

THE EMBASSY, THE AMBUSH, AND THE OGRE

GRECO-ROMAN INFLUENCE IN
SANSKRIT THEATER

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4. The Ogre

“Nobody Seeks to Kill Me!”

Book 9 of the *Odyssey* is divided into three episodes of unequal length: the Cicones, the Lotus-eaters, and the Cyclopes. Once he reveals his identity to the Phaeacians, Odysseus tells how, right after Troy, they encountered the Cicones, who managed to repel the ravaging Greeks and even to kill some of them; and on the tenth day thereafter, he dovetails the succinct tale of their get-together with the Lotus-eaters, whose alluring fruit nearly meant giving up on the homecoming. In both cases, the companions come out as imprudent, while Odysseus' prudence is what saves the day. However, the third episode is quite different, not only in terms of its lengthier narrative, but also concerning the hero's behavior.

The epic version of the episode goes like this: on the first day, Odysseus and his companions sail past the land of the Cyclopes, who are depicted as being unaware of such basic cultural practices as sowing or plowing, having assemblies or laws, or building ships. On the second day, the Greek warriors stay on the nearby island of the goats, where they eat and drink until nighttime. On the third day, Odysseus decides to take a small group of companions on an expedition to the neighboring land of the Cyclopes. Having sailed there, they find the cave of the mountainous Polyphemus, towards which only a still smaller group of twelve companions walk alongside the hero. Odysseus is carrying a special wine, which the priest Maron had given to him for sparing his life, as well as the lives of his wife and his son.

When they arrive, the Cyclops is out pasturing, and the twelve companions want to gather as much cheese and as many kids and lambs as they can carry, and then run back to the ship; but Odysseus recklessly chooses to wait for the Cyclops and ask him for a hospitable welcome. The Cyclops returns and closes the entrance to the cave with a boulder. When requested for hospitality, he openly disparages Zeus and the other gods, and proceeds to devour two of the companions. Odysseus is ingenious enough not to tell the Cyclops that they have a ship waiting for them – and not to kill him before the boulder has been removed from the entrance.

On the fourth day, the Cyclops devours two more men. By this point, Odysseus cleverly figures out a stratagem: with the help of his friends, he manages to carve a stake from the trunk of an olive that was laying around. By lot, four out of the eight remaining companions are chosen to aid the protagonist during the stabbing of the Cyclops. This new instance of selection presents the men as a group of four plus one. Once they are ready to implement the ruse, Odysseus gets the ball rolling by offering the Cyclops the special wine that he has been carrying, and by telling the ogre that his name is Nobody. An additional two men are eaten during the night.

As a gift of hospitality, the Cyclops offers Odysseus the gift of being the last one to be eaten, shortly before falling asleep with his neck exposed. Odysseus and his companions promptly stab the Cyclops in the eye. The other Cyclopes ask Polyphemus about his cries, to which he inadvertently replies with Odysseus' intended pun by saying that Nobody has harmed him. Odysseus laughs at the scene. Then, he fathoms the last step: he binds the rams in sets of three, and he secures a man below the middle one of each set. He himself rides below the strongest ram.

With the dawn of the fifth day, Polyphemus removes the boulder to take the rams for pasturing. He stands by the entrance while they exit the cave. But the smooth escape suffers from one last setback when the reckless Odysseus wants to make sure that Polyphemus is aware of what has happened to him. Furious, the Cyclops uproots the top of a mountain and throws it at the departing ship. Despite the best efforts of his companions

to restrain him, Odysseus outdoes his previous foolishness by trumpeting his real name.

Thus, Polyphemus recognizes the fulfilment of an old prophecy, and prays to his father Poseidon to either prevent Odysseus from returning home or, at least, to do so tardily, alone, and ready to overcome still more challenges. Another mountaintop falls near the ship while they sail back to the island of the goats. Eating and drinking for the remainder of that day, much as they had done at the beginning of the episode, upon the arrival of the sixth day they sail away and continue their adventure.

Vis-à-vis Euripides' *Cyclops*, its multiple sources include the Homeric and Hesiodic Epics; the *Homeric Hymns*; the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes, and even Euripides himself;¹⁴⁶ and the works of other dramatists which have only been preserved in a fragmentary manner, such as Epicharmus, Aristias, Cratinus, Callias, and maybe even Thimotheus.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the main source for the adaptation of the ogre motif is, without a doubt, *Od.* 9. In a nutshell, the plot of the play is as follows: throughout four episodes of varying length, the hero Odysseus alternately interacts with the chorus of Satyrs and with the Cyclops Polyphemus. The main events include Odysseus buying from the Satyrs, Odysseus plotting against Polyphemus, Odysseus being left high and dry by the Satyrs, and Odysseus revealing himself to Polyphemus.

