The Embassy, the Ambush, and the Ogre

Greco-Roman Influence in Sanskrit Theater

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3. The Ambush

The Tale of the Tricked Trickster

For the purposes of this book, an ambush broadly refers to "… spying missions, raids on enemy camps, cattle rustling, and other types of epic warfare that happen at night" (Dué & Ebbott, 2010, p. 32). In the Homeric Epics, ambushes seem to be valuable in terms of the overall goal of perfecting heroism. For instance, at *Il.* 13.277-278, one reads, "for an ambush, where the excellence of men better manifests itself, and where the cowardly man is brought to light, as well as the brave one [ἐς λόχον, ἔνθα μάλιστ' ἀρετὴ διαείδεται ἀνδρῶν, / ἔνθ' ὅ τε δειλὸς ἀνὴρ ὅς τ' ἄλκιμος ἐξεφαάνθη]". Even the sack of Troy could be seen as a night ambush.

The ambush motif makes for a good transition between those of the embassy and the ogre, given the fact that both of those episodes include instances of ambush. If the entire Cyclops episode (*Od.* 9.105-566) follows the poetics of ambush, at least a section of the Phoenix episode does so (*Il.* 9.474-477). However, *Iliad* 10 is the best example of the ambush motif in extant Greek epic. For this reason, as well as for the fact that the ambush from *Il.* 10 is the one adapted in Ps.-Euripides' *Rhesus*, this is the book that I will examine. Its distinctive feature is the doubling of the ambush: with two spying missions followed by two ambushes, all of which takes place during the night, this is a wonderfully detailed use of the motif, and a great starting point for the analysis.

The epic version is as follows: the book opens at nighttime and at the Greek bivouac, where everyone but king Agamemnon seems to be sleeping. Upon seeing the Trojan fires burning, he gets ready

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by dressing himself in the skin of a lion. At that point, he is visited by his brother Menelaus, who comes wearing a leopard's skin and asking if Agamemnon is planning on a spying mission. Afraid of Hector's deeds during the previous day, Agamemnon intends to hold a night council: he sends Menelaus to wake up everyone, while he himself goes looking for old Nestor. On their way, Agamemnon and Nestor wake up Odysseus and Diomedes, who will be the key figures of the Greek ambush.

For the council, the scene moves away from the huts, through the trench, and into the open field. Nestor proposes a night attack, during which they could gather intelligence about the Trojans' plans. Whoever volunteers will obtain fame and gifts. Diomedes steps up, but he also asks for a companion. The sneaky Odysseus seems like the perfect choice. By now, two out of the three watches of the night have passed, and dawn draws near. As with the king and his brother, their animal attire is highlighted: Diomedes' helmet is made from a bull's hide; Odysseus', from the teeth of a boar. With Athena's blessing, they march through the plain, still filled with the corpses from the daytime slaughter.

With a little repetition with variation, the author then turns to the Trojan bivouac. Like Agamemnon, Hector is awake and calls for a night council; like Nestor, he sets forth the idea of a night attack, which would reveal the Greeks' intentions. As gifts, he offers a chariot and two horses. Like Diomedes, Dolon volunteers, looking forward to obtaining Achilles' horses. He puts on a wolf's hide, as well as a helmet made from the skin of a ferret. Astutely, Odysseus lets him pass them, so that when they come after him from behind, he confuses foes with friends. Diomedes chases him, and Odysseus not only asks if Dolon is spying, but also manages to gather some intelligence of his own: the Trojans keep watch but their allies do not, the Thracians are newcomers and their king Rhesus has the best horses. Afterwards, Diomedes cuts off Rhesus' head.

Having outsmarted Dolon, Diomedes and Odysseus proceed to seek out Rhesus. Diomedes' casualties add up to twelve plus one, for Rhesus is killed after twelve of his companions. Meanwhile, Odysseus removes the bodies, and he leads Rhesus' horses back to the Greek camp, not without stopping midway to gather Dolon's

spoils. In favor of the Greeks, Athena oversees the ambush and intervenes when necessary; as for the Trojans, Apollo awakes the Thracian Hippocoon, who pointlessly calls for Rhesus. Diomedes and Odysseus come back as heroes, and the latter tells Nestor the deeds performed by the former: Diomedes is responsible for twelve-plus-one victims, this time, combining Rhesus' comrades and the spy Dolon. The book ends with the triumphant raiders bathing and eating.

Regarding Ps.-Euripides' *Rhesus*, its numerous sources include the Homeric Epics, the Epic Cycle, and even Aristophanes. Focusing on the tragedians, the play evinces the influence of Aeschylus and Sophocles, as well as a clear Euripides-*imitatio*. This notwithstanding, the main source for the adaptation is the ambush motif coming from *Il.* 10. The play is divided into four episodes, respectively dealing with the mission by the spy Dolon, the arrival of the hero Rhesus, his boastfulness, and his killing. Since the parodos,[101] the Chorus of Trojans makes it clear that the action starts by the tent of Hector, during the fourth watch of the night.

In the first episode, king Hector fears a night escape of the Greek army, which would leave him bloodthirsty. When he is about to wake everyone up, the warrior Aeneas offers him some advice: a spying mission might be better. Dolon volunteers and demands, as a reward, the horses of Achilles. Having dressed himself with a wolf hide, the boastful Dolon believes that he will kill the warriors Odysseus and Diomedes. After a first stasimon,[102] in which the Trojans fail to keep the champagne on ice and prematurely celebrate the mission of Dolon, the second episode turns the focus towards Rhesus. A messenger informs Hector about the arrival of Rhesus, which the shepherds mistake for a cattle raid. Uninterested at first, Hector progressively caves in. He goes from wanting nothing to do with Rhesus to accepting him, first as a guest and then as an ally.

After a second stasimon, during which the Trojans praise Rhesus in quasi-hubristic terms, the third episode begins with an

101 A parodos is the first choral part of a Greek play and it signals the entrance of the Chorus.

102 A stasimon is any choral part of a Greek play other than the first one and the last one, and it serves to separate the episodes.

explanation for the tardy arrival. Before coming to fight the Greeks at Troy, Rhesus had to fight the Scythians at Thrace. Boastful like Dolon, Rhesus believes that he can kill the Greeks within a single day. He asks to be stationed facing the tents of the hero Achilles, and Hector brings him up to speed about the well-known quarrel. Hector also warns him about Diomedes and Odysseus, shows him a place for him to spend the night, and shares with him the watchword, just in case.

Following a third stasimon that stresses both the tardiness of Dolon and the proximity of dawn, the fourth and last episode opens with Odysseus and Diomedes. Having already killed Dolon and learned the watchword from him, they are trying, without any success, to find Hector and kill him. They are not sure about their next step, and at this point the goddess Athena enters the stage to intervene in their favor. She points them towards Rhesus and orders them to kill him instead. Moreover, Athena diverts prince Paris, by posing as the goddess Aphrodite. Having already killed Rhesus, Odysseus and Diomedes are now struggling to get back to the ships. What follows is an epiparodos,[103] during which the Trojans fail to capture the Greeks, mostly because of the cunning of Odysseus.

Lastly, the exodos[104] includes some moving scenes: the dream of the charioteer, with two wolves mounted on horses; the accusation of Hector, who has left a lot to be desired as a general; and the *dea ex machina* of the Muse. The Muse curses Diomedes, Odysseus and even the infamous Helen. She laments the death of her son Rhesus, and she blames Athena for her meddling. All this helps Hector to confirm his suspicions of Greek wrongdoing. But there is more. The Muse also prophesizes the hero cult of Rhesus and the death of Achilles, and Hector never ceases to believe that he can turn his luck around. The play ends when daylight is just starting to break.

103 An epiparodos is a sort of second parodos or choral part of a Greek play.

104 An exodos is the last choral part of a Greek play, and it signals the departure of the Chorus.

In the dramatic version, the author profits, among others, from these nine procedures: [GA1][105] he merges two camps into one, [GA2] he merges two dialogues into one, [GA3] he adds a tricky bargaining, [GA4] he emphasizes the braggart, [GA5] he emphasizes the adaptation's sources, [GA6] he adds the anagnorisis, [GA7] he changes the perspective of the attack, [GA8] he maintains the nighttime, and [GA9] he ignores the on-stage death.

[GA1] In terms of spatial location, the narrative source begins at the Greek camp (*Il.* 10.1), transitions into the Trojan camp halfway through the book (*Il.* 10.299), and then returns to its starting point near the end (*Il.* 10.532). This twofold scenery is merged into one in the dramatic adaptation, where the two camps, together with their comings and goings, become one.[106] Agamemnon's and Hector's huts become just those pertaining to the Trojan. In this way, instead of contrasting Greeks and Trojans, the playwright

105 GA stands for "Greek Ambush". Hence, numbers GA1-GA9 refer to the adaptation of *Il.* 10 into *Rhesus*. Once again, these are just the adaptation techniques that will allow me to argue for parallelisms with the Greco-Roman world. Other techniques at play include maintaining the timing of Hector's speech, merging two of Nestor's opinions into one of Hector's, adding Hector's blaming of Fortune, changing the meaning of Hector's lion metaphor, merging Menealus' and Polydamas' characters into Aeneas' character, changing Dolon's character from ignoble to noble, emphasizing the wolf hide, changing Rhesus' character from noble to hero, emphasizing Odysseus' role, adding the watchword, changing the intended victim from Rhesus to Hector, changing the leaving of Dolon's spoils into a carrying of Dolon's spoils, emphasizing Athena's role, subtracting Dolon's treason, adding Athena's deception of Paris, changing Dolon's actual capture into Odysseus' and Diomedes' near capture, changing Rhesus' bad dream into the Charioteer's nightmare, changing the lion/Diomedes into the wolves/Achaeans, maintaining Diomedes' taking of Rhesus' chariot, ignoring Odysseus' and Diomedes' heroism, and changing Thetis' lament into the Muse's lament.

106 On merging two camps into one, see Liapis (2012): "In many ways, Hector is the play's central character, and his sleeping-place the visual centre of the action" (p. xlvii); Fries (2014): "Likewise, the position Hector assigns to Rhesus and his men in 518-20 (cf. 613-15) matches that of *Il.* 10.434, a telling detail after different precedents (including the τειχοσκοπία in *Iliad* 3) had to be invoked for the encounter between Hector and the Thracian king (388-526, 388-453, 467-526nn.)" (p. 9); and Fantuzzi (2020): "*Rhesus*, a play that focuses on the problem of power in the military sphere, begins appropriately enough at the bivouac of the leader of the Trojan army, Hector, and this remains the setting until the end" (p. 1).

contrasts two Trojan factions, headed by Hector and Rhesus. The topic of sleeping serves to weave together the two locations.

> ἄλλοι μὲν παρὰ νηυσὶν ἀριστῆες Παναχαιῶν
> **εὗδον παννύχιοι, μαλακῷ̃ δεδμημένοι ὕπνῳ·**
>
> Next to their ships, the other chiefs of the Achaeans **were sleeping through the night, overcome by soft sleep**.
>
> (*Il.* 10.1-2)

> Οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδὲ Τρῶας ἀγήνορας εἴασεν Ἕκτωρ
> εὕδειν, ἀλλ' ἄμυδις κικλήσκετο πάντας ἀρίστους,
>
> And Hector also **did not allow the heroic Trojans to sleep**; instead, he called together all their chiefs.
>
> (*Il.* 10.299-300)

> Βῆθι **πρὸς εὐνὰς τὰς Ἑκτορέους**·
> τίς ὑπασπιστῶν **ἄγρυπνος** βασιλέως
> ἢ τευχοφόρων;
>
> Go **to Hector's beds**! Who is **wakeful** among the king's squires or armor bearers?
>
> (*Rhes.* 1-3)

[GA2] Ps.-Euripides changes Agamemnon's and Menelaus' dialogue into Hector's and Aeneas' dialogue.[107] Building on the awakening scene, which served as an introductory announcement to the adaptation, the conclusions reached in these dialogues mirror each other, as an instance of repetition with variation: where Agamemnon orders that Menelaus raise his voice and wake up the Greeks, Hector instructs Aeneas to lower his and to allow the Trojans to continue sleeping. At the level of the characters, Agamemnon's farsightedness seems to be replaced by a sheer lack of it on Hector's part. However, when focusing on the author's intentions, the

107 On merging two dialogues into one, see Dué & Ebbott (2010): "The dialogue between Hektor and Aeneas about how to respond (*Rhesos* 87-148) is similar in structure, although not in content, to that between Agamemnon and Menealos (*Iliad* 10.36-72). We see that, after some disagreement, their conclusion is to let the allies continue to sleep, while Agamemnon and Menelaos, cooperative throughout, resolve to wake the Achaean leaders" (p. 123).

Trojans need to be asleep for the ambush to happen. With a clear precedent in the source text, and with a deliberate reversal in the new version, this dialogue serves as a clear-cut example of what an adaptation is, both as a product and as a process of creation.

> **φθέγγεο** δ’ ᾗ κεν ἴῃσθα, καὶ **ἐγρήγορθαι** ἄνωχθι,
>
> **Speak up** wherever you may go, and command them **to be awake**…
>
> (*Il.* 10.67)

> στείχων δὲ **κοίμα** συμμάχους· τάχ’ ἂν στρατὸς
> κινοῖτ’ **ἀκούσας** νυκτέρους ἐκκλησίας.
>
> Going there, **calm** our allies: perhaps the army might be stirred up, **having heard** about our nightly assemblies.
>
> (*Rhes.* 138-139)

[GA3] Dolon’s bargaining is an addition. And the bargaining chips reveal the influence of Agamemnon’s and Achilles’ negotiations, as per the enumeration at *Il.* 9.122-156, on Hector’s and Dolon’s negotiations.[108] In the epic, Hector voluntarily offers a pair of horses together with a chariot; then, Dolon has him swear that the horses will be those of Achilles. In the drama, Hector proposes the spying mission without mentioning any reward for such effort, and Dolon calls him on it.

