IN SEARCH OF VYĀSA

THE USE OF GRECO-ROMAN SOURCES IN BOOK 4 OF THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

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"…Well, good-bye: I have enjoyed our conversation very much, I assure you",-
"Conversation, indeed!" said the Rocket. "You have talked the whole time yourself. That is
not conversation". "Somebody must listen," answered the Frog", and I like to do all the talk-
ing myself. It saves time, and prevents arguments". "But I like arguments," said the Rocket.
"I hope not," said the Frog complacently. "Arguments are extremely vulgar, for everybody
in good society holds exactly the same opinions". Oscar Wilde, "The Remarkable Rocket",
The Happy Prince and Other Tales, Ballantyne, Hanson and CO., London and Edinburgh,
1888, p. 108.

"What do you say to the leading philosophers of the faculty here, to whom I have offered
a thousand times of my own accord to show my studies, but who with the lazy obstinacy
of a serpent who has eaten his fill have never consented to look at planets, to moon or to
telescope? Verily, just as serpents close their ears, so do these men close their eyes to the
light of truth. These are great matters; yet they do not occasion me any surprise". Galileo
Galilei, Letter to Kepler, August 19, 1610. Karl Von Gebler, *Galileo Galilei and the Roman
Curia*, London, C. K. Paul and Co., 1879, p. 26.

"Here, again," continued Goethe, "the Greeks were so great, that they regarded fidelity to
historic facts less than the treatment of them by the poet. We have, fortunately, a fine exam-
ple in Philoctetes, which subject has been treated by all three of the great tragedians… In
this subject, the problem was very simple, namely, to bring Philoctetes, with his bow, from
the island of Lemnos. But the manner of doing this was the business of the poet, and here
each could show the power of his invention, and one could excel another. Ulysses must fetch
him; but shall he be known by Philoctetes or not? And if not, how shall he be disguised?
Shall Ulysses go alone, or shall he have companions, and who shall they be? In Aeschylus
there is no companion; in Euripides, it is Diomed; in Sophocles, the son of Achilles. Then,
in what situation is Philoctetes to be found? Shall the island be inhabited or not? And, if
inhabited, shall any sympathetic soul have taken compassion on him or not? And so with
a hundred other things, which are all at the discretion of the poet, and in the selection and
omission of which one may show his superiority in wisdom to another. Here is the grand
point, and our present poets should do like the ancients". Johann Peter Eckermann *Conver-
sations with Goethe*, London, Smith, Elder, & Co., 1906, vol 1, p. 353 (Wednedsday, 31
January, 1827).

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INTRODUCTION

1. A Strange and Fascinating Book and Its Greco-Roman Sources

Book 4 of the *Mahābhārata* (*Mbh.*) is, undoubtedly, a strange and fascinating book. After a twelve year exile living in woods, as depicted in Book 3, the five Pāṇḍavas brothers, the heroes of the *Mbh.,* and their polyandrous wife, Draupadī, must live incognito in a royal court as indentured servants for one whole year. Book 4 begins with the brothers hiding their weapons in the branches of a tree and making out as if they were disposing of their own mother's corpse. To make it seem more authentic, one of these proud *kṣatriyas* (warriors and kings) takes an actual corpse and hangs it there with his own hands -something utterly unthinkable for a person of such a high caste.

The *Mbh.* is not exactly a merry tale. Instead, it tells the story of the supernatural plan of destruction of an entire generation of heroes through two wars centred on two cities -a destruction that ushers in our present, decadent era. In the processes directly leading to the first and main war, the oldest, King Yudhiṣṭhira, loses his kingdom in gambling and he and his brothers are condemned to a double exile with their polyandrous wife, Draupadī.

After the hardships of a twelve-year-sojourn in the forest, this year of concealment in the royal court of Virāṭa is narrated in oscillating moods which swing between comedy (all five brothers are depicted as enjoying, or at least accepting, their game of disguises, Bhīma, for example, works as a cook and eats in the most exaggeratingly voracious manner) and tragedy (centred in particular on Draupadī, who laments her subservient situation and is sexually harassed by General Kīcaka) .

This last story is additionally interesting as it contains a sexual assault, her laments, her criticism of Yudhiṣṭhira, her first husband, and even a ruse to get her assailant killed by her second husband, Bhīma, who after Draupadī persuades him with a long, heart-breaking speech, acts against the explicit orders of his older brother and king, Yudhiṣṭhira.

However, nothing is as weird, and so directly connected to sexuality as the position of Arjuna during this sojourn in Virāṭa's palace: he becomes a eunuch, dresses as a woman, and is the music and dance teacher to the royal princess. The super-hero becomes a mere *castrato*. It is no surprise that there has been a clear tendency to focus analysis on the sexual identity matter and, in particular, on Arjuna's condition as a eunuch.

Even the end of their serfdom contains some additional ill-fitting components. It comes about when a twin invasion by neighbouring enemies to raid the king's cattle takes place. While the other Pāṇḍavas dispose of one of the two armies, the other and most hated one, being an army of the Kauravas, the Pāṇḍavas' personal enemies who had them sent into exile, is defeated by the eunuch Arjuna, dressed, of course, as a woman. Oddly enough, Arjuna, obeying the wishes of the princess he serves as master of dance and music, pillages vestments from their vanquished foes, a practice that does not exist at all in the *Mbh.* universe.

Three days later, the Pāṇḍavas, anonymous servants until then, reveal their true identities. Their restoration to their role and position is as fascinating as it is straightforward: they simply sit on regal thrones, in regal vestments, in fact taking Virāṭa's place, for whom they await. When he arrives and wonders at the sight, their true names are proclaimed. At the same time, the eunuch Arjuna is no longer a eunuch. This is also shown in a very clear manner as King Virāṭa, begging their forgiveness, offers Arjuna his daughter's hand in marriage. Although Arjuna declines, he does accept the king's daughter for his own son and they are wed there and then a few days later. The wedding means at the same time the meeting of the Pāṇḍavas and their allies to prepare their vengeful war against their enemies -a much more daunting challenge for all of them together than the battle Arjuna fought alone. This is crucial to understanding the role Book 4 plays in the *Mbh.* Book 5 recounts their ill-fated diplomatic manoeuvrings and war preparations and the war itself is developed throughout Books 6-10.

Even authors who follow the common trend and consider the *Mbh.* as the product of the accumulation of centuries of strata have remarked on the Book's considerable degree of consistency, and artistry; incidentally, its very sophistication had a lot to do with their view of the Book as a product of "later stages" in the production of the *Mbh.*, a question that will be briefly dealt with below.

This book presents a dual approach and aim: first, to carry out a meticulous analysis and

evaluation of Book 4 of the *Mbh.* and, secondly, to demonstrate that it cannot be properly understood without taking into account the use of Greco-Roman sources by its author, Vyāsa (V) [1].

In the case of Book 4, V. essentially uses texts related to Heracles for its construction, and, more specifically, to one of his adventures: the year he had to spend at the court of Queen Omphale of Lydia. To begin with, let me anticipate that practically all the previously mentioned components of the Book, including its entire series of odd and bizarre traits, have been intelligently adapted from the story of Heracles to suit the needs of its author

Needless to say, to discover that those components have been used in no way detracts from the quality of the Book or its author; instead, it gives us a new way to understand how V. operated and adapted sources to create his great work. In fact, a substantial part of his artistry also lies in his ability and ingenuity in the handling of those materials. At the same time, to prove it means that no sound analysis of the Book can be done without taking into account the Greco-Roman sources V. uses and how he uses them. As his work adapts materials from a different culture to his own, any study of this Book and, in fact of the *Mbh.*, must necessarily be an intercultural and/or transcultural one.

2. Methodological Perspectives

In previous publications, I have maintained that the *Mbh.*, which was no doubt composed to achieve clear ideological, artistic, and religious aims in the very specific world of the Subcontinent, was composed, *inter alia,* by adapting Greco-Roman epic and mythical materials. Until now I have basically supported this perspective with empirical arguments, analysing different parts of the text, e.g., specific themes, stories, or characters, although I have also begun to approach this matter from historical (how, and under which historical conditions was it made possible?) and historiographical (why and how have those influences been rejected?) perspectives too.[2]

As in previous papers, the methodological starting point regarding this question is very

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[1]Throughout the remainder of the book I will be referring to this author as V. so as to distinguish him from the perceived author of the *Mbh.*, Vyāsa, and one of its main characters.

[2]See Bibliography and, in particular, F. Wulff Alonso (2014c), *Introduction* and *Conclusions*; (2015a); (2015c); (2017); (2018); (2019a); (2019b) (forthcoming 1) (forthcoming 2).

straightforward, namely: to point out common components. In order to properly evaluate them I propose a "principle of improbability". Whenever an author writes, he/she builds his/her own world, wherein each option gives rise to endless combinations and possibilities. He/she can put given characters on stage, describe what they think or do, make them speak or feel, create situations and actions, sequences, stages and objects. Each option opens up a world, which, in turn, opens many others. As the creation becomes more complex and more imaginative, the likelihood that another author could independently create what he/she has written becomes smaller, implausible and finally simply impossible.

An author can invent a girl who is out and about in the countryside as can many others. But if the location is a riverbank and she is there with her sister, she feels bored and, for instance, notices a rabbit that happens to be wearing a suit, the probability that other authors can invent exactly a story under those parameters declines. And the probabilities of independent invention decline dramatically if the rabbit talks, and wears a pocket watch, and if, additionally, the girl, following the rabbit, falls through a hole, sees, while falling, an empty jar labelled "marmalade", places that jar on a table, and finally arrives at an underground wonderland. Note the progressive difficulty in accepting the mere coincidence of two narratives displaying a) a girl, b) with her sister, c) besides a river, d) who sees a rabbit, e) the rabbit speaks, f) the rabbit holds a watch, g) and wears clothing, h) the girl follows him, i), the girl falls into a hole, j) sees, while falling, something, k) a jar, l) empty, m) labelled, n) marmalade, o) takes that jar, p) and places it on something, q) a table, and r) discovers a wonderland.

In a parallel process, the likelihood that a listener or reader finds out the exact title and authorship of the work grows as more details are given. Any one of these points is a choice between innumerable ones, and any choice opens a new universe of options.

The process of analysing these questions in a comparative perspective is not new, neither does it necessarily entail complex, or sophisticated procedures. Rather, it has been an almost routine one since the XIX century. In 1872, seven years after the publication of *Alice in Wonderland* (Carroll, 1865), an unschooled engraver, George Smith, achieved worldwide fame when he translated a collection of tablets from the Ashurbanipal Library containing the Babylonian account of the Great Flood. When he read them before the Society of Biblical Archaeology it was clear that the problem was the connection between the Genesis story of

the Flood and this new and obviously older source[3]. Was it a testimony in favour of the truth of the Biblical narrative or just a demonstration of a borrowing from previous texts by the authors of the Bible? This latter possibility was, in any case, a fact difficult to reconcile with the idea of the divine authorship of the text.

The above notwithstanding, the connections he proposed were accepted because there were many common elements. For instance, a) a god/s sent a flood. b) a god warned a man to build a boat to save himself, c) his family, and d) the animals on Earth. e) The boat had a roof, f) was coated with pitch, and g) was sealed before the deluge. h) The flood kills all human beings. i) The man opens a vent/window. j) The boat arrives at a given mountain. k) After the flood the man waits seven days, l) before sending out a dove m) and a raven, n) in this order (not a raven and a dove). o) After he burnt offerings, p), which were accepted-smelled by the gods.

The litmus test was that these common elements essentially defined the same story in *Genesis* and in the *Poem of Gilgamesh*, one of the world's oldest written works[4]. Its minor variations (god/gods, for instance) could be easily interpreted as the product of adaptations to new needs.

Naturally, someone beholden to the Biblical text would have disputed the direction of the literary loan, as was in fact done. In the scientific field, however, this pretension could not be easily accepted. First, it was evident that the biblical text was from a later date. Second, it became clear not just that the Babylonian flood text in the Gilgamesh poem was older than the Bible, but that it was part of a global tradition in which it had received various treatments and uses, from the Sumerian world of the third millennium BCE onwards. For instance, and with predictably less scandal surrounding it, it was proved with the same procedure that the chapter on the Flood in the *Poem of Gilgamesh* had been taken from a previous Mesopotamian work, the *Atrahasis*[5]. Third, it was found that this use was no exception; there is an entire series of components in the Bible that come from the Near East world and

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[3]G. Smith (1876), see Chapter 1: *The discovery of the Genesis Legends*; Chapter 16: *The Story of the Flood and Conclusion*.

[4]Two articles on the Internet are particularly useful: *The Great Flood: Parallels*, http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood6-parallels.html, retrieved May 10, 2018.

[5]See the *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic* by A.R. George.

Egypt and which can be traced from the available evidence[6]. Fourth, historical evidence for the Bible itself was added to all this. In recent decades it has been proven that what we know as the Old Testament is an aggregate of texts created as such in a specific time directly connected to the period following the Jewish captivity in Babylon circa 538 BCE, and thus, under Persian political rule. It was written by a number of members of Hebrew elites in the context of such a sophisticated political and religious project that actually ended up generating a process of ethnogenesis and a new religious model, Judaism. The fact that today discussion actually focuses not on the supposed pre-exilic dating of these texts, but on whether some of the information they contain could be ascribed with certainty to that period, is an interesting indicator of the degree of critical reflection on these issues. In any case, considering the shared components, including the litmus test of the common script of both stories, nobody can rightly deny the borrowings.

Two short additional examples may be useful to expand this perspective, as they mark two very different and illustrative cases.

The first is the use of Mesopotamian and Middle Eastern components not by the Jews but by the Greeks several centuries before. These components can be found in the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and Hesiod and include such similarities as an invincible hero who is the son of a goddess, sees his best friend die, changes dramatically and faces down his own death as well as the use of certain forms of Mesopotamian theogonies.

The second is that of Virgil's *Aeneid* in the I Century BCE Rome. The *Aeneid* represents a case similar to that of the *Mbh.* in certain respects, such as the fact that materials are taken from one language and translated into another, and that it is a systematic and well-structured use of Greek works, particularly the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. However, it is also very different in other respects, for example, Virgil wrote in a cultural context not dominated by oral formulations but by writing, and he used texts not simply known by his readers but venerated. The new work of Virgil takes up a theme from the stories following the war told in the *Iliad* and develops it with total freedom in his new epic.

Virgil uses previous materials with specific cultural and political objectives, linked to the

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[6]See, e.g., the pioneering work of J. B. Pritchard (ed.) (1950); for one of the many recent works on the theme see S. Parpola (2014).

political project of Augustus. Augustus patronizes a great myth of origins to help rebuild a society devastated by civil wars and to legitimize his regime and role as founder of a new state that intends to continue with those old glories told in Virgil's epic. The mass use of previous materials would be perfectly recognizable to the learned reader; moreover, it would not have been viewed as a demerit but as a legitimate homage to an admired model. It is not only that the story of Aeneas follows chronologically the Trojan War: Virgil also uses characters, settings, scenes, metaphors, and all kinds of literary resources from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* for his own aims. In fact, there arose a whole literary branch specialized in looking for and assessing, as well as criticising, Virgil's borrowings.

It could be useful to recall a common place: borrowing, quotation, parody, imitation, and the montage of previous authors and works are a substantial part of the European tradition, in fact of any cultural tradition. Borrowing and similar procedures were severely criticized in the XIX Century in relation to the image of the Romantic author[7], but seen with greater ambiguity, if any, before that.

Leaving aside the traditional models of borrowing analysis, another example that can help us frame this issue is the expertise in the legal realm regarding plagiarism of written texts, as this topic is closely linked to their profitability in books or movies.

Research into and expertise on plagiarism have greatly benefitted from being part of the very new and rich field of forensic linguistics. This field is wide-ranging and deals with things from the analysis of legal language, discourse and deceptive language to matters more closely related to plagiarism such as author identification of anonymous writings, discrepancies between oral statements and official written records as well as plagiarism itself. Plagiarism in the context of forensic linguistics [8] is of particular interest to us because it can refer to different variations, beginning with the literal or direct use of a given text, "linguistic plagiarism", as contemplated in the software for detecting school plagiarism. In principle, this kind of plagiarism relates to an equally simple one, namely: musical plagiarism, wherein it is theoretically possible to define and even quantify a succession of notes forming a given motif or theme to test its relation to other one.

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[7]See G. Steiner (2013), p. 633; A. Grafton (1997) for the evolution of the footnote in this context.
[8]M. T. Turell (2008); T. Grant (2008), pp. 225-6 in particular.

The theoretical basis of research into the variations of linguistic plagiarism is interesting as it excludes chance as a valid explanation for a given amount of coincidence between two texts or long enough verbal utterances. Common sense and day-to-day experience could suffice to avoid further argumentation. However, this is further substantiated by the idea that every author creates a unique and unrepeatable text that is inevitably influenced by their social background, which has bearings in part on the linguistic, textual and stylistic choices at their disposal (vocabulary, vocabulary frequency and hapax, syntactical structures, punctuation, word order, figure of speech, etc.) as well as other unconscious choices such as spelling and/or grammatical errors, their frequency, word length or sound averages.

In this sense, it is not at all strange that this kind of approach is currently being applied to Sanskrit texts, full of anonymous authors, and to the very *Mbh.*, in particular from the perspective of trying to know whether certain sections, such as the *Bhagavad Gītā*, present significant differences from other parts of the work which could be assigned to different authors or periods. Thus, Sanskrit computational linguistics also deals with questions of date and of authorship discrimination and attribution in the general context of linguistic computing.

As I am proposing a use of Greco-Roman texts by V. comparable to the Hebrew and Roman examples we have seen, involving both translation and adaptation, judicial cases beyond the literal copy are more useful, i.e., plagiarism of ideas. It happens when a previous text -or musical piece- is copied and, usually, receives changes and variations directed to hide the copying process and embellish or personalize it. Although linguistic plagiarism and plagiarism of ideas are frequently found together in different degrees, at the end of the spectrum there are examples of pure plagiarism of ideas, the more elusive case, referring to the copying of substantial components of a story or stories, mainly, plot, scenes, characters, settings, time, objects, and of a relevant combination of some factors among them.

All in all, the starting point is the same: the exclusion of the possibility of explaining a certain number of common components between two texts as chance, a point that, again, is based on the empirical observation that such a coincidence does not happen and in the application, *mutatis mutandis*, of the before said idea of the uniqueness of complex texts. This is basically the realization of what I have called the "principle of improbability". The broadening viewpoints in textual and literary analysis over the past few decades have further

enriched this perspective

All this opens the possibility that the judge or jury can, with the corresponding help of linguistic expertise, discern misappropriation of texts beyond subjectivity and "reasonable doubt". Apart from looking for direct text copying in different degrees, discovering the use of plot, scenes, characters and other components from the story, experts also look for specific procedures and results of the borrowing related to the above mentioned conceal-ment of the copying process, embellishment and personalization of the text. These appear as alterations of the original text through expanding phrases or changing words -in this case, frequently using statistically less common synonyms-, or inconsistencies in the borrowing text not present in the borrowed one and produced by that adaptation, an aspect also impor-tant for the question of the direction of the borrowing.

Although forensic linguistics can help us to think about the problem in new ways, this book, while employing new tools, is, admittedly, based on old-fashioned, orthodox perspectives (in the best possible sense), grounded in the traditional method of analysis of borrowings represented by Virgilian critics in Antiquity and the Genesis-Gilgamesh story in the XIX Century.

I hope to have convincingly argued in other publications that such a use of Greco-Roman sources is clear in the *Mbh.* and in Book 4 in particular. Centring the question on Book 4 and upholding the premise that practically all the previously mentioned components defining and characterizing Book 4 are adaptations taken from the story of Heracles and Omphale, implies that I can offer clear inter-textual examples illustrating it as well as offer an in-depth exegesis of such examples.

As stated before, my previous work on the *Mbh.* has been mostly centred on the plain exposition of common components, more or less implicitly considering that these and other arguments were obvious enough and did not need further clarification With this new book I have striven to modify my previous, perhaps over-encyclopaedic approach, and address the topic in a dual manner: to make explicit and develop the methodological arguments for defending my main hypothesis, and to make more evident the system V. uses for constructing his work with the help of Greco-Roman sources.

The evidence leads us in a direction that requires fine-tuning of methods, because we are searching for intelligent handling and adaptation of materials deriving from one culture to

fit the needs of a different one. It is not that I defend this as an *a priori* position, but that this is the only one possible explanation for the complexity of use of common components as shown in the text. This need to avoid taking lightly what is sophisticated and weighty has been called for by Alf Hiltebeitel (forthcoming) in reference to the *Iliad* and the *Mbh.*: "Wulff's approach thus does away with the need to search for one-to-one correspondences between Greek and Indian characters and scenes, which has been the defeating self-limitation that has stymied studies that sought to relate the *Iliad* and the *Mahābhārata* as deriving from some common source or sources". In fact, the question is not only to search for one-to-one correspondences between Greek and Indian characters and scenes, but also to search for the myriad variations of a process which is, by itself, a highly creative process.

3. Fourteen criteria

The beginning of any fine-tuning of methods has to be to make them as explicit as possible. The first step is to clarify the criteria by which it can be proved that shared components are the product of borrowing and not of chance, nor of shared components of the human mind, oral transmission, or oral transmission over centuries or millennia, including, for example the Dumezilian idea of remote, prehistoric Indo-European origins. Second, as accepting common components and borrowings does not automatically imply the use of written texts, another step is to make explicit the corresponding criteria to prove it. Lastly, after accepting that the shared components prove the use of written texts, the question concerning the direction of the borrowing must be methodologically defined too.

I should say that no scholar familiar with comparing texts would deny the first and most substantial of the criteria or arguments implicit -or explicit- in this kind of comparative perspectives. I use here both terms in the sense of "statement for a point", "reason supporting a conclusion" or "rule for evaluating the truth of a given proposition".

1. The first one is the already too frequently stated "principle of improbability", which denies the possibility of explaining repetition by chance or other explanations, given a certain quality and quantity of common components between two texts or sections of a text. The unlimited array of directions an author can take at each and every turn of the creative process makes impossible that an over-abundance of over-lapping components be the product of independent creation. In fact, much of the following criteria are just specific developments

of this one.

Certainly, its probative value is much more evident when we do not deal with isolated or scarce examples, even if these are sound enough, which leads us to the second criterion.

2. The complexity and density of borrowings,

3. I have also pointed out the need to recognize the importance of certain unusual cases, such as the odd, bizarre or fanciful components of a story. Thus, a rabbit in a narrative may well be commonplace, but not if it is pictured carrying a pocket watch, disappearing through a hole in the ground, talking, etc. Likewise, a man building a boat may well appear to be a commonplace trope; yet, a man building a boat because a god had warned him about an impending flood and instructed him on the finer points of boat building, is not. To find such similarities in two different stories is obviously meaningful as such details are, ostensibly, strange products of the human imagination which deepen the unlikelihood or sheer impossibility of independent creation. One very interesting variation of this case of the shared bizarre traits happens when it is so in one case, in one of the cultures, and not in the other. Some examples of these common odd traits will be developed in Chapter 4, Section 1.

Thus, a given quantity and quality of complex similarities meeting these criteria would exclude anything but direct borrowing from written texts.

The eight following points (4 to 11) attain to a step forward in the same direction: the question of how V. works the Greco-Roman materials he chooses for his creation, the "criterion or argument of the working methodology". Can we prove that the author who borrows uses discrete methods to do it? Can we show how he deals with the materials he is using? And, with that in mind, does he take whole stories or specific components? Does he use different sources for a given section of his text or just one? Does he use one source in different places of his work? If he dovetails stories, how does he do it, by mixing them or by using one as a lodestar? Does he uses Greco-Roman characters, and if so, how?

Ideally, if variations could be interpreted as the product of discrete adaptations to the new needs of the newly created text, the whole hypothesis would be additionally reinforced, in particular if we can trace methods repeated in different moments of the text. This also applies to specific changes and adaptations based on ideological and/or cultural differences. The case of the *Genesis/ Poem of Gilgamesh* variation wherein, for instance, the Mesopotamian gods

became Israel's god, can serve as a useful example, given that familiarity with the Bible makes it easy for a reader to understand it as a product of adaptations to the new needs of the monolatry (better than monotheism) of the religious construction defended by the author of *Genesis*. We can understand the key for the change, and also we can see that the change means to make one from many, a procedure that the author can repeat in other instances.

In our case, all of this naturally leads us from specific uses to those creative processes, methods and aims, as well as to the integration of all these components in V.'s general plan for the work.

4. The first one is the most obvious: when there is evidence of the literal or direct use by V. of a given text ("linguistic plagiarism"), e.g. when he uses similar words, metaphors or expressions. As we are dealing with a whole translation of concepts, stories and perspectives, but usually not of the words or sentences that convey them, it is not a frequent case, in particular if we consider the possibility of a conscious attempt to hide the borrowing. Essentially, what I am mainly defending is that there is a way to arrive at the same conclusion of the use of texts by V. from other perspectives, though the borders between both approaches are not always clear. A good instance of this vagueness could be the intriguing fact that Book 10 of the *Mbh.* deals with a night time attack on an encampment, just as it happens in Book 10 of the *Iliad*. Another example could be V.'s use in a given story of components from two stories which are textually close in his Greco-Roman sources. Finding examples of straightforward literal borrowing certainly constitutes, however, one of the most definitive tests, and will be further elaborated upon in Chapter 4, Section 2.

5. The following point refers to the litmus test indicated above and exemplified by the *Genesis*/ Gilgamesh story of the flood -that is, whether there is sufficient evidence to prove that the method used by the borrowing author implies such a concentration of shared elements that essentially define the same script, the same plot structure, in his work, or sections of his work, and in his source or sources. It is a particular case of a multiple use of materials, characterized by its structural, architectonic value.

Needless to say, this common script does not mean that both stories have to be identical. First, because the one who borrows works with his own design and cultural background as his backdrop, second because to adapt a given text necessarily means, choosing or not choosing components and making changes -to embellish, adapt…- and those changes bring

new possibilities of developing characters' roles and the general plot. Adapting does not exclude at all that a given author does not have different options at every step of his re-creative process.

In our case, the question would be whether the *Mbh.*, or a Book or section, is organized along the lines of a Greco-Roman text or story. It will be dealt in Chapter 4, Section 3.

6. This point refers to the evidence of concentration of different borrowed sources in a given part of the borrowing text. In our case it would mean the concentration of different Greco-Roman sources -more clearly if stemming from different periods- in a section or Book of the *Mbh.* This argument will be developed in Chapter 4, Section 4.

7. This point deals with the evidence for the use of a given Greco-Roman story or work. One very intriguing case is finding uses of one specific Greco-Roman work or story in different parts of the borrowing story or work. In our case, this demands we first prove that V. uses a given Greco-Roman source and, secondly, that such use is not limited to a specific section of the *Mbh.* but is dispersed throughout. This will be taken up in greater detail in Chapter 4, Section 5

8. Another rather interesting variation is the evidence for the use by the borrowing author not just of a specific work but also of an array of works written by a given author. In our case, it would be to prove the use of different works by a Greco-Roman author, Ovid. This will be dealt with in Chapter 4, Section 6.

Three additional arguments are directly related to the uses of characters from the borrowed work or works, all of which are developed in Chapter 5, Section 1.

9. Use of a given character to provide components for the construction of a character.

10. Use of a given character to provide components for the construction of several characters. This is clearer when it occurs in the same story or chapter.

11. Use of several characters to provide components for the construction of a given character.

Finally, the global argument of V.'s methodology is left aside, following a new question pointing to a new and crucial issue. As stated above, to accept borrowings of texts between one text in culture A and another one in culture B, and to accept that they have been done indeed by using written texts, gives rise to two salient different possibilities: that somebody in culture A has used a text from culture B, or vice versa. In this case, it is necessary to

propose specific criteria to rule out the possibility of explaining the common components as a product of borrowing in a reverse direction, India to Greece. Thus, methodologically, I am coming back again to criteria to prove the main hypothesis of this book, leaving aside the previous ones in an attempt to substantiate this book's central claim as well as V.'s methods.

12. The first one is the comparative cultural coherence of certain common stories, especially the odd ones pointed to in Argument 3 and dealt with in Chapter 4, Section 1. It may be useful to recall one example we already know of Book 4 to exemplify it: the contact of a *kṣatriya* -warriors and kings- with a corpse is hard to understand in the cultural context of the Subcontinent, and in the *Mbh.* itself, but we find that V. follows a Greek story in which Heracles has physical contact with a corpse in order to bury it, which is not so strange at all in Greco-Roman culture. I am presenting this argument in Chapter 5, Section 2.1, mainly on the basis of the cases presented in Chapter 4. Section 1.

13. Another argument is the question of seniority. In spite of the, already somewhat blurred, positions of poststructuralism and postmodernism, it is still generally accepted in the social and human sciences that events occur sequentially, that before precedes after. How does this issue affect our problem? If we come to the conclusion that the only option for explaining borrowings is the transmission of a written texts, chronologies must be contrasted to ascertain the question of its direction.

Let us briefly anticipate that for our case we will have to compare a story (the Omphale and Heracles one, created and written at least in the VI-V Century BCE and organically developed for centuries) to the *Mbh.*, which even scholars who believe in its cumulative production generally consider that it was created as an oral production between the IV Century BCE and the IV Century CE; in any case, it has proven extremely difficult for scholars to support claims of it having been written prior to the II or I Century BCE. This question is compounded if a second, no less improbable hypothesis found within this paradigm were to be accepted, i.e.: that Book 4 forms part of what is called the "later layers", in other words, written centuries later. This argument will be deployed in Chapter 5, Section 2.2.

14. At the same time, there is a question of double plausibility -historical, and logical and methodological. The first deals with the fact that it is necessary to define and compare the probability, and even the possibility, of the creation, transmission, translation and diffusion of a text/texts from another culture and at different moments in time. Once again, the Deluge

story and the direction of borrowing between the Babylonian-Mesopotamian world and the subsequent work or works created by Hebrew elites after having been liberated by the Persian Cyrus serves as an excellent example. In our case, we would need to address the question concerning Greco-Roman texts in the Subcontinent as well as the *Mbh.* in the Mediterranean world.

When, how, under what conditions and who could have possibly made use of the (written) *Mbh.* in the Greco-Roman world or, conversely, made use of Greco-Roman texts referring to Omphale and Heracles in the Subcontinent? Can both options be substantiated by the same sound arguments or are such options too dissimilar? If we take into account the results from previous chapters, logical and methodological consistency take centre stage. Thus, if it were proved, for example, that the strange and bizarre traits in shared texts elucidated in Criterion 3 are easy to explain in the Greco-Roman world and not in the world of the *Mbh.*, and that shared components by concentration and dissemination of sources, use of different sources in different ways, construction of characters and the like, are fruit of V.'s use of Greco-Roman sources, then to oppose this conclusion would inevitably necessitate a meticulous, step-by-step demonstration that the alternative option is more reliable, more solid.

4. Final Remarks and the Organization of this Book

The almost knee-jerk reaction to deny the use of Greco-Roman texts in the *Mbh.* is not, in my view, grounded in any evidence; instead, it hinges on what I call the 'Winternitz law'. Over a century ago, the Indologist Moriz Winternitz categorically rejected the possibility that Greek texts had reached the Subcontinent (1998, 3, 413): "It can in no case be proved that any Greek fiction whatsoever had come into India or an Indian fiction had reached Greece". This opinion served to shape the dominant paradigm until now. Interestingly, this position knowingly ignored the impressive examples of Greco-Roman influence in architecture and the plastic arts, rendering them as mere isolated exceptions.

However, in this book I maintain that the study of the uses of the story of Heracles and Omphale pervading Book 4 gives us clear examples to the contrary: there were several texts of fiction, and they were used, systematically and creatively. They fit the three first arguments/criteria, complexity, oddity and density, as well as all the following ones.

V's choice of the Heracles and Omphale adventure, together with his compact (1824 verses in the Poona Critical Edition) adaptation of it in order to construct Book 4 of the *Mbh.*, make a systematic and global analysis of the evidence feasible. Moreover, Book 4's relative brevity also makes it possible to explore and elucidate V.'s methodology as well as how he approaches the Greco-Roman texts and what therein piques his interest.

An additional interesting trait of Book 4 is that it contains a fascinating example of argument 8: the use of different works written by one Greco-Roman author. The story of general Kīcaka is basically composed by using two different Ovidian texts, both connected to Omphale and Heracles: 1) The Heracles, Omphale and Faunus story in the *Fasti*, depicting a nocturnal attempted rape by Faunus, and his defeat by Heracles, which is used by V. for the final scene of general Kīcaka's harassment; 2) The famous laments of Deianira, Heracles' wife, in Ovid's *Heroides* 9, which V. uses for composing Draupadī's laments to spur her husband Bhīma into killing Kīcaka. As we shall see, the Faunus story appears only in this Ovidian text, while Ovid's presentation of Deianira's lamentation is part of a long tradition of renderings; nevertheless, he effectively invents the literary trope of giving prominence to the voice of aggrieved heroines specifically when addressing their heroic counterparts. The *Mbh.*'s text, in turn, mirrors its specific formulations. There is also a possible use of his *Metamorphoses*. Note that if this use of Ovid in the *Mbh.* can be proven, it will supply us with a *terminus post quem* for its creation.

As is reasonably practicable, I shall restrict the scope of this book to Book 4 of the *Mbh.* and the themes surround it. That notwithstanding, I surmise that there are more uses of Ovid, in particular of his *Metamorphosis*, in other parts of the *Mbh* (see Wulff Alonso, forthcoming 1); in fact, some of these connections were pointed out long ago. Just as the use of Ovid is not an exception in the *Mbh.*, I will also refer to the fact that the use of Heracles' stories is not either; although, the way in which it is done is unique to this Book, i.e., a compact, massive form.

To make ever more explicit an initial approach to my position regarding the problem surrounding the authorship of the *Mbh.*, I must insist on one final point. Some years ago a

scholar adherent to the dominant theory of the accumulated, aggregated *Mbh.* tried to min-imize the possible impact of the Greco-Roman components in Book 4 by arguing that the Book would have formed part of the later sections of the *Mbh.*[9]. However, even if this were the case, the meaning of the presence of these Greco-Roman components for the analysis of this chapter would remain, the 'Winternitz law' would be invalidated, and the lessons to be learned from this case to understand other "later sections" or "modernized" sections would be no less important. Moreover, it would show the high degree of permeability of the Indian milieu to those influences at a given historical moment, even if it were to be accepted that this influence was not present in the alleged first stages of the work.

In any case, the systematic use all over the work of Greco-Roman sources squares well with the unitarian perspective. That theme will be dealt with in greater detail in the Conclusions, after the reader evaluates some further evidence.

Probably the most important problem that will be faced by a reader who intends to verify the solidity of the hypothesis defended in this book and follow its arguments is the difficulty of being familiar with the two stories and the two cultures of which we are speaking. The plan of this book tries to take this into account in the very structure of its chapters. After this introduction, focused on defining basically the central hypothesis and methodology, the first two chapters analyse Book 4 of the *Mbh.* (Chapter 1), and the Omphale and Heracles story (Chapter 2). Other *Mbh.* texts will be limited and circumscribed to the context of our arguments.

Once the two components of the comparison are presented, Chapter 3 becomes the axis of the book as it presents, in the most graphic way possible, the common components be-tween them. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the 14 arguments/criteria, and Chapter 6 presents a tentatively global perspective on the methods V. employs while working with various Greco-Roman sources to construct Book 4.

I also include two appendixes to examine, first, how different perspectives on Book 4 can be affected by the conclusions of this book and, second, on two Greco-Roman sources not related to Heracles which could have been used by V.

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[9]In terms of M. Winternitz (1998), 1, p. 458: "There can scarcely be any doubt that the whole of Book IV (*Virāṭa parvan*) is a later production than the magnificent battle-description in the following books".

Finally, I have used the Critical Edition of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute of Pune, unless explicitly noted. I particularly enjoy Johannes A. B. van Buitenen's translation [10], though Bibek Debroy's is also useful and has the advantage of being part of the only one complete translation of this edition in English. I have also used two translations of the so-called Vulgate Edition, the Kathleen Garbuth's translation of Book 4 in a bilingual volume, and the whole translation of the *Mbh.* by Kisari M. Ganguli.

Málaga-London, 2019

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[10]I would like to thank the University of Chicago Press for granting me permission to reproduce here several verses of his translation.

Chapter 1

ONE YEAR IN THE COURT OF KING VIRĀṬA

Among the most intriguing outcomes of lectures at conferences and seminars are, perhaps, the various ways that words can be misinterpreted and arguments misunderstood, particularly when do not conform to commonly held orthodoxy. I owe this insight to one particular such experience when, in a long speech, a Professor at a British University insisted on the fragility of comparisons between large quantities of material and concluded that the vast number of texts on Heracles and Omphale would naturally share common components with other such works of a certain size and scope, especially one as massive as the *Mbh.*

My initial response was that the argument of improbability is in no way limited to the entirety of Greco-Roman mythology and the *Mbh.* but encompasses all of world literature: for instance, nowhere in the world of literature do we have the series of *Alice in Wonderland* choices, and if we encounter but two cases of a hero/es who, immediately following a previous period of twelve years of wandering and suffering, are forced to live in a court for one whole year, in anonymity, as thralls, as transvestites, etc., there is simply no possible explanation by chance or accident to account for it. The obvious proof for this being that there are, quite literally, no more samples to be had.

My second rejoinder was, and is, even more categorical as the very basis of my colleague's impassioned attempt was erroneous. It is simply not the case that there are a vast number of extant texts recounting the Heracles and Omphale tale, quite the opposite; they are extremely scant. And they are massively concentrated in one of the shortest Books of the *Mbh.* Thus, the argument goes precisely in the opposite direction and, as a result, reinforces my main conclusion.

Let us begin with the analysis of the 1824 verses of Book 4 of the *Mbh.* I am following the Pune (Critical) Edition, and, for only two useful illustrative examples, I will be referring to other editions merely to take into account two texts suppressed in Pune Edition. In any case, it may be useful to state beforehand that differences between the editions are unimportant, and that the story remains the same in every case, as is the case, in fact, with the global story of the *Mbh.*

Although some of the following components have been noted earlier, let us begin with a summary of Book 4 and its contextualization within the *Mbh.* as a whole.

1. Preparing One Year at the Court of King Virāṭa

Book 4 plays a crucial role in the *Mbh.* As stated in the *Introduction*, the whole text is centred on two wars that are organised to bring about the demise of a generation of heroes. The first and more important war emerges from a succession conflict in the Hāstinapura Kingdom, culminating in Kurukṣetra's war (Books 1-10, plus the funerary rites of the deceased in Book 11). The ensuing Books, moreover, are also intimately connected to the events leading up to and during the war. Indeed, as depicted in Book 16, the second war, in Dvārakā, takes place thirty-six years later and is the result of the curse Gāndhārī cast on Kṛṣṇa at the end of the first war for not having done anything to stop the carnage and devastation (*Mbh.* 11.25.36-42). Gāndhārī is the blind King Dhṛtarāṣṭra's wife, mother of Duryodhana and the Kauravas, the evil enemies of Yudhiṣṭhira and the Pāṇḍavas; yet, at the same time she criticizes her son Duryodhana and her husband's intrigues against the Pāṇḍavas.

One of the plots she opposes is Duryodhana and Dhṛtarāṣṭra bringing about the exile of their, respectively, cousins and nephews, the Pāṇḍavas. At the highest point of Yudhiṣṭhira's prestige and renown, in Book 2, he is encouraged to gamble with Duryodhana's uncle Śakuni in the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura, the Great Hall of the palace. Yudhiṣṭhira loses everything, even his freedom, his brothers, and their polyandrous wife Draupadī, in a kind of gambling fever defined as a madness, an intoxication (*Mbh.* 2.53ff.; see, in particular, 2.55.5; 2.60.4-5). After Yudhiṣṭhira wagers and loses Draupadī, she is brought into the *sabhā* and grievously mistreated; nevertheless, she turns the tables and saves them all by posing an unanswerable question to the Royal Court.

It is then, in Book 2, the *Sabhāparvan*, when they are sentenced to a dual exile: twelve

years outside their country suffering hardships and dangers in the wild (Book 3) and, finally, one year hidden, incognito and undiscovered by their enemies[11]. The tedious and perilous twelve-year exile in the wild, described in the previous Book, now gives way to this year in King Virāṭa's court. Both periods are fused by their temporal contiguity as V. narrates them through the idea that if the Pāṇḍavas were to be discovered during the last year, they would have to repeat the whole thirteen-year period.

The last sections of Book 3 prepare Book 4 in several ways, but prominently in a final significant scene (*Mbh.* 3.295-8) in which the five brothers chase a deer that has caught in his antlers a Brahman's fire-sticks that were hanging on a tree. Thirsty and hungry, they reproach their brother Yudhiṣṭhira because of his patience and sense of *dharma*, three of them remembering the *sabhā* and regretting their attitude there. Then, one after another the four younger brothers are sent to look for water and arrive at a lake where a voice warns them not to drink until they have successfully answered a question; they rebuke and ignore the warning, drink and collapse on the ground. Finally, Yudhiṣṭhira arrives, sees his fallen brothers, stands in awe and sees a crane/*yakṣa* who repeats the warning. He heeds the crane's words and does not drink, answers all his questions and, after giving new proof of his virtue, is granted his brothers' revival and other wishes, obviously one we already know: that they will not be recognised during their year of hiding in Virāṭa's city. The *yakṣa* reveals himself as Yudhiṣṭhira's divine father, Dharma, and blesses him.

Everything revolves around the need to wait for the end of the thirteen-year period, the time marked out by destiny, and the supremacy of patience, forbearance and *dharma* over impulse, desire and lack of control. It is no surprise that Draupadī and Bhīma in Book 3 are the principal critics of Yudhiṣṭhira and that V. makes it one of the key themes in the most prominent story of Book 4, Kīcaka's story, and thereafter. The need to wait for the end of a period of time decreed by the gods/destiny is also a crucial issue in the Greek stories of Troy and Thebes, as well in Heracles' stories.

Other components further announce Book 4. Thus, the fire-sticks of the Brahman hanging

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[11]See *Mbh.* 1.55.40; 2.66.18-19: *te vā dvādaśa varṣāṇi vayaṃ vā dyūtanirjitāḥ praviśema mahāraṇyam ajinaiḥ prativāsitāḥ trayodaśaṃ ca sajane ajñātāḥ parivatsaram jñātāś ca punar anyāni vane varṣāṇi dvādaśa* ; 2.67.9-12; 3.36.22-27; the final destiny is revealed in *Mbh.* 3.298.15-19: Dharma grants Yudhiṣṭhira that none of them will be recognized while living in hiding in the city of Virāṭa; see *Mbh.* 4.1.1.

in a tree and taken by a deer, point to their first adventure in Book 4, featuring a tree where they hide their weapons to prevent them from being stolen.

A summary of Book 4 is unavoidable. To begin with, we can use the divisions and précis of the *Mbh.* as arranged by V. and take a brief look at the way he presents the narration of his work.

At the very beginning of the *Mbh.*, V. tells of the bard Ugraśravas, son of Lomaharsana, arriving at the Naimiṣa Forest where a sacrifice sponsored by Śaunaka and attended by many seers is to take place. Asked by one of the hermits, Ugraśravas reveals (*Mbh.* 1.1.8-10ab) that he comes from the Snake sacrifice of King Janamejaya, son of Parikṣit, where Vaiśampāyana had recounted true stories that form part of the *Mbh.*, first recited by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana (Vyāsa). He is then asked by the *ṛṣis* to tell this story. It is more specifically told that those stories were recited by Vaiśampāyana at Vyāsa's bidding, that it is Vyāsa's revelation after the protagonists' death which is taught to Vaiśampāyana (*Mbh.* 1.1.18; 1.1.56-58). Thus, our *Mbh.* would be the product of Vyāsa's creation, repeated by Vaiśampāyana to Janamejaya, first, and by the bard Ugraśravas to Śaunaka and the *ṛṣis* later. Its final form combines the narrator's voice describing Ugraśravas' arrival at the Naimiṣa Forest, what Śaunaka and the *ṛṣis* asked him, the answers he gave, and the dialogues between Vaiśampāyana and Janamejaya. Incidentally, Janamejaya is the great grandson of the Pāṇḍava Arjuna: he is the son of Parikṣit, who was born to Abhimanyu (Arjuna's son) and King Virāṭa's daughter, Uttarā.

The Bard Ugraśravas describes the *Mbh.* as a revelation, though an erudite revelation. Vyāsa saw/knew the *śāstrā*, treatises or sciences, on *dharma*, *kāma* and *artha* (*dharmakāmārthaśāstrāṇi* 1.1.47ab), the *śāstrā* on worldly affairs, ancient histories (*itihāsa* 1.1.48a) and their commentaries, as well as the *śruti* ("listened", "revealed", "canonical"), whereby "everything is here". It is defined as the holy *Upaniṣad* of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana (Vyāsa) (*Mbh.* 1.1.191), the Veda of Kṛṣṇa (*Mbh.* 1.1.205a), heavier than the Vedas in greatness and weight (*Mbh.* 1.1.208; see later *Mbh.* 1.2.235-43).

Shortly after, V. sets out a summary of the *Mbh.* in one hundred Books, as told by Vyāsa, and it is also revealed that Ugraśravas repeated it exactly as he did it, but in eighteen books (*Mbh.* 1.2.70-71). In Vyāsa's division the Virāṭa story is presented in four of his one hundred Books, Books 45 to 48 (*Mbh.* 1.2.48b-49b): 45, Virāṭa, 46, Kīcaka's slaying, 47, the cattle

raids, and 48, the wedding of Abhimanyu and Virāṭa's daughter.

Following this section and division, there is another summary of the *Mbh.* in eighteen Books, and our story is contained in Book 4. The summary includes five sections (*Mbh.* 1.2.130-33): 1) the Pāṇḍavas go to Virāṭa's city, hiding their weapons in a tree by the cremation ground; 2) the Pāṇḍavas enter the city and dwell there in disguise; 3) Kīcaka is killed by Bhīma; 4) Arjuna defeats the cattle raiding Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas retrieve Virāṭa's cattle; 5) Virāṭa gives Arjuna his daughter for Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu. I shall follow this last fivefold division of the text for my own summary.

For this Book, V. chooses the easiest way of telling one of his stories: Janamejaya asks Vaiśampāyana and Vaiśampāyana answers. Just as in many other parts of the *Mbh.*, the story will be narrated by V. either directly through Vaiśampāyana or through his renderings of conversations among characters.

2. The Pāṇḍavas Go to the City of Virāṭa and Hide Their Weapons in a Tree by the Cremation Ground

After the adventure with the deer and obtaining the abovementioned boon from his divine father Dharma, Yudhiṣṭhira returns to the hermitage where the Pāṇḍavas and their wife were living, relates the story to the Brahmans and gives the fire-sticks back to their owner (*Mbh.* 4.1.1-3).

Then Yudhiṣṭhira gathers his brothers together and reminds them that after their twelve previous years outside their kingdom they still have to endure the difficult thirteenth year and asks Arjuna to choose a place where they could dwell unnoticed by their enemies (*Mbh.* 4.1.4-6).

Arjuna recalls that they are protected by Dharma's boon and mentions ten kingdoms, asking Yudhiṣṭhira to choose one of them (*Mbh.* 4.1.7-10).

Yudhiṣṭhira chooses Virāṭa's kingdom and, echoing his father's words, says that they will take jobs and "amuse ourselves"[12]; he then goes on to inquire his brothers about their future jobs (*Mbh.* 4.1.11-15). Here, V. uses a structure he later repeats: a series of the five brothers' and Draupadī's words and actions, following a given order.

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[12]*Mbh.* 4.1.14c, Van Buitenen's trans.: *vihariṣyāma*, from verb *vihṛ*.

Arjuna asks Yudhiṣṭhira and he chooses to pose as a Brahman and the king's dice master (*Mbh.* 4.1.19-23). Yudhiṣṭhira asks the next oldest brother, Vṛkodara ("Wolfbelly"), the voracious Bhīma (*Mbh.* 4.1.23cd), and he answers that he will be the best cook the king has ever had, he will tame elephants and bulls, and defeat all the pugilists (*Mbh.* 4.2.1-8). After a long praise (*Mbh.* 4.2.9-20), Yudhiṣṭhira asks Arjuna and he says that his wish is to become a eunuch and amuse the king and women in the seraglio, teaching singing and dancing and musical instruments, and amusing them with his stories (*Mbh.* 4.2.21-27). Yudhiṣṭhira asks Nakula, who says he wishes to be Virāṭa's horse keeper (*Mbh.* 4.3.1-4). Yudhiṣṭhira asks Sahadeva, who wishes to manage Virāṭa's cattle herd (*Mbh.* 4.3.6-11). Finally, Yudhiṣṭhira asks Draupadī (*Mbh.* 4.3.12-15), who answers (*Mbh.* 4.3.16-18) that she will be Queen Sudeṣṇā's maid and expert hairdresser ¡for which he briefly pays her compliments (*Mbh.* 4.3.19).

All of them choose a name (Kaṅka, Ballava, Bṛhannaḍā, Granthika, Tantipāla, Sairandhrī, respectively) and all but Draupadī end their speeches associating their future status with some kind of satisfaction.

Yudhiṣṭhira sends back their retinue to different courts (*Mbh.* 4.4.1-4; 4.4.49). Then their family priest, the Brahman Dhaumya, instructs them on the dangers of courtly life (*Mbh.* 4.4.6-44), and Yudhiṣṭhira asks him to perform propitiatory rites for their journey; finally, the six set off (*Mbh.* 4.4.45-49).

They go to the Kālindī River, follow its southern bank and enter the Matsya's territory from the wilderness. Tired, Draupadī asks Yudhiṣṭhira to set up camp there, but he wants to sleep in the capital and orders Arjuna to carry her; this he does until they are close to the city and sets her down (*Mbh.* 4.5.1-8).

In the following scene (*Mbh.* 4.5.9-29b) Yudhiṣṭhira asks Arjuna what they are to do with their weapons and Arjuna says that there is a *śamī* tree close to the cremation ground, a good place to hide them. He is the first one to unstring his famous Gāṇḍīva bow, followed by his brothers. The brothers lay down the other weapons and Nakula climbs up the tree and ties them there. They also string a corpse up in the tree, whose rotting stench discourages people from approaching; they tell the cowherds and shepherds that the corpse is their 120-year-old deceased mother and that they are merely obeying their family rites (*Mbh.* 4.5.27-28b).

3. The Pāṇḍavas Enter the City and Dwell There in Disguise

Yudhiṣṭhira gives himself, his brothers and wife secret names (Jaya, Jayanta, Vijaya, Jayat-sena, and Jayadbala), all related to victory, *jaya*, and perhaps to Durgā or other such gods as "Jayā", and go to the city (*Mbh.* 4.5.29c-30).

They appear one by one before the court and king and, after a conversation, are accepted (*Mbh.* 4.6-11). The order of this new series is Yudhiṣṭhira (*Mbh.* 4.6), Bhīma (*Mbh.* 4.7), Draupadī (*Mbh.* 4.8), Sahadeva (*Mbh.* 4.9) Arjuna (*Mbh.* 4.10) and Nakula (*Mbh.* 4.11). In the case of the first four brothers, V. chooses the same structure, even for the strange case of Arjuna introducing himself as a eunuch and offering himself as a song and dance master for Princess Uttarā. When they approach Virāṭa and his court, the king marvels at their magnificent appearance. The brothers introduce themselves with their new names and roles, claim that they once worked for King Yudhiṣṭhira and now offer their services to Virāṭa, who does not quite believe they are who they say they are, but accepts them gladly with generous and, even in some cases, extravagant promises. Nakula's presentation is somewhat different, as he comes when the king inspects his horses, but their conversation and its results are similar.

When Draupadī (*Mbh.* 4.8) appears on the scene, she enters the city and speaks with the men and women of the town, who, repeating Virāṭa's model with her husbands, do not believe her to be a handmaid; she then is seen from the palace by Queen Sudeṣṇā, alone and wrapped in but one single dirty garment, and the queen summons and questions her. Of course, the queen does not believe she is a handmaid either. Sudeṣṇā admiringly describes her beauty in detail and asks her whether she is a goddess, *gandharvī* or *apsarā* (two kinds of minor supernatural beings), which Draupadī denies and repeats that she is just a handmaid, a former servant of Kṛṣṇa's favourite wife and of Kṛṣṇā, one of Draupadī's own names, the Black One. Sudeṣṇā tells Draupadī that she is afraid of her beauty and thinks that her husband will abandon her; yet, Draupadī insists that the queen has nothing to fear as she is married to five *gandharvas* who protect her. Moreover, Draupadī states that her husbands would not let her eat leftovers or wash the feet of her masters. Consequently, she is accepted under those conditions. V., therefore, reinforces her special way of enduring this year of thraldom by depicting her as establishing conditions. This is only paralleled by Yudhiṣṭhira asking Virāṭa to respect the results of gambling if he wins (*Mbh.* 4.6.12).

In the first part of the following chapter (*Mbh.* 4.12.1-11), V. displays in a new series (Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Sahadeva, Nakula, Draupadī) a short general overview of the Pāṇḍavas' life during the following months, winning Virāṭa's favour and making money -at times in a rather dubious fashion. Yudhiṣṭhira, without Virāṭa's knowledge, distributes his earnings from playing dice to his brothers; Bhīma gives his earnings from selling dishes and meats taken from the royal kitchen to Yudhiṣṭhira; they all share their earnings: Arjuna his gains from selling worn clothes, Sahadeva his dairy products, Nakula the king's pay, while, finally, Draupadī looks after them all. All of them, V. states, take care of one another and of Draupadī.

V. begins to focus on Bhīma in the following section (*Mbh.* 4.12.12-28). This serves as a prelude to his murder of Kīcaka, the only one real adventure in the story before the battles that conclude it. In the fourth month of the brothers' stay at Virāṭa's court a Brahmā festival is held which includes a gathering of wrestlers for a contest. One of the wrestlers, a sizeably large man, challenges all the others and when nobody dares to confront him, the king orders Bhīma to fight. Bhīma swiftly picks up his opponent, whirls him around one hundred times and slams him to the ground. The delighted king has Bhīma fight the other wrestlers and he thus gains the king's highest favour. Later, Virāṭa has Bhīma fight different animals such as tigers and elephants, and even pits him against lions amid the women in the seraglio (*Mbh.* 4.12.27-28), an odd matter related *inter alia* to the ensuing scene depicting the complaints Draupadī makes in order to persuade Bhīma to kill General Kīcaka.

4. Kīcaka is Killed by Bhīma

The basic features of Kīcaka's murder are as follows (*Mbh.* 4.13-23): 4.1 Kīcaka's sexual harassment of Draupadī (*Mbh.* 4.13-15); 4.2 Draupadī's complaints to persuade Bhīma to kill him (*Mbh.* 4.16-20); 4.3 The plot to kill Kīcaka by setting up a nocturnal tryst with her in the dancehall when, in fact, it is a deadly meeting with Bhīma (*Mbh.* 4.21); 4.4 The attempted revenge by Kīcaka's relatives who capture Draupadī and mean to kill her but who are, predictably, thwarted by Bhīma (*Mbh.* 4.22); 4.5 Draupadī's return to the inner court where she and the queen agree on a thirteen-day delay before leaving (*Mbh.* 4.23).

4.1. Kīcaka's Sexual Harassment of Draupadī. To begin with, V. (*Mbh.* 4.13.1-2) depicts Draupadī as unhappy with her lot after ten months working as Queen Sudeṣṇā's servant -

an interesting contrast to how her husbands are depicted and a good prelude to the tragic situation she is about to endure.

4.1.1. General Kīcaka sees Draupadī in Sudeṣṇā's palace, lusts after her and asks his sister Sudeṣṇā about her (*Mbh.* 4.13.3-9).

4.1.2 Kīcaka talks to Draupadī and rejection. Kīcaka talks to Draupadī about his passion for her, praises her beauty and offers to make his wives and himself her slaves, but she rejects him and sternly warns him about her five *gandharva* husbands (*Mbh.* 4.13.10-21).

4.1.3 Kīcaka asks his sister Sudeṣṇā for help and she sends Draupadī to his palace. In the following scene (*Mbh.* 4.14) Kīcaka asks his sister for help and she finally suggests that he try to seduce Draupadī in his palace. Sudeṣṇā tells Kīcaka that on the upcoming holiday she will send Draupadī to his palace to fetch some liquor and while she is there he can attempt to seduce her. When the holiday comes, Sudeṣṇā sends Draupadī to Kīcaka's palace despite her protests and refusals to go. Fearful, Draupadī implores Surya, the Sun, for his protections and the God sends an invisible *rakṣāsa* to watch over her. Then Kīcaka and Draupadī meet once again.

4.1.4 Kīcaka tries to seduce Draupadī and she runs off to Virāṭa's sabhā; Draupadī in Sudeṣṇā's palace. The next scene (*Mbh.* 4.15) takes place in two settings, Kīcaka's palace and the *sabhā* of Virāṭa's palace. In his palace, Kīcaka tries to seduce Draupadī, but she turns him down, pushes him over to the floor and runs off to Virāṭa's *sabhā* (*Mbh.* 4.15.1-6). In a most obvious way, V. connects this second setting with the pivotal scene of her first humiliation in Hāstinapura's *sabhā* (*Mbh.* 2.60.19-39). When V. describes in Book 2 how Yudhiṣṭhira lost everything and, initially, even everybody, the main thrust of his narration focuses on the humiliations Draupadī suffers at the hands of their enemies, the Kauravas, including how she tries to run away, is seized by Duryodhana's brother Duḥśāsana, dragged by her hair back to the *sabhā*, and thrown to the ground -all while menstruating and dressed in but one garment. Here in Book 4, V. has Draupadī run to the *sabhā* while Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma and the courtiers are there attending King Virāṭa and playing dice. Kīcaka enters and, in front of them all, grabs Draupadī by the hair, throws her to the floor and kicks her, though the *rakṣāsa* immediately pushes him over and he falls down onto the floor motionless (*Mbh.* 4.15.7-9).

While Yudhiṣṭhira tries to restrain Bhīma's mounting anger, Draupadī, publically airs her

grievances, focusing her scorn on the fact that a *sūta*'s son -an inferior charioteer-, Kīcaka kicked her in front of everyone. She also levels criticism against her absent *gandharva* husbands, against Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma, who, she claims, despite possessing infinite strength bear the offence as eunuchs (*Mbh.* 4.15.21c: *yathā klībā*), and against Virāṭa and his court for not protecting her (*Mbh.* 4.15.15-26). In this context, the reference to them as eunuchs is not incidental. In fact, V. will have her repeat the word when, after the war, Yudhiṣṭhira is paralyzed by pain and she tells him that a eunuch cannot get anything and a *kṣatriya* without using violence is nothing (*Mbh.* 12.14.13-14). V. also connects her words here to the grievances she voices in Hāstinapura's *sabhā* (*Mbh.* 2.62.1-13 for instance).

Virāṭa finds an excuse for his inactivity, the courtiers praise her, and Yudhiṣṭhira, worried about being recognized, tells her in a somewhat surly tone to be obedient, to wait for the right moment, not to be disruptive while they are playing, to quit fluttering about like a dramatic actress, and to leave (*Mbh.* 4.15.27-34). V. has her leave, but not before she moans about her overly considerate husband and how anyone can kick someone whose master is a gambler, connecting once more the present situation with Hāstinapura's *sabhā* (*Mbh.* 4.15.35). She loosens her tresses (another reference to Hāstinapura's *sabhā*) and departs. She then goes to Sudeṣṇā's palace and tells her what has happened. The queen pledges that she will have her brother killed, if that is her wish, but Draupadī says that others will be killing him soon (*Mbh.* 4.15.36-41).

4.2 Draupadī's complaints to persuade Bhīma and preparations for Kīcaka's killing

4.2.1 Conversation

V. now has Draupadī planning Kīcaka's killing and meeting Bhīma at night in quite a manipulative way. For their conversation (*Mbh.* 4.16-4.21.6), which is practically a monologue, V. chooses to have Draupadī refer to the anguish she has suffered at the hands of Kīcaka and how, given her former status, she is overcome with sorrow at seeing her and her husband's present situation. She goes on to wonder aloud whether it is worth living while enduring such hardships.

Starting off with Yudhiṣṭhira's responsibility for their current plight (*Mbh.* 4.17), she recalls her first humiliation in Hāstinapura's *sabhā*. She then laments her second humiliation when, in Book 3, the Kauravas' brother-in-law, Jayadratha, kidnapped her in the forest (see *Mbh.* 3.248-56). It is no accident that in that story Bhīma had been the main protagonist and had

opposed to keep Jayadratha alive. After recounting these humiliations, she finally tells Bhīma about Kīcaka's harassment. Threatening suicide, she yet again complains (*Mbh.* 4.17.10-29) about Yudhiṣṭhira, who had gambled everything away.

The main theme, besides his guilt, is the contrast between his former status as a powerful king, so rich, splendid and generous, who had all the kings on earth under his power, who shone over and was obeyed by the whole earth, and his present condition, as Virāṭa's servant and gambler.

In the case of Bhīma (*Mbh.* 4.18.1-8), Draupadī refers to his fights against wild animals in the inner court and how painful it was for her to watch. Plus, she also had to put up with Sudeṣṇā's gossip and snide comments about her and Bhīma sleeping together. V. connects her references to Bhīma and the section dedicated to Arjuna by having her say that she can not bear to live.

For Draupadī's references to Arjuna (*Mbh.* 4.18.9-23), V. again chooses to contrast his former and present condition: the once glorious warrior is now the degradingly-garbed dance master for the king's daughter. A part of the text refers to the contrast between various parts of his body and the adornments he wore then and now. The sounds of palm-clapping and the firing of a bow among men before/ songs among women now, diadems/ tresses, weapons/earrings, thousands of kings thwarted by his military prowess/dancing master in disguise as a servant to young women, the earth shaking with the sound of his chariot, and the protection of his mother Kuntī then/golden jewellery and earrings and conch shell in hand now. She also refers to the present situation in which Arjuna has his hair tied up into one tress, and is surrounded by young girls, like a bull elephant, with his musical instruments around; her sorrow is mixed with jealousy. We shall return to the significant repetition of sounds in this dichotomous play of then and now.

V. shifts her focus onto Sahadeva and Nakula by way of a reference to the three older Pāṇḍava's mother, Kuntī, who does not know the sorry states of Arjuna and the foolish gambler Yudhiṣṭhira (*Mbh.* 4.18.23). For Sahadeva (*Mbh.* 4.18.24-30) V. contrasts his former condition as a master of warriors and his present condition as a cowherd seeking to garner Virāṭa's favor. Kuntī's high opinion of Sahadeva as well as her request of Draupadī to take care of him, even at night, once again contrasts with his present situation as a cowherd covered at night with calf hides. An interesting reference is also made to the fact that Sa-

hadeva has committed no wrongdoings, which may justify his present situation. Once again, V. links these references to Sahadeva to his brother, Nakula, by continuing to question the point of going on living. The virtuous Nakula (*Mbh.* 4.18.31-33), who is now a stableman, trains and tends to horses before onlookers and his master, Virāṭa.

After reiterating Yudhiṣṭhira's guilt, Draupadī describes her personal suffering, her feelings and her humiliation (*Mbh.* 4.19). Predictably, Draupadī contrasts her former status as a queen, a member of prominent families by both birth and marriage, her happiness and her servants then, and her sufferings in servitude as Sudeṣṇā's handmaid now -stressing yet again the problem of going on living while having to endure this unbearable condition.

V., however, chooses to use her 'monologue' to touch on subtler questions previously debated by different characters throughout the *Mbh.*, including her and Yudhiṣṭhira, one of which she alluded to while talking about Sahadeva.

The first concerns the role of fate and human action. She says that she awaits the time when the tables will turn. A reference to the need to take action to alter destiny indicates that she is more willing to intervene (*Mbh.* 4.19.8). The second has to do with whether she is to blame for all this -surely she must have offended the Creator/Founder (*dhātṛ*) as a child (*Mbh.* 4.19.13a-b: *nūnaṃ hi bālayā dhātur mayā vai vipriyaṃ kṛtam…*). Yet, an overt insinuation is also made to the fact that she does not deserve this wretchedness (*Mbh.* 4.19.19ab).

Her humiliation is the main theme. Draupadī laments her humiliation, servitude and subordination to other women. She is the servant to Virāṭa's queen, Sudeṣṇā, Draupadī's inferior. V. focuses her humiliation on the description of her dried up body (*Mbh.* 4.18.36c), of her pallor (*Mbh.* 4.19.14ab), and, above all, of her hands, now coarse and marred from grinding sandalwood (*Mbh.* 4.19.21-22). V. highlights her hands for dramatic inflection during her interaction with Bhīma. Draupadī shows them to Bhīma as she speaks, and he holds them and lays them on his face before answering her (*Mbh.* 4.19.22-23; 29-30). When Draupadī shows Bhīma her hands, she tells him that Virāṭa likes the way she grinds sandalwood but every time she is doing so, she worries whether it will please Virāṭa or not (*Mbh.* 4.19.24-25). She sighs once and again and talks about her unforgivable hypothetical-offence against the gods, relating it to the fact that she continues to live on instead of being dead (*Mbh.* 4.19.28).

It is at that moment when Bhīma, sobbing, takes her callused hands and answers her. Bhīma

curses his arms and Arjuna's bow because her once rosy hands are now callused, and laments for not having taking immediate revenge in Virāṭa's *sabhā* as well as regrets not having killed their offenders the Kaurava in Hāstinapura's *sabhā* (*Mbh.* 4.20.1-4d). At the same time, he asks her not to disobey the law and to stop criticizing Yudhiṣṭhira, because if he were to hear her he would kill himself, followed by his brothers, and Bhīma himself (*Mbh.* 4.20.4e-6). Now V. has Bhīma tell Draupadī not to desert *dharma* and points to various instances of women who bore long hardships at their husbands' sides and asks her to follow their example (*Mbh.* 4.20.7-13), emphasizing that she has but one and a half months left to endure. This links Book 4 to Book 3 again. Bhīma mentions stories told or referred to there: Sukanyā and the Bhārgava Cyavana (*Mbh.* 3.122-5), Indrasenā Nāḍāyanī and her elderly husband (Mugdala: *Mbh.* 3.113.24ab), Sītā and Rāma (*Mbh.* 3.258-75), and Lopāmudrā and Agastya (*Mbh.* 3.113.23b).

V. now presents Draupadī reorienting her arguments (*Mbh.* 4.20.14-33) towards *dharma*: she, a poised, disciplined woman, suffers an unbearable situation because Kīcaka, an unruly, out-of-control man, constantly harasses her. When Draupadī first arrived in the court, Queen Sudeṣṇā had feared that King Virāṭa preferred Draupadī to her (*Mbh.* 4.20.16-17). Draupadī states now that Sudeṣṇā suspects that she is more beautiful and always worries that Virāṭa will become infatuated with her; General Kīcaka knows it and this is one of the factors that permits him to constantly proposition Draupadī, the core of the story. Although she warns Kīcaka off, he loathes her *gandharva* husbands, ignores her admonitions and disregards *dharma*, while she and her husbands keep striving for *dharma*.

Now comes the final turn of the screw. As her husbands will fulfil neither the *dharma* of protecting their wife nor the warrior's *dharma* of killing their enemies, Draupadī will kill herself.

She ends her argument by recalling how Kīcaka had kicked her in plain sight of Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma and reminding Bhīma (*Mbh.* 4.20.30) that it was he who had saved her earlier from Jaṭāsurā and defeated Jayadratha with his brothers (two attacks she had suffered during their twelve-year exile, *Mbh.* 3.154 and 3.248-56), and that he must now kill her new offender. The last part of her monologue increases the pressure as she ends by telling him that if he does not kill Kīcaka the following day she would drink poison (*Mbh.* 4.20.33). When she clings to his chest and cries, he comforts her and is convinced at last.

The following lines are predictable. Bhīma agrees to kill Kīcaka and proposes an evening tryst in the dancehall where, in Draupadī's stead, he will be waiting for Kīcaka in a sturdy bedstead (*śayana*) (*Mbh.* 4.21.1-5). The episode of Kīcaka's killing begins (*Mbh.* 4.21).

4.2.2 A last conversation between her and Kīcaka and the tryst agreement

The following day at dawn Kīcaka talks to Draupadī and says that King Virāṭa did not rescue her because he is stronger than him -the real king, the Matsyas say- and tells her again that he will be her slave, give her pieces of gold, slaves and a chariot. She agrees to their tryst under conditions of secrecy, suggesting they meet by night in the dancehall (*Mbh.* 4.21.7-17). V. now plays with her elation and her impatience, as well as with Kīcaka's preening and infatuation juxtaposed to his real fate. A final, minor scene occurs with Bhīma and Draupadī wherein she insists that Kīcaka must be killed. Bhīma is so enraged that he wishes to kill Duryodhana too, at which point Draupadī is forced to bridle his fury and remind him that Kīcaka must be killed in secret (*Mbh.* 4.21.24-37).

4.3 Kīcaka's killing in the dancehall

We shall see the last scene of the fight (*Mbh.* 4.21.38-59) in detail later (Chapter 3, Sections 4.2-4.4) and, for more textual aspects, in Chapter 4, Section 2. It should suffice here to say that Bhīma waits there, and when the excited Kīcaka comes near in the dark and touches the person on the bedstead, the fight begins. They wrestle, the pavilion shakes, and Bhīma finally defeats him and stuffs Kīcaka's head and limbs inside his own torso. Then he shows that ball of flesh to Draupadī, speaks to her and disappears (*Mbh.* 4.21.60-62).

Draupadī feels gratified, calls the guards, tells them that her *gandharva* husbands have killed her offender and invites them to see him; the guards come with torches, see Kīcaka covered in blood, wonder about his head and limbs, and accept that her *gandharva* husbands did it (*Mbh.* 4.21.63-7).

4.4 The attempted revenge by Kīcaka's relatives on Draupadī, and their killing by *Bhīma*

Though the development of the narrative pivots on Kīcaka's murder, there are two final episodes directly related to it. The first one is the attempted revenge by Kīcaka's relatives on Draupadī, who capture her and, as a result, provoke a new intervention by Bhīma to save her from imminent death (*Mbh.* 4.22).

I have already referred to several odd traits contained in this Book. It is surprising that one of the strangest, taking place now, has not been studied to the same extent as the depiction

of Arjuna's transvestism, or of such exalted *kṣatriyas* as the Pāṇḍavas handling corpses.
Draupadī, needless to say, is a very intelligent character, in this Book as in the entirety of the
Mbh., overflowing with feelings of anger and injured dignity, and moderately unrestrained,
yes, but as manipulative as she is intelligent. References to guilt, fate and the role of deeds
we have already seen, should be convincing evidence in and of themselves, although ad-
ditional reinforcement can be found by noting how V. refers again to his previous Books
and in a particular to the first -and lengthy- conversation between Draupadī and Yudhiṣṭhira
after their banishment (*Mbh.* 3.28-33), whose importance has been, again, highlighted by
Hiltebeitel (for example in 2011a, 268-70; 2011, 516-26). In the midst of the well known
dichotomy "there was a time/now" and open criticism to his gambling and dishonest defeat,
V. describes Draupadī subtlety musing on destiny, fate and human action and asking him
to crush their enemies and offenders over and above any other consideration. It is easy to
understand why Bhīma is the only brother who V. presents arguing for the same thing (*Mbh.*
3.34-37).

That wise Draupadī, just a few lines before recalled in her conversation with Bhīma, becomes
now what I would call a "stupid Draupadī". Kīcaka's kinsmen see the mangled corpse and,
with their hair on end, stunned and weeping, carry it to perform his funerary rites. And she
is standing right in the way, in the worst possible place, just by a pillar or column (*Mbh.*
4.22.4d: *stambham āliṅgya tiṣṭhatīm*). And she lingers a very long time indeed: Kīcaka's
kinsmen have time enough to decide to burn her with Kīcaka, ask for permission from Virāṭa,
and then to come back and find her still there.

Then they grab, tie up, and carry that odd Draupadī to the cremation ground, but she calls
out to her *gandharva* husbands, using the second series of the brother's new names, Jaya,
Jayanta, Vijaya, Jayatsena, and Jayadbala, Bhīma hears her call, jumps out of bed, hurries
over, tearing up a ten-measure long tree and arrives at the cremation ground toppling trees
as he goes.

There is no struggle, for they are shaking with fear and quickly unbind her and flee to the
city. Then Bhīma kills one hundred and five of them, a number which V. repeats two more
times (*Mbh.* 4.22.25c; 28a; 29b), and even alludes to twice more immediately after, when,
first, he says that they were in all one hundred and six including the general, and, second,
when men and women -certainly less accurate than the all-seeing poet who invents them-

witness it and tell the king that more than one hundred *sūtas* had been killed by *gandharvas* (*Mbh.* 4.22.29d; 4.23.1d).