In the prologue, the satyr Silenus explains that, while searching for the god Dionysus, who had been enslaved by pirates, he and his sons the Satyrs have ended up themselves as slaves at the house of Polyphemus, by the slopes of Mount Aetna. After a *parodos*¹⁴⁸ in which the audience learns that much of the day has already passed, the first episode introduces Odysseus. In their dialogue, Silenus and Odysseus go back and forth about civilization, government, agriculture, viticulture, and hospitality. Odysseus is, clearly, testing

146 E.g., *Cyc.* 222 ~ *Andromeda* fr. 125.

147 E.g., for Epicharmus, *Cyc.* 566-568 ~ *PGC* 72; for Aristias, *TrGF* 4; for Cratinus, *Cyc.* 358-359 ~ *PGC* 150; for Callias, *PGC* 6; and for Thimotheus, *PMGF* 780-783. See O'Sullivan & Collard (2013, p. 42), Shaw (2018, pp. 104-108), and Hunter & Laemmle (2020, pp. 4-8).

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

the waters. After learning that Polyphemus is out hunting, Silenus and Odysseus begin a commercial exchange involving, on one hand, meat, milk, and cheese, and on the other, not money but the wine previously supplied by the priest Maron. The subject of the Trojan war also comes up.

When Polyphemus returns to his cave, he finds his products on display, as well as a group of humans who make his mouth water. The drunken Silenus claims that Odysseus and his companions were trying to take everything by force, whereas Odysseus himself claims that it was all an agreed-upon transaction. With great comedic effect, Silenus swears by his sons the Satyrs that Odysseus and his companions were stealing the merchandise, while the Satyrs swear by their father Silenus that Odysseus and his companions were buying it. Following a new mention of the Trojan war, Polyphemus proclaims his ideology: he does not praise Zeus, but his belly; he does not follow any laws, but only the wishes of his heart; and he will only offer Odysseus, as hospitable gifts, a fire for cooking him, salt for seasoning him, and a bronze pot for completing the preparation of the meal.

After the first stasimon,¹⁴⁹ which gives time for some off-stage violence perpetrated by Polyphemus, the second episode begins with Odysseus narrating the culinary techniques displayed by the Cyclops. He does not only kill two of the companions, but he also carves, roasts, and boils as required. Immediately, Odysseus comes up with a plan. He must get Polyphemus drunk and away from the other Cyclopes, and then, he must use the olive stake from the cave to blind Polyphemus. If all goes well, Odysseus offers to rescue the Satyrs, and therefore, they offer to help him with the blinding. As intended, the drunken Polyphemus lies down just when the heat of the sun is at its peak. And just before falling asleep, he remembers to ask Odysseus about his name, to which Odysseus replies with the well-known “Nobody”. Now it is time to put the alleged bravery of the Satyrs to the test.

149 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.

Following the second stasimon, the third episode quickly presents the unwillingness of the Satyrs to help Odysseus, who in turn, must appeal to his companions. The contribution of the Satyrs is limited to cheerleading. Lastly and after a third stasimon, which allows for the proportional off-stage violence orchestrated by Odysseus, the fourth episode showcases the blinded Polyphemus, who is relentlessly mocked by the Satyrs. As per the epic script, Odysseus finally reveals his identity, whereas Polyphemus, having remembered the prophecy of his blinding, proceeds to throw rocks at his witty adversary. In the exodos,¹⁵⁰ the Satyrs simply follow Odysseus, eager to go back to serving Dionysus.

In the dramatic version, the author profits from these twelve procedures: [GO1]¹⁵¹ he merges two stories into one, [GO2] he adds the father/son conflict, [GO3] he adds the Chance, [GO4] he emphasizes the tree, [GO5] he emphasizes the sex, [GO6] he emphasizes the mistaken identity, [GO7] he changes the place, [GO8] he changes the time, [GO9] he changes the authoritarian figure, [GO10] he changes the role of the priest, [GO11] he changes the lot into a choice, and [GO12] he maintains the hospitality.