> ἀλλ’ ἄγε μοι τὸ σκῆπτρον ἀνάσχεο, καί μοι ὄμοσσον
> ᾗ μὲν **τοὺς ἵππους τε καὶ ἅρματα ποικίλα χαλκῷ**
> δωσέμεν, **οἳ φορέουσιν ἀμύμονα Πηλεΐωνα**,
>
> But come on, raise your scepter before me and swear to me that you will give me **the horses and the chariot ornamented with bronze, which carry the noble son of Peleus.**
>
> (*Il.* 10.321-323)

108 On the addition of a tricky bargaining, see Fries (2014): “The ‘guessing-game’ by which Dolon elicits the promise of Achilles’ horses as a reward for his expedition is informed by the proxy negotiations between Agamemnon and Achilles in *Iliad* 9, and the animals themselves are described after *Il.* 16.149-51 + 23.276-8 (cf. 149-94, 185-8nn.)” (p. 9); and Fantuzzi (2020): “The debate between Dolon and Hector is a major addition to the plot of *Il.* 10” (p. 64).

> οὐκοῦν πονεῖν μὲν χρή, **πονοῦντα δ' ἄξιον**
> **μισθὸν φέρεσθαι**. παντὶ γὰρ προσκείμενον
> κέρδος πρὸς ἔργῳ τὴν χάριν τίκτει διπλῆν.
>
> Well, it is necessary to work for it, **and therefore, to give the worker a fair wage**. Remuneration being attached to a job brings forth twice the pleasure.
>
> (*Rhes*. 161-163)

[GA4] Rhesus goes from silent character in the Homeric epic to title character in the play attributed to Euripides.[109] Rhesus' characterization is correlated to Hector's. In the play, when warned about Rhesus' unexpected arrival, Hector is the one who determines his standing: for Hector, Rhesus is, first, an opportunist who comes "for the feast [ἐς δαῖτ']" (*Rhes*. 325) without having contributed for securing "the prey [λείαν]" (*Rhes*. 326); Rhesus is, then, "a guest at the table [χένος δὲ πρὸς τράπεζαν]" (*Rhes*. 337) but not "an ally [σύμμαχος]" (*Rhes*. 336); and Rhesus is, eventually, considered "an ally [σύμμαχος]" (*Rhes*. 341). In turn, given that Priam does not figure among the characters of the play, Rhesus addresses Hector as a king: "O king of this land [τύραννε τῆσδε γῆς]" (*Rhes*. 388).

The emphasis on Rhesus' character continues with him being given an origin story: "But when I was about to undertake my long

109 On the emphasis on the braggart, see Dué & Ebbott (2010): "In the *Iliad* we do not have any opportunity to see what Rhesos is like as a character – he is asleep and then dead the only time he appears. In the *Rhesos*, his character is presented as overconfident in his abilities to win the war in a single day of fighting, but his tragic mistake is related to ambush in particular" (p. 126); Fries (2014): "The epic Thracian [sc. Rhesus] is a nonentity, a sleeping source of booty for Odysseus and Diomedes, but the memorable description of his god-like appearance and snow-white horses (*Il.* 10.435-41) has been incorporated into the Shepherd's report of his approach (301-8) and is further elaborated in the chorus' 'cletic hymn' and entry announcement (342-79, 380-7nn.)" (p. 9); and Fantuzzi (2020): "In the play Rhesus does not have time to fight, and dies 'ingloriously' (758-61), as in the *Il*., but at least he speaks extensively, in a long debate with Hector (388-517). This debate has two structural aims. First of all, together with Athena's claim that Rhesus could annihilate the Greeks on the battlefield in a single day (598-606), it constructs what we might call the virtual and boastful heroism of Rhesus. This in part replaces his non-existent martial glory with extreme ambition… The second aim of the debate between Hector and Rhesus is to consider in depth the risks and benefits of military alliances" (pp. 15-16).

journey to Ilium, my neighboring land, the people of Scythia, went to war with me [ἀλλ' ἀγχιτέρμων ψαῖα μοι, Σκύθης λεώς, / μέλλοντι νόστον τὸν πρὸς Ἴλιον περᾶν / ξυνῆψε πόλεμον]" (*Rhes*. 426-428). Nevertheless, probably the greatest novelty is the assertion that he could get rid of the Greeks within a single day. Coming from him, this only contributes to turning the emphasis into a sort of caricature, much along the lines of what the Roman theater (Plautus, *Mil*.) calls a *miles gloriosus* (braggart warrior).[110] Hector, Dolon, and Rhesus all have moments of boastfulness. As seen in the next three passages, respectively, Hector asserts that he could have destroyed the Greek army, Dolon proclaims that he will behead Odysseus, and Rhesus claims that he will end the war in a single day. Ironically enough, Rhesus does not make it past the night, Dolon himself is beheaded by Odysseus' coconspirator, and Hector makes it to the end of the play still believing that he can win.

> ὦ δαῖμον, ὅστις μ' εὐτυχοῦντ' ἐνόσφισας
> θοίνης λέοντα, **πρὶν τὸν Ἀργείων στρατὸν**
> **σύρδην ἅπαντα τῷδ' ἀναλῶσαι δορί.**
>
> O Fortune, in whichever form turned me, the lucky lion, away from my feast, **before I could kill the entire army of the Argives, as if dragged along, with this spear!**
>
> (*Rhes*. 56-58)

> σωθήσομαί τοι **καὶ κτανὼν Ὀδυσσέως**
> **οἴσω κάρα σοι…**
>
> I will return safely, **and having killed Odysseus, I will bring you his head…**
>
> (*Rhes*. 219-220)

> σὺ μὲν γὰρ ἤδη δέκατον αἰχμάζεις ἔτος
> κοὐδὲν περαίνεις, ἡμέραν δ' ἐξ ἡμέρας
> ῥίπτεις κυβεύων τὸν πρὸς Ἀργείους Ἄρη·
> **ἐμοὶ δὲ φῶς ἓν ἡλίου καταρκέσει**
> **πέρσαντι πύργους ναυστάθμοις ἐπεσπεσεῖν**
> **κτεῖναί τ' Ἀχαιούς**…

110 On Rhesus as a *miles gloriosus*, see Fantuzzi (2020): "Rhesus is from time to time almost a *miles gloriosus*, but he seems to have the potential to be a good fighter" (p. 46). Cf. Liapis' (2012, p. xlv ff.) critique.

> Indeed, you are now throwing your spear for the tenth year, and you are accomplishing nothing, and day after day, while playing at dice, you are casting Ares against the Argives. **But for me, a single daylight of the sun will suffice, when ravaging the towers, to burst into the roadstead and kill the Achaeans.**
>
> (*Rhes*. 444-449)

Rhesus behaves like a braggart warrior even more than Hector and Dolon. Two more examples serve to support this claim. In the first one, he wishes to take his own army to Greece, in an overt reversal of the known story. Then, so he asserts, he would singlehandedly destroy all Greece. In the second example, he once again focuses on Odysseus, whom he intends to impale with an aggressiveness like that he exhibited while threatening his beheading.

> ξὺν σοὶ στρατεύειν γῆν ἐπ' Ἀργείων θέλω
> καὶ **πᾶσαν** ἐλθὼν **Ἑλλάδ' ἐκπέρσαι δορί**,
> ὡς ἂν μάθωσιν ἐν μέρει πάσχειν κακῶς.
>
> …together with you, I wish to advance with my army towards the land of the Achaeans, and having arrived, **to ravage all Greece with my spear**, so that they would learn, in turn, to suffer badly.
>
> (*Rhes*. 471-473)

> …ζῶντα συλλαβὼν ἐγὼ
> **πυλῶν ἐπ' ἐξόδοισιν ἀμπείρας ῥάχιν**
> στήσω πετεινοῖς γυψὶ θοινατήριον.
>
> …having taken him alive and **having impaled him through his spine by the side of the doors**, I will set him up as food for the winged vultures.
>
> (*Rhes*. 513-515)

[GA5] If the epic source mentions in passing a clamor and an uproar among the Trojans, the dramatic adaptation further elaborates such commotion.[111] The epic Trojans are too sluggish to capture

111 On the emphasis on the adaptation's sources, see Fries (2014): "The epiparodos (675-91 + 692-727) dramatises a single sentence in the epic source. The commotion caused by the searching chorus parallels that of

Diomedes and Odysseus; the dramatic Trojans, grouped together as the Chorus, are too naive to hold on to them. Furthermore, the fact that this re-created commotion is certainly an adaptation is signaled by a pun. When an unaware Trojan asks, "What is your troop? [τίς ὁ λόχος;]", any discerning audience member hears, "What sort of ambush is this? [τίς ὁ λόχος;]". The word used here for "troop [λόχος]" is the same one that is employed through the drama for the main motif: the "ambush [λόχος]".

> Τρώων δὲ **κλαγγή τε καὶ ἄσπετος ὦρτο κυδοιμὸς**
> θυνόντων ἄμυδις· θηεῦντο δὲ μέρμερα ἔργα,
> ὅσσ' ἄνδρες ῥέξαντες ἔβαν κοίλας ἐπὶ νῆας.
>
> **A clamor and an unspeakable uproar rose** among the Trojans, who were rushing all together: they gazed upon the mournful deeds that the warriors had done before they left for the hollow ships.
>
> (*Il.* 10.523-525)

675	ἔα ἔα· βάλε βάλε βάλε· θένε θένε <θένε>. τίς ἀνήρ;
677	λεῦσσε· τοῦτον αὐδῶ.
680	δεῦρο δεῦρο πᾶς.
681	τούσδ' ἔχω, τούσδ' ἔμαρψα
678-9	κλῶπας οἴτινες κατ' ὄρφνην τόνδε κινοῦσι στρατόν.
682	**τίς ὁ λόχος;** πόθεν ἔβας; ποδαπὸς εἶ;
675	Hey, hey! Throw it, throw it, throw it! Kill him, kill him, <kill him>! Who is that man?
677	Look: I am speaking about that one!

---

the Trojans when, alerted by Hippocoon, they discover the massacre in the Thracian camp (*Il.* 10.523-4)" (p. 10).

680	Here, here, everyone!
681	I have them, I caught them,
678-9	the thieves who are disturbing the army during the night.
682	**What is your troop?** Where did you come from? From what country are you?
	(*Rhes*. 675-682)

[GA6] Another procedure followed by the author of the *Rhesus* is the addition of the anagnorisis. According to Aristotle,[112] "Anagnorisis, as its name signals, is a change from ignorance to knowledge, either towards friendship or towards enmity, of what defines prosperity and adversity [ἀναγνώρισις δέ, ὥσπερ καὶ τοὔνομα σημαίνει, ἐξ ἀγνοίας εἰς γνῶσιν μεταβολή, ἢ εἰς φιλίαν ἢ εἰς ἔχθραν, τῶν πρὸς εὐτυχίαν ἢ δυστυχίαν ὡρισμένων]" (*Poet*. 1452a28-31). Also, anagnorises can result from various procedures: "the one by signs [ἡ διὰ τῶν σημείων]", "the ones effected by the poet [αἱ πεποιημέναι ὑπὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ]", "the one by memory [ἡ διὰ μνήμης]", "the one from reasoning [ἡ ἐκ συλλογισμοῦ]", and "the one from events themselves [ἡ ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων]".

In *Il*. 10, Hector does not even acknowledge Rhesus' death, but in *Rhes*., following the Muse's appearance, Hector confirms what he has suspected all along: Odysseus is responsible. Before the *dea ex machina*, the Charioteer blames Hector for Rhesus' death, and Hector, in turn, accuses Odysseus of the killing of both Rhesus and Dolon. After the anagnorisis, the true enmity is revealed, not between Trojan factions, but between the Trojans and the Greeks. The next two passages indicate, respectively, Hector's first words in the narrative after Rhesus' killing, and Hector's first words in the play after the anagnorisis.

112 I follow the Greek text by Halliwell (Aristotle; Longinus; Demetrius, 1995). The translations are my own.

> Τρῶες καὶ Λύκιοι καὶ Δάρδανοι ἀγχιμαχηταί,
> ἀνέρες ἔστε, φίλοι, **μνήσασθε** δὲ θούριδος ἀλκῆς.
> οἴχετ' ἀνὴρ ὤριστος, ἐμοὶ δὲ μέγ' εὖχος ἔδωκε
> Ζεὺς Κρονίδης· ἀλλ' ἰθὺς ἐλαύνετε μώνυχας ἵππους
> ἰφθίμων Δαναῶν, ἵν' ὑπέρτερον εὖχος ἄρησθε.
>
> O Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians, all fighting hand by hand! O friends! Be men and **remember** your impetuous courage. Their best warrior is gone and Zeus, the son of Cronos, granted me great glory. Ride your single-hoofed horses straight towards the powerful Danaans, so that you may win greater glory.
>
> (*Il.* 11.286-290)

> **ᾔδη τάδ'**· οὐδὲν μάντεων ἔδει φράσαι
> Ὀδυσσέως τέχναισι τόνδ' ὀλωλότα.
>
> **I knew it**: there was no need for a seer to tell us that this one was killed by the tricks of Odysseus.
>
> (*Rhes.* 952-953)

Even when aware of the deceit, Hector refuses to admit defeat. His final words in the play are tragic, for he is willing to go down defending a lost cause.

> …ὡς ὑπερβαλὼν στρατὸν
> τείχη τ' Ἀχαιῶν ναυσὶν αἶθον ἐμβαλεῖν
> **πέποιθα** Τρωσί θ' ἡμέραν ἐλευθέραν
> ἀκτῖνα τὴν στείχουσαν ἡλίου φέρειν.
>
> Thus, having traversed the army and the walls of the Achaeans to set fire to their ships, I **believe** that the upcoming brightness of the sun will bring a day of freedom for the Trojans.
>
> (*Rhes.* 989-992)

[GA7] The broader authorial decision is that of changing the perspective from the Greeks to the Trojans.[113] The beginning of

113 On the change of perspective of the attack, see Dué & Ebbott (2010): "The *Rhesos* presents the story of this night raid and ambush from the Trojan point of view, and it seems to set itself up as a parallel or alternative to the *Iliad* 10 account in its opening details" (p. 123); Fries (2014): "For lack of an

the *Rhesus* makes this quite clear by contrasting several scenes. For instance, Nestor's question, "**who is this**, coming alone by the ships, through the army, during the dark night, when the other mortals sleep? [**τίς δ' οὗτος** κατὰ νῆας ἀνὰ στρατὸν ἔρχεαι οἷος / νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίην, ὅτε θ' εὕδουσι βροτοὶ ἄλλοι;]" (*Il.* 10.82-83), is transformed into that of Hector: "**who are those**, approaching our bedsteads during the night? [**τίνες** ἐκ νυκτῶν τὰς ἡμετέρας / κοίτας πλάθουσ';]" (*Rhes.* 13-14). The patronymic in "calling each man **by their father's name** and their descent [**πατρόθεν** ἐκ γενεῆς ὀνομάζων ἄνδρα ἕκαστον]" (*Il.* 10.68-69) is reworked into a patronymic and a pretend matronymic: "who will go to **Panthus' son** or to **that of Europa**, leader of the Lycian men? [τίς εἶσ' ἐπὶ **Πανθοΐδαν**, / ἢ **τὸν Εὐρώπας**, Λυκίων ἀγὸν ἀνδρῶν;]" (*Rhes.* 28-29). In addition, the Trojan "many fires [πυρὰ πολλά]" (*Il.* 10.12) become Greek "fires [πύρ']" (*Rhes.* 41); and the Trojan "sound of flutes and pipes, and clamor of men [αὐλῶν συρίγγων τ' ἐνοπῆν ὅμαδόν τ' ἀνθρώπων]" (*Il.* 10.13) turns into a Greek "tumult [θορύβῳ]" (*Rhes.* 45).