4.5 General fears over Draupadī and her triumphal return to the inner court

The final part, Draupadī's return to the city and palace, is presided over by the general fear she stirs up among the residents. When she first arrived in the city going around as if in trouble, she piqued the inhabitant's curiosity (*Mbh.* 4.8.3-5) but now they stand in awe at all the shattered bodies and have not a word to say (*Mbh.* 4.22.30). Past curiosity gives way to present fears. They tell the king of the impending danger: she is returning to his palace and, given that she is beautiful, her *gandharva* husbands powerful, and men like copulation, her presence is a threat to the very existence of the city (*Mbh.* 4.23.1-5).

Virāṭa orders the cremation of the Kīcakas and avoids speaking directly to Draupadī out of fear of her *gandharva* husbands, asking his wife to do so instead. Note the deepening inversion -in fact an inversion in power relationships-: the king who did not answer her plea in his *sabhā* does not even dare speak to her or tell her to leave.

V. then describes Draupadī washing her limbs and garments in a way which once again connects the present situation to Kīcaka's harassment and the event in the *sabhā*, for when V. recounts her return home after that humiliation, he describes, with the exact same words, the way she washes her limbs and garments (*Mbh.* 4.16.2cd and 4.23.12cd: *gātrāṇi vāsasī caiva prakṣālya salilena sā*). At the same time, V. plays with the dirty robe she had worn by arriving to the palace, without forgetting other aspects such as filthiness and the indirect reference to her humiliation in Hāstinapura's *sabhā*. When men see her now, they do not speak to her, rather they flee in all directions, or even shut their eyes (*Mbh.* 4.23.13), a clear contrast to her entrance into the city.

Two encounters in the palace with two of her husbands show how V. defines Draupadī's feelings. The first, with Bhīma by the kitchen door, reveals her -and his- satisfaction (*Mbh.* 4.23.14-16). The second (*Mbh.* 4.23.20-23) takes place when she passes by the dance-hall and Arjuna and the king's daughters come out, hail her, and comment on the welcome killing of the Kīcakas (*Mbh.* 4.23.17-19). When Arjuna asks about their demise she answers sneeringly by saying that she didn't believe that Arjuna, living such a comfortable life, was sincerely interested in the miseries of a handmaid. He/she retorts by saying that she cannot fathom his/her misery, reduced, as he/she is, to be (re)born as an animal, born from

an animal [13].

Her triumphant entrance with the young women in the court gives way to a final conversation with the queen, who asks her to leave in the name of the king and praises her youth and beauty. But Draupadī has, literally, the last word: she asks for a thirteen day delay before leaving (*Mbh.* 4.23.24-28). V. does not think it necessary to invent any answer from the queen. V.'s artistry and sophistication are clear in this scene. Note how V. remarks again upon the then/now contrast with the oppositions between Draupadī's previous arrival in the city and palace alone/ surrounded by the damsels, meeting Sudeṣṇā after being summoned by her/ by her own will, Sudeṣṇā doubting whether accepting or not a servant, a potentially dangerous servant, and conceding it/ her informing Sudeṣṇā, in fact the king, of her stay for thirteen more days (precisely the number of their years of exile) before leaving.

The consequences of her intrigues emerge immediately afterwards. Obviously, the main problem is that only ten months have passed and, theoretically, they could be discovered by the Kauravas and thus be forced to repeat their thirteen-year exile. This matter, and another more immediate one, are explored by V. in the following section, the cattle raids.

5. Arjuna Defeats the Kaurava Cattle Thieves and the Pāṇḍavas Free Virāṭa's Herds

Right at the beginning of the section dedicated to the cattle raid (*Mbh.* 4.24-62), the people of Virāṭa's kingdom are found gossiping about General Kīcaka's death as well as his penchant to bully men and sexually harass women (*Mbh.* 4.24.1-4). We have seen more ambiguities in the text regarding the General's position in the kingdom. Nevertheless, his status as a courageous General is stated, thus pointing to the second danger related to his death, namely: the weakening of the country.

The events in the Court of Hāstinapura now come back into play (*Mbh.* 4.24-29). Spies sent to track the Pāṇḍavas inform the Court that they have failed to find them; however, they report on the events in Virāṭa's kingdom surrounding Kīcaka's death at the hands of

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[13]*Tiryagyonigatā*: *Mbh.* 4.23.23c. In M.N. Dutt's translation, vol. 3, p. 66, *Mbh.* 4.24.26 "she has been born in the species of brutes"; K. Garbutt, pp. 186-7, *Mbh.* 4.24.25 "she has become a beast". While Van Buitenen's translation, "reduced to bestiality", misses the point, though not so in another previous translation, *Mbh.* 3.146.75cd: While speaking to Bhīma, Hanumān defines himself and other animals in contrast to human beings, *vayaṃ dharmaṃ na jānīmas tiryagyoniṃ samāśritāḥ*: "We who come from animal wombs do not know the Law". In *Mbh.* 3.178.9 a boa, an ancestor of the heroes, instructs Yudhiṣṭhira on the three possibilities after death: to be reborn as a human, as an animal, or attain Heaven: *mānuṣyaṃ svargavāsaś ca tiryagyoniś ca tat tridhā*.

gandharvas. The debate over the Pāṇḍavas' whereabouts soon gives way to the situation in Virāṭa's kingdom. V. now introduces a king who happens to visit Duryodhana, Suśarman, king of the Trigartas. Suśarman is a neighbour and enemy of Virāṭa and Kīcaka, and he suggests mounting a double invasion. Duryodhana, following the advice of the counsellor and king's friend Karṇa, accepts the proposal. Karṇa then chooses the target of the incursions, a cattle-raiding expedition, and prepares a two-pronged invasion staged over two successive days.

V., therefore, constructs a dual attack, the first mounted by Suśarman (*Mbh.* 4.30-32) and the second by the Kauravas (*Mbh.* 4.33-62). One of the clues to understanding V.'s invention here is that he reserves the narration of the second attack, which is much longer and given far more weight, for Arjuna. Let us not forget that in Book 4 Arjuna is depicted as suffering a double subordination/humiliation. He has gone from being a member of a royal family, a proud *kṣatriya*, to be an emasculated servant, indeed a eunuch under the thumb of a woman. Just as V. has begun to reconstruct Draupadī by depicting her as exultant, acclaimed by the women of the court, feared by everyone, including the king and queen, refusing to ask for their acceptance and, instead, telling them when she wants to leave, the reconstruction of the brothers begins with their roles as warriors. It is easy to understand that their exaltation is depicted in tandem with the disgrace not only of their enemies, but also of their masters -their faux superiors.

To begin with, V. notes through Vaiśampāyana's words that the thirteen year period had expired when the first offensive takes place (*Mbh.* 4.30.1-3). This will be reinforced later by the conclusive words of "grandfather" Bhīṣma, the venerable authoritative figure of the Kaurava's court, directed in particular against Duryodhana's words and hopes (*Mbh.* 4.47.1-6).

The sequence of the first onslaught is straightforward: it begins, the cattle are taken, the herdsmen inform the king in the court, the Matsyas prepare their army and counterattack. After the description of the Matsyas army, their splendid armour, chariots and standards all richly bedecked with gold, Virāṭa orders that cuirasses and other weapons -described in far more modest terms- be given to the disguised Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Nakula and Sahadeva. They all depart and meet the enemy in the evening. The battle which ensues is split into two parts; as darkness falls the armies withdraw and wait for the moon to rise high enough to

allow them to see and reengage. The four Pāṇḍavas do not participate in the first part of the battle; however, they engage when they see that Suśarman and his younger brother not only defeat Virāṭa but also take him captive (*Mbh.* 4.32).

It is interesting to see that V. describes Virāṭa in this predicament as being visibly shaken as Suśarman places him on his chariot like a crying new bride (*Mbh.* 4.32.9). In the middle of the process of the Pāṇḍavas' reconstruction, which basically deals with the recovery of their superior status in relation to their temporary master, it is not difficult to understand Virāṭa's feminization (mirroring that of Arjuna's) and subsequent rescue as part of V.'s play with these matters. Their "master" is now feminized before being saved by them and before they complete the process of restoration. Gender and hierarchy go hand in hand again, and V.'s move prepares the double reconstruction of Arjuna in those terms.

Yudhiṣṭhira observes King Virāṭa's predicament and the Matsyas' retreat, and, as a result, asks Bhīma to intervene. Note that for his previous intervention liberating Draupadī from the Kīcakas, Bhīma had used a large tree, and that now he proposes to uproot another tree and do all the work himself. However, Yudhiṣṭhira recommends more ordinary human weapons to prevent his being recognized, and they all attack. In the heat of the Pāṇḍavas' terrible attack Virāṭa frees himself and attacks Suśarman, who is captured by Bhīma (*Mbh.* 4.32.11-34).

With the enemy defeated, V. describes the cattle being retaken and Virāṭa's effusive gratitude and promises of reward, even offering the kingdom to the "Brahman" Yudhiṣṭhira. Naturally, Yudhiṣṭhira does not accept, and suggests the king proclaim his victory in the city (*Mbh.* 4.32.36-50).

V. has laid the groundwork for the second battle, the Kauravas' offensive and Arjuna's return to glory (*Mbh.* 4.33-62). The idea of this double onslaught over two successive days is designed to present the desperate situation of a kingdom invaded by a new enemy without an army to defend it, as all its warriors are far away repelling the previous day's invasion. Furthermore, this second wave is much more powerful than the first.

The process begins in a similar manner: a surprise attack, the cattle raid, and the head herdsman arriving in the city and palace to bring the news. The outcome is similar too: Arjuna defeats the invading army, recovers the cattle, and tells the prince to send envoys to the city announcing "his" victory (*Mbh.* 4.62.10). However, for the greater glorification of

Arjuna, the story is very different.

The first part of the story tells how, after the news of the incursion, Prince Uttara brags amid the women that he would defeat the Kauravas if he could only get a good charioteer. Finally, after certain manipulation by Draupadī, Uttarā asks Arjuna to be the charioteer of his brother. Thus, Uttara leaves with Arjuna on the reins. Upon approaching the enemy combatants, however, Uttara grows so frightened that he jumps from the chariot and flees only to be grabbed by the hair and dragged back by Arjuna (*Mbh.* 4.36.7-47).

It is time for V. to close a previous scene with some important implements related to the real, previous, personas of the heroes -time to return to the tree where their weapons and true identities are hidden. V. has Arjuna, not his brothers, going to the *śamī* tree and making Uttara climb up and retrieve their weapons (*Mbh.* 4.38). It is the best moment to show the prince inquiring about the wondrous glittering weapons he sees, and for depicting Arjuna answering with a description of them as the weapons of the Pāṇḍavas, putting particular emphasis on Arjuna's bow, Gāṇḍīva.

Uttara's question on where the Pāṇḍavas are now leads naturally to the disclosure of his, his brothers and Draupadī's identities (*Mbh.* 4.39). It is also time for re-owning their feats and names. To reinforce Arjuna's reconstruction, V. has the prince asking for proof of his identity, to speak his ten names, which Arjuna explains by referring to the great deeds and extraordinary traits associated with them. It is at this point when V. leaves aside the formula "Bṛhannaḍā told" and begins to use the formula "Arjuna told" (*Mbh.* 4.38.36 *Bṛhannaḍovāca*/ 4.39.5 *Arjuna uvāca*).

Weapons, names and feats come together and serve as the prologue to Uttara formally introducing himself and asking for his forgiveness (*Mbh.* 4.39.21-23). It is also the turning point of their power relationship as Uttara now becomes Arjuna's charioteer. To finish this sub-scene, V. underscores its previous colours by once more contrasting both characters: Uttara brags again for a while only to be frightened by the sound of Arjuna's conch and to be reassured by Arjuna. With this sound and the sound of his bow the enemies know for sure that it is Arjuna who approaches. Now V. describes their discussions and battle array (*Mbh*. 4.42-7).

The second part of the story depicts Arjuna's victory over the Kauravas. Though the ensuing battle foreshadows the Books which deal with the impending war (Books 6-10) in Kurukṣe-

tra, there are also meaningful differences. The main common components are: 1) The cruel massacre of enemies, horses and elephants along with connecting this cruel slaughter to a change of era (*Mbh.* 4.57.17-18); 2) extraordinary feats and extraordinary human and divine weapons; 3) incredible resistance to injury by the primary combatants; 4) the divisions of the Kaurava side between old warriors and counsellors; 5) the presence of the gods and other denizens of the heavens applauding the best moves from above (see *Mbh.* 4.51 in particular); 6) the highest level of courtesy and respect shown by Arjuna to his master-at-arms and his elders.

However, V. plays with the contrast between this particular battle and Kurukṣetra. A minor difference is that the key to this particular battle is the overwhelming prominence of the matter concerning the cattle. Moreover, no important Kaurava is killed, though thousands of minor combatants perish. The main difference is that Arjuna, helped only by a single charioteer, defeats the whole Kaurava army, whereas in Kurukṣetra he cannot even take down Bhīṣma, let alone the whole army.

After being kept in check for thirteen years, V. now presents Arjuna in terms of his fearsome, merciless, Śiva-like self-flowering, burning his enemies[14]and dancing with his bow among the corpses (*Mbh.* 4.57.9). The once feminized dance teacher is a very different dancer now. V. is restoring Arjuna to heroic glory and maleness. Accordingly it is understandable that before the battle V. presents Arjuna lying to Uttara about two improper facts we already know. First, Arjuna swears that he has never been a eunuch (*Mbh.* 4.40.12-13), although his condition as one had been obviously tested before he was accepted into the palace (*Mbh.* 4.10.11), then he tells Prince Uttara that there is no corpse tied up in the tree he has to climb (*Mbh.* 4.38.9-13).

It is interesting to note that corpses and sexual ambiguity relate Arjuna, once again, to Śiva (see Hiltebeitel in Appendix 1) while lying relates him to Kṛṣṇa, who frequently dissembles in order to move everything towards massacre. Associating Arjuna with attributes shared by these two gods may contribute to restoring his image

Gender questions and Draupadī are overwhelmingly palpable, and through them V. connects

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[14]*Mbh.* 4.57.14: *darśayitvā tathātmānaṃ raudraṃ rudraparākramaḥ avaruddhaś caran pārtho daśavarṣāṇi trīṇi ca krodhāgnim utsṛjad ghoraṃ dhārtarāṣṭreṣu pāṇḍavaḥ.*

the end of the battle with its beginning. When (*Mbh.* 4.34) V. depicts Uttara bragging amid the women saying that he can defeat the Kauravas if he gets a good charioteer, he has him compare himself to Arjuna. Draupadī resents such a comparison and suggests that he take Bṛhannaḍā-Arjuna as his charioteer, praising his work as Arjuna's former charioteer. Draupadī advises Uttara to ask his sister to persuade him. Uttarā (*Mbh.* 4.35) tells Arjuna-Bṛhannaḍā the whole story, including Draupadī's intervention, and V. highlights this parallel connection in two ways: he presents Arjuna in the dancehall (just as Bhīma and Draupadī in Kīcaka's killing), and Uttarā not only convinces Arjuna to join the fight, just as Draupadī persuaded Bhīma, but she tells him that if he refuses she would give up her own life, i.e., she repeats Draupadī's main persuasive argument. It may be important too that Arjuna dons his armour the wrong way, as if he did not know how to correctly put it on, and that Uttara has to help him -a fact that perhaps alludes to the future: Uttara now serves Arjuna (*Mbh.* 4.35.17-19). More surprising is the fact that Uttarā asks Bṛhannaḍā Arjuna to bring back garments for their dolls after defeating the Kauravas, and he does it (*Mbh.* 4.35.22-25). I have already mentioned how odd this is in the *Mbh.* and, more broadly, in Indian terms, which we will revisit this later.

It is easy to understand that Arjuna answers laughingly, "in tones of thunder or kettledrum" (Van Buitenen trans., *Mbh.* 4.35.24d *meghadundubhiniḥsvanaḥ*), a prelude to regaining his manliness. It is interesting to see that when the five brothers are born (*Mbh.* 1.114) all of them are welcomed by a disembodied voice announcing their great deeds to come; however, Arjuna's birth is not just celebrated by such voices, but also greeted by the clamour of Gods, seers and other denizens of the Heavens with roaring, the beating of kettledrums (*dundubhīnāṃ… svanaḥ*, *Mbh.* 1.114.38cd) and other such marvels. The restoration, re-birth, of the hero seems to be indicated by sounds and voices which echo his glorious birth. Thus, the poet reinforces all this with the change of music that thunders over the battlefield, no longer the music of that eunuch teacher of maidens, no longer the eunuch's effeminate voice. A whole musical reconstruction of the hero takes place. He is no longer the one who teaches in the dancehall when Uttarā meets him and calls him to the fight. Arjuna boasts that his chariot will be a fortress and the sound of its tires kettledrums (*Mbh.* 4.40.5-6; see 4.40.6b: *nemīninadadundubhi*). When he is about to attack, he exchanges bracelets for leather wrist guards that resound, again, as kettledrums (*Mbh.* 4.40.23c *dundubhisaṃnāde*).

When he strings Gāṇḍīva and draws it, it produces a sound as of rock hitting rock (*Mbh.* 4.40.25cd), that shakes the earth, among other impressive effects, and is "like the crackle of lightning" (Van Buitenen trans., 4.40.27b) which lets the Kaurava army know that it is indeed Arjuna who approaches.

His first ride out into battle is dominated by the sound of his big conch shell (*śaṅkha*),, the famous, with a no less terrible impact (*Mbh.* 4.41.7). A second blast accompanied by his bow's twang and the noise of his chariot wheels (*Mbh.* 4.41.18) makes his identity clear. It is easy to understand that the end of the battle comes about when he blows his conch and all of his enemies, save Bhīṣma, are rendered unconscious (*Mbh.* 4.61.10-11). His farewell to his enemies at their departure is also remarkable (*Mbh.* 4.61.27c-28b): V. writes that after greeting his elders and filling the air with the sound of Gāṇḍīva's twang, he blew his conch Devadatta, the first time that the name of his conch shell is mentioned.

This ostinato evokes references to his situation before and after the battle, projected into sounds, music, and even dance. Let us remember how V. presents him now dancing with his bow amid the corpses like a merciless Śiva-esque figure. We have already seen their concentration in Draupadī's words to Bhīma, including the contrast between the sound of hands clapping and the sound of a bow and songs, and between her words on his/her conch in hand (*Mbh.* 4.18.19c *kambu*) as a eunuch and the defeat of his enemies with his war conch (*śaṅkha*)[15].

In this context, the female -and gender- circle closes again: when the sound of his war conch renders his enemies unconscious, Arjuna orders Uttara to fetch his five major enemies' robes (*Mbh.* 4.61.10-15) for the young women of the court, as requested. Arjuna, who as a servant used to sell second-hand clothing from the court, brings back garments as spoils of war for them after defeating the Kauravas. The musician who once played to please the young ladies of the court, now uses music to defeat his enemies. At the same time, the hero who wore, and still wears, female attire, takes away the male garments of his defeated enemies, five, perhaps recalling the number of the five brothers, for the dolls of the princess and her friends.

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[15]Note that *kambu*, conch, is also used for describing Draupadī's neck in the words of the Queen when they meet (*Mbh.* 4.8.12c); Arjuna appears in the court wearing conches, *kambu* (*Mbh.* 4.10.1d), an adornment repeated in the king's words while describing him (*Mbh.* 4.10.5c); and in the words of Kīcaka to Draupadī as part of his offers (*Mbh.* 4.15.2a).

Music, dance and garments are essential components of the story.

6. Virāṭa Gives Arjuna His Daughter for His Son, Abhimanyu

This last section is dominated by the public restoration of their names and identities, and culminates when their former master Virāṭa acknowledges the true status of his former eunuch and servant Arjuna and considers him to be his equal, if not superior, and, importantly, male. In Virāṭa's mind, therefore, Arjuna is the perfect candidate for his daughter's hand in marriage.

V. develops the story in three scenes, with a common setting, the palace. The first two are set in the *sabhā*.

6.1 Two scenes in the same sabhā In the first scene the main protagonists are Yudhiṣṭhira and Virāṭa after coming back from their battle (*Mbh.* 4.63-64). In a new demonstration of V.'s interest in contrasting hierarchies, he now focuses the story on a conflict between the two kings, reinforcing the structural conflict between them (the superior one is temporarily subordinated to the inferior) via Virāṭa's inappropriate lack of control.

Yudhiṣṭhira, Virāṭa and the army return to the city, and it is only when Virāṭa is seated on his throne, that he asks after his son -oddly enough, nobody had informed him before. It is now when he learns of his son's expedition, and readies his army to go to his aid. Just as Uttara had compared himself to Arjuna, and Draupadī had resented it, Virāṭa expresses his doubts about that fight because his son has a eunuch as his charioteer, and Yudhiṣṭhira tells him that Uttara cannot be defeated with Bṛhannaḍā (Arjuna) at the reins (*Mbh.* 4.63.14-16). The good news brings joy and excitement to the king, who orders a grand reception and asks Yudhiṣṭhira to play dice. Though Yudhiṣṭhira tries to warn him off, even recalling his own case, Virāṭa will not be dissuaded and the game begins.

At the same time, V. presents him openly defying Virāṭa when he praises his son and Yudhiṣṭhira repeats his remarks about Bṛhannaḍā, against the king's warnings. This stands as the perfect example of the improper behaviour their family priest, the Brahman Dhaumya, counsels Yudhiṣṭhira against before his departure to live in Virāṭa's court (*Mbh.* 4.4). Nevertheless, when the irate king throws a die at Yudhiṣṭhira and makes him bleed, he reacts calmly, thus preventing two potential disasters for Virāṭa. The first is that if his blood falls on the ground, King Virāṭa and his kingdom would perish. He prevents this by catching

the blood in his hand while Draupadī quickly catches it in a golden vessel. The fact that his blood would destroy a kingdom refers to his royal and even imperial, quasi divine status, in an inverted reference to the words of grandfather Bhīṣma, that wherever Yudhiṣṭhira dwells, prosperity, good harvests, *dharma*, positive emotions, and fruitful social relationships prevail (*Mbh.* 4.27). It is, therefore, easy to understand that the spilt blood of such a king would curse the land where he lives rather than bless it.

The events in the *sabhās* of Hāstinapura and Virāṭa are connected through the repeated motifs of blood and gambling. In Hāstinapura, after Yudhiṣṭhira foolishly gambles away his kingdom, his family and himself, Draupadī is forcibly brought into the *sabhā* while menstruating. In Virāṭa's *sabhā,* Yudhiṣṭhira is left bleeding, following Virāṭa's gambling fever, but through his new-found self-awareness and poise, he prevents the destruction of Virāṭa's kingdom.

A fresh incident occurs when Uttara and Arjuna get back and are about to be received (*Mbh.* 4.63.48ff.): since Arjuna had sworn to kill anybody who hurts or makes Yudhiṣṭhira bleed in times of peace, Yudhiṣṭhira secretly tells the steward to usher in only the prince. Delaying his brother Arjuna's entrance, Yudhiṣṭhira saves a king driven mad by gambling and, by extension, his kingdom. When Uttara enters and realizes what is going on, he implores his father to ask for Yudhiṣṭhira's forgiveness, which Virāṭa immediately does (*Mbh.* 4.64.1-9). Additionally, there is another allusion to Hāstinapura's *sabhā.* Yudhiṣṭhira had sent secret instructions to Draupadī, stained with her menstrual blood. Now he is not telling her to enter the hall -to be abused, but also finally to save them from a whole destruction-, but secretly telling the steward the way to prevent the massacre of the king and his courtesans.

The conflict between Yudhiṣṭhira and Virāṭa makes it clear who possesses royal virtues and who lacks control and even, out of cruelty, hurts a "Brahman". A king must listen to opinions which differ from his own, just as Yudhiṣṭhira has been doing for thirteen years with Draupadī and Bhīma.

When V. describes Yudhiṣṭhira's tactfulness, he refers to the growing hierarchical repositioning of this king of kings: he is becoming the real master. When his later self-control vividly contrasts with Virāṭa's, V. stresses the shortcomings of a king already previously defined as less powerful than Kīcaka, "the true king", whose abuses against Draupadī in the *sabhā* he did not oppose, nor his relatives' attempt to kill her.

Thus, Yudhiṣṭhira triumphs over the king of the Matsyas, whose improper behaviour and lack of control not just endangers himself, but his kingdom and subjects. In a sense, Yudhiṣṭhira has successfully expiated the sins he committed as the reckless gambler in the sabhā of Hāstinapura.

It is time for Arjuna again. After Yudhiṣṭhira's bleeding stopped, Arjuna enters and Uttara tells his father *(Mbh. 4.64.19-29)* that the real victor of the battle had been the son of a god who has since disappeared. Nevertheless, in accordance with Uttara and Arjuna's plan, he goes on to say that the real victor will soon re-appear. Arjuna then busies himself with presenting the robes to Uttarā while the scene for the revelation of their true identities is announced.

The second scene (*Mbh.* 4.65-66) continues in the same setting, the *sabhā*, and is directly connected with the previous scene via one meaningful object, the throne. As one will recall, at the beginning of the previous scene we find Virāṭa seated upon his throne. Three days later the five brothers, magnificently attired and bedecked with all their accoutrements, enter and sit themselves down upon royal thrones (*bhūmipālāsana*, *Mbh.* 4.65.3b; see 6c *rājāsana*). When Virāṭa enters he is struck dumbfounded and demands to know what Yudhiṣṭhira, his presumed dice master, is doing.

V. again chooses Arjuna to preside over this scene by having him pronounce his brother's true name and proclaim his glory. The subsequent series of questions and answers (*Mbh.* 4.66) reveals the identities of Bhīma, Nakula, Sahadeva, Draupadī and Arjuna. Arjuna's words conclude with a metaphor comparing their stay in the court to unborn children in the womb (*Mbh.* 4.66.10d: *garbhavāsa iva prajāḥ*). It is not hard to understand why this metaphor is so apt. After this final year of exile in Virāṭa's court they final reassume their true identities, in a sense, they are re-born.

6.2 The wedding Five main ideas could help to summarize the wedding. First, Virāṭa offers his daughter Uttarā to Arjuna who accepts, but on behalf of his son, Abhimanyu, so as forestall gossip, and Virāṭa agrees (*Mbh.* 4.66.15-17; 4.66.27-29; 4.67). Second, the wedding becomes a covenant between the two houses. Third, relatives, servants, friends and allies, including Kṛṣṇa, are invited to join the feast and arrive with their armies, foreshadowing the upcoming war. Fourth, the glorious wedding takes place. And, fifth, the reconstruction of Draupadī's character is finalized.

V. remarks that Draupadī stands above all the other women present, who honour her (*Mbh.* 4.67.30), at the sumptuous wedding. It may be of interest that she is called by her ominous name of Kṛṣṇā, the "black one", and the other "black one", Kṛṣṇa who, throughout the work, tends to the culminating massacre of the *Mbh.* is also there. Riches and beauty define her now, in contrast once again to her arrival in the city.

While the music -conch shells, kettledrums, trumpets and war drums (*Mbh.* 4.67.26ab: *śaṅkhāś ca bheryaś ca gomukhāḍambarās*)- announces the wedding feast, it also heralds the assembly of the future army's commanders, described in the following Book as an authentic war council, where all the kings, seated on thrones, listen intently to the words of the first speaker, Kṛṣṇa.

7. Two Non Canonical Texts

Finally, two texts not included in the Critical Edition deserve some attention here (*Mbh.* 4.6, Vulgate). The first is placed between the concealing of their weapons in the tree and their arrival in Virāṭa's city. Yudhiṣṭhira praises the Goddess Durgā, as Kṛṣṇa's relative, saviour and last refuge of men in trouble, and asks her for victory and a boon[16]. The Goddess appears, announces their future victory and grants that they will not be recognized.

The second is an explanation of why Arjuna becomes a eunuch. In Book 3 (Vulgate 3.46). Arjuna goes to his father Indra's heaven to learn how to use supernatural weapons. Indra suggests to Urvaśī, a wonderful Apsarā, that she seduce Arjuna. However, he rejects her advances out of respect -she is the ancestor of several human royal families-, and she takes offence, curses him, and he will become a eunuch and a dancer among women. His father Indra limits this curse to this year spent in disguise: he will be a eunuch but only one year and during his stay in Virāṭa's palace. The critical Edition does not explain in any way Arjuna's shameful situation. We shall briefly revisit both stories later on.

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[16]Note the connection with their secret names: *Mbh.* 4.6.16: *tvaṃ vijayā caiva saṃgrāme ca jayapradā mamāpi vijayaṃ dehi varadā tvaṃ ca sāṃpratam* : "You are victory, the prize of victory, and the provider of victory in the war. Grant me victory and a boon suitable for the present circumstances", K. Garbuth trans., pp. 60-1; K. M. Ganguli: " You are Jaya and Vijaya, and it is you that give victory in battle. Grant me victory, O Goddess, and give me boons also at this hour of distress".

8. Some Final Notes on Book 4

I hope this brief summary makes it clear that Book 4 is a well-constructed text, full of finesse and artistry and that it is a pivotal Book, composed to lead to the ensuing war and massacre after the first part of the *Mbh.* As such, it refers, in its peculiar tragicomic manner, to very different, earlier components related to the heroic past of the protagonists, to their fall and humiliation in Hāstinapura's *sabhā,* to their sufferings and adventures during their stay in the wilderness, to their contrasting positions whether to respect the twelve-plus-one-year period of exile or not, and also to the future.

Everything points to the sophistication of V.'s creative processes, and how he links this Book with other parts of his work. It is not an isolated piece of literature in the middle of a chaotic mess. Many components of previous, and later, Books were created or adapted to be affixed here and coalesce in quite a harmonious way. For instance, V. prepares Yudhiṣṭhira's work as the dice master of the king by having him receive the secret of dice from a great *ṛṣi* (*Mbh.* 3.78.14-17). And prepares Arjuna's role as eunuch with the story of the Apsarā Urvaśī (in the Vulgate edition), and as master of music and dance by making his father Indra suggest that he take lessons from the *gandharva* Citrasena during his five years in Indra's Heaven (*Mbh.* 3.45.6-8).

Virāṭa's story results in the marriage of Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu, to Virāṭa's daughter Uttarā. Their son Parikṣit, who is to die in his mother's womb as the result of a curse only to be resurrected by Kṛṣṇa immediately after the end of the great war, is the only survivor and heir to throne of the Kuru's dynasty. As indicated above, King Janamejaya is the son of Parikṣit. Vaiśampāyana recites the *Mbh.* to Janamejaya during a sacrificial ritual to avenge his father's killing by a snake. Without Uttarā and Abhimanyu there is no future for the Kurus and no *Mbh.* At the same time, the result of Jayadratha's story in Book 3 is that he will get a boon which will result in the death of Abhimanyu during the war, a necessary step for concentrating that future on the yet unborn Parikṣit and on Kṛṣṇa saving him from the curse.

It is not for nothing that Draupadī seems to be all around in V.'s narrative, given that Draupadī had been born for the destruction of this generation of warriors and kings. Probably one of the reasons why V. decides to marry her to the five Pāṇḍava heroes is to centre the whole dramatic tension on her, which is, in any case, the main result of his decision. The

repetition of offences committed against her together with her anger and desire for imme-
diate retaliation are an essential part of his play. After imagining Bhīma and Draupadī
grudgingly accepting Yudhiṣṭhira's orders to control their desires for vengeance in previous
scenes of harassment, Book 4 presents Draupadī persuading Bhīma by referring to their
past frustrations. The then/now model is at play throughout the whole text, though its more
explicit formulation is specifically stated in her words to Bhīma. With the story of Kīcaka,
V. once again juxtaposes Yudhiṣṭhira's insistence on respecting the thirteen year period in
with Draupadī's reckless desire. V. plays with that dilemma and, at the same time, with the
readers' and listeners' emotions. The reader/listener might perhaps smile when noting how
V. has Draupadī, impatient and eager for retaliation while decrying the thirteen years they
must observe, ask the queen for a thirteen day delay before leaving, i.e., to demonstrate a
patience she in fact had not shown during the past thirteen years. In the scenes between
Kīcaka's offence and Draupadī's agreement with the queen (or concession to the queen), V.
elaborates on the themes of revenge, destiny, danger, and their consequences, which finally
explode in the coming war.

Even profound matters of fate and destiny, human actions and *karma*, which pervade the
whole work, appear here again in her words, alluding to the long conversation between Drau-
padī and Yudhiṣṭhira after their banishment (*Mbh.* 3.28-33). References to past grievances
(Jayadratha, Duḥśāsana, Jaṭāsurā) or adventures (their previous feats associated with their
weapons, Baka and Hiḍimba for example) further underscore all of that once again.

Biardeau and Hiltebeitel (see Appendix 1) have already stressed the different connections
Book 4 shares with other parts of the *Mbh.* Hiltebeitel, for instance, has given particular
attention to those connections related to Draupadī, especially in relation to her hair and
vestments and their association with pollution and danger. In that same vein, some remarks
concentrated on textual connections may be useful here to reinforce the subtlety of V.'s work
and to begin to ascertain his complex compositional techniques.

A reader/listener with no previous knowledge of Book 4 would no doubt associate Draupadī's
first appearance in the court, when she is seen from the palace by Queen Sudeṣṇā dressed in
but one single and very dirty garment, with the tragic moment when she is forcibly brought
to Hāstinapura's *sabhā* by Duḥśāsana, dressed in one single garment stained with menstrual
blood. As V. constructs the Kīcaka scene in the *sabhā* in connection to this one in Hāsti-

napura's *sabhā*, the association between both becomes obvious: she flees to Virāṭa's *sabhā*, Kīcaka chases her, grasps her by the hair, and throws her on the floor. In Duḥśāsana's case, however, she tries to avoid being brought to Hāstinapura's *sabhā*, but he chases her down, grasps her by the hair, drags her into the *sabhā* and throws her on the floor (*Mbh.* 2.60.22-28). Other components reinforce, in a very obvious way, V.'s references to the other scene (she asks for protection…), showing at the same time how he changes components to attain his objectives (the new position of Yudhiṣṭhira, their tough conversation…). Again, when she loosens her hair, departs, and goes to Sudeṣṇā's house (*Mbh.* 4.15.36) the allusions to the past, and foreshadowings of the future, are clear. When Draupadī bids farewell to her mother-in-law, Kuntī, after the scene in Hāstinapura's *sabhā*, she is described by V. as weeping, dressed in one blood-stained garment, and dishevelled (*Mbh.* 2.70.9); when she leaves the city in this guise, hiding her face behind her hair, this signifies that in thirteen years they will come back to the city and the offenders' wives, menstruating, with loosened hair, all clad in one single garment, stained with their dead sons' and husband's blood, will perform out their last rites (*Mbh.* 2.71.6; 2.71.18-20). In the same way, a reader/listener would be very well prepared for these associations and interpretations from the beginning and after seeing that just as V. presents Yudhiṣṭhira choosing to become a gambler, a reference to his primeval sin in Hāstinapura's *sabhā*, he presents her choosing to become a maid good at hairdressing, pointing to her offence there.

Offences are crucial and, as we see, connected in many ways. We know that V. has Draupadī refer to her abduction by Jayadratha and rescue by Bhīma, recounted in the previous Book (*Mbh.* 3.248-56). Jayadratha upbraided her and pulled her up into his chariot (*Mbh.* 3.252.22-24), and later, after a fight, flees without horses. Bhīma seizes him by the hair, kicks him in the head, mistreats him, binds him and puts him in his chariot, and even shaves Jayadratha's hair in a humiliating way (*Mbh.* 3.256.1-14). V. has Jayadratha being punished by receiving features of Draupadī's mistreatments: to be pulled up into the chariot, his own, and two previous ones coming from Hāstinapura's *sabhā*, mistreatment and grasping by the hair. The Virāṭa-Suśarman story has connections with Jayadratha's too: Virāṭa is shaken and put on his chariot by Suśarman as a crying new bride, a woman, just as Draupadī (and Jayadratha); not incidentally, Dhaumya, the chaplain, reproaches Jayadratha (*Mbh.* 3.252.25) for not following the traditional way in such cases, i.e.: to fight with other suitors

or rivals before carrying off a woman in a chariot. Later, Suśarman is captured by Bhīma when he flees on foot, again, just as Jayadratha.

Kīcaka's offences are related to Jayadratha's story and Hāstinapura's *sabhā* as well: a man talks to Draupadī with sexual overtones (*Mbh.* 2.60.20; 3.251-52), she denies his advances and tries to flee. In Kīcaka's and Jayadratha's cases the male touches her, she pushes him away and he falls down before fleeing or trying to do so. In the case of Jayadratha (*Mbh.* 3.252.23d) he falls down like a tree with its roots cut; in Kīcaka's case, the *rākṣasa* hits him and he falls on the ground like a tree with its roots cut (*Mbh.* 4.15.9cd). Jayadratha is seized by the hair and kicked in his head by Bhīma, just as Kīcaka does to Draupadī. It is perhaps easier to understand now why the beginning and the end of the fight between Kīcaka and Bhīma are marked by Bhīma grasping his enemy's hair (*Mbh.* 4.21.47-48; 4.21.57-58). Chariots and fleeing warriors can be connected more directly: Arjuna chases and grabs Uttara by the hair and drags him to the chariot too, as Bhīma in Jayadratha's case. And in both cases Arjuna recriminates them for their behaviour (*Mbh* 3.255.57-78; 4.36.17-23; 4.36.26).

Just as V. foreshadows the much more bittersweet victory in the Kurukṣetra war with the invading armies in Book 4, he also foreshadows Bhīma's killing of Duryodhana and Duḥśāsana (as foretold in Hāstinapura's *sabhā*) with his killing of Kīcaka. Kīcaka, the man who had kicked Draupadī in the head after grabbing her by the hair, is subsequently grabbed by his hair twice and mashed into a bloody ball of flesh.

Draupadī's satisfaction with Kīcaka's corpse gives way to her future satisfaction at seeing her offenders' bloodied and mutilated corpses, as promised by Bhīma in Hāstinapura's *sabhā* (*Mbh.* 2.61.43-46; 2.63.14; 2.68.28-29).

More broadly, note that in Books 2 and 4 the story of her humiliation and exaltation is inverted: in Hāstinapura she arrives at the court full of glory, while the Kauravas' wives were not too pleased to see her wealth (or plenitude) (*Mbh.* 2.52.31-32), but she leaves dressed in one garment and humiliated. In Virāṭa's city and court she arrives dressed in one garment as a humble handmaid and finishes the story full of glory and surpassing all the women. Her mistreatment in a *sabhā* is the cornerstone of both stories.

Thus, explicit and non-explicit references guide the reader/listener into other scenes and Books, and this is owing to V.'s techniques and technical skills. Book 4 is a remarkable

demonstration of artistry. It is a good example of the difficulties of speculating on "later" and "early" Books or parts of the *Mbh.* The work we do have was conceived as a whole and interrelations among its different parts are the best proof. Connections inside the *Mbh.* are subtle, fit well with the unitary view of the work and, additionally, allow us to see the complex compositional techniques V. uses. The idea of a whole re-creation of previous materials may seem more acceptable; however, the question is whether it is necessary or not, and whether there are serious arguments to defend it.

Pivotal between the two moments of the main story, the de- and re-construction of the main characters concludes with the allies assembling for the upcoming war. Easy victories and the easy killing of enemies seem to foreshadow a happy future that will never actually transpire.

Chapter 2

THE STORY OF OMPHALE AND HERACLES

1. An Introduction on Sources and Transmission

The present work deals with the interactions between two cultures at a moment when the Mediterranean world and the Subcontinent were in constant contact. Our main thesis can be only proved with empirical data, and, thus, for a real assessment of that evidence, both components of the comparison must be properly contextualized.

We have already examined the coherence of Book 4 within the whole story told in the *Mbh*. We have not explored its relationship with earlier texts written in the Subcontinent for the simple reason that there are no previous texts with similar stories. There is no evidence of the existence in the indigenous cultures of the Subcontinent of written documents before the III century BCE. Nor is there any evidence of literary texts before the final centuries BCE or the beginning of the Common Era, nor of any epic, whether oral or written, previous to, contemporary with, or even later than, the *Mbh.* and *Rāmāyaṇa.*

Conversely, the stories of Omphale and Heracles were created and recreated for centuries in Greco-Roman culture. Even if it were acceptable to present a unified and simple version of these stories it would inevitably distort the perspective, particularly when viewed from the comparative angle we are herein exploring. Thus, in the context of analysing the creative productions of two different cultures, this is an obligatory route.

Although it may be misleading to speak of a single Greco-Roman culture, important aspects of continuity in all fields cannot be neglected: in literature, knowledge, architecture, and

iconography, for instance. They entailed, above all, the self-conscious participation and recreation of inherited perspectives and ideas, and the creation of canons, beginning with the epics of the VIII-VII Centuries BCE, and including the artistic and literary productions of the following centuries, associated in particular to the need of conservation and uses of what was felt as a living, inherited legacy.

After the flowering of the Greek "Classical Period" in the V-IV Century BCE and Alexander the Great's expansion of his empire in the second half of the IV Century BCE, Greek power over the Middle East extended as far as India and Bactria. Consequently, there was a mass dissemination of genres and perspectives resulting in various adaptations and crossbreeding with the upshot of Greek Culture becoming a kind of international cultural language. Roman domination of Greece and the Hellenistic Kingdoms in the II and I Centuries BCE multiplied the connections with, and uses of, those Greek cultural, ideological and political traditions in Europe, the Near East and North Africa. This led to new developments, including what has been called the "Romanization of Greece" and a further "Hellenization of Rome", and recreated feelings, and practices, of continuity, both in Greek and Latin, which did not disappear with the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the V Century.

The fact that the Greco-Roman world was considered for centuries the backbone of the Western world helped to conserve and transmit the essential parts of that artistic, literary and, more generally, cultural legacy, despite the countless gaps and losses, re-appropriations and misunderstandings. Essential to that task of conservation and transmission was the Greek-speaking world of the Eastern Roman Empire, Byzantium until its fall in 1453.

We are dealing with a culture that had been producing written texts since at least the VIII Century BCE, that was highly concerned with chronology, as is well-demonstrated by the very invention of history as a literary genre in the V Century BCE, and that could boast roughly one thousand two hundred years of continuous written productions in the West and more than two thousand in Byzantium. At the same time, arts, particularly iconographies, developed variegated materials, styles and themes from more or less the same initial dating onwards.

Leaving aside any kind of qualitatively comparative assessment, if we accept a chronological limitation for the "Ancient World" between the second half of the VIII Century BCE and the first half of the VII Century CE (broadly speaking, the end of the Western Roman and

Sassanian Empires -Europe, Middle East, Iranian Plateau-, of the Guptas -Northern India-, the Kingdom of Funan -Southeast Asia- and of the Six Dynasties in China), it is in no way contentious to state that we are dealing with the ancient culture for which we have more reliable and precise chronologies as well as ever-more varied remains and vestiges.

An important part of these general remarks could be applied to one of its more interesting productions, namely: mythology. It would be suicidal to claim to provide a short definition of "mythology"; however, for us, it will suffice to describe this term as a series of stories encompassing divinities and humans located in a past age, the Heroic Age. In a context of renewed relations with Ancient Near Eastern cultures, the nascent stages of such mythological stories can be found in the Epics (the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the only two we have) and later branched out into the disparate literary and artistic genres developed or invented by Greco-Roman culture. Such genres included the later epics, lyric poetry, theatre -in form of comedies, tragedies, satyr plays, mime etc.-, historiography, handbooks on literature and iconography, erudite discussions, philosophy, religious texts (including Christian apologetic), geographical books, and, of course, the plastic arts (vases, wall paintings, temple reliefs, statues, mosaics and jewellery, in particular). Additionally, there was also the maintenance and recreation of mythological stories in popular culture, many of which are associated with cities and villages, cults, temples and shrines. As part of Greco-Roman culture, these stories were elaborated and re-elaborated in different literary and iconographic genres, thus making Greco-Roman culture the Ancient culture that has left us more literary and iconographic sources from its epic and mythological tradition.

The Greek Heracles is the Ancient World's hero par excellence and, consequently, we can see the multifarious uses of his character in that context during those centuries. Heracles was already referred to in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and, there were contemporary and later poems concerning his exploits[17]. Moreover, he was also the main or secondary character of hundreds of literary and iconographic works afterwards, making him a very pervasive character in art and literature, as well as a hero and/or divinity in individual and collective cults and rituals.

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[17]See M. L. West (ed. and trans.) (2003) *Greek Epic Fragments*, pp. 19-24 ("Poems on the exploits of Heracles").

His convergence with the Roman Hercules, as well as with many other heroes and gods of neighbouring societies, expanded his presence well beyond the Greco-Roman world's frontiers. India and Central Asia are no exception. In fact, the popularity of the hero even spread into those spaces between the Subcontinent and the Mediterranean world which included the traditional enemy of Hellenistic Greeks and the Romans until the III Century CE, the Parthian empire (Boardman 2015, *s.v* Heracles in Index). The well-known uses of Heracles in representations of Vajrapani in the Greco-Indian (or Indo-Greek) Buddhist world are, amongst many others, perhaps the most obvious examples (see, for example, Bopearachchi 2005, 115-16).

Considering this popularity, it may seem odd that we have but scant fragments and meagre remains of the story of Heracles and Omphale[18]. Transmission, transmission gaps in fact, have a lot to do with it. We know there were more extensive narratives dealing with this story; however, what we have are mostly summaries, some brief texts working with its materials, and scattered references to it as well some iconographies.

This scarcity of texts is not compensated for by the fact that Omphale's story comes to us situated at a given point of what we could call the hero's "biography". Other stories explain why he must spend a period of time in anonymity and under the power of Omphale, queen of Lydia, and the moments before and after this adventure. Unfortunately, again that information - also scanty- gives us but a vague outline rather than new or extensive information. Additionally, although Omphale's story includes different narrations on some of the tasks Heracles has to perform while he is under her power, these stories are neither long nor detailed.

Let me emphasise that the meagre remains of the story of Heracles and Omphale are no exception in the context of Heracles' stories. We do not have any of the monographic works about Heracles written in Antiquity. That notwithstanding, some of Heracles' adventures have fared better than others. For instance, the somewhat shameful story of Heracles cleaning the dung of Augias' stables, with scarce references and even scarcer plastic representations (Brommer 1986, 28-29), is a good example of a story that has not fared too well and helps to understand that the transmission of certain stories could imply more specific

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[18] For my previous publications on the theme see F. Wulff Alonso (1996) and (1997), pp. 113-142.

difficulties.

Another related general question impinges upon our story, namely: problems of chronology. That fragmentary state of the sources and the continuous use of the inherited mythological tradition in iconography and literature mean that we can be sure of the existence of a given story, or of given variations of that story in the historical moment for which we have conclusive evidence, but that we cannot maintain that it was created only at that precise moment and not before.

A short, introductory presentation of the story will thus be useful here so as to better follow its development and our argumentation. Heracles killed his guest Iphitos and was punished by being sold in a temporary thraldom under anonymity to Queen Omphale of Lydia. Under her power he performed several deeds, in particular the defeat of the Cercopes (thieves who tried to steal his weapons while he slept under a tree), killed Syleus (who forced strangers to hoe his vineyards), buried the body of Icarus (Daedalus' son, after he found it washed ashore) and, finally, defeated the cattle-raiding Itoni (neighbours of Omphale's realm), which brought about the revelation of his true identity and his release from slavery by the queen as well as a wedding and a son.

The story also entails other developments of the hero's submission to which I have briefly alluded, in particular: transvestisms of Heracles and Omphale, feminine tasks for the hero, scenes of feasts and music with Dionysian components where the hero is portrayed as drunk etc.

After his liberation, the hero assembles an army of volunteers and begins a revenge war against Iphitos' father, Eurytos, king of Oechalia, whose kingdom he takes by storm, the only and last one in this version, or, in the other version, begins a series of revenge wars which end years later in his war against Eurytos.

We do not know when all the sections of this story were assembled. Heracles' killing of Iphitos was told in the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 21.22-30) and a contemporary of Homer, Creophylos of Samos, wrote the *Capture of Oechalia*, as Strabo and others inform us (Strabo 14.1.18). It is difficult to think that there was no story about Zeus' punishment for the crime of killing a guest. We shall return to these questions later, but for now it will suffice to say that for Heracles, beloved son of Zeus and hero destined for immortality, death was not an option but his punishment had to be sufficiently severe. For a hero whose life is presided over by his

submission to a man (and inferior), Eurystheus, it is difficult to imagine a worse punishment than being a woman's slave. In any case, the story of Iphitos' murder is recorded before Omphale's story was.

Another story deeply connected to this one is documented on many vases from the VI and V Century BCE (Brommer 1984, 7-10). Heracles asks the Pythian priestess of Delos how to be rid of a disease produced by his crime. As she does not answer him, Heracles wrests from the temple the priestess' tripod to effect an oracle of his own. His half-brother by Zeus, the God Apollo, intervenes and a fight ensues until it is broken up by Zeus who throws a thunderbolt between them. A remedy for Heracles' situation is then settled upon, which, consistent in all our sources, is to be sold to Omphale (Apollodorus 2.6.2).

The Omphale and Heracles story, his servitude to her after Iphitos' murder, is crystal clear in the V Century BCE. However, as Omphale and Heracles' *liaison* was then already part of different Lydian royal genealogies, there is a strong likelihood that it already existed in the previous century[19]. In the V Century BCE, another historian and mythographer, Pherecydes of Leros (or of Athens) (Pherecydes, F. Jacoby (ed.) 1957, Nr. 3, fr. 82 b), not to be confused with the pre-Socratic philosopher, Pherecydes of Syros, explicitly associated Iphitos' murder with Heracles serfdom in Lydia. He writes that Zeus orders to sell Heracles for three talents, Hermes then carries out his sale in Lydia and Omphale buys him. Other historians dealt with the theme too, such as Ephorus of Cyme who, in the IV Century BCE, alludes to the love affair between Heracles and Omphale (Ephorus of Cyme, F. Jacoby (ed.) 1923, Nr. 70, 14): because of his love for Omphale he leaves the Argonauts' expedition. One of the principal poems on Heracles, written in the second quarter of the V Century BCE by Panyassis, contains some 9000 verses and includes his adventure with Omphale in Lydia[20]

We could follow different threads to reconstruct a multifocal perspective, but theatre is the most interesting. We see this story in the V Century BCE on the stage in an allusion made by Aeschylus in one of his extant tragedies (*Agammenon*), and later clearly surfacing in another

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[19]See the historian Xanthos of Lydia in A. Paradiso (2018), f. 18C with the commentary; below for Apollodorus and Diodorus; see Hellanicus, F. Jacoby (ed.) (1957), Nr. 4, fr. 112: Heracles gets a son from Malis, Omphale's slave. See Herodotus 1.7.

[20]See M. L. West (ed. and trans.) *Greek Epic Fragments* (2003), fragm. 23= A. Bernabé (ed.) (1996), fragm. 23.

tragedy by Sophocles (*Trachiniae*); we shall examine both below. It became popular in Athenian comedy; there were plays entitled *Omphale* (by Ion of Chios, Achaeus, Cratinus the Elder, Cratinus the younger and Antiphanes), though we only know them through fragments and allusions transmitted by later authors.

One of the most interesting theatrical references comes from Plutarch, the famous Greek (and Roman) intellectual of the I-II CE. It proves that our story was even used in the political arena of V Century BCE Athenian democracy, and with ill-intentions: in his biography of Pericles, he writes that Aspasia, his famous and learned partner, was called a new Omphale, a new Hera, and a new Deianira (Plutarch, *Pericles* 24.6). Aspasia, born in Miletus in Asia Minor, was easily associated with the also Asiatic Queen Omphale of Lydia.

The destructive overtones of the associations are obvious and even more so if we consider Pericles' severely criticized military interventions in the area (Aspasia would have pressured him to attack Samos, Plutarch, *Pericles* 25.1) and the malicious commentaries on Aspasia's role in leading "Olympian Pericles" (as he was ironically called) into wars, which were directly related to his sexuality and her dominance[21]. Goddess Hera is the constant and (im)mortal enemy of the hero, even well before his birth. Finally, Deianira is Heracles' wife and the woman who, as we shall see below, unwillingly causes his painful death.

Is it possible that this association of Aspasia with Omphale was actually meant to allude to Heracles' heroic deeds while in her service? It hardly seems reasonable to even entertain such an idea. Conversely, the obvious implications concerning the sexual and destructive aspects of Heracles and Omphale's relationship fit well here. It is no surprise then that in another one of his *Parallel Lives*, Plutarch, while comparing Demetrius and Mark Antony (3.3), likens the relationship between Cleopatra and Mark Antony to Omphale and Heracles' relationship. As depicted in paintings, Omphale "destroys" Heracles by taking away his club and lion skin just as Cleopatra's actions lead to Mark Antony's downfall.

Moreover, a text by Diodorus Siculus (8.9) found in a Byzantine précis comments upon the errors unbecoming a character's fame by alluding to the power love holds over the young and illustrates his point by drawing attention to the fact that ancient mythographers (likely from the V Century BCE) portray the unconquerable Heracles as being conquered by the power

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[21]Athenaeus 13.589d-e; 13.570a-b, citing Aristophanes, *Acharnanians* 524-29.

of love.

It is, therefore, safe to presume that the idea of Heracles and Omphale's love affair was soon associated with his more-or-less voluntary humiliations and her domination.

Likewise, when Palaephatus, the quintessential representative of the rationalization of myths, probably second half of the IV BCE, in his *On Incredible Tales* 44 refers to Omphale and Heracles in order to deny the versions depicting him as her slave, and writes that, first, she fell in love with him by merely listening about his force, and that, when they met, he fall in love with and did all she ordered, it is difficult to think that this allusion to her orders points to his martial deeds, which are in no case shameful nor in need of justification, rather than to the other, dark side of his actions under Omphale.

More or less in the same period, Clearchus, disciple of Aristotle, referred a very confusing tale in the context of "euhemerization", wherein the famous mythical King Midas becomes a depraved and feminized king of the no less depraved and feminized Lydians, working at the loom with his women and dressed luxuriously while Queen Omphale, who had previously taken revenge on the Lydian rapists, murdered the foreigners who slept with her (Athenaeus 12.515f-516c). This kind of mess can only be produced atop the reinterpretation, rationalistic interpretation, of very well-known mythological materials and point, very obviously, to Heracles' adventure in Lydia.

We can presume that those humiliating aspects of the Heracles and Omphale story concerning his transvestism were created by combining of the characteristic rudeness and ribald jests typical of the Athenian stage, and the plasticity in that direction, and in many more, of Heracles.

It is worth recalling that Heracles' transvestism is not limited to his adventure with Omphale. In his work *Quaestiones Graecae* (304c-e), Plutarch recounts a tale of Heracles as follows: After conquering Troy (one of his vengeful wars after the Omphale episode and alluded to in the *Iliad*) and being driven astray by a storm, Heracles lands on the Island of Cos. A few altercations occur and Heracles finds himself overpowered by his enemies. He is then helped by a Thracian woman and, so as to avoid capture, disguises himself by donning women's clothing and escapes. He returns later and triumphs over his enemies. After his victory, he marries a woman and wears a flowery robe for the ceremony. As a result, Heracles' chief priest in Antimachia at Cos also dresses like a woman, as do the bridegrooms when receiving

their brides.

The story is interesting as it presents a case -a shameful case- of Heracles' transvestism, followed by another one during his wedding on an island very close to Caria, the neighbouring region to Lydia, in Asia Minor, which was indeed part of Lydia under Croesus in the VI Century BCE. The juxtaposition of this story of Heracles' transvestism with the role reversal implied by Omphale's dominion over him may help to explain the origins of the invention of his transvestism under the queen. Nevertheless, the Cos story makes it clear that transvestism fits well within Greek tradition and its artistic treatments of the hero, and may well have helped to associate transvestism with the Heracles' submission to Omphale.

More roads lead to the Athenian stage. As stated before, we know of several plays dedicated to Omphale and Heracles, though no complete work is extant. The most interesting of the authors dealing with this story and the one from whom we possess the most fragments[22], is Ion of Chios from the V Century BCE. Greco-Roman tradition, represented for example by the very erudite work *The Learned Banqueters* by the II Century CE Greco-Egyptian author, Athenaeus, who cites hundreds of authors and about 2500 works, and gives us small fragments of Ion's *Omphale*[23]. Ion of Chios is a good example of how authors at that time treated the character of Heracles as well as of the possible impact such constructions may have had later on. He writes a satyr play, not a comedy or a tragedy, which includes satyrs, music, dance, and Dionysian components[24].

Though the fragments are few and short, we can see there the insatiable glutton and drunk, Heracles (Ion, fragm. 29-32, Leurini ed., perhaps 33 too; 29 refers to his three rows of teeth). There are also orders given (by Omphale?) (Ion, fragm. 25-26a and 26b, Leurini ed.) for the maidens to bring wine cups and for the Lydian players and singers to adorn/celebrate/garb the guest. Music instruments, maidens, feasting, and adornments are already part of Ion's presentation of the story in the V Century BCE. and will be part of it onwards. Thus, later iconographies picture him, as partly noted above, drinking in the midst of feasting characters, including women, with musical instruments all around. Once

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[22]A. Leurini (ed.) (2000), fragm. 22-38, pp. 21-28.

[23] See Athenaeus 6. 258f; 10.411c; 11.498e; 11.501f; 14.634c; 14.634f, 15.690b and below.

[24]See the very explicit case of Achaeus' *Omphale* in Athenaeus 11.466ef: satyrs read an inscription on a cup featuring "Dionysus", thus announcing the presence of the God.

more, in one of his essays Plutarch (*An seni respublica gerenda sit* 4) gives us interesting information, when, by criticizing self-indulgence and luxury in statesmen, he points out that some painters represent Heracles "in Omphale's palace wearing a yellow gown and giving himself up to her Lydian maids to be fanned and have his hair curled" (Fowler trans., Plutarch, *Moralia* 10, p.), note the association palace, (Omphale's) maidens, and feminine mannerisms.

In another of Ion's fragment a character (Heracles?) chooses (Ion, fragm. 27, Leurini ed.) *bakkaris* (a celebrated Lydian unguent) perfumes, and Sardian (from Sardis, the capital of Lydia) cosmetics over the Peloponnese's (sober) lifestyle. We even have a reference (Ion, fragm. 28 Leurini ed.) to the "eye-painting black *stimmis*", a kind of kohl, which may indicate Heracles' feminization. While we do not know when the abovementioned feast in the Heracles and Omphale story takes place, we do know via one of the most complete, extant versions (Diodorus) of the story that, after defeating the Itoni, Heracles wins Omphale's admiration, gains his freedom and a wedding follows shortly thereafter, which may constitute the best moment for it (Easterling 2007, 286) -though this is in no way conclusive.

The connections with ancient theatre do not end here. From the whole of Greek Comedy (comprising thousands of plays), we only have a few of Aristophanes' works along with a few fragments from other authors writing during the Old Comedy period, mere fragments from Middle Comedy, and relatively big papyrus fragments of Menander together with smaller fragments of other authors from New Comedy.

This makes the continuity of the use of the Omphale theme within the Roman world particularly relevant, especially with respect to one of the extant plays from one of only two Roman Comedic playwrights whose works have survived, Terence. We shall also see how Plautus, the other Roman playwright whose works have survived, may have inspired a scene found in a very famous story by Ovid about Omphale.

In the first half of the II Century BCE, writing in Latin but modelling his work on Greek comedy, Terence compares Hercules serving Omphale to a head beaten with a slipper (*Eunuchus* 5.7), an allusion made clear by Lucian of Samosata (*Dialogues of the Gods* 15; see below for other similar text) who directly refers to Heracles as a slave, combing wool, dressed in purple garments, and being beaten with a slipper by Omphale. Thus, both Terence in the II Century BCE and Lucian in the II Century CE refer to an earlier story, most likely a

comedy, depicting this fascinating scene. Terence's allusion is a good prologue to the centuries in which these themes openly flourish in texts, plastic arts and even texts, as the one of Plutarchus we have already seen, describing iconographies.

The connections with the plastic arts are no less continuous and, so to speak, no less organic. The fragmentary state of our sources inevitably raises question concerning chronology. Accordingly, it is important to bear in mind that iconographic and literary sources may exhibit different relative chronologies within Greco-Roman mythology as well as differing degrees of censorship, interests and/or limitations.

To better understand some the problems surrounding chronologies and continuity, it may be useful to explore, albeit briefly, the other example in Greek mythology of a cross-dressing hero, namely: the story of Achilles in Lycomedes' court in Scyros (Ruiz de Elvira, 1998, 47-8). I am not interested here in the connections between Achilles in Scyros and Heracles in Lydia nor in this tale's possible use in our *Mbh.* Book 4, but rather how it relates to the aforementioned problems concerning chronologies and continuities [25].

In order to prevent his participation and ultimate death in the Trojan War, Achilles' mother, the goddess Thetis, hides him in Lycomedes' court where, disguised as a maiden and living in the serail, he falls in love with Princess Deidamia. Odysseus later discovers him through a clever ruse. He sounds a military alarm, usually a trumpet blast and, in one version, also sets out in the palace's forecourt various trinkets made for women along with weapons of war. When the alarm sounds, Achilles swiftly takes up the weapons and readies himself to fight.

The oldest literary references to Achilles in Scyros come to us by chance: a fragment of a II Century CE papyrus containing a summary of a lost work by Euripides, the *Scyrians*, from the V Century BCE. The second comes from a text transmitted by anthologies, an *Idyll* by Bion of Smyrna (II BCE), *Epitalamium of Achilles and Neoptolemus.* As Apollodorus (see 3.13.8) is difficult to date, the first solid reference inside a complete text is in Ovid around the change of Era (*Ars Amatoria* 1.681-704; *Metamorphoses* 13.162-70), followed by another Roman, Statius, in the late I Century CE (*Achilleid* I. 207-920; see Hyginus, *Fabulae* 96 too).

We have no iconographic representations until the Roman period. However, there are two references to paintings, one by Polygnotos (V century BCE) in the Athenian Acropolis, described in the II Century CE by the Greek geographer Pausanias (1.22.6) and another by

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[25]See Appendix 2, Section 1 for its possible use in Book 4.

Athenion (late IV Century BCE), described in the I Century by Plinius (*Natural History* 35.134). Wall paintings in the *Domus Aurea* of Rome and in Pompeii, for instance, demonstrate the popularity of the theme in the I Century CE.

Note that only chance reveals that this story was developed in written texts in the V Century BCE and that we cannot say for certain whether it was created then or earlier. At the same time, only literary references reveal that there were iconographies prior to the Roman era, while in other myths the opposite is the case: we have examples in the plastic arts that predate the data found in literary renderings. The flowering and recreations of this theme in the Roman world has to be considered as the outcrop of centuries of previous works, not as a novelty.

Taking all of this into consideration it is easier to understand the case of Omphale and Heracles. First, the trope of transvestism in Greco-Roman mythology is not limited to stories involving Heracles. And second, the possible chronological differences between literary and plastic representations of transvestism in the story of Heracles and Omphale are not meaningful.

Figure 1: Omphale with Heracles' lion skin. Coin of Phokaia. IV Century BCE. Cleveland Museum of Art[26]

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[26]http://clevelandart.org/art/1916.973.a

We already know that the main story of Omphale and Heracles is attested to by literary sources from the VI-V Century BCE, though its more dramatic aspects needed additional time to be fully developed in other sources. It is likely that iconographic sources date back to the V Century BCE [27] and undeniably so to the IV Century BCE, although most pieces are chronologically later. From the IV Century BCE we have a likely literary reference to a statue by the sculptor Lysippus which represents Heracles as defeated by love, weaponless and dejected (*Anthologia Palatina* 16.103-4). More prominently, there are coins from Phokaia depicting Omphale's side of the exchange (Figure 1): Omphale's head sporting Heracles' lion-skin and shouldering his club (Boardman 1994, nr. 55, p. 51) along with other such representations of her, mainly in jewels[28]. These and other themes were developed during the Hellenistic period, flourishing from the I Century BCE and well into the Roman Age (Boardman 1994, 52-3 for a synthesis).

It is no surprise that our principal source of wall painting in Antiquity, Pompeii (I CE), having inherited centuries of earlier works now lost, presents some very interesting examples of the Omphale theme. We have seen how Plutarch refers to paintings depicting scenes from this tale. Likewise, the Greek writer Lucian remarks upon the upshot of Heracles' forced servitude to Queen Omphale in his *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* 10: "No doubt you have seen some picture of him: he is Omphale's slave, dressed up in an absurd costume, his lion-skin and club transferred to her, as though she were the true Heracles, while he, in saffron robe and purple jacket, is combing wool and wincing under Omphale's slipper. A degrading spectacle it is, the dress loose and flapping open, and all that was man in him turned to woman" (Fowler, Fowler, trans. Lucian, pp. 114-5).

It is not clear when the sub-stories concerning the deeds Heracles carries out while in the service of Omphale were assembled into the main story; nor is it clear whether any of them were created specifically as part of the main story or not. Considering our sources, these sub-stories in no way constitute an exception. They are scanty and, as such, do not offer much useful information. However, they raise additional questions of interest concerning

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[27]See K. Schauenburg (1960), pp. 66 ff.; J. Boardman (1994), p. 53 for a balance; one example from the VI Century BCE could also be of interest, see E. Stafford (2012), p. 133, a fragmentary amphora ca. 540 (Malibu 77.AE.45): a woman with a lion skin and a bow and a man with a plectrum and a cithara.

[28]J. Boardman (1994), p. 52 for a discussion and nr. 52, p. 50; nr. 59, p. 51; 71 and 72, p. 51; see also the uncertain relief in lead nr. 58, p. 51, Campanian bell crater nr. 3, p. 46 and Lucanian Pelike nr. 4, p. 46.

chronology and transmission within the continuum of Greco-Roman tradition.

The reason why they are recorded in our sources, nevertheless, is clear as they suggest the heroic side of the question, running in parallel to the labours performed for Eurystheus. Emphasizing them means blurring the dark, shameful, side of the story. As Plutarch notes (*Theseus* 6.5), during Heracles' year of bondage in the service of Omphale Lydia enjoyed peace and security, whereas Greece was overrun by villains until Theseus, inspired by Heracles, exterminated them.

According to our sources, the oldest deed and the first feat Heracles performed under Omphale, is the defeat of the Cercopes. This tale was previously touched upon in an epic poem from at least the VII Century BCE as well as on vases and temple decorations from the VI Century BCE. A more complete version, however, comes to us only via later sources. We know, for example, that it became popular in Athenian comedy in the V (Plato, Hermippus) and IV (Eubulus) Centures BCE and that it was a source of inspiration for plastic artists practically only until the IV Century BCE. It is impossible to pinpoint when exactly it became part of the Omphale and Heracles story; yet, given when representations of it in the plastic arts and/or texts begin to fall into oblivion, it is highly unlikely that its association to the story of Omphale is owing to a later creation.

In contrast, Syleus' story is a very typical Heraclean story -a villain king who mistreats foreigners and is punished-, which could have easily been created in association wtih Omphale. It is no surprise that we also have a satyr play by Euripides (V century BCE) bearing this name. Connections to the plastic arts also lead us to Athens and the V Century BCE: there are only seven extant representations of Syleus and all of them are Attic Red-figured vases from the first half of the V Century BCE. As with the story of the Cercopes, the fact that artistic renderings of the story of Syleus died away in the V Century BCE makes it exceedingly difficult to imagine that its association to the story of Omphale was affixed later.

Daedalus, mentioned in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 18.590-2) along with the Icarian Sea (*Il.* 2.145), is already found in representations winged with his son in VI Century BCE arts. And his adventure in Crete with Minos, followed by his escape and the loss of his son is part of the V Century BCE common stories (See, for instance, Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.2.33). Euripides mentions Icarus in one of his lost works, the *Cretans* (Scholiast to Aristophanes, *Frogs* 849). We also have other Athenian plays dedicated to Daedalus' adventures (Plato,

Eubules, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Philippus), and although some of them include Icarus'
death, we do not have any information that they include Heracles burying him.

As there are various versions of the burial, the intervention of Heracles in this task during his
stay under Omphale was probably invented after the creation of this story, perhaps because
of geographical reasons. An additional component may help to further clarify this supposi-
tion. Daedalus worked in the service of King Minos of Crete who imprisoned him and his
son, Icarus, as a punishment for Daedalus having helped Pasiphae, Minos' wife, satisfy her
lust for the famous Cretan bull. Daedalus and Icarus, therefore, are fleeing thraldom. The
association is not difficult to grasp: the thrall Heracles buries a man fleeing a cruel master.
While Syleus and the Cercopes disappear relatively quickly as art themes, the Icarus theme
is continuously represented and is particularly important in Rome: in Pompeii alone there
are ten paintings of Icarus' fall (Nyenhuis 1984, 2.1, p. 331; see below).

While the scantiness of extant material and relative chronological difficulties form part of
the story, the other side of the coin is far more significant: It is obvious that we do indeed
have a story. Moreover, it contains several inset stories, created and recreated within the
context of the continuous and long-standing uses of mythology in Greco-Roman culture and
its treatment of Heracles. The fragmentary, though in no way unusual, fashion by which this
story has come to us allows us to see it emerging at different moments and in different genres
and thus provides clues to track its presence and continuity within Greco-Roman culture over
centuries.

The theme, therefore, grows organically from at least the VI Century BCE onwards, en-
veloping previous stories and, perhaps, inspiring the creation of new ones.

The presence of this story in encyclopaedias and handbooks is a good example of its growth
and development. Our story is present, for example, in the mythology compilations of
Diodorus and Apollodorus in the Greek tradition of Classical Antiquity as well as in a com-
pendium by the Byzantine scholar John Tzetzes.

Due to that continuity we have the abovementioned iconographic and literary developments
pertaining to, in particular, erotic themes around the change of Era as well as new develop-
ments penned by several Greek and Roman authors particularly Ovid. Additional references
to this story continue well past the end of the Western Roman Empire.

One of the main reasons for the popularity of the Omphale and Heracles story is the mean-

ingful association between it and love, passion, and intemperance. Moreover, it subtly plays with the assumed dichotomy between female power and virtue, self-control, maleness and order by adapting varying tones and approaching it from disparate perspectives such as incredulity, justification for submitting to the loved woman, eroticism, reproach and moral recrimination, condemnation of paganism, etc. Wine and Dionysus, of course, play a crucial role in this game in terms of self-control/vice. In the *Anthologia Palatina* (16.99), for example, the Twelve Labours of Heracles are juxtaposed with the drunken Heracles conquered by Bacchus.

The presence of these themes in Classical Greek literature can be found in Plutarch (I-II Century CE), Lucian of Samosata (II Century CE), and Athenaeus (II-III CE) and in Latin literature in Ovid, Propertius (3.11.17-20; 4.9.47-50), Seneca (*Phaedra* 316-30, *Hercules Oetaeus* 371-77; *Hercules furens* 465-71), Statius (*Thebaid* 10.646-9) as well as in Christian authors such as Tertullian (*On the mantle* 4.3) and Lactantius (*The Divine Institutes* 1.9.7)

Two final references may shed further light on this story's continuity and its place in the wider Greco-Roman tradition. The first, *On The Magistracies of the Roman Constitution* (Περὶ ἀρχῶν τῆς Ῥωμαίων πολιτείας 3.64.3) by Ioannis Lydos, John the Lydian, a VI Century Byzantine scholar and writer on antiquarian subjects, explains that a *sandyx* is an old Lydian transparent garment that Omphale would have used to transform Heracles, who had fallen shamefully in love, into a woman. Moreover, Lydos also cites two Latin works with explicit enough names: the *Eroticon* of Apuleius (II Century) and the *Lives of Famous Whores* of Suetonius (I-II Centuries).

And the second comes to us from the XV Century copyist and writer Michael Apostolius who, in his *Collection of Proverbs* (Συναγωγὴ παροιμιῶν 12.74), transcribes the equally old perspective of something so odd as Heracles being a slave to Omphale: Ὀμφάληι Ἡρακλῆς λατρεύει, "Heracles served Omphale". Both sides of the coin have endured throughout the Ages.

2. The Story of Omphale and Heracles: Context

It is time for a more thorough presentation of the main features of this story. While the analysis of *Mbh.* Book 4 begins with the abstract given by V. at the beginning of the work, the before cited sub-genre of encyclopaedias/handbooks, an interesting and multifocal tradition

that was very popular during the Hellenistic era and later on, can fulfil a similar function. Again, two of our main sources are summaries of Heracles'adventures compiled by Apollodorus (2.6.3) and Diodorus Siculus (4.31.5-8). The version by the XII Century Byzantine scholar Tzetzes (*Chiliades* 2.412-36, our story in 36) is a shorter narrative that seems to combine components from the two earlier versions

Apollodorus' *Library* is a very good handbook on mythology. It is difficult to say when it was written, because it seems that there were different Apollodoruses, and perhaps different handbooks called by this name. In any case, it is clear that the Book we have under his name is the final result of a long, and sound tradition.

Diodorus' version is part of a *Bibliotheca Historica*, a Greek universal history written in the I Century BCE under Roman power. Diodorus, a typical Greek intellectual fascinated by Rome, is well aware of the difference between texts dedicated to ages in which proof, and thus proper history, is possible, and mythological narratives (Diodorus 4.1). Fortunately for us, however, he also defends the importance of recalling the deeds of heroes and benefactors of human beings; as such, he writes extensively on the mythological ages. Unsurprisingly, Heracles is mentioned in the very beginning of the work when Diodorus exalts history, and even universal history as a kind of reflection of the unity of mankind promoted by (Stoic) Divine Providence and culminating in Roman unification (Diodorus 1.1-3). He then glorifies Heracles (Diodorus 1.2.4) as a hero who submitted himself to terrible labours and dangers to benefit men and attain immortality.