[GO1] *Cyclops* brings together the stories about Odysseus and Polyphemus, on one side, and about Silenus and the Satyrs, on the other.¹⁵² The addition of a chorus of Satyrs is a *sine qua non* for a satyr drama, but their integration with the narrative of the source

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

151 GO stands for “Greek Ogre”. Hence, numbers GO1-GO12 refer to the adaptation of *Od. 9* into *Cyclops*. Besides those that will allow me to argue for parallelisms with the Greco-Roman world, other adaptation techniques include changing Odysseus’ and Polyphemus’ genealogies, splitting the disregard for Zeus into the disregard for Zeus’ plan and the derision of Zeus himself, adding the democratic perspective, changing the sheep pasturing into the hunting with dogs, emphasizing Polyphemus’ eye, changing the timing of the ram trick and the boulder trick, adding the buying scene, emphasizing the Trojan war, adding the Cyclops’ hedonism, adding the cooking, and changing the timing of the shipbuilding simile.

152 On merging two stories into one, see Shaw (2018): “As we have seen, Euripides actively acknowledges that the *Cyclops* is a reiteration of the constantly reiterated genre of satyr drama at the start of the play with Silenus’ ‘countless troubles’ (v. 1), but these countless troubles also relate to Odysseus’ legendary ‘many pains’ (πολλά ἄλγεια) at the start of Homer’s *Odyssey* (1.4)” (p. 98).

text is quite innovative. The prologue of the *Cyclops* closely mirrors the proem of the *Odyssey*: the invocation to the Muse turns into that of Dionysus; the heroic Odysseus, into the antiheroic Silenus; and the many resources, wanderings, men, and sufferings, referring to the well-known, postwar homecoming, become the countless labors of a lifetime of servitude under the god of wine.

The overall reversal is further signaled by the abrupt switch, within the very first verse of the play, from the opening dactyl of the first foot, evidently recalling the Homeric hexameter, to the iambs of the last two feet of the trimeter, whose syncopated rhythm makes them stand in overt contrast with the preceding one. To put it another way, the metric of the first verse marks the transition between genres.

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, **πολύτροπον**, ὃς **μάλα πολλά**
 πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν·
πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἶδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,
πολλὰ δ' ὃ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὄν κατὰ θυμόν,
 ἀρνύμενος ἣν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων.

O Muse, tell me about the man **of many resources**, who wandered **very much** after he had ravaged the sacred citadel of Troy. He saw the cities **of many men** and came to know their minds, and he experienced **many sufferings** in his heart while being in the open ocean, striving to secure his own life and the return of his companions.

(*Od.* 1.1-10)

Ἵ Βρόμιε, διὰ σέ **μυρίους** ἔχω **πόνους**
 νῦν χῶτ' ἐν ἡβῇ τοῦμόν ηὔσθηνει δέμας·

O Bromius, thanks to you I tend towards **countless labors**, both now and back in my youth, when my physique was strong.

(*Cyc.* 1-2)

But the interplay is not limited to the beginning of the dramatic composition. About halfway through and in a similar invocation to Zeus, the dramatic Odysseus rhetorically asks what he should say next. Clearly, the author is winking to his audience: this Odysseus knows the script from his epic counterpart, whose story is even explicitly criticized for being far-fetched, but acquaintance alone is

no reason for him blindly following his predecessor. Thanks to the criticality that comes with every literary tradition, the playwright dares to question the canonical text, while still admiring it enough to adapt it.

ὦ Ζεῦ, τί λέξω, δειν' ἰδὼν ἀντρῶν ἔσω
 κοῦ πιστά, **μύθοις** εἰκότ' οὐδ' ἔργοις βροτῶν;

O Zeus, having seen, inside of the caves, things that were terrible and unbelievable, like those found **in stories** but not in deeds of mortal men, what will I say?

(Cyc. 375-376)

[GO2] Euripides adds the father/son conflict. In the epic, there are two father/son relations at play: Poseidon/Polyphemus and Laertes/Odysseus. Unlike the hero, the ogre is the son of a god, and if humans like Achilles can hold a grudge (e.g., *Il.* 1.1), deities like Poseidon can do so too (e.g., *Od.* 1.20). When Odysseus finally reveals his identity, precisely by introducing himself as the son of Laertes, Polyphemus proclaims that he himself is the son of a worthier father, i.e., the god Poseidon. Shortly after, the Cyclops prays that, if possible, his father may cause Odysseus never to make it back home. In essence, the father from the first pair (Poseidon) would be responsible for the death of the son from the second pair (Odysseus).

In the play, the father/son relation is exploited in the form of the newly added characters: Silenus/Satyrs. *Sensu stricto*, Silenus is older than the Satyrs, but he is not their father. However, Euripides makes him so. The scene is quite comical: if the epic Polyphemus invokes Poseidon, the dramatic Silenus conjures not only Poseidon, Triton, Nereus, Calypso, and the Nereids, but also the waves and the fish. Silenus also profits from epithets combining superlatives and diminutives, and he falsely swears on the lives of his sons, only to be immediately called out on his lie by them, who in turn falsely swear on the life of their father.