The idea of retelling a known story from the point of view of the losing party is a common one in Greek theater (Aeschylus' *Persians*; Euripides' *Andromache*, *Hecuba*, *Helen*, and *Trojan*

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adequate precedent among the Trojans in 'Homer', the sequence of 1-148 has been devised as a mirror-image of *Il.* 10.1-179, which describes the anxious commotion in the Greek naval camp" (p. 8); and Fantuzzi (2020): "From the very beginning of *Il.* 10, Greeks and Trojans behave and think in similar ways and their actions mirror each other. The same duplication can be observed in *Rhesus*. The leaders of both camps are awake and call a council; in each camp, a leader has the idea of a spy mission and asks for a volunteer; in both cases, the volunteers arm themselves in an unusual way, wearing animal pelts or unusual headgear… and the spies are promised the enemy's best horses (in the case of the Trojans) or in fact receive them (in the case of the Greeks)" (p. 58). On the borrowings from *Il.* 10, see also Liapis' (2012) list: *Rhes.* 49-51, *Rhes.*72-73, *Rhes.* 178, *Rhes.* 193-194, *Rhes.* 458-460a, *Rhes.* 477-478, *Rhes.* 480, *Rhes.* 494-495, *Rhes.* 523-525a, *Rhes.* 609b-610, *Rhes.* 611-612, *Rhes.* 627-299, *Rhes.* 702, *Rhes.* 752-753, *Rhes.* 784-786, *Rhes.* 792, and *Rhes.* 829-831 (p. lx); and Fries' (2014) cross-references: *Rhes.* 1-148 ~ *Il.* 10.1-179, *Rhes.* 149-223 ~ *Il.* 10.299-337, *Rhes.* 264-387 ~ *Il.* 10.436-441, *Rhes.* 388-526 ~ *Il.* 10.434, *Rhes.* 527-564 ~ *Il.* 10.251-253, 428-431, 561-563, *Rhes.* 565-94 ~ *Il.* 10.339-468, *Rhes.* 595-641 ~ *Il.* 10.433-441, 463-464, 474-475, 479-481, *Rhes.* 642-674 ~ *Il.* 10.509-511, *Rhes.* 675-727 ~ *Il.* 10.523-524, *Rhes.* 728-881 ~ *Il.* 10.515-521, and *Rhes.* 756-803 ~ *Il.* 10.471-497 (p. 10, n. 4).

Women). Moreover, the procedure of introducing such retelling by a specific scene, like the awakening, works in tandem with the announced nature of most adaptations.

[GA8] As for the occurrence in time, night remains the trademark of the ambush motif.[114] However, the precise moment in time is phrased differently: in Homer, two out of the three watches of the night have passed; in Ps.-Euripides, four out of five. The contingents in charge of the watches in *Rhesus* are, successively, the Paeonians, the Cilicians, the Mysians, the Trojans, and the Lycians. For the adaptation, the number five signals the deadline.

> ἄστρα δὲ δὴ προβέβηκε, **παροίχωκεν δὲ πλέων νὺξ**
> **τῶν δύο μοιράων, τριτάτη** δ' ἔτι **μοῖρα λέλειπται.**
>
> The stars are far gone, and **two full watches of the night having passed**, now **only a third watch is left.**
>
> (*Il.* 10.252-253)

> δέξαιτο νέων κληδόνα μύθων,
> οἳ **τετράμοιρον νυκτὸς φυλακὴν**
> πάσης στρατιᾶς προκάθηνται·
>
> Let him hear the news of the recent reports of those who, **during the fourth watch of the night**, are guarding the entire army.
>
> (*Rhes.* 4-6)

> – τίς ἐκηρύχθη πρώτην φυλακήν;
> – Μυγδόνος υἱόν φασι Κόροιβον.
> – τίς γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῷ; – Κίλικας Παίων
> στρατὸς ἤγειρεν, Μυσοὶ δ' ἡμᾶς.
> – οὔκουν Λυκίους **πέμπτην φυλακὴν**
> βάντας ἐγείρειν
> καιρὸς κλήρου κατὰ μοῖραν;
>
> – Who was announced for the first watch?
> – They say that Coroebus, the son of Mygdon.
> – Who, then, after him?
> – The Paeonian army woke the Cilicians; and the Mysians, us.

114 On maintaining the nighttime, see Fantuzzi (2020): "No other tragedy is set entirely at night… although some fragmentary ones were probably set at night…" (p. 55, n. 183).

> – Then is it not time, as per the drawing of the lots, to wake the Lycians, having gone to them, **for the fifth watch**?
>
> (*Rhes*. 538-545)

[GA9] Dolon's death is gruesomely described in the epic, but it is only alluded to in the drama.[115] According to Aristotle,[116] "Suffering is a destructive and painful action, such as **deaths in public**, excessive pains, wounds, and others such as these [πάθος δέ ἐστι πρᾶξις φθαρτικὴ ἢ ὀδυνηρά, οἷον **οἵ τε ἐν τῷ φανερῷ θάνατοι** καὶ αἱ περιωδυνίαι καὶ τρώσεις καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα]" (*Poet*. 1452b11-13). Public deaths are not necessarily the same as deaths on stage. In Greek tragedy, the latter are *rarae aves*. Nonetheless, avoiding deaths on stage is not a rule but a convention, and it entails "the act that causes death" (Sommerstein, 2010, p. 33), rather than the actual death. In fact, death on stage occurs twice in the extant corpus of Greek tragedy (Euripides' *Alcestis* and *Hippolytus*). In this sense, ps.-Euripides' treatment agrees with the convention within Greek theater: he does not stage the beheading, i.e., the action that caused Dolon's death.

> Ἦ, καὶ ὃ μέν μιν ἔμελλε γενείου χειρὶ παχείῃ
> ἀψάμενος λίσσεσθαι, ὃ δ' **αὐχένα μέσσον ἔλασσε**
> **φασγάνῳ ἀΐξας, ἀπὸ δ' ἄμφω κέρσε τένοντε·**
> φθεγγομένου δ' ἄρα τοῦ γε κάρη κονίῃσιν ἐμίχθη.
>
> And he [sc. Dolon] was about to beg him by touching his chin with his stout hand, but having thrust at him, he [sc. Diomedes] **struck him in the middle of the neck with his sword, and severed both of his arteries,** and immediately, the head of the one still speaking mingled with the dust.
>
> (*Il*. 10.454-457)

115 On ignoring Dolon's death, Liapis (2012): "More importantly perhaps, the *Rh*. author takes care to refer to Dolon's eventual murder only in the vaguest terms (525-6, 557-8, 863-5 nn.) – whereas in the *Doloneia* the slaughter is described with gruesome detail (*Il*. 10.454-9)" (p. xlix); and Fries (2014): "Their entry dialogue (565-94) contains several allusions to the spy's interception and death (*Il*. 10.339-468), which allow the audience to reconstruct his fate" (p. 9).

116 I follow the Greek text by Halliwell (Aristotle; Longinus; Demetrius, 1995). The translations are my own.

> πῶς δ' οὐ δέδρακας; οὐ **κτανόντε** ναυστάθμων
> κατάσκοπον **Δόλωνα** σῴζομεν τάδε
> σκυλεύματ'; ἢ πᾶν στρατόπεδον πέρσειν δοκεῖς;
>
> How have you done nothing? **Having killed Dolon**, the spy of the roadstead, are we not keeping these spoils? Are you expecting to ravage the whole camp?
>
> (*Rhes*. 591-593)

Likewise, the number of Thracian deaths is not specified by the playwright. Even though book 10 specifies twice that the thirteen dead men are a combination of twelve plus one (*Il*. 10.487-496 and *Il*. 10.560-561), the *Rhes*. ignores the number of casualties.[117] The total of thirteen is obtained, first, by adding up the twelve Thracian warriors and Rhesus himself; and then, by considering the twelve Thracian warriors alongside Dolon. In the play, besides that of Dolon, only the death of Rhesus is mentioned. Once again, the convention within Greek theater is followed: the dramatist does not stage the action that caused Rhesus' death.

> ὡς μὲν Θρήικας ἄνδρας ἐπῴχετο Τυδέος υἱὸς,
> **ὄφρα δυώδεκ' ἔπεφνεν…**
>
> …so, the son of Tydeus attacked the Thracian warriors, **until he killed twelve**.
>
> (*Il*. 10.487-488)

> ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ βασιλῆα κιχήσατο Τυδέος υἱός,
> **τὸν τρισκαιδέκατον μελιηδέα θυμὸν ἀπηύρα**
> ἀσθμαίνοντα…
>
> But when the son of Tydeus approached the king, **he took the honey-sweet life of the thirteenth one** [sc. Rhesus], who was left gasping for breath…
>
> (*Il*. 10.494-496)

> …πὰρ δ' ἑτάρους δυοκαίδεκα πάντας ἀρίστους.
> **τὸν τρισκαιδέκατον σκοπὸν εἵλομεν ἐγγύθι νηῶν,**

117 On ignoring the number of casualties, see Fantuzzi (2020): "At *Il*. 10.495 Homer speaks of twelve Thracians plus Rhesus killed by Diomedes; *Rh*. does not give figures" (p. 49, n. 155).

> …in addition to all twelve of his best companions. **We killed, as a thirteenth one, the spy** [sc. Dolon] **by the ships**.
>
> (*Il.* 10.560-561)

> **κεῖται** γὰρ ἡμῖν Θρῄκιος στρατηλάτης,
>
> The Thracian general [sc. Rhesus] **lies dead** before us…
>
> (*Rhes*. 670)

Give Me Five! – Villages or Nights?

Book 4 of the *Mahābhārata* is composed of four minor books, and in its compactness, it manages to encompass most of the main themes of the entire text. Minor book 45 begins with the return of the fire-drilling woods that were stollen at the end of the forest adventures. During their year incognito, Yudhiṣṭhira disguises himself as the gamester Kaṅka; Bhīma, as the cook Ballava, who also plays the part of a gladiator; Arjuna, as the eunuch Bṛhannaḍā, who works as a teacher of music and dance; Nakula, as the horse groom Granthika; Sahadeva, as the cattle tender Tantipāla; and Draupadī, as the maid Sairandhrī.

Minor book 46 depicts a new humiliation of Draupadī, which recalls the one from the assembly hall at Hāstinapura: Kīcaka, king Virāṭa's general, upon Draupadī's rejection of him, grabs her by the hair, throws her on the floor, and even kicks her. In revenge, Bhīma tricks Kīcaka in the dance pavilion, and then kills him, along with one hundred and five of his kinsmen. Minor book 47 presents a two-fold ambush: the Trigarta king Suśarman marches against the Matsya king Virāṭa; the Kaurava prince Duryodhana, against the Matsya prince Uttara. After a battle foreshadowing the one that will take place in Kurukṣetra, minor book 48 closes with the wedding of Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu, and Virāṭa's daughter, Uttarā. Their grandson Janamejaya will be the one listening to the *Mahābhārata*.

The ambushes upon Virāṭa and Uttara (*MBh*. 4.24-62) narrate Suśarman's and Duryodhana's *gograhaṇa* (cattle raid). The epic version is as follows: at Hāstinapura, Duryodhana hears from his spies the bad news that the Pāṇḍavas are nowhere to be found,

and the good news that Kīcaka and his kinsmen have been slain by *gandharva*s (celestial musicians). Aware of the little time left before the concealment will be over, Duryodhana only focuses on the downside. He receives counsel, not only from Karṇa, Duḥśāsana, and Kṛpa, but also from Droṇa and Bhīṣma, who encourage Duryodhana to keep on looking for his cousins. It is up to king Suśarman to turn Duryodhana's attention towards the slain general, and to suggest the opportunity of an ambush against the country of king Virāṭa. Duryodhana adds a twist: undercover, Suśarman and the Trigartas should march there first, and on the next day, he and the Kauravas should join them to finish the job.

By now, the time of the covenant has nearly expired. In the Matsya kingdom, a herdsman travels from the country to the city to warn Virāṭa that the Trigartas are raiding his cattle. Virāṭa prepares to fight and asks Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Nakula, and Sahadeva to ride with him. The journey back from the city to the country explains their late arrival, after sunset. Then, the Matsyas and the Trigartas fight at night, and darkness makes it harder to distinguish their enemies. The casualties are countless. When the moon finally offers a glimmer, Suśarman and his brother, having dismounted their chariot, kill Virāṭa's horses and guards, and then proceed to lift Virāṭa himself, as if he were a bride. Seeing this, Yudhiṣṭhira instructs Bhīma to intervene, but without blowing their cover. At this point, the tables turn: Bhīma, having killed Suśarman's horses and guards, dismounts his own chariot, and then goes on to catch the fleeing Suśarman. The role reversal is clear. The cattle are safe.