Heracles, the Greek hero *par excellence*, is a two-sided hero, at the same time a valiant enemy of monsters and criminals and a powerful, hypersexual, gluttonous, bullying nitwit hero -a good protagonist for both tragedies and comedies (See Galinsky 1972, 1-7). Diodorus' Stoic Heracles is part of the evolution of the former, the liberator of Prometheus who becomes the liberator of humankind, while most of the presentations of Heracles under Omphale head in the opposite direction.

It is easy to understand that this other Heracles, the transvestite dominated and derided by a woman, was unacceptable for Diodorus, as for many others, such as Palaephatus. However, respect for the tradition made it absolutely necessary to include this adventure, albeit a somewhat watered down version. We could say something similar regarding Apollodorus' approach.

The story of Heracles they tell is basically similar. He is the son of Zeus, invincible and powerful. Out of jealously and odium, the goddess Hera hatches a scheme to make his relative, Eurystheus, king instead of him before he is even born, tries to kill him when he is a child and later, when he is already a famous hero, sends him a madness which leads him to kill his own sons. Apollodorus (2.4.12) writes that he killed his three sons by Megara and his half maternal twin brother Iphicles' two sons; as a consequence, he exiles himself. After a decision pronounced by the Delphic Oracle, he is forced to carry out the famous twelve labours, which constitute both a punishment and a way to immortality. There is a small and interesting variation in the madness in Diodorus (4.10.7-4.11.2): he is dejected because he does not want to serve Eurystheus, an inferior man, nor disobey his father Zeus' order to do so. Hera, therefore, takes advantage of the situation and sends him a frenzy which devolves into the madness that leads him to murder his sons. Heracles' dissatisfaction with his life and destiny pervades Greek culture from the *Iliad* onwards: Athena (*Il.* 8.362-69) remembers him crying and looking at the sky in the midst of those terrible twelve labours until his father sent her to help him. In the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 11.620-22), the poet presents him telling Odysseus in Hades that he, a son of Zeus, had suffered terribly under the sway of an inferior man who imposed on him hard labours.

It is important to note that in Apollodorus the labours are initially ten and become twelve when Eurystheus does not accept two of them (Apollodorus 2.5.11). Heracles recovers his liberty after spending twelve years under Eurystheus' power (Apollodorus 2.4.12) performing said labours.

Diodorus, Apollodorus and Tzetzes all place the story of Heracles' temporary enslavement to Queen Omphale right after the completion of his twelve labours. As it is told, once the labours are finished he gives his wife, Megara, to his nephew Iolaus and looks for a new bride. He woos Iole, King Eurytus' daughter in Oechalia (Diodorus 4.31.1-3; Apollodorus 2.6.1-2) and Apollodorus and Tzetzes have him winning her hand in bow contest. However, Eurytus refuses to give up his daughter as he fears that Heracles may be driven mad again and kill any children he had with Iole. A problem then arises with Eurytus' mares (Diodorus, Tzetzes, Homer)/cows (Apollodorus) which gives way to an encounter between Eurytus' son, Iphitos, and Heracles. Heracles kills Iphitos and is condemned to temporarily live in anonymity as Queen Omphale's slave.

Many years later, Heracles revenges his terrible humiliation by killing Eurytus and carrying Iole off as a slave. When Heracles' new wife, Deianira, realizes that he intends to marry Iole, she recalls that the Centaur Nessus, while dying from a poisoned arrow Heracles shot him with, had told her to use a given potion made from his blood to regain her husband's love. The arrows, however, had been dipped in the blood of the Hydra and, thus shot, the poison had spread through Nessus' blood. Consequently, by using the potion in the hopes of winning back her husband's love, Deianira unwittingly causes Heracles' death.

It is now worth enriching our perspective by going back in time to our first explicit reference to Omphale in Sophocles' play *Trachiniae*, from the second half of the V Century BCE. He presents a different chronological sequence for the immediate aftermath of the story.

He deals with the last moments of Heracles' life and unites the killing of Iphitos, the story of Omphale and the death of Heracles. He presents Deianira lamenting her life as Heracles' wife, always waiting for him and being afraid because of the dangers he must face. He has been absent for fifteen months after killing Iphitos (*Trachiniae* 38-45; see 164-5 too), a long time without news, while she, also exiled, waits for him in Trachis.

There is an initial reference (*Trachiniae* 69-70) to a rumour saying that he had been a slave of "a Lydian woman" (obviously Omphale) during the whole ploughing season (one year) and is now fighting in Euboea against Eurytus. Later, a herald who brings captive women tells Deianira that Heracles lives, and that he had defeated Eurytus, sacked his city and captured the slaves he is conducting there. When Deianira asks him whether Heracles has spent all this time warring, he answers that for the majority of those fifteen months, for one year, he was a slave under Omphale after being sold, in accordance with Zeus' will (*Trachiniae* 248-53), for having killed Iphitos.

Thus, Sophocles refers to the killing of Iphitos as the result of Eurytus' offences against Heracles; in turn, that killing brings about his servitude to Omphale and, immediately afterwards, Heracles' revenge. Of course, the key element of the tragedy is also that Deianira finds out that one of the captives is Iole, Eurytus' daughter, and that Heracles wants to marry her. To preclude their marriage she uses the poison that brings about his death, which in turn drives her to commit suicide. In this version, the Omphale tale takes one year, and his revenge against Eurytus takes place immediately, leading to Iole's captivity, Deianira's error and his death

As mentioned above, the version told by Apollodorus, Diodorus and Tzetzes -the one which eventually becomes, so to speak, "canonical"- repeat the association of Eurytus' offence, Iphitos' murder and Heracle's thraldom on the one hand, and of Eurytus' death, Iole's captivity and Deianira's error, on the other, but situate a long period of time between both series of stories. The conflict with Eurytus and Iphitos' subsequent murder, takes place before Heracles marries Deianira. The hero, therefore, must wait to take his revenge. In the meantime he marries Deianira, has sons, wages wars and performs various feats.

Both Apollodorus and Diodorus write that Heracles kills Iphitos and must pay for it. Apollodorus gives the more favourable version, writing that Heracles, who had nothing to do with the lost animals of Eurytus, went mad again and killed Iphitos. According to Tzetzes, the madness comes directly from Hera, something probably implicit in Diodorus' sources. The parallel with his previous and longer subordination to Eurystheus is obvious in all three authors.

3. Omphale and Heracles: The Main Storyline

Apollodorus' version follows with the story of the Tripod in Delphi: disease-ridden and in search of a cure, Heracles consults the Pythian priestess of Delphi but receives no answer. He carries off the temple Tripod and gets in a fight with Apollo, causing Zeus to intervene and break them up by throwing a thunderbolt between them. Afterwards, Heracles receives an oracle: the remedy for his disease is to be sold into a three-year temporary slavery and to pay Eurytus compensation for the murder of his son. Hermes sells him to Omphale, though Eurytus does not accept the compensation.

According to Diodorus (4.31.5-6), Heracles travels to Asia with some of his friends and is sold by one of them to Omphale, the Queen of the Lydians, daughter of Iardanos. His friend then gives the money as compensation to Iphitus' family, who accepts it; as a result, Heracles regains his health.

Diodorus also writes (4.31.6-7) that while under Omphale's power Heracles begins to punish robbers. His feats include defeating the Cercopes, a group of thieves, some of whom he kills and others he binds and brings before Omphale, and slays Syleus, who forced passers-by to hoe his vineyards. Apollodorus (2.6.3) and Tzetzes say that he also kills Syleus' daughter, Xenodoce.

Apollodorus adds another story. He writes that Heracles saw the body of Icarus washed ashore on the island of Doliche and buried it; he called the island Icaria instead of Doliche. In return, Icarus' father Daedalus made a statue of Heracles which years later Heracles mistook at night for a living enemy and threw a stone against it. He also writes that, during his servitude to Omphale, it was said that he took part in the Argonautica in their quest for the Golden Fleece -a debated question.

The end of the Omphale story is precisely stated in Diodorus (4.31.7-8): the defeat of the Itoni, who had invaded Omphale's country to steal cattle. He writes that after their defeat she was pleased with Heracles' courage, she learned who he was and who his parents were, marvelled at his excellence, set him free and married him.

It is an interesting version because it could explain differences in the years of slavery: both versions are compatible if we presume that, because of his feats, he may have been liberated before the theoretical deadline of three years, serving one year instead of three. In any case, the three-year version, so far as we know, is a later version as Sophocles' version already established his servitude as lasting only one year[29].

Additionally, Diodorus writes (4.31.8; and see Ovid, *Heroides* 9.53-4) that he fathered a son on Omphale named Lamos. Apollodorus (2.7.8) gives his name as Agelaus, ancestor of King Croesus, and writes that previously, while still a slave, he begot other son by a woman slave, thus connecting Heracles to the long tradition of references to various royal genealogies of Lydia.

Finally, we know that the three authors agree that just after his servitude he musters an army of volunteers and sails for Ilium, Troy, to wage a war of revenge, the first in a long series. These vengeful wars culminate in the capture of Eurytus' Oechalia which, ultimately, brings about his death.

It may prove useful to end this section with some contextualizing remarks. We are dealing with a well-known story. We know that the killing of Iphitos by Heracles was told in the *Odyssey*. And, as I have already pointed out, it is difficult to think that there were no stories which recount how Zeus punished the crime of killing a guest -a terrible crime in ancient

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[29]For a probable reference to the one-year period in Ion of Chios see Athenaeus 6.258f. The three-year version comes, at least, from Herodorus (IV Century BCE), F. Jacoby (ed.) (1957), Nr. 31, fragm. 33= Scholia Sophoclis, *Trachinias* 253, G. A. Xenis (ed.) (2010).

Greek culture not to be compared with, for example, the mere act of killing a few thousand people in battle or storming cities. As Zeus' beloved son and a hero destined for immortality, his death was not an option; as such, his punishment had to be terrible and severe.

The fact that he must be a slave is easy to understand in this context and is directly related to the punishment Zeus doles out to other offenders who cannot be killed or condemned to Tartarus or other such places, namely: the gods, Apollo and Poseidon. In fact he is one of the very few heroes punished as a god, with temporary thraldoms, and, at the same time, the only one who is involved in the two gods' serfdoms for excellence (see below).

Let me stress again the coherence of the two involved steps: as mentioned above, Heracles is depicted in the *Odyssey* as suffering on account of being a slave to an inferior. A hero previously forced to serve and inferior male, Eurystheus, could only be further punished by being forced to shoulder to a more demeaning condition, namely: by being made subordinate to man's inferior, a woman.

It is clear enough that this story mirrors the story of Eurystheus: the same succession of madness, crime, oracle, punishment through temporary enslavement/submission, hardships and labours, and liberation, as well as the repetition of the intervention of Hera (madness) in Tzetzes, and of Heracles' father, Zeus, in Apollodorus after the fight over the Tripod.

4. Transvestism and Something More

The reinforcement of the theme of Heracles' submission to a man by this additional submission to a woman is full of consequences. If a hero and son of Zeus destined to be king must obey orders given by the inferior Eurystheus, to suffer the humiliation of being under his power, then whilst under Omphale he suffers a double, additional debasement. In effect, he loses his name and heroic status, and even his role as a male for he is dominated by a woman instead of dominating her. Explorations on humiliation in terms of the destruction of the typical male role are easy to understand in this context.

It is also interesting to note the coherence of the end of the story with the main conflicts in the narrative: the loss of Heracles' social and gender role. His social role could only be regained by carrying out heroic feats, while his gender role is regained by marrying the woman who had been his master. In any case, shame and rage are obvious and explicit and, naturally, give way to his revenge

We have briefly touched upon why the most dramatic aspect of this story disappears in our three main sources, although it is prominent in iconographic and literary sources, as well as in literary sources describing artworks. It may be worthwhile here to take a brief look at these representations with a few examples. They present Heracles during his stay in Omphale's palace as a transvestite, holding a spinning wheel and doing other feminine tasks, while Omphale takes hold of his weapons (his mace, in particular) and wears his lion skin, often even wearing just that. In other scenes, Heracles appears drunk, conquered by wine, love or lust, and surrounded by objects associated with Dionysus, including musical instruments[30].

Figure 2: Omphale and Heracles. Marble statue. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. Roman copy of a Greek original[31]

There are representations of heads, busts, and standing groups of Heracles and Omphale together, exchanging roles, as well as different variations of her alone, in different materials

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[30]See for representations, in particular, J. Boardman (1994) and K. Schauenburgh (1960); see too F. Brommer (1984), pp. 126-8; G. Herzog-Hauser (1953), 394-6; K. Tümpel, J. Sieveking (1902), 887-99.

[31]https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Eracle_e_onfale,_copia_del_I_sec_da_creazione_eclettica_romana_del_50-0_ac_ca._6406_01.JPG Photo Sailko.

and for different uses. Curiously enough, Heracles alone is rare. Four additional images could be useful for the reader here, apart from the already mentioned Phokaian coin from the IV Century BCE (Figure 1). The first is a presentation of this theme of female domination with two figures in a marble group [32] from the I Century BCE, perhaps following a Hellenistic original (Figure 2). Note her nudeness and superiority. The second presents the same theme in the centre of a III Century CE mosaic in Liria (Spain) representing the twelve labours of Heracles (Figure 3)[33]. Now the throne emphasizes her naked superiority. Two paintings from Pompeii (I century CE or previous) finish our small list. The first (Figure 4)[34], repeated with small variations in other Pompeian wall painting, obviously implying the popularity of the theme, presents a seated Omphale looking down at Heracles, fallen, drunken, and dressed as a woman, while the *erotes* take his club and quiver. One of the interesting things about this picture is that we do not have a text explaining its meaning in the context of (a given) Heracles and Omphale story. The last one is another wall painting from Pompeii (Figure 5)[35] where the transvestite and drunk Heracles is shown in the middle of a kind of Dionysian parade, with the *erotes* and musical instruments (a flute and a *tympanum* near his ears); Omphale, wearing his weapons, displays again her triumph. In Ion's fragments we have seen associations between music and this story without more ado. However, we already know that those Dionysian overtones are commonplace, just as music is part of a Dionysian *thiasos*, and also a specific trait in representations as seen in this last one. *Thyrsoi* are carried by the participants and they are, at the same time, wands and musical instruments and even, occasionally, weapons. Both associations are also visible in texts, for example, in Seneca (*Hercules Furens* 465-76), where a character criticizes (absent) Heracles saying that he could not be called brave because he gave his lion skin and club to a girl, he dressed in Tyrian robes, dripped his locks with nard, wore a barbaric headband and busied his hands with the *non virilem* sounds of *tympani*; Heracles' mortal father, Amphitryon, then defends him by referring to Bacchus. In any case, Heracles becomes a musician in Seneca, just as he plays -in fact breaks- *tympana* in Statius (*Thebaid* 10.649).

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[32]J. Boardman (1994), 7,1, p. 48, nr. 23; 7,2, p. 33, Omphale 23.

[33]J. Boardman (1994), 7,1, p. 49, nr. 39.

[34]J. Boardman (1994), 7,1, p. 48, nr. 28; 7,2, p. 34, Nr. 28.

[35]J. Boardman (1994), 7,1, p. 48, nr. 29; 7,2, p. 34, nr. 29.

Figure 3: Omphale and Heracles. Mosaic of Liria (Spain). Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid. III Century CE[36]

Considering all this from a more comprehensive perspective, Heracles' feminization under Omphale, as weird as it may seem, is no surprise. Quite the contrary, indeed it would be surprising if it did not happen. Mythological constructions dealing with a relationship of a female -goddess or woman- who is superior to a male tend to explore the implied, basic contradiction: if male identity is based on dominance over women, female superiority denotes danger. Obviously, in a story presided over by sexual and/or marital relationships, this danger is condensed in most extreme form. As many other mythologies and epics do, Greek mythologies and epics project this danger onto the individual man in relation to his body and virility and onto other things connected to him: sons, kingdoms, armies, etc. (see Wulff Alonso 1996; 1997; 2015b).

Omphale is a powerful female, akin to a goddess, and her relationship with Heracles produces the same result, i.e.: his feminization and her masculinization, demonstrated via their exchange of roles and clothes, his feminine tasks and humiliation, and her triumph. As stated before, Athenian comedy may have been the genre in which all these potential components flourished, exploring Heracles' humiliation in a rather Greco-Roman way, very connected to the other side of the hero's character, the super male of Greco-Roman mythology.

In any case, Heracles' adventure with Omphale has multiple layers, putting into play the anxiety over male and female roles, sexual ambiguity, the comic effect of the feminization

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Figure 4: Omphale and Heracles. Pompei wall painting. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. I Century CE

of the super-male, the dangers of love and desire, as well as erotic aspects concerning female dominance and transvestism. The fact that this story inspired the creation of a wide assortment of art and other objects, including intimately personal items such as jewellery, is a testament to this theme's deep, underlying significance[37]. Its continuity and popularity in modern European painting, sculpture and literature serves as a further demonstration of this story's importance.

As noted before, there are also some additional literary sources which explore the story of Omphale. Two of the most remarkable come from the same author, the Roman Ovid, and form part of the continuity of recreations of mythical stories that characterises Greco-Roman culture. His recreations, however, are penned in another language, Latin, as he, along with other authors (Virgil, Horace, Properce, etc.), were trying to create a literary language capable of rivalling the beloved Greek models. For Roman writers, using original Greek materials was by no means problematic nor implied any lack of creativity, it was simply the continuation of the tradition they inherited and admired.

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[37]A last example: J. Boardman (2015), p. 156 and Pl. XLIV: Onyx cameo from Akra (Pakistan) showing Omphale's head; see 138-50 for a stone palette with a possible Heracles-Omphale scene.
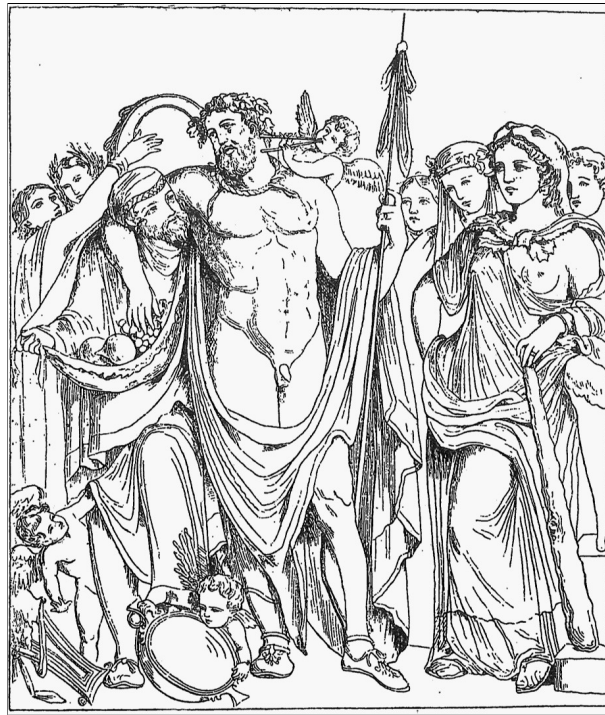
Figure 5: Omphale and Heracles. Pompei wall painting. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. I Century CE[38]

5. Omphale and Heracles in Ovid

The success and transmission of Ovid in the Latin tradition and beyond ensured the survival of his works. The first deals with aspects related to transvestism while the second takes its cue from Sophocles' treatment of Deianira's suffering.

The first is not only the most remarkable but also the longest extant piece dedicated to the story of Omphale and Heracles. As is common in mythology, our story is an inset within the story of Faunus from Ovid's *Fasti* (2.303-58). Certainly, it is not a very impressive amount of verses, in particular if we compare those few verses with the 1824 verses of the *Mbh.* Book 4 or the 353 (double) verses detailing General Kīcaka's episode inside it.

Ovid's book deals with Roman festivals (*Fasti*) by months. We have only six Books, devoted to the first six months, and it is unclear whether he finished the work or not and when and where he wrote it or whether and when he revised it. Basically, he details religious festivals,

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[38]August Baumeister, *Denkmäler des Klassischen Altertums, zur Erläuterung des Lebens der Griechen und Römer in Religion, Kunst und Sitte*, Vol. 2: Kadmos-Perikles, München, 1887, p. 1105.

rites and their mythological explanations, usually giving different versions. In the Second Book, February, he writes about the question of why the Lupercales, a sacred brotherhood, are naked in the Lupercalia festival on February 15, which precedes the Faunus rites. One of the answers given is the story that interests us now, explicitly a hilarious one (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.304).

As Ovid writes, Faunus eschews the use of clothes because he once was humiliated in connection with them. One day Faunus glimpses Heracles and Omphale entering a cave situated in a grove dedicated to Bacchus (Dionysus) with some attendants and falls in love. While servants prepare meals and wine, Omphale exchanges clothes with Heracles: she gives him her garments and jewellery while she takes his club, lion skin, bow and arrows. After eating, they lie down on separate beds, because they are preparing themselves for a Bacchic ceremony to take place the next day.

Faunus wishes to lie with her and enters the cave in the dark; he first touches the lion skin and is scared, but later he feels the -feminine- clothes of the person on the neighbouring couch. He climbs up and touches again, feels hairy legs and Heracles awakes and thrusts him away. Faunus falls with a crash, at which point Omphale orders the attendants to bring torches. When the intruder is seen on the ground groaning and barely able to move his limbs, everybody laughs, and Omphale also laughs. After such an experience with vesture, the god prefers that his worshippers go naked to his rites.

To avoid repetitions, the whole story will be set out in more detail below, though the reader can easily see its parallels to the story of Kīcaka's harassment of Draupadī: both include nocturnal sexual assaults of women, wherein the sexually aroused male looks for her in the dark, touches a man instead and is defeated by him.

We do not know whether Ovid invented it. He maintains some of the typical traits of the traditional narrative. Note that she is his *domina*/mistress. It could be meaningful that this exchange is situated in a ritual context resembling the Heracles' Cos cult transvestism. Note also the difficulty in deciding at which point in the Omphale-Heracles story this feast and incident takes place; in any case, it occurs under the auspices of a relationship of love and light domination.

Other components seem to be taken from a source we already know: the stage. The comedy-like aspects of the story have been directly related not only to comedies in general, but

specifically to one of the few that have survived, the play *Casina* by the Roman playwright Plautus. In *Casina*[39] we find a scene in which a sexual aroused man tries, in the dark, to have sexual relations with a "woman" (Casina) who is in fact a man because there has been a substitution to cheat him. This substitution is not casual, but contrived by a woman who dresses a strong male servant as a woman to humiliate her husband and his own servant. Thus, we have, as in Ovid's story, a) in a darkened place (bedroom/cave) b) a male (the husband's servant/ Faunus) entering and trying to have sexual relations with a "woman". Plautus more crudely explores the ambiguity of the situation with very specific details, as the man touches the penis of "Casina", but we also have: c) he, instead of a woman, meets a man dressed as a woman, d) who pushes him away (*Casina* 930/ *Fasti* 2.350), e) a description of the impact of beard-like bristles/ hairy legs (*Casina* 929/ *Fasti* 2.348), f) the male falling from bed (*Casina* 931/*Fasti* 2.350), and g) the question of shame and fear playing an essential role (for servant and master in *Casina* 875 ff.).

It is not important for us whether Plautus takes the whole story from a previous Greek author -Diphilus-, as most probably happens. What is important is that Ovid's rendering works with well-known Greco-Roman materials, one of them, obviously, being the very common theme in Greek theatre of sexual comic confusion in the dark.

Along the same lines, one of the main components of the story, Faunus' nocturnal and surreptitious attempt of having sexual contact with a sleeping female, who awakes after a noise and general derision of the prowler ensues, has an interesting parallel in another story also told by Ovid and other authors. Told twice in *Fasti* (1.415-438 and, in relation to Cybeles, 6.319-344), the story of Priapus recounts how during a Bacchic festival Priapus, tiptoeing in the dark, tries to assault the drunken and sleeping Naiad Nymph, Lotis, but Silenus' donkey brays raucously, alerting the party-goers, and the discovered and fully erect Priapus has to flee in the midst of people laughing at him. Thus, if Ovid invented the story, he has a lot of components to use from a tradition in which attacks, whether nocturnal and surreptitious or not, and erections by Faunus' Greek equivalents (*satyroi*, Silenus, Priapus…) were frequent. There is another possible source for Ovid, which, I must say, has remained undetected until now. Though this new Heraclean theme will be dealt later on so as to better understand

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[39]See the interesting commentary of E. Fantham (2011), p. 372.

the construction of the Kīcaka and Draupadī story by V. and his creative mechanisms, it is useful now because it entails another story of sexual assault perpetrated by male characters, not just in simple darkness but in a cave, and which repeats three main aspects of Plautus' story not found in Ovid, but are indeed in the *Mbh.* Book 4: harassment, substitution-trap, and retaliation.

The story is told in relation to the temple of Aphrodite Apatouros, in the Black Sea. This myth is most probably quite ancient, and perhaps not altogether Greek. Strabo writes that near Phanagoria in the Maeotian Lake (Sea of Azov), the northern extension of the Black Sea, there was a magnificent temple of Aphrodite Apatouros, and that some attempted to explain the etymology of its name by linking it to the Greek word for "treachery", ἀπάτη. He explains (Strabo 11.2.10) the treachery: once when the Giants sought to rape Aphrodite, she devised a plan to kill them. The goddess called upon Heracles for help and prepared a deception: she hid him in a cave, asked the Giants to enter one by one but when they arrived there thinking they would have her, Heracles (transvestite?) was waiting for them in the darkness and killed them all. Cave and darkness, as well sexual connotations and violence, are patent here too.

Comparing the Ovidian story of Omphale, Faunus and Heracles, it seems evident that there are some common components: a) a male/s desire(s) a beautiful female, b) he/they enter(s) in the dark to have relations with said female (who does not know it/does not want it), c) he does not make love to her, but meets a man, Heracles, and is defeated by him. Note that, in particular, Heracles becomes a defender of menaced females.

The story's connection to Ovid is interesting. Aphrodite is the most important divinity in the pantheon of the Bosphorus, with at least four temples, two of them quite famous: this one, and the one of the nearby city of Phanagoria, a very well-known trade centre (Ustinova 1998, 226). It is no stretch to imagine that Ovid would have known this story in Rome and may have adapted it for his Faunus tale, a sexual demigod but hardly warrior-like or powerful. However, Ovid was exiled for many years (8-17/18 CE) and died on the Black Sea. An author who writes works in the Barbarian language of the people inhabiting the place where he lives, the Getae, would have been indeed more interested in the Greek communities living by the sea. Ovid reworked the *Fasti* during his exile, at least enough as to change the dedication of the work after Augustus' death (14 CE) to a member of his family (*Fasti*

1.1.1-6; *Tristia* 2.549-52). Did he use the Apatouros story for the version we have of the Faunus-Omphale-Heracles story? Did he use a more literal version in one of his lost works that could have been used by V. or is it possible that he took it from another source?

In any case, the quality and character of the story is undoubtedly Greek. The name "Apaturos" is most probably a local name adapted by the Greek colonists as it recalls the Greek "Apaturia", the name of a famous festival of the Ionian communities (Herodotus 1.147). In at least the case of one of them, Athens, there is a parallel intent of explaining the name of the festival through a myth and an act of treachery[40]. The myth has probably a double component, Greek and indigenous. We have a hint of the second: Herodotus writes a story told in the Black Sea about a goddess who lives in a cave, steals Heracles' mares and tells the hero she will not give back his mares without having intercourse with him; after, she delays returning the mares until she bears three sons of Heracles (Herodotus 4.8-10).

There is another very well-known Heraclean story (Apollodorus 2.4.10) connected to this one by the common themes of a) interest in bearing sons of Heracles, b) a certain trick, and c) darkness. King Thespius entertained Heracles for fifty days while he was chasing the Nemean lion. Each night (in some versions, during the same night) the king sent one of his daughters to sleep with him, while the hero thought that he was always sleeping with the same maiden. Note how Thespius, Aphrodite and the offended wife in Plautus' *Casina* all use the distractive ruse of darkness to achieve their aims, yet another commonplace motif in Greco-Roman texts.

It is not that in the *Fasti* Ovid ignored the traditional perspectives of Heracles' humiliations under Omphale, it is that he departs from tradition and creates (or recreates) the story in the terms he chooses, without omitting some of its main features (transvestism, Omphale's power, Heracles as slave, Dionysian context, erotic overtones...).

Nevertheless, Ovid does use the more traditional version as a kind of backdrop for the second text we shall see, *Heroides* 9, as well as in his didactic elegiac poem on the arts of love and seduction (*Ars Amatoria* 2.217-22). He recommends that men follow the wishes of their beloved woman and points out that even the great Heracles, after having defeated all the monsters Hera had sent him and before ascending to the heavens, performed feminine tasks

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[40]Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Acarnanians* 162; M. P. Nilsson (1906), pp. 463-4 for the festival.

among the Ionian girls.

In the second use of the Heracles and Omphale story that interests us here, there is no problem at all in tracing the paths Ovid chose to follow. Taking his cue from Sophocles' description of Deianira's suffering where the story of Omphale is referred to, in her words, as the terrible humiliation it is, Ovid essentially invents an entirely new literary genre, *Epistulae Heroidum* (Letters of Heroines). As letters written by aggrieved heroines to their heroic lovers, these poems present one singular female voice expressing her feelings. Accordingly, there are no other interacting characters, here only Deianira writes/speaks, describing her feelings and the events which take place up until his, and her, very death. Although the text will be explored later more thoroughly, a brief presentation here may prove useful.

Heroides 9 pictures Deianira writing a letter, which becomes a monologue, lamenting her situation, complaining about his husband's behaviour and her suffering. The description of Iole's entrance into the city, the beautiful slave-girl who threatens her position as Heracles' legitimate wife, is prominent in the text. Deianira's eventual suicide also factors into her discourse. She describes Omphale's domination and her husband's feminization before the defeat of Iole's father in a very specific way, connected not just to a general complaint in terms then/now (the great hero and warrior then/ the servant of a woman now), but to the feminization of the hero's body set to spinning wool and serving others.

No longer a poor slave on the margins of the story, as she is in Sophocles, Iole is now in the forefront as a stunning girl who enters the city, forgets her condition as a slave and rivals her mistress, Deianira. Believing Heracles is bringing a new bride into their palace, Deianira is aggrieved and mad with jealousy.

Curiously enough, in Aeschylus' *Agammenon*, where we have the very first, though not quite explicit, allusion to the story of Omphale story in Greek literature, there is an interesting reference to a young woman prisoner-of-war, king Priamus' daughter, Cassandra, who threatens her future mistress' position, and to the question of her acceptance/non-acceptance of her condition as a slave. The poet does it through the voice of her mistress, Clytemnestra (Aeschylus, *Agammenon* 1039-41, Smyth's trans.): "Get down from the car and do not be too proud; for even Alcmene's son [Heracles], men say, once endured to be sold and eat the bread of slavery".

Note the play between: a) young princess, b) now captive and slave (Cassandra-Iole), c)

entering the palace after the defeat and death of her father, d) a mistress (Clytemnestra-Deianira) in potential danger because of the captive arrival, and e) the death of her husband because of her (Agammenon-Heracles).

Ovid sails very travelled seas, though always finds new inspiration for risky voyages. Others shall follow in his and his predecessors' footsteps.

6. Some Stories within the Story

The sub-stories centred on the story of Omphale deserve some additional attention as well. We know that, according to Diodorus, under Omphale Heracles defeats the Cercopes, kills Syleus, and defeats the Itoni, the final story, to which Apollodorus adds the burial of Icarus. But there is still yet another feat: he slays a terrible serpent near the Lydian river Sagaris (Hyginus, *Astronomica* 2.14.2; *Second Vatican Mythographer* 155). The stories about the Itoni and the serpent are both very short.

Our information on the literary treatments of the other three stories comes almost entirely from ancient erudition, compilers, and antiquaries etc., a tradition embodied by the Alexandrian School of the III Century BC, followed by, for example, Athenaeus more than four centuries later, and continued by Byzantine scholars. Thanks to those materials, we have seen that all three main stories concerning the feats Heracles performs while under Omphale's rule present interesting tracks leading to Athenian comedy; although Heracles is the most popular character in the Greek theatre from the V Century BCE onwards (see Vollkommer 1988,78; 65 ff.) the fact that there were plays, comedies in particular, dedicated not just to Omphale, but to the Cercopes, Syleus, and Daedalus, is also noteworthy.

6.1 Cercopes

As stated before, it is impossible to pinpoint the precise moment when these stories become part of the story of Omphale. We do know, however, that the oldest one (VIII or VII Century BCE) is the story of the Cercopes, which, according to Diodorus, Apollodorus and Tzetzes is the first of Heracles' feats performed under Omphale. There are other locations, and even stories, for the Cercopes, as in Ovid (*Metamorphosis* 14.90-100), who relates the Cercopes to the Pithecousai, where they were turned into monkeys by Zeus, or Pherecydes, which has them turned into stone[41] or in Herodotus (7.216), who writes of a place in the Thermopylae named after them.

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[41]See Pherekydes, F. Jacoby (ed.), (1957), Nr. 3, fragm. 77.

For our version of the Cercopes and Heracles tale there are representations from the VI Century BCE onwards, though, as I pointed out earlier, they lost popularity at the end of the IV Century BCE and thus disappeared (Woodford 1992, 6.1, p. 34). It is a theme, nevertheless, that was lavishly used in Old and Middle Greek comedy.

As the story goes[42]While Heracles is asleep under a tree, the Cercopes try to steal his weapons, which are hanging on its branches or propped against the trunk. Heracles awakes and captures the Cercopes, usually two. He then hangs them head-down by their feet on a pole/branch and slings it over his shoulder, their heads down and feet up. When they begin to laugh, and he asks them why, and they tell that they had recalled that her mother had told them to take care of a μελαμπύγος ("black buttocks"), which they now see refers to the black haired buttock of the hero -perhaps instead to a black buttock eagle. Their mother is a goddess, Theia, daughter of Okeanos, in Zenobius and Tzetzes, *Scholia Lycophronis*, for example.

There are two components that help to connect this story to the story of Omphale. The first is that in both cases Heracles' loss/ threat of losing his weapons is an essential part of the plot: in one case the hero prevents it, and in the other -Omphale- he cannot, though he recovers them in the end. His weapons are, of course, associated with his identity, and the corresponding loss of it, as attested to by Ovid, who has Deianira associate Omphale's proud display of his lion skin with proof of her victory over such a victor[43]A text by an unknown tragic author transmitted by Plutarch (*De intelligentia animalium* 10= *Moralia* 967C) shows him sleeping with his bow under his arm and grasping his club with his right hand, which is representative of the troubled and tormented component of the hero.

The second is the sexual implications, in one case associated with Omphale's domination

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[42]Pseudo *Nonnus, comm. on Sermon 4.39 of Gregory Nazianzus,* in J. Nimmo Smith (ed.) (1992), pp. 29-30; Zenobius 5.10; Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 5.73-99; Tzetzes, *Scholia Lycophronis Alexandra* 91 (E. Scheer, (ed.) 1908, pp. 50-51); Suidas, *Lexikon*, s.v. Κέρκωπες.

[43]Two brief examples suffice: Aristophanes' *Frogs* presents Dionysus dressed in a lion-skin and taking a club to go to Hades, thus disguised as his half-brother Heracles, a typical comedic theme (see Galinsky 1972, 89-91); Euripides (incidentally also a character in Aristophanes' play) presents Heracles, immediately after coming back from Hades and after being driven mad by Hera and killing his sons (*Heracles*, 1376-1385) doubting whether or not to keep his weapons, the weapons he has used to kill his sons, and even imagines them talking to him; finally Heracles decides to take them up again, as they were comrades of his glories and defence against his enemies. To put on the lion-skin means to be prepared to confront even philosophical problems: Plato, *Cratylus* 411a.

and his actual feminization, and in the other, most probably with something similar though via a double association: 1) "black-buttocks" is connected to a hard life, to virility[44]; 2) a crude, obscene sexual joke based on the potential use the Cercopes can make of his buttocks. One representation of the erected Cercopes[45]looking at Heracles backside and the fact that in some versions he kills them, or part of them, as in Diodorus, after their laughter and subsequent explanation, points to a homoerotic reference. This is easy to understand in a context dominated by the hero's subjugation to a woman and his consequent feminization. Be that as it may, with the Cercopes the hero can take immediate revenge instead of being forced to accept the situation.

6.2 Syleus

In contrast, we cannot say whether the story concerning Syleus was created in direct relation to the story of Omphale or not. The seven Attic red-figure vases (490-460 BCE) preceding Euripides' satyr play have led specialists to presume that, as usual, there were precedents, most probably plays and Athenian plays at that, prior to Euripides (Oakley 1994, 7,1, pp. 825-7).

A reasonable reconstruction of Euripides' version of the story reads as such[46]: Heracles is sold by Hermes to Syleus and he is forced to hoe his vineyards. After Syleus' tyrannical behaviour, Heracles destroys his vineyard, brings the vines to Syleus' palace, burns them to bake bread, devours Syleus' bullock, drinks his best wine, uses the palace door as a table, and destroys the house -an amphora in the Louvre pictures him breaking a column with an axe (Oakley 1994, 7,1, p. 826, nr. 5; 7,2, p. 581, nr. 5). When Syleus returns to the palace and protests, Heracles confronts him, challenges him to a drinking contest and, most likely, kills him. One of the fragments depicts the hero telling Xenodoce, Syleus' daughter, in a very direct way that she stop crying and enter the house with him to sleep together (Euripides, *Fragments,* Collard, Cropp (eds.) 2008, fragm. 694).

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[44]See Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 801-4; see Aeschines, *On the Embassy* 40: Aeschines calls Demosthenes cercops, which implies mischievous, tricky, as white buttocks implies coward.

[45]See F. Brommer (1984), p. 31 and Taf. 8; S. Woodford (1992), 6,1, p. 33, nr. 9; 6,2, p. 17, nr. 9; Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 5.190 says that they saw Heracles back and genitalia.

[46]The basis for this are two summaries of the work, see Euripides, *Fragments,* Chr. Collard, M. Cropp (eds.) (2008), pp. 173-9 and Philo, *Every good man is free* 100-03; see also Apollodorus 2.6.3; Diodorus 4.31.7; Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 2.432-35; see F. Brommer (1984), p. 34; E. Kuhnert (1909-15); G. Türk (1931); J. H. Oakley (1994).

In the version transmitted by Apollodorus, Syleus is without a doubt killed and his daughter Xenodoce too. Whether she is killed by Heracles, and perhaps whether she is raped too, her participation in offences to Heracles is implied. It is particularly meaningful that on one of the vases we have, a woman, probably Xenodoce, steals Heracles' club and lion skin while he chopped the vines in the nude[47].

This story is one of the Heraclean narratives picturing kings or powerful men mistreating or killing foreigners before being themselves defeated and/or punished by the hero. The theme is deeply connected to the immediate experience of common people as it features a bad master of day labourers getting his due, which makes it all the more touching. Perhaps Hermes' intervention hinders immediate retribution. However, while the queen, protected by divine injunctions, could not be punished, even if Hermes theoretically protected Syleus and his daughter, retribution is probably swift in Euripides and no doubt swift and immediate in the versions of our handbooks.

Some interesting fragments of Euripides' *Syleus* are of particular interest here because of its intrinsic interest and because they help us to see a part of the flesh irremediably lost in the bare skeleton given by our meagre sources. In the first part of the Common Era, Philo of Alexandria collected them in a fascinating text, *Every Good Man Is Free*, embodying some of the questions we have already seen and new ones.

Philo writes about real freedom, which consists of freedom of passions and control of the self, a virtuous condition letting him not to do anything against his will. From this perspective, even a slave could be free. In contrast, a soul and life dominated by vices and passions as desire, fear, pleasure, grief or anger, means a real slavery. The Jew (and Roman, and Greek, and Egyptian) Philo includes among his examples of endurance and wisdom, of souls no surrendering to bad masters (Philo, *Every Good Man Is Free* 74 ff.), the Seven Greek Wise men, the Persians Magi, the Indian Gimnosophistes, and the Hebrew Essenians, and begins his individual examples by citing the wise Indian Gimnosophist Calanus, who did not accept Alexander's orders, and the Stoic Zenon.

Poets and prose writers, Philo states, often imbue their characters with these virtues, as

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[47]See J. H. Oakley (1994), 7,1, p. 826, nr. 7; F. Brommer (1984), p. 36 and Tafel 9; in J. H. Oakley (1994), 7,1, p. 826, nr. 5 and 6 she is probably also the woman who runs while Heracles destroys the column (5) and while he uproots two vines (6).

with Euripides who presents Heracles at the moment in which he is put up for sale, i.e., just before Syleus buys him (see for the whole reference *Every Good Man Is Free* 98-104); the hero's conduct under the pressure of this horrendous situation proves that his nature is incommensurate with that of a slave and the people who looked upon him felt "that he is not only free, but will become the master of his purchaser" (Philo, *Every Good Man Is Free* 100, Colson trans.). Hermes is asked then whether Heracles is φαῦλος (mean, bad, worthless, defective) and the god demurs, drawing attention to his bearing, dress and club (Philo, *Every Good Man Is Free* 101). Somebody (Syleus or, perhaps, another character) says: "Who wants to buy a stronger than himself, and bring him home as master of the house? It fairly frightens one to look at you, eyes full of fire, you look just like a bull watching a lion's onset". And continues: "Your looks alone are evidence enough, though you say nothing, that you won't obey. Giving, not taking, orders is your line" (Philo, *Every Good Man Is Free* 101, Colson trans.).

We can see how there are two main issues at stake: first, who is the real master in a situation where a superior man is subject to an inferior? Danger is all around. Second, the people looking upon such a man at the moment in which he appears and is about to be sold to a buyer question whether he is really the slave/servant he feigns to be.

It is not difficult to guess why Syleus' story has been associated with (or even invented in the context of) the story of Omphale. Queen Omphale's connection to Heracles involves this very relational configuration predicated on dominance and authority, master/slave or master/minion, though no vengeance on her is taken. In *Syleus*, Heracles, the "slave" who is neither perceived as nor is a slave, breaks away from the expected *status quo* when, no longer able to stomach such mistreatments, he lashes out in anger. Thus, this story is presented as a kind of alternative solution to the basic conflict inherent to such, understandably thorny master/slave relationships. Here, Syleus' abuse of the master/slave (or master/thrall, master/day-labourer) relationship occasions the havoc Heracles wreaks in the fields where he works and in the house where his master lives.

Moreover, Xenodoce's theft of Heracles' weapons and lion skin, as shown on the abovementioned vase, is obviously reminiscent of the loss of his weapons and characteristic attributes while serving Omphale (as well as the Cercopes' intent to do the same), thus reinforcing the associations between female dominance and the loss of basic component which serve to

identify him as a hero and a man.

6.3 Icarus, Daedalus, Heracles

The story of Icarus is, in part, an etiological myth to explain the name of an island and sea, Icaria, which is close to Samos and, consequently, to Asia Minor and Lydia. When Daedalus and Icarus flee -and fly- from the king of Crete Minos, the heedless Icarus soars to high, loses his wings, falls into the sea and dies (Hyginus, *Fabulae* 40, Apollodorus, *Epitome* 1.12-13), thus giving a new name to the sea and island. It is a very popular story and, as such, there are many references to it across artistic genres as well as plastic representations from the VI Century BCE onwards. It has an impressive continuity: Icarus' fall "is one of the four most common mythological themes in Roman wall painting" (Nyenhuis 1984, 321), probably due to Ovid's moving treatment of the theme in two separate works, *Metamorphoses* 8.183-235 and *Ars Amatoria* 2.21-96.

We have seen Apollodorus' version: Heracles sees the body of Icarus washed ashore on the island of Doliche, buries it and then calls the island Icaria instead of Doliche. In return, Icarus' father Daedalus made a statue of Heracles, which years later Heracles mistook at night for a living enemy and attacked it; in one version he is even hurt by the statue or by the rebounding stone he hurled at it (Eustathius, *com. Iliad* 882.38-42).

We find the same version of Heracles burying Icarus in Pausanias (9.11.5), though without any connection to Omphale. Moreover, the island is said to have no previous name and is hence called Icaria, along with the sea, in honour of the fallen. He goes on to write that in his days a small mound on a promontory could be seen at his burial site. In other versions, Heracles is not the one who buries Icarus. For example, Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 8.234-5) presents his father Daedalus doing it after his fall and giving the new name to the island. And other variations (Apollodorus, *Epitome* 1.12-13) of Icarus' death do not offer explanations regarding who buries him and changes the island's name.

In any case, Heracles burying a corpse is not at all strange in his stories. For instance, Apollonius of Rhodes (*Argonautica* 1.1302-8) refers to the killing of two heroes by Heracles on another island, Tenos, and their burial under a mound.

The fascinating story of the fight Heracles has in the dark with a statue made in his own image deals with well-known materials: stories of Daedalus' marvellous statues can be found on the Athenian stage: a fragment of Aristophanes' *Daedalus* recounts how Daedalus made a

statue which was "tied down to keep it from running away" (Henderson trans., *Aristophanes Fragments*, fragm. 202, pp. 204-5), an idea also developed by Socrates in his dialogues (Plato, *Meno* 97d). The name "Daedalus" is associated with marvellous abilities and talents (see Athenaeus 3.101b; 7.326f; 9.399d; 9.395f.). Just before recounting the story of Icarus' burial by Heracles, Pausanias describes a particular statue of him in a sacred place in Thebes, the statue with which -the Thebans say- Daedalus gifted the hero for having buried his son (Pausanias 9.11.4-5; *cf.* 8.35.2).

Heracles' fight in the dark against Faunus in the story of Omphale has some connection to this nocturnal fight. But this one shows more obvious connections to the themes revolving around the deconstruction of the hero's persona and the self-destructive traits prevalent throughout this adventure in particular. Icarus' death, associated with his hubristic behaviour during his flight, together with his lack of burial and funeral rites and Heracles' eventual recovery of his corpse, is reminiscent of the loss of Heracles' personality and dignity as a hero during his slavery under Omphale and his eventual recovery. " Heracles went from Omphale to Hebe" (Athenaeus 6.245e): from extreme gender humiliation to marrying a goddess and apotheosis after death.

This is particularly meaningful if we recall another abovementioned aspect which further connects both stories: Daedalus and Icarus are, in effect, fleeing their bondage under King Minos. Consequently, a temporary thrall buries another temporary thrall who has fled a tyrannous master and king. Both stories are linked by deep common components as well as by their setting in Asia Minor, making their association with the realm of a Queen of Lydia easy.

6.4 The Serpent

Hyginus' text is part of the etiological myths concerning the origin of the Constellation of Ophiuchus, the Serpent or the Serpent Bearer (*Astronomica* 2.14; see *Second Vatican Mythographer* 155 too). Among other theories, some people, he writes, contend that, after Hercules/Heracles killed it, Jupiter placed the Serpent in the heavens as a constellation. The serpent lived in Lydia near the Sagaris River, part of Queen Omphale's realm, killing people and sacking the fields nearby; when Heracles killed it, Omphale sent Heracles back to Argos with gifts. We know that his victory over the invading Itoni is the cause of Heracles' liberation in our more authoritative version; we have here just a projection of it. The story is a

typical example of Heracles killing dangerous beasts, just as the story of Syleus is a typical example of Heracles killing wrong-doers.

6.5 The Itoni and the End of the Affair

The Itoni story is found only in Omphale's narrative and has no known autonomous life outside it (Diodorus 4.31.7). The Itoni are a neighbouring people who invade and plunder a large part of her kingdom. The object of their plunder is λεία, which means the plundering, chiefly, of cattle[48]. Heracles defeated them, took away their booty, sacked and destroyed their city and enslaved the inhabitants. There is no information in Diodorus of any other warrior helping him. It is the very last feat before his true identity is revealed: she admires his feat, and learns of his name and family, ending his servitude or perhaps shortening it. It is a somewhat brutal, but no doubt warrior-like prologue to the recovery of Heracles' heroic condition and gender role: Omphale marries him, thus reversing his previous role of subject, and he fathers a child with her who will be the founder of a dynasty.

In all our versions the end of his slavery serves as the prologue of a protracted revenge war. We know that for Sophocles it is the last war before his death, against Oechalia and King Eurytos, Iole's and Iphitos' father. And we also know that for Apollodorus, Diodorus and Tzetzes it is the (first) Trojan War; Apollodorus writes that Heracles musters a voluntary army as do the other two authors, albeit implicitly, for they write that he sails with a number of ships.

Heracles' Trojan War, a story already referred to in the *Iliad* as a first and easier taking of the city, in a sense closes another story from the *Iliad*: Apollo's and Poseidon's thraldom and Heracles' final involvement in it [49]. The two gods are condemned by Zeus to serve a man and they hire themselves to Laomedon, King of Troy. Apollo takes care of his cattle, which obviously thrive, and Poseidon builds the supernatural Trojan Wall, the key to the *Iliad*'s Trojan War and the second protagonist of the battles after Achilles. After their temporal slavery, Laomedon defrauds them of their wages, arguing that they were working under Zeus' orders and did not merit it. Thus, two superior males are temporarily under the power of an inferior, who exploits this situation.

The two gods cannot directly punish Laomedon on account of Zeus' orders. Note an addi-

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[48]See H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, *A Greek English Lexicon*, *s. v. λεία*; see also A Bailly, *Dictionnaire Grec Français*: "butin, particul. 1 bétail que l'on enlève".

[49]Apollodorus 2.5.9; 2.6.4; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 89; Diodorus 4.32; 4.42; see *Iliad* 5.638-42; 20.145-48; 21.441-57.

tional structural parallel with the two cases of Heracles we have already seen: Eurystheus and Omphale, and a more specific parallel with Augias' refusal to pay Heracles for cleaning his stables, and the contrast of all them with the story of Syleus. As it is impossible for Apollo and Poseidon to kill Laomedon, they send a sea monster to ravage his kingdom and, ultimately, do away with the king. To prevent it, Laomedon has to expose his daughter, Hesione, to the sea monster to be devoured. Heracles offers to save the princess in exchange for some extraordinary horses the king possesses. Though apparently the hero acts against the gods' plans by saving her, in the end, he actually exacts their revenge. When the princess, in chains, waits for the monster that is going to devour her, Heracles kills it, but Laomedon double-crosses Heracles too and does not give him the promised reward. Yet, as their deal is not mediated by Zeus, many years later the enraged, grudge-holding Heracles punishes the Trojan king, killing him and most of his children after sacking their beloved city. As pointed out before, for our three authors this is the first in a series of revenge wars that Heracles wages after being liberated from Omphale, the last of which is his war on Eurytus' Oechalia.

The story of Laomedon's transgression against divine superiority and its ghastly consequences finds its inverse in the story of Apollo and Admetus. As with Laomedon, Apollo is forced to serve a mortal man, Admetus; but unlike Laomedon, Admetus conducts himself properly, treats Apollo justly and hospitably, wins his favour and is therefore richly rewarded. As is to be expected, Heracles also figures into the story of Admetus by saving his wife Alcestis. Peril is palpable in the inverted cases of a master/slave relationship wherein a superior is subject to an inferior, but when the superior is actually a god the peril is all too real, the rewards and punishments absolute.

Greek tradition has Heracles taking part in a wide range of such stories: to forcibly endure abusive masters (Eurystheus, Omphale) and to take revenge of others (Augias, Syleus), as well as to take revenge against an abusive master of gods (Laomedon), and to reward a good one (Admetus).

It is interesting to note that in Apollodorus (2.6.2) Heracles meets and kills Iphitus when his adventure with Admetus comes to a close and that when his adventure with Omphale ends, he goes off to Troy and kills Laomedon. The hero's thralldom, therefore, is bookended by his interventions in both gods' thralldoms.

7. A Final Note

One of the more salient features of Heracles is represented by a line we examined earlier: Heracles went from Omphale -the woman who humiliates the hero to the utmost and feminizes him- to Hebe -the goddess who marries him once he becomes a god. We could even say: from servant of an inferior man under Eurystheus to god and companion of the gods after his apotheosis. Note the relatively simple architecture of power at play: gods/men, with the fragile and vulnerable position of the heroes between them, and man/woman.

The stories of its greatest hero, and particularly the ones which concern us here, display Greco-Roman culture's apprehensions and anxieties vis-à-vis hierarchy, power and good relations between the different hierarchical statuses. Obviously, "good" social order and hierarchies encompass "good" gender order. At the same time, they also serve as the perfect vehicle for a few related and philosophically essential questions regarding the hierarchy of self, i.e.: the problematic dichotomy of mind/body, read in the key of control versus desire and passions.

The story of a man -in fact a super-man and super-male- forcibly made subservient to a woman after having been forced to serve an inferior man, i.e., a story of a male temporarily under the power of a woman and feminized after having been forced to submit to an inferior, opens a wide array of possibilities for the construction and accumulation of stories.

The trope of temporary slavery is consequently noteworthy in our secondary stories, which feature: 1) Two runaway thrall, slaves or imprisoned characters, Daedalus and Icarus, the final redemption of one of them, who is buried as a hero by Heracles; 2) A vile master, Syleus, who buys Heracles as a slave, mistreats him and is, of course, killed by him. In the versions where the end of the story is Heracles' revenge on Laomedon after not being rewarded for having saved Hesione, we not only have this relationship Laomedon-Heracles, but also that of two gods, Poseidon and Apollo, who had been temporarily made subservient to a man, Laomedon, who first cheated them, was punished with Hesione's exposure to the sea-monster and was, finally, killed by Heracles.

The trope of women and gender issues dovetails here once more. The motif of Heracles' weapons and lion-skin has an interesting role in a story which depicts him as a transvestite who temporarily loses them because Omphale possesses him, while Xenodoce and the Cer-

copes seem to be related to the same motif.

The story of Heracles and Omphale provokes -just after this adventure in Sophocles- a revenge war, the result of which is the ambiguous arrival of a beautiful woman (Iole), also enslaved, who does not appear to be the prisoner and slave she is said to be. Her arrival inflames the jealousy of the hero's wife, the Lady of the palace, and ultimately, brings about the hero's death. It is a coherent, bitter and painful end for a story whose protagonist's life has been fraught with humiliation, exacerbated by his enslavement and feminization. These are stories which had been told for centuries, created, recreated, adapted and moulded in accordance with well-known models and structures.

Chapter 3

COMPARING TWO STORIES

After presenting our main thesis and the methodological keys in the *Introduction*, and *Mbh.*'s
Book 4 and the story of Omphale in Chapters 1 and 2, it is time to see whether my theory
holds up to scrutiny in the empirical field. The crux of the matter is simply to prove that
there is significant quantity and quality of common components (plot, scenes, characters,
stages, time, props…) [50]shared by these stories.

While this Chapter does not deal directly with the methods V. employs while adapting
Greco-Roman sources, two important issues may prove necessary and useful to help the
reader understand the substantial unity of some of these parallels.

The first is the fact that Heracles is one, individual hero, whereas the Pāṇḍavas are five broth-
ers. As we've seen in other examples, the fusion or fission of borrowed/adapted components
often depends on the needs of the borrower's culture. The multiple Mesopotamian gods, for
example, were fused to become the one (though not quite yet only) Jewish God; conversely,
if V. adapted the story of Heracles, as I contend, he had to fission the different components
of the hero's character into all or some of the Pāṇḍavas.

Concurrently, during the Omphale and Heracles *affaire* Heracles' wife, Deianira, is not at
Omphale's palace, but far away, in the same way that she is not with him during his twelve
Labours, though she appears with him in some adventures. If V. adapted this part of the story
from the Heracles, Omphale and Deianira story, the decision to have Draupadī accompany
her five husbands during their double exile means that while the Pāṇḍavas' roles in this Book

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[50]For previous approaches see F. Wulff Alonso (2008), pp. 355-62; 364-402 for Heracles; pp. 368-81 for
Omphale and Heracles; (2014c), pp. 360-9, 373-389, 391-411, 417-22 for Heracles; pp. 379-89, 391-406
for Omphale and Heracles; (2009b) for Heracles; (2018), (2019a), (2019b) for Book 4.

are created on the basis of one Greco-Roman character, her construction necessarily entails the use of multiple characters.

In the 18-Book rendering of the *Mbh.*, Book 4 is divided into five sections (*Mbh.* 1.2.130-3). Once again, I will be following this fivefold division of the text for the subsequent analysis. Moreover, a section will also be dedicated to the essential antecedents of Book 4, presented mostly in Book 3, as well as a final section concerning the common, general features of the story not previously dealt with.

The table below shows, in two parallel columns, the Greco-Roman sources I posit V. has used along with the corresponding section of Book 4 in which he has used them. To make it easier to follow the comparison, a brief summary of the common features at play are provided in *italics* at the beginning of the Greco-Roman column on the left-hand side.

To test the accuracy of the proposals, readers familiar with Greco-Roman culture may prefer to first consider the components in the left column, whereas readers familiar with the *Mbh.* Book 4 may prefer to first consider those in the right.

1. Preparing for One Year in the Court of King Virāṭa

Before delving headlong into the Pāṇḍavas sojourn in King Virāṭa's court, two components need to be taken into account: 1) The dual exile to which they have been condemned; 2) Their adventure with the deer.

1	*A relative, king and enemy, causes the hero/es problems directly related to the loss of a kingdom.* Heracles loses the kingdom of Mycenae through Hera's intervention to help his close relative Eurystheus, who is the enemy that causes him problems.	The Pāṇḍavas lose a kingdom and king Duryodhana, a close relative, is the enemy who causes them problems.
2	*12 years wandering.* Heracles is forced to accomplish twelve labours all over the world pursuant to Eurystheus' orders; in Apollodorus 2.4.12 the Pythian priestess commands him to serve Eurystheus for 12 years.	Book 2, *Sabhāparvan*, the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī are sentenced by the Kauravas to a dual exile (*Mbh.* 2.67.9-12; 2.68.1): the first implies twelve years outside their country suffering hardships and dangers in the wild (Book 3).
3	*Plus one year of thraldom.* After these 12 years, Heracles is sold into temporal thraldom under Omphale (Apollodorus 2.6.2; Diodorus 4.31.5). Sophocles in his *Trachiniae* 69-70; 252-53 states it to be one year.	The second is to spend one year in disguise, which turns out to be the year they spend as servants in Virāṭa's court (*Mbh.* 1.55.40; 2.66.18-19; 2.67.9-12; 3.36.22-27; 3.298.15-19).

4	*Anonymous during that year.* During that year, Heracles is an anonymous slave and only after his feats Omphale learns who he is and who his parents are (Diodorus 4.31.8).	They must remain there incognito and undiscovered by their enemies; only at the end of their thraldom can they reveal who they truly are.
5	*In a royal court.* During this year, Heracles is under the power and in the court of Queen Omphale of Lydia.	During that year, the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī are under the power and in the court of King Virāṭa.
6	*Changing 12 into 10 and 10 into 12.* The value of this 12/1 association is reinforced by another Heraclean association, now 12-10: Heracles originally was enforced to do 10 labours, but Eurystheus does not accept 2 of them and he must do them again, 12 (Apollodorus 2.5.11). Increase of 2. Note that if his twelve labours mean twelve years, the association between ten labours and ten years is also easy to presume.	The Pāṇḍavas have to spend one year in Virāṭa's court, but they spend 10 months instead of 12; however, it is enough because of astronomical reasons (*Mbh.* 4.47.1-6; see 4.30.1-3; 4.13.1). Decrease of 2. The enemy of the heroes, Duryodhana, is against this shortening.
7	*Reduction of penance to one year.* Another reduction of penance may be of interest here. After the intervention of Heracles' father, Zeus, the oracle states that the remedy for his disease is to be sold as a slave and remain as such for three years; however, Diodorus (4.31.8) writes that after Heracles defeated the Itoni, Omphale was pleased with his courage and set him free, which may explain the 3/1 variation.	In Book 3 (*Mbh.* 3.46, Vulgate) the Apsarā Urvaśī takes offence when Arjuna rejects her advances and curses him to become a eunuch. His father Indra limits this curse to this year of concealment in Virāṭa's court. The end result is one year.
8	*One year of penance for the sake of the future.* Both periods are full of suffering, but at the same time are ways to reach a higher goal: freedom from Eurystheus and immortality in the first case, health recovery and revenge in the second. Supernatural powers insist in the need of completing the term as commanded, though the situation makes the hero suffer and ponder flouting the command.	Both periods are full of sufferings, but at the same time are ways to reach a higher goal: accumulation of merits, revenge and recovery of the lost kingdom. Supernatural powers insist in the need of completing the term as commanded, though the situation causes the heroes to suffer and, in particular, Bhīma and Draupadī (though in fact all but Yudhiṣṭhira) to reject it.

9	*Madness as cause.* The root of the problem lies in two moments of madness: The first, sent by Hera, in which the hero kills his sons by Megara and his brother's sons; And, the second, according to Apollodorus (2.6.2), when he went mad again and threw his host Iphitos from the walls of Tiryns.	The root of the problem lies in a fault of Yudhiṣṭhira in a moment of madness, intoxication, in the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura (see *Mbh.* 2.53 ss.; in particular, *Mbh.* 2.55.5; 2.60.4-5; 2.60.5c: *mūḍho rājā dyūtamadena matta*), which damages close relatives too. He, his brothers and their wife lose, first, their liberty along with all their assets, and, secondly, have to leave after being humiliated, Draupadī in particular.
10	*Before it all begins, a favourable intervention of the hero's divine father -the father of the "sinner"- translates into his/their healing and knowledge of the immediate future.* When the priestess of Apollo refuses to give Heracles a remedy for the disease his crime against Iphitos caused, Heracles carries off the oracular tripod and Apollo pursues and fights him. Zeus intervenes and Heracles thus receives an oracle: to be sold in a temporary thraldom. Zeus' intervention allows Heracles to achieve his goal: to know the cure for his disease, identified as his thraldom under Omphale (see Apollodorus 2.6.2).	In the last meaningful scene at the end of Book 3, Dharma, Yudhiṣṭhira's divine father, intervenes just before their year of thraldom in Virāṭa's court (*Mbh.* 3.295-8). The whole adventure ends with Yudhiṣṭhira's victory over his brothers, the remedy for their death/illness, and Dharma granting him the boon of not being recognized during the following year. It is here when, for the first time, it is revealed, by Dharma's own words, that their year incognito in the service of a court will take place in Virāṭa's city (*Mbh.* 3.298.18).
11	*Not only a father but also: a) theft of a sacred instrument, b) which is associated with fire; c) confrontations between brothers; d) illness/death-illness; e) unanswered questions finally answered, and subsequent healing; f) restoration of the stolen sacred instrument to its rightful owner.* The tripod incident contains several components: a) Heracles attempts to steal the sacred instrument the priestess uses for divination, b) which is clearly associated with fire; c) Apollo and Heracles, both sons of Zeus, are half-brothers, and fight just before the latter's one-year thraldom.	The incident with the deer presents: a) the deer-Dharma stealing a Brahman's gear with his fire-sticks that was hanging from a tree by catching it in his antlers (*Mbh.* 3.295.8-10), a sacred implement. b) Fire-sticks are obviously associated with the sacred fire (the Brahman mentions the *Agnihotra* ritual). c) The whole incident revolves around the confrontation between Yudhiṣṭhira and his four brothers (two brothers, two half-brothers) concerning his behaviour in relation to his previous and current period of penance.
	Continued on next page	

11	The divine father's intervention takes place here: Zeus hurls one of his thunderbolts between them which leads to a solution. It entails restoring the tripod to Apollo as well as the solution to the main problem at hand. d) Heracles' illness is, then, the problem. e) The unanswered question concerning the cure for the hero's disease is the key conflict in this scene. His father, however, facilitates the answer, which is to be sold into thraldom and serve under Omphale. f) Heracles relinquishes the sacred tripod and it is returned to Apollo.	The intervention by the *yakṣa-Dharma* creates the problem (the theft of the Brahman's fire-sticks and the collapse of his four brothers) and also leads to Yudhiṣṭhira's victory, to their recovery thanks to him, and to the restoration of the fire-sticks to the Brahman. d) The four brothers become dead/ill[51]. e) This happens because they do not answer questions before drinking water. Yudhiṣṭhira (*Mbh.* 3.297) answers all his father's questions and is granted wishes that he uses to heal his brothers and ensure they will not be recognized during their year in Virāṭa's palace. f) They return the implements to the Brahman.
12	*A theft of implements hung in a tree: a) theft of implements, b) hung in a tree, c) chasing of the thief/eves by the hero, d) recovery of the stolen objects.* The first adventure under Omphale features the Cercopes' a) attempt to steal Heracles' weapons which are b) hanging from or in a tree. c) Heracles chases them down and d) recovers his weapons.	Though theft, weapons and tree is the theme of the first episode of Book 4, we have here a more direct use: a) an attempt to steal sticks for the sacred fire, the equivalent of weapons for a Brahman, which are b) hanging from a tree. c) The heroes chase the thief-deer and d) they recover the fire-sticks. Additionally, it should be noted that the five brothers, tired and thirsty from pursuing the deer, sit down under the shadow of a tree (*Mbh.* 3.295.15). We know too that the four youngest brothers fall down later in a state similar to being asleep, as does Heracles while under the tree.

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[51]They drink and fall down, collapse: *pītvā ca nipapāta ha*, *Mbh.* 3.296.31d; 3.297.2d: "motionless and liveless" (Van Buitenen trans.); 3.297.11b: "in the power of death" (van Buitenen trans.); 3.297.8cd: they are as though dead, but the colour of their faces is healthy; 3.296.23a: Arjuna see them as if they were sleeping, *prasuptāv iva tau dṛṣṭvā*.

| 13 | Two "canonical" Heraclean adventures give us several major components of the story; moreover, they are contiguous in some of our versions (Diodorus 4.13.1-2; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 30.5-6). The first is the pursuit and capture of the Ceryneian Hind, one of his twelve labours (Apollodorus 2.5.3; Diodorus 4.13.1). *a) The chase of a deer*, b) *characterized by its horns.* c) *Great difficulty or impossibility of capturing it.* d) *The end of the pursuit is associated with water.* e) *The animal is related to a divinity as is the place where the hero finds the solution to the problem.* f) *The hero argues with the divinity associated with the deer and convinces him/her.* g) *There is a group of five beings and the divinity captures/makes four of them fall dead or ill while the other manages to avoid it.* a) Heracles has to bring a live hind back to Mycenae. b) Golden-horned and a female, c) he chases the deer unsuccessfully for an entire year and is weary. d) The only way to do it is hurting the animal with an arrow in the Ladon River. e) The deer is sacred to Artemis, and the river is immediately associated to a mountain called Artemisium. f) Afterwards, he meets Artemis and her brother Apollo and they have a discussion; in some versions Apollo even fights him. However, he argues that he had to do it by Eurystheus' order, and the goddess finally accepts his apologies. g) Callimachus, *Hymn 3, to Artemis* 98-109 refers to the same deer when he presents young Artemis coming across five golden-horned deer and capturing four of them, while the other flees over the river Celadon, the very one Heracles later chases. | The incident of the five brothers chasing the deer entails: a) Chasing a deer, b) which carries in his horns the Brahman's gear with his fire-sticks. c) They cannot capture it and have to stop after an exhausting pursuit. d) The end of the pursuit takes place at a lake. e) The deer is in fact a god, Dharma, and the god avers that the lake is his. f) Yudhiṣṭhira has to answer the questions posed by his father Dharma; he does so successfully and wins the liberation of his brothers. g) Of the five brothers, four collapse after their meeting with the god, while the other one, Yudhiṣṭhira, answers the questions, remains free and liberates them. |

14	Another one of Heracles' twelve labours may provide additional major components of the story, related in particular to its setting: the birds of the Stymphalian lake (Apollodorus 2.5.6; Pausanias 8.22.4-6[52]; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 30). a) *A lake where the birds live*, b) *surrounded by a deep wood*, c) *with a dangerous bird/s that kill people.* d) *A hero climbs a mountain/tree to see and he detects water and aquatic birds.* e) *The hero/one of the heroes shoots arrows into the sky.* f) *After/before this shooting it is explicitly proclaimed that there are no more birds.* a) A lake, where the birds live, b) surrounded by a deep wood, c) with countless -dangerous- birds that do not let people arrive there (in a part of the versions, they even shoot their metallic feathers at people or kill them with their beaks). d) As the thick vegetation keeps them safe, the hero climbs a mountain to scare them, see the lake and shoot the birds. e) He scares the birds with a loud noise and shoots them out of the sky with his bow. f) The birds leave the place for ever.	a) The brothers, one by one, find a lake, full of aquatic birds, *sārasa*, *Mbh.* 3.296.8c; 3.296.11b. b. The lake is in the middle of a thick wood (*Mbh.* 3.295.15b; 3.296.8ab; 3.296.24b; 3.296.40-43). c) The *yakṣa* takes the form of a crane (3.297.11a: *baka*) that bids the brothers not to drink until they have answered his questions, they pay no heed and the crane "kills" them. d) Nakula climbs a tree to look for water and sees an outcropping of trees, hears the sounds of aquatic birds and deduces the presence of water. e) Later, when Arjuna arrives to the lake, and before falling down, fires hundreds of arrows showering the skies, when the voice warns him before drinking (*Mbh.* 3.296.28-9). f) When he arrives, sees his fallen brothers, prepares his bow and looks at the big forest, but he does not see any living being there (*Mbh.* 3.296.24ab: *nāpaśyat tatra kiṃ cit sa bhūtaṃ tasmin mahāvane*).
15	*A lonely adventure after a farewell.* Following Diodorus (4.31.5-6), Heracles sails to Asia with some of his friends and the one who sells him to Omphale comes back to pay the price he fetched to the sons of Iphitus. Heracles is alone.	*Mbh.* 4.4.1-4; 4.4.49. Yudhiṣṭhira sends the Brahman Dhaumya and the servants to the palace of Drupada, Draupadī's father. The heroes have no attendants or friends with them.
16	*Travel and water.* Heracles sails to Asia with his friends (Diodorus 4.31.5).	*Mbh.* 4.5.1-4. The Pāṇḍavas travel to the Kingdom of Matsya and follow the southern bank of the Yamunā.

Table 1: Preparing for One Year in the Court of King Virāṭa

2. The Pāṇḍavas Go to Virāṭa's City and Hide Their Weapons in a Tree by the Cremation Ground

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[52]Pausanias 8.22.7 describes in Stymphallus a sanctuary sacred to Stymphallian Artemis, another interesting connection to the story of the deer.

1	*The first adventure features a tree, weapons and real or potential thieves of said weapons.* While Heracles sleeps under a tree, the Cercopes attempt to steal his weapons.	Arjuna chooses a tree to hide their weapons in before entering the city. Nakula climbs up the tree and ties them with strong nooses to the branches (*Mbh.* 4.5.9-29b).
2	*Famous and supernatural weapons.* His famous weapons are his lion skin and club as well as the supernatural bow given to him by Apollo (Apollodorus 2.4.11; Diodorus 4.14.3).	They are their famous weapons, the supernatural bow of Arjuna in particular, the Gāṇḍīva, the first and only one to be given a name (*Mbh.* 4.5.15-24; Gāṇḍīva 17cd).
3	*Preventing theft.* Heracles captures the Cercopes and prevents the theft of his weapons.	The Pāṇḍavas want and, effectively, prevent the theft of their weapons.
4	*The hero/es find a corpse.* Heracles arrives on the island of Doliche and finds the body of Icarus (Apollodorus 2.6.3).	To prevent the theft of their weapons, they find a corpse and
5	*The hero/es a) perform (real or fake) funerary rites, b) thus making the corpse prominent, and visible to people from afar/people avoiding it from afar. c) It is done to the father's/family's satisfaction. d) There is the corpse of a son/ a mother. e) Secondary characters see a body flying before falling down/being put up: some shepherds.* a) Heracles takes the corpse of Icarus and buries it (Apollodorus 2.6.3: θάπτω, "honoured him with funerary rites"). b) His burial site is traditionally depicted as a visible mound on a promontory (Pausanias 9.11.5, *cf.* Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1.1302-8 and *Odyssey* 12.9-15), c) the father of the dead man, Daedalus, is satisfied and grateful. d) The father is directly related to the funerary rites for his son; in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8.234-5), for instance, the father, Daedalus, performs the funerary rites. e) Ovid tells of Icarus and Daedalus flying and how they are seen from below by a fisherman, a herdsman (*pastor*) and a ploughman (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.217-20) who think they are gods and worship them. This description is just before the line describing Icarus' foolhardy behaviour and fall.	a) They 'bury' it in the tree (*Mbh.* 4.5.27ab) according to a (fake) rite. b) Its main aim is to prevent people from approaching the tree; the far-reaching stench would it make clear that there was a corpse there (*Mbh.* 4.5.27c-f). c). They tell the local shepherds and cowherds that the corpse is their mother and that they are hanging it in the tree in accordance with their family's funerary rites and in a way that their ancestors and, supposedly even their 'mother', would approve of (*Mbh.* 4.5.28-29). d) The 'sons' perform funerary rites for their mother. e) The Pāṇḍavas tell the cowherds and shepherds (*Mbh.* 4.5.29a-b: *ā gopālāvipālebhya ācakṣāṇāḥ paraṃtapāḥ*) who ask them about it that the corpse is their mother.