τοῦ γὰρ ἐγὼ **παῖς** εἰμί, **πατήρ** δ' ἐμὸς εὐχεται εἶναι.

For I am his **son**, and he is proud to be my **father**.

(*Od.* 9.519)

ΣΙΑΗΝΟΣ

μὰ τὸν Ποσειδῶ τὸν τεκόντα σ', ὦ Κύκλωψ,
 μὰ τὸν μέγαν Τρίτωνα καὶ τὸν Νηρέα,
 μὰ τὴν Καλυψὼ τὰς τε Νηρέως κόρας,
 μὰ θαίερά κύματ' ἰχθύων τε πᾶν γένος,
 ἀπώμοσ', ὦ κάλλιστον ὦ Κυκλώπιον,
 ὦ δεσποτίσκε, μὴ τὰ σ' ἐξοδᾶν ἐγὼ
 ξένοισι χρήματ'. ἢ κακῶς οὔτοι κακοὶ
οἱ παῖδες ἀπόλοιθ', οὓς μάλιστ' ἐγὼ φιλῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

αὐτὸς ἔχ'. ἔγωγε τοῖς ξένοις τὰ χρήματα
 περνάντα σ' εἶδον· εἰ δ' ἐγὼ ψευδῆ λέγω,
ἀπόλοιθ' ὁ πατήρ μου· τοὺς ξένους δὲ μὴ ἀδίκει.

SILENUS

O Cyclops, by Poseidon who begot you, by the great Triton
 and Nereus, by Calypso and the Nereids, by the sacred
 waves and the entire lineage of the fish, O pretty little
 Cyclops, O sweet little master, I swear that I was not going
 to sell your goods to the strangers; if not, may these bad
sons of mine, whom I cherish more than anything, **perish**
 in a bad way!

CHORUS

Right back at you! I saw you selling his goods to the
 strangers; if I am telling lies, may my **father perish!** Do not
 do these strangers wrong.

(Cyc. 262-272)

[GO3] The playwright also adds the Chance. In the epic narrative, the outcome of the encounter depends on the gods, specifically on Athena. Even the term selected to refer to the ensuing glory (εὐχος) refers to the kind of glory that is conferred by the immortals. Conversely, in the adaptation, not only Zeus, but every god is degraded. And if there is no longer a difference between gods and humans, cosmos makes room for chaos, and all comes down to dumb luck. Unlike the older hierarchy, where gods outrank humans but are themselves outweighed by fate, this newer world order presupposes just an overarching, deified Chance (Τύχη) that renders deities useless.

πολλῆ δὲ ροίζω πρὸς ὄρος τρέπε πίονα μῆλα
 Κύκλωψ· αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ λιτόμην κακὰ βυσσοδομεύων,
 εἶ πως τισαίμην, δοίη δέ μοι εὖχος Ἀθήνη.

And with much whistling, the Cyclops turned his fat sheep towards the mountain, but I was left behind, deeply pondering an evil, in case **Athena** would grant me the glory, and I could somehow make him pay.

(*Od.* 9.315-317)

καὶ μὴ ᾿πί καλλίστοισι Τρωικοῖς πόνοις
 αὐτόν τε ναύτας τ' ἀπολέσητ' Ὀδυσσέα
 ὑπ' ἀνδρὸς ὧ θεῶν οὐδὲν ἢ βροτῶν μέλει.
 ἢ **τὴν τύχην** μὲν δαίμον' ἠγεῖσθαι χρεῶν,
 τὰ δαιμόνων δὲ **τῆς τύχης** ἐλάσσονα.

And after his most beautiful Trojan endeavors, do not destroy Odysseus himself and his sailors at the hands of an individual to whom there is no care for gods or men. Otherwise, we will have to regard **Chance** as a deity and the deities as inferior to **Chance**.

(*Cyc.* 603-607)

[GO4] The author emphasizes the tree. There are two components to the dramatic depiction of the blinding. The first one concerns the planning process: Homer has Odysseus planning to get Polyphemus drunk before blinding him with the staff of green olivewood, but Euripides goes one step further, by having Odysseus plan to discourage Polyphemus from making any sort of contact with the Cyclopes before even attempting to get him drunk, let alone blinding him with the stake of olive. Clearly, the dramatic Odysseus is playing chess while the epic Odysseus is playing checkers.