While Virāṭa goes to the country to resist Suśarman's ambush, Duryodhana comes to the city commanding a second ambush. As with Virāṭa, a herdsman warns Uttara that the Kauravas are raiding his father's cattle. However, unlike Virāṭa, Uttara is not ready to fight since he is missing a charioteer. Unhappy about Uttara having compared himself to Arjuna, Draupadī suggests precisely the one Pāṇḍava who remains at the city. Uttara's sister, Uttarā, fetches him. Arjuna pretends to be unfit, but eventually he departs, promising the young girls to bring back, as spoils, clothes for their dolls. Uttara goes from boastful to panicked in the blink of an eye. The scene is yet another role reversal of Virāṭa's manhandling: Arjuna, having

dismounted the chariot, must lift Uttara while he flees. Moreover, the image of Arjuna comforting Uttara foreshadows that of Arjuna himself being reassured by Kṛṣṇa later, during the *Gītā*.[118]

The main result of the ambushes is the recognition of the Pāṇḍavas. Having gone for their weapons that were hidden in a tree, Arjuna reveals his and his brothers' identities to Uttara, and, as proof, he proceeds to explain his ten names. Droṇa recognizes Arjuna by the sound of his conch, and Duryodhana celebrates the finding, taking it to mean a new exile for the Pāṇḍavas. Karṇa is ready to fight, and so is Kṛpa, although the latter wonders if the ambush might have been a mistake. Even Aśvatthāman, the protagonist of the text's better known *sauptika* (ambush), questions whether there should be any pride in raiding. In response to Duryodhana's question, Bhīṣma carries out the official counting, and he concludes that the due time has passed. Arjuna leads Uttara through the battlefield by pointing out to him the chief warriors on the Kaurava side. To the delight of the gods and the great seers, Arjuna vanquishes Kṛpa, Droṇa, Aśvatthāman, Karṇa, Bhīṣma, and Duryodhana. Once again, this prefigures the battle of Kurukṣetra. With his conch, Arjuna stuns everyone but Bhīṣma. Then, he instructs Uttara to gather the fallen warriors' clothes, and the herdsmen to collect the cattle and rest the horses.

After the ambushes comes the Pāṇḍavas' and Draupadī's reinstatement (*MBh*. 4.63-67), signaled by Abhimanyu's and Uttarā's wedding (*vaivāhika*). By the time Virāṭa returns to the city, Uttara is now gone. Upon finding out about the successful repelling of the second ambush, Virāṭa becomes proud: he commands a pompous reception for his son, and he orders Yudhiṣṭhira to play a celebratory dicing-match with him, which recalls the one at Hāstinapura. During the game, Virāṭa boasts that Uttara alone is responsible for the victory, while Yudhiṣṭhira insists that it would not have been possible without Arjuna. Virāṭa becomes angry and throws a die at Yudhiṣṭhira's face. To prevent Arjuna from killing Virāṭa, Yudhiṣṭhira catches the spilling blood with his hand before

118 On the parallelisms between the *Virāṭaparvan* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, see Hejib & Young (1980).

it reaches the floor, and he instructs the steward to let Uttara enter the assembly hall alone.

The revelation of the identities continues gradually. On the day of the second ambush, Uttara credits the triumph to the son of a god, so that Arjuna is still in disguise when he presents Uttarā with the plundered clothes. On the third day thereafter, the Pāṇḍavas enter Virāṭa's assembly hall and sit on his thrones. When Virāṭa asks about this behavior, Arjuna first reveals Yudhiṣṭhira's identity, and then those of Draupadī and the remaining Pāṇḍavas, including his own. Only then does Uttara admit that it was Arjuna who vanquished the Kauravas. Having become aware that it was Bhīma who rescued him, and that it was Yudhiṣṭhira whom he offended, Virāṭa offers Uttarā in marriage to Arjuna, who, in turn, accepts her for Abhimanyu. Arjuna sees her more like a daughter, and this is what ensures her chastity. For the ceremony, the Pāṇḍavas move to Upaplavya, where they will conduct the embassies; Arjuna brings Abhimanyu, who had been staying with Kṛṣṇa at Ānarta; and noblemen attend from all over the world.

In (Ps.-)Bhāsa's *The Five Nights*, the plot is divided into three acts, which move the action from Hāstinapura, where king Duryodhana is performing a sacrifice, to the Matsya kingdom, towards where he is leading a cattle raid, and again back to Hāstinapura, where Abhimanyu brings the news about the wedding. Before the first act come two sections: one is a prologue, which, by means of paronomasia, serves both to invoke the god Viṣṇu and to introduce the main characters of the plot; the other is a prelude, in which a conversation between three Brahmans sets the stage at the time of the sacrifice.

At the beginning of the first act, the preceptor Droṇa and the grandfather Bhīṣma speak about a law-abiding Duryodhana, thus setting the expectations of the audience. Then, the words coming from others make room for the deeds being performed by Duryodhana himself, when he discusses the subtleties of duty with his friend Karṇa and his maternal uncle Śakuni. Following the sacrifice, Śakuni proposes that Duryodhana carry out a royal consecration. After all, the kings are already there. Duryodhana greets all who have gathered for him, and he notices the absence

of king Virāṭa. Śakuni sends a messenger to make inquiries. Then, Duryodhana brings up the matter of the graduation fee that is due to Droṇa, and, out of the blue, Droṇa expresses his intention to make a request.

In a tricky way, Droṇa pretends to cry, so that Duryodhana sees to him being brought some water. It is only after the promise has been made binding by the water that Droṇa finally reveals what he wants: Duryodhana must share the kingdom with the Pāṇḍavas. Undecided, Duryodhana turns to Śakuni and Karṇa for advice. The former pushes for a negative response, and the latter leaves the choice up to Duryodhana, not without reminding him that he is always to be counted on in times of war. Against their advice, Duryodhana intends to be true to his word by giving them a second-rate part of the realm. However, Śakuni also has a trick up his sleeve. For the agreement to take effect, news of the Pāṇḍavas must be brought to them within the next "five nights".

At this point, the messenger that Śakuni had sent to inquire about Virāṭa comes back and tells the Kauravas about the death of general Kīcaka and his kinsmen. When listening to the details of their deaths, Bhīṣma recognizes the work of the hero Bhīma, and he reveals this relevant information to Droṇa. With this unexpected turn of events, Droṇa no longer has a problem agreeing with the condition set by Śakuni. Joining in with the trickery, Bhīṣma pretends to have a feud with Virāṭa, which, on one hand, would account for Virāṭa being absent during the sacrifice, and on the other, would merit Duryodhana leading a cattle raid to remind him who is in charge. Once again, Bhīṣma reveals his true intentions to Droṇa. As soon as the Pāṇḍavas become aware of the ambush, they will take part in the defense, thus rendering themselves easily recognizable.

The second act focuses on the attack. In an interlude, an old cowherd lets slip the fact that, on that very day, Virāṭa is celebrating his birthday, which is the reason why there are currently so many cattle in the city. After that, as if playing the game of telephone, the old cowherd tells a soldier about the seizing, then, the soldier tells a chamberlain, and, although reluctant to importune the man of the hour, the chamberlain eventually tells Virāṭa. Piece by piece, Virāṭa begins to put together the picture of what is happening. First,

he learns from the soldier that Duryodhana is the one responsible. Then, after he has turned to Yudhiṣṭhira in the guise of the Brahman Bhagavān for backup, Virāṭa learns from an attendant that other kings are marching alongside Duryodhana. Lastly, he learns from his own charioteer that his vehicle is no longer available, since his son, prince Uttara, has taken it to battle, with the aid of Arjuna in the guise of the eunuch Bṛhannalā.

For the remainder, it is the soldier who travels back and forth to continue with the narration. First, he informs that the chariot on which Uttara and Arjuna were riding has been smashed by a burial ground, which makes Yudhiṣṭhira rejoice, and in turn, Virāṭa gets angry at him. Then, the soldier communicates that most of the raiders have been defeated, but the young Abhimanyu is still standing, which makes Yudhiṣṭhira worry. After that, he reports that the menace is over, which immediately leads Virāṭa to credit Uttara. At this point, Arjuna enters the stage, evincing some difficulty in handling the weapons. Arjuna being present, the soldier further conveys that Abhimanyu has been taken captive by Bhīma, who is in the guise of a cook. And then, Bhīma also enters the stage and justifies the capture as the lesser of two evils.

Both Bhīma and Arjuna take pleasure in taunting Abhimanyu, who still manages to adhere to rightfulness on every occasion. After a while, Uttara also returns, and this accelerates the anagnorises. Uttara points to the scar on the arm of Arjuna, and thus, Arjuna is recognized; then, Arjuna himself reveals the identities of Bhīma and Yudhiṣṭhira. Father and son come together in an embrace. However, there is still something that troubles Virāṭa: Arjuna has been living under the same roof as his unmarried daughter Uttarā. Faced with such a conundrum, Virāṭa offers Uttarā in marriage to Arjuna, who accepts her as a suitable wife for his own son Abhimanyu. Having a three for one on rites, the marriage is to take place on the same day that begun with a sacrifice and witnessed a birthday celebration.

At the beginning of the third and last act, a charioteer explains to the stunned Kauravas how Abhimanyu was taken from his chariot by a foot soldier, who was just using his bare hands. Once again, Bhīṣma recognizes the work of Bhīma, and this time, Droṇa reaches the same conclusion all by himself. Nonetheless, Śakuni

is far from convinced, even when the charioteer introduces, as an exhibit, an arrow signed by Arjuna. It is only when Uttara arrives as a messenger, not of Virāṭa but of Yudhiṣṭhira, that Duryodhana agrees to honor his deal. What happens next? Was there no war of Kurukṣetra or did the Kauravas, as they tend to do, manage to foul things up anyway? The playwright is smart enough to leave the story open-ended.

In the dramatic version, the author profits, among others, from these nine procedures: [SA1][119] he merges two ambushes into one, [SA2] he merges two addressees into one, [SA3] he adds a tricky request, [SA4] he emphasizes the braggart, [SA5] he emphasizes the adaptation's sources, [SA6] he adds the anagnorisis, [SA7] he changes the timing of the sacrifice, [SA8] he changes the five villages into the five nights, and [SA9] he ignores the on-stage anger.

[SA1] Just like his treatment of the speeches towards father and son in *The Embassy*, his re-creation of Suśarman's and Duryodhana's ambushes as Duryodhana's ambush in *The Five Nights* evinces merging as one of (Ps.-)Bhāsa's trademark adaptation techniques.[120]

119 SA stands for "Sanskrit Ambush". Hence, numbers SA1-SA9 refer to the adaptation of *MBh*. 4 into *The Five Nights*. Besides those that will allow me to argue for parallelisms with the Greco-Roman world, other adaptation techniques include merging Yudhiṣṭhira's and Duryodhana's character into Duryodhana's character, splitting Duryodhana's character into Duryodhana's, Karṇa's, and Śakuni's characters, changing the genealogy, ignoring the news about the Pāṇḍavas, adding Virāṭa's birthday celebration, merging four of the five brothers into one, changing Bhīṣma's assertion into Yudhiṣṭhira's conjecture, changing Uttara's cry for help into Uttara's resoluteness, changing Uttara's visual scrutiny into Virāṭa's multisensory scrutiny, adding Arjuna's forgetfulness, changing the pretend failure in arming into an actual failure in arming, emphasizing the name *Vijaya*, ignoring the name *Kaṅka*, changing Abhimanyu to the Kaurava side, changing Arjuna's lifting of Uttara into Bhīma's lifting of Abhimanyu, emphasizing Abhimanyu's role, changing the timing of the Pāṇḍavas' recognition, emphasizing Arjuna's link to Śiva, and subtracting the taking of the spoils after the battle.

120 On merging two ambushes into one, see Steiner (2010): "Im Virāṭaparvan (Adhyāya 30-62) ist der Kampf um die Kühe ausführlicher gestaltet mit mehreren Angriffen und Gegenagriffen. Im Stück wird dies zu nur einem indirekt beschriebenen Angriff unter Bhīṣmas Führung zusammengefasst – und dessen letzlich erfolgreicher Abwehr durch den als Bṛhannalā verkleideten Arjuna [In the *Virāṭaparvan* (*Adhyāya* 30-62) the fight for the cows is more detailed with several attacks and counterattacks. In the play, this is summarized in only one indirectly described attack under Bhīṣma's leadership – and its ultimately successful defense by Arjuna disguised as Bṛhannalā]" (p. 157).

Vyāsa presents two different herdsmen, carrying two separate messages: one to Virāṭa, about Suśarman's ambush; the other to Uttara, about Duryodhana's ambush. But at the same time, he intends for them to be taken in tandem. The assertion about the hundreds of thousands of cattle being raided by the Trigartas is clearly mirrored by the one about the sixty thousand cattle being raided by the Kauravas. Perceptive as always, the playwright reinterprets the parallelism as a merging: as in the epic's first ambush, the message's addressee is Virāṭa; as in the epic's second ambush, the message's subject is the Kauravas.

> asmān yudhi vinirjitya paribhūya sabāndhavān |
> **gavāṃ śatasahasrāṇi trigartāḥ kālayanti te** |
> tān parīpsa manuṣyendra mā neśuḥ paśavas tava ||
>
> Having defeated us in a fight and subdued our relatives, **the Trigartas are taking hundreds of thousands of cattle from you**. O best of men, try and protect them – may your cattle not be lost!
>
> (*MBh*. 4.30.7)

> **ṣaṣṭiṃ gavāṃ sahasrāṇi kuravaḥ kālayanti t**e |
> tad vijetuṃ samuttiṣṭha godhanaṃ rāṣṭravardhanam ||
> rājaputra hitaprepsuḥ kṣipraṃ niryāhi vai svayam |
> tvāṃ hi matsyo mahīpālaḥ śūnyapālam ihākarot ||
>
> **The Kurus are taking sixty-thousand cattle from you**. Stand up to recover the cattle herd, the prosperity of the kingdom. O prince, desirous of your own benefit, go out quickly, for the Matsya king made you keeper of his empty kingdom.
>
> (*MBh*. 4.33.10-11)

> bho bho nivedyatāṃ nivedyatāṃ mahārājāya virāṭeśvarāya **etā** hi dasyukarmapracchannavikramair **dhārtarāṣṭrair hriyante gāva** iti
>
> Hey, hey! Let it be made known, let it be made known to the great king, to lord Virāṭa, that **the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra**, their prowess hidden by the deeds of robbers, **are seizing these cattle**.
>
> (*PR* 2.0.42)

[SA2] (Ps.-)Bhāsa also merges the father and the son into a single character. If *The Embassy* evinces a partial merging of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Duryodhana, where the old king is still allowed a few words of his own, *The Five Nights* accomplishes a total merging. In *MBh*. 4, even though Dhṛtarāṣṭra plays no role during the ambushes, Duryodhana is still introduced, since the beginning and throughout the *Gograhaṇaparvan*, as "Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son" (*dhṛtarāṣṭraja-*, *MBh*. 4.27.7b; *dhṛtarāṣṭrātmaja-*, *MBh*. 4.50.12c; *dhṛtarāṣṭraputra-*, *MBh*. 4.60.1b; and *dhṛtarāṣṭrasya putraḥ*, *MBh*. 4.61.1b). In *PR*, Dhṛtarāṣṭra has been reduced to a patronymic, used not specifically for Duryodhana, but for the collective of the Kauravas (*dhārtarāṣṭra-*, *PR* 2.0.42, *PR* 2.1.2, *PR* 2.8.3, *PR* 2.15c, *PR* 2.20c, and *PR* 2.27.9).