6	*Hanging and tying of body/bodies*. Heracles carries the Cercopes tied and hung upside down from a pole, quite obviously a branch.	The Pāṇḍavas hang the corpse by tying it up in the tree branches (as with their weapons) (*Mbh.* 4.5.27b).
7	*In the story a) There is a (real/fake) mother of brothers, b) The brothers are asked about her in relation to something which is being witnessed, and they answer. c) She is extraordinarily long living.* a) When the Cercopes laugh and Heracles asks them why, b) they say that their mother had warned them to avoid a μελαμπύγος. c) In the authors who characterise her, she is a goddess (for instance, Zenobius 5.10; Tzetzes, *Scholia Lycophronis Alexandra* 91).	a) The fake mother is mentioned, b) when shepherds and cowherds ask them what they are doing with the corpse when they see them. The protagonists answer with the cover story about their mother. c) They say that the corpse is their 180-year-old mother (*Mbh.* 4.5.28a-b: *asītiśatavarṣeyaṃ mātā na*).
8	*A goddess mentioned by the antagonists/protagonists and her intervention: she had predicted/predicts the future.* The Cercopes mention a goddess, their mother, who had given them a prophecy/oracle, a warning, for the future, though, quite typically, they misunderstood it.	Immediately after concealing their weapons in the tree but before their arrival in Virāṭa's city (*Mbh.* 4.6 Vulgate), Yudhiṣṭhira praises the goddess Durgā, who appears, announces their future victory and grants that they will not be recognized.
9	*Semantic connections between new names? A name change, semantically related to long/large, plus a name meaning penis.* Apollodorus writes that Heracles honoured Icarus by calling the island Icaria instead of Doliche (Δολίχη). Δολιχός means long (in size, space, time…), producing compounds such as δολιχεγχής (of long spears) or δολιχήρετμος (of long oars) (Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, *s.v.* δολιχός). At the same time, the most likely origin for the word *Κέρκωπες* is *kérkos*, meaning tail and penis (Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. *kérkos*); the second meaning of *Κέρκωψ*, Kerkops, after the first and obvious, Cercopes, man-monkey, is *II. long-tailed ape* (Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. *Κέρκωπες*).	Arjuna's name as a eunuch is Bṛhannaḍā (*Mbh.* 4.2.22d), probably *bṛhat*, high, tall, large, wide… and *naḍa*: reed, and a feminine name with sexual connotations ("the large-reeded lady": Garbuth (trans.) 2006, p. 33, to *Mbh.* 4.2.27, Vulgate), a humorous allusion to his condition as a eunuch.

Table 2: The Pāṇḍavas Go to Virāṭa's City and Hide Their Weapons in a Tree by the Cremation Ground

3. The Pāṇḍavas Enter the City and Dwell There in Disguise

1	*The hero/es are not believed before being bought/recruited.* a) *The scene is presented from the perspective of the viewers who make comments.* b) *They look at the slave/servants with admiration and do not believe he/they are slave/servants.* c) *They say they look more like superiors -masters, kings...- than servants.* There is no extant source portraying Heracles' entrance into Omphale's city or palace. However, we have the fragments of Euripides' *Syleus* and the commentaries by Philo (*Every Good Man Is Free* 98-104). He describes Heracles in the moment prior to being bought by Syleus. They present the viewers a) looking at him, b) doubting that he is a slave, and c) considering Heracles stronger than his master, more apt to give than to take orders ("that he is not only free, but will become the master of his purchaser", *Every Good Man Is Free,* 100, Colson trans.).	a) King Virāṭa and his retainers look upon the Pāṇḍavas with admiration when they appear before the court. The king comments to the courtiers on their appearance and then talks of them or directly to them, as in the case of Sahadeva. b) He looks at Yudhiṣṭhira and does not believe he is a Brahman (*Mbh.* 4.6.4-6), at Bhīma and does not believe he is a cook (*Mbh.* 4.7.6; 4.7.9), at Sahadeva and does not believe he is a commoner (*Mbh.* 4.9.6), neither Arjuna a transvestite (*Mbh.* 4.10.5-7), nor Nakula a stableman (*Mbh.* 4.11.10). In the same way, the people who see Draupadī entering the city do not believe she is a chambermaid (*Mbh.* 4.8.5). c) King Virāṭa says that Yudhiṣṭhira seems to be a king of the earth, blazing like Indra (*Mbh.* 4.6.5), Bhīma mirrors Indra (*Mbh.* 4.7.6ab) and deserves the world (*Mbh.* 4.7.9d), Sahadeva a Brahman, a *kṣatriya*, a king (*Mbh.* 4.9.6ab), Arjuna a warrior who could compete with him and his sons on a chariot (*Mbh.* 4.10.6cd), and Nakula looks like a god and a king (*Mbh.* 4.11.2cd: 4.11.3d; 4.11.10a; 4.11.10d). Sudeṣṇā says to Draupadī that people so beautiful order slaves and that she is no servant. She even asks her if she is a goddess or some other supernatural being (*Mbh.* 4.8.9; 4.8.13-14).
2	*A servant/slave who was a lady enters the city.* We have in Ovid's *Heroides* 9 the description by Deianira of Princess Iole's entrance into the city as a slave won in war (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.120-36).	Queen Draupadī enters Virāṭa's city as a chambermaid (*Mbh.* 4.8.1 ff.). However, she is a queen who disguises herself as a servant.
3	*She does it in a modest/arrogant way.* Iole is a captive, a slave, but presents herself as Heracles' conqueror, his wife-to-be.	She walks "about as though in problem", Van Buitenen trans.; she "began to roam about, as if she was in great trouble", Debroy trans. *Mbh.* 4.8.2d: *kṛṣṇā vyacarad ārtava.*

4	*Her hair bound as a free woman/as a servant.* She walks with her hair bound: "but not with unbound hair in the manner of a captive" (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.125, Kline trans.).	She modestly braids and hides her locks (*Mbh.* 4.8.1), and
5	*Her robes: gold as a lady/poor and dark as a chambermaid.* She dresses "covered with gold" (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.127, Kline trans.).	she dresses in a black, dirty robe, just one article of clothing, to look like a chambermaid (*Mbh.* 4.8.2a-c).
6	*She and the crowd: conquering and proud/ modest and demure.* She walks as a free and conquering woman. Unlike a captive, "visible far and wide", she shows "her proud face to the crowd" (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.126; 129, Kline trans.).	She walks "about as though in trouble"; the crowd, men and women, do not believe she is a chambermaid because of her beauty, dress and gentle speech, but she pretends to be (*Mbh.* 4.8.2d-5).
7	*A jealous lady looks from her palace at an extremely beautiful servant/slave and is afraid of being replaced by her.* Deianira, describing Iole's arrival, sees her as a foreign rival who may become Heracles' wife in her stead (see above and *Heroides* 9.131-6).	Sudeṣṇā, who sees her from a balcony, admires her beauty, and does not believe she looks like or is a chambermaid. But she accepts her, though she is afraid that the king may prefer Draupadī over her (*Mbh.* 4.8.6 ff.; 4.8.20-26).
8	*The hero/ one of the heroes is a transvestite for a year.* Iconographic sources and texts present Heracles during his stay in Omphale's palace as a transvestite; Ovid's *Heroides* is no-exception, see 9.55 ff.)	Arjuna is a eunuch in women's attire (see *Mbh.* 4.10.1).
9	*The transvestite hero is directly related to music.* Heracles is depicted in a Dionysian atmosphere replete with dancing and music and is even shown playing the *tympanum* (see Figure 5; Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 469-70; Statius, *Thebaid* 10.649).	Arjuna serves as the song and dance master of Princess Uttarā (see *Mbh.* 4.10.8, for instance). There is also a systematic use of music/sound references in Draupadī's monologue and in the scenes of Arjuna's battle and process of reconstruction. He defeats his enemies with the sound of his conch Devadatta.
10	*The transvestite serves a king's daughter.* Omphale is presented in Diodorus 4.31.5 and Apollodorus 2.6.3 as the daughter of King Iardanus.	Arjuna is the song and dance master of Princess Uttarā, King Virāṭa's daughter, and her maidens.

11	*The transvestite hero lives among maidens in a palace.* Many of our sources, such as Ion (A. Leurini (ed.), Fragm. 25-26a), Plutarch (*An seni respublica gerendae sit* 4…) and Ovid (*Heroides* 9.73; *Ars Amatoria* 2.217-22) present the hero amid Omphale's maidens in her palace.	The *Mbh.* associates Arjuna with Uttarā and her maidens; Arjuna put himself forward as Uttarā's dance and song master, and the king accepts him as teacher of his daughter and her maidens (*Mbh.* 4.10.10ab). For Draupadī, he is a servant of girls, surrounded by girls (*Mbh.* 4.18.20-21) who accompany him in virtually all of his appearances (see for example *Mbh.* 4.23.17-18; 4.35.2 ff.)
12	*The hero/one of the heroes is a gluttonous cook.* Under Syleus, Heracles brings the vines into Syleus' house and burns them to bake bread, devours his bullocks and drinks his best wine, using the door for a table. See Apollodorus 2.5.11 and 2.7.7 on Heracles cooking and eating bullocks. Athenaeus 10.411c cites as an example of his gluttony a fragment of the *Omphale* of Ion of Chios.	Bhīma is the cook of the court. He says that he had been a cook, a fighter against animals and a wrestler (*Mbh.* 4.7.5-8; see 4.2.1-7) in Yudhiṣṭhira's court. He disguises as a cook, tells the king he is a cook and is accepted by him (*Mbh.* 4.7). He is a notorious glutton all throughout the *Mbh.*
13	*The hero/one of the heroes is an animal killer.* Heracles is a specialist in the taming and killing of wild animals (he kills the Nemean lion and the Stymphalian birds, captures the Ceryneian Hind…). Under Omphale he kills a serpent (Hyginus, *Astronomica* 2.14.2).	Bhīma is a specialist in the killing of wild animals; in *Mbh.* 4.2.4 he says he will tame animals; see *Mbh.* 4.7.8c; 4.12.27-28; 4.18.2; 4.66.5d: fights with lions, elephants, tigers, buffaloes, boars. Note that in *Mbh.* 4.18.9ab Arjuna is described as having defeated gods, men and snakes.
14	*Fights of the hero against animals. a) A wife's words: b) she suffers because her husband fights against animals c) while she is in a house.* a) Deianira states that b) she suffers knowing of Heracles' fights with beasts and monsters. c) She says this while at home (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.33-42; see 35: *ipsa domo*)[53].	Bhīma fights against animals in the inner court (*Mbh.* 4.12.28). This is repeated later in Draupadī's words. a) She states b) that she suffers when she sees Bhīma fighting against beasts, c) in the inner court (*Mbh.* 4.18.1-2ab).
15	*Fights against animals are associated with rumours that make the wife unhappy.* Deinaira associates her fears regarding Heracles' fights against animals with rumours about his death or not death: "Unhappy I catch at the murmurs of uncertain fame" (*aucupor infelix incertae murmura famae*, *Heroides* 9.41, Kline trans.)	Draupadī says that when the queen sees her suffering while watching Bhīma fight beasts, she comments to her maidens that Draupadī and Bhīma sleep together, which mortifies her (*Mbh.* 4.18.2cd-8).

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[53]See below for this and the following Point Section 4.1, Points 6 and 7.

16	*The hero/one of the heroes engages in hand-to-hand combat.* Heracles is a specialist in hand-to-hand combat, fighting animals and wrestling. Under Omphale he fights the Cercopes, Faunus and Syleus with his bare hands. In other stories he fights, for example, Antaeus and Achelous (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.138-40; 9.71-2; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 9.183-4; Apollodorus 2.5.11; 2.7.5).	Bhīma is a specialist in hand-to-hand combat and wrestling. We know that he says to his brothers that he will be a cook and a wrestler, and tame elephants or bulls, and that he says to Virāṭa that he is a cook, an animal fighter and a wrestler. In Virāṭa's court, he defeats all wrestlers (*Mbh.* 4.12.12-27ab).
17	*Defeating a) a giant/ big man b) who challenges everybody and is insolent, c) is defeated in the air d) and killed.* During one of his last labours (cattle of Geryon or Garden of the Hesperides) Heracles defeats Antaeus in Libya (see above). Antaeus a) was a giant, b) who challenged every passer-by to wrestle, and is characterised as extremely insolent (see in particular Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines* 2.21), c) To kill Antaeus, Heracles must lift the giant up in a wrestler's grip because by touching the Earth -Gaia, Antaeus' mother- he recovers his strength (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 9.183-4; Apollodorus 2.5.11). Thus, he holds Antaeus aloft, weakening him, and then crushes him. d) The notion of exhausting/defeating before killing is reinforced by Hyginus, *Fabulae* 31: Antaeus killed his victims when they became exhausted: *Hic cogebat hospites secum luctari et delassatos interficiebat.*	During a festival of Brahmā in Virāṭa's court, there is a gathering of wrestlers for a contest (*Mbh.* 4.12.12 ff.). a) One of the wrestlers is a big man (*Mbh.* 4.12.15-24), b) who challenges all the others, but nobody dares to confront him. c) Upon the king's orders, Bhīma challenges him, picks up his opponent, whirls him around one hundred times d) and, once defeated, Bhīma casts him to the ground and kills him.
18	*Serving kings: Cattle, mares, thraldom, fertility and preventing barrenness.* I have already mentioned the thraldoms to humans of the gods Apollo and Poseidon in Troy and the one of Apollo alone under king Admetus. During the first, Apollo takes care of King Laomedon's cattle herds (*Iliad* 21.448-9) and during the second of Admetus' mares (*Iliad* 2.763-67) or his cattle (Apollodorus 3.10.4).	The youngest and twin Pāṇḍava brothers, Nakula and Sahadeva take care, respectively, of the horses and cattle at Virāṭa's palace with fruitful results (*Mbh.* 4.9; 4.11; 4.12.30-1). Sahadeva presents himself as a "counter of cows" (*gosaṃkhya. Mbh.* 4.9.9c) and says (*Mbh.* 4.9.12-13) a) that his cows multiple and never become ill, and that b), he can choose bulls able to impregnate even barren cows (*vandhyā*, 13c) just by smelling their piss
	Continued on next page	

| 18 | We have seen these stories' connection to Heracles and how, in Apollodorus, Heracles closes the story of Admetus just before beginning his adventure with Iphitus. According to Apollodorus, while Apollo serves Admetus all his cows bear twins (Apollodorus 3.10.4). Callimachus, *Hymn 2, to Apollo* 2. 47-49 presents Apollo under Admetus taking care of his mares. When he looks at them while grazing (50-54), a) the cattle, goats and sheep increase in number, the sheep have an abundance of milk, and b) no sheep will be barren (ἄκυθος, 53). | |

Table 3: The Pāṇḍavas Enter the City and Dwell There in Disguise

4. Kīcaka Is Killed by Bhīma

It is generally accepted that the episode surrounding Kīcaka's killing (*Mbh.* 4.13-23) is the only substantial story developed in Book 4 before the fights against the invading enemies. To bring simplicity to the explanation, I am beginning with Draupadī's complaints to Bhīma. We already know that, in contrast to her husbands, V. (*Mbh.* 4.13.2) depicts Draupadī as unhappy after ten months in the service of the queen and her discontent serves as a prelude to Kīcaka's harassment. One of the most fascinating components of the episode is V.'s use of two different Ovidian texts, one of which, the *Heroide* 9, was previously used for his description of Draupadī's arrival in the court and Bhīma's fights against animals.

4.1. *In Draupadī's Words*

| 1 | *The hero's wife recounts her grievances.* The text is a letter by Deianira to her husband Heracles enumerating her grievances and articulating her desperate situation. | The text is practically a speech by Draupadī to her husband Bhīma enumerating her grievances and articulating her desperate situation, though Bhīma talks to her too (*Mbh.* 4.16-4.21.6). |

2	*The tragic side of the story.* Deianira embodies the tragic side of the ambiguous tale of Heracles and Omphale, and through her bitter words she articulates it on its most tragic level in a very long tradition ranging from Sophocles' *Trachiniae* to Ovid, *Heroides* 9.	Draupadī embodies the tragic side of the ambiguous story in the court of King Virāṭa and her long complaint to Bhīma articulates it on its most tragic level.
3	*Lamenting the hero/es' hierarchical and gender degradation: then and now.* The main component of Deianira's complaint is that Heracles succumbs to Iole (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.1 ff.) now and, very specifically, to Omphale before (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.53 ff.). Love defeats him. Iole is a captive woman who now dominates him as Omphale did before, and Heracles is just a defeated, conquered conqueror, a yoked man. She juxtaposes his current state with his previous one as the hero who had pacified the whole world and performed so many incredible feats.	The main component of Draupadī's complaint is hers and her husbands' submission as servants to inferiors, a humiliating situation which she contrasts with their previous situation (king, queen, hero…). See *Mbh.* 4.17.15-28 for Yudiṣṭhira; 4.18.9-23 for Arjuna; 4.18.24-33 for Nakula and Sahadeva; 4.19 for her own degradation). In the case of Yudiṣṭhira (*Mbh.* 4.17.23-28) and Arjuna (*Mbh.* 4.18.9-18), their previous condition as victors though now subservient to others is underscored. Thus, Arjuna, victor of gods, men and snakes, is now the dancing master of the daughter of King Virāṭa (*Mbh.* 4.18.9), the victor of thousands of kings is a servant of girls (*Mbh.* 4.18.15-16).
4	*Lamenting her husband's behaviour.* Deianira laments her marriage to Heracles and blames his bad behaviour now and before: he is always away (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.33: *vir mihi semper abest*) while she is alone in their empty house; he has liaisons with other women, sons with them etc. Now he brings home a lover.	Draupadī laments her marriage to Yudiṣṭhira because of his bad behaviour now and before; he had to give up his kingdom and property and go abroad (*Mbh.* 4.17.11). He lost their kingdom in the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura, he is a gambler and a gamester, even now in Virāṭa's court (*Mbh.* 4.17.10 ff.; 4.17.22).
5	*Then and now: the whole earth.* Deianira's husband Heracles had pacified the world through his strength and given peace to the earth (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.13-15; *respice vindicibus pacatum viribus orbem, qua latam Nereus caerulus ambit humum, se tibi pax terrae, tibi se tuta aequora debent*).	Draupadī's husband Yudiṣṭhira "held all the kings on earth in his power… having illuminated the whole earth with his brilliance… whom the entire earth obeyed" (*Mbh.* 4.17.24ab, 4.17.25ab, 4.17.28ab, Van Buitenen trans.).
6	*Suffering in a house on account of his fights against animals.* Deianira suffers when, at home, she learns of Heracles' fights against beasts and monsters (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.33-42) [54].	Draupadī suffers when she sees Bhīma fighting against beasts in the inner court (*Mbh.* 4.18.1-2; see 4.12.28).

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[54] See for this and the following Point Section 2, Points 14 and 15.

7	*Fights against animals are associated with rumours that make her unhappy*. Deinaira associates her fears regarding Heracles' fights against animals with rumours about his death or not death: "Unhappy I strive after the murmurs of uncertain fame" (*aucupor infelix incertae murmura famae*, Ovid, *Heroides* 9.41).	Draupadī's suffering is directly associated in the text with gossip: the queen sees her suffering and comments to her courtiers that Draupadī and Bhīma sleep together, another matter which mortifies her (*Mbh.* 4.18.2cd-8).
8	*She thoroughly laments the hero/one of the heroes' feminization*. This includes a) *his feminine adornments*, b) *the involved feminized parts of his body*, c) *his activities as a woman and a servant*. Deianira contrasts Heracles' feminization and his subordination to women with his previous heroic deeds. More specifically, she describes a) a necklace, gold and jewels, turban in hair, a belt (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.57-66); Sidonian dress (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.101), b) adorned neck, arms, muscles, hair… and c) He holds a basket with wool, twists the thread[55], spins… (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.73-80).	Draupadī contrasts Arjuna's feminization and his subordination to women with his previous heroic deeds (*Mbh.* 4.18.9-22). She describes a) his feminine adornments (women's attire, earrings, golden jewellery, tresses), b) hair in tresses/man's diadem, hands playing musical instruments/ bowstring, c) Dancing master of a group of girls, playing musical instruments, conch shell in hand...
9	*Lamenting her own subordination*. Deianira laments her subordination to King Eurystheus (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.45).	Draupadī laments her humiliation and subordination as a servant to Virāṭa's queen, Sudeṣṇā, Draupadī's inferior (*Mbh.* 4.19).
10	*A lady is suspicious of a beautiful slave/servant, who was a princess/queen, and fears she will become her husband's new wife*[56]. Deianira sees Iole entering the city (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.120-29) and she knows Iole to be a rival: she describes her entrance into the city as a captive who does not act like one; she is terribly afraid that Iole (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.130-36) will replace her as Heracles' wife. In fact, this is the problem that makes her send him the robe with the love-charm, but which ultimately brings about Heracles' death.	Draupadī says that Sudeṣṇā (*Mbh.* 4.20.16-17) suspects that she is more beautiful than her and always worries that Virāṭa may fall for her. General Kīcaka knows this and it is one of the factors that allows him to constantly proposition Draupadī, the nucleus of the story. When Draupadī first arrived in the court, Queen Sudeṣṇā had feared that King Virāṭa may prefer Draupadī to her.
11	*Jealousy of other women*. Deianira laments Heracles' erotic adventures and sons (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.47-52), though she focuses the conflict in Omphale and Iole.	Draupadī laments seeing Arjuna (*Mbh.* 4.18.20-22) surrounded by the young maids of the court like an elephant surrounded by his females.

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[55]Needless to say, the other side of the coin, Omphale's display of his weapons and lion skin is also present and serves as an example of her triumph over him: she is the man and the victor now, Ovid, *Heroides* 9.103-18.

[56]See Section 3. Points 2-7

12	*A scared servant and his/her hands associated with his/her errors.* Deianira recounts Heracles' humiliations, and one of them presents him before his mistress Omphale, frightened by her threats while working with wool: he makes errors with his strong hands (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.73-80).	Draupadī's humiliation is not just a problem of mere subordination: "a scared serving wench" (Van Buitenen trans.), she confesses to being afraid of Virāṭa for she prepares with her now callused hands the sandalwood unguent that pleases him, but she always wonders if she has prepared it well (*Mbh.* 4.19.22-25).
13	*She mentions two times he fought for her.* Deianira remembers that Heracles fought for her twice (*pugnae bis tibi causa fui*): against Achelous and against Nessus, defeating them both (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.138-42). The second fight comes on the heels of Nessus' attempt to kidnap her.	On two different occasions during her discourse, V. has Draupadī recall two offences prior to their present crisis: first, her mistreatment in the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura and the second (*dvitīya*), Jayadratha's attempt to kidnap her (*Mbh.* 4.17.2-4). Again, in *Mbh.* 4.20.30 she remembers two offenders, Jayadratha and Jaṭāsura, both of whom attempted to kidnap her. Jaṭāsura was defeated by Bhīma, who for the most part also defeated Jayadratha, though his brothers were there to help.
14	*She speaks about committing suicide a) several times and, more specifically, b) a reference to her own suicide ends the text c) in connection to an allusion to poison.* a) Deianira refers several times to her own suicide. b) At the end of the text she knows that she has produced her husband's death and asks herself once how she would survive (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.148) and four other times why she hesitates to die (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.146; 9.152; 9.158; 9.164). In the last verses she announces her death and bids farewell to relatives and life (*Heroides* 9.165-68).	a) Draupadī asks herself several times throughout the text why she lives on. She claims to be unable to bear life and says that she should die (*Mbh.* 4.17.3; 4.17.5-6; 4.18.8; 4.18.30; 4.19.10; 4.19.12; 4.19.28; 4.20.33). b) V. organizes her almost-monologue with Bhīma in two speeches (*Mbh.* 4.17.1-19.28 and 4.20.14-33) with three smaller ones by him. The end of her first speech is one of the moments in which she maintains that she would rather die than carrying on with her sad life (*Mbh.* 4.19.28). At the end of her second speech, V. has her stating that she would rather drink poison than marry Kīcaka, that it would be better to die in front of him (*Mbh.* 4.20.33, see 33c-f: *viṣam āloḍya pāsyāmi mā kīcakavaśaṃ gamam, śreyo hi maraṇaṃ mahyaṃ bhīmasena tavāgrataḥ*. c) Swallowing poison (*viṣa*) is the way she would commit suicide.
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14	c) Her suicide appears immediately associated with her insisting that she had been tricked by Nessus and had not voluntarily killed Heracles with the poisoned robe (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.163-4 *Inlita Nesseo misi tibi texta veneno. Inpia, quid dubitas Deianira mori?*).	
15	*Negative consequences of the woman's action associated with her words, albeit somewhat ambiguous.* Deianira' entire epistle is tainted by its ending: she kills her husband and, finally, herself. At the same time, Heracles becomes a god after death.	Though there are some traces of ambiguity, when Draupadī convinces Bhīma to kill Kīcaka the result is undoubtedly negative: both disobey Yudhiṣṭhira and endanger the success of their 13-year exile just weeks before its supposed end. And, in fact, the invasion of Virāṭa's kingdom which may have revealed the true identity of the Pāṇḍavas takes place because of it.

Table 4: In Draupadī's Words

4.2. *Kīcaka is killed by Bhīma: previous notes*

Some previous components are relevant to the episode surrounding Kīcaka's death. Four of them are of interest to us here as they serve as a prologue to Ovid's *Fasti*.

1	*Fighting and killing in palaces, making them shake.* Heracles fights and kills Syleus in his palace, and destroys it. An amphora pictures him breaking a column with an axe (Oakley, 1994, 7.1, p. 826, n. 5; 7.2, p. 581).	Bhīma fights in Virāṭa's palace against wrestlers and animals, killing one of them, and in the dance pavilion against Kīcaka. The dance pavilion where he confronts Kīcaka in the dark shakes while they fight (*Mbh.* 4.21.53).
2	*Fighting an abusive master.* The reason Heracles fights and kills Syleus is directly related to the fact that he is an abusive master.	Kīcaka is an abusive master.

3	*Women all around. Fighting at the behest of and in front of women.* Though we do not have the original sources detailing the adventures Heracles has while in the service of Omphale, they were obviously undertaken on her orders, specifically the slaying of the serpent and the defeat of the Itoni. We do not know whether she was present for them or not. Our sources do, however, inform us that Heracles fights in the presence of Syleus' daughter and in one version even kills her.	The two most important fights in the *Mbh.* Book 4, Bhīma against Kīcaka and Arjuna against the invading Kaurava, are incited by women. The first by Draupadī, who urges Bhīma to kill Kīcaka, and the second also by Draupadī, who suggests Prince Uttara to resort to Princess Uttarā who, in turn, persuades Arjuna to join the fight. It is interesting to note that V. presents Bhīma fighting against the wrestler in a public contest, and against different animals in the midst of the women of the serail, in the inner court.
4	*Violence and a woman.* In one of our versions, Heracles kills Xenodoce, perhaps after a pursuit (see Apollodorus 2.6.3, and J. H. Oakley (1994), 7,1, p. 826, nr. 5 and 6); in another version he appears to rape her.	Draupadī runs away from Kīcaka, who wants to rape her.

Table 5: Kīcaka is killed by Bhīma: previous notes

4.3. *Kīcaka, Bhīma, Draupadī / Faunus, Heracles, Omphale*

1	*A love's prologue: casual meeting of the rapist with a servant on duty and a queen.* Faunus, from a high hill, sees Heracles walking with his mistress (*domina*) (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.305-06), holding a parasol for her (311-12).	General Kīcaka meets Draupadī when she goes about serving Sudeṣṇā in the queen's house (*Mbh.* 4.13.3); her condition is previously remarked upon through Draupadī's dissatisfaction.
2	*Exalting beauty: shining beauty and smell.* Omphale's beauty is exalted in two verses (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.309-10): *ibat odoratis umeros perfusa capillis Maeonis, aurato conspicienda sinu* : "her scented locks streamed down her shoulders; her bosom shone resplendent with golden braid" (Frazer trans), a shining immediately reinforced by Hercules' gilded parasol.	When he sees her, Draupadī is exalted by V. as a goddess or a goddess' child (*Mbh.* 4.13.4); in the first two verses (*Mbh.* 4.13.6-7) of Kīcaka's words (*Mbh.* 4.13.6-9) to his sister he tells her that he had not never seen in the king's palace such a beauty, and that: "that beautiful/radiant woman (*bhāminī*) makes me extremely mad with her form as a liquor with its fragrance (*gandha*).
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2		Who is, my fair/brilliant (*śubha*), this heart-stealing goddess, tell me who and from where is the handsome/resplendent one (*śobhana*)". [57] When Bhīma fights him he grabs his "garlanded and fragrant/scented hair", *Mbh.* 4.21.47e-f: *bhīmo jagrāha keśeṣu mālyavatsu sugandhiṣu).*
3	*Desire at first sight.* Faunus sees Heracles and Omphale and is immediately filled with desire: (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.306-07)[58]: "Faunus saw them both from a high ridge. He saw and burned…", Frazer trans.: *vidit ab excelso Faunus utrumque iugo: vidit et incaluit…*	General Kīcaka falls in love with Draupadī at first sight (*Mbh.* 4.13.3-4) [59]: "Then Virāṭa's marshal saw the lotus-faced Daughter of Pāñcāla serving in Sudeṣṇā's house. And no sooner had Kīcaka seen her going about like a child of a God, a Goddess herself, that he was hit by the arrows of Love". Kīcaka immediately tells his sister (*Mbh.* 4.13.6ab): "I have never before beheld this beauty here in the palace of King Virāṭa" (Van Buitenen trans.)
4	*An ardent passion.* Faunus' passion is described as a burning passion: *vidit et incaluit,* "He saw and burned" (Frazer trans.); and see: *hic meus ardor erit* (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.307-8).	Kīcaka is "burned by the fires of lust," *kāmāgnisaṃtaptaḥ, Mbh.* 4.13.5a (Van Buitenen trans.); "scorched by Kama's fire" (Garbuth trans., p. 105, *Mbh.* 4.14.7 Vulgate).
5	*An immediate passionate communication.* Faunus immediately tells the Mountain Spirits about his love (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.307-8).	Kīcaka immediately talks to his sister about his passion (*Mbh.* 4.13.6-9).
6	*Her above others, says the male.* Faunus says to the *montana numina*, the Mountain spirits (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.307-8) that his fire/burning/passion will be her, and has nothing to do with them (2.308: *nil mihi vobiscum est, hic meus ardor erit*).	Kīcaka tells Draupadī that he would abandon his previous wives (*Mbh.* 4.13.12a).
7	*A slave man.* Heracles is her slave: Omphale is described as Heracles' *domina* (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.305) and he is depicted holding a parasol over her while they walk to the cave (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.311-12). The ambiguity of the classical theme "love slave"/real slave is apparent.	Kīcaka tells Draupadī that he would abandon his previous wives, that they would be her slaves, and that he too would be her slave (*Mbh.* 4.13.12); see also 4.21.10-11b: he will be her slave and give her two hundred slaves, males and females.

[57]*Mbh.* 4.13.6c-7b *rūpeṇa conmādayatīva māṃ bhṛśaṃ, gandhena jātā madireva bhāminī, kā devarūpā hṛdayaṃgamā śubhe; ācakṣva me kā ca kutaś ca śobhanā.* See 4.13.11d: *na śobhase sundari śobhanā sati*: he tells her that being brilliant she does not shine. Note for *śubha* and *śobhanā*: *śubh*, beautify, look beautiful, shine, be bright or splendid; for *bhāmin*: shining, radiant, beautiful: *bhā*: to shine, be bright, the sun.

[58] See commentary of 2.307 in M. Robinson (2011), Ovid, *Fasti*, p. 307 for love-lust at first sight as the usual way to express classical passion, with references to Ovid and other authors.

[59]*Mbh.*4.13.3-4: *tathā carantīṃ pāñcālīṃ sudeṣṇāyā niveśanesenāpatir ya dadarśa jalajānanām haviḥ, tāṃ dṛṣṭvā devagarbhābhāṃ carantīṃ devatām iva kīcakaḥ kāmayāṃ āsa kāmabāṇaprapīḍitaḥ.*

8	*Protection and the Sun.* Heracles holds the parasol over her before entering the grove to protect her from the warm sunlight (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.311-2). *Aurea pellebant tepidos umbracula soles, quae tamen Herculeae sustinuere manus*: "A golden parasol kept off the sun's warm beams", carried by Heracles' hands (Frazer trans.; *pello*: expel, put to flight).	When Draupadī must go to the general's house, she prays to the Sun, who hears her pleas and consigns an invisible *rākṣasa* to protect her (*Mbh.* 4.14.19-20; see *rakṣo rakṣārtham ādiśat* 20b).
9	*Feasting.* Faunus sees them entering a grove, a wood sacred to Dionysus, and they drink and eat there (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.317; 2.327).	Sudeṣṇā, the queen, tells her brother that she is sending Draupadī to his palace to have some liquor and dishes prepared; he does so, giving orders to prepare drinks and dishes. She then tells Draupadī to fetch her some liquor (*Mbh.* 4.14.5-10).
10	*Attendants prepare meals and drinks.* The attendants prepare food and wine for Omphale and Heracles (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.317, *dumque parant epulas potandaque vina ministri*).	The queen's suggests to Kīcaka to prepare liquor and dishes (*parviṇīṃ tvaṃ samuddiṣya surām annaṃ ca kāraya, Mbh.* 4.14.5ab), and he has his cooks to do it (*Mbh.* 4.14.7-8)
11	*Preparing a religious festival.* They are preparing the rites (*sacra*) of the God for the next day (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.329-30).	The queen tells him to prepare food and drinks for a festival (*Mbh.* 4.14.5a: *parviṇī*).
12	*A scene in the dark of night.* The scene takes place in a dark grove at night (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.331: *noctis erat medium*), "it was midnight", when Faunus enters the cave.	In the final scene, we are told that Bhīma arrives first and "hidden in the night" (Van Buitenen trans.) waits in the dancehall for Kīcaka to enter (*Mbh.* 4.21.38ab, *bhīmo 'tha prathamaṃ gatvā rātrau channa upāviśat*).
13	*A direct allusion to a (too) well and specifically adorned man.* Omphale arranged Alcides (Heracles) in her own garb/in her style (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.318: *cultibus Alciden instruit illa suis*) dressing Heracles with her dress and adornments. Ovid describes how he breaks the small bracelets and shoes and that the girdle and tunic are too small (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.319-24).	"Kīcaka, who has adorned to his fancy, arrived", Van Buitenen trans., *Mbh.* 4.21.39ab, *kīcakaś cāpy alaṃkṛtya yathākāmam upāvrajat*); K. Garbutt, p. 137, *Mbh.* 4.22.39 Vulgate: "[Kīcaka] had decorated himself to his liking". Note his description some verses before: *gandhābharaṇamālyeṣu vyāsaktaḥ sa viśeṣataḥ Mbh.* 4.21.20a-b: "He was fond of fragrances, ornaments and garlands" (B. Debroy trans., Vol. 4, p. 47).
14	*A reference to a lion.* When Omphale gives Heracles her robes and adornments, she takes up his club, arrows, quiver and his lion's pelt (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.325).	Bhīma waits for Kīcaka "as an invisible lion to a deer" (*Mbh.* 4.21.38c, Van Buitenen trans.).

15	*The would-be rapist has great expectations upon entering*. When Heracles and Omphale finish feasting and everybody falls asleep, Faunus enters the cave; Ovid (*Fasti* 2.331-34) writes: *noctis erat medium. quid non amor improbus audet? roscida per tenebras Faunus ad antra venit: utque videt comites somno vinoque solutos, spem capit in dominis esse soporis idem*. Note *spes; expectation, hope.. .*: "It was midnight. What will unruly love not dare? Faunus came through the dark to the dewy cave, and seeing the servants lost in drunken slumber, had hopes of their master also being fast asleep" (Kline trans.).	Kīcaka arrives on time in the dancehall, with the hope, desire or expectation (*āśā*) of meeting her (*Mbh.* 4.21.39cd: *tāṃ velāṃ nartanāgāre pañcālīsaṃgamāśayā*).
16	*An additional allusion to darkness while entering*. When Faunus enters there is another allusion to darkness: *roscida per tenebras Faunus ad antra venit* (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.332): "Faunus enters the dewy cave through the dark".	V. writes, Kīcaka enters "the large chamber, which was covered by dense darkness" (Van Buitenen trans.: *praviśya ca sa tad veśma tamasā saṃvṛtaṃ mahat, Mbh.* 4.21.40cd)
17	*Touching in the dark and a couch.* Faunus enters looking for her couch, guiding himself with his hands. After he touches (*tango*, Ovid, *Fasti*, 339) the lion skin and recoils, he touches (*tango, Fasti* 2.343) the next couch and thinks she is there (*Fasti* 2.344).	Kīcaka enters the hall with his mind on the tryst, trying to find her in the darkness. Bhīma sits/lies on the couch waiting, and he touches him (*śayānaṃ śayane… parāmṛśat, Mbh.* 4.21.42ab) and thinks it is her.
18	*An excited male: A man on a couch, the rapist comes closer and gets an erection.* Just after touching where he thought to be Omphale, Faunus climbs in and reclines on the near side of the couch. Before pulling up Heracles' tunic and finding the hero's hairy leg, we are told that *et tumidum cornu durius inguen erat*: "his swollen cock was harder than horn" (Kline's trans., Ovid, *Fasti* 2.346).	Bhīma was lying in the bed, when, after touching, Kīcaka desire-crazed came closer with his rational mind, or mind and soul, drunk because of his erection: *Mbh.* 4.21.43a-c *upasaṃgamya caivainaṃ kīcakaḥ kāmamohitaḥ harṣonmathitacittātmā…*; *harṣa*: erection (M. Monier-Williams *Dictionary*: erection and pleasure; O. v. Böhtlingk, R. Roth, *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, *Freude… Geschlechtige Erregung, Geilheit*).

19	*Touching hair and the beginning of the fight.* When Faunus pulls up the garment, he touches Heracles' hairy leg (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.347-8, *interea tunicas ora subducit ab ima: horrebant densis aspera crura pilis*), and now Heracles shoves him and he falls down (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.349-50).	Kīcaka touches Bhīma on the couch instead of Draupadī, and Bhīma grabs his "garlanded and fragrant/scented hair" and the fight begins (*Mbh.* 4.21.47e-f, *bhīmo jagrāha keśeṣu mālyavatsu sugandhiṣu*). After or by killing him (*Mbh.* 4.21.57cd) Bhīma grabs his hair again. When Kīcaka's relatives see his corpse their hair stands on end (*Mbh.* 4.22.2a-b).
20	*A motionless and defeated rapist on the floor.* Faunus falls down and is barely able to lift his limbs from the hard ground (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.349-50; 353-54).	In the previous scene in which Kīcaka chases Draupadī, she throws him to the floor. Then Draupadī fled to Virāṭa's *sabhā* and Kīcaka, in Virāṭa's presence, throws her to the floor and kicks her head; in response, the invisible *rākṣasa* pushes him away and he falls to the floor, whirls, and lies motionless, *niśceṣṭa* (*Mbh.* 4.15.6-9).
21	*A simile using snakes and reactions.* When Faunus touches the lion skin he recoils "as a traveller, troubled, will draw back his foot on seeing a snake" (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.341-42, Kline trans.).	When Bhīma and Kīcaka wrestle, at the beginning, Bhīma reacts "as a serpent struck with a stick" (*Mbh.* 4.21.51cd).
22	*After the rapist is defeated, the lady calls the attendants and they come with torches.* Omphale calls the attendants and asks for torches: the facts become clear in the firelight: *fit sonus inclamat comites et lumina poscit Maeonis: inlatis ignibus acta patent* (Ovid, Fasti 2.351-52).	Immediately after Kīcaka's defeat, and being called by Bhīma to see her enemy's corpse, joyful Draupadī calls the guards/keepers of the *sabhā* (*sabhāpālān uvāca*, *Mbh.* 4.21.63d); the guards (*rakṣiṇa*) come "carrying torches", *Mbh.* 4.21.65: *tac chrutvā bhāṣitaṃ tasyā nartanāgārarakṣiṇaḥ sahasaiva samājagmur ādāyolkāḥ sahasraśaḥ.*
23	*The lady's happy retaliation.* Omphale, Heracles and the others laugh at the sight of Faunus sprawled out upon the ground (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.355-56).	Draupadī, exultant, tells them to witness the result of his actions (*Mbh.* 4.21.63-4). Previously, after killing Kīcaka, Bhīma, exultant, calls her to contemplate his mangled enemy.

| 24 | *The limbs of the fallen man are beheld by the viewers.* They see that Faunus cannot move: he could barely lift his limbs from the ground (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.354: *membraque de dura vix sua tollit humo*). | There is a reference to Kīcaka's feet, hands, and head when everybody sees him on the ground. They disappear as Bhīma stuffs his feet, hands, head, and neck into his torso, and the guards wonder where they are (*Mbh.* 4.21.59; 4.21.66-67). Later Kīcaka's kinsmen see him with all his limbs mangled (*aṅga, Mbh.* 4.22.2c) |
| 25 | *The longest and more substantial story.* The story of Faunus, Omphale and Heracles is the longest episode we have of the whole Omphale and Heracles theme; in fact, it is the only one with any substantial development. | The story of Kīcaka and Draupadī is the longest episode until the fights against the invaders; in fact, it is the only one with any substantial development. |

Table 6: Kīcaka, Bhīma, Draupadī / Faunus, Heracles, Omphale

I have already warned about the error of thinking that V.'s adaptations have to be, or in fact are, mechanical uses of the Greco-Roman sources he works with. In this sense, it is easy to understand that there can remain differences between the stories of Kīcaka and Faunus, despite all the obvious similarities. We have briefly indicated some of them. They are basically -structurally- male harassment, the offended woman, avoiding the threat, plotting a trap: the rapist is told to go to a dark place where a man is waiting for the offender instead of her), and his consequent killing as a retaliation.

Nevertheless, we have also seen that all three of these components are found the interesting case, also centred on Heracles, of the reference made by Strabo (11.2.10) to a story associated with the name of the temple of Aphrodite Apatouros, in Phanagoreia, the Black Sea.

4.4. *Aphrodite and Heracles, Kīcaka and Draupadī*

1	*A male (or males) harasses a female.* The Giants want to rape Aphrodite.	Kīcaka harasses Draupadī.
2	*The female asks a man for help and they plot a trap.* She asks Heracles for help and hides him in a cave.	She asks Bhīma for help. He suggests the trap of the dancing hall.
3	*Secrecy.* The Giants come one by one.	She asks Kīcaka to keep the secret.
4	*The male (or males) is killed in darkness upon entering a place where the hero waits for him instead of the woman.* Aphrodite calls in the Giants one by one and Heracles kills them.	Draupadī arranges to meet Kīcaka in the dancehall under the cover of night and Bhīma kills him.

Table 7: Aphrodite and Heracles, Kīcaka and Draupadī

4.5. *The last act in Kīcaka's adventure. An odd Draupadī*

V. relates Kīcaka's death to Draupadī's victory but, at the same time, to potential peril for the Pāṇḍavas and even for herself. I have referred to the strange case of the intelligent, wise and cunning Draupadī becoming foolish enough as to stay and linger in plain sight of Kīcaka's kinsmen as they carry off the mangled corpse to perform his funerary rites. After they grab her, tie her up and carry her off to the burning field, Bhīma, in his usual fashion, storms in and saves her.

Two, somewhat maladjusted, stories of Heracles may help explain this. The last part of the story can be related to another one of Heracles' adventures which features the intent by a group of men to sacrifice him, their failure and his subsequent revenge. Like other foreigners before him, Heracles was led to sacrifice after being found in King Busiris' kingdom in Egypt. The main component of the story is Heracles' resounding victory and the havoc he wreaks[60].

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[60]The killing of a group of people attending the sacrifice is a basic component already found in Pherecydes of Athens, F. Jacoby (ed.), (1957), Nr. 3 and 17 and Herodotus 2.45 (denying the story without mentioning Busiris), which is particularly evident in vase representations, exploring the same comic effects that we can presume in comedies; see Apollodorus 2.5.11; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 31.2; Ovid uses the theme lavishly, not just in *Heroides* 9.69; see A. F. Laurens (1986) for representations. It is frequently associated to Antaeus' story. See N. Livingstone (2001), pp. 77-90.

4.5.1 *Killing practitioners of human sacrifice*

1	*A group of men and a ceremony.* A group of priests or attendants of King Busiris of Egypt	A group of men, Kīcaka's kinsmen, when carrying his body to perform the funerary rites,
2	*Finding a victim.* They find Heracles, a foreigner.	see Draupadī (leaning on a pillar) *Mbh.* 4.22.4.
3	*Tying up a victim.* They tie him up (Apollodorus 2.5.11).	After asking Virāṭa for permission, they come back, grab her, tie her up (*nibandh*, *Mbh.* 4.22.10b).
4	*Carrying the victim to a sacred place.* They carry him to a sacred place to be sacrificed (Apollodorus 2.5.11).	and carry her to the cremation ground to sacrifice her (*Mbh.* 4.22.10 ff.).
5	*A last minute and somewhat brutal rescue.* But at the last moment, when he arrives there and is near the altar, he breaks free and massacres the participants.	However, she calls her *gandharva* husbands using their secret names and, right as they were about to burn her in the cremation ground (*Mbh.* 4.22.22), Bhīma attacks them; many escape and flee to the city but he slaughters more than one hundred of them (*Mbh.* 4.22.22-25).
6	*The victim is liberated.* He breaks the rope or burst the bonds (Apollodorus 2.5.11).	When they see him approaching, they think he is a *gandharva*; as such, they let her loose and flee (*Mbh.* 4.22.23-24). Bhīma comforts Draupadī and sets her free (*Mbh.* 4.22.26a-b: *ta āśvāsayat kṛṣṇāṃ pravimucya...,*).
7	*No fight, but flight.* The enemies of the hero take flight.	The enemies of the hero take flight.
8	*Unconventional weapons and a branch.* Heracles is depicted wielding his club (Hyginus, *Fabulae* 31), typically represented as a tree branch; though in other representations he fights unarmed or brandishing Egyptians, for example (see Brommer 1984, pp. 42-6 and Laurens 1986 for the iconography). See Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1.1190-1205 for Heracles tearing up a tree in another context.	Bhīma wields a tree trunk complete with its branches.

9	*Storming hero.* It is interesting to see that he appears in representations storming altars and everything around.	He breaks a door and later tears up a ten-measure long tree and arrives at the cremation ground toppling trees along the way.
10	*The killing of a king and his entourage.* The victims are King Busiris and his attendants.	The root cause of Bhīma's slaughter is his earlier victim, Kīcaka, who acted as though he were a king and even claimed to be one. At the end of the story, V. states that Bhīma killed one hundred five people, one hundred six counting General Kīcaka (*Mbh.* 4.22.28-29).

Table 8: Killing practitioners of human sacrifice

It is quite a popular story and has been passed on in a fashion similar to the stories concerning Heracles' adventures with Omphale. In Athens we have the usual concentration of sources: historians (Pherecydes of Athens and Herodotus), one epic poet (Panyasis of Halicarnassus' *Heracleia*, Bernabé (ed.) 1996, F 12), plays (again a Satyr play by Euripides, and five comedies), and vases (see Laurens 1986; Vollkommer 1988, 22-3). There are representations on vases ranging from the second half of the VI Century BCE to the IV Century BCE, most of them in Athens and, within this group, most from the first half of the V BCE. Thus, Busiris' story can be integrated into the abovementioned series of stories which deals with the whole Omphale and Heracles affair as portrayed in V Century BCE Athenian plays (Omphale, Cercopes, Syleus, Daedalus) and vases.

Draupadī's strange attitude and her bizarre choice to linger in such an unfortunate place may be explained by V.'s interest in creating this scene. However, the first part of it is still incredibly odd, i.e., the way her enemies come upon her standing next to a pillar or embracing it. Another Heraclean adventure may be help to flesh this out:

4.5.2 *Draupadī leaning on a pillar?*

1	*A woman to be killed.* Hesione, the daughter of Laomedon, king of Troy, is offered to a sea-monster after Laomedon mistreats Apollo and Poseidon (see above and Apollodorus 2.5.9; Diodorus 4.42).	There is a woman who is going to be killed, Draupadī.

| 2 | *A woman and a pillar.* Hesione is usually described as a woman tied up to a rock before being saved by the hero. At the same time, the story of Andromeda and Perseus, has a similar theme and iconography -in fact, "it is not possible to say in many cases (see depictions) which of the two myths was meant to be shown" (Oakley 1997, 628), and shows representations of Andromeda tied up to columns (Schauenburgh 1981). | Draupadī was leaning on, clinging to or embracing a pillar (*Mbh.* 4.22.4d: *stambham āliṅgya tiṣṭhatīm*) when the Kīcaka's kinsmen see her. See Van Buitenen's, Debroy's and Garbuth's translations; for Garbuth see p. 177, *Mbh.* 4.23.4 Vulgate; see Biardeau (1997), 41 "Draupadī, qui se tient debout, enlaçant un pilier de son bras". |
| 3 | *Saved by the hero.* The hero, Heracles, saves her after a fight. | The hero, Bhīma, saves her after a fight. |

Table 9: Draupadī leaning on a pillar?

5. Arjuna Defeats the Cattle Raiding Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas Retrieve Virāṭa's Herds.

Our information on how the change in the relationship between Heracles and Omphale was formulated is very scant. Our only direct information is the reference Diodorus makes to the Itoni's invasion and defeat; even so, it is interesting to note that this small tidbit and its implications square well with the longest corresponding sections of the *Mbh.*

| 1 | *The last adventure. Defeating invading enemies.* Heracles defeats a neighbouring army, the Itoni, who invade Omphale's realm (Diodorus 4.31.7). | During their stay in the court of Virāṭa the Pāṇḍavas defeat two neighbouring armies that invade the kingdom. There are two incursions (*Mbh.* 4.24-62). Arjuna defeats the more important army, the army of their archenemies the Kauravas. It should come as no surprise that in the defeat of the other army, Bhīma, the other Pāṇḍava brother imbued with Heraclean traits and performing like deeds in Book 4, plays a prominent role. Arjuna is the first to recover his name, in the presence of the prince, and to retrieve their weapons. |
| 2 | *A cattle raid.* The object of this attack is λεία, which means the plundering, chiefly, of cattle. (Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, *s.v.* λεία). | The attack is a two-pronged cattle raid. |

3	*Defeat and cattle recovery.* Heracles soundly defeats them and seizes their booty.	Both Arjuna and his brothers soundly defeat the enemy and take away the invaders' booty.
4	*Some spoils.* Heracles sacks the city and enslaves its inhabitants, taking the spoils off with him.	Arjuna sends Prince Uttara to fetch the robes of the fallen Kaurava (*Mbh.* 4.61.12-15) for his sister Uttarā.
5	*The end of the servitude and his/their recognition.* This adventure marks the end of Heracles's servitude; it constitutes his last feat before his liberation. We already know that Omphale, pleased with Heracles, learns who he and his parents are, sets him free, and marries him (Diodorus 4.31.8).	This episode marks the end of the Pāṇḍava's servitude; it constitutes their last feat before their liberation. We already know that the most important battle is fought by Arjuna, and that he recovers their weapons, his name, gender and social status before Prince Uttara. He and the other brothers will be publicly recognised in the following scenes as a result of the battles.

For one final point, let us return to the beginning of the scene:

6	*The transvestite hero changes his robes* (male/female, female/male) *in a comical or laughable way. His mistress is there and somebody dresses him/helps him get dressed.* When Heracles and Omphale are in the cave, they exchange clothes, and she dresses him in her feminine robes and adornments (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.318-24). He breaks the bracelets and shoes, which are too small for his wrists and feet, and the girdle and tunic are too small. It is a comical scene (see Statius, *Thebaid* 10.646-9).	After Uttarā convinces Arjuna to be her brother's charioteer, V. describes how the transvestite Arjuna, while in front of Uttarā and in jest, put on his (male) cuirass upside down making all the maidens laugh. Consequently, Uttara helps him get dressed (*Mbh.* 4.35.17-18).

Table 10: Arjuna Defeats the Cattle Raiding Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas Retrieve Virāṭa's Herds.

6. Virāṭa Gives His Daughter in Marriage to Arjuna, Who Accepts Her For His Son Abhimanyu. The End

6.1. *Two scenes in the same* sabhā

1	*Notable objects: thrones in the palace used for scenes of humiliation/exaltation and characters' attire.* We have seen the meaningful role of Omphale's throne, a place where she displays her triumph and Heracles' humiliation, where she dons his iconic outfit, while he is depicted prostrate and feminized. No text better than Ovid to show it: as she vanquishes him, Ovid says, she displays his spoils like a warrior displays the spoils stripped from his defeated enemy (Ovid, *Heroides* 9.113-114: *non sunt spolia illa leonis, sed tua*). Thrones and masculine/feminine attires, deeply associated, remain essential in representations of his humiliating condition under Omphale in her palace. There are no clear representations of this moment to know whether his recovery was portrayed in the same place or not[61].	The throne is crucial in the final scenes of *Mbh.* Book 4. Two scenes take place in the same *sabhā*. The first is related to Yudhiṣṭhira's humiliation by King Virāṭa which, in turn, sets up his, his brothers' and their wife's exaltation in the second. In both cases the throne is an essential part of the scene. Seated on the throne, Virāṭa, after his army returns to the city, asks after his son and is informed of the second assault. However, he knows soon that the enemy army has been defeated. As we already know, crazed by gambling, offends Yudhiṣṭhira, jeopardizing his life and his kingdom's safety. In other terms, the *sabhā* becomes the focus of the first and last conflict between Yudhiṣṭhira and Virāṭa, in which the Pāṇḍava wins the contest, but is apparently offended and humiliated. In the obviously related following scene (*Mbh.* 4.65-6), on the third day, bathed and dressed in white, Yudhiṣṭhira at their head, the Pāṇḍavas go to the same *sabhā* and seat on regal thrones, where their presentation takes place.
2	*Masters shocked by the hero's/heroes' insubordination. It involves: a) the master's previous bad behaviour; b) the hero/heroes in the palace; c) something that is done which upsets the master; d) the master's arrival and immediate complaints; e) the hero's/heroes' reply.* One of the few clear components of our, quite literally, fragmented evidence pertaining to the story of Syleus, is that a) after Syleus behaves so badly	In this final scene, a) after Virāṭa behaved so badly, b) we find the Pāṇḍavas in the palace c) seated on the thrones. d) King Virāṭa arrives and, clearly displeased, tells Yudhiṣṭhira that he had made him his mere gambling official and demands to know why he is so-well dressed and seated upon a/the royal throne (*Mbh.* 4.65.6). In the Vulgate version the king is explicitly incensed (*Mbh.* 4.70.5d: *saroṣaḥ pṛthivīpatiḥ*; Garbuth trans., p. 463: "the king of Matsya grew furious"). e) Arjuna answers and proclaims their glories.
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[61]Some authors have associated the image of Heracles before a seated woman on a wall painting from

2	b) Heracles invades his palace. c) While there in the palace he just trashed enjoying Syleus' food and best wine (perhaps is seated at the door/table), d) Syleus returns. Furious, he berates Heracles and confronts him. e) Heracles replies by challenging Syleus to a drinking contest, which is followed by a fight resulting in Syleus' death.	
3	*Names, family and feats.* In Diodorus (4.31.8), after Heracles defeats the Itoni, Omphale learns of his true name, and of his parentage, and marvels at his valour; as a result, she sets him free.	In this final scene, Arjuna proclaims their true names, their family lineage and the feats they have performed. Likewise, Uttara reveals how Arjuna single-handedly won the battle. Virāṭa marvels, begs for their forgiveness and offers them his kingdom.

Table 11: Two scenes in the same *sabhā*

6.2. *The wedding*

1	*The end of the story/Book features the wedding of the former feminized slave/servant (or his son) and his former mistress.* Reconstruction of the hero's gender and social role. The text of Diodorus states: Omphale set Heracles free, and marrying him bore him Lamus.	Virāṭa bestows Uttarā on Arjuna, though he accepts her only as his daughter-in-law.
2	*The hero's own bride for his own son.* So far as I know, Heracles is the only Greek hero who gives an ex-wife or bride to younger relatives, his son and his nephew. While dying, he charges Hyllus, his son by Deianira, to marry his (in Deianira's mind) wife-to-be, Iole (See Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 1221-9; Apollodorus 2.7.7); previously he gave his ex-wife Megara to his nephew Iolaus (Apollodorus 2.6.1).	Virāṭa bestows Uttarā on Arjuna, but he accepts her only as his daughter-in-law, wife of his son Abhīmanyu.

Herculaneum (now in the Archaeological Museum of Naples, n. 9008) with Heracles and Omphale, and while I certainly agree with them, to make use of it here would require excessively long argumentation.

3	*A dynasty and an heir.* Agelaus or Lamus, their son, was said to be the ancestor of the dynasty of King Croesus of Lydia (Apollodorus 2.7.8).	Uttarā and Abhīmanyu's son, Parikṣit, the only descendant of the Pāṇḍavas, will become king.
4	*An impending war for revenge.* Just after his thraldom to Omphale, Heracles musters an army of volunteers and, in the most popular version, sails for Troy to wage a war of revenge against Laomedon for having cheated him.	Their allies assemble, and with millions of soldiers they set off for the impending war, a war of revenge (*Mbh.* 4.67.15 ff.).

Table 12: The wedding

7. Six Essential Traits of the Whole Story

1	*The tone of the entire story is set in an ambiguous key: comedy and tragedy, humiliation and carnival, joy and sadness mingled with theatrical components.* An entire tradition explores these dichotomies, from the Athenian Comedies of the V Century CE onward, including iconographic and literary references, such as Ovid's *Fasti* and his exploration of the feminized, drunk and/or gluttonous Heracles, but also Heracles' revenge and Deianira's words in Sophocles and Ovid's *Heroides* 9.	On the one hand we have the descriptions of the Pāṇḍavas' choosing jobs to carry out in Virāṭa's court, of how they live in the court, of the way they skim profits in a picaresque, roguish way, helping one another pilfer surplus food like kitchen leftovers or milk from the herds and even of more comedy-esque scenes such as the last part of Kīcaka's story, the story of Uttara or the Pāṇḍavas' revelation before Virāṭa. On the other, we have the stark contrast, expressed by Draupadī's bitter words, between their previous glories and status and their current state of humiliation and, in the case of Arjuna, feminization.
2	*This is a complex story replete with references to issues pertaining to femininity and gender, with powerful female characters and a hero's feminization.* Note the series: a) A goddess, Cercopes' mother, is mentioned at the beginning. b) Heracles' feminization as a transvestite, which is c) related to his subordination to a powerful woman, Omphale, a queen, his *domina*.	These aspects are neatly concentrated in Book 4: a) In the Vulgate edition the goddess Durgā is mentioned at the beginning of the story. b) Arjuna's feminization as transvestite-eunuch is c) related to a powerful female, the *apsarā* Urvaśī, in the Vulgate edition. d) He is presented as the servant of his mistress, Uttarā, a princess, and teaches music and dance to her and her maidens.
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2	d) He is presented under her power and among her maidens doing feminine tasks, dancing, etc. e) He fights at her behest against the enemies of the kingdom (the Itoni in particular). f) There is a potential conflict between the hero's wife, Deianira, and another woman, the slave Iole, and, in Deianira's own words, between her and Omphale. g) There is an additional conflict between the hero and another male (Faunus) over the hero's partner-wife (Omphale). h) The wedding of the mistress and the (ex) slave as a happy ending. Additionally, the case of Syleus' daughter.	e) She, though manipulated by Draupadī, sends him into battle (the Kaurava invasion of Virāṭa's kingdom). f) Draupadī, as a servant, has a potential problem with Sudeṣṇā, her mistress, and her husband. g) Draupadī is attacked by Kīcaka and defended by her husband Bhīma. h) The wedding of the mistress (Uttarā) and the son of the (ex) servant as a happy ending. Additionally: Bhīma fighting in the serail. Abuses of Draupadī in the *sabhā*, her accusations of her husbands being eunuchs as they do not protect her (*Mbh.* 4.15.21c). Virāṭa's capture and Suśarman manhandling him as though he were a crying new bride (*Mbh.* 4.32.9). Arjuna and Uttara. The clothes Arjuna brings for the girls' dolls. Finally, the last triumph of Draupadī surpassing all the women.
3	*This is a complex story replete with references to issues pertaining to femininity and gender as well as to hierarchies and power struggles explored through the temporary submission of superiors to inferiors.* Heracles' temporary subordinations under Omphale and Syleus, as well as his previous subordination under Eurystheus (and Apollo's and Poseidon's subordinations to mortal men) constitute temporal subordinations of superiors to inferiors. This creates an unbalanced and dangerous position that is examined via the themes of humiliation suffered by the temporary servant, as in the story of Omphale, of retaliation, as in the story of Syleus, and via themes related to rebalancing and restoring his true status.	The whole story explores the basic unbalanced situation of temporary servants, five men and a woman. V. explores structural tensions through the relationships between Draupadī/Sudeṣṇā, Draupadī/Virāṭa, Draupadī and Bhīma/Kīcaka, Draupadī/Yudhiṣṭhira, Yudhiṣṭhira/Virāṭa, Arjuna/Uttara, and Virāṭa/Kīcaka. The last part of the story explores this conflict and re-balancing through harassment and killing, jealousy, bad behaviour humiliating the inferior… until the final proclamation of their identity and display of their superiority.

| 4 | *It is also a story in which changing attire, identities and, in particular, names are fundamental.* Again, these aspects are the essential core of the story of Omphale as it is dominated by Heracles' new anonymity and personality as a slave and his transvestism. He is also one of the few heroes with two names. Apollodorus (2.4.12) states that after his first madness and the killing of his sons and nephews, the Pythian priestess called him Heracles, changing his previous name of Alcides, and ordered him to serve Eurystheus and to perform the labours; see Diodorus 4.10.1 for a different context. It is easy to understand that after finishing the labours, succumbing to a second fit of madness and resorting again to the Pythian priestess, he does not receive a new name but rather made to toil namelessly; recovering his name and identity are thus central to the story. Parallel to the process which previously subjected him to an inferior man, here he is subject to a woman and no more a man. Thus, the loss under Omphale of his name and of his characteristic weapons, including his clothing-trophy-shield, the lion skin, obviously come together. The stories of the Cercopes and Syleus-Xenodoce with the (frustrated) theft of his weapons and clothing play the same tune, just as the burial of the previously anonymous corpse of Icarus translates into a monument to his memory and the homage of Daedalus' statue. Both flee from King Minos' power. Freedom, family, feats, identity and name come together in Diodorus' perspective of Heracles' liberation. | Draupadī and the Pāṇḍavas lose their identities and attire, particularly the eunuch and transvestite Arjuna. The question of names inundates the whole book. All of them choose public names, and additionally Yudhiṣṭhira gives them secret names which are used by Draupadī when she is about to be sacrificed and calls out to her "*gandharva* husbands". The scene of Arjuna's exploits on the battlefield explores these aspects through his "suiting" up for battle, his departure as charioteer, the Kurus laughing at the sight of him and wondering about his identity, their recognition of him and their ultimate defeat. Prince Uttara disrobing the routed Kuru army is perhaps also related to their mockery of the feminine clothes Arjuna wore during the previous year. As a servant, Arjuna once sold second-hand clothes from the court; now he returns victorious bringing with him the robes of his defeated enemies for the dolls of Uttarā and her maidens. Note that in the presence of the Prince, Arjuna recovers their weapons, his many names and the name of his famous bow right before the exhibition of his true power. It should come as no surprise that V. has Arjuna assert that now, after his defeat, it is Duryodhana's turn to "lose his name". The scene wherein the five brothers are seated on thrones dressed as kings and their lineage, names and feats together with Draupadī's are proclaimed is contiguous with the recovery of Draupadī's proper attire and her corresponding triumph over the women of the court and the queen herself. |

5	*Some settings and objects are essential to the story, mainly, a) a palace, b) a throne, c) clothing (related to humiliations), d) weapons at risk, e) cattle, spoils of war, and f) musical instruments.* Though some of them had been dealt with individually, it is worth mentioning their interesting accumulation. a) The palaces of Omphale and Syleus, where the main story takes place, b) the thrones from where she contemplates his degradation, c) the clothing related to his humiliation (feminine robes for him, his lion skin for her), d) weapons at risk of being stolen or temporarily lost (Cercopes, Omphale, Xenodoce), e) cattle and spoils of war, the former recovered after being stolen (cattle and Itoni) and the latter as a result of victory (Itoni's city sacked by Heracles), f) musical instruments (*tympani, thirsoi*) in Heracles representations)	a) The palace of King Virāṭa where the main story takes place, b) the thrones related to the heroes' humiliation and recovery of their lost status, c) clothing related to their humiliation (the five brothers and their wife dressed as servants, Arjuna dressed as a woman) and restoration (the comic scene of the cuirass, final scenes and wedding), d) weapons at risk of being stolen hidden inside the tree and later recovered by Arjuna, e) cattle and spoils of war, the former recovered after being stolen by two armies, the latter as a result of Arjuna's victory, f) musical instruments played by Arjuna.
6	*One essential theme of the story is the need to wait until the end of the periods of hardships ordained by the gods and the suffering and conflict that entails.* We already know that Heracles' dissatisfaction with his life and destiny pervades Greek culture from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* onwards: terrible labours and the terrible humiliation of being under the sway of an inferior coalesce. Diodorus' version establishing the contextual backdrop of the first madness sent by Hera is crystal clear: serve an inferior or disobey Zeus? (Diodorus 4.10.7-11.1). In Ovid's *Heroides* 9, Deianira embodies that component of utter dissatisfaction with such an absent and long-suffering husband pitted against all kinds of dangers. Heracles has to wait until the completion of his labours under the power of Eurystheus, in the end making this period 12 years.	Everything revolves around the need to wait for the end of the thirteen-year period, and the supremacy of patience, forbearance and dharma over impulse, desire and lack of control. V. reinforces this with the idea not just of a year spent incognito, but of a year in which they cannot be discovered without risking the repetition of the whole 13-year exile. Yudhiṣṭhira's belief in the need to wait is projected in his victory at the end of Book 3, a book which presents twelve boring years in the wild, and in which Draupadī and Bhīma are the principal critics of Yudhiṣṭhira.
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| 6 | The same happens under Omphale. The need to wait for the end of a period of time decreed by the gods/destiny is a crucial issue in Troy and Thebes too. With the former, the Achaeans have to wait 9/10 years to take the city, with the latter, the first assault fails because they did not wait for the right time, and only the sons of the first and now dead attackers can take the city. | It is easy to understand why V. makes this problem one of the keys in the most prominent story of Book 4, Kīcaka's story, creating it as a kind of distorting mirror of the primeval scene of the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura. V. has Yudhiṣṭhira telling Draupadī there that her *gandharva* husbands do not see that it is the appropriate or right time for wrath (*Mbh.* 4.15.33a: *na kālaṃ krodhasya*), and also telling her that she has no notion of what constitutes the appropriate or right time (*Mbh.* 4.15. 34a *akālajñāsi*). |

Table 13: Six Essential Traits of the Whole Story

I trust the evidence laid out here is clear enough. Moreover, note how these stories' antecedents, beginnings, developments, main adventures, main characters, settings, particular objects, endings and principal themes all match up. The stories are aligned so thoroughly that not only their themes but also their details square astonishingly well. Indeed, the last six common aspects dealt with here, the core, the spirit, the essential questions at play with the stories are enough to conclusively assert two independent identifications without any parallel in other stories.

It is important to recall that we are dealing with very limited Greco-Roman sources when it comes to the Omphale-Heracles theme. Nevertheless, note how virtually all the extant fragments concerning that story are found in *Mbh.* Book 4, that there is not a single section of Book 4 which has not been inspired by these Heraclean stories and that the two longest Greco-Roman references we do have are used for the longest sections of Book 4 before the final battle. It is tempting to muse on whether there were many other Greco-Roman sources used. Perhaps Arjuna's final fight against the Kurus, for instance, was not only inspired by the basic Heraclean components found in Diodorus but also by a complete description of the transvestite Heracles defeating the Itoni; after all, the information Diodorus has passed down inclines one to presume that he did it single-handedly. But such speculations and flights of fancy must be consigned to the farthest fringes of sound evidence; and there is no shortage of sound evidence to deal with here.

Chapter 4

EXPLORING METHODS, EXPLORING V.

It is time to return to the criteria in order to demonstrate that shared components are the product of borrowing and not of other causes pointed out in the Introduction. I do not think it necessary to delve further into arguments 1 (quantity and quality) and 2 (density). Perhaps it suffices to read the italicized headings in the tables and correspondences in the previous chapter or, more easily, section 3 of this chapter on Argument 5. Criterion 3, accordingly, will serve as a good beginning.

1. Some Bizarre Traits

Argument 3 highlights the odd, bizarre or fanciful components found simultaneously in two different stories and the degree to which they deepen the unlikelihood or sheer impossibility of independent creation, in other words, how these components reinforce our "principle of improbability".

As stated in the Introduction, it must also be presumed that translations -considering in particular translations between different cultures- and adaptations may produce inconsistences, contradictions, and oddities, in so far as they make use of components from another culture and adapt them to their own. As a consequence, a very curious variation occurs when comparing two texts which share bizarre or odd components and were produced in two distinct cultures, i.e.: such components are construed as "bizarre" or "odd" in one culture and not -or not to the same degree- in the other. An argument could be made that this sort of variation is merely the by-product of the adaptation process itself.

It is also a good moment to securely tie up a few ends I left loose in the Introduction when I put forward the claim that Book 4 of the *Mbh* is replete with these sorts of features. I

underscored seven bizarre or odd components: 1) One year where the Emperor of the world, his wife and brothers live incognito in a royal court as servants; 2) A fake burial of their mother entailing the touching and handling of a corpse; 3) One of the brothers serving as a cook; 4) Another brother, Arjuna, degraded to the condition of eunuch and serving the king's court teaching music and dance; 5) The strange central incident of the story where Draupadī is sexually harassed by General Kīcaka, who is later killed by Bhīma at night after a ruse, coupled with the story of her laments and harsh criticism of Yudhiṣṭhira in order to persuade Bhīma to kill Kīcaka against Yudhiṣṭhira's orders; 6) The taking of spoils after the final battle; 7) The king offering his daughter's hand in marriage to Arjuna, who respectfully declines but accepts the offer for his son.

We have seen that all seven of these components can be explained by the use of Greco-Roman sources directly related to Heracles and Omphale.

1. The first one implies the common presence not just of the year of serfdom, but of the succession 12 years plus 1 (Chapter 3, Section 1, Points 2-5). It is an original component in both cultures, but not at all in the same degree, not to mention the relative antiquity of the two periods (VII-VI BCE for the 12 labours, VI-V BCE for the 1 year), and the antiquity of the principle which stipulates the need to respect the time marked out by destiny/fate (Chapter 3, Section 7, Point 6). From the VIII BCE onward Heracles' mythical figure is by definition portrayed as an unwilling subject of Eurystheus, and the serfdom to Omphale is but a re-creation of this component, a logical worsening, and a stiffer penalty.

2. The second, concerning the performance of funeral rites for a corpse and the consequent touching of the corpse by a hero (Chapter 3, Section 2, Points 4-6), is indeed not common in Greece but at the same time is by no means particularly strange. The most famous case is Odysseus performing funeral rites for his comrade Elpenor in the *Odyssey* (*Odyssey* 12.9-15) after meeting his shade in Hades (*Odyssey* 11.51-83), imitated, for example, by Virgil, *Aeneid* for the cases of Misenus and Palinurus. We already know that in the III Century BCE Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* (1.1302-8) refers to a killing carried out by Heracles and the burial of his victims under a mound on an island.

The Pāṇḍavas touching a corpse and performing fake funerary rites is so obviously odd that V. makes Arjuna lie to Uttara about the corpse on the tree when he is ordered to retrieve Arjuna's weapons. It is no surprise, in this context, that V. has Arjuna lie about his transvestism too. The lack of any reference to polluting/purification of *kṣatriyas* touching a corpse is just

astonishing. We have seen also that there is a good answer for the problem of the (fake) mother: just as V. finds a corpse in the Greco-Roman text he is working with and in the first adventure after the Cercopes-tree, he finds a mother in this very story.

3. The third concerning one of the brothers serving as a cook (Chapter 3, Section 3, Point 12), is easy to understand as a projection of Heracles' traits, in general, and in this specific adventure. Notwithstanding, Bhīma's general characterisation in the *Mbh.* makes it easy to understand his role here too, leaving aside the question of how much of this characterisation depends on the projection by V. of Heracles' traits onto him.