Κύκλωπος γὰρ ἔκειτο μέγα **ρόπαλον** παρὰ σηκῶ,
χλωρόν ἐλαίνεον...

Indeed, beside the pen lay the Cyclops' great **staff of green olivewood**...

(*Od.* 9.319-320)

κώμου μὲν αὐτὸν τοῦδ' ἀπαλλάξαι, λέγων
 ὡς οὐ **Κύκλωψι** πῶμα χρῆ δοῦναι τόδε,
 μόνον δ' ἔχοντα βίοτον ἠδέως ἄγειν.
 ὅταν δ' ὑπνώσση Βακχίου νικώμενος,
ἀκρεμῶν ἐλαίας ἔστιν ἐν δόμοισί τις,
 ὃν φασγάνῳ τῷδ' ἐξαποξύνας ἄκρον
 ἐς πῦρ καθήσω· κᾶθ' ὅταν κεκαυμένον
 ἴδω νιν, ἄρας θερμὸν ἐς μέσην βαλῶ
 Κύκλωπος ὄψιν ὄμμα τ' ἐκτήξω πυρί.

I intend to keep him away from that revel, by telling him that there is no need for him to give this drink **to the Cyclopes**, but to go through life pleasantly, keeping it to himself. Once he becomes drowsy, overcome by Bacchus, there is **a stake of olive** in his abode, whose tip, after sharpening it with this sword, I will put into the fire. When I see it kindling, having lifted it while still glowing, I will thrust it into the mid-forehead eye of the Cyclops and melt his eye with the fire.

(Cyc. 451-459)

[G05] Euripides also emphasizes the sex by means of the “Ganymede : Zeus :: Silenus : Polyphemus” analogy. According to the *Iliad*, the Trojan Ganymede was the son of Tros, the eponymous king of Troy, as well as the brother of Ilus, from whom the city received the name of Ilium. Just as Aphrodite comes out from the Judgment of Paris as the most beautiful amongst female immortals, so too does Ganymede stand out as the most beautiful amongst male mortals. His beauty even earns him the job of wine steward to the king of the gods. Such conquest by Zeus reflected the Greek social norm of a sexual relationship between an adult man and a pubescent youth.

Out of this background, the author of the *Cyclops* constructs his analogy by assuming that “Ganymede is to Zeus what Silenus is to Polyphemus”. In other words, the drunken Polyphemus sees in Silenus a potential passive-role sexual partner, thus allowing for the utilization of sex as one of the pillars of any satyr drama worth its ranking within the genre. Hence, the beauty of the most beautiful hero serves as a source of inspiration for a type of sexual encounter that would be more beautiful than one with a woman.

Ἴλος τ' Ἀσσάρακός τε καὶ ἀντίθεος **Γανυμήδης**,
 ὃς δὴ **κάλλιστος** γένετο θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων·
 τὸν καὶ ἀνηρείψαντο θεοὶ Διὶ οἰνοχοεῦειν
κάλλεος εἶνεκα οἴο, ἴν' ἀθανάτοισι μετεΐη.

Plus, Assaracus, and the godlike **Ganymede**, who was born as **the most beautiful** of mortal men: on account of his **beauty** the gods carried him off to pour out wine for Zeus, so that he could be among the immortals.

(*Il.* 20.232-235)

ἄλις **Γανυμήδη** τόνδ' ἔχων ἀναπαύσομαι
κάλλιον ἢ τὰς Χάριτας. ἦδομαι δέ πως
 τοῖς παιδικοῖσι μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς θήλεσιν.

Enough! I will sleep **more beautifully** with **this Ganymede** than with the Graces. Anyway, I take more pleasure in youths than in women.

(*Cyc.* 582-584)

[GO6] Additionally, the playwright emphasizes the mistaken identity through a change in the timing of the name trick.¹⁵³ The epic highlights the relevance of the name trick by placing it in the middle of the sequence, after the boulder trick and before the ram trick. It also stresses the pun between the proper noun “Nobody” and the pronoun “nobody”. The play on words is simple but effective: Polyphemus means that someone named Nobody is seeking to kill him, but his fellow Cyclopes interpret his statement as meaning that nothing is happening. Furthermore, Polyphemus tries to distinguish between a positive statement (Nobody is using trickery) and a negative one (Nobody is not using force), but such subtleties end up being conflated thanks to