Moreover, the dramatic Duryodhana sometimes speaks as if he were the epic Dhṛtarāṣṭra. A case in point is the offering of half of the kingdom. Vyāsa has Dhṛtarāṣṭra as the first one to suggest, as a sort of preamble to their thirteen-year exile, that the Pāṇḍavas take the Khāṇḍava tract, which constitutes half of the kingdom. On the contrary, (Ps.-)Bhāsa has Duryodhana suggest half of the kingdom, and then, propose it to be a bad, unendurable, and unfriendly country, that is, something like the Khāṇḍava tract. At *MBh*. 5, where Duryodhana is presented by Kṛṣṇa with a similar offer (*MBh*. 5.122.57-61), he responds with the categorical rejection of even what could be pierced with a needle (*MBh*. 5.125.26a-b). Here, Duryodhana is the one bringing it up, and Śakuni is the one turning it down, also in similar terms: "I will say 'nothing!' [*śūnyam ity abhidhāsyāmi*]" (*PR* 1.44a). Having Śakuni as his dramatic understudy, allows Duryodhana to fill in for the epic Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

> **ardhaṃ rājyasya** saṃprāpya khāṇḍavaprastham āviśa ||
>
> Partaking of **half the kingdom**, take possession of the Khāṇḍava tract.
>
> (*MBh*. 1.199.25e-f)

> mātula pāṇḍavānāṃ **rājyārdhaṃ** prati ko niścayaḥ
>
> O uncle, what is your opinion about the Pāṇḍavas having **half the kingdom**?
>
> (*PR* 1.42.4)

> mātula **balavat** praty **amitro 'nupajīvyaś** ca kaścit **kudeśaś** cintyatām
> tatra vaseyuḥ pāṇḍavāḥ
>
> O uncle, think of some **bad country, unendurable** and **extremely unfriendly**. Let the Pāṇḍavas live there!
>
> (*PR* 1.43.1-2)

[SA3] Droṇa's graduation fee is an addition. In this sense, the *Saṃbhavaparvan* (*MBh.* 1.59-123) is mined for adapted elements. There, one finds the story of Ekalavya (*MBh.* 1.123.10-39), which seems to have been adapted into *The Five Nights* in the form of Droṇa's graduation fee. Ekalavya wants to be Droṇa's pupil, but Droṇa rejects him for being the son of a Niṣāda. After touching the master's feet, Ekalavya retires to the forest and fashions a clay statue of Droṇa, under whom he studies. Thanks to a dog, the Pāṇḍavas come across the outstanding archer, who introduces himself as Droṇa's pupil, and filled with jealousy, Arjuna reminds Droṇa of his promise of a privileged position among his students. Without further clarification, Droṇa asks Ekalavya for a fee, to which Ekalavya agrees, only to later find out that what Droṇa wants for a *dakṣiṇā-* "graduation fee" is his *dakṣiṇa-* "right one", in reference to his thumb. At the cost of renouncing archery, Ekalavya pays the fee and cuts off his thumb.

In the play, in lieu of Droṇa asking, it is Duryodhana who offers him a "graduation fee [*dakṣiṇā*]" (*PR* 1.27.14), without saying what it will be. Then, Droṇa pretends to cry, and Duryodhana fetches him some "water [*āpas*]" (*PR* 1.29.8), which serves to seal the deal before even agreeing to the terms. The dramatic Droṇa's request is for the Pāṇḍavas to recover their share of the kingdom. In support of the claim that it is the epic Droṇa's petition to Ekalavya which is adapted here, it is worth remembering that, in the outer "circle of promises" around Ekalavya's thumb, there is Drupada's promise of sharing his kingdom with Droṇa himself, which is fulfilled by Droṇa receiving half of Drupada's land.[121]

121 On the "circle of promises" and the *Ringkomposition* in the story of Ekalavya, see Brodbeck (2006, especially p. 4, diagram 1).

> tato droṇo 'bravīd rājann ekalavyam idaṃ vacaḥ |
> yadi śiṣyo 'si me tūrṇaṃ **vetanaṃ** saṃpradīyatām ||
> ekalavyas tu tac chrutvā prīyamāṇo 'bravīd idam |
> kiṃ prayacchāmi bhagavann ājñāpayatu māṃ guruḥ ||
> na hi kiṃ cid adeyaṃ me gurave brahmavittama |
> tam abravīt tvayāṅguṣṭho **dakṣiṇo** dīyatāṃ mama ||
>
> O king, then Droṇa gave this order to Ekalavya, "If you are my student, quickly give me my **fee**!" Having heard that, Ekalavya said this, propitiating him, "O fortunate one, what can I give you? Let my teacher command me. O expert on the absolute, there is nothing that I shall not give to my teacher." He told him, "Give me your **right** thumb!"
>
> (*MBh*. 1.123.33-35)

> yeṣāṃ gatiḥ kvāpi nirāśrayāṇāṃ
> saṃvatsarair dvādaśabhir na dṛṣṭā |
> tvaṃ pāṇḍavānāṃ kuru saṃvibhāgam
> eṣā ca bhikṣā mama **dakṣiṇā** ca ||
>
> Execute the distribution with the Pāṇḍavas, the destitute ones who have had no visible means for twelve years. This boon will be my **fee**.
>
> (*PR* 1.31)

[SA4] (Ps.-)Bhāsa turns Uttara's braggartry into Virāṭa's braggartry. *MBh*. 4's Uttara is a *miles gloriosus* (braggart warrior).[122] *PR*'s Virāṭa, in turn, is a bragging father. Vyāsa paints the braggartry from the point of view of both Arjuna and Uttara himself. Like a true *katthano bhaṭaḥ* "braggart warrior", Uttara boasts about the greatness of his flag, the number of enemies that he could face, his ability to conquer the entire Kaurava troop, his capacity for terrifying their best warriors, and his resemblance to Indra and to Arjuna himself. Near the end of this nonsensical crescendo, he even trumpets his own prowess. However, his behavior at the battlefront is quite different. Arjuna, who has witnessed Uttara's boastful assertion of his supposed manliness, eventually questions

122 On Uttara as a *miles gloriosus*, see Wulff Alonso (2020): "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" (p. 178).

it when Uttara trembles at the mere thought of fighting. The oxymoronic contrast between the epic Uttara's words and his deeds, evinces this character's comicality: he is the one who ends up belittled and terrified, looking less like a god or a hero, and more like an abducted bride. So much for his prowess.

The dramatic braggartry, on the contrary, is considered from the point of view of both Uttara himself and his father Virāṭa. According to the bragging father, one man is enough for defeating an entire army and one day suffices for Uttara to wrap up the whole ambush. But unlike Arjuna, Virāṭa is biased in favor of his son Uttara, and more importantly, unlike Arjuna, Virāṭa did not witness Uttara's deeds, but only learned about them from the Soldier's speech. If the epic source was consistent in presenting Uttara's boastfulness in terms of both his own deeds and other people's opinions about them, the dramatic adaptation separates a boastful Uttara, as borrowed from the canonic text, and as characterized by Virāṭa, on one side, and a moderate Uttara, recast by the new text, and described by himself, on the other. The dramatic Uttara, when reflecting about his situation, is aware that the report about him is specious, and he even feels ashamed about it. Uttara is just paying lip service to Arjuna, as is (Ps.-)Bhāsa to Vyāsa.

> sa labheyaṃ yadi tv anyaṃ hayayānavidaṃ naram |
> tvarāvān adya yātvāhaṃ samucchrita**mahā**dhvajam ||
> vigāhya tatparānīkaṃ gajavājirath**ākulam** |
> śastrapratāpanirvīryān kurūñ **jitvā**naye paśūn ||
> duryodhanaṃ śāṃtanavaṃ karṇaṃ vaikartanaṃ kṛpam |
> droṇaṃ ca saha putreṇa maheṣvāsān samāgatān ||
> **vitrāsayitvā** saṃgrāme dānavān **iva vajrabhṛt** |
> anenaiva muhūrtena punaḥ pratyānaye paśūn ||
> śūnyam āsādya kuravaḥ prayānty ādāya godhanam |
> kiṃ nu śakyaṃ mayā kartuṃ yad ahaṃ tatra nābhavam ||
> paśyeyur adya **me vīryaṃ** kuravas te samāgatāḥ |
> kiṃ nu **pārtho 'rjunaḥ sākṣād** ayam asmān prabādhate ||
>
> If I found another man who knows how to drive my horses, after marching swiftly with my **great** flag raised, plunging into the enemy army which would be **crowded** with elephants, horses, and chariots, and **conquering** the Kurus who would become unmanly against the power of my sword,

> I would bring back the cattle. After **terrifying** Duryodhana, Śāṃtanava [sc. Bhīṣma], Karṇa Vaikartana, Kṛpa, Droṇa with his son, and the great warriors that have assembled in battle, **just as he who wields the thunderbolt** did against the Dānavas, I would bring back the cattle in an instant. Having found an empty place, the Kurus march after taking our cattle herd, but what can I do if I am not there? Today the assembled Kurus shall see **my prowess** and think that it is **the Pārtha Arjuna in the flesh** who torments them.
>
> (*MBh*. 4.34.4-9)

> tathā strīṣu pratiśrutya **pauruṣaṃ** puruṣeṣu ca |
> **katthamāno** 'bhiniryāya kimarthaṃ na yuyutsase ||
>
> Having thus asserted your **manliness** among men and women, and having marched out **while boasting**, why do you not want to fight?
>
> (*MBh*. 4.36.20)

> nṛpā bhīṣmādayo **bhagnāḥ** saubhadro grahaṇaṃ gataḥ |
> uttareṇ**ādya** saṃkṣepād arthataḥ pṛthivī jitā ||
>
> Kings such as Bhīṣma **have been defeated**, Subhadrā's son [sc. Abhimanyu] has walked right into his capture. In short, **today** Uttara has surely conquered the earth.
>
> (*PR* 2.41)

> **mithyā**praśaṃsākhalunāmakaṣṭāyeṣāṃtu**mithyā**vacaneṣu bhaktiḥ |
> ahaṃ hi yuddhāśrayam ucyamāno vācānuvartī hṛdayena **lajje** ||
>
> Though there is devotion in their **false** words, their **false** praise is still wrong. I might be compliant with their words while being praised in relation to the battle, but in my heart I **am ashamed**.
>
> (*PR* 2.60)

[SA5] The dramatist also includes Bhīṣma's feud with Virāṭa. In the narrative source, while Duryodhana is dwelling on the bad news about the Pāṇḍavas not having been found, Suśarman concentrates on the bigger picture and sells it as the glass being half full. His is the idea of an ambush and his is also the justification

for undertaking it to get back at Virāṭa for a very real feud between them, which antedates the events of the *Virāṭaparvan*. (Ps.-)Bhāsa subtracts Suśarman. This means, on one hand, assigning the role of proponent of the ambush to someone else; and on the other, providing them with a plausible explanation for wanting to carry it out. Bhīṣma is cast in the role, and a fictional feud between him and Virāṭa is added to the mix.

A close reading reveals four occurrences of the compound *gograha*(*ṇa*)-, meaning "cattle raid", near the end of the first act (*PR* 1.52.3, *PR* 1.53d, *PR* 1.54b, and *PR* 1.55.3). This can be interpreted as the play announcing itself as an adaptation of the *Gograhaṇaparvan* from *MBh*. 4.

> **asakṛn** matsyarājñā **me rāṣṭraṃ bādhitam** ojasā |
> praṇetā kīcakaś cāsya balavān abhavat purā ||
> krūro 'marṣī sa duṣṭātmā bhuvi prakhyātavikramaḥ |
> nihatas tatra gandharvaiḥ pāpakarmā nṛśaṃsavān ||
> tasmiṃś ca nihate rājan hīnadarpo nirāśrayaḥ |
> bhaviṣyati nirutsāho virāṭa iti me matiḥ ||
> tatra **yātrā** mama matā yadi te rocate 'nagha |
> kauravāṇāṃ ca sarveṣāṃ karṇasya ca mahātmanaḥ ||
>
> The Matsya king **has repeatedly oppressed my kingdom** with his might. Before, his general was the powerful Kīcaka, cruel, intransigent, and evil-minded, but of known prowess throughout the earth. Then, the violent wrongdoer was killed by some gandharvas. O king, him being dead, it is my opinion that Virāṭa will be deprived of his pride, destitute, and dispirited. O faultless one, if it pleases you, I favor **an ambush** of all the Kauravas and the eminent Karṇa.
>
> (*MBh*. 4.29.4-7)

> pautra duryodhanāsti mama virāṭen**āprakāśaṃ vairam**
> atha bhavato yajñam anubhavitum anāgata iti
> tasmāt kriyatāṃ tasya **gograhaṇam**
>
> O grandson Duryodhana, I have **a secret feud** with Virāṭa, which is why he did not come to assist at your sacrifice. So, let there be **a cattle raid** against him!
>
> (*PR* 1.52.2-3)

[SA6] Regarding the emphasis on the anagnorisis, (Ps.-)Bhāsa splits the explanation for the scar.[123] In *MBh*. 4, Arjuna's scar is due to the bowstring slapping the interior of his forearm. In *PR*, there are two contrasting explanations. First, and in agreement with what the epic Arjuna says, the dramatic Uttara interprets the scar as coming from string slap, and he tries to present it as proof for convincing Virāṭa that Bṛhannalā is, in truth, Arjuna. Then, and as if arguing with his epic counterpart, the dramatic Arjuna clarifies that it has an altogether different origin. Just as archers get slapped by their bowstring, so too can eunuchs bear the marks of their trade: since they must wear bracelets, their forearms can become pale through lack of exposure to sunlight. To the untrained eye, a scarred forearm and one that is just pale would look very much alike, even though they are not so. Of course, the character is just being crafty, as is the playwright.