4. The fourth, concerning Arjuna as a eunuch (Chapter 3, Section 3, Points 8-11), is much more bizarre and interesting. Transvestism is odd in both cultures, but to a very different degree. While it is rare in Greek mythology it does exist and not only in stories of Heracles, recall Achilles in hiding dressed as a maiden. One of the story's two internal logics associated with his condition is that after being subjected to Eurystheus, the logical worsening, the stiffer penalty, is to be subjected to one considered the inferior of an inferior, namely: a woman. Earlier we examined the other internal logic at work in the story: as a male subjected to a female, her domination entails his feminization.

Arjuna's transvestism, conversely, is an unparalleled trait. Additionally, in the context of V.'s assignation of roles to his characters, it is not difficult to understand how Heracles transvestism plus his connection to (Dionysian) music and dance under Omphale becomes Arjuna's professional task. Incidentally, the case of Bhīma as a cook could be the product of a similar process.

5. The fifth, concerning the matter surrounding General Kīcaka and Bhīma killing him at night after a ruse coupled with the story of Draupadī's laments, is also very original. However, we have seen that Deianira's laments and complaints about her husband Heracles form part of a long tradition stretching back to Sophocles in the V Century BCE, if not further, and later help Ovid shape an entirely new literary genre. Likewise, even if it were not part of the tradition in which Ovid contextualizes it but rather of his own making, the story of Faunus has plenty of clear precedents for its essential components: the specific ruse and the theme of "confusion in the dark" is commonplace on the Greco-Roman stage (see above Aphrodite Apatouros and Plautus' *Casina*).

6. The sixth, concerning plundering and the despoiling of fallen enemies, is a common-

place, customary procedure in Greek culture and, naturally, in the adventures of Heracles. Conversely, it stands as a *unicum*, an utterly odd and bizarre occurrence in the *Mbh.* and, to the best of my knowledge, in the ancient culture of the Subcontinent. What makes it all the more perplexing is that Princess Uttarā asks Bṛhannaḍā-Arjuna to bring back garments for her dolls after he defeats the raiding Kauravas[62].

7. The seventh, concerning Heracles' and Arjuna's marriage/marriage offering, respectively, to their previous mistresses (Chapter 3, Section 6.2, Points 1-2), is fairly easy to understand in the case of Heracles as it forms part of the reconstruction of heroic persona and gender role, and is consistent with portrayals and depictions of Heracles from the VI Century BCE onwards. Conversely, the marriage offering to Arjuna seems a bit out of place when one considers that it is the eldest brother and king, Yudhiṣṭhira, who had been offended and that Arjuna already had two wives. Nevertheless, after the recognition and presentation of the six protagonists/heroes, V. recounts that Virāṭa realizes that he had offended King Yudhiṣṭhira, tells Uttara that it is time to placate the Pāṇḍava and that he would offer Uttarā's hand in marriage to Arjuna (*Mbh.* 4.66.15-16). In Arjuna's case, the need to restore his gender role and the manner in which it is achieved is reminiscent of Heracles and is further reinforced by yet another odd component, his renouncement of the marriage offering in favour of his son which mirrors Heracles' renouncement of marriage to Iole and Megara in favour of his son and nephew Hyllus and Iolaus.

Thus, this proposed series of original or decidedly odd traits could be interpreted as the by-product of the adaptation process of Greco-Roman sources by V.

I shall briefly point out below (Chapter 5, Section 2.1), regarding the problem of the direction of the borrowing, two other similar but not identical cases which reveal odd traits in the *Mbh.* that could be understood as products of V.'s adaptations of Greco-Roman materials for his narrative project: why V. portrays King Virāṭa having Bhīma fighting beasts in the *seraglio*? And why V. presents Draupadī just waiting, and for a long time, in the way of the angry Kīcaka's relatives? or, in other words, the problem of the stupid Draupadī.

Presently, it seems prudent to focus our attention on Criterion 4, which deals with how V.

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[62]Needless to say, the inspiration for the invention is there, another thing altogether is the interpretation of what V. creates with it; see Chapter 1; and Appendix 1 for M. Biardeau and A. Hiltebeitel.

uses his sources and how his working methodology is put into practice.

2. Towards V.'s Method. Textual Uses

As stated before, V.'s preferred method does not consist in using Greco-Roman texts in the way of "linguistic plagiarism", i.e., directly taking texts -similar words, metaphors or expressions- and simply translating them from Greek or Latin into Sanskrit. Rather, his method consists in the perspective of ideas, in taking and adapting internal components of stories. When we find such components, it is exceptional.

On the whole, V. displays in Book 4 one of the most significant series of possible cases in the entirety of the work and he does so in a seemingly conspicuous manner. The Kīcaka, Bhīma, Draupadī / Faunus, Heracles, Omphale story, examined in Chapter 3, Section 4.3 by comparing *Mbh.* 4.13-23 to Ovid's *Fasti* 2.303-358, undoubtedly stands as one of two of V.'s most systematic uses of Greco-Roman materials. Below is a more structured comparison of some of V.'s direct uses taken from a selection of its 25 points. For a more appropriate assessment of these as well as previously proposed components, it may be useful for the reader to recall that we are dealing with just over fifty Ovidian verses and yet the theme's core -a would-be rapist entering a dark place- is the same.

1	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 2. *Shining beauty, smell, scented hair.* When Faunus sees Omphale, her beauty is defined in relation to her scented hair - *ibat odoratis… capillis*- and resplendent-golden components -*aurato… sinu*- (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.309-10).	Kīcaka sees Draupadī (*Mbh.* 4.13.6-7 of 6-9) and tells his sister: "that beautiful/radiant woman (*bhāminī*) makes me extremely mad with her form as a liquor with its fragrance/smell (*gandha*). Who is, my fair/brilliant (*śubha*), this heart-stealing goddess… the handsome/resplendent one (*śobhana*)". Later on, Bhīma grabs Kīcaka's "garlanded and fragrant/scented hair" (*Mbh.* 4.21.47e-f, *bhīmo jagrāha keśeṣu mālyavatsu sugandhiṣu*).
2	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 3. *Two contiguous uses of "see" when the villains see the desired woman for the first time and fall in love/desire.* Note: *Vidit ab excelso Faunus utrumque iugo. Vidit et incaluit…* (Ovid, *Fasti*, 2.306-07). "Faunus saw them both from a high ridge. He saw and burned" (Frazer trans.).	*Mbh.* 4.13.3-4: *tathā carantīṃ pāñcālīṃ sudeṣṇāyā niveśane senāpatir ya dadarśa…., tāṃ dṛṣṭvā devagarbhābhāṃ…*: "Then Virāṭa's Marshal saw the lotus-faced Daughter of Pāñcāla serving in Sudeṣṇā's house, and no sooner had Kīcaka seen her…" (Van Buitenen trans.).

3	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 4. *A burning passion*. Faunus' passion is a burning passion: *vidit et incaluit*: "He saw and burned" (Frazer trans.) and *hic meus ardor erit:* she will be my fire/burning/passion (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.307-8).	Marshal Kīcaka is "burned by the fires of lust", *kāmāgnisaṁtaptaḥ* (*Mbh.* 4.13.5a in Van Buitenen's trans. or "scorched by Kama's fire" in Garbuth's version, *Mbh.* 4.14.7 Vulgate.
4	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 10. *Orders to prepare meals and wines/liquors.* See *epulas potandaque vina* (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.317).	Sudeṣṇā suggests her brother prepare *surām annaṃ ca,* meals and wines/liquors (*Mbh.* 4.14.5b). He orders liquors and dishes (4.14.7-8).
5	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 11. *The context: a religious festival*. They prepare the *sacra* of the God (*Fasti* 2.329).	A religious festival, *parviṇī* (*Mbh.* 4.14.5a).

The scene in the cave/dancehall is the most fruitful:

6	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 12. *Immediately before the villain/rapist enters the scene, there is a reference to the night; in both cases it can be found in the previous verse.* The scene takes place in a dark grove at night, *noctis erat medium*, it was midnight, (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.331), when Faunus enters the cave in Ovid, *Fasti* 2.332.	We are told that Bhīma arrives first and "hidden in the night" (Van Buitenen trans.) waits in the dancehall, *Mbh.* 4.21.38ab: *bhīmo 'tha prathamaṃ gatvā rātrau channa upāviśat* for Kīcaka's immediate entrance in *Mbh.* 4.21.39.
7	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 16. *An additional allusion to darkness upon entering.* When Faunus finally enters there is a new allusion to darkness: *roscida per tenebras Faunus ad antra venit* (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.332): "Faunus enters the dewy cave through the dark".	Kīcaka enters "the large chamber, which was covered by dense darkness" (Van Buitenen trans.): *praviśya ca sa tad veśma tamasā saṃvṛtaṃ mahat* (*Mbh.* 4.21.40cd). Note the parallel structures: Faunus/*Sa* (he, Kīcaka, just mentioned in *Mbh.* 4.21.39a), *venit/praviśya, ad antra/ veśma, roscida (antra)/mahat (veśma), per tenebras/ tamasā saṃvṛtaṃ.*
8	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 13. *A direct allusion to a (overly) well and specifically adorned man in a burlesque scene.* Omphale arranged Heracles in her own garb/in her style, see Ovid, *Fasti* 2.318, *cultibus Alciden instruit illa suis*, dressing him with her dress and adornments.	"Kīcaka, who has adorned to his fancy, arrived" (Van Buitenen trans.); see *Mbh.* 4.21.39ab, *kīcakaś cāpy alaṃkṛtya yathākāmam upāvrajat*; Garbutt trans., p. 167, *Mbh.* 4.22.39 Vulgate: who "had decorated himself to his liking".

9	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 15. *Expectations upon entering of the would-be rapist: a specific term.* Faunus enters the cave (*Fasti* 2.333-34)*: utque videt comites somno vinoque solutos, spem capit in dominis esse soporis idem.* "And seeing the servants lost in drunken slumber, had hopes (*spes*) of their master also being fast asleep" (Kline trans.).	Kīcaka arrives at the dancehall, with the hope, desire or expectation (*āśā*) of meeting her (*Mbh.* 4.21.39cd) *tāṃ velāṃ nartanāgāre pāñcālīsaṃgamāśayā.*	
10	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 17. *The would-be rapist, is referred to with a derogatory term before touching the man on the couch.* Faunus enters looking for her couch, guiding himself with his hands; he is now referred to as the "adulterer" (*adulter*: *Fasti* 2.335), though he is referred to by his name, Faunus, just three verses before (2.332). After he touches the lion skin and recoils, he touches the next couch (*lectus*) and thinks Omphale is there (*Fasti* 2.344).	Kīcaka enters the dancehall with his mind on the tryst, trying to find Draupadī in the darkness. Now referred to as *sudurmatiḥ* (villain, wicked-minded) (*Mbh.* 4.21.41d), and *sūta* -though by name just before in *Mbh.* 4.21.39a-, Kīcaka touches (*parāmṛś*) Bhīma, his death in fact, who sits/lies on the couch (*śayana*), believing he is Draupadī: *śayānaṃ śayane tatra mṛtyuṃ sūtaḥ parāmṛśat, Mbh.* 4.21.42ab).	
11	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 18. *A man on a couch, the would-be rapist approaches and gets an erection.* Just after touching who he thought was Omphale, Faunus climbs in and reclines on the near side of the couch. Right before he pulls up Heracles' tunic and finding the hairy leg of the hero, we are told that *et tumidum cornu durius inguen erat*: "his swollen cock harder than horn" (Frazer trans.) (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.346).	Bhīma was on the coach when Kīcaka, desire-crazed, came closer with his rational mind, or mind and soul, drunk because of his erection (*harṣa*): *Mbh.* 4.21.43a-c *upasaṃgamya caivainaṃ kīcakaḥ kāmamohitaḥ harṣonmathitacittātmā…*; *harṣa*: erection (Monier-Williams, *Dictionary*: erection and pleasure; Böhtlingk, Roth, *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, *Freude… Geschlechtige Erregung, Geilheit*).	
12	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 19. *Touching hair, the beginning of the fight and one of them is thrown on the floor.* "And meanwhile pulling up the bottom edge of the garment; there he met legs that bristled with thick rough hair. Before he could go further…" (Frazer trans.), Heracles shoves Faunus and he falls off the couch (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.347-50). Note: *Fasti* 2.347-8: *interea tunicas ora subducit ab ima: horrebant densis aspera crura pilis* ("the rough legs bristled with thick hair").	Kīcaka touches Bhīma on the couch instead of Draupadī, Bhīma grabs his "garlanded and fragrant/scented hair" and the fight begins (*Mbh.* 4.21.47e-f). (*bhīmo jagrāha keśeṣu mālyavatsu sugandhiṣu*). *Mbh.* 4.21.50ab. There is a short fight and "the powerful Kīcaka threw him on the floor onto his knees" (Van Buitenen trans., *Mbh.* 4.21.50ab: *kīcako balavān bhīmaṃ jānubhyām ākṣipad bhuvi*. When Bhīma finally kills him (*Mbh.* 4.21.57cd) he grabs Kīcaka's hair again. More body hair is at play when Kīcaka's relatives see his corpse and the hair of their bodies stands on end (*sarve saṃhṛṣṭaromāṇaḥ saṃtrastāḥ prekṣya kīcakam, Mbh.* 4.22.2a-b).	

13	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 22. *After the would-be rapist's defeat, the lady calls the attendants and they come bearing torches. She is happy.* "There was a crash. The Maeonian damsel called for her attendants and demanded a light (*lumen*): torches (*ignis*) were brought in, and the truth was out", Frazer trans., Ovid, *Fasti* 2.351-52; *fit sonus inclamat comites et lumina poscit Maeonis: inlatis ignibus acta patent*. Note: *inlatis ignibus*: "torches brought", "bringing torches" (ablative absolute), and facts/actions are plain/manifest. She and the others laugh at Faunus.	Immediately after Kīcaka's defeat, joyful "Draupadī told the wardens of the *sabhā*... come and look" (*sabhāpālān uvāca, Mbh.* 4.21.63d...*samāgacchata paśyata Mbh.* 4.21.64d); and the guards (*rakṣiṇa*) come now carrying torches: *Mbh.* 4.21.65: *tac chrutvā bhāṣitaṃ tasyā nartanāgārarakṣiṇaḥ sahasaiva samājagmur ādāyolkāḥ sahasraśaḥ*. Note: *ādāyolkāḥ*: *ādāya*, carrying, absolutive of verb *ādā*, plus *ulkāh*, torches, accusative plural of *ulkā*. She is exultant.	
14	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 24. *The limbs of the fallen man are beheld by the viewers.* They see that Faunus cannot move: he could barely lift his limbs (*membrum*) from the ground. Ovid, *Fasti* 2.354: *membraque de dura vix sua tollit humo.*	When everybody sees Kīcaka's torso on the ground, references are made to his feet, hands, and head: the guards wonder where they are (*Mbh.* 4.21.59; 4.21.66-67). Later on Kīcaka's kinsmen see him with all his limbs (*aṅga*), mangled (*sarvāṅgasaṃbhugnaṃ Mbh.* 4.22.2c.)	
15	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 20. *The protagonist/antagonist is thrown on the floor/ground/earth, motionless.* Ovid, *Fasti* 2.353-54: *ille gemit lecto graviter deiectus ab alto, membraque de dura vix sua tollit humo.* After he falls from the high couch, Faunus groans and was barely able to lift his limbs from the hard ground (*humus*, earth, floor, ground).	Kīcaka throws Bhīma on the floor/ground/earth, bhū (4.21.50cd: *kīcako balavān bhīmaṃ jānubhyām ākṣipad bhuvi*). Let us recall again that in Virāṭa's court the rakṣāsa pushes Kīcaka away and he falls down onto the floor/ground/earth (*bhūmi* 4.15.9a) incapable of motion (*niśceṣṭa* 4.15.9c).	
16	*The rapist is called ironically "her lover" when, while still supine on the ground, he is seen by the hero and the queen.* Ovid, *Fasti* 2.355-6: *ridet et Alcides et qui videre iacentem, ridet amatorem Lyda puella suum*: "Alcides [Heracles] laughed, as did all who saw him lying; the Lydian wench [Omphale] laughed also at her lover" (Frazer trans.). Note *amator*, with a potential positive or negative connotation, is used here in the latter sense: "one who loves in a sexual sense" (see *Oxford Latin Dictionary* and Lewis, Charlton T., Short, Charles, *Dictionary*). See, for example, Horatius, *Epistulae* 1.1.38.	After defeating Kīcaka, Bhīma shows his mangled body to Draupadī and says to her: *paśyainam ehi pāñcali kāmuko 'yaṃ yathā kṛtaḥ* (*Mbh.* 4.21.61cd) "Look princess of Pāñcāli, what has become of your lover" (Van Buitenen trans.), The word lover, *kāmuka* (see the dictionaries of Monier-Williams and Böhtlingk, Roth]) has two meanings as well, wishing, loving, lover... but also libidinous, lustful... It is not at all a frequent word in the Mbh., and one of V.'s extremely rare uses of it occurs in Yudhiṣṭhira's final words to the defeated Jayadratha (*Mbh.* 3.256.21c): he calls Jayadratha *strīkāmuka*: lecher, lustful (of women).	

Metaphors and similes are accepted parts of the "linguistic borrowing". Two examples.

17	Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 21. *A simile using snakes and reactions*. When Faunus touches the lion skin (on the first couch, where Omphale lies), he recoils "as a traveller, troubled, will draw back his foot on seeing a snake" (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.341-2, Kline trans.).	When Bhīma and Kīcaka wrestle, at the beginning, Bhīma reacts "as a serpent struck with a stick" (*Mbh.* 4.21.51cd).

I am avoiding direct references to aspects related to the direction of the borrowing; however, as an exception, it could be worth noting now that this Ovidian allusion to Faunus recoiling as a traveller on seeing a snake is taken directly from the *Iliad* [63]. As a thorough examination of the use of this metaphor throughout Greco-Roman literature would surely prove excessive as well as exhaust the reader's patience, it will suffice to say that Ovid's older contemporary, Virgil, also makes use of this metaphor in the *Aeneid* [64].

One final related example in the case of V.'s choices concerning the construction of certain metaphors may prove useful.

18	See Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 14. Lions. In Ovid's *Fasti* (2.325), Heracles' lion-pelt is taken up by Omphale during their odd exchange of attires, which, consequently, sets the scene for Faunus' confusion. The lion-pelt, moreover, is alluded to when Faunus touches it right before the inevitable clash (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.339-40).	Bhīma is waiting for Kīcaka "as an invisible lion to a deer", *Mbh.* 4.21.38c, Van Buitenen's trans.). In *Mbh.* 4.21.49b, when they begin to wrestle, they are called *narasiṃha*, "lion-men" or "lion-like men".

As can be seen, this particular story, and Book 4 in general, contain several interesting examples of textual use and linguistic borrowing. V.'s sophistication is obvious; his lexical uses or inventions, such as *amator/kāmuka*, as well as a number of syntactic parallels reveal his inventiveness. While the case of Deianira/Draupadī's words is also of particular interest in this respect, I do not believe these matters need to be further elucidated here. It is, however, important to bear in mind one of the less obvious ways of detecting V.'s direct use of

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[63]*Iliad* 3.33-35: "As one who starts back affrighted, trembling and pale, when he comes suddenly upon a serpent in some mountain glade" (Samuel Butler's trans.).

[64]Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.379-81: He compares a warrior who draws away when he realizes that he had fallen in the midst of enemies to one "who has crushed a serpent unseen amid the rough briars, when stepping firmly on the ground, and in sudden terror shrinks back as it rises in wrath and puffs out its purple neck", H. Rushton Fairclough' trans. (1967), vol. 1.

Greco-Roman texts, namely: the way in which he frames a story or inset by using a given Greco-Roman text and embeds therein components or details taken from another textually close story. Some cases we have already explored, for example, the case of the Cercopes and the tree where V. embeds the discovery of a corpse from Icarus' story and how, immediately before, he makes use of different components taken from the Cercopes' story to frame the deer-Dharma story. The specific case of the Daedalus-Icarus story and the way in which it is interspersed throughout the *Mbh.* is also noteworthy.

Such textual uses square well with the multiple examples already given pertaining to the borrowing of ideas and motifs, which are particularly prominent in this story, from the initial "love-at-first-sight" scene to its end. While this alone certainly reinforces the main argument and specifically substantiates V.'s use of Greco-Roman texts, he also employs additional and more sophisticated methods to make use of such sources.

3. Towards V.'s Method. A Whole Common Draft

Criterion 5, the organization of a book or section in accordance with the story arc of a Greco-Roman story, is particularly relevant here insofar as it satisfies the most global litmus test, i.e.: there exists a readily apparent concentration of shared elements which (particularly if they are presented in the same order in both narratives) for both cultures define the same story, as in the example of *Genesis* and the *Poem of Gilgamesh*.

In other words, if we maintain that two seemingly disparate and complex stories are indeed related through the act of borrowing then one of the soundest tests to verify said relation would be to examine the core components of both stories in order to ascertain whether each can be independently identified by the demonstration of a clear concentration of common elements. After having viewed, at considerable length, the correspondences between Book 4 of the *Mbh.* and the examined Greco-Roman sources, to push on in this direction may seem more repetitive than insistent; nonetheless, focusing our attention on the text, the story arc, will help us better understand the question regarding the overall structure of Book 4.

To keep our focus here solely on the issue of a Whole Common Draft, I will only be presenting the common elements analysed in Chapter 3 which fulfil two conditions: 1) to be part of or directly related to the whole Heracles and Omphale affair; 2) to be part of the narrative development of Book 4. The only exceptions, found in section 1 below, deal with

a few components concerning the antecedents or events leading up to Book 4. To make the references here easier to follow, I will be using the same numeration of sections and points used in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3, Section 1. Preparing for one year in a royal court

(1) A relative, king and enemy, causes the hero/es problems directly related to the loss of a kingdom. Consequently, the hero/es have to endure (2) twelve years of wandering, (3) plus one year of thraldom (4) anonymously (5) in a royal court. In relation to these periods, or to the final one, there are two changes of numbers applied to time (6): 10/12 (years), 12/10 (months), and (7) a reduction of penance to one year (thraldom/ being a eunuch). That specific year signifies (8) one year of penance for the sake of the future. (9) Madness is the cause of this terrible situation. (10) Before it all begins, a favourable intervention by the/one of the hero's divine father -the father of the "sinner"- translates into his/their healing and knowledge of the immediate future. This sub-story entails (11) Not only a father but also (a) the theft of a sacred instrument (b) which is associated with fire; (c) confrontations between brothers; (d) illness/death-illness; (e) unanswered questions finally answered and subsequent healing; (f) restoration of the stolen sacred instrument to its rightful owner. Immediately afterwards, the year of thraldom commences, entailing (15) a lonely adventure after a farewell and (16) travel and water.

Chapter 3, Section 2. The first adventure. A tree, weapons and a theft

(1) The first phase of the adventure features a tree, weapons and real or potential thieves of said weapons. The weapons are not common ones; (2) they are famous and supernatural weapons. (3) The story, therefore, revolves around preventing said theft. In this context, (4) the hero/es find a corpse (5) and (a) funerary rites (real or fake) are performed for it (b) thus making the corpse both prominent and visible to people from afar/so people avoid approaching it. (c) It is done to the father's/family's satisfaction. (d) It is the (real/fake) corpse of a son/mother. (e) Secondary characters, among whom is a shepherd or shepherds, see a body falling down/being hung up. There is also (6) a hanging and tying of body/ies; (7) there is also (a) a (real/fake) mother of brothers. (b) The brothers talk about her in relation to a question that touches upon something which is being witnessed. (c) She is extraordinarily long living. (8) A goddess and her intervention are mentioned by the antagonists/protagonists: she had predicted/predicts the future. Finally, there is also the possibility of (9) semantic

connections between new names. A name change, semantically related to long/large, plus a name meaning "penis".

Chapter 3, Section 3. Adventures in palaces

(1) The hero/es are not believed before being bought/recruited. (a) The scene is presented from the perspective of the viewers who make comments. (b) They look at the slave/servants with admiration and do not believe he/they are slave/servants. (c) They say they look more like superiors -masters, kings...- than servants. (8) The hero/one of the heroes is a transvestite for a year. (9) The transvestite hero is directly related to music. (10) The transvestite serves a king's daughter. (11) The transvestite hero lives among maidens in a palace. (12) The hero/one of the heroes is a gluttonous cook. (13) The hero/one of the heroes is an animal killer. (16) The hero/one of the heroes engages in hand-to-hand combat.

Chapter 3, Section 4. Two prominent sections in the story

The first (4.1) describes a wife recounting her grievances and is situated immediately after/during this adventure. (1) The hero's wife details her grievances (2) thereby giving voice to the tragic side of this heroic tale. (3) She laments the hero/es' hierarchical and gender degradation, then and now. (4) She laments her husband's behaviour, (5) contrasting the past and the present, makes a specific allusion to the whole earth, (6) and describes how she suffers in a house on account of his fights against animals. (7) These fights are associated with rumours that make her unhappy. (8) She thoroughly laments the hero/one of the heroes' feminization. This includes: (a) his feminine adornments; (b) the involved feminized parts of his body; (c) his activities as a woman and a servant. (9) She laments her own subordination. (10) In her words a lady (herself/her mistress) is suspicious of a beautiful slave/servant, who was once a princess/queen, and fears she will become her husband's new wife. (11) She expresses feelings of jealousy of other women. (12) There is a reference to a scared servant and to his/her hands associated with his/her errors. (13) She mentions two times he fought for her. (14) She speaks about committing suicide (a) several times and, more specifically, (b) a reference to her own suicide ends the text (c) in connection with an allusion to poison. (15) Negative consequences of the woman's action are associated with her words, albeit in a somewhat ambiguous fashion.

The second section depicts (Section 4.3) a would-be rapist [65]. Before the main scene -in which the rapist enters a dark place to rape her, but meets the hero/one of the heroes instead-, there is (1) a love's prologue: a casual meeting between the rapist and a servant on duty and a queen where he falls in love with her. In this process some components dealing with description overlap, for instance (2) her beauty is exalted as shining/radiant and her smell is fragrant. (3) The would-be rapist feels desire at first sight, (4) burns with an ardent passion, (5) and immediately expresses his infatuation, (6) placing her above others. Moreover, (7) a slave man is mentioned. (8) The Sun is also mentioned in relation to protection. (9) There is a scene of feasting (10) where attendants prepare meals and drinks (11) for a religious festival.

The main scene describes the villain entering a place to rape her, (12) a scene which occurs in the dark of night. (13) There is a direct allusion to a (overly) well and specifically adorned man (the hero/the antagonist) as well as (14) a reference to a lion. (15) The would-be rapist has great expectations upon entering. (16) There is an additional allusion to darkness while entering. (17) The rapist reaches out in the dark looking for a couch. (18) The excited rapist unknowingly approaches a man (the hero) on a couch, he comes closer and gets an erection. (19) There is a touching of hair associated to the beginning of the fight. (21) There is a simile about snakes and reactions. (22) After the rapist is defeated, the lady calls the attendants and they come bearing torches. (23) The lady's happy retaliation is crystal clear. (24) The limbs of the fallen man are beheld by the spectators. Apart from the final scenes, this particular story constitutes (25) the longest and most substantial story of the hero/heroes' year-long adventure in a royal court.

Chapter 3, Section 5. The last glorious feat

The end of the story comes after a glorious feat by the hero/es. (1) The last adventure features defeating invading enemies who come (2) to raid cattle. (3) They are defeated and the cattle are recovered. (4) There are spoils. (5) It signifies the end of the hero/heroes' period of servitude and his/their recognition.

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[65]I am not including here the textual borrowings analyzed above in Chapter 4, Section 2.

Chapter 3, Section 6. A recognition and a wedding

Recognition. Throughout the whole story and, in particular, during the entirety of the final scenes, (1) notable objects play a pivotal role, namely: thrones in the palace around which scenes of humiliation/exaltation occur and the characters' attire. (3) The names, family pedigree and feats of the hero/heroes are revealed.

Wedding. (1) The end of the story/Book features the wedding of the formerly feminized slave/servant (or his son) and his former mistress. (3) This wedding ensures the continuation of the dynasty and an heir. (4) Plus, it is followed by an imminent war of revenge.

Chapter 3, Section 7. Six essential traits

(1) The tone of the entire story is set in an ambiguous key, oscillating between comedy and tragedy, humiliation and carnival, joy and sadness, and is peppered with theatrical components. (2) This is a complex story replete with references to issues pertaining to femininity and gender, with powerful female characters and a hero's feminization. (3) References to issues pertaining to femininity and gender overlap with those concerning hierarchies and power struggles which are explored through the temporary submission of superiors to inferiors. (4) It is also a story in which changing attire, identities and, in particular, names are fundamental. (5) Some settings and objects are essential to the story, mainly: (a) a palace; (b) a throne; (c) clothing (related to humiliations); (d) weapons at risk; (e) cattle and spoils of war; (f) musical instruments. (6) One essential theme of the story is the need to wait until the end of these periods of hardship, as ordained by the gods, and the suffering and conflict which it entails.

It should be noted that Criterion 5 is met both for the general structure of the Book and for most of its sections. There have, of course, been points excluded from this précis but this is not the place or time to examine them in a systematic manner. We know that all of them are related to the Omphale and Heracles adventure or to stories of Heracles[66]. We can see that the more developed ones also meet the criteria, i.e., both source and borrowed stories have the same basic story arc and can be independently identified by it.

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[66]Leaving aside the stories under or related to Omphale (the Cercopes, Syleus, Daedalus-Icarus, the Serpent, Itoni), I have suggested in Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 13, the Ceryneian Hind; Section 1, Point 14, the Birds of the Stymphalian lake; Section 3, Point 17, Antaeus; Section 3, Point 18, use of two stories concerning gods' thraldoms, with the common denominator of Apollo and Heracles, one of them related to Troy, Laomedon and Hesione; Section 4.4 Aphrodite, the Giants, and Heracles; Section 4.5.1 Busiris; Section 4.5.2 Hesione; Section 6.2, Point 2, Heracles' marrying his wife-to-be (Iole) and a wife given to a son and a nephew.

The reader can take a look, for example, as always with the help of the tables in Chapter 3, to the use of the stories of the Cercopes, the Ceryneian Hind, and the Stymphalian birds for the Deer-Dharma story in Book 3 (Section 1, Points 12-14). In Book 4 it suffices to see: Section 4.4 Aphrodite and Heracles and the Kīcaka story; 4.5 Busiris and Kīcaka's relatives slaughtered, or compare the arrival of Heracles in the story of Syleus and of Iole in Ovid's *Heroides* to the arrivals of the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī (Section 3, Points 1 and 2-7).

I should say that if to prove the borrowing we are exploring were the only objective of this chapter and book, we could stop now. However, the other aims of this book have not yet been accomplished. Thus, it behoves us to dig deeper into the remaining criteria as they provide additional clues and evidence for our analysis of Book 4, as well as other sections of the *Mbh.*, and will lead us to a more profound understanding of V.'s methods.

4. Towards V.'s Method. Concentration of Different Sources

A necessary step in uncovering the method V. used to re-cast the Greco-Roman sources he selected is, of course, to define which sources he actually chose. Once more, we will refer to the right side of the tables in the previous chapter.

Let us recall again that there are very few extant Greco-Roman sources for the Omphale-Heracles theme. Accordingly, it would be impossible to elucidate, with any certainty, the entire series of sources V. used in the creation of Book 4. In other words, we can say where his rendering has connections with those sources we do have, but we cannot be overly ambitious or speculative on this matter.

Starting with this premise, we can see that V. has a good grasp of and ample information concerning the Omphale-Heracles theme. And the extant sources we have provide sufficient evidence so as to allow for the application of Criterion 6: "Concentration of Different Greco-Roman Sources in a Section or Book of the *Mbh.*".

A brief overview may be useful.

As seen before, a substantial part of his sources connect, rather neatly, with the contents of our compendiums, Apollodorus and Diodorus, in all Sections, but Section 4. We have seen that he takes components present in both authors (the Cercopes, for example), but also components present only in one of them (Icarus, Itoni). Consequently, seems reasonable to presume that he uses either a more complete handbook than the ones we have, or several

compendiums.

Traces of other sources are also evident. For Section 1, V. may have also used Sophocles' *Trachiniae* for the one-year-long sentence (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 3); it helps to take into account this possibility his familiarity with Ovid's *Heroides*, as explored particularly in 4.1 (*In Draupadī's words*), of which the *Trachiniae* is an obvious source. The possible use here of an Ovidian text from the *Metamorphoses* describing the herdsman (fisherman and ploughman) who sees Icarus and his father just before the narration of their fall is also interesting when viewed alongside V.'s description of the cowherds and shepherds who ask the Pāṇḍavas about their "mother's" corpse being tied up in the tree (Chapter 3, Section 2, Point 5e).

For Chapter 3, Section 3, Point 1, when the hero/heroes' condition as servants or slaves is not believed, an argument can be made that it is reminiscent of the tale of Syleus as told by Euripides' eponymous play. Its possible use in Section 4.2 (*Kīcaka is killed by Bhīma: previous notes*) and in Section 6.1, Point 2 (Syleus' and Virāṭa's surprise before the insubordination of Heracles and the Pāṇḍavas) could further bolster that claim. The use of this play could be reinforced yet again by taking into consideration the profound connection between the significant secondary stories of Heracles in Omphale's service (Syleus, Daedalus, the Cercopes, and see also Busiris) and the V Century BCE Athenian stage as well as Athenian vase iconography. Yet, once again this fails to provide decisive evidence for our argument as such stories may be already been summarized in compendiums or similar works. I have also suggested the use of Ovid's *Heroides* for Draupadī's entrance (Chapter 3, Section 3, Points 2-7), for Bhīma's fighting with animals and for Draupadī's laments about her husband's fights with animals and the associated rumours (Chapter 3, Section 3, Points 14-15). Additionally, I suggest in Appendix 2, Section 2 the use of the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* for the meeting of Sudeṣṇā and Draupadī.

The most striking and central component of the story, transvestism, is borrowed from other sources that are less strait-laced as Diodorus and Apollodorus. The use of Ovid's, *Fasti* 2, where Omphale and Heracles swap attire, makes a clear case for the influence this text had on V., as do other works by Ovid, beginning with Deianira's bitter description in her epistle (*Heroides*) of her husband's degradation (Chapter 3, Section 4.1, Point 8). Yet, they fail to satisfactorily account for the theme's overarching presence and importance in the text

(Chapter 3, Section 3, Points 8-11; Section 7, Points 2 and 4, for example). While there are substantial literary references regarding this issue throughout Greco-Roman literature, I think it entirely reasonable to posit that V. was also familiar with Greco-Roman iconography or, in the very least, with compendiums on the subject. The strange case presented in Section 4.5.2 (*Draupadī leaning on a pillar?*) may serve to reinforce this perspective.

In Section 4 the concentration of sources seems more evident, though Ovid is by far the main source. V.'s direct use of *Heroides* 9, with, perhaps, some help from Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, constitutes the core of Section 4.1.

Whether we accept the presence of the Syleus theme for Section 4.2 or not, Section 4.3 (*Kīcaka, Bhīma, Draupadī / Faunus, Heracles, Omphale*) also has Ovid as its core as his *Fasti* 2 is used extensively. I do not think it necessary to accept the direct use of Plautus' *Casina* here, but the main differences between Ovid's *Fasti* and Kīcaka's story in V.'s Book 4 coincide with the story of Heracles as recorded by Strabo and explained in Section 4.4 (*Aphrodite and Heracles, Kīcaka and Draupadī*). Accordingly, this allows for the possibility of yet another source; and Strabo is by no means a bad choice. Though, considering the easy association between Ovid and the Black Sea, given his years of writing there while in exile there from 8 CE until his death in 17/18 CE, could perhaps drive us again in the same direction without having to posit Strabo as a source. He very well could have written, or transmitted, this story in a text that no longer exists.

In contrast, for the last part of the adventure, as portrayed in 4.5 (*The last act of Kīcaka's adventure. An odd Draupadī*), compendiums will suffice, and perhaps, as suggested before, some iconography for 4.5.2 *Draupadī leaning on a pillar?*

For Section 5 compendiums give us again the general outlines; as suggested above, it is the only case in which there could be some ground to miss a specific lost work, one depicting Heracles' defeat of the Itoni, but in absence of evidence this is merely an intuitive idea. These themes will be dealt with later in greater detail. However, by making the decision to split Heracles' attack, V. could have invented both narratives on the basis of materials contained, for example, in his presumably "more-complete-than-ours" compendium. For his construction, he could have used Ovid's *Fasti* again (see Chapter 3, Section 5, Point 6) for the comic scene of Arjuna putting on his male cuirass, and, exceptionally, one non-Heraclean source: the story of Achilles' discovery, who was hiding anonymously as a transvestite in the

seraglio of Scyros after a military alarm had been raised (see Appendix 2, Section 1). In any case, he has enough materials in his own work, in the previous sections and particularly in the long Books of the war, to delve into.

Section 6, again, could have been built using basically materials gathered from compendiums, but also from iconography (e.g. thrones) and Syleus' story, as told in Euripides' *Syleus*. Section 7 (*Six Essential Traits*) clearly demonstrates that V. has a very good grasp of and ample information concerning the Heracles and Omphale theme as well as an extraordinarily discerning capacity to recognize the story's undercurrents and to creatively reinvent them.

At the same time, it is worth highlighting the fact that he has selected, dovetailed, and re-interpreted stories related to Omphale and Heracles as well as also other stories related to Heracles alone. Let us recall his use of the series 12 years, the duration of the "canonical" labours, plus 1 year. This fact reinforces the double conclusion of his broad knowledge and resourceful ingenuity, as well as his use of a correspondingly vast bibliography.

Thus, we have in Book 4 different sources, stemming from different periods, clearly selected in a very refined process from, by and large, the stories of Heracles and Omphale, and, much less but prominently too, from other Heracles' stories. Ovid's renderings are just part of those materials.

I have not yet dealt directly with the question of how he uses these sources. However, it is obvious that we are not dealing with a casual accumulative process, but that V. uses them in an exceedingly variegated and sophisticated way.

5. Towards V.'s Method. Use of a Given Source and Its Dissemination

The very promising variation of the use of one specific Greco-Roman work or story in different parts of the *Mbh.* seems to be clear in three cases in particular: Syleus, the presumed compendium or compendiums and, overall in the case of two Ovidian works: 1) *Heroides*, which was most probably used at four different moments in the text: a) Draupadī's arrival to the city; b) Bhīma's fights against animals; c) extensively in Draupadī's complaints; d) in the comic scene of Arjuna putting on a cuirass; 2) *Fasti*, used mainly for Kīcaka's story, but also for the transition from the transvestite Arjuna to the cuirassed Arjuna.

However, to further test the strength of this criterion let us look, albeit momentarily, beyond Book 4. At the end of Chapter 3 I asserted that the evidence presented clearly supports

the argument that virtually all the materials concerning the story of Heracles and Omphale are recast in Book 4. The operative word here is "virtually", and I intentionally hedged my language as such to allow for the one exception to this rule I have found.

Apollodorus recounts how, after Icarus' fall and ultimate demise, Heracles happens upon and buries his body. In gratitude of this gesture, Icarus' father, Daedalus, sculpts a statue of the hero. Ironically, one night years later, Heracles mistakes the statue for a living enemy and attacks it; oddly enough, however, he is actually hurt by the statue or the stone he throws against it.

Naturally, this tale falls squarely into the category of "odd stories". It would be an interesting exercise to ask a reader familiar with the *Mbh.* if he/she knows of a story where a man who cannot see attacks a statue he mistakes for an enemy and ends up wounded. I am certain the reader would recall it and would most likely be hard-pressed to find another such example in all of world literature. In Book 11 of the *Mbh.*, immediately after the end of the first war, Kurukṣetra, a story eerily similar to the tale of Heracles and the statue features an incident with the blind king and father of many of the slain, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and a statue. Moreover, it is directly connected to a scene depicting the funerary rite of the unburied warriors and, not at all surprisingly, is centred on one of the two Pāṇḍava brothers V. chose in Book 4 to imbue with Heraclean traits, Bhīma.

Given that V. mines materials from the story of Daedalus and Icarus and infuses them in two additional stories in the *Mbh.* and for very different purposes, I will deal first with this story and take up the other two in the ensuing section.

5.1. A Statue for Heracles and Bhīma

In the *Mbh.* , this story takes place in Book 11 at the close of the first war. V. depicts the father of the dead Kauravas, King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, leading a cortège of women and old men on to the battlefield to perform funerary ceremonies for the millions of unburied warriors. There they meet the Pāṇḍavas, led by Kṛṣṇa, who are also devastated and saddened by the severe cruelty of the massacre, which even includes their own sons. While both parties are racked with pain the scene is nevertheless incredibly tense. V. displays his talent by teasing out the ambiguity of the situation he has created and the looming dangers, and not just for the old blind king. As is expected in a world now reigned over by Yudhiṣṭhira, reconciliation prevails, but great perils remain hidden and are ready burst. The scene ends on this note as

Queen Gāndhārī, the mother of the fallen Kauravas and one of the Kauravas' fiercest critics, casts a curse on Kṛṣṇa for not having prevented the slaughter to suffer an ignominious demise thirty-six years later in his city, Dvārakā, while its male inhabitants go about exterminating each other. This occurs in Book 16 and, quite naturally, brings a quick close to the *Mbh* . At the beginning of this scene, however, as the two cortèges meet, the potential threat is posed by Dhṛtarāṣṭra. The old blind king reluctantly embraces Yudhiṣṭhira, but when he goes to embrace Bhīma, who has killed his one-hundred sons, his intention is to crush him. At the last second, Kṛṣṇa, sensing the danger, swaps Bhīma for an iron statue made in his likeness; Dhṛtarāṣṭra crushes it and, in so doing, injures himself.

Let us lay the whole matter out, beginning with the scene's principal exposition.

1	*A context of funerary rites.* Heracles buries Icarus, Daedalus' son (Apollodorus 2.6.3).	Dhṛtarāṣṭra is going to preside over the funerary rites of his sons and the millions of fallen heroes, leading all the survivors, including the Pāṇḍavas (*Mbh.* 11).
2	*A context of unburied corpses.* Heracles finds Icarus unburied corpse.	The corpses have yet to be buried.
3	*A loving/hating father as co-protagonist in relation to his dead son/s.* Daedalus is Icarus' father, and is grateful to Heracles.	Dhṛtarāṣṭra's hates Bhīma because he had slain his one hundred sons, including Duryodhana.
4	*A statue of the hero.* Daedalus makes a statue of the hero, Heracles.	There is an iron statue of the hero, Bhīma (the whole story of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and the statue in *Mbh.* 11.11.15-27).
5	*A statue made out of hate/love.* Daedalus makes the statue for Heracles out of gratitude.	The statue had been made by Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son; most probably Duryodhana, who hated Bhīma (see *Mbh.* 11.11.27; see Crosby's trans., p. 243, *Mbh.*11.12.27, Vulgate).
6	*Attacked by a man.* Heracles attacks the statue made in his likeness.	It is attacked by a man, King Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
7	*A mistake by the attacker.* Heracles mistakes it for an enemy.	who mistakes it for an enemy, Bhīma.

8	*Because he does not see.* It is dark and he cannot see that the statue is not the enemy.	He could not see that the statue was not Bhīma because he is blind.
9	*The attacker is wounded.* Heracles attacks the statue. He is wounded by the stone bouncing back -which more closely parallels the way in which Dhṛtarāṣṭra injures himself - or by the statue itself (Eustathius, comm. *ad Iliad* 882.38-42).	Dhṛtarāṣṭra is wounded while breaking the statue with his arms (*Mbh.* 11.11.18-19).

Table 14: A Statue for Heracles and Bhīma

While I am not directly tackling V.'s more specific methods in this Chapter, a few brief notes may help to clarify V.'s processes and the obvious, albeit minor disparities between the constituent components of the stories as outlined in the tables above. The finer details regarding his working methodology, however, will be more thoroughly explored in the ensuing chapters.

As can been seen, V. respects the story's core, its essence. In effect, he respects the acts which take place, namely: interring a corpse left unburied and the creation of a statue in the hero's likeness. Moreover, together with respecting this scene's four main characters (a dead son, a statue of the hero, a father, and a hero), he also respects the entire series of actions the scene's main character carries out: 1) Attacking a statue; 2) being unable to see; 3) mistaking the statue for an enemy; 4) being wounded in the act.

Essentially, he adapts it to his needs, the climatic war and the falling action towards a fleeting resolution. As stated above, the scene takes places after the first war but before the funerary rites for the fallen have been performed. V.'s uses of this source here is entirely consistent with the way in which he makes use of it in Book 4, as what contextualizes the scene and is being underscored is unburied corpses and funerary rites. Thus, having previously recast the tale of Icarus' unburied body in the scene from Book 4 where the Pāṇḍavas hang a corpse in a tree, the resultant statue of Heracles was simply too valuable a story to squander. Accordingly, he seems to have set it aside for the end of the first war. As in the case of the double use of the story of the Cercopes (theft of implements in Book 3 and 4), V. recycles this theme at a moment intricately connected to one of its principal elements.

The context, of course, is extremely different. Icarus' story entails an individual corpse, a

son, left unburied after having died in an accident and happened upon by the hero who performs his funerary rites; whereas V.'s story deals with one-hundred sons and some million-odd more people killed in a war and left unburied on the battlefield.

While V. casts the father (Daedalus) in the blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the unburied son (Icarus) in Duryodhana -and to some degree in his other sons as well as the millions of fallen warriors- and the hero (Heracles) in Bhīma. It is the core essence of the story that has to be altered, the mood, the tone, the emotional ties amongst the characters. Despite maintaining the general tenor of love and/or respect for the fallen by performing the necessary funerary rites, V. has Bhīma kill Duryodhana and all Dhṛtarāṣṭra's other sons in the war, thus making hate this scene's dominant sentiment. The father's feelings of gratitude towards the hero, therefore, have to be inverted into odious resentment and reward into the desire for revenge.

This implies that V. has to reallocate or reassign roles and actions among the characters. At the expense of Bhīma, he gives the aggrieved father, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the lead role. Thus, it is Dhṛtarāṣṭra who directs and presides over the internment of the unburied bodies and who also receives the significant series of four actions related to the statue, the one who attacks it after mistaking it for an enemy and ends up injured. Note that his blind condition makes it easy to adapt the detail of Heracles being unable to see because it was night. Nevertheless, Dhṛtarāṣṭra maintains his role as father, mirroring Daedalus, but unlike Daedalus he is not the statue-maker. Yet keeping things closely linked, V. cleverly gives his son the role of creating the statue which, unlike the statue of Heracles, was sculpted out of their common hatred for Bhīma rather than in his honour. In this sense, V. gives a slightly better role to Duryodhana than his counterpart, Icarus, was given.

For his part, Bhīma is just past and has a purely passive role here: previously the killer of this son and of the others, the model for the statue and the intended victim, practically is in the scene just to be pushed aside by Kṛṣṇa, so, in a sense, barely receiving Icarus' corpse role of being touched and moved by Heracles.

Significantly, Kṛṣṇa is the only new character V. introduces here and the only one who does something that is not consistent with the Greco-Roman story, namely: he protects the hero. V. does not simply adapt previous components. If Bhīma becomes a supporting character and Dhṛtarāṣṭra the protagonist, Kṛṣṇa is characterized as his antagonist. After having led the first round of the great massacre, V. has Kṛṣṇa here directing the post-war period by

protecting the Pāṇḍavas in his role as saviour. V. never loses sight of the main ideological concerns of the *Mbh*.

The sophistication of his working methodology is impressive. Note how he seamlessly weaves into the story inversions, modifications, exchanges inside scenes, the reallocation of roles and actions and new components.

As mentioned before, there is another, no less odd, section of the story of Daedalus and Icarus that V. recasts in the *Mbh*. Just as the two previous uses are not conceivable without the context of funerary rites, this additional example also shares that connection but V.'s recasting of this tale becomes blatantly obvious when we consider the common components of a persecution and a failed winged escape.

Once again we could ask the reader familiar with the *Mbh*. if they know of a story where two relatives take to flight and one of them ascends so high that his wings are damaged by the sun and, as a result, falls from the sky and lands near or in the sea. While there are additional parallels, these details would surely suffice for one to identify the story and deduce whence V. borrowed it.

5.2. *Daedalus, Icarus, Heracles and Jaṭāyu, Sampāti, Rāma*

The *Epitome* of Apollodorus 1.8-15 [67] gives us the basic backdrop: in King Minos' palace in Crete, the exiled Daedalus helps Theseus to escape the famous labyrinth by giving instructions to Minos' daughter, Ariadne, who then absconds with Theseus. As a consequence, Minos holds Daedalus prisoner on the island and even in the very labyrinth. This is his second offence, as he had previously helped Minos' wife, Pasiphae, have sexual relations with a bull, the result of which was her giving birth to the infamous Minotaur.

Daedalus fashions wings for himself and his son Icarus. He tells Icarus not to fly too high for the sun may melt the wax holding his wings together; yet, ecstatic with flight he ignores his father's instructions, soars too high, destroys his wings, falls into what is now known as the Icarian sea and drowns. Daedalus, however, flies on to Sicily. Minos follows in blind pursuit travelling here and there; since does not know where Daedalus is hiding he sets a trap involving a challenging puzzle and a reward for cracking it. At long last Minos moors

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[67] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 1.12-13 for Icarus' flight and death; see Apollodorus 3.1.4 (Pasiphae); 3.15.8 (Minos, Labyrinth, Pasiphae, Daedalus' crime, exile and Crete); see further references in Chapter 2, Section 6.3.

his army-carrying fleet in the Sicilian port of Kamikos. The King, Cocalos, desirous of the reward offered, falls for the trap and has Daedalus solve the puzzle, thus, inadvertently, blowing his cover. Knowing now that Cocalos is harbouring him, Minos demands the Sicilian king to surrender Daedalus. Cocalos yields, but cordially insists that Minos, weary of travel, first take a bath; while bathing, Cocalos treacherously has his daughters kill the Cretan king. Despite the story's ostensible complexity, its core plot elements remain: the literal flight of a fugitive and the subsequent pursuit.

In the section of Book 3 of the *Mbh.* known as the *Rāmopākhyāna*, V. recounts a very curious version of a story which is also told in the other great Indian epic, the *Ram.* Considering the problematic issue of settling on an absolute and correspondingly relative dating of each epic, it is understandable that this tale has caused rivers of ink to flow. Nonetheless, even if speculations concerning the accumulative creation of the *Mbh.* and the *Ram.* were to be rejected, there are countless ways to interpret these texts. For instance, it could very well be considered as a springboard for a story more fully developed later in the *Ram.*, a kind of draft or blueprint for the story's subsequent and more fleshed-out rendering. Fortunately, this discussion is not of our concern and we can, instead, simply focus on the textual evidence for a story in the *Mbh.* which features a literal flight in the dichotomous context of an escape/pursuit [68]

The story the seer Mārkaṇḍeya tells the Pāṇḍavas (*Mbh.* 3.258-75) to comfort them after Jayadratha's failed attempt to kidnap Draupadī is centred on the exiled Prince Rāma and his wife Sītā. While in a forest during their exile, the evil ten-headed *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa, king of Laṅkā, kidnaps Sītā and carries her off to his island fortress. In pursuit is Rāma, who is in fact an incarnation of Viṣṇu sent to kill Rāvaṇa, who has defeated the Gods and can only be brought down by a mortal -just as Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are incarnations of the God in the subsequent age or Yuga and lead a similar army of warriors incarnated and/or begot by supernatural beings. Incidentally, the motif of gods who are only able to defeat their supernatural enemies with the aid of a mortal is an essential part of a story in Book 3 and

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[68]Nevertheless, I would like to point out that these issues might be further clarified by studying the uses of Greco-Roman sources in both works. In the case of the *Ram.* , there have been interesting and oft-overlooked suggestions regarding these kinds of connections, made primarily in the XIX Century by several renowned scholars of the day, such as Albrecht F. Weber (1871).

closely related to the tale Mārkaṇḍeya tells the Pāṇḍavas: In it, Arjuna is the main protagonist and its arc, unsurprisingly, parallels a Herculean story (see *Mbh.* 3.45.9-29; 3.165-70 and Apollodorus 1.6.1-2).

The story of Rāma and Sītā runs in three parts. The first features their temporal exile. The second features Sītā's kidnapping and how Rāma learns of her whereabouts. In short, Rāma and his inseparable brother Lakṣmaṇa find her with the help of the exiled monkey-prince, Sugrīva, after Rāma agrees to help him by killing his brother and king of the monkeys, Valīn. The third features Rāma and his army's journey to Laṅkā and their battle with and defeat of Rāvaṇa.

The "flight and fall" which is of interest to our analysis is actually found twice, in the transition between parts 1 and 2 and parts 2 and 3. The main characters of both incidences are the vulture-brothers Jaṭāyu and Sampāti. They are absolutely essential to the plot as it is Jaṭāyu who tells Rāma who kidnapped Sītā and it is Sampāti who tells Hanūmān that Rāvaṇa and Sītā are on his island fortress of Laṅkā.

Both the story from the Greco-Roman world and the story from *Mbh.* deal with failed flights and the pursuit of a fleeing, winged-male.

We could begin by comparing the aerial components:

1	*Two relatives fly together*. Daedalus and his son Icarus fly together.	The vulture Sampāti tells Hanūmān, who is looking for Sītā, that once in a competition he and his brother Jaṭāyu, "ascended
2	*One of them ascends too high and his wings are damaged by the sun*. Icarus, against his father advice, ascends too high; Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* (2.59-60): *nam sive aetherias vicino sole per auras ibimus, impatiens cera caloris erit.…* "for if we go through the ethereal air in the proximity of the sun, the wax will not bear the heat".	to the assembly hall of the Sun" (Van Buitenen trans.), but the wings of Sampāti were burnt because he had ascended too high (*Mbh.* 3.266.45-49).
3	*and he falls, landing near or into the sea*. Icarus falls near or in the later-named Icarian sea and the later-named island of Icaria.	Sampāti had fallen on a mountain near the seaside (*Mbh.* 3.266.49; 42-43).

4	*Falling wings.* The sun melts the wax binding Icarus' wings, which also fall.	At a later stage, Rāvaṇa, who had just kidnapped Sītā, cuts Jaṭāyu's wings off when the vulture opposes her abduction, chases and hurts him (*Mbh.* 3.262.41-3.263.6) [69]. The wings fall to the ground.
5	*Last rites for a found fallen hero.* Heracles finds Icarus' corpse and performs funerary rites for him.	Jaṭāyu falls to earth; Rāma and his brother Lakṣmaṇa come across him. Jaṭāyu informs them that he is their father's friend and what he has done to help; afterwards he tells them which way Rāvaṇa went, he dies and the two heroes perform his funerary rites (*Mbh.* 3.263.15-21).
6	*A father and good will.* Daedalus rewards Heracles for conducting his son's funerary rites.	Jaṭāyu tries to help Sītā because he is Rāma's father's friend (*Mbh.* 3.263.1; 3.263.17).

If this, for whatever reason, is not convincing enough further evidence is not hard to come by. As we have seen, V. has a propensity not just to disperse his borrowings from a given source but also to concentrate them.

Accordingly:

7	*After the first aerial disaster, there is a persecution of a flying fugitive.* King Minos first pursues Daedalus and Icarus. After Icarus' death, Minos continues to look for flying Daedalus and finds him.	First Jaṭāyu pursues Rāvaṇa, who had just kidnapped Sītā. After Jaṭāyu's death, Rāma pursues the flying Rāvaṇa
8	*The first step for the pursuer is to find out where the fugitive is.* Minos pursues Daedalus but does not know where he is. He pursues him and only later happens to find out where he is hiding.	Rāma does not know where Rāvaṇa has hidden Sītā. He pursues her captor and only later susses out their whereabouts.
9	*The flying fugitive hides on an island.* Daedalus hides on the island of Sicily.	Rāvaṇa carries Sītā to the island of Laṅkā, where he keeps her and himself in hiding.
10	*In a kingdom and palace.* Daedalus is hidden in King Cocalos' palace.	King Rāvaṇa carries Sītā to his kingdom and palace.

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[69] See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 12.562-72 for a fight of Heracles with an eagle, a metamorphosed hero, with interesting parallels.

11	*The fugitive is pursued by a prince/king with an army/fleet.* Minos arrives to Sicily with a fleet.	Rāma, with the help of Sugrīva and Hanūmān, invades Laṅkā with an army.
12	*The persecution has to do with the abduction of a woman directly related to the offended party.* Daedalus helps Theseus, who carries off Minos' daughter, Ariadne, to escape by ship. Minos upbraids Daedalus in the labyrinth; Daedalus escapes and Minos pursues him.	Rāvaṇa has abducted Sītā, Rāma's wife, and Rāma pursues him.

We have also seen that V. constructs his characters in a systematic way, imbuing one of them, for example, with traits/elements borrowed from a character or several characters found in Greco-Roman texts. Three traits/elements for the villain of this story standout, and one is incredibly exceptional.

13	*A king (fugitive/pursuer), the villain of the story, will be killed.* Minos is killed.	Rāvaṇa is killed.
14	*A group of females in the villain's palace kill/threaten to kill a central character.* A group of women in the palace, Cocalos' daughters, kill Minos, at their father's behest (Apollodorus, *Epitome* 1.15).	A group of *rākṣāsī*, who are Sītā's women guardians, threaten to devour her (*Mbh.* 3.264.43-52) if she does not accept Rāvaṇa.
15	*A curse and punishment of conditional impotence cast on the villain due to his promiscuous sexual life and numerous illicit affairs.* Minos can only have sexual relations with his wife, Pasiphae, who cursed him on account of his frequent infidelities. As Apollodorus (3.15.1) explains, Minos is cursed to ejaculate beasts that destroy the women from inside, whereas Antoninus Liberalis (*Metamorphoses* 41.4-5) is more specific, stating he ejaculates snakes, scorpions, and millipedes.	The *rākṣāsī* Trijaṭā tells Sītā in *Mbh.* 3.264.58-59 that she is protected: "Rāvaṇa had been cursed by Nalakūbara, because he had assaulted [his nephew Nalakūbara's] bride Rambhā: the slave to the senses is not able to approach an unwilling woman", Sharf trans.; note *Mbh.* 3.264.59cd: *na śakto vivaśāṃ nārīm upaitum ajitendriyaḥ*; also in *Mbh.* 3.275.33: his body would explode. Note: he is the victim whereas Minos' lovers are the victims.

Table 15: Daedalus, Icarus, Heracles and Jaṭāyu, Sampāti, Rāma

Thus, we can see how V., drawing on the main aerial theme from the story of Daedalus and Icarus, recreates two stories, centred on persecution and other components taken from the

Greco-Roman story, that he then insets into the tale of Rāma and Sītā. We can also see the license he takes with the components he quarries and his keen eye for fascinatingly odd stories.

As the thrust of my argument is centred on V.'s borrowings from the stories of Heracles, it seems only apt to return to our initial source. In order to confront King Rāvaṇa and rescue Sītā, Rāma must travel southward across the Ocean -in Indian mythology south is associated with death. Eager and frustrated, Rāma threatens the Ocean god with his bow. After a brief conversation, the frightened god decides to help him and even suggests a way for him to cross: to build a bridge (*Mbh.* 3.267.30-42).

For one of his labours, Heracles had to travel westward across the Ocean, the direction associated with death, to the far-flung island of Erytheia to confront King Geryon and bring back his cows. Along the way he threatens the Sun with his bow and the god bids him to cease and in exchange lends him his great golden goblet. Heracles uses the goblet to sail across the Ocean, but when the Ocean begins to rock it Heracles threatens him with his bow and Ocean implores him to desist (Pherecydes in Athenaeus 11.470c).

V.'s use of Heracles for Rāma does not end there. Heracles' defeated enemy Geryon is also associated with the Hydra of Lerna, in Euripides (*Heracles* 419-24) for instance, Heracles burns the Hydra to ashes, consuming it utterly (ἐκπυρόω, 421) and kills Geryon with an arrow dipped in its poison. One of the obvious reasons for this association is that Geryon is a monster that in our older source, Hesiod, *Theogony* 387, is triple-headed, though usually is depicted as triple-bodied, and the Hydra of Lerna is multi-headed. There are different versions on how many heads it had: in Apollodorus 2.5.2 it has nine, whereas in Diodorus 4.11.5 it has one hundred.

In Apollodorus Heracles arrives on his chariot driven by his nephew Iolaus. He forces the Hydra to come out its lair by loosing fiery arrows at it. A crab comes to the Hydra's aid and Heracles kills it. There are two bouts in the fight. First, Heracles smashes the Hydra's heads with his club, but they not only survive after being smashed, but double. Heracles then decides to burn its heads, and, during the second bout, asks his charioteer Iolaus to set fire to a nearby wood and burns the necks to prevent the regeneration of its heads. Finally, he cuts off the only immortal head and buries it in a given place under a rock.

Rāvaṇa has ten heads in both the *Mbh* and the *Ram.* In the *Mbh.* (3.274), Rāma kills

Rāvaṇa's son and Rāvaṇa attacks him. There are two bouts in the fight. In the first, Rāvaṇa attacks with his *rākṣasas*. When they are killed, Rāvaṇa, through magic, brings them back to life, and Rāma kills them again with his divine weapon. Now Rāvaṇa, through magic again, sends enemies in the shape of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, and Lakṣmaṇa tells his brother to kill the ones resembling him. Thus, we have in the first part an interesting version of the heads coming back to life and the hero killing many similar enemies, in this case similar to him not to his enemy.

The second bout features the common components of a chariot, charioteer, and fire. Now, it is the time for the charioteer to appear and for fire taking part in the second bout. Mātali, Indra's charioteer, arrives on Indra's chariot (akin to the story of Arjuna fighting the god's enemies during his stay in Indra's heaven), beckons Rāma to mount the chariot and kill Rāvaṇa. After a fight, Rāma fires an arrow on which he had cast a Brahmā's spell and engulfs his enemy, chariot, charioteer and horses in flames. Rāvaṇa is so completely burnt that there are not even ashes (*Mbh.* 3.274.30-31); we could say, echoing Euripides, that he is burnt to ashes and consumed utterly.

The *Ram.*'s version is in the first part more faithful to the original: Rāma decapitates the heads of Rāvaṇa with his arrows, but they regenerate and their final number is one hundred (*Ram.* 6.96.20-4)[70]. Rāma keeps fighting until, in the second part, the charioteer, Mātali, suggests he loose Brahmā's arrow and thus Rāma kills Rāvaṇa (*Ram.* 6.97.1-19)[71]. In this version Rāma orders a funeral for Rāvaṇa, argues that he deserves it, and finally has him cremated (*Ram.* 6.99.30-42).

In sum, the three cases of V.'s borrowings from the story of Daedalus and Icarus reinforce the applicability of Criterion 7. Thus, these three sections taken from a Greco-Roman story passed on to us mainly through compendiums can be found dispersed throughout the *Mbh.* in Book 4, Book 11, and Book 3.

Note that Book 4 is situated in the pre-war period and Book 11 in the immediate post-war period, all in the "main narrative". The story, then, follows -in a sense, following Bhīma too- until the end of the war where V. makes it a perfect fit. Moreover, V. uses materials from

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[70]See *Ram.* 6.97.3d: the arrow sounds like a snake; 6.97.8ab: associated to fire and a venomous serpent; 97.10d: to a snake. See also the first arrow cutting off Rāvaṇa's head in 96.20d: a venomous serpent.

[71]See M. Monier-Williams (1863), p. 86 note for this association with the Hydra.

the same story recast in a "sub-story" in the *Mbh.* told to the Pāṇḍavas during the first part of their exile in the boring pre-war days, which further demonstrates his skill and working methodology as well as how problematic it would be to consider such "sub-stories" as merely products of different "layers" and moments of creation.

While it would be obviously anachronistic for Bhīma to take part in a story which occurred in the past era -as is clearly stated by Hanūmān when he appears before Bhīma in Book 3- V. keeps threading the Bhīma connection by having him allude to this very story in Book 4. As we saw in the previous Chapter, V. has Bhīma reference Sītā and Rāma in a series of four examples while asking Draupadī for patience and forbearance.

Thus, we can reinforce three issues. The first is that Criterion 7 can be applied here. The second is that the complex uses of these three stories as well as the precise links between them can be only understood as the result of V.'s deliberate use of them. The third is that, once again, we can understand the *Mbh.* only if we see the multiple and no less complex relations between its parts. We are not dealing with a patchwork quilt but rather with a richly woven tapestry.

6. Towards V.'s Method. The Use of Different Works by a Specific Greco-Roman Author: Ovid

To deal with Criterion 8, V.'s use not just of the same work but also of different works written by a specific Greco-Roman author, Book 4 suffices again, as it concentrates V.'s borrowings from Ovid's *Fasti* and *Heroides.*

This case is particularly interesting as he undertakes an ambitious design of complex adaptation from the section of Faunus and Omphale-Heracles in *Fasti* 2, as examined in Chapter 3, Section 4.3 *Kīcaka, Bhīma, Draupadī / Faunus, Heracles, Omphale.* It entails fleshing out and enlarging it by making use of and embedding additional stories concerning Heracles' adventures. The story of Aphrodite, Heracles and the Giants (Section 4.4) and, perhaps, the story of Syleus (Section 4.2) are reinterpreted and adapted to better fit the heroine's monologue voiced in *Heroides* 9 (Section 4.1) in order to underscore the persuasive element in Draupadī's speech to Bhīma urging immediate retaliation while borrowings from the story of Busiris and, perhaps Hesione (Section 4.5), help to create a dramatic ending.

I have also suggested that V. availed himself of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for his description of

the cowherds and shepherds who ask the Pāṇḍavas about their "mother's" corpse which they are hanging in the tree (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 5e); admittedly, it is an isolated trait, but one that is undoubtedly significant given its specificity and context.

No doubt, an exhaustive and systematic treatment of V.'s borrowings from Ovid found in the remaining Books of the *Mbh.* may shed further light on the specific selection of themes and materials V. takes from the works of an author with whom he is clearly familiar. The connections between gender and sex culled from the main Ovidian texts which V. recasts in Book 4 are surely not an exception; indeed, V.'s borrowings from Ovid are so extensive that they warrant specific treatment in their own monograph.

Chapter 5

EXPLORING METHODS: USING CHARACTERS. THE DIRECTION OF THE BORROWING

1. Towards V.'s Method. Using Characters

I have just dealt briefly with the issue concerning how V. adapts the characters from his sources in the case of the stories related to Daedalus and Icarus. While this particular matter has been emphasized throughout our analysis of Book 4, it is now time to focus it more broadly on the entirety of Book 4.

As mentioned earlier, the Book 4's basic structure together with the designed story arc requires V. to make two rudimentary adaptations of the themes and characters found in Heraclean adventures. There are five principal heroes in the *Mbh.* instead of one, and the heroes' wife takes part in their exile, unlike Deianira though interestingly enough she does accompany Heracles in some later adventures. This implies the use of a particular Greco-Roman character, Heracles, to provide components for the construction of several characters (Criterion 10) and a general adaptation of female roles to flesh out the now doubly humiliated wife -the wife of five exiled heroes racked with misfortune and becoming a direct victim for having accompanied them. Accordingly, this entails the use of several Greco-Roman characters to provide components for Draupadī (Criterion 11). Of course, both encompass Criterion 9, use of a Greco-Roman character to provide components for the construction of a character in the *Mbh.*

However, to begin, it is important to recognize the difference between the case of the

Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī, who are previously created characters with an already established backstory and an obvious trajectory in the work as a whole, and those characters V. creates specifically for Book 4. In terms of narrative creation, V. has to adapt the new adventures of the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī to their previous characterisations; thus, nobody but Bhīma could have been a better cook or, for instance, it is difficult to imagine Draupadī living happily as a handmaid. Likewise, Yudhiṣṭhira has to be patient and wait until the very last moment to disclose his identity, and Arjuna must be respectful with his elders in the battle at the end of Book 4.

For the new characters his procedure is necessarily divergent. All of them seem to be created specifically for the occasion; and just as they barely exist before, they virtually disappear after, with the exception of Uttarā, in her role as Abhimanyu's wife and the mother of the Pāṇḍavas' heir, Parikṣit. Thus, V. does not need to adapt new scenes and previous characters; on the contrary, in the same move he can create new adventures and new characters. In this process, it is interesting to see how V. creates these new characters in direct relation to their counterparts and, in one case, their adversaries, the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī.

1.1 Construction of the Pāṇḍavas' roles

All the Pāṇḍavas and their polyandrous wife share traits borrowed from Heracles' roles before and during that year as temporary slave/servants. All of them are mentioned in the complaints of Draupadī, thereby receiving the role of Heracles in Deianira's *Heroide*. All the brothers are co-protagonists of the two-bout war against the invading cattle-raiders and of its resultant reconstruction of their true personas, though the main voice in the final chorus is given to Arjuna. All of them share in most of the general common traits of the story.

However, there are two characters who receive most of Heracles' traits, corresponding roughly with Heracles' Greco-Roman division as, on the one hand, the brutish, spontaneous and unsophisticated hero and on the other the consummate knight and paladin hero, Bhīma and Arjuna.

To Arjuna also goes the role of transvestite, associated with music and housed among girls (Chapter 3, Section 3, Points 8-11), the most infamous trait of the Heracles and Omphale adventure. As suggested above, V. uses Heracles' transvestism plus his connection to (Dionysian) music and dance under Omphale to create that professional task associated with his condition of eunuch.

However, it is not just a task, it is a dual shame. Lest we forget, V. has Arjuna on two separate occasions remark on his own and their situation by using a metaphor very similar in form but markedly different in content: in their revelation before Virāṭa, Arjuna says all of them were as unborn children in the womb (*Mbh.* 4.66.10d: *garbhavāsa iva prajāḥ*), but as the transvestite eunuch he/she previously told Draupadī after her vengeance on Kīcaka that "she" (Arjuna) had been reborn as an animal or born from an animal womb (*tiryagyonigatā*: *Mbh.* 4.23.23a).

That degradation in the hierarchical order human/animal parallels his gender degradation, a shameful situation clearly visible in Draupadī's words (Chapter 3, Section 4.1, Points 3 and 8) as well as in his lie to Prince Uttara by the tree and later in his enemies' words. The implications of his condition as a eunuch in the narrative and its meaning is, then, clearly expressed by V. through his very characters. Certainly, V.'s play on sexual ambiguity with Shivaite components, as Hiltebeitel suggests (see Appendix 1), could help to soften but not eliminate this.

The fact that he is imbued with the double dimension of Heracles' humiliation under Omphale (social and gender degradations), while his brothers and common wife share in only the former, is directly linked to his prominent role in the Book. First off, he is the character who V. chooses to have Yudhiṣṭhira ask to select a place at the beginning of the story, to order him to carry their shared wife before arriving in the city and ultimately the court, and to ask him again to find a place where they can hide their weapons.

Later, V. divides the cattle-raiding invasion in two, one for Arjuna to confront and one for his brothers. We have seen the ways in which V. plays with the notions of heroism and transvestism during this battle, and how he depicts the first recuperation of Arjuna's and the other Pāṇḍavas' names and famous weapons.

Arjuna's shift into heroic transvestite is the first metamorphosis towards becoming his true self again. V. makes this evident through Arjuna's instructions to Uttara, who later proclaims victory at Arjuna's behest (*Mbh.* 4.62.11) by singing the glories of "the son of a god" who had defeated their enemies, and Arjuna's return to the court and the danger it implies for King Virāṭa, who had so egregiously offended Yudhiṣṭhira, the true king and emperor. What ensues is his and Uttara's preparations for the revelation of the remaining Pāṇḍavas' true identities and Arjuna's prominent role in that no-less-glorious unveiling. Moreover, he plays

a pivotal role in the resulting wedding as King Virāṭa originally offers his daughter's hand to Arjuna, an offer, in line with another set of Heraclean traits, he rejects and cedes to his son. Yet, with regard to the full reconstruction of his gender role, V. maintains the most important feature concerning the way in which Heracles' gender role is fully reconstructed, namely: the possession (albeit indirect in Arjuna's case) of the hero's former mistress.

As for Bhīma, he is imbued with the Heraclean traits of voracious eating and cooking as well as fights with men and beasts (Chapter 3, Section 3, Points 12-17). Again, V. creates a task and profession out of said traits. In some sense, Bhīma also acquires an additional trait as the recipient of Draupadī's complaints and laments when V. adapts a heroine's monologue from an Ovidian epistle into a dialogue between the two characters, though all his brothers are considered in her speech.

Above all, however, V. gives him the role of the defender and protector of the "lady in distress", his wife Draupadī, which represents the role Heracles plays in the stories of Omphale and Faunus and of Aphrodite and the Giants. Naturally, it is also Bhīma who, in keeping with these Heraclean traits, carries out a massive and explosive killing of a group of people committing human sacrifice, and is further punctuated by its correlation with the rescue of a lady in distress whose depiction curiously mirrors, in some respects, that of Hesione.

Finally, so as not to neglect the continuous links with earlier characterisations of Bhīma, it should be stressed that this Bhīma is in perfect keeping with his previous roles not just in relation to gluttony, hand to hand fighting and the like, but also as a pawn of the powerful Draupadī; established in Book 3, it is a role that is developed in direct opposition to Yudhiṣṭhira concerning the essential question of waiting/not waiting and its implications regarding the future massacre.