153 On the emphasis on the mistaken identity, see O’Sullivan & Collard (2013): “Odysseus takes command of the situation early, speaking at times misleadingly (524, 526, 528) and preparing to use the trick of calling himself ‘Nobody’ (549), famous from Homer (cf. 672-5)” (p. 53), and “The blinded monster’s reappearance and recognition of his own situation can be seen as a farce (663-709), in which the satyrs taunt their longtime tormentor with Odysseus’ trick of Nobody (672-3). The satyrs’ jokes with the name are certainly consistent with the Homeric hero’s own mirth when he sees his trick take effect (*Od.* 9.413-14)” (p. 55). Cf. Hunter & Laemmle (2020, p. 16).

the presupposed negative of the name taken as a pronoun, and all that the Cyclopes hear is a double negative (nobody is using neither trickery nor force).

‘ὦ φίλοι, **Οὐτίς** με κτείνει δόλῳ **οὐδὲ βίηφιν**.
οἱ δ’ ἀπαμειβόμενοι ἔπεα πτερόεντ’ ἀγόρευον·
‘εἰ μὲν δὴ **μή τις** σε **βιάζεται** οἷον ἐόντα,
νοῦσον γ’ οὐ πως ἔστι Διὸς μεγάλου ἀλέασθαι,
ἀλλὰ σύ γ’ εὖχεο πατρὶ Ποσειδάωνι ἄνακτι.’

“O dear ones, **Nobody** seeks to kill me with trickery **and not by force!**” In answer, they pronounced these winged words: “If, indeed, **no one uses** their **force** against you who are alone, there is no way for you to avoid the sickness of the great Zeus, but still, pray to our father, the lord Poseidon.”

(*Od.* 9.408-412)

Similarly, the drama profits from the comical implications of the confusion. But what was simple becomes complex: the assertion that Nobody destroyed Polyphemus can be taken as expressing that there was no wrong done to him; the claim that Nobody is blinding him, as stating that he is not blind; and even the question regarding the whereabouts of this Nobody, as deserving a nonsensical answer, for the word “there”, as part of an utterance such as “there is nobody”, does not denote an actual place. Where the Homeric Odysseus had a good laugh, the Euripidean Satyrs come close to rolling on the floor laughing.

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ
Οὐτίς μ’ ἀπώλεσ’.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
οὐκ ἄρ’ **οὐδεὶς** <σ’> **ἠδίκηι**.

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ
Οὐτίς με **τυφλοῖ** βλέφαρον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
οὐκ ἄρ’ εἶ **τυφλός**.

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ
†ὡς δὴ σὺ†.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ πῶς σ' οὔτις ἂν θείη τυφλόν;

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ

σκώπτεις, ὁ δ' **Οὔτις** ποῦ 'στιν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐδαμοῦ, Κύκλωψ.

CYCLOPS

Nobody destroyed me.

CHORUS

Then, **nobody did wrong** to you.

CYCLOPS

Nobody blinds me right in my eye.

CHORUS

Then, you are **not blind**.

CYCLOPS

<Oh, that you were!>

CHORUS

And how could nobody make you blind?

CYCLOPS

You are mocking me. But where is this **Nobody**?

CHORUS

O Cyclops, he is **nowhere**.

(Cyc. 672-675)

The Euripidean Odysseus also has his fun. When he eventually reveals his name, he does so on the sly: he does not speak of Odysseus, but of his body; he does not act in defiance of Polyphemus, but out of self-preservation; and he is not close by, but at a safe distance. He is not acting the part of the well-trained warrior, but that of the well-read actor. In fact, it is not the Cyclops but Odysseus himself who alludes to the ancient prophecy as per the *Odyssey*.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τηλοῦ σέθεν
φυλακαῖσι φρουρῶ σῶμ' Ὀδυσσέως τόδε.

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ

πῶς εἶπας; ὄνομα μεταβαλὼν καινὸν λέγεις.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὄπερ μ' ὁ φύσας ὠνόμαζ' Ὀδυσσέα,
δώσειν δ' ἐμελλες ἀνοσίου δαιτὸς δίκας·

ODYSSEUS

Far from you, I set a watch over this body of Odysseus.

CYCLOPS

What did you just say? Having changed your name, you
boast of a new one.

ODYSSEUS

The very one my father gave me: Odysseus. And you were
destined to pay the penalty for your impious banquet.