> pratijñāṃ ṣaṇḍhako 'smīti kariṣyāmi mahīpate |
> **jyāghātau** hi mahāntau me saṃvartuṃ nṛpa duṣkarau ||
> karṇayoḥ pratimucyāhaṃ kuṇḍale jvalanopame |
> veṇīkṛtaśirā rājan nāmnā caiva bṛhannaḍā ||
>
> O lord of the earth, I will vow that I am a eunuch. O lord of men, my great arms, **scarred by the bowstring**, are difficult to hide. O king, after putting fire-like earrings on my ears and having a braid done on my head, I will go by the name of Bṛhannaḍā.
>
> (*MBh*. 4.2.21-22)

> prakoṣṭhāntarasaṅgūḍhaṃ **gāṇḍīvajyāhataṃ kiṇam** |
> yat tad dvādaśavarṣānte naiva yāti savarṇatām ||
>
> The **scar**, which was **inflicted by the string of Gāṇḍīva** and remains hidden in the interior of his forearm, does not vanish, having the same appearance even at the end of the twelve years.
>
> (*PR* 2.63)

123 On splitting the explanation for the scar, see Hawley (2021): "He [sc. Arjuna] speaks of how he'll wear ornaments – which we later discover to be bangles, an image that the *Pañcarātra* will go on to spotlight – that cover the bowstring scars of his forearms" (p. 96), and "Arjuna's account of the scar – that it was created by his bracelets – recalls the reasoning that the *Virāṭaparvan*'s Arjuna uses to support his choice of custom" (p. 114).

> etan me p**ārihāryāṇāṃ vyāvartana**kṛtaṃ kiṇam |
> **sannirodhavivarṇatvād** godhāsthānam ihāgatam ||
>
> This scar of mine was produced **by me removing my bracelets**: it comes close to taking the place of the arm guard **because of the paleness caused by the confinement**.
>
> (*PR* 2.64)

The name on the arrow is another addition related to the anagnorisis.[124] It constitutes a re-creation of a scene, not from the *Virāṭaparvan*, but from the *Bhīṣmaparvan* (*MBh*. 6). In *MBh*. 6, Bhīṣma recognizes Arjuna's arrows just by feeling them, whereas in *PR* he discerns Arjuna's arrow by looking at his signature, which needs no further deciphering. Bhīṣma has heard the message loud and clear.

> **kṛntanti** mama gātrāṇi māghamāse gavām iva |
> **arjunasya** ime **bāṇā** neme bāṇāḥ śikhaṇḍinaḥ ||
>
> They **cut** my limbs just like someone cuts his cows from the herd during the month of Māgha: they must be **the arrows of Arjuna**, and not the arrows of Śikhaṇḍī.
>
> (*MBh*. 6.114.60)

> **bāṇapuṅkhākṣarair vākyair** jyājihvāparivartibhiḥ |
> vikṛṣṭaṃ khalu pārthena na ca **śrotraṃ** prayacchati ||
>
> By means of **words having their syllables in the feathers of his arrows** and being transmitted by the tongue of his bowstring, the Pārtha [sc. Arjuna] communicated with us, and this does not result in us **hearing** him?
>
> (*PR* 3.17)

124 On the addition of the name on the arrow, see Steiner (2010): "In MBh 4.59 wird der Zweikampf zwischen Bṛhannalā und Bhīṣma geschildert, in dessen Verlauf beide gegenseitig ihre Standarte mit Pfeilen treffen. Im Pañcarātra wird ein auf Bhīṣmas Standarte geschossener Pfeil, auf dem Arjunas Name steht, für die Kauravas zum Hauptindiz für die Identifizierung Arjunas. Es wird dammit wohl auf MBh 6.114.55-60 (insbes. 60) angespielt, wo Bhīṣma für sich in Anspruch nimmt, die Pfeile Arjunas zu erkennen [In *MBh*. 4.59, the duel between Bṛhannalā and Bhīṣma is described, during which they both hit each other's banners with arrows. In *Pañcarātra*, an arrow shot at Bhīṣma's banner, with Arjuna's name on it, becomes the main indicator for the Kauravas for the identification of Arjuna. It is so alluded to in *MBh*. 6.114.55-60 (esp. 60), where Bhīṣma claims to recognize Arjuna's arrows]" (pp. 157-158).

However, the main emphasis of *PR* in terms of anagnorisis concerns Abhimanyu.[125] The epic showcases a gradual recognition of the Pāṇḍavas: prince Uttara learns about their true identities right before the second raid, but king Virāṭa is only let in on their secret three days thereafter. And the play turns it into an expeditious anagnorisis of the Pāṇḍavas: by featuring Abhimanyu in the ambush, on one hand, Uttara is not needed at the assembly hall until much later; and on the other, Arjuna gets to make himself known to someone closer to his heart. Father/son relations are, indeed, among (Ps.-)Bhāsa's favorite topics.[126] The change of Abhimanyu to the Kaurava side, the emphasis of his role, and the addition of his anagnorisis; they all come down to this.

That such father/son interactions bring out a man's true nature is an idea that Vyāsa had already developed, and he did so by focusing on none other than Arjuna. During the *Āśvamedhikaparvan* (*MBh*. 14), Arjuna, while securing the way for Yudhiṣṭhira's horse, comes across Babhruvāhana, his son born to Citrāṅgadā. Just as the epic Babhruvāhana is taunted by Arjuna, being paired up with women rather than with men, so too does the dramatic Abhimanyu interact with his father and uncles: he taunts them and gets taunted by them. The taunting is, in fact, what catalyzes the anagnorisis, here expressed in terms of making the son see who his father and uncles really are. Two sons, one encounter. Once again, the playwright is performing a merging.

Furthermore, anagnorisis is a very common procedure within Roman theater (Plautus, *Capt*. 872-874, *Cas*. 1012-1014, *Cist*. 664-665, *Curc*. 653-657, *Epid*. 635-636, *Men*. 1133, *Poen*. 1065-1075 and 1258, and *Rud*. 1160-1165; and Terence *An*. 904-956).[127] So, it could have been borrowed by Sanskrit theater ((Ps.-)Bhāsa *PR* 2 and *SV* 6; and Kālidāsa *Vikr*. 5 and *Śak*. 6).[128]

125 On the addition of Abhimanyu's anagnorisis, see Wulff Alonso (2020): "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)" (p. 239).

126 See Brückner (1999/2000, p. 502, n. 4).

127 See Vaccaro (1981/1983, pp. 88-89) and Ricottilli (2014, pp. 118-120).

128 See S. S. Dange (1994a). See also S. A. Dange (1994b), for the procedure of the "incognito heroine" in (Ps.-)Bhāsa *SV* 4, Kālidāsa *Śak*. 6, and Bhavabhūti

na tvayā **puruṣā**rthaś ca kaś cid astīha jīvatā |
yas tvaṃ **strī**vad yudhā prāptaṃ sāmnā māṃ
pratyagṛhṇathāḥ ||

You live here but you have absolutely no ambition as **a man**!
You are certainly like **a woman** in that you have received me
only with conciliation when I came looking for a fight.

(*MBh*. 14.78.6)

na ruṣyanti mayā **kṣiptā** hasantaś ca **kṣipanti** mām |
diṣṭyā gograhaṇaṃ svantaṃ pitaro yena **darśitāḥ** ||

They, **taunted** by me, are not vexed; instead, they **taunt** me
while laughing at me. Luckily, the cattle raid ends well, by
showing me my father and uncles.

(*PR* 2.67)

[SA7] (Ps.-)Bhāsa changes the timing of Duryodhana's sacrifice. At the beginning of the *Gograhaṇaparvan*, Duryodhana is "in the middle of the assembly hall [*sabhāmadhye*]" (*MBh*. 4.24.8c), where he is visited by his spies; but, in the first act of *The Five Nights*, he arrives at a "forest [*vanaṃ*]" (*PR* 1.12b, *PR* 1.13a), where Brahmans are officiating at a sacrifice. Rather than a simple change of location, what is at play here is a change in timing: Duryodhana's sacrifice in the play seems to be an adaptation of his sacrifice during the *Ghoṣayātrāparvan* (*MBh*. 3.224-243) since both share some key elements: the officiating Brahmans (*MBh*. 3.241 ~ *PR* 1.2.2-18.5); the consecrated Duryodhana (*MBh*. 3.243 ~ *PR* 1.23.1); and the attending kings, marked by the significant absence of one of them (*MBh*. 3.242 ~ *PR* 1.27.2-13).

Furthermore, Duryodhana's sacrifice in *MBh*. 3 closes a minor book about a cattle raid against *gandharva*s (celestial musicians), which, in turn, has a lot in common with the cattle raids from *MBh*. 4: Dhṛtarāṣṭra/Duryodhana receives news about the Pāṇḍavas (*MBh*. 3.224 ~ *MBh*. 4.24), Karṇa urges Duryodhana (*MBh*. 3.226 ~ *MBh*. 4.25), the cattle raid is proposed by a complicit party (*MBh*. 3.227 ~ *MBh*. 4.29), Duryodhana reaches Dvaitavana/Matsya (*MBh*. 3.229 ~ *MBh*. 4.33), Citrasena/Arjuna fights back (*MBh*. 3.230 ~ *MBh*.

Uttar. 3.

4.41), and Duryodhana is defeated (*MBh*. 3.231 ~ *MBh*. 4.60). The thematic proximity of the cattle raids would account for the use of the sacrifice, and therefore, for the change in timing.

The epic sacrifice and the dramatic sacrifice, although correlated, are not mere images of each other. This is, precisely, the distinctive feature of any adaptation. A crucial change is that Duryodhana does not overreach for a royal consecration (*rājasūya*), and consequently, the Brahmans do not need to downsize it to a Vaiṣṇava sacrifice. The obstacle preventing a royal consecration, as per the source text, is the fact that both Yudhiṣṭhira and Dhṛtarāṣṭra are still alive. In the play, Yudhiṣṭhira's exile seems to suffice for counting him out of the running, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra is not even listed as one of the *dramatis personae*. Besides having his potential competitors out of the picture, the dramatic Duryodhana meets the criterion of being a good person, which is probably the reason why even his subordinates exhibit a friendly disposition towards him and the ceremony.

> tatra **yajño** nṛpaśreṣṭha prabhūtānnaḥ susaṃskṛtaḥ |
> pravartatāṃ yathānyāyaṃ sarvato hy anivāritaḥ ||
> eṣa te **vaiṣṇavo nāma yajñaḥ** satpuruṣocitaḥ |
> etena neṣṭavān kaś cid ṛte viṣṇuṃ purātanam ||
>
> O best of the kings, let **a sacrifice** according to the rules begin, with sufficient food, well prepared, unobstructed in every direction. This **sacrifice** of yours, **called Vaiṣṇava**, is appropriate for good men; no one besides Viṣṇu has sacrificed with it before.
>
> (*MBh*. 3.241.31-32)

> sarvair antaḥpuraiḥ sārdhaṃ prītyā prāpteṣu rājasu |
> **yajño** duryodhanasyaiṣa kururājasya vartate ||
>
> Once the kings joyfully arrive, along with all their queens, this **sacrifice** of the Kaurava king Duryodhana will proceed.
>
> (*PR* 1.2)

[SA8] Regarding the play's title, I suggest that the author changes the five villages from the *MBh*. into the five nights of the *PR*. In other words, although present in the form of a Vaiṣṇava sacrifice, the religious component would not have been the sole determinant

for the title *The Five Nights*.[129] There might have been a literary component to it too. In *MBh*. 5, during Saṃjaya's embassy (*MBh*. 5.22-32), Yudhiṣṭhira sends Duryodhana the message that five villages, one for each of the five Pāṇḍava brothers, would end the quarrel once and for all.[130] The number five could be an adapted element coming from this recurring request.

> **bhrātṝṇāṃ** dehi **pañcānāṃ grāmān pañca** suyodhana |
>
> O Suyodhana, give **five villages to the five brothers**!
>
> (*MBh*. 5.31.20a-b)

> yadi **pañcarātreṇa pāṇḍavānāṃ** pravṛttir upanetavyā rājyasyārdhaṃ pradāsyati kila
>
> If someone brings him news **of the Pāṇḍavas within five nights**, he will accordingly give up half the kingdom.
>
> (*PR* 1.45.7)

[SA9] The author ignores Virāṭa's anger. According to Bharata,[131] violence and death on stage are to be avoided, specially in the acts: "**Anger**, favor, and grief, the pronouncing of a curse, withdrawal and marriage, the vision of a wonderful birth, all of them should not be made visible in an act [***krodha****prasādaśokāḥ śāpotsargo 'tha vidravodvāhau | adbhutasambhavadarśanam aṅke 'pratyakṣajāni syuḥ*]" (*Nāṭyaś*. 18.20), and "A battle, a kingdom's loss, **a death**, and a city's siege, should not be visible in an act, but contrived through interludes [*yuddhaṃ rājyabhraṃśo* ***maraṇaṃ*** *nagaroparodhanaṃ*

129 On the dramatic sacrifice as a *vaiṣṇavayajña* (Vaiṣṇava sacrifice) and the explanation of the title in relation to the religious movement of Pāñcarātra (Hindu tradition of Vaiṣṇava worship), see Steiner (2010, especially p. 163 ff.). Cf. Tieken's (1997) proposal about the dramatic sacrifice as a *rājasūya* (royal consecration) and the explanation of the title in relation to a *kṣatrasya dhṛti* (wielding of power): "This period of five days has evidently been grafted on the *kṣatrasya dhṛti*, a five-day sacrifice, which functions as a kind of interlude between the completed *rājasūya* and the next one, that is, in case a competitor shows up" (p. 23).

130 Yudhiṣṭhira's offer is later mentioned by Duryodhana (*MBh*. 5.54.29), Yudhiṣṭhira again (*MBh*. 5.70.14-16), Draupadī (*MBh*. 5.80.6-8), Vidura (*MBh*. 5.85.9), and Kṛṣṇa (*MBh*. 5.148.14-16). See Brodbeck (2020, p. 337).

131 I follow the Sanskrit text by the Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages (2020). The translations are my own.

caiva | pratyakṣāṇi tu nāṅke praveśakaiḥ saṃvidheyāni]" (*Nāṭyaś*. 18.38).

In clear contrast with the narrative, which is full of gruesome bloodshed (e.g., *MBh*. 4.31.14, *MBh*. 4.56.6, *MBh*. 4.57.17-18, *MBh*. 4.60.4, *MBh*. 4.60.15), the play does not even allow Yudhiṣṭhira's nosebleed. However, the deleted scene is alluded to a couple of times, by referring to the anger that caused it. The most obvious allusion involves Yudhiṣṭhira proclaiming Arjuna's role in the Matysa victory, and consequently, bringing forth Virāṭa's wrath; the less evident one refers to Abhimanyu narrating Bhīma's role in his capture, but still being unable to vex Virāṭa with his attitude. The minimization of the epic Virāṭa's anger is such that the dramatic Virāṭa even admits finding a certain joy in other people's anger.