As V. accumulates in Arjuna and Bhīma the main traits of Heracles, the role of the other brothers is less relevant. Yudhiṣṭhira, leaving aside the general questions related to being part of the group of brothers that inherit Heracles' subordination, is just the old character with his old and sad feelings of guilt, and, in this sense, the Draupadī's counterpart. V. articulates the notion that "revenge must be taken" through Draupadī, whereas through Yudhiṣṭhira he articulates the more prudent approach of "justice will be done when the time is right". V.'s reallocation of tasks amongst the brothers makes Yudhiṣṭhira's role crystal clear: he is a Brahman -his true nature, related to his forbearance and his decision to respect the thirteen-

year period of exile- and a very poised and cool-headed dice master in King Virāṭa's court, no longer the mad, impassioned gambler.

Few components belonging to Heracles are used by V. in his characterization of Yudhiṣṭhira. However, like Heracles, he is the primary target of Draupadī's complaints in V.'s recasting of Deianira's *Heroides* (Chapter 3, Section 4.1, Points 3-5) as he twice failed to react immediately to offences. V. constructs Yudhiṣṭhira's muted victory over King Virāṭa in monarchical power and virtues after the latter's offence by making use of one of the essential props in this Heraclean story: the throne from which Omphale humiliates (and perhaps also exalts) him. It is interesting to see that V. builds this scene with the help of Yudhiṣṭhira's somewhat imprudent defence of Arjuna, which runs parallel to Draupadī's reaction to Uttara boastfully comparing himself to Arjuna.

As in the rest of the *Mbh.*, the roles of Nakula and Sahadeva are vague and indistinct. I have suggested the possibility of V. using Apollo's temporary serfdoms for their tasks of horse keeper and cattle herd (Book 3, Section 3, Point 18) and more specifically of Callimachus *Hymn 2, to Apollo*. This could be reinforced by the possible use of the following hymn, Callimachus *Hymn 3, to Artemis* for the contrast between Yudhiṣṭhira and his four brothers in the Dharma story (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 13g). It could be also of interest to note that the association between waters consecrated to a divinity and the arrival of a human being who offends the divinity and is swiftly chastised appears some lines later in the same work, *Hymn 5 The Bath of Pallas* 73-81. In short, Tiresias, like the five Pāṇḍavas, arrives thirsty at a sacred fountain in the mountains where the goddess Athena is taking a bath; he sees her naked and the goddess strikes him blind [72].

Nakula's and Sahadeva's task may have something to do with their fathers, the Aśvins. In any case, it is not particularly relevant; indeed nothing much in the *Mbh.* related to them is.

1.2 Construction of Draupadī's role

The case of Draupadī's character construction by V. is particularly interesting, as his decision to have her accompanying her husbands during their twofold exile allows him to continue using her as the lodestone for the story's dramatic weight. It is not as effective as having her

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[72]Tiresias' mother Chariclo complains and the goddess gives him the gift of augury. See F. Wulff Alonso (2014c), pp. 369-73 for the use of this story, in its variation of sex change, for Bhaṅgāśvana's story in *Mbh.* 13.12; see Apollodorus 3.6.7.

married to the five Pāṇḍava brothers, but in any case it further reinforces it. Accordingly, Heracles' two wives, Deianira, lamenting Deianira, and Omphale, the potential victim of Faunus' lust, as well as the other women around, even Iole, can be partially fused into the Pāṇḍavas' polyandrous wife. A whole new characterisation is at play.

Yet, Draupadī also receives some traits from Heracles as she too has been made a slave/servant. More specifically, Heracles' hands in Deianira's words are now projected by V. into her hands in her own words, his fear before his mistress becoming her fear before her master (Chapter 3, Section 4.1, Point 12).

Above all, however, she gets Deianira's role by way of her complaints and laments (Chapter 3, Section 4.1), which she projects onto her husbands and herself. It is a long and sophisticated recasting, in which V. projects all his abilities in the complex art of *mutatis mutandis*. She also receives part of the text concerning the beautiful servant/slave, Iole, who arrives in the city and provokes jealousy and concerns about the dangers that she poses to an older and less beautiful lady, Deianira. Draupadī becomes the object of jealousy, when she enters the city and Virāṭa's wife sees and talks to her (Chapter 3, Section 3, Point 7). This question surfaces again as part of Draupadī's grievances (Book 3, Section 4.1, Point 10). V. maintains Deianira's jealousy elsewhere, as he has Draupadī lament seeing Arjuna surrounded by the young maids of the court like a bull elephant surrounded by his females (Chapter 3, Section 4.1, Point 11).

Adaptations and inversions, the latter being one of V.'s preferred methods, abound. Draupadī's entrance into the city closely mirrors Iole's. And while like Iole, she is perceived as strikingly beautiful she is, unlike Iole, not depicted as an alluring rival to the queen. Instead, she is characterized as modest and diffident. V., therefore, at times directly adapts and at other inverts; here, he systematically contrasts the unassuming manner in which Draupadī enters the city with Ovid's depiction of Iole's swaggering, defiant entrance (Chapter 3, Section 3, Points 2-6).

Obviously, she is imbued with components borrowed from Omphale regarding the nocturnal sexual assault and from Aphrodite as part of the plan to kill her sexual assailants. Moreover, she receives additional components from Heracles as a would-be victim of Busiris' human sacrifice. Others less clear may have been taken from Hesione, who awaits death before being saved by the hero, and from Omphale, who perhaps bade Heracles to confront the

Itoni just as Draupadī persuades indirectly Uttarā to send Arjuna into the fray against the Kauravas. Her triumphal return to the palace seems to reassume, now in a more direct way, Iole's attitude by arriving to the city and palace.

Needless to say, as in the case of her husbands, she is all that and much more. She is a character developed by V. throughout the *Mbh.*, receiving these components, and others, from the Greco-Roman tradition as well as from the Subcontinent's cultural heritage. Though there is a clear case for borrowing here, she is essentially V.'s creation. For example, her very task as Queen Sudeṣṇā's maid and expert hairdresser is humiliating, but most of all, threatening, considering the importance placed on her hair in scene from the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura and how this motif continuously reverberates throughout the story, beginning with the parallel scene in Virāṭa's *sabhā*.

V.'s characterization of Draupadī as the proud woman born for the destruction of a generation of heroes who impatiently seeks revenge for wrongs committed against her or her husbands is further developed in Book 4. After wreaking her vengeance, this clandestine queen and empress terrifies everyone, even the queen whom she now serves. Ultimately, she outshines all her rivals in a resplendent wedding that marks the eve of the longed for war. She is, at the same time, the best choice to follow in the tracks of Deianira so as to flesh out the darker side of an ambiguous, tragi-comic story.

V.'s continuous references to the past and the future through Draupadī's words, anger and desires for retaliation, actions and scenes, as well through the repetition of offences committed against her, are part of the same game.

In a sense, she is the other side of Deianira. Deianira's naivety leads to her husband's death and her own suicide. V.'s changes imply the transformation of her dramatic and finally futile laments in words directed to manipulate. Draupadī becomes a Deianira who, instead of surrendering her own life and bringing death to her husband, convinces the hero, as Aphrodite did Heracles, to kill those who have done her wrong.

1.3 Construction of counterparts and antagonists: the royal family

Far more complicated is the problem V. faces in constructing the characters living in Virāṭa's palace, the whole royal family, the counterparts of the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī. Let us recall that, so far as we know, V. finds in Omphale's palace very few available characters: Omphale herself, her maidens, the future son and heir, and one only in name, Omphale's father. We

could also add Deianira, Faunus, the giants, Aphrodite, Syleus, the Cercopes, the Itoni and, even more peripherally, Daedalus and Icarus.

In a sense, the whole royal family receives Omphale's role as mistress, but, at the same time, V. trebles the masters (King Virāṭa, general Kīcaka, who claims to be the real king, and Prince Uttara) and doubles the mistresses (Queen Sudeṣṇā and Princess Uttarā).

Thus, just as Virāṭa is a function of Yudhiṣṭhira, Sudeṣṇā is a function of Draupadī, though Sudeṣṇā is a more sophisticated character. Virāṭa's role becomes important at the end of the Book, in the final scenes, to his own detriment and to Yudhiṣṭhira's glory. Until then, his role is a positive one, even though he receives from Omphale the, somewhat domesticated, missions of having Bhīma fighting people and animals, which take place now in the palace. He receives also a part of Omphale, as the master who participates in scaring Draupadī just as Heracles before Omphale in the Ovidian Deianira's words (Chapter 3, Section 4.1, Point 12). He also receives from Omphale his offences against the hero, now Yudhiṣṭhira, associated to the throne. After Yudhiṣṭhira's moral victory over him, he receives again the role of Omphale, with hints of Syleus, by being the most important member of the chorus in attendance before the enthroned Pāṇḍavas in the palace's *sabhā* as their names, feats and family lineage are revealed. Astonished and frightened, he offers his daughter's hand in marriage as Omphale offers herself.

The previous scene in the *sabhā* depicting Draupadī's harassment, however, alludes too strongly to the scene in the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura, clearly indicating that V. is interested in having the readers recall the general plan of the work and Virāṭa's role now as a somewhat distorted Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Sudeṣṇā receives the other side of V.'s recasting of Iole in Draupadī, thereby becoming Deianira, the jealous woman watching the entrance of a beautiful, potential rival who, eventually, comes into her home (Chapter 3, Section 3. Point 7; Section 4.1, Point 10). She also receives one elusive component of Deianira's story: rumours, though now the rumours about the illicit lovers of her absent husband become her own gossip about Draupadī and Bhīma's sexual relations (Chapter 3, Section 4.1, Point 7). Note that she talks to the women in the serail just as Omphale's abuses took place among her maidens.

As usual, V. creates new traits for his character, with an interesting ambiguity hovering over the scenes with Kīcaka and Draupadī. V. works with her jealousy and the anomalous power

imbalance between the general, her brother, and the nominal king, her husband, thereby reinforcing a story which indicates its basic inherited component: the (im) balance of power entailed in a situation in which superiors are temporarily subjected to inferiors and those theoretical inferiors could change their position.

For Kīcaka V. uses, again, Omphale: he is the only clearly abusive master in the story, inheriting even the sexual overtones of her dominance. Syleus, as abusive master, might also figure into his characterization, as well as Heracles as the rapist of Syleus' daughter. He is also the master who orders his servants to bring food and drinks, as Omphale presumably does (Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 10). Heracles overly well adorned by Omphale before the scene in the darkness, becomes him adorning himself overly well before the same scene (Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 13). He receives also traits from Heracles as slave and love slave, now delving into the ambiguity of the term by offering to become Draupadī's slave and making his wives their slaves (Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 7). Let us recall the long tradition of portraits of Heracles under Omphale as a man who cannot control his impulses, enslaved not by divine decree, but by that very lack of control. V. develops this issue specifically through Draupadī's words, contrasting her husbands' and her conduct with Kīcaka's behaviour governed by his passions (see, for example, *kāmarāgavaśānugaḥ* in *Mbh.* 4.20.25b, stressing that he is dominated by lust and desire). Yet, V. of course connects this question with the more general themes revolving Duryodhana and Yudhiṣṭhira: whether honest people have to play fair and by the rules when their opponent is a wicked cheat.

Yet, above all he is the typical conceited, boastful villain in a comedy who is quickly dispatched by the hero. Thus, he mainly receives the role of Faunus and the Giants and is consequently defeated and killed accordingly. The scene in the *sabhā* evokes the past while his grisly demise in the dancehall foreshadows what is to come, for Kīcaka is the first on the long list of Draupadī's offenders who are systematically and brutally killed by Bhīma.

Uttarā is Bṛhannaḍā-Arjuna's mistress, and she and her maidens receive Omphale's and her maidens' roles, but with no violence, nor sex, nor even alcohol. She is simply a sweet character; there are no sexual overtones, as befits the eunuch Arjuna and the delicate fact that he will recover his masculinity after a year and become her father-in-law. As goddess Athena in Greek mythology, V. needs Uttarā to be virginal and, in her case, childish so as to allow her to safely interact with Arjuna. She receives from Omphale the wedding offer to her former

servant/slave, only to become, as Iole, the bride of his son. Naturally, the offer cannot come from her; rather, as is suitable for such a character, the proposal is made by her father.

She is part of two interesting and difficult scenes that, perhaps, have to do with an admittedly faint presence of Omphale. Upon hearing Prince Uttara's boasting, Draupadī cunningly persuades him to ask Bṛhannaḍā-Arjuna to be the charioteer for the prince through his sister Uttarā. Arjuna, therefore, is sent to battle by his mistress, just as it is presumed that Heracles was sent by Omphale to confront the Itoni. If the "dark" Draupadī is the brain behind this manoeuver, Uttarā is her hand. Interestingly, she receives along with it part of Deianira's role infused elsewhere in Draupadī: the threat of suicide. In Uttarā's case, as in Draupadī's, if Arjuna does not do what she asks for she will end her life. The context of Omphale playing with the attire and garments of Heracles in the *Fasti* may provide additional clues to understanding the scene where Arjuna puts on his amour upside down before setting off as the Prince's charioteer. Uttarā's strange request of him to bring back garments for their dolls and the issue of spoils may also have something to do with this play on dressing and undressing.

Prince Uttara is an invention, a foil character of Arjuna. He is, at the same time, a quite typical Greco-Latin *miles gloriosus*, a braggart warrior, who ends up becoming the eunuch Arjuna's charioteer, squire and the herald of his glories.

Finally, a few remarks on a minor, albeit supporting, character. It is interesting to see how (Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 8) V. takes Heracles protecting Omphale from the sun rays before entering the cave as inspiration for his scene where the Sun sends a *rākṣasa* to protect Draupadī while on her way to meet Kīcaka. We know that the *rākṣasa* pushes Kīcaka away from her, making him fall to the floor and lie motionless, just as Heracles push Faunus away and he is barely able to lift his limbs from the ground (Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 20). This supporting character is constructed with materials borrowed from the protective traits of the main hero. In this context, it is easier to comprehend the parallel between V.'s recasting of Heracles in a *rākṣasa* who protects Draupadī and, in the story of Busiris, his recasting of Heracles in Bhīma who is made to appear as a *gandharva*, with the same function.

1.4. In sum

As can be seen, V.'s use of the characters he finds in the stories of Heracles and Omphale is very sophisticated, but there are keys that allow us to unlock his methods, including Cri-

teria 9, 10 and 11. Such methods involve projections, recasting, modifications, exchanges, inversions and all manner of alterations he contrives to achieve his goal as creator.

His use of characters and sources is systematic enough as to be understandable. All this reinforces the same conclusions reached on textual borrowings, odd components and his varied uses of sources. Greco-Roman sources are a kind of quarry for V., and he utilizes its different materials in different manners and in various sections of his work. Following this metaphor, we could even say that he knows how to use these materials both as structural components and as more modest elements.

Thus, we can explain V.'s techniques, even define them, and thereby track the way in which they are put to use which, in turn, reveals the discrete processes at work when it comes to projecting Heracles and, in particular, components from the stories of Heracles and Omphale into Book 4. His work is seamless. His borrowings and adaptations are by no means extraneous; rather, they are intricately woven into the development of his narrative.

2. The Direction of the Borrowing

Introduction

As stated in the Introduction, this section entails a different approach to our topic, in so far it does not aim to prove V.'s methods and use of Greco-Roman materials, as dealt with in Criteria 4 to 11. The question now is simply to prove the direction of the borrowing, as well as to demonstrate that the alternative explanation for the shared components is far less plausible if not altogether impossible.

Any discussion regarding these problems must begin with implications pertaining to the fact that our aim here is to explain a systematic borrowing of written materials, i.e., the close similarities between *Mbh.* Book 4 and the stories of Heracles and Omphale can be only be accounted for as such: 1) Texts from the Greco-Roman world found their way to the Subcontinent, were translated and used in the construction of *Mbh.* Book 4, or inversely; 2) Texts from the Subcontinent found their way to the Greco-Roman world, were translated and used in the construction of the stories of Heracles and Omphale. Both explanations, then, must be contrasted: a) For Book 4, the author of the *Mbh.*, V., takes Greco-Roman components principally from the stories of Heracles and Omphale; b) The stories of Heracles and Omphale are heavily influenced by Book 4 of the *Mbh.*

It could be useful to begin this section by recalling the fact that methodologies for ascertaining the direction of borrowing in the case of texts obviously interrelated are not a novelty, but a question as old as comparative studies. I have already referred in the *Introduction* to the seminal case in Western culture, the story of the flood in the *Gilgamesh Poem* (A) and in *Genesis* (B). Before getting into our subject, it might be useful to broaden our perspective on this issue by briefly revisiting this transcendent and age-old debate. For the sake of the argument, I am leaving aside the internal reasons arising from the study of both texts and their shared traits and will focus solely on the "external" components.

When the textual parallels were found to be sufficiently evident that direct borrowing constituted the only valid interpretative explanation, it became clear that:

1. The Biblical text was later. *Chronology: Text A is older than B.*

2. The Babylonian flood in the Gilgamesh poem was a coherent part of an older and more general textual tradition of Babylonian renderings of the theme with different offshoots in Mesopotamia as well as in several foreign cultures and languages outside the region. *Text A has a long tradition of renderings and is present in different ages and cultures.*

3. The Babylonian culture had an established, organic and venerable tradition of literary writing that had long held influence on other cultures. *Literacy in culture A is longstanding and influential in other cultures.*

4. The borrowings in Genesis were not isolated but a part of a whole series of components in the Bible borrowed from the Ancient Near East and Egypt. *B takes other texts coming from A.*

5. In recent decades it has been definitely proved that there was a historical process of creation of Genesis and the Bible, correlating to the construction of Judaism, which can be explained and contextualized by, *inter alia*, the use of materials coming from Babylonia and other places, which may perhaps be better understood when viewed under the theoretical lens of transculturation. Moreover, this process was historically much later (V-III BCE) and thereby underscores the time gap between it and the Mesopotamian processes.*The group of texts in which B is included, as well as B, take components from other cultures, including culture A, because culture B was in a process of identity construction which resulted in a process of ethnogenesis related to new religious and political models.*

6. The historical and material conditions which allowed the Hebrew elites to assimilate and

reinterpret Mesopotamian literary components are clear and include: 1) The longstanding tradition of Babylonian cultural supremacy; 2) geographic proximity; 3) presence of Hebrew elites in Babylonia who were highly literate in various graphic systems and proficient in Babylonian; 4) some of those elites returning to their country of origin; 5) the continuous bidirectional flow of people and goods; 6) regional peace established by the Persian Empire and enjoyed by the Province of Yehud, the ancient kingdom of Judah. *Favourable historical conditions, agents and means borrowing and exchange in the direction B>A.*

Note: to defend the opposing interpretation would mean to maintain that most or all of these propositions are false or irrelevant. Considering the obvious chronological problem inherent to such an interpretation, tendering a defence for it, one that must be supported by compelling arguments and strong evidence, would be a monumentally difficult task.

The example above should help to broaden our perspectives and stymie any inclination to take a more parochial view of the matters at hand.

In the *Introduction*, I suggested three arguments/criteria that are directly related to this issue, in short: 1) Comparative cultural coherence (12); 2) seniority (13); and 3) Historical and logical-methodological plausibility (14).

2.1. The direction of the borrowing. Coherence and inconsistency: oddities

In the Introduction (Criterion 3), I briefly drew attention to the interest of odd, bizarre or fanciful components shared by these two stories and further elucidated the most salient cases in Chapter 4, Section 1 (*Some Bizarre Traits*). As such, it does not seem necessary to rehash the analyses of the seven main cases dealt with therein. Some such components are odd in both cultures, though never to the same degree, while others are completely normal in the Greco-Roman world but almost entirely unheard of in the *Mbh.* and the Indian Subcontinent at large. Touching corpses, for instance, is not just left unexplained but no purification rites are performed afterwards. Moreover, Arjuna clearly lies about it thus creating a glaring contradiction.

The outcomes of V.'s adaptation of these components may, perhaps, be explained as a side effect of the direct and massive impact the original Greco-Roman texts had on his process. Following this line of reasoning, other problems concerning oddities could be likewise untangled. For instance, why does V. portray King Virāṭa commanding Bhīma to fight beasts in the *seraglio* among the women of the court? It is an utterly bizarre place to hold bouts of

mortal combat with wild beasts and an incredibly strange public to have there in attendance. By contrast, there is nothing at all odd about Heracles killing a serpent at Omphale's behest during his adventures, nor is it odd that while in her palace Deianira receives the news of his battles against beasts and monsters with great anguish.

We have seen (Chapter 3, Section 3, Point 13) that V. first uses the matter of Bhīma fighting animals in his short presentation of the activities the Pāṇḍavas perform in the court. Later, we have the same thing in Draupadī's complaints to Bhīma in the palace to persuade him to carry out the killing of General Kīcaka (Chapter 3, Section 3, Point 13-15; Chapter 3, Section 4.1, Point 6-7). We already know that V. uses Deianira's complaints and her words about her suffering when, at home, she is made aware of Heracles' fights against beasts and monsters to construct Draupadī's parallel complaints and even maintains the complaints' association with rumours.

Viewed as such, V.'s version is more easily understood. The far-off home where Deianira receives the dramatic news of her husband's dangerous life and fights with animals and monsters cannot be used, as Draupadī is in the same palace as her husband. To have these fights in the palace is not a bad rendering, in so far as it is one of the few ways in which a woman living in an inner palace could see these kinds of shows. Thus, the home where a woman (Deianira) becomes frightened when listening to rumours about her husband's fights with beasts becomes the house where a woman (Draupadī) sees her husband's fights and is frightened. In the same move, the rumours that make Deianira unhappy are, in Draupadī's case, unnecessary as she is actually there watching the show. However, given that V. never misses an opportunity to make use of good material, the rumours are immediately recast in the context of Sudeṣṇā's malicious gossip.

Likewise, it could be argued that other such inconsistencies in Book 4 originate from V.'s borrowing of Greco-Roman material. When after Kīcaka's murder, for example, V. depicts Draupadī idly loafing about in plain view of his upset and vengeful relatives the inconsistency in her character is jarring for she is normally characterized as brilliant and wise. Yet, it could be seen as way for him to lay the groundwork for the insertion of Heracles' adventure with Busiris. At the same time, given Draupadī's strange pose, leaning against a pillar, this line of thought seems to lead to the conclusion that V. was heavily influenced by images of Hesione as her tale relates to the role of Heracles as saviour and, obviously, the ensuing adventure.

The image of the five Pāṇḍavas making dubious profits as servants may be considered inconsistent if not otherwise odd. Yet, it is tempting to recall that servants in Greco-Roman comedy are all but expected to engage in petty pilfering. Other such comedy-eque elements could be added to the story, beginning with Virāṭa's extravagant behaviour upon his arrival or his *miles gloriosus* son.

2.2. *The direction of the borrowing. Seniority*

Chronologies must be obviously contrasted to ascertain the direction of the borrowing. To begin with and to balance both hypothesis, two issues must be raised: First the issue regarding writing and literacy in both cultures and, second, the chronological issues related to the involved works.

There is no serious evidence of written documents and literacy in the Subcontinent before the III century BCE, i.e., prior to the epoch-making impact of the Buddhist King Aśoka. It is presumed that there was an earlier use of Sanskrit applied solely and strictly to religious matters but always with the limitation of the III Century BCE. The construction of Sanskrit literary texts is something quite different, and the beginning of the Common Era is the most credible dating (see Pollock 2006). Another, no less significant problem is also particularly relevant here: whether or not the evolution of Sanskrit was mature enough well before the change of Era to be used in literary texts. Given the evidence, the response to that problem is a near emphatic "no".

In contrast, there is evidence of writing in Greece from at least the VIII Century BCE. From then on we have a continuous, uninterrupted tradition of works together with the creation of several literary genres. The first work we have, the *Iliad,* is a literary text, though full of religious components, created in the VIII-VII century BCE and it was part of the already prolific genre of epics.

In this context, we have seen that the Omphale and Heracles story was created and written down (and painted) in at least the VI-V century BCE -though some of its components are older-, that it was organically developed in texts and in the plastic arts for centuries and that some of its most interesting recreations were made by Ovid around five centuries after the first conclusive evidence of its existence. It is just one of the hundreds of stories narrated, written, sculpted, painted and exported in a complex and variegated world.

As Greco-Roman chronological facts are, all in all, basically clear, any discussion on these

matters has to begin with the proposed dates and processes of creation of the *Mbh.* I have briefly commented on the problem of authorship of the *Mbh.* and indicated that there are two main perspectives. The first is the "traditional" and yet dominant perspective, originally synthesised by E. Washburn Hopkins, defending a long-time creation and recreation of the *Mbh.* Its proponents argue for a previous oral stage from, say, IX-VIII BCE onward and a more specific elaboration between IV BCE and IV CE through different moments and authors, belonging to different social groups. The second, "unitarian" perspective, represented today in particular by Alf Hiltebeitel, defends its creation *ex novo* by an author or a team in a given period between Alexander the Great (second half of the IV Century BCE) and the beginnings of the Common Era (see Appendix 1).

To accept the influence of the *Mbh.* on the stories of Heracles and Omphale would mean to accept that the *Mbh.* was well-known in Greece before these stories were created in the VI-V Century BCE. At the same time, we have seen the clear, textual connections between the *Mbh.* Book 4 and Ovid's works, which means that this influence must also be accounted for.

Let us begin at the beginning. The first series of problems hobbling this hypothesis could be summarized as such: there is no evidence to suggest that literacy or literature of any kind existed in the Subcontinent in the VI-V Centuries BCE and it is highly doubtful that the Sanskrit language at that time was sufficient developed to render such a work. For the moment, I will be leaving aside not only the richness of the language employed in the *Mbh.* but also the formal maturity of the work, including the main story arc, "sub-stories" and sapiential sections, as well as the elegance and depth of the ideological and religious matters, including the *bhakti*, all of which are utterly incompatible with this chronology.

A second group of problems arise out of the mere existence of the *Mbh.*, certainly a rather important factor in the task of presuming its impact. No serious theory of the *Mbh.*'s creation would allow for the existence of a written *Mbh.* in the VI-V Century BCE. This is crystal clear for the unitarian perspective. As its basic premise is to accept that the *Mbh.* we do have -despite being a bit polished, as in the Poona Critical Edition- is basically the original *Mbh.*, then arguments on the maturity of the work become much more evident.

The dominant theory of an accumulated *Mbh.* is even more difficult to defend. Indeed, despite its many proponents, it is nearly impossible to make any categorical claims given the

fact that after more than a century of hegemony and publishings, there is no clear consensus among them beyond common concepts such as a previous oral phase, successive layers, accretions, accumulative creations, successive appropriation of the original epic by other social groups, particularly Brahmans, and the like. It is not simply a problem of consensus, in so far as the free possibility of chopping up the different Books, sections, themes, characters, divinities and ideological components of the work and giving them different chronologies, ideological contexts and creators, makes any general statement on this view practically impossible.

In any case, serious scholars such as John L. Brockington would never postulate a finished V Century BCE *Mbh.* (Brockington 1998, 132). Additionally, as pointed out in the *Introduction*, the specific application of the methodology of piercing sections and giving chronologies to Book 4 have led researchers working with the approach to believe it to be a later Book, which probably means for most of them a presumptive date well after the beginning of the Common Era, making it all the more impossible to consider its existence so many centuries before.

Consequently, to presume Indian influence on Greece in the VI-V Century BCE forcibly requires a lot of dubious historical assumptions, implying nothing shy of altering the entire chronology of Indian culture and literacy and, thus, of the *Mbh.* itself.

Moreover, we must also bear in mind the second part of these chronological problems: If one is to maintain Indian influence on Greece, he will not only have to account for the period between the VI-V Centuries BCE but also, as stated above, for the *Mbh.*'s intense, textual connections with Ovid's *Fasti* and *Heroides* written five centuries later as well as the processes in the interim.

Plausibly account for such facts seems far-fetched. Are we to imagine a secret *Mbh.* at work behind the scenes in Greco-Roman literature for more than five centuries? Are we really expected to accept that there was such a mysterious text being used and reused? If so, we would be forced to countenance additional problems. As is now clear, two Ovidian stories were conflated to create the, arguably, more original episode in Book 4 concerning General Kīcaka. The theory of the mysterious Indian text, therefore, would have to rationalise why such an appealing theme as attempted rape lay dormant for centuries in Greco-Roman literature until Ovid finally decided to make use of it.

Something similar could be said for the heroine's laments. Let us recall that we have Sophocles' version of Deianira's lament and Ovid's, and that the latter shares more connections with the *Mbh*. Could the solution perhaps be to suggest several unrecorded and thus untraceable arrivals of the *Mbh.,* or different texts of the *Mbh.*, at different times in the Greco-Roman world? We would then have to countenance the fact that we have not a shred of evidence for the continual presence in the Greco-Roman world of such a momentous text; nor do we have any evidence of its successive arrivals, which is no small hurdle given the populous, archival and communicative circle constituting the Greco-Roman world's literary ambience.

Having reached this point, arguments concerning seniority must inevitably give way to arguments regarding historical plausibility.

Let us finish this section, however, with a final reference to chronology. It could seem to be somewhat idle to contrast this series of assumptions with the more parsimonious conclusion that V. borrowed from centuries of Greco-Roman literary productions while living and writing in the connected world of the Subcontinent during the I Century CE or shortly thereafter. This latter perspective presents no chronological problems.

2.3. The direction of the borrowing. Plausibility

I referred in the *Introduction* to the need of considering two different kinds of plausibility, historical (in the broad sense of the word) and, so to speak, logical and methodological. Both imply defending the consistency, coherence and empirical base of one of the two alternative explanations when compared with the other.

The first approach deals with the fact that it is necessary to define and compare the probability, and even the possibility, of the creation, transmission, translation, and diffusion of a text/texts in the proposed historical periods in which contact between these two worlds would have taken place. Deep transcultural relations need to meet specific conditions. I have just laid out some of the problems and arguments this entails.

Historical conditions must also be additionally contrasted and cover, in the very least, two things: 1) The frequency and intensity of contact between Greece and the Subcontinent; 2) Reasonable conditions allowing for the necessary agents to facilitate the opportunity and success of this exchange such as, translators, patrons, scribes, propagators, readers, etc.

Claiming that the *Mbh.* influenced Greco-Roman literature and art does not just generate the chronological problems noted above: it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to believe that in the V Century BCE, in a context of rare and sporadic contact between Greece and the Subcontinent by way of the Persian Empire, the conditions and agents able to perform this task existed. And the problem concerning the continuity of influence up until Roman times and Ovid only serves to compound such matters. There is no sound historical evidence to suggest such conditions existed until the period after Alexander the Great in the last decades of the IV Century BCE.

In contrast, the historical conditions and means for borrowing and exchange in the I Century CE are clear. By then, after centuries of a Greek presence in North Western India and Central Asia (Wulff Alonso 2014c, 30 ff. and 2008, 25 ff.), there were well-established sea and land routes connecting India and the Roman Mediterranean, frequent contact, and a particularly easy connection to the city with the best Greek library and the richest book market of the Ancient World, Alexandria. The presence of Mediterranean people in the Subcontinent and of people from the Subcontinent along the routes and in the cities connecting both worlds, including Alexandria, has been well documented. In that context, the Roman Empire dominated Egypt and enhanced the very profitable economic route, which was a multinational endeavour and formed part of the first world globalization. Accordingly, Greco-Roman culture was the international culture *par excellence*, the *lingua franca* from the Rhine to the Subcontinent and Bactria, a culture easily exportable through products and even specialists.

In parallel, the development and evolution of literacy and Sanskrit and its adaptation to literary writings were ripe enough for ambitious undertakings, and cultures and religions of the Subcontinent were using every kind of material for their own goals and aims. We are dealing with the momentous period of the Buddhist evolution which brought about the *Mahāyāna* movement, the changes in the Vedic tradition which gave way to *bhakti* and Hinduism, the new dynamics associated to the Kuṣāṇa Empire and other powers, the growing impact of urbanism and transoceanic routes, etc. In this fruitful process of exchanges and cultural creativity, of ethnogenesis, such a borrowing is far from exceptional.

As in the case of the Bible, this does not constitute an isolated borrowing. The huge amount of art borrowings and inspiration should be sufficient evidence to quash any doubt regarding

that possibility, as they include a considerable amount of components, and not just in North India but in South India too[73]. The quantity and variations of representations of Greek myths, including the Trojan War, is impressive, and not just in public, but also in private contexts, as shown by the myths represented in stone palettes (Boardman 2015, 142-53). In this sense Winternitz's law ("It can in no case be proved that any Greek fiction whatsoever had come into India or an Indian fiction had reached Greece") is extremely difficult to uphold. But evidence for uses of Greco-Roman mythological materials in texts (see Arora 1981, Preciado Solís 1984; Chakravarti 1995, 217-19) exists, and correspondingly has to be reduced, if accepted, to orality.

Put simply, it is extremely very difficult to accept that there were no works of fiction in private and public libraries, or in the theatres of the Greek cities in Bactria and North-western India, or in the homes of the Greco-Roman artists who made art works and reproduced epic and mythological themes, or carried by any of the thousands of Mediterranean travellers, merchants, artisans, and residents frequenting the Indian coastal cities, or that Indians attending lectures by renowned Greek orators in Alexandria would have never dared to bring literature back to India.

After Alexander the Great, Greek culture was the international language of culture, and we have sound evidence of Indian kings' sympathetic outlook towards the Greek and Roman worlds. To maintain that in the midst of political upheaval, religious evolution and struggles, with Buddhists searching for useful cultural instruments for the sake of proselytism, everybody, even the Buddhists, would have abstained from such a contaminative practice, implies an undoubtedly interesting, albeit dangerous vision of the "Indian Mind", and an extremely limited way of understanding the complex variations of, and answers to, cultural influences (See my remarks in Wulff Alonso, 2015a, in particular).

At the same time, there is at least one entire field where the circulation of Greco-Roman books is undeniable and foundational, namely: Astrology -as the title and content of the *Javanajātaka* of *Sphujidhvaja* bear out (see Pingree 1978). To consider that there were only astrological books is obviously dangerous; but even if this were the case, it is good to

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[73]See, for example, J. Boardman (2015), pp. 102-94; M. K. Dhavalikar (1981); (2005) or O. Bopearachchi (2005).

remember that astrology is as associated with mathematics as it is with mythology. Architectural handbooks are another promising field. Hermann Goetz (1959, 179) following Prasanna Kumar Acharya (1927,134-59 and *passim*), writes: "there is a parallel almost done to every detail, between the *Mānasāra Śilpaśāstra* (possibly one of the earliest texts) and Vitruvius' *De Architectura*. Thus, one cannot escape the impression that this whole type of literature had been started in imitation of Roman writing…". What is particularly interesting is that we can follow the trail of other type of *śāstras*: Rostovtzeff (1923, 154) and Heichelheim (1938) maintain that the *Arthaśāstra* included Hellenistic components. Connections between the physician's oath in the *Caraka-saṃhitā* and the Hyppocratical Oath are also of interest (Goblet d'Alviella 1897, 97-98, following Gustave Alexandre Liétard).

The difficult world of Greco-Roman philosophy and Buddhist and non-Buddhist borrowings is also a good field of enquiry. The use of fables stands as another important example (Rodríguez Adrados 1999).

It is hard to understand why the Kuṣāṇa and Śaka kings, who used Greek inscriptions on their coins until the II century CE, and in particular the Kuṣāṇas, under whose power and patronage the adaptation of Greco-Roman skills, methods and even stories in the plastic arts occupied such a prominent place, would have avoided, for example, commisioned translations or uses of the said texts.

Thus, the historical plausibility of V.'s use of Greco-Roman materials is evident. The complexity of the world he constructs in his work is compatible with this date and much less so with previous periods. This includes the imperial context of the story, dominated by Yudhiṣṭhira's being crowned Emperor after his brothers bring the world under his power, including Rome (see Hiltebeitel 2011b, 553-79; 2001, 5 ff.). The coronation of Yudiṣṭhira can be understood even as a world turned upside down, which, as expressed via Mārkaṇḍeya's prophecies, V. sketches in the past and would like to see repeated in the future.

The importance of the Chinese Han and the Roman empires in the I Century BCE and CE in Central Asia and the Mediterranean Sea respectively, heralds a complex imperial situation. The first great Kuṣāṇa king, Kujula Kadphises, looks westward imitating Roman gold coins but is well aware of the existence of the Chinese East Hans, as his people came from the Western edge of China and had had smooth relations with Chinese dynasties for centuries; plus, a substantial pillar of his power was rooted in commerce with the East. It is easy to

understand that in his effort to consolidate his Empire his models could have been Rome and China (Falk 2015, 106-9). It is also obvious that his power owed much to the Silk Road and that its southward routes became essential to his Empire, as his later military expansion proves.

Conquests are only one side of this tale. Let me stress the centuries long and multi-voiced processes of constructing networks of common practices between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean Region (and in fact from Africa to South East Asia), as shown, for example, in the creation of a monetary network (Bondada 2015) through multiple adaptations, complex changes and exchanges to the components of coins (weight standards, weight systems, metal, choice of metal, iconography, legends, etc.), in dynamics that cannot be reduced to "emulation" or "imitation", not to say admiration.

In the midst of this world of artefacts, a reference to basic objects found in our story may help to present historical arguments in a more "plastic" manner: thrones make a lot of sense in a Greco-Roman context, especially when considering its function in Omphale's representations, but thrones are a late element in Indian culture (Lohuizen de Leeuw 1989, 77-8).

This hypothesis resolves another problem related to V.'s context: there is no serious evidence in the Subcontinent for the existence of any epic, oral, or written, previous to, contemporary of -or even after- the *Mbh.* and *Ram.* However, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and practically all the epic traditions of the world do not produce isolated works but entire series. As, to a degree, in the case of Virgil's *Aeneid*, V. would have invented his own epic tradition. Maturity is the reward of a good work with well-tested materials.

Logical and methodological consistency is another no less important issue. As pointed out in the *Introduction*, the results of previous chapters are also relevant to the question regarding the direction of the borrowing. If the odd traits in Book 4 can be explained by V.'s adaptations, and other components by understanding V.'s working methods, to defend the opposite hypothesis necessarily means either to deny the empirical components or to argue step by step for alternative theories to explain the observed phenomena.

In a sense, and I propose it here merely as a thought experiment, it is akin to positing that Virgil, who clearly took components from the Greek Epics as well as from the later Greek and Roman tradition up until the second half of the I Century BCE to construct the *Aeneid*, had somehow miraculously written a text centuries earlier that laid the bedrock for all the

Greek and Roman texts from which he later borrowed.

Leaving aside other such issues related to a reliable chronology, putting forth a strictly empirical argument for Indian influence in the Greco-Roman world would require a counter-hypothesis to explain the presence and specific uses of Ovid's texts over the centuries, along with a solid chain of counter-proposals for any of the borrowings as well as for any of the conclusions drawn by scholars on the processes and methods involved therein.

Such hermeneutic contortions fail to address both detailed and more global questions concerning the direction of borrowing. It would indeed be interesting to entertain arguments which defend that touching dead bodies is of no significance or consequence for a *kṣatriya*, or that it is normal for Arjuna to lie about committing such an act. The quality of textual correspondences between Ovid's *Fasti* and the *Mbh.* with respect to the nocturnal adventures of Faunus and Kīcaka, respectively, could only be explained by proving that there was a flawless transmission of the *Mbh.* text into the Greco-Roman from its arrival in VI-V Century BCE up to and beyond Ovid. The continuity in the theme of Deianira's lament from Sophocles to Ovid would mean that the themes of Draupadī's lament were kept unaltered, unadulterated for centuries. Such positions illogically warp time and are clearly fanciful construals.

I have defended in this book, for example, that V. takes three different components from the Icarus and Daedalus story and inserts them in three different places (Book 3, Book 4 and Bool 11); the alternative account, by contrast, would have to explain how and why a Greco-Roman author happened to extract those specific components from different Books of the *Mbh.* to construct a unified story which included sections detailing Icarus' fall, the funerary rites performed by Heracles, and the statue crafted in the hero's likeness.

To tender a more global example, we have seen that on the whole Book 4 thoroughly parallels the main script of the stories of Heracles and Omphale (see Argument 5, and Chapter 4, Section 3) and that the Greco-Roman side of the shared components includes several Greco-Roman authors and works scattered throughout centuries, while on the Indian side, we just have the *Mbh.* To defend the alternative interpretation, therefore, how, exactly, that process of dissemination took place must be reasonably explained.

The problem is not simply one of belief but what informs and underlies our convictions. Whether we believe that there was a translated version of the *Mbh.* which greatly influenced the development of Greco-Roman literature from the V Century BCE until, at least, Ovid's

death in the second decade of the Common Era or we believe that the Greco-Roman world deeply impacted the creation of just one work, any assertion based on such beliefs must be steeped in reasonable, logical, fine-tuned arguments for holding them. And as can be seen, any attempt to define, as systematically as possible, an explanation for the obvious parallels and methods involved in such renderings that favours the potential influence of the *Mbh.* on the Greco-Roman world quickly runs aground. In brief, when faced with the overwhelming evidence to the contrary and forced to account for the sundry details regarding historical chronology, empirical evidence, literary characterization, plot organization, etc. the argument of the *Mbh.*'s influence on the Greco-Roman world falls apart.

To finish this section in a more constructive manner and as way to synthetize the issue, arguments on the direction of the borrowing proposed here are complex, and not simply derived from external components but also from the internal evidence of the compared texts.

Chapter 6

BOOK 4: A GLOBAL VIEW OF ITS CONSTRUCTION

Introduction

After analysing the common components shared by Book 4 of the *Mbh.* and several Greco-Roman sources, particularly the stories concerning Heracles and Omphale, as well as analysing some of the methods V. employs to re-fashion those components, it may be useful to present a tentative overview of how Book 4 on the whole was produced with the help of those sources and to delve deeper into his methods.

Again, to avoid an overly rose-coloured image, it should be remembered that it is highly unlikely that we have all the Greco-Roman sources that V. employed. Nevertheless, he uses the ones we do have so extensively that he practically uses all of them, accounting for a substantial part of Book 4.

The issue, therefore, is to determine how he adapts and uses all these materials for the whole of Book 4, as well as its individual scenes, so as to better understand his process of global invention and structuring.

While deeply complex, the overarching story of the *Mbh.* is one of a systematic plan of a near wholesale eradication of an entire generation of heroes through two colossally destructive wars. The first war, waged on the fields of Kurukṣetra, is what interests us here. It was caused by two successive dynastic crises in the Royal House of Hāstinapura: First, Bhīṣma, the crown-prince and ideal heir, abdicates the throne and thereby sows the seeds of future discord as the kingdom is left without an indisputable heir. This conflict later erupts between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, signalling the end of one era and the commencement of the

final, most degenerative one, the *Kaliyuga*, our present time, which also serves as a prelude for renewal as the cycle will reset in the future at the close of this present era.

Book 4 is pivotal for several reasons. Firstly, it entails the end of a gruelling thirteen-year exile and logically looks back on the past offences committed and the subsequent loss of the Pāṇḍavas' kingdom, while simultaneously keeping an eye on the future: the upcoming war. Some scholars contend that the battle at the end of Book 4, particularly the section recounting Arjuna's resounding victory, prefigures the future war of Kurukṣetra. That contention, however, is far too simplistic. When considered in tandem, Draupadī and Bhīma's joyous revenge on Kīcaka together with the two easily-won battles seem to clearly allude to both the past and the future. With the former, V. now has the protagonists exact immediate revenge for the wrongs committed against them, where before they were forced to grin and bear it; whereas with the latter, V. has the Pāṇḍavas quickly and easily dispatch of the invading armies, a far-cry from what transpires on the fields of Kurukṣetra. Instead, victory will be hard-fought and agonizing; and it will cost the Pāṇḍavas the utter annihilation of their kith and kin together with the loss of their own honour. V. makes it clear that even honour and *dharma* have to be re-thought in the coming *Kaliyuga*, and Kṛṣṇa is his favourite character to make this dramatically manifest. A quick vengeance prepares the characters and readers for the future just as deceptively as Arjuna's easy victory on the battlefield.

Thus, Book 4 entails what we might call the (by now) final effect of accumulated tension: the weight of the offense, an essential part of the divine project of massacre, centred on Draupadī, the woman explicitly born for the *kṣatriyas*' destruction, and the requirement of waiting for the deadlines -literally in this case- marked by the two periods of exile.

In V.'s plan, Book 4 is a pivotal *Parva* in many respects. On the one hand, it stands as a radical shift from Book 3 and not only with respect to the starkly juxtaposed settings, forest/palace, and the activities of the protagonists, but also in terms of its style and composition. The problem for V. in Book 3 is how to flesh out twelve years of confessed boredom in the wild with incidents and doctrine. What he introduces there could have had included many more scenes or far fewer without effecting any real change. He resorts to devices already explored in Book 1 and 2, but also creates new ones, for example, confrontations with *rākṣasas*, attempts to kidnap Draupadī, pilgrimages, discussions with supernatural seers, and even Arjuna's long sojourn in Indra's heaven in search of supernatural weapons for the

looming war. This allows V. to create two parallel narrative sequences in Book 3.

In contrast, Book 4 recounts a rather self-contained and tightly wrapped story, despite being full of references to other parts of the work. V.'s use of the main story-arc and individual scenes from the tales of Heracles and Omphale relies not only on the notion of a thirteen-year exile for the story's construction but also on the characters' anonymity during the thirteenth year, which instils a new mood in Book 4.

V. finds a story where Heracles spends one year, incognito, in a royal court as a temporary slave until his magnificent feat unveiled his true identity to Queen Omphale. With respect to the story of Heracles being sold to Syleus, the hero's anonymity is not likely to be thought of as a device to protect his identity but, rather, to make him a more appealing, more marketable product. In contrast, V. takes full advantage of his protagonists' condition of anonymity, infusing it with dramatic possibilities: If they are unmasked, they will be forced to repeat the entire thirteen-year process. In terms of the way in which Book 4 is narrated, the mood would have been completely different had the threat of being discovered been elided. This particular device, therefore, allowed V. to create and maintain suspense until the very end. Moreover, he concentrates nearly everything around the palace. The story of the tree and the weapons, for example, does not take place in an unspecified place, but close to the city. The two exceptions, naturally, are the two battles prior to the revelation of the heroes' true identities; but even so, the real significance of their revelation floods into the palace and King Virāṭa's Throne Room. These are the story's main settings, the palace and its sundry wings, not caves or the blurry forest.

While V. does not explore the themes of humiliation or sexual domination which are so prevalent in his Greco-Roman sources -the eunuch Arjuna has cordial and sweet relationship with his/her tender mistress, Princess Uttarā- he does follow the main thread of those stories about gods being temporarily subordinated to mortal men, as well as the stories of Heracles which entail a superior's temporary subordination to an inferior (viz. Eurystheus and Syleus, in particular). Though the story of Heracles and Omphale does not overtly explore the risks inherent to a person in a precarious position of power abusing their power, other tales of Heracles do; accordingly, they may have inspired the groundwork for V. to further elaborate these themes, particularly with the story of Kīcaka and, in part, with Virāṭa's behaviour immediately preceding the Pāṇḍavas' unveiling.

In this sense, by transmuting a dark, damp cave into a palace's dancehall, V. recasts Faunus' harassment together with Deianira's laments to fashion the main thread of the story centred on Draupadī, interweaving the motifs of evil masters, sexual harassment, the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura, jealousy, the bitterness of humiliation, criticism of Yudhiṣṭhira, reflections on fate, and, finally, a risky act of revenge which foreshadows the coming demise of their erstwhile offenders. The story of Kīcaka, therefore, entails the creation of a situation of terrible abuse in which an important part of the structural contradictions explodes.

V.'s narrative aims are clear. The present state of affairs has placed the Pāṇḍavas on a lower hierarchical rung, and much of the narration of Book 4 revolves around the protagonists bidding their time before reclaiming their rightful place. The major episode surrounding Kīcaka and his ill-fated encounter with Bhīma, Yudhiṣṭhira's spat with Virāṭa and the even subtler rift between Sudeṣṇā and Draupadī, crescendos into the drawn-out climactic revelation of their true identities. First, four of the Pāṇḍavas recover their roles as warriors via their easy victory over the first invading army as well as through their blatant superiority over Virāṭa. Second, Arjuna reclaims his standing as a warrior and his male identity by forcefully swapping roles with the fainthearted Prince, Uttara, as they ride into battle, and then by single-handedly crushing the second invading Kaurava army. The battle scene leaves no doubt that he is a warrior not to be trifled with. The full-recovery of his gender comes afterwards, when he finally changes out of his eunuch garbs, dresses as the warrior-prince he is for their solemn presentation in the *sabhā*, and is offered the hand of the king's daughter, his former mistress, in marriage.

In a similar fashion, V. also incrementally builds up the recovery of Draupadī's role of superior and queen which culminates in her triumph during the wedding, through the revenge she takes on Kīcaka and the gradual evolution of her characterization. She first entered the city bashfully, diffidently, surrounded by people questioning her and was finally summoned by Queen Sudeṣṇā, with whom she spoke obsequiously. Now, after the murder of General Kīcaka and his relatives, the city's inhabitants cower before her in awe-struck fear as she enters the royal palace heading an entourage of young maidens, freely approaches Queen Sudeṣṇā and firmly, graciously tells her how much longer she will be staying in the palace. Likewise, V. depicts Bhīma's transformation from cook and combatant in the king's service to the hero who mangles the most important and powerful General in the king's court along

with his relatives, and who plays a prominent role in rescuing the feminized King on the battlefield and massacring his enemies.

Finally, V. depicts Yudhiṣṭhira's triumph in the battle, first, in his status as warrior, a *kṣatriya*, which is also a triumph over Virāṭa, who has to be rescued by Bhīma, followed by the second, at the palace and *sabhā,* on the field of sovereignty and monarchical virtues; and thereby reinforces everything in the scene of their presentation in the same *sabhā* as the emperor Yudhiṣṭhira is.

Indeed, Book 4 is a clear demonstration of V.'s literary and artistic skills. In effect, there are three narrative frameworks he borrows from the Greco-Roman tradition to organize the story arc of the Book.

Frame 1: V. abides by the general themes present in the tales of Heracles until the beginning of Book 4 and returns to Frame 1 at its end with the theme of the revenge war. Frame 2: V. incorporates the main themes found in the stories of Heracles and Omphale, which constitute the structuring principle of Book 4. Frame 3: V. makes use of the stories of Faunus and Deianira to construct the story of Kīcaka.

Dominated by the succession of the 12 + 1 years of exile, Frame 1 brings V. to end of Book 3 and beginning of Book 4. Frame 2 offers V. the general outline of the stories of Heracles and Omphale found today (and probably then) in various compendiums, from Zeus's intervention before it all begins and the Cercopes to the wedding. He respects the episodes which mark the beginning (tree and theft/no theft) and the end (cattle-raid, revelation, wedding) of the story and includes components from the story of Syleus as well as Deianira's laments. Though, the most significant component comes from Frame 3, which he inserts into Frame 2. He avails himself of the Faunus story with enough flexibility so as to allow him to develop several new scenes and integrate into them his adaptations of Deianira's laments, of Aphrodite's revenge, and of Busiris' demise. When he finishes with Frame 3 he returns to Frame 2 and describes the situation after the murder of General Kīcaka and his relatives, recounts the dual invasion, and, ultimately, resumes with Frame 1 to set up the upcoming war of revenge.

To recap, V. begins with Frame 1, moves into Frame 2, inserts Frame 3 into Frame 2, returns to Frame 2 until the wedding is over and, finally, take up Frame 1 again for the fast-approaching war.

1. Preparing for One Year in the Court of King Virāṭa. The Story of the Deer-Dharma

As the fairly self-contained and well-crafted story of Book 4 follows the much looser accumulation of stories and exploratory tangents comprising Book 3, it is to understand why V. chooses to mingle the two narratological styles to help bridge the two Parvans.

While the final story of Book 3 remains, to an extent, faithful to the Book's overall style and themes, it also ushers in the change in narrative style the reader will be confronted with in Book 4.

The story of the deer-Dharma (Chapter 3, Section 1, Points 10-14) is a story in which V. deploys his complex methodology, a kind of bridge story with two additional objectives. The first is to dramatically reinforce the triumph of waiting, patience, wisdom, i.e. of Yudhiṣthira and his conduct over the past twelve years, and to do so with the presence and approval of none other than his father Dharma, the god of justice. The second is to ensure, also as a result of Yudhiṣthira's wisdom, that they will neither be discovered in the year that follows nor have their whereabouts revealed.

To construct it, V. has at his disposal several materials.

Three of them are explored in previous Books, two in the sprawling panorama of Book 3. Essentially, these constitute three templates upon which V. relies to craft his narrative.

In the first one a Brahman asks *kṣatriyas* to step in after a theft has occurred and they are compelled to do so. This template is also used in Book 1 (*Mbh.* 1.205) in a story with ambiguous connotation as it results in Arjuna embarking on a sort of exile.

The second template is not so different: A scene where one of the Pāṇḍava brothers is in danger of death and is saved by Yudhiṣthira's wisdom. The narrative device is, for example, used in the story of a mortal danger posed by an animal (a boa), in fact a supernatural being and an ancestor, in which Yudhiṣthira's wisdom prevails as he predictably saves his rowdy brother Bhīma (*Mbh.* 3.175-178). It constitutes, of course, a sort of narrative concentration of the all-pervading theme of waiting/not waiting for the period of exile to end and the role wisdom plays therein.

The third template relates to mountains, trees and forbidden waters. Bhīma is not only the brother who most openly opposes their need to wait out the decreed period of exile, but also

the one who constantly violates proper etiquette in sacred spaces. For instance, he is sent by Draupadī to find and bring back some exceptionally special lotuses. While on his quest he comes across the divine monkey, Hanūmān, whose cordial superiority fails to make him any more prudent. As it turns out, the lotuses are to be found in a lake on the palatial grounds of the God Kubera. When Bhīma finally arrives at this divine lake encircled by trees, he is warned by the *rākṣasas* who guard the sacred space that he cannot enter without Kubera's permission. Bhīma scoffs at their admonitions, a battle ensues and they are defeated. He then dives into the hallowed lake, drinks of its waters and picks its lotuses (*Mbh.* 3.146; 3.151-53). Though the god Kubera is not troubled by his conduct, his brother Yudhiṣṭhira severely reproaches him. Yet, to no avail, as he does something similar shortly thereafter (*Mbh.* 3.157-9), and V. makes use of the same template again. It is possible that for episodes such this, V. is borrowing from Callimachus' rendering of Tiresias' woes in Hymn 5, *The Bath of Pallas.*

In any case, there are other Greco-Roman sources from which V. more clearly borrows. First is the story surrounding Heracles and the Delphic Tripod. As V. takes on and recasts the story of Heracles and Omphale, he also chooses to refashion its catalyst. In effect, this provides him with a skeleton for the adventure with Dharma (see Chapter 3, Section 1, Points 10-11) with of course, the necessary and corresponding modifications.

For the beginning of this story, V. relies on the same material that frames the first adventure in Book 4, i.e., the Cercopes. As Book 4 borrows primarily from the stories of Heracles and Omphale, V. uses here at the end of Book 3 two of Heracles' twelve labours: The Ceryneian Hind and the Birds of Stymphalian Lake. He re-fashions all these materials as if taking morphological components and organizing them under different grammatical rules.

The central concept, the story's main thread, is a dual adaptation. First, he recasts the story of the Delphic Tripod -with the help of the Cercopes story too- which includes: The theft of a sacred implement associated with fire; confrontations between brothers; the intervention of a divine father; illness; answers finally given to previously unanswered questions; consequent healing; restoration of the sacred implement to its rightful owner. Next, V. falls back on the second template mentioned above which includes Yudhiṣṭhira's wisdom saving one of his brothers from mortal danger posed by an older relative disguised as an animal. Here the ancestor is Dharma, Yudhiṣṭhira's divine father, who disguises himself as a deer and a

crane and introduces himself as a *yakṣa*. After Yudhiṣṭhira demonstrates his prudence and wisdom, he is rewarded with Dharma's revelation, and, as in the Heraclean Tripod story, with health, in this case for his brothers, and the communication of the immediate stay in a court.

V. develops the story in four scenes: 1) The deer stealing the sacred implements and heroes' pursuit; 2) the conversation among the tired, thirsty brothers and their search for water; 3) their arrival at the lake and their subsequent death/illness; 4) the conversation between Yudhiṣṭhira and Dharma, the former proving himself and thereby saving his brothers. V. reserves the restoration of the sacred implements to their rightful owner for the beginning of Book 4.

For the first scene, the story of the Delphic Tripod serves as the exposition and the catalyst, namely: the theft of sacred implements. However, V. also weaves in a more faithful version of the story of the Cercopes that we see in Book 4, which only features the way in which the Pāṇḍavas prevent the theft of their weapons hung in a tree. Here, as in the original Greco-Roman source, certain instruments hung in a tree are stolen and the thieves are pursued by the heroes (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 12abc). As we have seen, V. has a penchant to disguise certain ancestors of the Pāṇḍavas as animals who then test the brothers' wisdom. The Cercopes, as monkeys or semi-monkeys, however, do not appear to interest him, perhaps because prior to this story he describes Bhīma's encounter with the divine monkey Hanūmān. Instead, he takes the deer from the story of the Ceryneian Hind along with the great difficulty or near impossibility of catching it, but refashions the golden antlers that characterise the hind into antlers which snatch the sacred implements (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 13abc).

To set the adventure in motion, V. resorts to the first of his three templates: A Brahman asks for help. The story of Heracles' unsuccessful attempt to steal the sacred Delphic Tripod, an implement intimately associated with fire (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 11ab), seems to have inspired V. to swap out Heracles' weapons hung from the tree branches in the story of the Cercopes for a Brahman's fire-sticks.

For the second scene, he recasts the unspeakable difficulties Heracles faced in capturing the Ceryneian Hind during his year-long hunt into the persistent problems of hunger and thirst which beset the Pāṇḍavas during their desperate pursuit of the deer (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 13c). At this point, however, V. returns to the story of the Delphic Tripod and draws

on the dramatic confrontations between brothers (Chapter 3, Section1, Point 11c).

Just as Heracles' and his half-brother Apollo' s fight, the Pāṇḍava brothers fall into a serious, though obviously milder, row. Sharply critical of their eldest brother, the four younger Pāṇḍavas take umbrage with Yudhiṣṭhira's insistence on respecting their decreed period of exile before exacting revenge. The focus, therefore, falls onto Yudhiṣṭhira who, as a sort of victim, becomes the scene's main character.

To transition from this scene to the next, V. borrows from the story of the Stymphalian Birds. Just as Heracles has to climb a mountain to catch sight of the lake and birds, V. has Yudhiṣṭhira order Nakula to climb a tree to look for water. Nakula then hears the sounds of aquatic birds, spies trees associated with water and deduces that there must be a lake there in the middle of the woods (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 14abd). Note how in both stories the hero takes to high ground in order to find what is sought; though V. has Nakula climb the tree to find a solution to their predicament, curiously it is the sound of birds which end up leading them to water.

The third scene entails the second and third template: a mortal danger posed by a supernatural being that has taken the form of an animal and a forbidden lake in the middle of the forest. To draw this pursuit associated with water to a close, V. dovetails these templates with themes reminiscent of the Ceryneian Hind as well as the trope of a sacred place possessed by a deity where the hero will find the solution to his problem (Book 3, Section 1, Point 13de).

A lake and aquatic birds are easy to find in the story of Stymphalian Lake. Under this influence, the dangerous animal must also be an aquatic bird; accordingly, the deer disappears. When Nakula arrives at the lake there are cranes everywhere; we know that the *yakṣa-* Dharma takes the form of a crane that "kills" the four brothers (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 14c).

While here V. inserts one of his literary devices of narrating the same action repeated by the five brothers one after another, he does not squander the core imagery of the Stymphalian Lake adventure: Heracles shooting the voracious birds out of the sky with his bow and, later, the serene image of a quiet, bird-less lake. Yet, once again, V. changes the order and thus the meaning. Since Arjuna's arrows are to prove useless against the god disguised as a crane, when he arrives the lake is quiet and serene without a bird in sight; later he blackens the sky

with his arrows, but all for naught (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 14ef). Once the theme of the Stymphalian Birds is exhausted, V. abandons it.

I have suggested that the contrast between the situation of Yudhiṣṭhira and his other four brothers (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 13g) may have been taken from Callimachus' rendering of a story of *Hymn 3, to Artemis* in which the goddess sees five deer, captures four while the fifth, the one Heracles later captures, escapes. If he uses *Hymn 2, to Apollo* (Chapter 3, Section 3, Point 18) for Nakula's and Sahadeva's tasks, this may indeed be the case, in particular if we take in consideration the possible use of *Hymn 5, The Bath of Pallas* for the waters where the deity is and the reason for the arrival and the activity of the hero: he is thirsty while hunting.

In any case, for the main issue in this scene he comes back to the story of the Delphic Tripod (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 11de) and takes up the motifs of "unanswered questions and illness". Here, however, it is not the hero asking how his problem can be solved and being refused the answer (Heracles asks how to remedy the illness that was brought on by his crime of rashly killing Iphitos after momentarily losing all self-control), it is the heroes themselves rashly refusing to answer the questions posed by the crane-Dharma. The story underscores the four younger Pāṇḍava brothers' lack of control as they heedlessly ignore the crane-Dharma's warning not to drink from the lake until they have answered his question. As a result, they all fall ill/dead. Yudhiṣṭhira, however, controls his desire to drink through virtue and wisdom, engages in a dialogue with the crane and satisfactorily answers his questions. In this very obvious way, V. both remarks on the virtue of self-control and alludes to the arguments and conflict among the brothers found in the second scene.

Once again V. relies on one of his three templates, in this case the second. The crane-Dharma, a supernatural ancestor, poses a mortal threat to the four younger, unrestrained brothers; as befitting, Yudhiṣṭhira's virtuous wisdom prevails and, as such, he saves his brothers.

In the fourth scene, V. continues to follow the story of the Delphic Tripod, beginning with the divine father intervening to offer a solution to the hero's problem (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 10); though here Dharma is also the origin of the problem, but arguably for the greater glory of his son. The solution springs from an, until then, unanswered question/s (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 11e). Note the obvious inversion: the solution lies in the answer to the

question posed, in the Greco-Roman world it is a divine oracle that reveals the truth to a mortal, whereas in the *Mbh.* it is a mortal who answers the questions posed by a god.

The dialogue between Yudhiṣṭhira and the crane-Dharma is framed within V.'s second template and is perhaps inspired by the dialogue with a deity in the story of Ceryneian Hind. In effect, the dialogue results in the hero not being punished or having the heroes exonerated from their punishment (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 13f).

As in the story of the Delphic Tripod, the story's resolution is sort of healing and clearly foreshadows the coming year of slavery/thraldom. V. links the upcoming year's servitude to the condition of anonymity as Yudhiṣṭhira's divine father grants them the boon of not being discovered. Moreover, just as Yudhiṣṭhira knows that they will be spending that year in King Virāṭa's court, Zeus' intervention reveals to Heracles that he will be sold into temporary bondage and what immediately follows is Omphale's purchase of the hero. Finally, as in the story of the Delphic Tripod as well as the story of the Cercopes, the stolen implements are returned to the rightful owner, bringing the story to a close (Chapter 3, Section 1, Points 11f and 12d).

In sum, V.'s impressionist, free use of Greco-Roman materials is undoubtedly sophisticated and all the more so if we see how he keeps them subordinated to his own interests. Note that he is using materials from four different Greek stories, the fight over the Tripod related to Iphitus' murder, the Ceryneian Hind, the Stymphalian birds and the Cercopes. He also uses four of his own templates: 1) A Brahman asking for help after a theft occurs; 2) one of the brothers in mortal danger and saved by Yudhiṣṭhira's wisdom; 3) the hero and lakes, trees and forbidden waters; 4) the brothers repeat successively a series of actions. And the central concept of the story comes from one of the Greek stories and one of his own inventions: the story of the Delphic Tripod and his second template.

One final component seems additionally interesting. V. is using for this last adventure of Book 3 materials from the stories of the Cercopes and the Tripod, respectively, which are in the Greco-Roman sources in contiguous textual relationship. As one may recall, the story of the tree which begins the adventures of Book 4 borrows from the stories of the Cercopes and Icarus, most probably for the same reason.

V. then returns to the structuring principal of Frame 2 mentioned above. The heroes say their farewells to the seers and their priest, Dhaumya, and are now alone. Since the Pāṇḍavas are

not technically being sold into bondage, no friends accompany them to the "auction block", as happens with Heracles. A final reference to the sea in the Greco-Roman material before the real adventure begins is understandably modified in the *Mbh.*, which makes reference instead to a river (Chapter 3, Section 1, Points 15 and 16).

2. The Pāṇḍavas Journey to Virāṭa's City, Hiding Their Weapons in a Tree by the Cremation Ground

Just before they set out, V. inserts a new scene, which is necessarily an invention without precedent: Yudhiṣṭhira presides over the distribution of roles for the coming year among his brothers and their common wife. He presents it as their personal election (*Mbh.* 4.1-3). We have already seen how he does it (Chapter 5, Section 1.1). I will refrain from repeating that analysis here, but to better understand what follows it may prove useful to recall a few components. We know that V. uses very sophisticated methods for the construction of his characters and, in particular, for the allocation of actions, words or other traits borrowed from Greco-Roman sources.

We already know that all the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī receive general components of Heracles, and that even some more specific ones are instilled in Draupadī and/or Yudhiṣṭhira. However, Arjuna and Bhīma receive most of his traits during this adventure and the best scenes. Thus, while all of them receive professional tasks, Arjuna's and Bhīma's professions constitute a more direct recasting of traits commonly associated with Heracles, predominately for the former who becomes a musician and a eunuch but also for the latter who becomes a cook and a sort of gladiator. Yudhiṣṭhira's profession is directly linked to the development of his role in previous Books, as is the case with Draupadī. For the two youngest brothers, it is possible that Apollo's bondage to mortal men was recast into their professional task (perhaps via Callimachus), but the role of their fathers may well also be at play.

While the character construction of the Pāṇḍava brothers in Book 4 requires the melting out of Heraclean components, Draupadī's construction implies concentration, in so far as she is now a main character rather than a lamenting, far-away wife and that her development spans the previous Books. It is no accident, therefore, that V. maintains the tragedy/comedy ambiguity found in the stories of Heracles and Omphale by emphasizing the contrasting attitudes of Draupadī and her husbands.

Let us return to Frame 2. For the scene where the heroes hide their weapons in a tree by the

cremation ground, V. makes uses of the stories of the Cercopes and Daedalus and Icarus. The shift in the story is obvious. Weapons, which are so important during this year for the more ridiculous and laughable aspects of the transvestite Heracles, have to disappear now, only to reappear when Arjuna, the transvestite and eunuch, a discrete heir of those Heraclean aspects, recovers his gender and role as a warrior. The hiding of the weapons is absolutely key to the concealment of their identities, one of the main recurrent themes in Book 4.

A story featuring a tree out of which thieves steal the hero's weapons, are pursued and captured by the hero who, consequently, recovers his weapons, becomes a story in which the heroes prevent the theft of their weapons. As seen above, V. uses most of the principal components of this story (theft, pursuit, recovery) for the deer-Brahman story; accordingly, he avoids repeating them in the same way here.

Similar to the previous story, V. yet again takes the different components of the main story (see Chapter 3, Section 2) and freely reorganizes them in a somewhat impressionistic mode, though here in a much easier manner as it involves, for the most part, only two Greco-Roman sources.

First, V. makes use of components derived only from the story of the Cercopes, namely: its occurrence at the beginning of the year of exile, the tree, the prevention of the theft of the weapons and the famous weapons (Chapter 3, Section 2, Points 1-3).

Secondly, he introduces components from the story of Icarus to ensure that people will be reluctant to approach the tree. The association with the corpse and, by extension, the cremation ground is a product of V.'s creativity and obviously inspired by Icarus' corpse. V. did not change the chance finding of the corpse by the hero/es, or its connection to a specific burial ritual either (Chapter 3, Section 2, Point 4 and 5a).

However, he concocts the idea of putting the corpse in the tree to prevent the heroes' weapons from being stolen, thereby inverting the function of Icarus' mound: instead of catching from afar the eye of passers-by, it deters them from approaching because of the foul stench (Chapter 3, Section 2, Point 5b). Thus, people who see the high tree from afar -and avoid the corpse-, are a decent recasting of the people who are expected to see Icarus' mound from afar and recall him.

Besides potential people seeing the mound, he has at his disposal in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* more people, one of them a *pastor*, watching the heroes in flight just before Icarus falls,

and he borrows both components, inverting the second (falling down/ being put up). As the problem is to prevent the theft of their weapons, he presents them seeing the heroes' handling of the corpse, asking them about it and getting an answer (Chapter 3, Section 2, Point 5d).

As in the case of the hanging and subsequent theft of the Brahman's implements, V.'s inspiration for the theme of securing the weapons by tying them up in the tree branches comes from the weapons of Heracles in the tree. His inspiration for hanging the corpse in a tree may have been found in both stories, though prominently in the story of the Cercopes; apart from the hanging weapons, the captured Cercopes are represented hanging upside down from a pole which is quite obviously a branch (Chapter 3, Section 2, Point 6).

The following modification is particularly brilliant, though it is well grounded in his Greco-Roman source: he has a mother, the mother of the Cercopes, a father, Daedalus, some sons, the Cercopes, and one son, and corpse, Icarus. Now, instead of a son's body and its last rites blessed by the father -in some versions, incidentally, performed by him and not by Heracles-he has a (fake) mother's corpse and its last rites carried out by her sons and in accordance with family customs (Chapter 3, Section 2, Points 5cd and 7a); thus, V. translates Daedalus' satisfaction in terms of observance of a family tradition -we could even say, to the satisfaction of their mother's, their family's, and their ancestors' customs.

There are additional interesting narratological uses here. Note that V. maintains the condition of the mother not just as a mother, but also of a mother of brothers, translating it from the Cercopes to the Pāṇḍavas, and that the question is related to people who not only see but ask and get an answer: the Cercopes see Heracles' back, laugh and now talk about their mother after being questioned by Heracles about their strange laugh, while the shepherds and cowherds see the Pāṇḍavas, ask them about their strange ways of burial as they lift a body, getting the answer that the corpse is their deceased mother. In such a context it may be easy to understand that a goddess became a long living mother in so far as a goddess is a difficult candidate for being buried in any way, but long living maintains a part of her extraordinary characterisation (Chapter 3, Section 2, Point 7a-c). The number of years, 180, by the way, could be related to the importance of 18 in the *Mbh*.[74].

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[74]See J. A. B. van Buitenen (trans.) (1978), pp. 141-42 the repetition of eighteen as an exclusive and hardly coincidental peculiarity of the *Mbh.* -books, armies, days of battle, chapters of the *Bhagavad Gītā-* , which would have influenced the eighteen *Purāṇas*. See F. Wulff Alonso (2008), pp. 415-18 for a possible Greco-Roman base in the succession 9/10, also present in the *Mbh.*: the end of war happens in Book 9, but the definitive end comes from the nocturnal destruction of the encampment by Aśvatth āman and his fight with Arjuna in Book 10; Bhīṣma is invincible and terrible during the first 9 days, and is killed after a nocturnal visit and his agreement, on the 10 th day of 18 days of battle. 36 years between the two bouts can be related to the series 9/18 too.

It is interesting to pause and muse on the Cercopes' mother as a goddess and her role here: She warned her sons about the future, though her accurate prophecy/oracle, as per usual in Greek mythology, was misunderstood. She cannot prevent her sons' future disgrace. It is possible that V. may have found in this story the inspiration for the following section (not found in the Critical Edition): Yudhiṣṭhira prays to Durgā, asking the Goddess for her protection and, upon revealing herself, she announces their future victory grants that they will go unrecognized in Virāṭa's court (Chapter 3, Section 2, Point 8). If this were the case, the presence of a goddess [75] would be part of the original version, despite being left out of the Critical Edition.

The double change of the heroes' names may have been a natural consequence of the way he defines their disguises. All in all, it is tempting to see a possible explanation of the weirder of the two series, Arjuna's name, that could be grounded in the two sources he uses in this episode. There is indeed a name change in one of them at the end of the story: Heracles changes the name of the island Doliche ($\Delta o\lambda i\chi\eta$) to Icaria. $\Delta o\lambda\iota\chi\acute{o}\varsigma$ means long (in size, space, time, etc.), producing compounds. As $K\acute{e}\varrho\kappa\omega\pi\varepsilon\varsigma$ comes from *Kerkos*, meaning tail and penis, the new name of Arjuna, Bṛhannaḍā, probably from *bṛhat*, high, tall, large, wide, etc. and *nala*, meaning reed, a humorous allusion to his condition of eunuch, seems to fuse the two terms: a long penis-reed (Book 3, Section 2, Point 9).

In sum, V.'s working methodology comes into view. Once again, his principal method is to concentrate the sources from which he borrows (see Criterion 6 developed in Chapter 4, Section 4), the stories of the Cercopes and Daedalus and Icarus, with the former providing the basic framework for his story, despite significant adaptive changes being made. He also employs the method of textual proximity, i.e., borrowing components from another story close in the text to the story he is principally using.