(Cyc. 689-693)

[GO7] In terms of spatial location, Euripides changes the action to a Mediterranean venue: the island of Sicily.¹⁵⁴ The Homeric

154 E.g., Cyc. 20, Cyc. 60, Cyc. 95, Cyc. 106, Cyc. 114, Cyc. 130, Cyc. 298, Cyc. 366, Cyc. 395, Cyc. 599, Cyc. 660, and Cyc. 703. On the change of location, see O'Sullivan & Collard (2013): "But those expecting a close emulation of Homer may have been surprised to learn of the location of Euripides' drama on Sicily, an innovation possibly attributable to the Sicilian poet Epicharmus (F 70-2 *PCG*); in *Odyssey* 9 the home of the Cyclopes is never made clear. Yet in Euripides' *Cyclops* the Sicilian location is made explicit fourteen times in a play of just of 700 lines (20, 60, 95 (twice), 106, 114 (twice), 130, 298, 366, 395, 599, 660, 703)" (p. 42); and Shaw (2018): "Not only has Euripides moved the action of the play from the geographically uncertain Homeric world to the island of Sicily, but he also mentions Sicily and Mt. Aetna a remarkable thirteen times over the course of the play" (p. 84), "He also appears to update the myth in a way that alludes to recent historical events, particularly the infamous Sicilian Expedition. From 415 to 413, the Athenians waged a battle to incorporate Sicily into their 'Empire'" (p. 83), and "Euripides may have even drawn on this myth because the audience would have been mindful of the poet's role in saving Athenian soldiers who were captured by barbarians and confined to a rocky prison. Polyphemus and the Cyclopes represent the Sicilian natives; Odysseus and his men are the arrogant and ill-prepared Athenians; Polyphemus' cave is the rocky quarry that imprisons the Greeks; and Euripides' poetry literally saves the day, with the prisoners escaping

geography is fictional, with its unlocated land of the Cyclopes, and its neighboring island of the goats. The Euripidean geography, in turn, is real: Malea is a cape in the southeast of the Peloponnese, which marked the sailing route towards Italy; and Aetna is a volcano in the east of Sicily. Although the characters and themes remain the subject of stories, there is an authorial intention of grounding spaces and times in historical facts. This agrees with the criticism of unbelievability that the play directs towards the epic.

Νῆσος ἔπειτα λάχεια παρέκ λιμένος τετάνυσται,
γαίης Κυκλώπων οὔτε σχεδὸν οὔτ' ἀποτηλοῦ,
ὕλησσι· ἐν δ' **αἴγες** ἀπειρέσιαι γεγάασιν
ἄγριαι...

Now, a small, wooded **island** stretches outside the harbor, neither close to **the land of the Cyclopes** nor far from it, in which countless wild **goats** have been raised...

(*Od.* 9.116-119)

ἤδη δὲ **Μαλέας** πλησίον πεπλευκότας
ἀπηλιώτης ἄνεμος ἐμπνεύσας δορὶ
ἔξέβαλεν ἡμᾶς τήνδ' ἐς **Αἰτναίαν** πέτραν,
ἴν' οἱ μονῶπες ποντίου παῖδες θεοῦ
Κύκλωπες οἰκοῦσ' ἄντρ' ἔρημ' ἀνδροκτόνοι.

Now, while we were sailing near **Malea**, an east wind blowing upon our mast made us go off course towards this rock of the **Aetna**, where the one-eyed sons of the sea god, the murderous Cyclopes, live in their solitary caves.

(*Cyc.* 18-22)

[GO8] The author also changes the time, reducing several days of action to just one, and thus following the Greek theatrical convention. According to Aristotle,¹⁵⁵ “the latter [sc. tragedy] tries above all to be of under **one round trip of the sun**, or to exceed it by little; but epic is unlimited in time span and differs in this respect [ἢ μὲν ὅτι μάλιστα πειρᾶται ὑπὸ **μίαν περίοδον ἡλίου** εἶναι

through the poet's theatrical creation” (pp. 84-85). On the Sicilian Expedition, see Plutarch *Nic.* 29.2-5.

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

ἢ μικρὸν ἐξαλλάττειν, ἢ δὲ ἐποποιία ἀόριστος τῷ χρόνῳ καὶ τούτῳ διαφέρει]” (*Poet.* 1449b11-14).

The epic mentions the dawn of a new day on five separate occasions (*Od.* 152, *Od.* 170, *Od.* 307, *Od.* 437, and *Od.* 560), which means that the action stretches for at least six days. In addition, the Greek warriors are held captive inside of the cave for at least two nights: from days three to four, and four to five. In contrast, the play traces only the happenings of less than one round trip of the sun: a good part of the day has already passed, since the kids and lambs have been sleeping all day; but it is still daytime, because the daylight still allows for the trading of merchandise; and given the amount of sun-heat, the exact time of day must be the afternoon.