Given that avoiding violence on stage is a convention within Greek tragedy (Aeschylus *Supp*. 825 ff. and *Ag*. 1650 ff.; Sophocles *OT* 1146 ff.; and (Ps.-)Euripides *Andr*. 577 ff., *Hel*. 1628 ff., *IA* 309 ff., and *Rhes*. 684 ff.),[132] it could have been borrowed by Sanskrit theater ((Ps.-)Bhāsa *PR* 2).

> tataḥ **prakupito** rājā tam akṣeṇāhanad bhṛśam
> mukhe yudhiṣṭhiraṃ **kopān** naivam ity eva bhartsayan |
> balavat pratividdhasya nastaḥ śoṇitam āgamat
> tad aprāptaṃ mahīṃ pārthaḥ pāṇibhyāṃ pratyagṛhṇata ||
>
> Then, the **enraged** king hit Yudhiṣṭhira in the face with a die, threatening **out of anger** that it was not so. Having been hit hard, blood came out of his nose; but the Pārtha [sc. Yudhiṣṭhira] held it back with his hands, so that it did not reach the ground.
>
> (*MBh*. 4.63.44-45)

> bhagavan akāle svasthavākyaṃ **manyum** utpādayati
>
> O Bhagavān [sc. Yudhiṣṭhira], your untimely confident speech brings forth my **wrath**.
>
> (*PR* 2.20.1)

132 See Sommerstein (2010, Chapter 2).

> **na** te kṣepeṇa **ruṣyāmi ruṣyatā** bhavatā rame |
>
> I **am not annoyed** by your [sc. Abhimanyu's] haughtiness; I enjoy you **annoying** me.
>
> (*PR* 2.58a-b)

Together with the ignoring of the on-stage anger, another innovation of *The Five Nights* is ignoring the outcome.[133] In *MBh.* 4, although there might be contrasting opinions about the exact number of days that it encompasses, everyone agrees on a deadline consisting of thirteen years. But in *PR*, a new, five-night deadline is fashioned, so that the conflict can have a speedy resolution. Therefore, when the epic Duryodhana learns about Arjuna's identity, he demands that the Pāṇḍavas go into exile for another twelve years, but when the dramatic Duryodhana is informed about it, he graciously admits his defeat, and is more than willing to give the kingdom back. A happy ending is strongly suggested, but sometimes the right thing is easier said than done.

> anivṛtte tu nirvāse yadi bībhatsur āgataḥ |
> **punar dvādaśa varṣāṇi** vane vatsyanti pāṇḍavāḥ ||
>
> If Bībhatsu [sc. Arjuna] comes when the exile had not yet finished, the Pāṇḍavas will live in the forest **for another twelve years**!
>
> (*MBh.* 4.42.5)

> **bāḍhaṃ dattaṃ mayā rājyaṃ** pāṇḍavebhyo yathāpuram |
> mṛte 'pi hi narāḥ sarve satye tiṣṭhanti tiṣṭhati ||
>
> **Of course, I am giving** the Pāṇḍavas **the kingdom**, their suitable residence, for when truth lies dead, so too lie all men.
>
> (*PR* 3.25)

133 On ignoring the outcome, see Wulff Alonso (2020): "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" (p. 239); and Hawley (2021): "The entire *Mahābhārata* has a false ending of its own: Yudhiṣṭhira goes to hell, only to discover that it is an illusion" (p. 92, n. 3).

Tokens of Recognition and Other Telling Details

Based on the analysis of the ambush motif as per *Il.* 10 and *Rhesus*, as well as according to *MBh.* 4 and *The Five Nights*, I have identified four instances of possible Greek influence in the adaptation techniques: [AM1][134] *twofold epic themes are merged in the plays, causing the occasional subtraction of other themes*, [AM2] *dramatic features are added with the purpose of emphasizing certain aspects of the characterization that are merely suggested in the source texts*, [AM3] *spaces, times, characters, and themes are changed in the plays, which otherwise would be dramatizations and not adaptations*, and [AM4] *death and violence on stage are ignored as per dramatic convention*.

[AM1] *Twofold epic themes are merged in the plays, causing the occasional subtraction of other themes*. Not only do Greek and Sanskrit epics share the parallel presentation of themes regarding the ambush, but also Greek and Sanskrit theater opt for merging them for the stage. In *Rhesus*, the Greek and Trojan camps are combined into an all-encompassing Trojan bivouac (GA1), and the interactions between Agamemnon and Menelaus, on the Greek side, and between Hector and Aeneas, on the Trojan one (GA2), are brought together against this new, merged background.

If the author of *The Five Nights* knew the Greek sources, the procedure could have influenced his parallel merging of themes. As a part of the major authorial decision of showcasing Duryodhana in a better light, the play fuses the epic Duryodhana with the epic Dhṛtarāṣṭra to produce a kinglier character (SA2). In this sense, the chief subtraction, i.e., that of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, mirrors that of Priam from the *Rhesus*; and the dominant merging, i.e., that of the two ambushes into one (SA1), recalls that exact same procedure in the *Rhesus* as well.

134 AM stands for "Ambush Motif". Hence, numbers AM1-AM4 refer to the proposed influences from *Rhesus*' adaptation of *Il.* 10 into *The Five Nights*' adaptation of *MBh.* 4.

Regarded as an instance of Greco-Indian *anukaraṇa*, the distinguishing trait here would be merging: a Greek text (*Rhesus*) about one raid (by Odysseus/Diomedes) adapted from a source (*Il.* 10) containing two separate ambushes (by Dolon and by Odysseus/Diomedes), would have become an Indian text (*The Five Nights*) about one raid (by Duryodhana) adapted from a source (*MBh.* 4) containing two separate ambushes (by Suśarman and by Duryodhana). In this sense, the adapted elements would be Indian, but the adaptation techniques would come from the Greco-Roman world. In support of this claim, I adduce the same use by (Ps.-) Bhāsa of the two speeches in *The Embassy*.

[AM2] *Dramatic features are added with the purpose of emphasizing certain aspects of the characterization that are merely suggested in the source texts*. Additions and emphases are numerous and correlated in both plays. In *Rhesus*, Dolon's tricky bargaining (GA3) and Rhesus' braggartry (GA4) mirror each other in terms of characterization. Furthermore, the overall commotion (GA5) is presented by means of a pun through which the adaptation proclaims itself as such, and Hector's tardy anagnorisis of Odysseus as a foe rather than a friend (GA6) tells us more about the Trojan's lack of cunningness than about the Greek's mastery of it.

In *The Five Nights*, Droṇa's tricky request for a graduation fee (SA3) is correlated to Uttara's braggartry (SA4) too. There is also a proclamation of the adaptation as such, which now comes in the form of Bhīṣma's feud with Virāṭa (SA5). Lastly, there is room for several anagnorises (SA6): Uttara's recognition of Arjuna by means of a scar, Bhīṣma's recognition of Arjuna thanks to an arrow, and Abhimanyu's recognition of Arjuna because of the father/son encounter. The same event being presented from three different perspectives is a helpful resource when it comes to characterization. Out of all these parallel subjects, trickery and anagnorisis stand out.

On the subject of trickery, Dolon reveals himself as a great source for potential borrowings into (Ps.-)Bhāsa's tricky characters,

such as Droṇa.[135] Ps.-Euripides' Dolon is well aware of the tricky way in which Homer's Dolon gets Hector to swear by his general offer about the best Greek horses, while also turning it into the specific offer of Achilles' horses. Being acquainted with the source text, Ps.-Euripides' Dolon proceeds to request his remuneration, just like any other fourth-century Greek mercenary would have normally done. (Ps.-)Bhāsa's Droṇa is also familiar with the way in which Vyāsa's Droṇa waited for Ekalavya to ask him what he wanted as his remuneration. However, he still opts for requesting his remuneration, against all social convention, before being asked to do so. In this, (Ps.-)Bhāsa's Droṇa seems so odd that even Duryodhana wonders about his behavior.

> οὐκοῦν πονεῖν μὲν χρή, πονοῦντα δ' ἄξιον
> **μισθὸν** φέρεσθαι. παντὶ γὰρ προσκείμενον
> **κέρδος** πρὸς ἔργῳ τὴν χάριν τίκτει διπλῆν.
>
> Well, it is necessary to work for it, and therefore, to give the worker a fair **wage**. **Remuneration** being attached to a job brings forth twice the pleasure.
>
> (*Rhes*. 161-163)

> DROṆAḤ
> **dakṣiṇe**ti
> bhavatu bhavatu
> vyapaśramayiṣye tāvad bhavantam
>
> DURYODHANAḤ
> **katham** ācāryo 'pi vyapaśramayiṣyate

135 If Dolon, as a human trickster, offers borrowable elements for Droṇa, similarly, Athena, as a divine trickster, does so for the Indra from *Karṇa's Task*: "Begone! Bear in mind that all that is yours **concerns me**, inasmuch as seeing that **my allies** prosper. You will also come to know about **my goodwill** [χώρει· μέλειν γὰρ πάντ' **ἐμοὶ δόκει** τὰ σά, / ὥστ' εὐτυχοῦντας **συμμάχους ἐμοὺς** ὁρᾶν. / γνώσῃ δὲ καὶ σὺ **τὴν ἐμὴν προθυμίαν**]" (*Rhes*. 665-667), and "Dear Karṇa, may **your renown** last like the sun, like the moon, like the Himālayas, and like the ocean [*bhoḥ karṇa sūrya iva candra iva himavān iva sāgara iva tiṣṭhatu **te yaśaḥ***]" (*KBh*. 16.8b). Both Athena's and Indra's statements could be interpreted as favorable (as Paris and Karṇa take them) or as unfavorable (as Athena and Indra intend them). Like that of Droṇa, Indra's request is odd enough to make Karṇa wonder about it: "O fortunate one, **should you not tell** me to have a long life? [*bhagavan **kiṃ na vaktavyaṃ** dīrghāyur bhaveti*]" (*KBh*. 16.9).

> DROṆA
> "**A graduation fee**", you say. So be it, so be it. I will make a request for you at once.
>
> DURYODHANA
> **How** will a preceptor make a request?
>
> (*PR* 1.27.15 – 1.27.18)

Regarded as another instance of Greco-Indian *anukaraṇa*, the distinguishing trait here would be oddity: a Greek text (*Rhesus*) in which a tricky character (Dolon) normally requests a remuneration (the horses) when following a source (*Il.* 10), would have become an Indian text (*The Five Nights*) in which a tricky character (Droṇa) oddly requests a remuneration (the deal) when following a source (*MBh.* 1.123.10-39). Oddity in one culture, paired with a lack of it in the other, strongly suggests a borrowing.[136]

As for the anagnorisis, even though its achievement by means of a scar is certainly Homeric (e.g., *Od.* 19.466-475), its relation to a reinstatement could point to a borrowing from Roman theater. Plautus (254-184 BCE)[137] and Terence (185-159 BCE)[138] offer several examples: in *Capt.* 872-874, an account by a third party allows a freeman to recognize his "son [*filium*]", who had been living as a slave; in *Cas.* 1012-1014, the epilogue predicts the discovery of a female slave's noble birth, as the "daughter

136 See Wulff Alonso (2020): "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" (p. 19).

137 I follow the Latin text by Nixon (Plautus, 1916, 1917, 1924, 1930, and 1952). The translations are my own.

138 I follow the Latin text by Sargeaunt (Terence, 1918). The translations are my own.

[*filia*]" of a freeman; in *Cist*. 664-665, a "baby rattle [*crepundia*]"[139] causes a mother to recognize her daughter, who had been living as a courtesan; in *Curc*. 653-657, a "ring [*anulum*]"[140] results in a soldier recognizing a supposed courtesan, with whom he was in love, as none other than his sister; in *Epid*. 635-636, a slave realizes that a young woman, who had been subject to slavery, is his master's "daughter [*filiam*]"; in *Men*. 1133, an abducted young man realizes that he is in the presence of his long-lost "brother [*frater*]", once he hears the other repeat the name of their mother; and in *An*. 904-956, an old man reminiscing brings about the recognition of a young woman as the "daughter [*filiam*]" of a freeman. Nonetheless, the most relevant examples come from Plautus' *The Little Carthaginian* and *The Rope*.

In *The Little Carthaginian*, a youth named Agorastocles is kidnapped and sold as a slave, only to be latter recognized as the nephew of a Carthaginian man who secures his wedding. Several of these details coincide with the plot of *The Five Nights*. Agorastocles and Abhimanyu are abducted youths: "is taken away [*surripitur*]" (*Poen*. 68) and "has walked right into his capture [*grahaṇaṃ gataḥ*]" (*PR* 2.34). They both endure a subordination: "sells him to a master [*vendit eum domino*]" (*Poen*. 75) and "made him descend [*avatāritaḥ*]" (*PR* 2.37). Their uncles take part in both recognitions: "my uncle [*mi patrue*]" (*Poen*. 1076) and "dear uncle [*bhos tāta*]" (*PR* 2.67.2). And they both end up married: "you must give her to me in marriage [*despondeas*]" (*Poen*. 1156) and "I take her as a wife [*pratigṛhyate*]" (*PR* 2.71).

However, the most telling commonality is that of a scar aiding the anagnorisis: bitten by a monkey, Agorastocles is left with a scar on his left hand, which is examined by Hanno, his older, long-lost relative, for his recognition; and, having his forearm slapped by the bowstring/confined by the bracelets, Arjuna is left with a scar on

139 This could have been borrowed by (Ps.-)Bhāsa for the "lute [*vīṇayā*]" (*SV* 6), and later, re-created by Kālidāsa as the "gem [*ratnam*]" (*Vikr*. 5).

140 This could have been re-created by Kālidāsa as the "ring [*aṅgulīyakaṃ*]" (*Śak*. 6).

his (presumably right)[141] forearm, which is interpreted by Uttara, his younger, soon-to-be relative, for his recognition.