Let us recall that he uses both stories in several places throughout the *Mbh.* (see Criterion 7 developed in Chapter 4, Section 5): the former, in the previous story of the deer-Brahman and here, and the latter by dividing it into three, infusing the corpse and the last rites here and making use of the statue and their flight for more convenient occasions.

Correspondingly, characters are changed following the needs of his narrative. By modifying

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[75]See Appendix 1 for the treatments of M. Biardeau and A. Hiltebeitel.

the main theme found in the story of the Cercopes', theft and recovery, into prevention of theft, he can do away with the Cercopes themselves, and have everything revolve around the Pāṇḍavas, the tree and the weapons, including the corpse, the (fake) mother, her last rites and other components taken from these two sources and adapted in different ways. We know one of the most important imprints of the process: even though Heracles undergoes a process of purification after his crime -which proves useless-, the Pāṇḍavas and, specifically, Nakula do not seem to be affected by the contamination of touching the corpse.

All in all, V. achieves his aim: the scene effectively wraps up their weapons along with their true identities as warriors, unfurling a new subplot and introducing the readers to the setting where the story mainly takes place, King Virāṭa's palace.

3. The Pāṇḍavas Enter the City and Dwell There in Disguise

V. is not particularly interested in their lives at the court. This is the immediate effect of the neutralization of the most dramatic components of the relationship between Omphale and Heracles, beginning with sexual domination. Instead, as we have already seen, he is interested in a more traditional way of breaking gender's good order: the abuse of a male and potential rapist.

From this vantage, he focuses much more attention on the presentation of the heroes in the court, on providing a general perspective, and on laying the groundwork for the central conflict of the Kīcaka episode. His adaptation and creation of characters here becomes increasingly intricate.

3.1. Presentation at the court

For the first part, he has a general scheme to apply to the six characters, coming from Euripides' *Syleus* and, perhaps, similar stories of Heracles (Chapter 3, Section 3, Point 1), and he uses it as a basis for all of them. Note that the scene is presented from the perspective of the viewers. They look with admiration at a supposed slave/servant, whom they have never seen, doubt his supposed condition, comment on it among themselves, and hint, in a more or less explicit way, that they look more like superiors -masters, kings...-, than servants.

V. then falls back on the narrative technique of have each brother carrying out the same act one after another. In effect, taking cues from the story of Heracles and Syleus, he invents a scene for the presentation of four of the five Pāṇḍavas (Nakula is presented later in similar

fashion), but instead of having a god intervene and lie about their true identity, as Hermes does for Heracles, he has the Pāṇḍavas lie directly about who they really are.

As each of them appears before the court and shows off certain skills related to his fake identity, which all but one of the brothers claim were learned and developed in or around Yudhiṣṭhira's former palace, King Virāṭa makes comments to his courtiers and, despite his incredulity, gives each a job within his court. Two issues are thus reinforced. The first is the obvious component of, quite literally, shining superiority, as the king and his courtiers compare the Pāṇḍavas to powerful, mighty animals (snakes, bulls, elephants, lions, etc.), to elements of nature (mountains, the sun, the moon, the Himalayas, etc.), and supernatural beings (Indra, etc.). Likewise, the second is their gracious gait and gallant swagger, which betray their pretence of being mere servants. The potential danger posed by a superior temporarily feigning inferiority is palpable, but when Yudhiṣṭhira enters the court it is made manifest as he is openly compared to venomous serpent (*Mbh.* 4.6.2d)

More importantly though, is that in these scenes V. begins to reveal how his first invented character, King Virāṭa, is to be constructed. As with Omphale and Syleus, King Virāṭa has to accept the heroes and must not be characterised in ill terms. Accordingly, he is described a rather amiable king. Many critics have pointed out, however, that it is a bit over the top, considering Virāṭa quite freely offers up his entire kingdom to an itinerant, gambling and wandering Brahman and to a eunuch (*Mbh.* 4.6.11b; 4.6.13d; 4.10.7ab).

In a context of a comedy-like text, this may not be so odd. When we see that V. chooses to highlight the main theme of the piece by portraying Virāṭa offering not only the kingdom, but also to be the servant of Yudhiṣṭhira (*Mbh.* 4.6.11b: *praśādhi matsyān vaśago hy ahaṃ tava*), we may identify that V. is playing the interesting game of indicating the real problem at play: the power imbalance beyond appearance. Truth comes through the lenses of comedy. At the same time, he is preparing his character for doing other debatable things, in particular at the end of the year and in the same *sabhā*, when he offends Yudhiṣṭhira. V.'s characterisation of Virāṭa in comedy-esque fashion allows him to be presented as generally good, albeit at times fickle, without crossing dangerous lines by being, for example, wholly stupid or entirely wicked.

As we have seen V. follows the general outline of the story of Syleus for Draupadī's entrance, but he also borrows from Ovid's *Heroides* 9 by adapting Deianira's description of Iole en-

tering the city as a slave (see Chapter 3, Section 3, Points 2-7). This constitutes the first of three uses of Ovid's epistle in Book 4, and two of them are found in this section alone.

In this section he borrows components from Deianira's monologue to allow the narrator, Vaiśampāyana, to give a direct description and to develop a double dialogue between the heroine and the crowd and the heroine and Queen Sudeṣṇā. Other components of this monologue are borrowed to give a plain description of Bhīma and the animals. In the third and final use of this Ovidian text, Draupadī's complaints to Bhīma, we know that V. relies on the text to give expression to the heroine's feelings but adapts the monologue into a dialogue, though a rather one-side dialogue.

V.'s adaptation of Iole's entrance into the city is particularly fascinating, especially when we consider that he uses very few verses from Ovid (*Heroides* 9.121-29). The way he chooses to do it is one of his favourites, namely: inversion (Chapter 3, Section 3, Points 2-7). The genius of Ovid's quick synthesis is recast in a no less brilliant adaptation. Iole's traits are inverted, synthetized and recast in Draupadī in but a few verses; the queen sees her from the palace and summons her, after which their dialogue begins.

Note that both heroines enter the city, walk through it, and Iole, presented as a captive and slave who shows herself as the wife to be and the conqueror of Heracles, becomes Draupadī, a queen and empress who pretends to be a servant. Accordingly, an arrogant woman and a triumphant pace become a modest gait and attitude, Iole showing her hair bound as a free woman, becomes Draupadī hiding her locks, Iole's golden appearance becomes a modest appearance too, and her attitude before the crowd also changes radically in this regard.

V. now further elaborates on his new invention, the important dialogue between servant and queen. It is tempting to view this as the dialogue -or the inversion of the dialogue- which never takes place in Ovid between Iole and Deianira.

Sudeṣṇā's characterisation by V. parallels, in a sense, the one of her husband: she has to be amiable enough as to see, summon and accept Draupadī, but there must be place for other aspects too, related to her ambiguous role in the Virāṭa story, jealousy in particular. V. prepares this scene and conversation between the two women in the perspective of its intertwining with later ones. Thus, he invents an argument of Draupadī to convince Sudeṣṇā, the five *gandharva* husbands, who would defend her, who will be mentioned several times by Draupadī later, and reinforces in Sudeṣṇā's words at full length the irresistible appeal of

Draupadī's beauty. Everything points at Virāṭa. In Appendix 2, Section 2 I suggest another source for this meeting, which could help to explain the erotic overtones of the story, the Aphrodite and Anchises meeting in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*.

3.2. Some general traits of a rather boring existence and Bhīma's modest rise to prominence

In that dispassionate life, V. briefly presents their existence by borrowing from traditional, picaresque components of representations of urban slaves in Greco-Roman theatre. Yet, at the same time, he begins to focus on Bhīma in the following section having him defeat a wrestler in a contest and, later, having him fight different wild animals, including lions. As such, V. begins infusing Bhīma with more and more Heraclean traits.

We know that in Bhīma he accumulates a meaningful part of the non-transvestite traits of the story. The characterization of Bhīma as a gluttonous hero is one of the main components V. uses to define him throughout the *Mbh*. This is not the place to develop his possible inspiration *ab ovo* in Heracles for doing so, as our scope is less ambitious. However, we have seen that in the story of Syleus (Chapter 3, Section 3, Point 12) we have not only these components but also those associated with hand-to-hand combat in a very specific setting: inside a palace. Thus, V. has the aspects related to cooking and fighting at his immediate disposal without having to depart from more general inspirations Heracles provides. Plus, there are comedies recounting Heracles' adventure with Omphale which depict him as a voracious eater.

We can see how he concentrates in the city and palace some of Heracles' adventures while under Omphale. As it is presumed in the case of Omphale and at least some of his feats around her kingdom, Bhīma fights there following the wishes of the fickle king, Virāṭa. For instance, he orders Bhīma to confront a wrestler who boasts he cannot be beaten. Apart from imbuing Bhīma with the common Heraclean trait of being a brawler and having him figure predominantly in his recasting of Heracles' encounters with the Cercopes and Faunus (Chapter 3, Section 3, Point 16), he also uses Bhīma as the protagonist in another well-known story borrowed from the adventures of Heracles, the story of Antaeus (Chapter 3, Section 3, Point 17).

The other strange trait of this subsection, Bhīma's fights against animals in the seraglio, makes the issue of the palace all the more prominent. While both heroes are typically portrayed as slayers of animals (Chapter 3, Section 3, Point 13), here V. takes inspiration more

directly from Deianira's words in Ovid's *Heroides* (Chapter 3, Section 2, Points 14-15; see also Section 4.1, Points 6-7). Deianira recounts her suffering when, while in the comfort of her own home, she learns of her husband's battles with wild beast and monsters in far-flung lands. V. recasts her suffering into Draupadī who tells Bhīma of the torment she feels while watching him fight wild beasts in the inner court.

Just as Deianira's fears spring from the rumours of her husband fighting beasts and monsters, Draupadī's suffering is also directly related to gossip. Obviously, certain adaptations had to be made, but the principal elements of tormenting gossip/rumours and the hero fighting beasts remain. Moreover, the fickle king's caprices help V. to rationalise the story's oddities, while the malicious intentions of the cunning queen begin to lay the groundwork for her role in the story of Kīcaka.

Perhaps the reason V. sets the story of Bhīma defeating a seemingly invincible wrestler during a religious festival has something to do with the fact that the story of Faunus, which incidentally frames the episode with Kīcaka, takes place during a religious festival (Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 11). At any rate, there are plenty of Greco-Roman sources which lend to a deeper understanding of the process by which V. constructs this particular episode and its characters. Once again, there is an accumulation of Greco-Roman sources concentrated under a specific banner or theme, and V.'s adaptation of them lead to the creation and introduction of a real antagonist, Kīcaka.

4. Kīcaka Is Killed by Bhīma

Throughout this book we have been focusing on this singular episode from various angles. While I have endeavoured to avoid repetitions, I am afraid some will prove inevitable.

We do not know where exactly Ovid situates the episode with Faunus in the story of Heracles and Omphale, but that V. decides to make use of it is clear. Instead of burdening his characters with additional hardships and labours, as happens with Heracles (Chapter 3, Section 1, Point 6), V. seems to offer them a reprieve by inserting this adventure after ten months of their one-year exile have passed. The incident opens the troubling possibility of their being discovered; to prevent that from happening, V. must invent a solution to the potential problem.

The story of Kīcaka enjoys a complex and nuanced development before the final fight occurs.

Indeed, just as the story of Faunus is the longest extant episode comprising the stories of Heracles and Omphale (Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 25), the story of Kīcaka constitutes the dramatic core of Book 4. In further parallel, the conflict of the story is associated with a situation of abuse wherein the structural contradictions explode and allusions to the past and future abound

It may be worth pointing out that Draupadī's circumstances, a female subjected to a temporary thraldom, has no precedent in Greco-Roman mythology; and apart from Heracles under Omphale, there are no precedents for males being subjected to a temporary thraldom under a mortal female either. The sexual implication of this latter subjugation, with the exchange of gender roles, female domination and male feminization are not mere chance and, in a sense, explain its rarity. Arjuna inherits this bizarre Heraclean role, and its exceptionality, though without the most terrible traits.

Draupadī's case, on the other hand, is much more isolated. There is a small number of Gods condemned to temporary serfdoms under a mortal man, as well as a small number of heroes -Heracles and Cadmus-, but no females. When Thetis offends Zeus by not accepting his sexual advances, he marries her off to a mortal man, her inferior, Peleus, and thus to beget a mortal son, Achilles. Or when Zeus grows tired of Aphrodite throwing him into countless shameful love affairs with mortal women, he makes her desire a mortal man, Anchises, and beget a mortal son, Aeneas (see Appendix 2, Section 2).

In this sense, for the Greco-Roman world, therefore, temporary thraldoms for male heroes and gods is tantamount to a goddess being punished and degraded by being forced into marrying/having sexual relations with an inferior -a mortal man. While obviously different, Draupadī's case also presents parallels with the circumstances of women (e.g., Iole and Cassandra) who are enslaved through war. Indeed, V. explores some of these common components, seen in the queen's fear of losing her status and her jealousy of Draupadī's beauty and youth.

By her essential nature, Draupadī is a superior woman. Born supernaturally out of sacrificial fires and announced to bring about the destruction of the *kṣatriyas* caste, Draupadī also possesses preternatural beauty; she represents pure danger to any man who may desire her. Her obvious superiority erases any possibility for a male to assert dominance over her. Moreover, V. also plays with her status as the polyandrous wife of the most powerful heroes

and thus, as the rightfully crowned empress of the world.

Through Draupadī and with the additional help of Deianira's laments, V. explores nearly all possible contradictions: her position/her mistress' position, her mistress' jealousy/her innocence, her own jealousy/damsels of the court, her husbands' position/their master, her husband Arjuna's position/maidens and princess, her and her husbands' social degradation/previous status and deeds etc. Thus, it is easy to understand why, in such a context, he borrows from the story of Faunus along with the story of Aphrodite to construct the essence of a new tale in which none other than the kingdom's General, the purported real king, desires her sexually and hopes to marry her.

Given V. decides to have Draupadī accompany her husbands during their double exile, certain sexual conflicts arise which are explored, in the context of an already sexualized narrative in which Heracles is abused by his mistress, with the help of the overly sexualized tale of Faunus along with the story of the Giants harassing Aphrodite and, as a result, being killed. In sum, the story of Draupadī and Kīcaka can be traced back to the various stories of Heracles and Omphale, to the mythological context in which they were created and to the internal structural dynamics of those stories.

In this fragile context of a temporary and exceptional submission of a superior to an inferior, V. explores the implications of the former's abuses when they cross into the sphere of the sexual: an apparent female servant (doubly inferior) is harassed by a powerful General.

It is in this sense that V. begins episode with Kīcaka's, underscoring the different feelings of Draupadī and her husbands after ten months and emphasising how she, who deserved being served, is unsatisfied serving Sudeṣṇā (*Mbh.* 4.13.1-2) -a possible reference, again, to Deianira's words in Draupadī's version. All this occurs just before V. describes how Kīcaka see her and falls in love. V. stresses Kīcaka's grave mistake directly, stating he speaks to her "as a jackal to a lioness in the forest" (*Mbh.* 4.13.10d). Even Draupadī herself offers him words of caution, asserting her condition as a married woman, married no less to superior beings, *gandharvas*, sons of gods, contrasting it with his condition of *sūta*, or *sūta*'s son, longing for impossible things.

Kīcaka is presented as the only real antagonist of the story, a character invented for breaking, in various ways, the proper order of things, and not only in relation to Draupadī. Note how V. elaborates on his power vis-à-vis the king, and, after his death, on the people's relief

and remarks on his harrying of men and harassment of women (*Mbh.* 4.24.1-4). His defeat marks the beginning of the re-structuring of the true, until then hidden hierarchies, and thus, also marks the beginning of the end of this year and Book.

Before following the story, a short summing up of some of the previous analysis can be useful, and not simply to pay homage to V.'s ingenuity and abilities. To create this story, V. seemingly has at his disposal the stories of Syleus (Chapter 3, Section 4.2); undoubtedly clear, however, is his borrowing from Ovid's story of Omphale, Heracles and Faunus (Chapter 3, Section 4.3) as well as from the story of Heracles which we know through Strabo that features Aphrodite, the Giants, and Heracles (Chapter 3, Section 4.4) and, finally, from the complaints of Deianira found in Ovid's *Heroides* 9 (Chapter 3, Section 4.1).

The process of adaptation, as always, fuses with the process of invention. And neither are, by any means, unsophisticated. We already know that the first entails not only variegated uses of disparate sources, but the recasting and adaptation of: 1) Several characters' traits -Omphale and Deianira, and even Aphrodite into Draupadī, Heracles into Bhīma, Faunus and the Giants into Kīcaka; 2) settings -a cave, or two caves, perhaps with the help of the palace where Deianira writes her letter and the destroyed palace of Syleus, into a palace and a dancehall; 3) characters' words -lonely Deianira's Ovidian laments and monologue into Draupadī's dialogue with Bhīma to persuade him to exact retribution; 4) actions -Faunus's attempted rape and the Giants harassment into Kīcaka's parallel deeds.

All in all, V.'s most remarkable feat in this process is that he uses the barely fifty verses from Ovid's *Fasti* as a map to sketch his story's arc, from the very beginning to the end, or, more specifically, from the moment in which there is a casual meeting between a male and a servant on duty and a lady, with desire at first sight, an ardent passion and an immediate passionate communication, until the very last scene which features the offended lady summoning some supporting actors who come carrying torches and look upon the victim of the incident (Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Points 1-24). We have seen that he is so interested in this text that it stands as our best example in Book 4 of textual uses of a Greco-Roman source (see Chapter 4, Section 2); his sophistication and knowledge of Latin and its Sanskrit parallels are obvious and astounding.

It is, at the same time, a fine example of one of the methodological tools he relies on: to integrate the narrative around a (reinterpreted) Greco-Roman story, used as a main framing

device, and add to it relevant components from other stories, components coming from his previous work and his more direct constructions for the occasion. In structural terms, after developing the story by following the map provided by the story of Faunus, the most determinant external source is the story of Heracles, Aphrodite and the Giants, which allows V. to realign the story from Kīcaka's attempts to seduce Draupadī and the subsequent role of Virāṭa's *sabhā* to his bloody demise. On that basis, V. recasts and constructs a harassment in several steps, namely: a cry for help, a trap set and, finally, death.

4.1. The sexual harassment of Draupadī by Kīcaka

4.1.1. General Kīcaka sees Draupadī in Sudeṣṇā's palace, lusts after her and asks his sister Sudeṣṇā about her

In Ovid's *Fasti* V. finds Faunus atop a high hill looking down on Heracles walking with and serving his mistress, and he translates it into General Kīcaka meeting Draupadī serving Sudeṣṇā in her house. He follows Ovid's description of her beauty, reserving some of its components (shining beauty and smell) for Kīcaka's conversation with his sister, and possibly even for his own adornments before his death, and reproduces other components, some of them literally, desire at first sight and ardent passion in particular (Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Points 1-4).

He also finds an immediate passionate conversation between Faunus and the *Montana numina* (Mountain spirits) and recasts it easily into Kīcaka's conversation with Queen Sudeṣṇā, which includes remarks on Draupadī's shining beauty and smell (Book 3, Section 4.3, Points 2 and 5).

4.1.2 Kīcaka talks to Draupadī and his advances are rejected

V. has Kīcaka talk to Draupadī, who rejects him. He introduces in the two verses of Kīcaka's dialogue the message Faunus delivers to the *Montana numina*: he is leaving his wives, just as Faunus is done with them, and at the same time plays with Heracles' condition of slave in the scene from *Fasti*, as well as the general debate regarding his condition as real slave or love slave -he will be her slave, just as his wives will. At the same time, V. has Kīcaka tell her (*Mbh.* 4.13.11d) that she is radiant, but not shines, alluding again to the shining characterisation of Omphale (Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 2). Draupadī's rejection seems less influenced by external sources.

4.1.3 Kīcaka asks his sister for help and she sends Draupadī to his palace

V. constructs a new conversation between Kīcaka and Sudeṣṇā, another one between her and Draupadī, and, finally, he has Sudeṣṇā send Draupadī to Kīcaka. Sudeṣṇā's intentions are portrayed as ambiguous (*Mbh.* 4.14.3-4), perhaps in relation to her jealousy of Draupadī. For Sudeṣṇā's plan, V. returns to his narrative map, the *Fasti*, and he finds there feasting, a religious festival and attendants preparing food and drinks. In his story these components become the context and excuse for sending Draupadī to Kīcaka's palace (Book 3, Section 4.3, Points 9-11). Draupadī's refusal to go and her mistress' insistence are easy to understand in this context. For Draupadī's prayer to the Sun and the God sending an invisible *rākṣasa* to protect her, V. may have taken inspiration from Ovid's reference to Heracles holding a parasol over Omphale before they enter the grove to protect her "from the sun's warm beams" with the corresponding inversion (protect from/protect with) (Book 3, Section 4.3, Point 8).

4.1.4 Kīcaka tries to seduce Draupadī and she runs off to Virāṭa's sabhā; Draupadī in Sudeṣṇā's palace

For the following scene, which features Kīcaka trying to seduce and rape Draupadī, her flight and their arrival in the *sabhā*, we cannot say for certain whether V. had some kind of precedent in the story of Aphrodite and the Giants. Kīcaka pursuing her could have been taken from the story of Syleus, where Heracles seems to chase his daughter Xenodoce to kill/rape her (Book 3, Section 4.2, Point 4). There is a possible borrowing related to the *rākṣasa*: in the *sabhā*, the *rākṣasa* responds to Kīcaka attacking her by pushing him away, as a result Kīcaka falls to the floor and lies motionless, which V. may have taken from Faunus' fall after being pushed away by Heracles (Book 3, Section 4.3, Point 20).

Here in Virāṭa's *sabhā,* V. crafts a re-enactment of the scene in the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura. Among other things, V. recapitulates the way in which Draupadī is abused, including references to her feet and hair, the failure to respond underscoring the absence of *dharma* in the *sabhā* and court, Bhīma's impulsiveness and the need to restrain him, the scene's choir lending her their support, Draupadī's words to her husbands and the king, and Yudhiṣṭhira's passivity. Departures from his own previous rendering are interesting too, and not unrelated to the ways in which V. works with his Greco-Roman sources for the sake of his own narrative's development. Thus, for instance, the reason King Virāṭa fails to protect Draupadī now correlates with his position of weakness with respect to Kīcaka; his craven inaction, moreover, reinforces the image of an unbalanced kingdom. For his part, Yudhiṣṭhira does

not act here either, rather he asks her to exercise patience and to wait for the right time.

Yet, there is something slightly off-key here. Yudhiṣṭhira callously dismisses Draupadī's pleas for help by demanding she drop her histrionic attitude and quit behaving like an actress/dancer, *akālajñāsi sairandhri śailūṣīva vidhāvasi* (something like "you have no concept of proper timing, girl, and you flutter about like an actress" *Mbh.* 4.15.34ab). Moreover, he bids her not to interrupt the men's gambling in the Royal Court (*Mbh.* 4.15.34cd). Though it seems odd for V. to have Yudhiṣṭhira allude, in such a jarring manner, to his own disgraceful shortcoming in the parallel story set in the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura and thereby tether the comedic tone of the story to such an open insult, through it we catch a glimpse of the other side of their bitter and protracted matrimonial row, which includes her unflattering assessments of her emasculated *gandharva* husbands. V. is preparing his next step. Just as V. maintains Yudhiṣṭhira's inaction but then has him verbally spurn Draupadī, when he maintains Draupadī's words he changes their function: her lines are not intended to find a solution to the problem created by Yudhiṣṭhira's gambling, but to demand immediate revenge. Thus, he opens the way to a certain inversion of the past: she gets revenge and triumph, thus alleviating the suffering of the characters involved and easing the narrative tension.

4.2. Draupadī's complaints to persuade Bhīma and preparations for Kīcaka's killing

4.2.1. Conversation

The next section is obviously dominated by the second great adaptation of an Ovidian source in Book 4, the *Heroides* 9, though arguably there is also influence from the text of Aphrodite and the Giants, in so far as Aphrodite, after the harassment, convinces Heracles to act and the trap they contrive is the same.

In any case, the adaptation is made clear simply by contrasting the common points (Chapter 3, section 4.1). V. changes an absent wife into a present wife, her complaints to her husband in an incitement to immediate retribution, and a monologue into a conversation, though Draupadī does most of the talking. In this sense, it is a much more direct adaptation than in the case of his previous uses of the text. At the same time, it is also a very interesting example of how V. takes a text and expands it and of his sophistication in doing so.

V. constructs Draupadī's cunning persuasion using many bitter references to the contrast between their past and present situations and to her and her husbands' humiliation, to Yudhiṣṭhira's faults and to the lack of retribution for past offences, and also to philosophical

questions dealt with in previous conversations with Yudhiṣṭhira. The use of one of his favourite devices of repeating a series of remarks or actions in relation to each individual brothers one after the other is compelling here, as seen, for example, in the then/now components all throughout the text (Chapter 3, Section 4.1, Point 3, for example). It is also easy to understand V.'s uses of Deianira for Draupadī in this context (See Chapter 3, Section 4.1, Points 1, 2, 9, 13, 14) and the complaints about Heracles for Yudhiṣṭhira (See Chapter 3, Section 4.1, Points 4-5).

V.'s particular insistence in recasting Heracles' feminization in Arjuna stands out (Book 3, Section 4.1, Point 8), as does the way he adapts Heracles' fights with wild beasts for Bhīma (Book 3, Section 4.1, Point 6-7) and recasts the correlating rumours into Sudeṣṇā.

In the same mood, the Iole/Deianira problem emerges again in Sudeṣṇā's jealousy, which V. had already projected into her fears and associated with General Kīcaka's harassment (Book 3, Section 4.1, Point 10). We know too that that same trait of Deianira trait is recast into Draupadī's jealousy before the maidens of the court (Book 3, Section 4.1, Point 11), and that she simultaneously receives components related to Heracles which are associated with hands and scared servants (Book 3, Section 4.1, Point 12). Interestingly enough, the sophisticated V. presents her reminding Bhīma of two prior offences to the present crisis in which he had saved her or was key in doing so and, thus continues to follow Deianira's thread too (Book 3, Section 4.1, Point 13). Through Bhīma's words, V. recalls four examples, one of which is the example of Sītā (*Mbh.* 4.20.9-10), and, accordingly also recalls the version of her story told in the previous Book, a story which, not incidentally, we know uses material from the Daedalus source which is also used at the beginning of this Book.

Finally, in the same vein, the alluded to and ultimately real suicide of Deianira is very intelligently adapted to Draupadī's threats of suicide to convince Bhīma -one of them ending the text and maintaining the association with poison mentioned in the Ovidian source (Book 3, Section 4.1, Point 14).

4.2.2 A final conversation between Draupadī and Kīcaka and their tryst agreement

Now V. organizes everything to set, in a logical manner, the following significant scene, namely: Kīcaka's killing in the dancing hall. He adjusts the sub-scenes and, with them, directs the reader's emotions through Draupadī's actions: she agrees to the tryst with Kīcaka, there is a description of their contrasting emotional states -her elation and his infatuation-,

which serves to make him all the more detestable, and finally she has a last conversation with Bhīma to tell him of the success of the arrangement

The story of Aphrodite provides V. with the trap and the heroine's conversations, as Aphrodite speaks first with Heracles and then, one by one, with the Giants (Chapter 3, Section 4.4). As such, the logic of the narrative is made clear: the giants come into the cave one by one under the cover of night, and not simply to make them easier for Heracles to kill but because they have concealed their arrangement with the goddess from one another. Thus, the condition of secrecy, which V. makes apparent and explicit (*Mbh.* 4.21.12-15), most probably figures into the Heraclean tale as well. The association between *gandharvas* and Giants is not difficult to make; moreover, V. has Draupadī insist that secrecy is a necessary step to prevent her *gandharva* husbands from getting involved.

In the following scene, V. revisits the Faunus story to humorously characterize the overly-adorned Kīcaka as vain and conceited by borrowing from the presentation of Heracles as absurdly dressed in Omphale's attire and breaking her adornments (Chapter 3, Section 4.3, Point 13).

At the same time, the fact that the killing takes place in the dancehall, associated with Arjuna's teachings as dance master, may be less causal than it seems. In any case, the two characters who most closely mirror these Heraclean traits in Book 4 seem to converge for a while in this setting, just as later in the two short conversations with Draupadī when she returns to the palace after the revenge.

4.3 Kīcaka's killing in the dancehall

After using the *Fasti* to structure the whole episode with Kīcaka, V. now seizes on the opportunity to pursue it in the clearest way (Chapter 3, Section 4.3).

As he also uses the story of Aphrodite (Chapter 3, Section 4.4), he has leeway to play with the aroused expectations of the excited rapist and the hero waiting for him in the dark, a very well-known theme in Greco-Roman comedy. The end can be nothing other than death for the villain, and V. includes the ensuing and brutal hand-to-hand fight instead of having the hero merely push the villain to the ground. For the fight inside of the building he may have also relied on the story of Syleus (Chapter 3, Section 4.2, Point 1). But the whole scene follows the *Fasti* template, even, as we have already seen, in some textual components.

After his previous uses of various elements from the story of Faunus once he enters the cave,

he now borrows extensively from it for Kīcaka entering the dancehall (Chapter 3, Section 4.3, points 12-24).

As in the *Fasti*, the main action begins when the extremely aroused villain enters and attempts to find Draupadī in the dark. When Kīcaka assumes that he is touching her, the description of his erection is also useful to explore its contrast with the fact that he is touching the manly hero instead of her, all just as in their Ovidian story. At the same time, the Ovidian villain's contact with the hero's hairy leg can be changed into the *Mbh*.'s hero grabbing the villain's hair before the fight. Instead of the ridiculous defeat of Faunus, V. inserts a proper fight. In this context, the reference to the hairy leg of Heracles when Faunus touches it leads V. to describe Kīcaka's hair grabbed by Bhīma, obviously associated with Kīcaka grabbing Draupadī by the hair in the *sabhā*, and to her humiliation in the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura.

V. is also interested in other components from the Ovidian text, for example, clothing, or in an allusion to a lion, a dramatic reference to a snake where the villain recoiling as a traveller is transformed into the hero reacting like a snake struck with a stick. After the villain's defeat and ultimate demise, V. has at his disposal and makes use of the woman and queen summoning the servants, who arrive carrying torches, her satisfaction before the fallen villain, which he accompanies with Draupadī's words, a description of the servant's reaction and even an allusion to the villain's limbs, adapted here to the messy details of the fight he creates for his hero, Bhīma.

As V. chooses to reinforce her triumph in a new episode, he needs new inspiration and new material.

4.4 The attempted revenge on Draupadī by Kīcaka's relatives and Bhīma's massacre of them
My proposal for understanding this scene, including the doubly odd case of Draupadī's languid attitude, lingering close to the path of the Kīcaka's relatives, and her strange stance "leaning on a pillar" (van Buitenen trans.), includes, first, the main use of another story of Heracles -the Busiris adventure- with the corresponding change, as he substitutes Draupadī for Heracles as the tale's intended victim (see Chapter 3, Section 4.5.1). Again, instead of the more impressionistic method of the deer and the tree scenes, for example, he relies on one Greco-Roman text and then borrows from another to complete his story.

For this scene, he borrows from the Busiris adventure a group of men who are going to

perform a ceremony, who find a human victim, tie him, carry him to a sacred place, though in the last moment they are attacked by a hero, who uses unconventional weapons and rages at everything in sight, killing everyone but those who manage to flee. In many ways it is not even a fight but rather a massive flight.

His adaptation of the story requires him to split the victim and rescuer in two: thus, Heracles becomes both Draupadī and Bhīma. As in the story of Busiris, Kīcaka's relatives, while en route to cremate his corpse, come across Draupadī, tie her up and carry her off to the cremation ground. Yet, since the hero is not the victim, Draupadī calls upon the *rākṣasas* to save her and Bhīma comes storming in. Now we see why V. invented two series of names for the brothers at the beginning of the adventure, and we see a new crosslink among superhuman beings, Heracles and Bhīma. The hero arrives, using a tree -a typical weapon for Bhīma, and not quite as odd as using Egyptians, but exceptional enough- raging at everything in sight, killing everyone but those who manage to flee. Indeed, it is no contest, there is no fight but rather mass flight. As the fake "king" Kīcaka had already being killed, V. does not need to follow Busiris' story and kill him now; however, he fuses the killing of Kīcaka and his kin in Bhīma's promise to Draupadī before (*Mbh.* 4.21.1) and in the narrator's voice afterwards (*Mbh.* 4.22.29d: 105 dead and with Kīcaka 106).

V.'s adaptation includes Kīcaka's kin remarking that killing Draupadī is not simply revenge but also a kind of *sati* in homage to the dead general (*Mbh.* 4.22.5-6). They also ask the king for permission, who, on account of their strength, grants it (*Mbh.* 4.22.8), underscoring once again Virāṭa's position of weakness with respect to Kīcaka.

The story, likewise, interests V. mainly because it reinforces Draupadī's importance in his narrative and helps him to shift its focus. For the following scene, he needs Draupadī to be captured. The invention of Draupadī's markedly languid attitude, lingering in the path of Kīcaka's kin -they spot her, go ask the king for permission to sacrifice her and return- is one way to achieve this. I have suggested interpreting this and her no less bizarre pose, "leaning on a pillar" (trans. Van Buitenen), as a recasting of yet another Heraclean feat, his rescue of Hesione, Laomedon's daughter (Chapter 4, Section 5.2). In effect, this story provides V. with a woman waiting to be killed, in some versions tied up to a pillar or column, but ultimately being saved by the hero. Laomedon's story is associated with Apollo's and Poseidon's temporary serfdom in Troy and Heracles' final revenge -a revenge which, in our extant

compendiums, is exacted immediately after his adventures with Omphale and constitutes a key part of the tradition[76].

In this is indeed the case, we can see that V. once again avails himself of one of his favourite methods, i.e.: taking a story as a rough outline (Busiris), attaching or fusing another story or stories to it (Hesione), and adapting everything to his aims.

4.5. General fears over Draupadī and her triumphal return to the inner court

Draupadī's victory is used by V. as a prologue to the more general reconstruction of her and her husbands' hierarchical position. There is a whole reconstruction and inversion of her arrival ten months before.

If the beginning of her stay at the court, her arrival to the city and palace, was constructed with materials taken from Ovid's *Heroides* 9, we can see here how V.'s adaptation has taken on a life of its own, leading him to construct a second scene where those, and other, components can flow in new directions. Since V. created a modest entrance in the city and palace, inverting Iole's entrance, he now changes the mood of the story by introducing more Iole-like qualities. Draupadī's return to the palace is dominated by the people and king's growing fears. V.'s invention of two short and very different conversations with Bhīma and Arjuna additionally prepares the end of the story and the link between the two characters who receive most of Heracles' roles. Arjuna has yet to been born again after his/her stay in an "animal womb".

Surrounded by the cortege of maidens, Draupadī lets the queen know for how long time she is staying there. V.'s sense of humour is clear here: thirteen days of patience for them after thirteen years of impatience for her. It is not an isolated flash of humour, but another relay between two comedy-like scenes, the sex confusion in the darkness and the *miles gloriosus*. Times for fun, more or less moderate revenge, and identities' recovery.

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[76]Though I will not expand upon this argument here, the reader can follow the use of the stories of Hesione and Admetus-Alcestis -related to the two serfdoms of gods *par excellence* - in the story of Baca, *Mbh.* 1.145-52; see F. Wulff Alonso (2008), pp. 385-8: the hero who rescues the victim offered to a monster is also Bhīma

5. Arjuna Defeats the Cattle Raiding Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas Recover Virāṭa's Herds

The only direct information about the end of Heracles' thraldom is a short reference in Diodorus to the invasion and defeat of the cattle-raiding Itoni. Heracles' last adventure, therefore, entails the defeat of invaders bent on stealing cattle, their subsequent defeat, the recovery of the herds, and the taking of spoils. Moreover, it serves as the immediate prologue to Omphale learning of his true name, his family and excellence, setting him free, marrying him and bearing a son and heir.

Scant as they are, it would be an error to undervalue these accounts for several reasons. First, it is particularly meaningful that after having constructed the story of Kīcaka by relying mainly on Ovidian materials, V. returns to Frame 2, the structuring principle of Book 4, to round out the year-long adventure. Just as he started Frame 2 so he ends with it (Chapter 3, Section 5.1, Points 1-5). Secondly, practically all the Greco-Roman materials found in our scant sources -actions, objects, setting- are employed. Third, we can see how V. develops certain structural components taken from the Greco-Roman sources.

Admittedly, with such scarce Greco-Roman materials, it is impossible to follow V.'s uses of Heracles during his longer battle scenes. We even do not know whether Heracles was portrayed as a lonely warrior and transvestite, for instance, though the text does at least invites us to think that he does it alone. Nevertheless, V. is not in want of materials produced in his own workshop, from disputes and squabbles on the Kaurava side since Book 2, until practically the end of the work, to the five war Books full of in-fighting and major battles. Even the rules of both war narratives are clearly dissimilar from their Greco-Roman counterparts. The *Mbh.*, is full of marvellous components with no parallel on the Greek side, which V. invents in his own way all throughout his war books.

However, it is easy to understand that if Heracles' victory means the recuperation of his gender and heroic role, the reconstruction of the Pāṇḍavas also begins with the recovery of their roles as warriors. As what is at stake is identity reconstruction, V. plays the game by beginning with Heracles' first reconstruction as warrior and hero.

V. does not construct mere aggregate components, but a whole integrated story and he uses Kīcaka's death as the cause of the invasion. His adaptation method now implies splitting

the Itoni episode in two parts: V. creates one feat for four of the brothers, though more in particular for Bhīma, and another for Arjuna alone -the two characters he chose as main recipients of Heraclean components in Book 4. Accordingly, the first attack allows V. to lay the groundwork for the Pāṇḍavas' subsequent exaltation and Virāṭa's relative humiliation, while the second attack allows him to extol Arjuna's magnificence as well as reconstruct his role as a warrior and, in part, his gender. Despite these astonishing feats, V. maintains their anonymity until the final scenes of Book 4.

Ajuna's resounding victory represents a propitious moment for him to shed this bizarre Heraclean trait of transvestism and reclaim his true role as a warrior. In comparison to Heracles', Arjuna's transvestism was rather mild; there was no absolute reversal of gender roles and no one took possession of his weapons, garb and masculinity, as Omphale did with Heracles. Likewise, until the last incident, the other heroes' subordination is relatively mild, with the exception, perhaps, of Virāṭa ordering Bhīma to fight for the palace's entertainment and Draupadī' anxiety regarding the quality of the sandalwood powder she makes for the king. In Book 4, the tensions surrounding an obvious imbalance in hierarchical and gender structures constitutes an overarching and recurrent theme which is played out, albeit with different consequences, in several stories, from the episode with Kīcaka to the recasting of Heracles' feminization into Arjuna. This theme becomes all the more apparent if we take into account that traditional gender constructions are, by definition, hierarchical.

Given this atmospheric tension, it is easy to understand why V. seems unsatisfied with the two victories the Pāṇḍavas win over the enemies of their master and king and thus tacks on an additional "defeat", humiliation and feminization of King Virāṭa and his son and heir Uttara. Virāṭa captured and hoisted into his chariot like a weeping new bride and Uttara succumbing to fear and being grabbed by the hair and dragged to Arjuna's chariot carry clear implications regarding gender.

For the beginning of the episode, the moment of the military alarm, V. displays a first appearance of Uttarā, as his virginal and childish mistress -the opposite of Omphale- and as an instrument of Draupadī, perhaps replicating Omphale now, a question perhaps associated to her strange request for clothes for her dolls, which could be partially understood in the same way. Now she is left waiting for being that minor Omphale again as potential bride and mother of the dynasty's heir. In Chapter 3, Section 5, Point 6, I suggest that V. constructs

the moment when Arjuna put on his cuirass, from the also laughable exchange of clothes between him and Omphale in Ovid, *Fasti.* The male Heracles receiving feminine robes and giving to her his weapons and lion skin, becomes the transvestite Arjuna putting a male cuirass on his feminine robes, thus the feminization of Heracles becomes the beginning of the recovery of Arjuna's masculinity. The final scene with Arjuna bringing back clothes of the fallen enemies seems a kind of humorous play between the spoils brought by Heracles, and the *obstinato* of clothes pervading the whole story: Uttarā, the mistress, -perhaps in another demonstration of V.'s humour by playing with Omphale and the whole story- receives now male vestments from the fallen enemies for her and their maidens' dolls. In Appendix 2, Section 1 I suggest that V. takes for this scene of military alarm and discovery of a transvestite hero the other similar story in Greek mythology: the adventure of Achilles in Scyros.

Uttara's transformation from *miles gloriosus* into Arjuna's charioteer, squire and later herald of his impressive victory accompanies the first time one of the Pāṇḍavas reclaims his feats and names. Coming full circle, the scene is centred on the tree where their weapons are hung. As in the story of the Cercopes, the heroes' weapons are inextricably linked to their identities, their loss would, in effect, constitute the loss of their identity, a theme also at the root of the stories of Heracles and Omphale and probably why these two stories were coupled in the end. By coming back to the tree, V. recounts the recovery of the first of three aspects Arjuna was stripped of during his humiliating year as a eunuch. As weapons are, in the case of Heracles, associated with the loss of his identity and Omphale's triumph, here they are associated with the recovery of Arjuna's identity, which also hints at a similar sort of inversion in the final scenes. Tree, costumes and names come together.

The tree is, again, a very clear example of V.'s subtlety and of how he initially constructs a (sub)story with Greco-Roman materials and uses it at other moments to create new scenes where the original source material practically disappears, though not the main issues involved therein.

To end this section, let us recall again the difference between this victory and the future war. Kīcaka's killing and Arjuna's victory point towards the future, but in a deceptively simple-sounding way, as if spurring the characters -and readers- headlong into the future. The plan of destruction pervades everything.

6. Virāṭa Gives Arjuna His Daughter for Arjuna's Son, Abhimanyu. The end

6.1 Two scenes in the same sabhā

We already know that the last section of Book 4 focuses on the public restoration of the Pāṇḍavas names and identities in a story developed in two scenes, and is followed by a wedding in the palace and preparations for the upcoming war.

Once again, we have but scant Greco-Roman sources, in fact, Diodorus. However, V. not only maintains the main succession of events portrayed in the compendiums, but also continues to develop structural keys, which he arranges in a common setting, the palace, and has converge on one of the essential objects borrowed from the story of Omphale, the throne.

In the first scene, the throne where Virāṭa sits is associated with Yudhiṣṭhira's flaw and consequent humiliation; yet here, in Virāṭa's palace his poise and self-control prevail over the innumerable references to his original sin in the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura, gambling. The structural conflict between the two kings with regard to their capabilities as kings leads to the revelation of their real hierarchical status and shatters the increasingly fragile façade of Yudhiṣṭhira's temporary subordination. As he is indeed the real king, spilling his blood can seal the doom of an entire kingdom; but, in a telling twist, it is Yudhiṣṭhira's composure and self-control which prevents the destruction of Virāṭa's realm, who has lost all self-control in a fit of temporary madness and violence. A new Yudhiṣṭhira prevails over Virāṭa and, in particular, over the old Yudhiṣṭhira.

Just as Prince Uttara's vaunting goads Draupadī to persuade Uttarā to send Arjuna into battle, this incident is provoked by Yudhiṣṭhira's and Virāṭa's differing opinions on the respective roles of Uttara and Arjuna in their enemies' defeat. It stands as Yudhiṣṭhira's second intervention in Virāṭa's *sabhā*, and both ring, perhaps intentionally, a bit off-key. Nonetheless, and in keeping with Yudhiṣṭhira's and Draupadī's previous interventions, Arjuna's return and the potential threat he represents for Virāṭa dramatically reinforces the superiority of the Pāṇḍavas.

In the second scene, V. underscores the previous components which correspond to the main theme of this episode: renewal and triumph. The thrones arrayed in Virāṭa's *sabhā* are now meant for the Pāṇḍavas. The association between thrones and humiliation found in the Omphale theme and briefly explored during the previous scene, logically gives way to V.'s

inversion of it for the brothers' exaltation. We have no literary account of the specific scene where Heracles' true identity is revealed, but it seems reasonable to assume it occurred in Omphale's palace and before her throne. Nevertheless, the "master" being taken aback by the hero assuming his place (Chapter 3, Section 6.1, Point 2) has an interesting parallel in the story of Syleus.

The scene, just before Heracles' overwhelming victory and after the previous bad behaviour of Syleus, features the hero invading his palace, wreaking havoc, and the king arriving and complaining, followed by the hero's clear riposte.

That being said, it is indeed interesting to see that V.'s use of thrones presents an interesting similarity to his use of the tree: in both cases they are related to the recovery of the Pāṇḍavas' true identities, rather than representing the very real threat of being robbed of their weapons, or being humiliated.

The final, complete recovery of everything they had lost comes when V. recasts the main components of Diodorus: name, family lineage, and excellence (Chapter 3, Section 6.1, Point 3). Proclaimed mainly by Arjuna, their names, their true names now shine resplendent after having been tucked away in darkness.

While the paucity of our Greco-Roman sources is lamentable, I think it reasonable to presume that the use of Syleus' riled disbelief at Heracles insolence is not isolated. The sources we do have, however, have proven to be significantly meaningful. The near transcendent importance of names in Book 4 carries with it a dual meaning: the Pāṇḍavas relinquish and then recover their true names, just as Heracles, and they also change their names, a rather Heraclean trait (Chapter 3, Section 7, Point 4). It is possible that for the enunciation of their true names and enumeration of their glories, V. repurposed Draupadī's earlier conversation with Bhīma, but flips the emphasis by exalting the past rather than lamenting the present. If this were to be the case, it would constitute yet another re-elaboration of a Greco-Roman source to suit his needs. What is clear, however, is that V. is forcing us to ponder the significance of the site, of the *sabhā*: like the entrance to a seemingly endless tunnel, the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura is where the heroes were plunged into darkness and toil, but King Virāṭa's *sabhā* is where they emerge to blinding exaltation after thirteen arduous years of exile and loss.

6.2 The wedding

For the wedding V. continues to follow, in his usual expansive style, the story of Omphale we know from Diodorus. Situated right at the end of Book 4, Virāṭa's offer of his daughter's hand in marriage to Arjuna's definitively restructures the lost male role of the once feminized hero. Rather than conclude with a process of accumulative borrowings, V. ends with a process of structural completion: the lost male role of the feminized hero is definitely recovered in both cases.

I have suggested that this somewhat odd election of Arjuna as the potential bridegroom has to do with his inheritance of the feminine Heraclean traits under Omphale (Chapter 3, Section 6.2, Point 1). I have also suggested that when V. has Arjuna accept her as a wife for his son Abhīmanyu, V. may have also been relying on stories of Heracles: so far I know, Heracles is the only Greek hero who gives an ex-wife or bride to younger relatives, his own son and nephew (Chapter 3, Section 6.2, Point 2).

In this wedding he also finds the continuity of the dynasty with an heir, yet not now her (Omphale) dynasty, but rather his (Kurus) dynasty (Chapter 3, Section 6.2, Point 3). V. never lets us forget his own project: he will be the heir to the whole dynasty of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, their only son or grandson to survive the war and only because he is saved by Kṛṣṇa after being killed in her mother's womb. The wedding, besides representing the final victory of Draupadī over the court's maidens, also ensures a covenant between the two houses that reinforces their position and move the narrative towards the looming war.

To close, V. returns to the Frame 1. He follows the steps of his Greco-Roman source, which recount how Heracles embarks on a war of revenge. It is the moment in which V. concentrates everything on a wedding in the midst of relatives, friends and guests, which include no less than the godhead Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa's appearances and disappearances in the narrative are meaningful. Just as he had not been at the *sabhā* of Hāstinapura during their humiliation, he has not been here either, and V. now presents him coming to guide everything towards their dubious victory (Chapter 3, Section 6.2, Point 4).

We know there are two versions of the Heracles' revenge war. In one version it is not a series of wars but rather one war waged against Eurytus -a war which seems to bring apparent success, but in fact spells disgrace and pain for the hero, thus parallelizing V.'s development of the story. In the other version, the war against Eurytus is the last war in a series of wars

the hero wages. Apollodorus (2.6.4) records that after Omphale, Heracles mustered an army of volunteers and sailed to Troy, the war of revenge that finishes the Laomedon-Hesione question. Perhaps it could be of interest to know that Heracles' defeat of Troy is depicted, from the *Iliad* on, as a very easy task compared to the terribly long and bloody Trojan War (*Iliad* 5.638-46), which may have served as a good inspiration for the easy victories of the Pāṇḍavas before the horrendous war to come.

7. A Final Note

V. constructs his own story and does not just play with his sources in a particularly complex way, weaving in, among others, details, sophisticated narratives, settings, objects and costumes, or dovetailing them with his own constructions, but maintains and develops the structural components of the narrative, as well as its complex genre adscription.

Finally, it could be useful to repeat three key points at issue. The first is just to reaffirm that clear patterns in V.'s ways of adaptations and re-writing can be recognized. It is not only that the author of the *Mbh.* used and adapted certain materials, but that it is possible to make further, deeper observations of his *modus operandi*, of his technical patterns of adapting said materials to their own interests and aims. The second is more obvious and perhaps even more unnecessary: it is impossible that this sophisticated work with Greco-Roman sources could have been done without written sources and without himself writing. Third, it is impossible to understand Book 4 without taking into account his use of those Greco-Roman sources.

CONCLUSIONS

> *jāne 'ham etad apyevaṃ cīrṇaṃ carasi*
> "I know this is so. You do what is already done"
> *Mbh.* 11.25.44cd

1. Some Conclusions

The principal aim of this book has been to prove that V., the author of the *Mbh*., constructed Book 4 by borrowing extensively from Greco-Roman written sources concerning, for the most part, the stories of Heracles and Omphale as well as secondarily from other stories involving Heracles and to identify his peculiar methodology.

After describing both stories in chapters 1 and 2, I graphically present their common traits in chapter 3, develop in chapters 4 and 5 fourteen arguments in defence of my thesis and, finally, suggest a global proposal of V.'s construction of Book 4 in Chapter 6.

A brief overview of the fourteen arguments and their conclusions may be helpful.

1-2. I contend that the quality and quantity, as well as the complexity and density of common components shared between Book 4 and the proposed Greco-Roman sources precludes anything but direct borrowing of written texts.

3. I also demonstrate that these stories share odd, bizarre and/or fanciful components. As stated in the Introduction, to find them simultaneously in two different stories deepens the unlikelihood or sheer impossibility of independent creation. They can be understood through that process of borrowing and adaptation, and are not, or at least not in the same degree, bizarre in the Greco-Roman world -Heracles' transvestism, for example-; as such, they must be viewed as a product of the process of V.'s adaptation.

In eight additional points (4 to 11) I delve into those common components exploring some of the main ways V. makes use of those Greco-Roman materials, i.e.: his working methodology with sources and characters.

4. Though not his method of choice *per se*, there is at least one very interesting and so-phisticated example of literal or direct use of a Greco-Roman text (a case for "linguistic plagiarism"). V. uses and translates parts of the Faunus, Heracles, and Omphale story from the Ovidian *Fasti*. Note that there are other interesting examples of another kind of textual use, represented by the story of the Cercopes and the tree. He uses the first story of Heracles under Omphale, the Cercopes story, for his first story in Book 4 -the hiding of the heroes' weapons. He translates the discovery of Icarus's corpse into the discovery of the corpse the Pāṇḍavas hang in the tree, and he does it because Icarus' burial is the closest story to the Cercopes' in the compendium he is working with -just as it is today. At the same time, he does not utilize two essential components of the story, the theft and chase of the Cercopes, as both elements are used immediately before for the last story at the end of Book 3.

That notwithstanding, V. does not normally avail himself of literal uses of his Greco-Roman sources. Instead, he generally seizes on more global, overarching components and adapts them to his narrative needs.

5. The most important way V. adapts Greco-Roman materials is also the most architectonic (in Aristotelian terms): such a concentration of shared elements that essentially define the same narrative of a given story or sub-story in the *Mbh.* and in the corresponding Greco-Roman story, what I have called the "litmus test" *par excellence*. V. structures the entirety of Book 4 around the stories of Heracles and Omphale. In effect, he uses three frameworks, all of which he borrows and adapts. The first is the overall framework which delimits the 12 years for Heracles' Twelve Labours plus 1 year of servitude under Omphale, which is recast into the Pāṇḍavas' twelve-year exile in Book 3 and their one-year of service in King Virāṭa's court in Book 4. Both Heracles' and the Pāṇḍavas' one-year of servitude are followed by preparations for a war of revenge. The second is the story of Heracles and Omphale itself, from the intervention of Zeus/Dharma and the tree and weapons adventure to the cattle-raid, revelation, wedding and preparations for the upcoming war. The third is the sub-frame of the adventure concerning Kīcaka, taken primarily from the story of Faunus and integrated into the second frame.

Likewise, V. also employs this method for sub-stories. In particular, he uses for the main plot

-with the corresponding adaptations- the Faunus' story from the *Fasti* to create the sub-story of Kīcaka, structurally and thematically reinterpreting it with the help of another similar tale of Heracles, the story of Aphrodite, the Giants and the hero, and adding Deianira's complaints from Ovid's *Heroides* to construct Draupadī's laments.

It is important to stress yet again that V. organizes, in his own way and for his own purposes, the whole construction. The series 12 plus 1, for example, takes on a new meaning in terms of dramatic tension when he modifies the anonymity of Heracles during that year by making anonymity itself a condition for the success of the Pāṇḍavas: if they are not discovered, they can claim the throne, if they are, they would be forced to repeat the whole 13-year period.

6. Under this overarching umbrella, V. displays different uses of his sources, including, as in the last case, a concentration of a series of disparate sources in a given part of the borrowing text. In fact, together with seizing on one source and using it as a guiding thread, this seems to be his preferred method. We have seen, for example, how he employs this method for the Dharma adventure, the hiding of the heroes' weapons in the tree, most probably the arrival at the court, Bhīma's tasks and the stories around Kīcaka.

7. We have seen too that besides the most obvious case of the use of certain Greco-Roman stories in a given section of his text, he also takes various elements from a given story and uses them in different places. For instance, he uses Deianira's words for Draupadī's, but also for her entrance into the city and palace and for Bhīma's fights against animals in the inner court. The most intriguing example is his use of story here in Book 4 and in other places in the *Mbh.*: Daedalus and Icarus are used in Book 4 for the scene where the heroes hide their weapons, but also for the *Rāmopākhyāna* in Book 3 and for the iron statue appearing in the dangerous meeting of the Pāṇḍavas and Dhṛtarāṣṭra in Book 11.

8. Though we can clearly presume the use of different authors -particularly authors of compendiums and Euripides' *Syleus*- the most impressive trait of Book 4 regarding sources is V.'s clever use of one Greco Roman author, i.e.: his obvious familiarity with Ovid. The use of two different works -and there are more, though not as conspicuous in this Book, the *Metamorphoses* in particular- and the way he uses them, including direct borrowing through translation, is rife with implications. Note that Deianira's complaints (*Heroides*) and Faunus'

harassment (*Fasti*) are the two longest, extant stories related to the Heracles and Omphale theme, just as they were most likely the longest and most popular during Roman times, and that V. uses both stories to construct the most important and longest incident during the year of concealment before the final battles. Perhaps V. does not just read Latin, but knows very well the main literary trends in the Greco-Roman world of that time.

I have also traced the way in which V. remoulds certain attributes and actions of Greco-Roman characters and applies them to his own. The following three points briefly illustrate how he achieves this:

9. The basic, most straightforward component is a one to one use, i.e., remoulding a Greco-Roman character to construct one of his characters. The cases of Deianira (*Heroide*) for Draupadī's words to Bhīma or of Heracles to construct the transvestite Arjuna are clear examples. However, V. does not like linear procedures in which a character corresponds mechanically to another character.

10. He also takes components from one Greco-Roman character for constructing several of his characters. Thus, Heracles does not only offer components for the transvestite Arjuna, but for all the brothers and Draupadī as slave/servants, for Yudhiṣṭhira as object of Draupadī's grievances, and, more specifically, for Bhīma (hand-to-hand fights, contests against animals, cooking and voracity, defeat of Kīcaka, killing of practitioners of human sacrifice…). In fact, Bhīma and Arjuna are the male protagonists of the story because V. decided to have them embody different components of Heracles' role.

11. V. uses components extracted from the roles played by several Greco-Roman characters to construct the scenes of one of his characters. Typically, Draupadī receives many components from Deianira, but also prominently from Omphale (for the story of Faunus-Kīcaka), from Iole (her arrival to the court), and even from Heracles (the victim in Busiris' story).

The last two examples are particularly relevant to V.'s method: as V. has more main characters to deal with, when he decided to borrow from the handful of characters and events associated with the Omphale theme (Heracles, Deianira, Omphale, Iole, Cercopes, Syleus, Icarus' corpse, the Itoni invaders, etc.) Heracles had to be split and distributed among the five Pāṇḍava brothers and, in a sense, Draupadī in order to flesh out their roles. Similarly, as

he has Draupadī accompany her husbands during their exile, unlike Deianira in the Omphale theme, V. has to concentrate components coming, primarily, from different women in the Greco-Roman story to construct her role in Book 4.

That being said, everything is suffused with V.'s aims interests and, above all, ingenuity. With respect to his main characters, he takes into account their previous actions and characterisations as well as their future deeds. This contrasts with the construction of supporting characters, with no previous background and, in particular, scarce or inexistent roles later, despite a few, albeit limited exceptions, such as the mistress Uttarā becoming the mother of the future heir to the crown like the mistress Omphale in the Greco-Roman tales. In effect, V.'s supporting characters are created as functions -counterparts or antagonists- of the six main characters, and with the same procedures. Note that Omphale disappears and in the same move her crude sexual dominion. V.'s recasting of the transvestite Heracles into Arjuna does not include those sexual overtones. There are five masters, three males (King Virāṭa, Kīcaka, Prince Uttara) and two mistresses (Queen Sudeṣṇā and Princess Uttarā). Thus, Kīcaka is created mainly by remoulding Faunus and the Giants from the story of Aphrodite, inheriting too the sexual abuses Omphale lays on Heracles -and perhaps those Heracles lays on Syleus' daughter- and even minor components of Heracles' dress. However, the dynamics of the narrative are dominated by his role as the "real king", sexual-harasser, bully, and the queen's brother, i.e., by V.'s plot and its projection in this specific section of the storyline.

The three last criteria discussed in the Introduction rise above questions related to V.'s specific methodology and instead aim to substantiate the last part of the main hypothesis of this Book. As we have a borrowing based on written texts, the following step is to elucidate the direction of the borrowing, i.e., whether V. takes Greco-Roman components or the other way around. The first option is clear enough, considering the three main arguments.

12. First is the argument of cultural coherence/incoherence. Traditionally Book 4 has been considered a Book full of strange, odd, things. I have presented the seven most outstanding cases and suggested two more. All of them are also part of the Omphale theme and they are much less or not at all strange or odd within the Greco-Roman context. It is a typical

example of the problems of adaptation of borrowings.

13. Seniority is clear too. The Omphale theme is clearly present in the VI-V Century BCE, so that to believe that the Greeks did the borrowing implies that the story had to be borrowed from the *Mbh.* in the VI-V Century BCE. And, additionally, that it was borrowed again later by Ovid. The other option is that V. borrowed Greco-Roman texts after Ovid (I Century BCE/CE).

We have on one side the Greco-Roman culture displaying: 1) Writing from the VIII Century BCE; 2) a continuous written literary and artistic production in very different genres from the VIII or VII Century BCE onwards, most of them created by their authors, and with the important impact of comedy and tragedy in the V Century BCE.; 3) many external impacts, in particular after Alexander; 4) Heracles as prime hero from the very beginning, the protagonist of adventures which later become part of the main story used here; 5) the creation of this story dating back to at least the VI Century BCE and being further developed, with the other associated stories, in different literary and artistic genres, from the V Century BCE onwards, with continuous productions for centuries, including the brilliant reworking of the Augustan poet Ovid around the change of the Era.

With respect to the *Mbh.* we have: 1) A culture without writing until the III Century BCE; 2) the start of written of literary texts most probably not before the final Centuries BCE and first centuries CE with no previous adaptation of the language for this task; 3) a culture with scarce external impacts; 4) the heroes of this story are only present in the *Mbh.*, with no known precedents (the coincidence of a few isolated names means just names, not characters -in fact, there is not even any sound evidence for previous epics in the Subcontinent, as in the case of Rome, heroic songs do not mean an epic; 5) we do not know when this story was created and not even the supporters of its fragmentary nature would defend a (in their case: first and preliminary) writing before the IV Century BCE. Additionally, Book 4 is considered from this perspective a "later Book", so that it would be necessary to posit a quite later dating.

The question related to chronology becomes more obvious if we consider two things. Without forgetting the fact that it is certainly difficult to believe in an influence of a written *Mbh.* in the VI-V Century BCE, when there was no *Mbh.* and no writing, the theory of the influence of the *Mbh.* would have to account for a) the fact that we do not have any shred of

information regarding such a presence in the talkative world of Greco-Roman culture, b) an extended dramatic impact between, say, the V Century BCE Athens and Rome at the change of Era, when Ovid would have again taken up the Book. A mysterious Book being used for centuries, or rather no less mysterious translations and uses of it throughout the centuries does not add up.

14. We referred in the *Introduction* to the need of considering two different kinds of plausibility, historical (in the broad sense of the word) and, so to speak, logical and methodological. Both imply defending the consistency, coherence and empirical basis of one of the two alternative explanations as compared to the other.

The main question in the first case is to compare the two options: when did a frequency and intensity of contacts between Greece and the Subcontinent exist which would have seen the emergence of the necessary players in the game, i.e.: translators, perhaps patrons, scribes, people taking part in the mechanisms of diffusion, readers, etc.? Deep transcultural relations such as the one studied here need to meet very specific conditions.

The I Century CE and onward, post-Ovid, do not present any problems regarding the question pertaining to the conditions of the Subcontinent or the quantity and quality of its dealings with the Mediterranean world. It is at this time that the first globalization of the Eurasian Continent and Africa takes place, Greco-Roman influence is at its zenith, thousands of people come and go by sea from the Mediterranean to India, mainly through Egypt, but land routes are also important. There were Indians in Alexandria and Egypt, the essential western pole of the route, and Mediterranean (and Egyptian, Parthian, Arabian…) peoples all along the coasts of the Subcontinent, not to mention the by then more than three century long presence of Greeks in Bactria and the northwest of the Subcontinent. Greco-Roman culture was the main international language from Europe to India, including the Parthian Kingdom. There is enough evidence of this impact, beginning with the artistic impact, not only on North India but on Buddhism as well. Competition among doctrines, great changes in Buddhism, development of *bhakti* and many other components help to understand how these difficult and fascinating times were a perfect, fertile ground for such an ambitious project. Needless to say, the VI-V Century BCE date has a lot of difficulties to overcome: lack of contacts, conditions and agents, etc., not to mention the problem regarding the continuity of that influence until Ovid. Moreover, the complexity of the world V. constructs in

his work, including empires, is incompatible with this date though much less so with quite later periods.

The question of the logical and methodological consistency is in a sense a consequence of the previous chapters. By defending V.'s use of written texts, I have also dealt with the way he does it and the internal coherence of the involved processes. If the evidence is accepted, but not the same direction of borrowing, all that has to be reinterpreted from the alternative perspective. Basically, it should explain the process of dissemination of the different components of the *Mbh.* Book 4 during centuries of plastic and literary productions in the Greco-Roman world, from the three frames to the odd components, and the specific ways it is done, for example, to the construction of characters by Ovid -and Sophocles- including Faunus and Deianira. All that, quite typically, is associated to a borrowing, including alterations, embellishments, inconsistences, extensions and enlargements, as we have seen all throughout this Book; to deny it means the need to present an argument for the processes in the other direction.

In order to avoid conveying a misleading image of V.'s borrowing as overshadowing his creativity and to thus understand the whole Book as the artistic product it is, I have presented a tentative reconstruction of his working process in Chapter 6. Just because the Book, admittedly, does not have "secondary" stories or doctrinal sections either, his working methodology can be understood in a quite direct way. I would highlight three additional components.

First, the subtlety of V.'s technical work. It will suffice to mention the short and more manageable example of the story of Heracles' and Bhīma's statue (Chapter 4, Section 5.1) with Daedalus, Icarus, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Duryodhana and Kṛṣṇa. As we have seen, V. respects the main core of the story of Icarus, context, actions and its four main characters. That notwithstanding, he adjusts the context, inverts the emotional relationships among his characters, redistributes the actions among them, transmutes components -darkness into blindness, for instance-, and even has one character practically disappearing -Bhīma- and makes room for the necessary new one, Kṛṣṇa.

Adaptations are not strange in the Greco-Roman world, authors constantly altered inherited components, as many of the tragedians do with Homer. Indeed, recycling materials, characters and stories served to expand the literary world of the Mediterranean, from the Greeks

themselves to Virgil and beyond.

Later adaptations of the Indian Epics to drama constitute an interesting example of the presence of these kinds of processes in the Subcontinent. We could even ask ourselves whether V. created his work considering the possibility of future ritual and stage renderings. The *Pañcarātram* attributed to Bhāsa is a good example of a free adaptation of the cattle-raid: after a royal sacrifice, Duryodhana promises the Brahman and warrior Droṇa a present, and Droṇa asks him to share his kingdom with the Pāṇḍavas. Duryodhana accepts it under the condition of finding them within five days. As news of Kīcaka's and his relatives' deaths are received and Bhīma's intervention is presumed, Droṇa agrees. When the cattle raid takes place and the Pāṇḍavas are discovered, Duryodahana accepts the situation. It is fascinating to see the changes: first, through inversion, the discovery of the Pāṇḍavas becomes now positive. Second, the bad will/good will of Duryodhana and his counsellor Karṇa. Third, the author has Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu, courageously fighting with the Kauravas, being captured by the Pāṇḍavas and carried to Virāṭa's court where he shows his dignity just before the corresponding discovery in terms of Aristotelian *anagnorisis* (See his *Poetics* 1452a). It is remarkable to see how in this version, adapting the title of the famous Giraudoux play about Troy, the war of Kurukṣetra could not have taken place, and this requires new inventions, perhaps Śakuni's intrigues, to make it possible or a parallel world in which it never took place.

A second demonstration of subtlety is V.'s systematic use of the most meaningful settings and objects in the Greco-Roman stories, basically palace, presumably throne hall, a tree, feminine dresses, weapons and the throne. He mainly concentrates the settings in royal palaces, even transmuting two caves in one dark palatial dancehall. However, it is not only a question of reusing things, but of reusing meanings.

Two examples are outstanding. Weapons are crucial to the Omphale theme for they express the exchange of roles inherent in the story, and the Heracles' double loss of heroic and gender roles. V. maintains the Cercopes-tree story, where tree and weapons are essential, and adapts it to allow the weapons to be recovered later, as he does not need the weapons to stress Omphale's domination. When in one of his characteristic adaptations, he doubles the story of the Itoni's cattle raid, he reserves the most important role for Arjuna and has him recovering weapons, name and heroic status by the tree. Just as he creates two scenes for the

tree-weapons, the throne, used, so far we know, mainly for Heracles' humiliations, becomes also doubled in a humiliating, though ambiguous, scene with Kīcaka and Yudhiṣṭhira, and also in a second scene of exaltation, when the six main characters recover their roles and identities and Arjuna definitively recovers his gender status.

It is interesting to see how, when lacking precise, detailed Greco-Roman sources though privy to how the events unfold, we can see how V. follows the succession of events and uses the same settings and objects, thereby unveiling his track through his adaptations. Even crucial costumes let us follow this track too: the feminine ones of Arjuna-Heracles, as well as the overly adorned Heracles in the *Fasti* projected onto Kīcaka, give way to the regal attires of the Pāṇḍavas in the final scenes. Heracles new superiority -implicit in the wedding- is translated, among other things, in terms of sumptuous attires and Draupadī's superiority over all the women of the court.

The third question relates to V.'s clear perception of the deep structural components of the story and the way he exploits them for his own ends. He knows very well the concentration of two situations of submission concerning Heracles and their display of loss of hierarchical role and humiliation in the first, and the same plus loss of gender role in the second. Additionally, there is another one he is familiar with as well, the story of Syleus, situated during Heracles year under Omphale. I have suggested that he also knows and uses Apollo's and Poseidon's serfdoms to humans (Laomedon of Troy and Admetus).

As pointed out in the previous chapter, by adapting all these materials, V. puts in play a whole series of related structures. His main characters are five superior heroes and a superior woman, who are, respectively, five sons of gods, as Heracles, and even partial reincarnations of gods, and a supernatural reincarnation of a goddess who is born for the destruction of the *kṣatriyas*. There is little temporary serfdom as a punishment for a member of the heroic and divine categories in Greco-Roman mythology, only one which features a male under a female (Heracles and Omphale) and not a single one featuring a female under a male.

In the case of a (albeit non-existent) female's temporary serfdom as a punishment, in principle, the double, social and gender, superiority of a male over a female would simply reinforce the woman's defencelessness or, more literally, powerlessness. But temporary serfdom is not necessary when a wedding means subordination to men in itself. The Thetis and Peleus story is the most important example, with no less negative consequences, now for both: shame for

her, suffering for the human and the goddess, and danger for him and their son (Achilles). The degrading of a woman in a temporary serfdom is another thing and has its most obvious parallel in the degrading of a woman as a prisoner of war: in Greek mythology women prisoners of war are situated in that double scale of subordination, inferiors as women and as prisoner. Thus, they are systematically raped, and the mating or wedding becomes associated to misfortune for all parts involved when the man is married and tries to make a wife of his new slave, as in the case of Iole, Deianira and Heracles and of Cassandra, Clytemnestra and Agamemnon.

V. is familiar with these constructions. We know that before beginning with Book 4, V. had already made two important decisions: to have Draupadī accompanying her husbands in their double exile and to rid the transvestite Arjuna of sexual implications or abuses, unlike Heracles under Omphale. Arjuna as a eunuch becomes sexually neutralized, so that sexual tensions must overflow in another direction, a more conventional one. As he constructs abuses full of sexual implications against Draupadī as core scenes of the two previous books, the sexual implications of this specific situation have to surface, and the already sexualized narrative of Heracles offers him the opportunity of using Faunus' attempted nocturnal attack with the help of the Giants harassing another superior female, the goddess Aphrodite. In a sense, he explores the unexplored case of a female's temporary serfdom to a man (we could even say: to two men) and a woman. Draupadī seems a servant, but she is a superior female, so that she serves inferiors. Kīcaka's death, the death of an abusive master and a male confronted by a superior female, is the natural consequence, just as it is that his corpse becomes a ball of flesh without limbs in a very plastic representation of his castration.

The invention of Kīcaka is not merely the invention of a sub-story; it also sheds light on V.'s comprehension of the structural contradictions at play in a context full of allusions to the past and future. He does not need a Greco-Roman precedent of a woman's or goddess' temporary thraldom to a man to construct it. Naturally, Draupadī's anonymity is full of danger for those inferiors who, temporarily, find themselves in a position of superiority. It is in this context that we can understand V.'s further explorations and scenes, mainly through Draupadī's words and their source: Deianira. Kīcaka's story is prominent, but also Draupadī's relation to her mistress -developed with the help of the structurally similar position of a woman prisoner of war such as Iole-, and her husbands' positions and degradation,

developed obviously with the help of Heracles' position.

Kīcaka is the inferior who openly abuses his position -as does Laomedon, King of Troy, father of Hesione, with Apollo and Poseidon-, while the king and queen do it in a more discrete way. Kīcaka's killing means the end of that abuse and the beginning of the recovery of the true status of temporary inferiors and of the reorganization of the momentarily disrupted hierarchical relationships in the kingdom, at the same time paving the way to the logical end, the emphatic display of the six main characters' superiority over their temporary masters.

Incidentally, in this context, it may be useful to return to the important problem that the Critical Edition gives no explanation by not accepting the role of the *apsarā* Urvaśī: the humiliating situation of Arjuna. It makes no sense to leave this terrible and humiliating situation unexplained. There is no punishment without transgression. Urvaśī's story is totally consistent with all we have seen: Arjuna, as Gilgamesh with Ishtar (*Gilgamesh* 6; see George, ed. and trans., 2003), rejects her sexual advances and is punished, in his case with castration. Indra's role of reducing the punishment to one year is also coherent.

It is, thus, in the context of the subtlety of V.'s work and knowledge where it is possible to understand how he manages to construct an absolutely new story, integrated harmoniously in the *Mbh.*, and at the same time maintain the main traits of the original story including, *inter alia*, its ambiguous tone (comedy and tragedy, humiliation and carnival…), and the female and gender issues.

2. In Search of V. A Note on His Sources

I have avoided, as far as possible, direct references to the whole *Mbh.* for methodological reasons: Book 4 is our focus and it should suffice to defend V.'s uses Greco-Roman sources, the way he does it, and the specific concentration of sources regarding the Omphale theme which structure it. However, as pointed out above, the uses of Greco-Roman sources in this Book are no exception in the *Mbh.* In this regard, Book 4 indicates the rule rather than to the exception.