Ag.	Ampsigura mater mihi fuit, Iahon pater.
Han.	Patrem atque matrem viverent vellem tibi.
Ag.	An mortui sunt?
Han.	Factum, quod aegre tuli. nam mihi sobrina Ampsigura tua mater fuit; pater tuos, is erat frater patruelis meus, et is me heredem fecit, quom suom obiit diem, quo me privatum aegre patior mortuo. sed si ita est, ut tu sis Iahonis filius, **signum esse oportet in manu laeva tibi,** **ludenti puero quod memordit simia**. ostende, inspiciam.
Ag.	Em ostendo.
Han.	Aperi. audi atque ades:
Agorastocles.	Ampsigura was my mother, and Iahon my father.
Hanno.	I wish your father and mother were alive!
Agorastocles.	Are they dead?

141 Since, in the *MBh*., Arjuna is repeatedly said to be *savyasācin*- (a left-handed archer), it is not too far-fetched to assume that he would have slapped the interior of his right forearm with the bowstring.

Hanno.	Indeed, and I took it badly, because your mother Ampsigura was my cousin; and your father, he was my cousin on my father's side, and by the time of his death, he even made me his heir, so, ever since he died, deprived of him, I have been badly affected. But, if it is true that you are the son of Iahon, **there should be a sign on your left hand, where a monkey bit you, when you were playing as a kid**. Show it me, so that I can examine it!
Agorastocles.	There, I am showing it to you.
Hanno.	Open it up! Listen and witness!

(*Poen*. 1065-1075)

prakoṣṭhāntarasaṅgūḍhaṃ **gāṇḍīvajyāhataṃ kiṇam** |
yat tad dvādaśavarṣānte naiva yāti savarṇatām ||

The scar, which was inflicted by the string of Gāṇḍīva and remains hidden in the interior of his forearm, does not vanish, having the same appearance even at the end of the twelve years [sc. of exile].

(*PR* 2.63)

etan me pārihāryāṇāṃ vyāvartanakṛtaṃ kiṇam |
sannirodhavivarṇatvād godhāsthānam ihāgatam ||

This scar of mine was produced by me removing my bracelets: it comes close to taking the place of the arm guard because of the paleness caused by the confinement.

(*PR* 2.64)

Regarded as yet another instance of Greco-Indian *anukaraṇa*, the distinguishing trait here would be reversal: a Roman text (*The Little Carthaginian*), in which a younger character (Agorastocles) is recognized by an old relative (Hanno) because of a scar on his left side, would have become an Indian text (*The Five Nights*) in which an older character (Arjuna) is recognized by a younger soon-to-be relative (Uttara) because of a scar on his right side.

In *The Rope*, a woman named Palestra, after being kidnapped and sold as a courtesan, is later recognized as the daughter of a fisherman who, eventually, secures her wedding. In this case, the most compelling point of encounter are the names carved on weapons, which function as determinants for the anagnorisis: the woman Palestra is recognized by her father Daemones because she identifies, without seeing them, a little sword with the name of her father Daemones carved on it, as well as a little axe with the name of her mother Daedalis carved on it; and the man Arjuna is recognized by his grandfather Bhīṣma because he identifies himself, without being seen, through an arrow with the name Arjuna carved on it.

Daem.	dic, **in ensiculo** quid **nomen** est **paternum**?
Pal.	Daemones.
Daem.	Di immortales, ubi loci sunt spes meae?
Gr.	Immo edepol meae?
Trach.	Pergite, opsecro, continuo.
Gr.	Placide, aut i in malam crucem.
Daem.	Loquere **matris nomen hic quid in securicula siet**.
Pal.	Daedalis.
Daem.	Di me servatum cupiunt.
Gr.	At me perditum.
Daem.	Filiam meam esse hanc oportet, Gripe.
Daemones.	Tell me, what is **your father's name, which is on the little sword?**
Palestra.	Daemones.
Daemones.	O immortal gods, could my hopes be any higher?
Gripus.	By Pollux, never mind mine!

Trachalio.	Go on, I beg you, straightaway.
Gripus.	Do it leisurely, or else, I'll be hanged if…
Daemones.	Tell me **the name of your mother, which is on the little axe.**
Palestra.	Daedalis.
Daemones.	The gods want me to be saved!
Gripus.	And me to be lost!
Daemones.	O Gripus, this must be my daughter!

(*Rud*. 1160-1165)

bāṇapuṅkhākṣarair vākyair jyājihvāparivartibhiḥ |
vikṛṣṭaṃ khalu pārthena na ca śrotraṃ prayacchati ||

By means of **words having their syllables in the feathers of his arrows** and being transmitted by the tongue of his bowstring, the Pārtha [sc. Arjuna] communicated with us, and this does not result in us hearing him?

(*PR* 3.17)

Regarded as one more instance of Greco-Indian *anukaraṇa*, the distinguishing feature here would be merging: a Roman text (*The Rope*) in which a female character (Palestra) is recognized by an old relative (Daemones) because two names (Daemones and Daedalis) are spelled on two weapons (a little sword and a little axe), would have become an Indian text (*The Five Nights*) in which a male character (Arjuna) is recognized by an old relative (Bhīṣma) because a name (Arjuna) is spelled on a weapon (an arrow).

Before moving on to the next instance of possible Greek influence, I would like to adduce an additional argument to support the view of Abhimanyu's anagnorisis from a Greek/Aristotelian perspective. According to *Poet*. 1452a28-31, an anagnorisis encompasses three changes: from ignorance to knowledge, from enmity to friendship (or vice versa), and from prosperity to adversity (or vice versa). When those criteria are applied to the dramatic Abhimanyu, one sees that he goes from not knowing the identity of his father and

uncles to being fully aware of it. Following such realization, he retrospectively understands why they were not taunted by him, and immediately he re-signifies their behavior as a friendly form of taunting. Moreover, any adverse effects that could have resulted from his capture are suddenly overshadowed by the prosperous family reunion. This is not the case in the *Virāṭaparvan*, where the Pāṇḍavas, even after being recognized, remain friends to their friends (the Matsyas) and foes to their foes (the Kauravas), and they just move on from one adverse situation (the exile) to the next (the war).

[AM3] *Spaces, times, characters, and themes are changed in the plays, which otherwise would be dramatizations and not adaptations*. As would be expected from any other text that critically engages with its canonical source, both adaptations incorporate various changes. In *Rhesus*, the general perspective is recast from the Greeks to the Trojans (GA7), whereas in *The Five Nights*, the remote sacrifice is remade as a proximate one (SA7). Additionally, while Ps.-Euripides maintains the nighttime from the Homeric ambush (GA8), (Ps.-)Bhāsa turns Vyāsa's five villages into the eponymous five nights (SA8).

If (Ps.-)Bhāsa was acquainted with (Ps.-)Euripides, the title itself could have been a Greco-Roman borrowing for *The Five Nights*. Assuming that the number five is an adapted element coming from the five-village request in the *MBh*., the *Rhesus* would have provided a supplementary literary component. To put it another way, the *pañca-* part of the title would be Indian, but the *rātra-* part of it could be Greco-Roman. Thus, the spatial limit of five would have been re-created as a temporal limit of five, and the five "watches of the night" from the Greek play would have become the five "nights" in the Sanskrit play.

> – τίς ἐκηρύχθη πρώτην φυλακήν;
> – Μυγδόνος υἱόν φασι Κόροιβον.
> – τίς γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῷ; – Κίλικας Παίων
> στρατὸς ἤγειρεν, Μυσοὶ δ' ἡμᾶς.
> – οὔκουν Λυκίους **πέμπτην φυλακὴν**
> βάντας ἐγείρειν
> καιρὸς κλήρου κατὰ μοῖραν;

> – Who was announced for the first watch?
> – They say that it was Coroebus, the son of Mygdon.
> – Who, then, after him? – The Paeonian army woke the Cilicians; and the Mysians, us.
> – Then is it not time, as per the drawing of the lots, to wake the Lycians, having gone to them, **for the fifth watch**?
>
> (*Rhes*. 538-545)

> yadi **pañcarātreṇa** pāṇḍavānāṃ pravṛttir upanetavyā rājyasyārdhaṃ pradāsyati kila
>
> If someone brings him news of the Pāṇḍavas **within five nights**, he will accordingly give up half the kingdom.
>
> (*PR* 1.45.7)

As an instance of Greco-Indian *anukaraṇa*, the hallmark here would be change: a Greek text (*Rhesus*) with a temporal deadline (five watches of the night) which has been adapted from the temporal deadline (three watches of the night) of the source (*Il.* 10) would have become an Indian text (*The Five Nights*) with a temporal deadline (five nights) which has been changed from the spatial deadline (five villages) of the source (*MBh.* 5).

[AM4] *Death and violence on stage are ignored as per dramatic convention*. In agreement with the Greek dramatic convention, *Rhesus* ignores the death of Dolon (GA9), as well as the total of deaths. Deaths on the Greek stage are highly unusual, and so are they on the Indian stage, as prescribed by *Nāṭyaś*. 18.38.[142] Similarly, *The Five Nights* opts to ignore the violence by Virāṭa (SA9) as well

142 The fact that Euripides and (Ps.-)Bhāsa are, respectively, the only Greek playwright and the only Sanskrit playwright who contravene this practice strongly suggests an influence. Furthermore, Hippolytus' death on stage in *Hippolytus* could have been borrowed for that of Duryodhana in *The Broken Thighs*: "O father, **my waiting is over**, for I am dead. Cover my face as fast as possible with veils [**κεκαρτέρηται τἄμ'**· ὄλωλα γάρ, πάτερ. / κρύψον δέ μου πρόσωπον ὡς τάχος πέπλοις]" (*Hipp*. 1457-1458), and "Ah, **my heart's desire is fulfilled**. My life is giving up on me… To fetch me, Time has sent a celestial vehicle, a chariot for heroes, yoked to a thousand geese. Here, here I come. (He goes to heaven) [*hanta **kṛtaṃ me hṛdayānujñātam** | parityajanti me prāṇāḥ… eṣa sahasrahaṃsaprayukto māṃ netuṃ vīravāhī vimānaḥ kālena preṣitaḥ | ayam ayam āgacchāmi | svargaṃ gataḥ*]" (*ŪBh*. 65.1-2… 9-11).

as the upcoming violence of the war. Here, the Greek convention could have been borrowed as an Indian rule.

Violence on the Greek stage is avoided at all costs by Aeschylus (524-455 BCE),[143] Sophocles (496-405 BCE),[144] and (Ps.-)Euripides: in *Ag*. 1650 ff., there are threats of a fight by "sword [ξίφος]"; in *OT* 1146 ff., of "torturing [αἰκίσῃ]" an old man; in *Andr*. 577 ff., of "staining with blood [καθαιμάξας]" the head of a king with a scepter; in *Hel*. 1628 ff., of "looking to die [κατθανεῖν ἐρᾶν]"; in *IA* 309 ff., also of "staining with blood [καθαιμάξω]" the head of an old man with a scepter; and in *Rhes*. 684 ff., of a "spear [λόγχην]" going through an enemy. This time, Aeschylus' *The Suppliants* seems to be the model.

The Suppliants present a lengthy confrontation between the Chorus and a Herald. There, one finds violent references to "the cutting off a head [ἀποκοπὰ κρατός]" (*Supp*. 841), the throwing of "punches [παλάμαις]" (*Supp*. 865), and "the dragging by the hair [ὀλκὴ… πλόκαμον (*Supp*. 884) and ἀποσπάσας κόμης (*Supp*. 909)]". But the precise borrowing would have come from a King who calls out the Herald for his arrogance, which in turn would have become the overconfidence and the haughtiness that Virāṭa criticizes, respectively, in Yudhiṣṭhira and Abhimanyu.

> οὗτος, τί ποιεῖς; ἐκ ποίου **φρονήματος**
> ἀνδρῶν Πελασγῶν τήνδ' ἀτιμάζεις χθόνα;
> ἀλλ' ἦ γυναικῶν ἐς πόλιν δοκεῖς μολεῖν;
> κάρβανος ὢν δ' Ἕλλησιν ἐγχλίεις ἄγαν·
> καὶ πόλλ' ἁμαρτὼν οὐδὲν ὤρθωσας φρενί.
>
> Hey there! What are you doing? Out of what kind of **arrogance** are you dishonoring this land of the Pelasgian men? Or do you think you have come to a city of women? Being a barbarian, you indulge yourself too much among the Greeks. Having erred a lot, you have done nothing right in your mind.
>
> (*Supp*. 911-915)

143 I follow the Greek text by Smyth (Aeschylus, 1922, 1926). The translations are my own.

144 I follow the Greek text by Storr (Sophocles, 1912, 1913). The translations are my own.

> bhagavan **akāle svasthavākyaṃ** manyum utpādayati
>
> O Bhagavān [sc. Yudhiṣṭhira], **your untimely confident speech** brings forth my wrath.
>
> (*PR* 2.20.1)

> na **te kṣepeṇa** ruṣyāmi ruṣyatā bhavatā rame |
>
> I am not annoyed by **your** [sc. Abhimanyu's] **haughtiness**; I enjoy you annoying me.
>
> (*PR* 2.58a-b)

As an instance of Greco-Indian *anukaraṇa*, the hallmark here would also be change: a Greek text (*The Suppliants*) where a monarch (the King) censures some explicit instances of violence (beheading, punching, and hair pulling) by one newcomer (the Herald), would have become an Indian text (*The Five Nights*) where a monarch (Virāṭa) censures some implicit instances of violence (being overly confident and being haughty) by two newcomers (Yudhiṣṭhira and Abhimanyu).

In a nutshell, from the ambush motif, I propose a Greek influence from *Il.* 10 and *Rhesus* into *MBh.* 4 and *The Five Nights*. I have pinpointed four adaptation techniques: theme subtraction-cum-merging (AM1), character addition-cum-emphasis (AM2), changing of spaces, times, characters, and themes (AM3), and ignoring-by-convention (AM4). In terms of the proposed Greco-Indian *anukaraṇa*, the influence would be marked by merging. Additionally, I put forward five Greco-Roman borrowings for the ambush motif: the remuneration, taken from *Rhesus* itself and characterized by oddity; the scarred limb, acquired from Plautus' *The Little Carthaginian* and defined by reversal; the signed weapon, gotten from Plautus' *The Rope* and distinguished by merging; the five night watches/five nights, also coming from *Rhesus* itself and differentiated by change; and a violent arrogance, to be found in Aeschylus' *The Suppliants* and marked by change as well. If the *MBh.* already relies on the Greek epic's

version of the ambush, as seems to be the case,[145] then it would not come as much of a surprise that *PR* also profits from Greek sources, especially the *Rhesus*.

145 See Wulff Alonso (2020): "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*" (2020, p. 243). Cf. Liapis' (2012, p. xxxii) view of an Indo-European shared background.