What is remarkable, however, is the intensity of his uses of Heracles in a triple sense: many sources, many stories, and an in extremely compact way. He draws on compendiums as a source, some or a very good one: note that, for example, Heracles burying Icarus' corpse is

included inside the story of Omphale in Apollodorus, but not in Diodorus, while the Itoni are in Diodorus and not in Apollodorus-, Ovid -clearly, two of his books here, the *Fasti* and *Heroides*, plus probably the *Metamorphoses*-, and most probably the Euripides' *Syleus*. I have suggested three possible uses of Callimachus' hymns (2, 3 and 5) as well, though here the best argument is admittedly not the intensity of the borrowings, but the fact that three minor pieces of evidence together coming from the same source turn out to be not so minor after all.

At the same time, I have defended that V. takes components from different Heraclean stories: Omphale and related stories, including Cercopes, Syleus, Icarus, Itoni, and, additionally, the story of Heracles, Aphrodite and the Giants, Busiris, the Stymphalian birds, the Ceryneian Hind, Antaeus and Hesione, etc., leaving aside other Heraclean components such as marrying off his wife-to-be to a relative. It is clear that V. is very familiar with Heracles' adventures. Again, it is no exception in his work to employ them: Heracles is one of his main sources. Though I have already explored some of them (Wulff Alonso 2009; 2014c, see Heracles in Index), there is a lot of work that remains to be done.

All in all, as far as I know no other Book is carved in such a compact way with the main Greco-Roman hero. The way V. does it, however, may shed additional light on other Books of the *Mbh.* Book 10, the *Sauptika Parva*, for instance relies heavily on one Greco-Roman source. It recounts a nocturnal attack on sleeping enemies, mirroring Book 10 of *Iliad*. Other sources, in particular related to the fall of Troy, help to explain other components of the Book which ends the war.

3. In Search of V. Final notes

In light of this evidence only one possibility remains: this Book, as and in fact the entire *Mbh.*, is the product of a single author or group of authors creating it. The latter possibility may be accepted only if qualified by the proviso: "directed by one very authoritative poet", the conductor of an orchestra playing his own composition. In any case, there is an author, V.

The use of Ovid (43 BCE-17/18 CE) as his latest source allows us to posit that he wrote his work during or after the first decades of the 1st century CE, in my opinion not long after. A date around the change of era fits well with the dates proposed by several unitarian and

non-unitarian scholars (see Hiltebeitel 2001, 18-21). As stated above, this situates him in a moment when the Subcontinent was part of a cosmopolitan world, of the first globalization in the history of the world, and, of course, of a world dominated by several centuries of struggles and wars for hegemony of domestic and, in particular, external groups.

V.'s knowledge not only of Greek and Roman literature but of both languages is renowned: he knows enough Latin to translate Ovid, and, leaving aside possible direct translations of Greek texts, his use of all kinds of Greek sources here would be impossible without familiarity with the Greek language. This is not as strange as it may seem. Multilingualism is not rare in the Greco-Roman world (Mullen, Patrick eds., 2012), nor in the parts of it directly connected to the Subcontinent, Egypt (see Papaconstantinou ed., 2010) or the Roman Near East, as proved in Palmyra (Millar 1995). The condition of the Subcontinent made multilingualism even more necessary.

At the same time, V. displays high capabilities of intelligent handling and adaptation of materials and genres, which could be easily paralleled to the kind of techniques present in Virgil's times and work, though, in my view, in a more sophisticated fashion. Rome around the change of Era is a good example of the adaptation of the Greek world. With a systematic use of Greek materials, Rome saw the creation of a new literature and culture, new uses of writing in cultural processes, including theoretical reflections on these and many other questions (Moatti 1997). Publications on the legacy of the Greek Classics present two main landmarks in the Greco-Roman world, the Alexandrian School from the III Century BCE onward and the two centuries bookending the change of Era, dominated by Rome and its new perspectives, a period full of commentaries, summaries, discussions, imitations, glossaries and compendiums (Dickey 2007, 1 ff.; 6 ff.). Both moments greatly helped to make Greco-Roman culture what I have once called a portable/exportable culture.

V.'s brilliant handling and adaptation of materials from one culture to fit the needs of another is one of the mainstays of his work, and it would have been impossible without a deep knowledge of both cultures and of the involved processes. V. is part of a multicultural world in which Greco-Roman culture/s was the *lingua franca*, with no political or economic hegemony behind it. Greek and Roman components are part of V.'s cultural background in the same way as it happened with the more or less contemporary "Gandhāra school".

To put it mildly, it is a bit shocking that after more than thirty years of global studies and nearly the same intellectual global studies[77], after the connections all throughout the Eurasian continent have been underscored and the two ends of the chain assiduously compared[78], after the sources for Chinese perspectives on the Silk Road and the West have been made available (See for example Hill 2009; Hilsewé 1979), after the cultural-intellectual dimensions of the Road brilliantly highlighted (Hansen 2012), after extremely thought-provoking works concerning the intellectual assimilation of India and the Far East into the Greco-Roman world have been published[79], some of which even becoming bestsellers (Frankopan 2015), the dominant paradigm in the field only accepts the inevitable commercial exchanges between the Greco-Roman world and the Subcontinent[80].

Even so, accepting that without further ado, entails ignoring the implications of the impact trade had on such basic matters as the extension of urbanization in South India (see Champakalakshmi 1996; Ray 1986), the whole series of common practices entailed in the construction of maritime trade (Ray 2003) and monetary (Bondada 2015) networks, and even the obvious relationship between Buddhism and trade, here on the Silk Road and in the South East Asia connections. And it also entails ignoring that technical borrowings (as Margabandhu 2005) are much more than technical. Evidence of contacts as compiled by Jairazbhoy (1963, 48-147) is still waiting for consideration after more than sixty years, while a policy of harm reduction in the unavoidable field of art dominates the question, in a position that I would hazard to define as the "immaculate conception of the Indian mind". New trends in the ways of understanding cultural exchange and cultural studies are set aside in the same move. All in all, I wonder whether we are talking about the most backward attitude in all the fields involved in this first moment of globalization of the Eurasian Continent.

This denial of cultural and ideological implications in no way implies harbouring a respectful attitude towards the individual particularity of Indian culture, but accepting a perspective which is more likely to have been produced by colonialist constructions of the "Indian mind"

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[77]For a short presentation of these issues see F. Wulff Alonso (2019d); see S. Conrad (2016) for the interesting perspective of a historian; W. H. McNeill (1963) for a no less interesting beginning in the reaction against Spengler's and Toynbee's isolating perspectives; and his reflection in 1995 for the evolution of the question at that time; one interesting turning point is the debate between I. Wallerstein. (1974) and A. G. Frank and B. K. Gills (1993) (and see B. K. Gills, A. G. Frank 1991); see for "global intellectual history" S. Moyn, A. Sartori (eds.) (2013), with the interesting paper of Sh. Pollock.

[78]See, for example, W. Scheidel, The Stanford Ancient Chinese and Mediterranean Empires Comparative History Project (ACME).https://web.stanford.edu/~scheidel/acme.htm; Scheidel (ed.) (2009); (2016).

[79]See for example G. R. Parker (2008) for Rome; note the exhaustive information of Ptolemaios, in the new edition of A. Stückelberger, G. Grasshoff (eds.) (2006.)

[80]To cite just four fundamental works on the theme, see E. H. Warmington (1928); A. Dihle (1978); M. G. Rachske (1978); R. Tomber (2008).

instead of constituting a reaction against a perverse colonialist attitude of projecting Greco-Roman influences in India as a demonstration of Indian subordination in the past and the present which, in my opinion, was not meaningful[81]. In this field, as in other related ones like Indian exceptionalism in connection with the "notion of an essential bipolarity between the Occident and the Orient" (Chattopadhyaya 2008, 266), we are talking about a quite typical example of originally Orientalist assumptions absorbed by indigenous subjects and sympathetic academics.

It is perhaps unnecessary to highlight that modern India is not an exception to the general rule that isolating cultures is not just risky on scientific grounds, but politically dangerous, as noted by Amartya Sen (2005, 56 ff., 65) commenting on the relationship between *hindutva* and "isolationism". Denial of external influences is a common practice of political and ideological positions defending essentialist perspectives on identity, which is depicted as the evolution of one community, one essence, one mind -as defined by the doctrine of the "peoples' psychology" between the end of the XIX and the beginnings of the XX Century-, which, over the centuries, has survived invasions and other de-culturalising influences. Obviously, all of this calls for one people, one party and one interpretation of the present, just the opposite of what Bhagwat Saran Upadhyaya wrote in the opening of his book, *Feeders of Indian Culture*, dedicated to the cultures which have come to India throughout history: "History is total continuous and universal, vertical and horizontal. And so is culture total, continuous and universal, vertical and horizontal… Culture, therefore, is a common heritage resulting from common effort. Parts join to form a whole, the whole forms a unit in an integrated continuum of parts. The continuum covers the globe" (1973, 1). A whole series of Addresses of Presidents of the *Indian History Congresses* have remarked on the need to link up Indian history with world history to understand the "commonality of interest and problems of humanity" (Gupta, 1991, 4-5) and work against the isolation of Indian history from the rest of the world.

Out of this oft-denied multicultural context, V. takes what he needs for the construction of

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[81]See F. Wulff Alonso (2015a); (2015c); (2014a); (2011c); (2009a). For an interesting example of the use of the concept of "Indian mind" see J. H. Marshall (1922), 649: "But these ideals awakened no response in the Indian mind. The vision of the Indian was bounded by the immortal rather than the mortal, by the infinite rather than finite. Where Greek thought was ethical, his was spiritual; where Greek was rational, his was emotional".

his epic, forging a bold new work for the neoteric ideological and political world he helps to shape in the Subcontinent. The richness of his materials is pivotal for the success of his undertaking.

I am not delving into a thorough explanation of my perspective on V.'s project, as my main aims in this book are more modest. Some of the conclusions drawn from Book 4, nonetheless, could be useful for more general thoughts on the *Mbh.* The most obvious consequence is that research on Book 4 has to take into account V.'s borrowings as a previous step to further analyses. To put it succinctly (see Appendix 1), the whole structure of Book 4 and its contents are not produced by the projection, for example, of components of the Vedic structure of the sacrifice applied to the preparations of a destruction painted in hues of *pralaya*, carnival-like models, *avatāra*'s revelations or other theological conundrums, but by a whole narrative structure and by precise contents which V. delineates with precision from the beginning to the end with the help of those systematic borrowings. Needless to say, that does not mean in any way that V. had not those, or other, meanings in his mind when he selected, adapted, mixed and knitted those components together with other sources and his own inventions, but this implies another, technically secondary, step in the analysis.

In the same way, I hope that this examination of V.'s methodology and the results of another forthcoming Book on his borrowings from Ovid, will offer the necessary tools for the construction of a more global perspective. The presence of common components in Virgil's *Aeneid* and the *Mbh.* was initially explored by Lévêque (1880), Lallemant (1959) and Duckworth (1961), though they interpreted such components on the erroneous basis that the *Mbh.* predated the *Aeneid*, a presumption then undeniable. However, I choose Ovid instead of Virgil for this first approach for the intrinsic interest that the reader can appreciate in V.'s use of Ovid in Book 4. A further study of V.'s uses of Greco-Roman sources in a third book on the overarching plan of destruction in the *Mbh.* will facilitate a better understanding of his global aims and project. I shall try to substantiate more ambitious perspectives, some of them already suggested elsewhere, which are obviously inseparable from the results of current research.

The most obvious conclusion to be drawn from this book, the fact that V.'s work demonstrates its condition of master of narrative and its techniques, easily connects with the perspectives of authors as Hiltebeitel or Hegarty, who stress the fact that we are talking about a

narrative, a narrative about the past, with intentions and purposes expressed in the text and reflected in the way it portrays it (Hegarty 2012, 1 ff.). Certainly, V. invents a past, defines the kind of king as well as the social and political order suitable to the decadent present, and envisions a future wherein everything will be fixed.

V. constructs a doctrinal framework of beliefs which is simultaneously juxtaposed to the convictions of the "non-believers" -after all, defining a new orthodoxy requires the creation of heterodoxy and potential enemies or rivals- and thereby generates perspectives for a radical future shift. Yet, all of this is projected onto a narrative, an artistic and literary work wherein all his talents are unfurled; just as V.'s artistic and literary prowess cannot be defined by his lavish and technically perfect use of Greco-Roman sources alone, the thematic scope of his *magnum opus* cannot be reduced to mere doctrinal matters.

The Greco-Roman stories he uses are more like pebbles rounded by time, usage and adaptation to different ages and societies than ready-made geometric cobbles or bricks, and he selects them because of the wealth of their inherent meaning. Even matters as profound as the world's changing eras, a decadent present and hopes of new beginnings are part of the international *Weltanschauung* around the change of era in Mediterranean cultures. When V. reuses all those materials, he puts on display all his talent, his interpretations, the inherent meanings, all he wants to use from his own culture, the reader's capability of perceiving and imagining and much more.

These may include not just stories but the ideological wave that connected *bhakti* and the mystery cults, and perhaps the presence of apocalyptical literature, not necessarily Judeo-Christian, that could have influenced Mārkaṇḍeya's apocalyptical section in the *Mbh.* or the *Purāṇas*, for example (Wulff Alonso 2012, 81-85; 2019c). This does not exclude more obvious connections between the *yuga* and the Greco-Roman concept of the succession of ages, presided over by the transition between the previous heroic and the present era as pictured in the *Iliad* and the *Mbh.* The breeding ground is, again, centuries of religious contact and exchanges in North India and Central Asia as seen, for example, in the Greek coins minted by the Greco-Bactrian kings.

V. can only be understood as a decidedly meaningful part of the historical evolution of the Subcontinent's religions. The *Mbh.*, as Biardeau and Hiltebeitel defend, is the great monument of the *bhakti* and is consistent with processes taking place around the change of

era, dominated by the adaptation of Sanskrit to literary texts, as defended by Pollock (2006) and the intent of the Brahmans to recover from the serious crisis they were undergoing, as defended by Bronkhorst (2016; 2017). This perspective connects easily with those expressed by authors such as Kunal Chakravarti (2001, 32 ff.) regarding the origin of the *Purāṇas*, including the role of local adaptations and, of course, the connection between orality and writing in these processes.

In this context, we can presume in the *Mbh.* (and later in the *Purāṇas*) whole religious inventions or appropriations of components coming from other religions, such as *āśrama* and Brahmanical asceticism, for example, or *tīrtha* and pilgrimages. Likewise, Bronkhorst (2007) has criticized the idea of a uniform "post-Vedic" age (or "Hinduist" or "Prehinduist") not just in the Subcontinent but also in the North, thus reinforcing the perspective of the different answers to the new situations, which include the very connected Buddhist intellectual world and its uses of Greco Roman components (Bronkhorst 2000). I wonder whether or not to use Greco-Roman components was ever really an option.

Given the profound complexity of the *Mbh.*, it should be viewed not only as the first monument of the *bhakti* (Biardeau), but also as an attempt to construct a new doctrine in a setting where the old Vedic gods and polytheism were being torn down (Wulff Alonso 2016a, 224-28). Reincarnation, the image of a primal god creating and recreating the world along with creating and recreating the very gods themselves, the paths to deliverance which emulate or surpass the merit of sacrifice, e.g., pilgrimages, asceticism, meditation, ethical behaviour, etc., are only congruent with a concept of the divine which is far removed from the old gods. Only a god capable of integrating all of that can be the supernatural companion and protector of the new kind of king.

It is V.'s boundless talent that brings these components into play as narrative devices. His epic opened newly discovered doors for the then burgeoning culture of the *bhakti*, which we know today as Hinduism. Sufficiently shielded from rival perspectives, V.'s work is easily translatable into other art forms, such as theatre and the plastic arts, and contains a *summa* of useful doctrines inside and outside the stories he narrates.

Exploring these issues requires mining several rich fields and examining the complexity of a poet containing multitudes. A last example: the same V. who uses these Greco-Roman materials so extensively has his character the seer Mārkaṇḍeya announce a future wherein

the dust will settle and the foreigners, *mleccha*, including the Yavana (the Greeks), will be dominated again by the faithful, as it was in Yudhiṣṭhira's age.

In this context, simple analyses and classifications are doomed to come off as shallow and ignorant, or as Sanjay Subrahmanian so elegantly puts it in his analogy: "It is as if we impoverished drinkers of wine from Saint-Emilion and Lalande-de Pomerol were constantly asked to declare our preferences between Coca-Cola and Pepsi" (Subrahmanian 2013, 177). Finally, let me stress a last component in his work, for which we can be particularly grateful. Though not his favourite method, we know he occasionally takes Greco-Roman texts in a quite literal way, as shown in his borrowings of Ovid for the Kīcaka's story. Thanks to that, we can even surmount the obstacle of the lateness of the manuscript tradition. We have here the proof of the validity of the text we have. Thus, V. renders us a last service.

APPENDIX 1. REVISITING PREVIOUS INTERPRETATIONS. A SHORT OVERVIEW

It goes without saying that our findings do not exclude previous interpretations; rather, as a kind of necessary step, they inject the issue of V.'s uses of those Greco-Roman materials into the discussion. When V. adapts his story to his previous and later Books, when he weaves in components from the Subcontinent's culture or invents new ones, he does so on the basis of that systematic borrowing, i.e., through this filter. Moreover, he does not use isolated components selected at random; instead he constructs with them a narrative, a whole script or screenplay if you will, a whole story arc, which follows his model.

How does that systematic borrowing affect previous perspectives and how, when applicable, does it integrates them? A short overview may prove useful.

1. The Dominant Paradigm

The dominant paradigm of the *Mbh.*[82] is grounded on several assumptions,

1) The work is the product of a long process of accretion, not a unitary one. 2) The first layer is a piece from the traditional oral epic genre within a context of a well-developed epic genre. 3) It was created (basically or wholly) prior to the arrival of Alexander the Great to India, 4) and later on there were successive authors from diverse social backgrounds restructuring the work, usually bards and Brahmans. 5) There was a transition from an oral to a written

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[82]See J. L. Brockington 1998 for the most authoritative author on this perspective; see V. Adluri, J. Bagchee (2014) for a first critical approach to the historiographical foundations of this position; B. M. Sullivan (2016), for the present position in the debate; see below A. Hiltebeitel's and V. Adluri's and J. Bagchee's publications; for a short presentation see my introduction in Wulff Alonso (2016b), pp. 16-20.

tradition at some point of the process. 6) The different uses and appropriations of the work over the centuries can be seen in its different parts. Secondary or "sub-stories" would be one of the layers of the onion to peel off, doctrines and doctrinal sections another, *bhakti* with, of course, Kṛṣṇa and the *Bhagavad Gītā*, as well as the doctrine of the *yugas*, and whole Books, Book 4 included, and even the whole story after the Kurukṣetra war. In that vein, the official founder of the orthodoxy, E. W. Hopkins defined the *Mbh.* as a "tale and its tumors" (Hopkins 1901, 385). The metaphor of an onion, or an artichoke, may be apt, though after peeling back all the successive layers even the core would have been quite affected by time and intrusions. For some authors we could say "thoroughly rotten". 7.Though there has never been a common position, the accepted date for the accumulative construction of the work would have been from IV Century BCE to IV Century CE (Hopkins). 8) It is generally defended that at a given moment, though not before the beginning of the Common Era, an author would have taken the previous materials and organized a last version, presumably with more additions, to give some coherence to the work.

One of the main problems involved in this position is that the eight points are based on internal interpretations of the work, with no external components to help in its construction. Not a single one of them has ever been proved, beginning with the fact that there is no evidence of bards composing oral or written epics, or of the sociological adscriptions of the presumed successive authors. The same could be said of the assumptions which underpin the work's construction, as the character of primitive epics, the idea of bards associated with warriors and picturing just conflicts and battles, and more sophisticated Brahmans adding doctrine to a mere war story, or the linear relationship between orality and writing, in particular in epics. At the same time, the main internal arguments, based on differences of versification and style, can be argued considering a long process of construction by an author, and/or his work with a team.

From the perspective of this paradigm, Book 4 of the *Mbh.* has not been the object of much research, perhaps because its presumably late component led to scant far-reaching reflections. Understandably, it does not matter whether some degree of artistry can be accepted or not, an additional strange product of a landscape of fortuitous accretions in a wild world

of tumours disorderly grown during centuries does not call for deep analysis.

All in all, the idea of a final *Mbh.,* just as the one we would have in the Poona Edition, allows for the possibility to reflect on the Book's meanings and on its position in the work as a whole. As Brockington contends: "To assert that this material is a later development is not to deny the rich symbolic meanings that have been identified but rather to affirm that they have grown out of the basic narrative and act as a counterpoint to it" (1998, p. 143). Though this opens a way to analysis, it implies certainly a potential limitation, in so far as there is a previous intuitive decision regarding what constitutes the basic narrative and the text becomes a counterpoint, excluding a more integrative approach.

At any rate, the main question to answer becomes: What intention did the presumed new author of the Book have when he created and inserted that new text into the main narrative? A good example of this approach is Van Buitenen's position. Denying the wholly unexamined tendency to consider the "insertion" of the Book as mere caprice, he asked himself why Book 4 would be included exactly at this point in the main narrative, and, thus, which previous components could have been laying the groundwork for such a strange story. His main influence for a typically fuzzy answer seems to come from an anthropological component (Van Buitenen 1981, 20-21). For him, the position of the adventure between the past and future, the disguises cast in a kind of masquerade, and the comedy-like tone of the Book would recall Indian festivals with exchanges of roles, feasts related to the change of the year and the *Holī*, analysed by his colleague the anthropologist McKim Marriott (1966). In sum, the poets would project this ambience in their inversions of the heroes' roles and in the transitional position of the Book in the narrative. It is, incidentally, remarkable to see that Marriott and Van Buitenen seem to have discovered in far-off India no less than carnival.

Yet, the evidence for the use of various Greco-Roman sources demands that our analysis take into account V.'s use of those sources, specifically the stories of Heracles and Omphale. Arjuna as a transvestite, the tragicomic, masquerade ball, carnivalesque, aspect of Book 4, its meaning emerging through its position as a festive prologue to a tragic slaughter, it transitional function as a tragicomic interlude between two part of the adventure, all of these elements are present in V.'s Greco-Roman sources and, as such, did not originate in his mind,

which becomes all the more evident when we recall the succession 12 plus 1. Once again, it is possible, though unlikely, that V. had formulated those ideas on his own and then selected those precise components from his Greco-Roman sources to add them to the story's basic structure. Yet, given the evidence for as well as the primacy of those borrowed components, they must be considered in any further analysis of Book 4. Even it is believed that Book 4 is a later insertion, that presumed insertion must be evaluated in light of the all the amassed evidence: the feast had indeed been going on for centuries when Van Buitenen's carnival kicked off.

In a similar, but not identical, way, we can take a look at the interesting approach of R. P. Goldman (1995). Both referring to the *Mbh.* and the *Ram.* he denies that Kṛṣṇa and Rāma and the *bhakti* were introduced in a later "layer", rightly arguing that (Goldman 1995, 73) "absolutely no convincing text-historical evidence for the extraneous character of these sections can be adduced". It is from this vantage that he interprets the Book as delving into the narrative developments of the complex position of *avatāra*, as the Pāṇḍavas are five gods chastised to be reborn as humans, who are hidden/not hidden, discovered/not discovered in a kind of *līlā*, full of dramatic ambiguity in relation to "normal" human beings.

The questions around the *avatāra* matter has to be, again, seen from the premise that this situation is, without *avatāra*, inherited from the stories of Heracles. As we already know, and *ad nauseam*, the main key of Heracles under Omphale and Syleus is the dynamics born out of the temporary submission of a powerful hero to inferiors, just as in the case of Apollo's and Poseidon's serfdoms to humans, though in his case with the additional fruitful narrative factor of anonymity, which are the same keys that define the Pāṇḍavas' and Draupadī's positions under Virāṭa, without more ado.

In sum, the *avatāra* question can no longer be considered *the* key for the narrative of the Book, or even foreshadowing the events of the future war and full of *bhakti* resonances (Goldman 1995, 96-7) after having detected the structuring role of the story of Heracles and Omphale in which we have the same effects and very similar dynamics, including dangers, with no *avatāra* or *bhakti*. Again, an alternative perspective could be to think that the author selected this Greco-Roman model because he had these issues in mind and/or that this is

one of the rich components the author put in motion by way of allusion or metaphor after selecting and adapting it, but this is a very different question, and I do not feel it necessary to evaluate it here. It is perhaps advisable, in any case, to consider the difference between those dangers related to Kṛṣṇa as *avatāra* born for the destruction/salvation of the world, on one side, and the Pāṇḍavas and many other characters who are reincarnated gods, *asuras* and other beings, and on both sides, just for the destruction. Let us just recall that Virāṭa is also a divine reincarnation, of the Maruts (*Mbh.* 1.61.76).

It is worth mentioning here one approach that is indifferent to the question of unity, as it basically focuses on arguments based on constants of the human mind, psychoanalytical approaches [83]. To present the most obvious case, Arjuna as a eunuch is interpreted under this perspective, as are his foremother Urvaśī's and his father Indra's roles. Oedipal transgressions and associated castration, incest or, in a similar perspective, homosexual phantasies or repression of homosexual impulse have an easy place here. To take in consideration the Greco-Roman filter, again, is a fatal blow for the theory of pure invention, but not for this approach, in so far as borrowing and adaptation could be interpreted in the same way: the author, attracted by components already containing and recalling those Oedipal or homosexual phantasies in the Greco-Roman sources he is dealing with, could have taken and adapted them. All in all, I prefer other explanations in gender terms. Another thing is, of course, the need of taking into account texts and contexts. When, for instance, W. Doniger (1997, 143) seeks to substantiate psychoanalytic hypothesis and homosexual phantasies by exemplifying them with stories in which men dress as women to seduce other men, as Bhīma with Kīcaka, it exceeds the limits of what is actually in the text -though, admittedly, not in later Indian or in previous Greco-Roman theatre [84].

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[83]See, for example, R. P. Goldman (1993); W. Doniger (1997); (1999), pp. 279-81; A. Pelissero (2002); A. Custodi (2007).

[84]See the interesting parallel referred to Heracles in the error of N. Loraux 1982, on the feminizing character of a *peplos* presented to Heracles by Athena; the case of his robes under Omphale is obviously different. See F. Wulff Alonso (1997), pp. 135-7; L. Llewellyn-Jones (2005), 57-8.

2. Unitarian Perspectives

The Hopkins' definition of the *Mbh.* in the meaningful terms of a cancer, help us to understand a second component of the history of its interpretations. The hegemony of the "analytical" approach was built after a typical foundational academic sacrifice: J. Dahlmann's intellectual lynching (see Hopkins 1901, 401-2). The position of J. Dahlmann, though chronologically wrong, left open the possibility of understanding the *Mbh.* as a whole, as both a doctrinal and a narrative work [85], and it was furthered by other authors such as Sylvain Lévi [86]or V. Pisani. Thus, Pisani writes[87]:

"*The Mahābhārata* is instead the brilliant work of a man who... conceived the plan to give his countrymen, in a single book, a "thesaurus" of Indian heroic and hagiographic traditions, along with a "summa" of sacred and profane wisdom, permeated of the religious and philosophical conception that he expressed above all in the *Bhagavadgītā*, constituent of the poem, as Sylvain Lévi rightly saw, the fulcrum and the center of gravity...".

At the same time, the need to understand the work globally was defended by other authors such as E. Sukthankar, the editor of the Critical Edition of the *Mbh.* However, they were a minority in the field until very recently.

Thus, after many decades of these analytical positions' dominant hegemony, only in recent years has there sprouted the possibility of thinking about the *Mbh.* afresh as a whole[88]. One of the reasons was the end of the critical edition, which let us see the *Mbh.* more clearly as a self-sustained work. The new approaches came to life mainly through the confluence of two trends. First, authors who defend the composite character of the *Mbh.*, or who simply avoid any definition in this regard, perhaps to avoid the involved academic risks, but also defend a final redaction not just a chaotic mess. Second, authors who defend a whole unitarian perspective.

Naturally, in authors defending a unitarian perspective, the analysis of Book 4 becomes

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[85]See, for example, J. Dahlmann (1899), pp. 288-89: "In der Verschmelzung des erzählenden und belehrenden Elementes liegt der Einfluss des Epos". "The influence of the Epic lies in the fusion of the narrative and instructive elements".

[86] See S. Lévi (1917), p. 103: "Il est â la fois plus simple et plus honnête de prendre le poème tel qu'il est pour essayer d'en concevoir la genèse". "It is both simpler and more honest to take the poem as it is to try to conceive the genesis".

[87] See V. Pisani, L. P. Mishra (1970), p. 117: "Il *Mahābhārata* é invece l'opera geniale di un uomo il quale… ha concepito il piano di dare ai suoi connazionali, in un solo libro, un thesaurus delle tradizioni eroiche e agiografiche indiane e insieme una "summa" di sapienza sacra e profana, permeata della concezione religiosa e filosofica che egli ha espresso sopratutto nella *Bhagavadgītā*, constituente del poema, como ben vide Sylvain Lévi, il fulcro e il centro di gravità…".

[88]Fort recent positions in the debate see B. M. Sullivan (2016); see A. Hiltebeitel below; for two mainly unitarian publications see V. Adluri, J. Bagchee (eds.) (2013); (2016).

necessarily a part of their comprehensive perspective on the *Mbh.* and, therefore, this must be also taken in account to valuate them. The most important contributions to the discussion come from the two main advocates of the unitarian position, Madeleine Biardeau and Alf Hiltebeitel.

As part of their intellectual background and of the evolution of the theme, it may be useful to refer to Georges Dumézil, as both authors were originally inspired by his work. At the same time, it could be useful for the reader to contrast the comparative approach proposed in this book -see in particular the Introduction, Section "Fourteen Criteria" and above in this Chapter- with an approach that only in a very particular way can be considered as comparative.

Dumézil's proposals are based on a whole series of assumptions: 1) The central idea is that there was a homogeneous Indo-European society many millennia ago. 2) In that society there were groups of "vieux penseurs" (old/ancient thinkers, see, for example, Dumézil 1986, 48; 26), who elaborated a precise trifunctional doctrine, basically dividing the world into three spheres: sovereignty-priestly/warrior/fertility-prosperity. Consequently, such a social division already existed, or, at least, was imagined, then*, i.e.*, before the separation of the different Indo-European branches. 3) That doctrine was maintained for millennia by those Indo-European branches, through the agency of successive Indo-European "penseurs", who projected it, 4) in social realities (the "Indo-Iranian" branch in particular) 5) and in theologies, mythologies, rituals, institutions, and even in literature and epic. 6) That perspective can be seen in the Indo-Iranian world in a famous list of gods found in a treaty between Bronze-age Mitanni and the Hittites -Mitra, Varuna, Indra and the two Nasatya- and that its order has to be interpreted in trifunctional as well as hierarchical terms, i.e., Mitra-Varuna first function, Indra second, and the Nasatya third. 7) The *Mbh.* is the result of one such group of thinkers, "spécialistes savants", "une école", dedicated to readapting and transposing the trifunctional ideology from mythical to epic (see 1986, 238-9 in particular). 8) They projected it, in particular, in the order and hierarchy of the five Pāṇḍavas through their divine fathers, but also by projecting a trifunctional Indo-European Goddess in Draupadī, for instance (1986, 103-24). 9) The story line proposed for the *Mbh.* (1986, 208 ff.) is another

inherited Indo-European eschatology that culminated in the triumph of Yudhiṣṭhira and the inheritance of the kingdom by Parikṣit, after being saved by Kṛṣṇa. 10) Book 4 does not make sense in terms of dramatic action, it was a kind of game (1986, 89-94). 11) But it allowed those authors to fill it with their subtle inventions; in particular, the disguises of the Pāṇḍavas would reveal their plan and method, as it would have been motivated by the desire to put in parallel the functional structure of the group and the hierarchy of social classes that they would represent.

We can see that Dumézil was not really working with a comparative method, but just trying to prove or, better, illustrate a hypothesis rooted in his interpretation of a far prehistoric past, and doing it in a way which is "the very opposite of an empirical study of religions" (Belier 1991, 239), running the obvious risk of projecting phantasies by reconstructing a remote past with no evidence (Lincoln 2012, 100). His perspectives, his lack of method and criteria, dubious uses of evidence, and, in particular, its impossible application to the *Mbh.* have been exhaustively demonstrated by authors as J. Brockington, W. Doniger, R. Frye, I. Gershevitch, A. Hiltebeitel, J. Gonda, N. Loraux, Ch. Malamoud, J. Narten, E. Pirart, B. Schlerath, or P. Thieme. Not a single one of those eleven aforementioned points can be supported with evidence.

It will suffice to mention an evident case of distortion related to his crucial point 9, as his précis of Book 18 of the *Mbh* (1986, 42) reads[89]: "Dans les diverses parties de l'autre monde, Yudhiṣṭhira retrouve avec joie ses amis de la terre: les uns, dieux ou portions de dieux incarnés, ont repris leur place; les autres, fils des dieux, sont assis près de leurs pères". I wonder whether undergraduate student would pass an exam with such a precis. The main question in this Book is just the opposite: Yudhiṣṭhira does not meet there his brothers and wife, but Duryodhana, and, impacted and bewildered, he goes to the hell where they are, to participate in their destiny and, finally, to rescue them. Dumézil, as Yudhiṣṭhira, cannot understand why his enemies are there, because he cannot understand that all of them and their confrontation are part of a plan of destruction using even the *asura*/*deva* opposition and their respective incarnations. That is the story of Book 18.

From this vantage, a further distortion of the storyline after the war is easy to understand

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[89]"In the different parts of the other world, Yudhiṣṭhira joyfully meets his friends from the earth: some, gods or portions of incarnated gods, have taken their place; the others, sons of the gods, sit near their fathers".

from (Dumézil 1986, 218) [90]: "Quand il [Parikṣit] sera en âge de régner, Yudhiṣṭhira lui remettra ses poivoirs et, avec ses quatre frères et Draupadī, partira vers les paradis où seul il entrera vivant, mais où il les retrouverá, chacun dans le coin du monde divin d'oú il était descendu pour s'incarner". The succession in the kingdom is anything but automatic, once again the *Mbh.* text is clear: The Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī leave after the death of Kṛṣṇa and his people, which is the result of a curse cast 36 years before at the end of the first war, and after the task of the final destruction has been carried out, not because the then 36-year old Parikṣit is old enough to receive the kingdom. The *Mbh.* does not culminate with Yudhiṣṭhira's victory in the war -there is not even a happy ending there[91]- and the inheritance of the kingdom by Parikṣit, but after the second war, when Kṛṣṇa and his people die after a shameful, mutual massacre and the Pāṇḍavas, in Book 16, make the decision to die as well. Then a desperate Arjuna asks Vyāsa, who tells him, as we already know (*Mbh.* 16.9.25-36), that Kṛṣṇa's death was bound to happen, that Kṛṣṇa could have prevented it and did not want it, that *now* the burden of the Earth had been relieved, that the Pāṇḍavas and their weapons had achieved their purpose, the task of the Gods, and that the time had come for them -and their divine weapons- to go. All that contradicts his Indo-European eschatology, Point 9, therefore, is sent to the hell of oblivion and deformation in Dumézil's universe.

Railing against Dumèzil's methods and results is not my aim here. Unlike Dumèzil, I am not defending the notion that an author or group of authors subtly projected a suppositional Pre-historic ideology onto their character's disguises; rather, it is my contention that the whole construction of the text relied heavily on extensive borrowing from Greco-Roman sources which, in effect, underpin the structure of the entirety of Book 4 and can be empirically proven. Understandably, I am not interested here in possible adaptations of Dumèzil's construction to the evidence shown here either, though certainly it could be imagined that a group of intellectuals could be thought of as selecting trifunctional parts of their Greco-Roman sources and knitting them in a trifunctional way according to their needs. The main problem, perhaps, is the first part of the process, the Greek one: Dumézil considered the

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[90]"When he [Parikṣit] is old enough to reign, Yudhiṣṭhira will give him his powers and, with his four brothers and Draupadī, will go to the paradise where only he will enter alive, but where he will find them, each in the corner of the divine world of where he was descended to incarnate".

[91]See A. Hiltebeitel, (1991) [1976], p. 308 for the not idyllic post war period.

Greeks -unlike the Indians- too free as to let themselves be limited by trifunctional constraints[92].

That aside, the path Dumèzil has opened for subsequent authors and scholars is of paramount importance. His very intelligent work[93]sought out connections and relations not immediately visible as well as a global view of the *Mbh.*, in an environment where the stimulating calls to "structural" and global analysis pervaded, particularly during the sixties and seventies, and which managed to bear fruit despite employing as misleading an analytical approach as "structuralism".

In this regard, it is particularly meaningful that two prominent Indologists, Madeleine Biardeau and Alf Hiltebeitel, while initially inspired by Dumèzil's work, ultimately rejected his perspectives as a result of deepening their scholarship in the *Mbh.* and other texts of the Subcontinent. Though Dumèzil's propositions were a good starting point, they effectively set these two famous Indologists on a very different path. It is beyond the scope of this Appendix to offer a systematic analysis of their work, but in order to underscore a few implications my own conclusions have with respect to their work on Book 4 a general overview is unavoidable.

Biardeau approaches the *Mbh.* from the vantage of her deep knowledge of the *Purāṇas*[94] and she is the first contemporary scholar to try and systematically connect Book 4 to other parts of the *Mbh.* as well as to later and previous texts, particularly the *Purāṇas*. Her scholarship is informed by the theory of the overall unity of the work, which she maintains is not merely the product of a genius but the principal, most ancient of all *bhakti* monuments, its foundational chart (Biardeau, 1989, 70, n.1; 1985, 28).

First of all, Biardeau considers *bhakti*, with Kṛṣṇa and the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the secondary or "sub-stories" and doctrinal sections as parts of a unitary *Mbh.* As such, for her there is an unequivocal connection between the Kurukṣetra's war, the ultimate change of *yuga*, and the

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[92] See G. Dumézil (1987), pp. 161-66; G. Dumézil (1986), pp. 632-33. Note in (1987), p. 164: (the Greek mutation, the birth of critic and free thought) "En un peu de deux millennaires, elle s'est étendue, non sans résistance, des "vieilles espèces", à une grande partie de l'humanité":"In a little over two millennia, it has spread, not without resistance from "old species", to a large part of humanity".

[93]Once Sylvain Levi said the young Dumézil: "Ne vous découragez pas. Vous n'avez dit jusquà présent que des bêtises, mais c'était des bêtises inteligentes" (D. Eribon 1992, p. 156). "Do not be discouraged. You've said nothing other than nonsense, but it was intelligent nonsense".

[94]See, in particular, M. Biardeau (1973-4); (1976); (1978); (1981); (1985); (1997): (2002). A brief synthesis in (1985), pp. 26 ff.

avatāra, Kṛṣṇa, coming to the Earth to help defeat evil and strengthen the dharmic monarchy in that fight. All of which occurs in the context of a work substantially interested in defining and instructing a dharmic king.

Three critical remarks on her work made by Hiltebeitel will help to bring her point of view into clearer focus.[95]. Though Biardeau is his most important intellectual reference point, Hiltebeitel dissociates himself from some meaningful core components of her work.

The first problem in her construction was in a certain sense inspired by Dumézil, though the context of her thought on the problem is no longer the presumed Indo-European eschatology, but Purāṇic constructions. She thinks[96] that the *Kaliyuga* begins with Duryodhana's success and ends with his defeat in Kurukṣetra and with the restoration of the dharmic kingdom of Yudhiṣṭhira, later inherited by Parikṣit, and his ceremonial consecration as a king, the *rājasūya*. In this context, she also thinks that the *avatāra* Kṛṣṇa would not be incarnated if not to usher in the new perfect age, the *Kṛtayuga*.

In this aspect, she goes against traditional orthodoxy, including the *Purāṇas* and most modern interpreters, who consider that the Kurukṣetra war -followed by massacre in Dvārakā- brings about the transition between *Dvāparayuga* and *Kaliyuga*, our present time. Thus, the years of exile are for her the *Kaliyuga* and the war itself becomes the very transition into the new renovation of the cycle. From this vantage, all is pervaded by her direct association of the years of exile with the *Kaliyuga* -though, additionally, Duryodhana's reign is never painted in the *Mbh.* in those colours either- and the preparation of the transition and of the war with a confrontation which is made akin to a *pralaya*, a cosmic dissolution, a whole destruction, followed by its reconstruction, a whole renovation [97]: "Une guerre quasi cosmique encadrée par deux grands sacrifices royaux, une crise du monde dont il faut assurer la continuité, un conflit dynastique en lequel se cristallise cette crise, car la continuité du pouvoir royal dharmique peut seule assurer la permanence du cosmos".

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[95]For A. Hiltebeitel's view of her work, see A. Hiltebeitel (1983); (2011d); for her position on Book 4 see the references in (1980b) (=2011c, pp. 53-81, 54-6 in particular); (1981) (=2011c, pp. 3-32) and (1991b) (=2011c, 101-123) too; my citations of these three papers follow (2011c).

[96]See, for example, M. Biardeau (1976), pp. 145 ff.; 170-3; 217; (2002), I, pp. 396; 609-10; II, pp. 481-82: 517 and A. Hiltebeitel (2011d), p. 6; (2011c), p. 42, n. 29.

[97]M. Biardeau (1976), p. 217: "An almost cosmic war framed by two great royal sacrifices, a crisis of the world whose continuity must be ensured, a dynastic conflict in which this crisis is crystallized, because only the continuity of the royal dharmic power can ensure the permanence of the cosmos".

The second criticism Hiltebeitel levels is that Biardeau overstates Arjuna's rapport with king-ship[98]. For her, Arjuna is the ideal king. As she thinks that a basic component of the story is the role of the *avatāra* who brings about the new perfect age as the model and instructor of the king who accompanies him, and Yudhiṣṭhira is the Dharmic King, but not the model king, and has no particular close relation to Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna would satisfy that role, obvi-ously full of *avatāra* connotations[99]. For her in order to bring about the *Kṛtayuga* through war, the ideal king must possess elements of destruction/creation, Rudraïque-Viṣṇuite and Kṣatriya-Brahman[100], which is consequently how she views Arjuna. This perspective is the product of a rigid view of Purāṇic interpretations and a no less unbending viewpoint on the relationship between the *Mbh.* and Purāṇic lore, which is clearly disputable.

A third component becomes visible via Hiltebeitel's final criticism. When it is affirmed that there is a model of *avatāra*, and of a king-who-necessarily-accompanies-the-*avatāra* and that it must be projected into a given character, characters become embodiments of the model, with the risk of losing sight of many things, including the substantially narrative component of the story and its characters. At the same time, the epic becomes the place where myths, symbols or embodiments of divinities are projected, a rather sensitive question given the chronological aspects related to the later dates for the creation of the *Purāṇas*. In this sense, it would be appropriate to distinguish between a battle containing references to the end of a *yuga* (or *kalpa*), or a character receiving features of a deity, and considering the battle a straight projection of the end of a *yuga*, or *kalpa*, and the character as an embodiment of that divinity. In this vein, Hiltebeitel does consider that in the *Mbh.* there are less "codes" to unveil than references or allusions (Hiltebeitel 2011b, 514, n. 4), in the same way that its author/s do not "transpose" Vedic sacrifices using them as schemas or "allegorize" older stories in a different (epic) register (Hiltebeitel 2001, 119). In sum, using of metaphors, similes and the like versus direct and conscious embodiments and projections.

It is impossible to make a synthesis that matches the wealth of thought and suggestions contained in Biardeau's texts referring to Book 4. All in all, I hope that the next points will be a fair synthesis of her train of thought [101].

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[98]A. Hiltebeitel (2011c), p. 56; see (2011d), p. 6 for his suffering of "Arjune fatigue".

[99]M. Biardeau (1978), pp. 87-9; see 88: using "un langage chiffré" an encrypted language.

[100]M. Biardeau (1978), pp. 111; (1976), pp. 182-5.

[101]With a little help of A. Hiltebeitel's remarks on her work cited above. I regret not having the opportunity here to follow the evolution of her thought: some components present in the seventies finally disappear or lose their relevance at the end of her career.

Bear in mind that her model has the thirteen year period as the part of the *Kaliyuga* shown in the *Mbh.*, and that the one year period must be full of symbolic representations of the upcoming tragedy and the *pralaya*-like situation.

1. First of all [102], she interprets the thirteen years of exile as a period of *dīkṣā,* a "consecration" for a ceremony, prior to that war considered as a vast sacrifice ending the *Kaliyuga* and full of *pralaya* connotations. Notwithstanding, for her the first twelve years spent in exile as hermits in the woods (*vanāprastha*) are a *dīkṣā* in a more symbolic way, while in the thirteenth year (Book 4) this trait in displayed in a much more explicit way. First, they live "like offspring dwelling in the womb" (*garbhavāsa iva prajāḥ*: 4.66.10d) and, second, anonymous and hidden, in what Biardeau views as a typical case of ceremonial isolation before that, literally, epoch-making sacrificial war.

2. Biardeau interprets the episode of the *śāmi* tree in the same way[103]. The Pāṇḍavas hide their weapons there for the upcoming war-sacrifice, a component reinforced by the use of the wood of a *śāmi* tree in certain sacrificial processes.

3. She accepts the coherence -in the Vulgate edition- of Durgā's appearance here and at the beginning of the war, before the *Bhagavad Gītā* (*Mbh.* 6.23, Vulgate). She connects *bhakti*, the goddess, sacrificial cults and the *śāmi* tree [104]. The war goddess related to the combat against evils and devils has a convenient place here. Chronological problems lead her to suggest the presence in the original text of components in the same direction, later embodied by the more explicit presence of the goddess.

4. The story takes place in the Matsya Kingdom [105]. "Matsya" means "fish". There is a relationship between the story of Manu and the great flood and the fish that saves him; the fish is associated with Viṣṇu's *Matsyāvatāra* and similar components that connect it to chaos and cosmological components (including the *matsyanyāya:* "the big fish eats the little one"). She connects it to a disorder resounding with *pralaya* implications in a kingdom where the king is not the real king and the secret name of Yudhiṣṭhira, Kaṅka, the fish-eating heron is related to Yudhiṣṭhira's triumph here, with associations to his father Dharma and death. Yudhiṣṭhira ultimately restores order, foreshadowing the final order in the world after his triumph in the great battle. She associates also this with Virāṭa's name, coming from another cosmogonic principle *virāj.*

5. Her main interest is centred on Arjuna. Let us recall his role as ideal king, the one that has to exist for the *Kṛtayuga* to dawn, and his character as a kind of *avatāra*'s double (Biardeau 1973-4, 92). She understands that his role as teacher/master of dance and music of the princess has to be understood from the perspective that to be a master

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[102]See M. Biardeau (1976), pp. 153-4; 207-8; (1973-4), p. 93; (1978), p. 187, and n. 3; (1985), pp. 276-9; (1997), pp. 50-2; (2002), I, pp. 852-4.

[103]See above and, in particular, M. Biardeau (1981).

[104]M. Biardeau (1981), pp. 218; 237-8; 241; (1985), pp. 277-8.

[105]See M. Biardeau (1973-4), p. 90; (1976), pp. 154; 166; 208, n.1; (1978), pp.189; (1985), p. 277; (2002),I, pp. 778-79; 782.

in the art of music and dance implies being a master in the art of divine play, which transposed in royal terms includes "sans doute" the royal art of conducting men and things, the administration of punishment, which is the essence of royal power, and makes him a symbolical king and an *avatāra* during this year[106]. Thus, Arjuna, who had learnt this art in Indra's heaven, becomes the divine master while his student, the young princess, comes to symbolize, necessarily, the Earth. This relationship, therefore, expresses his status as the secret master of the land, the king and *avatāra* who is restoring the chaotic Matsya kingdom (Biardeau 1978, 190-1).

6. For her, Arjuna's role as eunuch is a necessary core of the story, "la pièce maîtresse du dispositive", a kind of necessary mathematical result (Biardeau 1978, 191-2), in so far he displays at its most the renunciating traits necessary in a king, related to the renounce to her and to the kingdom, to let the continuity of his kin and of the world through her, and his son.

7. Arjuna's battle against the cattle raiders is full of implications, related, first and obviously, to his condition as *the* king associated with the *avatāra* and an end of the era, the *pralaya* connotation[107], including destruction-creation and Śivaite-Viṣṇuite traits which point to the coming war.

8. Moreover, there are playful allusions to the *Bhagavad Gītā* via the relationship between Arjuna and Uttara and the ambiguous role of charioteer/master (Biardeau 1978, 200).

9. She associates Book 4's cattle components and other such traits with a *Rājasūya*[108].

10. As Arjuna is sent into battle by Uttarā, Biardeau asserts that since Uttarā symbolizes the Earth, Arjuna, as the king, must protect her[109]. The former Earth, Draupadī, had been undressed by the Kauravas, an Earth without protection, and now Arjuna strips the fallen Kauravas off and gives the robes to Uttarā, symbolically ending the crisis. At the same time, the term used in the text for her dolls, *pāñcālikā* (*Mbh.* 4.35.23a) refers to Draupadī, as coming also from Pāñcāla's kingdom. It is part of the process of transition from Draupadī as the Earth-sovereignty to Uttarā.

11. Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma are not so important. The former [110] is the official, we could say, nominal, king, and Kaṅka, the fish-eating heron, who eventually restores order to the chaotic-aquatic kingdom before doing the same with his own and the world. His mastery of dice, in a context where the *yugas* are represented by the dice's results, is full of resonances and hints at his victory after his previous defeat.

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[106]M. Biardeau (1978), pp. 189-90; (2002), I, p. 850: "la musique et la danse ici sont la figure du dharma"; 1995, 292; 312: "la maîtrisse de la musique et de la danse est le symbole de la maîtrisse du monde"; (1997), pp. 44; 48; in (1973-4), pp. 91-2 a more destructive connotation.

[107]M. Biardeau (1978), pp. 196-8; (1973-4), pp. 98-100; (1985), pp. 312-13.

[108]M. Biardeau (1978), pp. 198; (1985), pp. 313; (1997), p. 50.

[109]M. Biardeau (1978), pp. 198-200; (1985), pp. 313; (2002), I, p. 850.

[110]M. Biardeau (1978), pp. 106-10; (1985), pp. 289-90; 322; (1997), pp. 45-6; (1973-4), pp. 99-100.

12. Bhīma is less important, however Biardeau gives him some significance, for instance she considers him to be "the arm of the Goddess" in the General's killing (Biardeau 1974, 96).

The ampleness of Biardeau's interpretations is clear enough even in this brief summary. At the same time, it is also clear that by dealing with Book 4 she is not dealing with a casual interlude, but with a quasi-cosmic interlude. Certainly, if she is not right in moving to the other extreme of the pendulum, the risk of over-interpretation becomes obvious, in particular considering the wrong perspective on this period as a part of the *Kaliyuga* full of allusions to the immediate arrival of the *Kṛtayuga* with the war. In that vein, it can be difficult to discriminate between findings and those possible over-interpretations.

For example, allusions to the *Bhagavad Gītā* in the battle (Biardeau's Point 8), to Draupadī's undressing (Point 10) in the robes and dolls theme, or to Śivaite-Viṣṇuite traits in Arjuna's battle (Point 7) could be accepted without believing in the three criticized perspectives of Biardeau on *yugas*, *pralayas*, Arjuna's role as the king-by-the-*avatāra*, and characters such as Uttarā and Draupadī as whole embodiments of the Earth-kingdom he must protect. Other perspectives are perhaps too tainted by those components to remain useful. This could be the case of Yudhiṣṭhira's role and associations (Point 11), leaving aside obvious matters such as the commonplace connection between dice-*yugas*, or Bhīma's connection to the goddess (Point 12). The use of etymologies for the names "Matsya", a previous kingdom's name, and "Virāṭa"[111], with more obvious alternative interpretations (Point 4), is another good example, though I can imagine V. inventing the name Kaṅka for Yudhiṣṭhira as a pun before sending his character to a kingdom of fish.

However, the main issue in this section is how Biardeau's analysis might be affected by the whole series of borrowings attested to in this Book. The most obvious case is the question of the *dīkṣā* (Biardeau's Point 1). We already know that the succession of twelve years in the wild and one year hidden in a royal court already formed part of the material borrowed from the stories of Heracles, including the hero's anonymity. The episode of the *śāmi* tree and the weapons (Point 2) is also clear: when V. begins to write about this year of anonymity,

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[111]To derive "Pāṇḍavas" from *paṇḍa/paṇḍra*, "eunuch" (M. Biardeau 1976, p. 262; 2002, I, pp. 854-5) is an even more risky example of extreme speculation.

the adventure of his heroes in King Virāṭa's court, he has to imagine what they will do with their weapons, which are incompatible with their anonymity. He could have chosen a less conspicuous scene, but he follows his model where he finds weapons in the tree, the Cercopes, the theft, the chasing, the mother, etc. He uses the tree, theft and chasing for the previous story in Book 3. As such, he now inverts the material by switching a theft for preventing a theft by having the heroes hide their weapons in the tree. Finding of Icarus' corpse is transmuted into finding a corpse to reinforce the hiding, and V. even uses the presence of a goddess (Cercopes' mother) talking about the future, with the corresponding adaptations for the presence of the Goddess (Point 3). The borrowed narrative structure evidently prevails, and other components, if they are to be presumed, are secondary.

Arjuna's association with music and dance (Point 5) and his role as eunuch (Point 6) are directly taken from Heracles' transvestism. Finally, cattle components in both battles against the raiders, not simply Arjuna's (Point 9), are also taken from the Itoni's defeat by Heracles. The departure point is that V. did not invent these six themes but took them from his Greco-Roman sources. He did not create them to meet his needs, and so, for example, Arjuna was in no way made into a eunuch because V.'s musings on his role as renunciating king makes it necessary or, in terms of Biardeau (1978, 189), almost compulsory: "la nécessité de la transformation d'Arjuna en eunuque", that "pièce maîtresse du dispositive", but rather as an adaptation of a transvestite Heracles for reasons we have already analysed -the "profession-alization" of the heroes for a one year contract in a royal court, a borrowed Greco-Roman component. The question now changes to: when V. organised the whole outline of Book 4 with Greco-Roman materials, i.e., by selecting, adapting, re-organizing or giving new meanings to his construction, were those six components in his mind?

Once more, the most important thing is not the answer to this question, but the question itself, the necessary filter for her, and others' theories on the Book posed by the evidence of the borrowing. Things that are previously in the Greco-Roman sources are obviously not new inventions. Again, I am not interested here, and most probably much less the reader, in my answer to the question in these six cases, though certainly to problems related to finding empirical evidence to sustain them, and to the three flawed points of departure, we must add that perhaps the place where she casts them is hardly prepared for such a seed. Symbolic representations of the upcoming tragedy and of the *pralaya*-like situation

would have a difficult time growing in the soil of a tragicomic story in which V. thoroughly respects the tragicomic formula. A very different question, as stated before, is whether V. suggests, for example, Śivaite components in Arjuna's fight or connects the battle with Indra fighting the *asura*, which he certainly does. Again, metaphors and similes are a very different question to systematic recastings.

Alf Hiltebeitel is one of the most important scholars in the field and the most authoritative author of the unitarian view [112]. At the beginning of his career, he integrated into his research Dumézil's work, though maintaining a certain distance, until it practically disappeared as a real influence on his work [113]. Instead, his later discovery of Biardeau gave place to a decades-long, fruitful dialogue [114]. His perspective on Book 4 arises from that dialogue, though their different approaches are also clear. I have already referred to their divergences in relation to her ideas that the *Kaliyuga* began with Duryodhana's success and ended with his defeat in Kurukṣetra, with her overstatement of Arjuna as king, and with embodiments and projections versus metaphors, similes and the like.

Some of Hiltebeitel's more important contributions come from his focus on festivals, cults, oral epic traditions and theatrical representations in reference, specifically, to Draupadī [115]. Thus, he considers that components of the *Mbh.* can be illumined by looking at materials concerning the Hindu Goddess that often appear only later. The poet/s of the *Mbh.* could have found those materials in already existing oral traditions, which he analyses in his, and other authors', anthropological research.

Hiltebeitel accepts the idea of Book 4 as a highly artistic and coherent piece where the display of symbols and themes is particularly intense and brilliant (Hiltebeitel 2011c, 53): "The disguises which they adopt show the epic poets as true symbol-masters, concealing and revealing the "deepest" identities of their heroes and much of the purpose -primarily

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[112]See for his perspectives and evolution on the *Mbh.*, in particular, A. Hiltebeitel (1991) [1976]; (2001), pp. 1-31; 2011 a, b and c include his most important papers, the more theoretical ones in b; see also Doniger (1990); V. Adluri, J. Bagchee (2011a) and (2011b); F. Wulff Alonso (2016b).

[113]See A. Hiltebeitel (1991) [1976], pp. 356-360 for a critical turning point on the "transposition" of a "veritable pantheon" in human personages, with characters becoming copies of those mythical prototypes, and for his yet initial critical position to consider the *Mbh.* as just a transposition of the Indo-European eschatological myth in historicized form, without other components.

[114]See A. Hiltebeitel (2011d) for his own rendering; V. Adluri, J. Bagchee (2011a), pp. XV ff. for her importance in his "literary turn".

[115]See in particular A. Hiltebeitel (1988), (1991a), (1999b).

theological- of the roles they play in the epic narrative as a whole".

He also accepts Biardeau's interpretation of the thirteen year exile as a *dīkṣā,* a "consecra-tion" and thinks that the author/s play, in particular, with dual identifications of Arjuna and Draupadī (see, for example, Hiltebeitel 2011c, 3 ff.; 56 ff.; 67; 74 and *passim*). First, Ar-juna, besides being associated to Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa, is also associated to Indra-sovereignty, as seen in the "crowned" Arjuna (*kirīṭin*); he is the protector of the Earth who defeats the Kau-rava. A second identification, underestimated by Biardeau, is with Śiva. This is shown in his name as eunuch, Bṛhannaḍā from Bṛhad-nara, "great man," and equivalent to *Mahāpu-ruṣa* (Hiltebeitel 2011c, 62-3), connecting him additionally with the asexual *puruṣa*. It is also visible in his relation to dance-music and to the battle-dance and to cosmic dissolution, and in his condition of eunuch-transvestite. All this is additionally enriched by associations of eunuchs with birth and weddings, as seen, for instance, in his role in the wedding of Uttarā-Abhimanyu and the continuity-rebirth of the dynasty. That association to Śiva is also related to the complementarity of Viṣṇu in the process of construction/destruction and in his relationship to Kṛṣṇa (Hiltebeitel 2011b, 510-12).

All in all, Draupadī's treatment is far more important (see above and Hiltebeitel 2011c, 14-21; 27-29; 45-51…). Her dual association has a more obvious side in the case of Śrī, Royal Prosperity *(rājaśrī)*. Her disrobing symbolizes royal sovereignty usurped and defiled by Duryodhana, the Earth with no protection, though she is never defeated, as seen in the miracle of the inexhaustible robe. One of her associations with the robes taken from the fallen enemies by Arjuna, goes in this direction and points towards the future. The second one is to Mṛtyu and to the Indian Goddess, Kālī, Durgā, in her robes too, but in particular in connection with the dishevelled Draupadī-Sairandhrī, referring to her mistreatment in the palace of Hāstinapura, where it was additionally associated to impurity, menstrual-blood and defilement, actualized here in terms of offence/revenge in the story of Kīcaka and even in his death at the hands of Bhīma.

Connections to impurity, blood, outcaste connotations and others are part of the subtle play of the author/s and are related to the parallel components he finds in his, and others' anthro-pological work. In the same vein, the dishevelled Draupadī evokes the *prakṛti* of the *pralaya* and, so, the image of her keeping her hair dishevelled for thirteen years points to a critical situation that must be ended by her husbands for the sake of the earth (Hiltebeitel 2011c,

32).

Two other components, chosen among many others, may show Hiltebeitel's broad perspectives. Thus, he suggests that Arjuna and Draupadī scarcely meet during this year (2011c, 67) because Arjuna-king cannot appear with Draupadī, Royal Prosperity, while Duryodhana usurps the kingdom. The second is that he accepts the perspective of Heino Gehrts (1975) associating the robes removed from Draupadī and the ones given to Uttarā's and her maiden's "dolls", as representing the amnion and chorion, symbols of rebirth (Hiltebeitel 2011c, 46-7). In this sense, Arjuna's giving of the robes is positively associated with the whole reconstruction of the dynasty and the world. His association here of eunuch-music-song-dance-marriage-birth is particularly auspicious (see his synthesis in Hiltebeitel 1985, now in 2011c, 83 ff. *passim*). He thinks that the disguises of his brothers and Draupadī are associated in the Book to impurity because of their "caste identities and their roles as sacrificers" (Hiltebeitel 2011c, 77), obviously related to associations sacrifice-war-death, however, in Arjuna's case (Hiltebeitel 2011c, 78) is more associated to birth, though he, as all of them, is also related to Śiva's destruction for the benefit of the worlds (Hiltebeitel 2011c, 81).

Again, this is not the place to give my opinion on the validity of these ideas and on his way of interpreting the weaving of allusions and references he considers essential to understand the coherence of the work. In his case, the idea of the poets using metaphors and similes and giving through them theological keys is much freer of the rigid side of Biardeau's perspectives and in that way his ideas are much less affected by the Greco-Roman evidence.

As seen before, the revelation of the "deepest identities" of the main characters is not associated by Hiltebeitel to the mechanical projection of whole personalities -or of their fathers's-, neither of structural needs, but are subordinated to the narrative. Thus, as he does not depict Arjuna as necessarily a eunuch, it is also not necessary to recall that his condition comes from Heracles' transvestism while under Omphale. In the same way, his implications of the fact that Arjuna and Draupadī scarcely meet during this year could perhaps be rejected, for example, considering that Bhīma is the only exception in this regard, but there is nothing in the Heracles and Omphale story to contradict or qualify it. Whether the dishevelled Draupadī evokes the *prakṛti* of the *pralaya* is a question that the reader can accept or not and, again, without being questioned by the borrowing.

In any case, we can accept them, as many other components, as another corroboration of V.'s creativity, revealed both in the way he works with his Greco-Roman sources and in the way everything he touches radiates with his talent and creativity.

APPENDIX 2. A FINAL NOTE ON TWO OTHER GRECO-ROMAN SOURCES

This Book is focused on V.'s borrowings and adaptations of material primarily taken from the stories centered on Heracles and Omphale as well as few other sources. While I have put forward a few other unrelated sources from which V. borrows material, mainly from the stories of Daedalus and Icarus, I would like to suggest here two additional cases.

1. The Transvestite Achilles in Lycomedes' Royal Court on Scyros

The first case is related to the Trojan War and, even more importantly, constitutes one of the extremely rare examples of a hero's transvestism in Greek mythology and the only other one, apart from the tale of Heracles and Omphale, which is well-known. I touched upon this theme briefly in Chapter 2.

Young Achilles' mother, the Goddess Thetis, hides her son away in Lycomedes' court on Scyros to prevent him from being taken off to war in Troy. He lives anonymously in the seraglio disguised as a young maiden and forges a special bond with the Princess, Deidamia, with whom he has a child, Neoptolemus. Odysseus, who wishes to take Achiles off to war, contrives a ruse to flush out the hero: he sets up a display upon which women's trinkets and weapons are neatly arrayed. After false military alarm is sounded, Achilles rushes towards the weapons and is thus discovered (Hyginus, *Fabulae* 96; Apollodorus 3.13.8; see Wulff Alonso 2014c, 389-91). It is also a theme used, for example, by Ovid (*Ars Amatoria* 1.689-704; *Metamorphoses* 13.162-70), with Omphale's components, as an allusion to hands and wool.

I have suggested the possible use of this source for the military alarm in Virāṭa's palace

preceding Arjuna's battle. We have sufficient information concerning V.'s methods to understand why he may have used this story of Achilles for Arjuna here.

As a eunuch, Arjuna is not the most formidable candidate to help his brothers in the fight against the cattle raiders. As such, the story of Achilles in Scyros may have prompted V. to envision two battles, whereby the second attack, reserved for the transvestite Arjuna, allows him to perform the necessary heroic feats to reclaim his gender and status as a warrior. The military alarm after the army's exit from the city is a good way to justify the intervention of a transvestite hero, with the help, among other things, of a prototypical Greco-Roman component, a real stock character, the braggart, *miles gloriosus*, recast here in Prince Uttara. If Heracles fought against the Itoni alone, it should be easier.

Like Heracles, Achilles is a transvestite man living anonymously in a palace, but there are some subtle and important differences. While living anonymously in the seraglio, Achilles forms a special bond with the young, innocent princess, whereas Heracles lives in the palace under the power of strong female figure and his real condition is discovered after a military alarm. As such, this portrayal of Achilles may have informed V.'s choice to make Arjuna a transvestite eunuch who lives in the seraglio and forms a special relationship with the sweet, innocent princess, and only reveals his true self after a military alarm. Concordantly, Deidamia may have also served as inspiration for Uttarā's characterization as that sweet, innocent princess.

This is further reinforced by two additional connections. The most important one is that the catalyst for discovering Achilles -the arrangement of weapons spread out among other objects- is found in another scene. As explored in Argument 7, this constitutes yet another typical example of the second variation of V.'s method with the additional nuance of dividing up its core elements and dispersing them throughout his work. In Book 1, after Arjuna wins Draupadī's hand in a contest at the court of her father, King Drupada, the still anonymous brothers go to their wedding (*Mbh.* 1.186). Wanting to know who they really are, Drupada sets out different objects pertaining to different social castes, including military paraphernalia, which of course they gravitate towards; consequently, he discovers that they are actually warriors (Wulff Alonso 2008a, pp. 375-6). As such, in this scene V. recasts both the ruse and the arrangement of various objects found in the story of Odysseus discovering Achilles, while the components associated with the seraglio, military alarm and the

princess are recast in Book 4. It is no coincidence either that here in Book 1 the story of the contest for Draupadī's hand borrows extensively from the archery contest for Penelope's hand in the *Odyssey* (see Wulff Alonso 2014c, 319-37).

The fact that Arjuna and Achilles receive their musical training from a supernatural being is also interesting. Arjuna learns dancing and singing from the *gandharva* Citrasena during his stay in Indra's heaven (*Mbh.* 3.45.6-8), while Achilles learns music from the centaur Chiron, a very popular theme in texts and iconography (see Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.11-12, for example). This could have been an additional inspiration for the construction of Arjuna's persona in Book 4.

2. Meeting People: Aphrodite and Anchises, Sudeṣṇā and Draupadī

This case is situated at the beginning of Book 4, when V. has his old characters meet his new ones. We know that these scenes rely heavily on the Syleus theme and, in the case of Sudeṣṇā and Draupadī, on the Iole-Deianira theme too.

We also know that they feature a first meeting between two characters and a conversation, that the arriving character lies about/hides his/her dangerously superior condition, though his/her real condition is, in any case, made explicit. At the same time, the welcoming character, though at first incredulous of their story, finally believes and accepts the newcomer.

In the case of Draupadī and Sudeṣṇā's meeting, we can follow V.'s use of Deianira-Iole up to when Sudeṣṇā (Deianira) sees Draupadī (Iole) from her palace, including how V. works with an inversion of the attitude and adornments of the latter.

Given that Iole and Deianira never actually met, V. needs to explore new possibilities. We know he develops both the scene and characters by mainly exploring Sudeṣṇā's conflicting feelings of compassion for and mistrust/jealousy of Draupadī's beauty, and Draupadī's need of, and arguments for, being accepted.

When Sudeṣṇā meets Draupadī (*Mbh.* 4.8.6 ff.), she asks her who she is, and Draupadī answers. Sudeṣṇā does not believe her and, after thoroughly describing her beauty, asks (*Mbh.* 4.8.13 ff.) whether she is a *yakṣī*, *devī* (goddess), *gandharvī* or *āpsarā*; after mentioning the names of several goddesses, she asks her again which one of the goddesses she is. Draupadī answers that she is no *devī*, nor *gandharvī*, *āsurī* or *rākṣasī*, but a *sairandhrī*, a handmaiden, and goes on to tell Sudeṣṇā her (false) story. The queen replies by again talking about her

beauty, her concerns that her husband may cast her aside, the women's fascination with her, the trees bending, and how all the men will inevitably fall under the power of the god of love upon seeing her. Draupadī reassures Sudeṣṇā that there is no need to worry and is, at long last, reluctantly accepted.

The *5 Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* describes how Aphrodite desires to seduce Anchises after falling for a trick Zeus played on her (*5 Homeric Hymn* 45 ff.). In effect, Zeus wants to humiliate Aphrodite in revenge for the kind of bestiality implied in her game of making the gods fall in love with and lust after mortals. This text is better understood under the premise that the end of the Heroic Age constitutes the end of sexual relations between the gods and mortals.

The poet describes Aphrodite's desire, and how she bathes with heavenly oil, puts on rich clothing and jewels and arrives at the top of the mountain where Anchises is. The sexual atmosphere is reinforced by the image of ferocious animals following Aphrodite and her making them mate.

She (*5 Homeric Hymn* 80 ff.) poses as a human princess to avoid frightening Anchises, because a man who lies with a goddess loses his health, in sum, becomes impotent (*5 Homeric Hymn* 190). When he sees her, the poet describes thoroughly how he is struck by her beauty, height, dress and jewels, and immediately falls in love with her (*5 Homeric Hymn* 84-90). He asks her which of the goddesses she is, perhaps Artemis, or Leto, or Aphrodite, or Themis, or Athena. Or whether she is one of the Graces, or else one of the Nymphs that inhabit the woods, or the mountain where they are or the fountainhead of rivers or the grassy meadows. The author finishes Anchises' words by having him taking for granted that she is a supernatural being and offering her an altar and offerings, asking her for offspring and a long and happy life. She answers that she is no goddess, but a mortal woman and tells her (false) story. As in the case of the animals, the goddess put desire in his heart, and he is in love; he answers that, if it is so, no god nor mortal could restrain him, not even far-shooting Apollo, from going to bed with her.

Some common components are evident: a) a character arrives, a female (Aphrodite and Draupadī), b) she has a conversation with just one character (Anchises/Sudeṣṇā) and wants to be accepted (sexual relationship/to live in the palace for a year), c) there is a danger related to sexuality (impotency/sexual attraction of a husband). d) The arriving female

(Aphrodite/Draupadī) has previously adorned/disfigured herself, e) though in both cases she pretends to be less than she is (a woman/a handmaiden). f) When they meet, there is a thorough description of the impact her beauty has on the beholder (on Anchises, through the poet's words/on Sudeṣṇā, through her own words). g) The welcoming character talks to her and asks h) whether she is a goddess, i) whether she is one of a series of goddesses, j) the possibility of her belonging to another explicit semi-divine category, and k) the explicit or implicit acceptance of her supernatural condition ending the inquiry. l) It follows the arriving character's story (first time/repetition), a lie, m) and the somewhat reluctant acceptance on the part of the welcoming character. Note also more specific sexual connotations: n) Anchises says that he is going to bed with her regardless/Sudeṣṇā's remarks on men wanting to go to bed with her -this becomes more obvious later, after her offenders are slaughtered and people grow fearful of Draupadī's allure-. o) Animals following and mating/trees bending before her. p) The goddess of love, Aphrodite, conquering Anchises /the god of love subjecting men…

If this is so, we can better understand something quite astonishing: the fact that Sudeṣṇā's words stand as the longest and one of the more passionate descriptions of Draupadī's beauty in the whole *Mbh.* (see Van Buitenen 1978, 12-13). The erotic components are, however, a constitutive part of the story of Aphrodite and Anchises perfectly adjusted to its context.

We can also see how V. connects stories: the stories of Iole and Aphrodite are connected by the arrival of two females, dangerous in their own right (a slave posing as a lady, a goddess posing as a woman), while Heracles meeting Syleus and Aphrodite meeting Anchises are connected by a similar but not identical danger (two superiors posing as inferiors) as well as by the concurrent need to hide the truth/lie. When he exhausts the components found in the stories of Iole and Syleus, respectively, he can use the Aphrodite story for Draupadī and Sudeṣṇā's meeting.

Moreover, this may have helped V. construct the sexual tension evident in the story of Kīcaka which he builds with materials from the story of Faunus. Though he follows the story-arc of Ovid's *Fasti*, perhaps some components connect this scene with Anchises' infatuation. For example, V. tells that Kīcaka sees Draupadī going around as a goddess and is hit by the arrows of love (note far-shooting Apollo in the *Hymn*), and has Kīcaka ask his sister who that goddess is (*Mbh.* 4.13.4-7).

The Anchises and Aphrodite story is the second most popular story depicting a sexual encounter between a man and a goddess. The first is, of course, the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, the parents of Achilles. We have seen that Achilles' and Heracles' transvestisms are the two most popular ones in the Greco-Roman world. The use of Achilles' transvestism and of Anchises' story reinforce the main traits of V.s interests in this Book, centered on transvestism and sexuality. Their uniqueness and appeal explain why he uses them here.

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