Ἦμος δ’ ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος **Ἥως**,

As soon as the early **Dawn** of rosy fingers showed herself...

(*Od.* 9.152 = 170 = 307 = 437 = 560)

ποθοῦσί σ’ **ἀμερόκοι-**
τοι βλαχαὶ σμικρῶν τεκέων.

Among the little young ones, the bleating ones **who have slept all day** are longing for you.

(*Cyc.* 58-59)

ἐκφέρετε· **φῶς** γὰρ ἐμπολήμασιν πρέπει.

Bring them, for **daylight** suits merchandise.

(*Cyc.* 137)

καὶ πρὸς γε **θάλπος ἡλίου** πίνειν καλόν.

And, besides, it is nice to drink **in the heat of the sun**.

(*Cyc.* 542)

[G09] The playwright changes the authoritarian figure. There are two sides to this procedure. On one side, Dionysus’ authority is positively highlighted, when the epic’s wine drinking becomes the

play's worshipping of the god of wine.¹⁵⁶ On a superficial level, the epic has vines and wine as antedating the arrival of the Greeks, whereas the drama stresses the fact that the inebriating liquor is a Greek invention. However, on a deeper level, there is the association of wine with Dionysus, and therefore, the reinterpretation of drinking as a form of worship. If wine/Dionysus is divine, then it/he must be worshipped. This idea receives further development. For instance, when the epic Odysseus offers the wine to Polyphemus, he introduces it as a special drink coming from his ship, but the dramatic Odysseus is no tagalong, so when he gets to this part of his script, he carefully makes sure to give it his personal touch: this drink is divine, precisely because of its association with Dionysus.

Κύκλωψ, τῆ, πίε οἶνον, ἐπεὶ φάγεις ἀνδρόμεα κρέα,
 ὄφρ' εἰδῆς οἶόν τι ποτόν τόδε νηῦς ἐκεκεύθει
 ἡμετέρη...

O Cyclops, here, drink the wine, after you have eaten human flesh, so that you know **this sort of drink** that our ship contained.

(*Od.* 9.347-349)

...ᾧ τοῦ ποντίου θεοῦ Κύκλωψ,
 σκέψαι **τόδ' οἶον** Ἑλλάς ἀμπέλων ἄπο
θεῖον κομίζει **πῶμα, Διονύσου γάνος.**

156 On Dionysus' authority, see O'Sullivan & Collard (2013): "Interestingly, Homer emphasizes Odysseus' own thought processes in devising his revenge on the monster; it is a βουλή ('plan') that seems best to him (*Od.* 9.318, cf. 302). In Euripides' version the hero's escape plan is 'an idea sent from some god' (literally, 'something divine': τι θεῖον) that comes to him (*Cyc.* 411), and from here Dionysus is a more palpable presence in the play in the form of wine" (p. 51); Shaw (2018): "The name *Bacchios* is used twelve times, Bromios is mentioned six times, and *Dionysos* five, which averages out to about one mention of the god in every thirty lines" (p. 66), "His very first words in the first verse of the play are addressed to the god: 'Oh, Bromius!'" (p. 66), and "Then, at the end of the play, as the chorus of satyrs exit the stage, they sing one final couplet (708-9), exclaiming that they 'will be slaves to Bacchus for the rest of time'" (p. 68); and Hunter & Laemmle (2020): "The complete absence of wine from Cyclops-society, a striking difference from *Odyssey* 9, means that its introduction and destructive effect upon the Cyclops become, more sharply, another variation on the very familiar narrative and dramatic theme of the introduction of Dionysus' rites to a land or city which did not practice them before" (p. 17).

O Cyclops, son of the sea god, look at **this sort of divine drink** that Greece procures out of the vines: **the crown jewel of Dionysus**.

(Cyc. 413-415)

Furthermore, if human beings worship wine/Dionysus, then it/ he favors them in return. Unlike the ingenious Odysseus from the epic, who comes up with a plan all on his own, the devoted Odysseus from the theater receives a divine idea. In this way, this self-proclaimed sommelier turns out to be the most enthusiastic of the devotees. From a structural point of view, the dramatist has re-created Zeus' plan as "Dionysus' plan": introducing an unwilling authoritarian to the liberating effects of wine. In a fifth-century context, relieving the world from overpopulation no longer makes sense as a divine plan, but preaching the gospel of Dionysus does. One might even recall that Euripides' *Bacchae* seem to have made it all the way to Parthia (Plutarch, *Crass.* 33.2).

On the other side of the procedure, Polyphemus' authority is negatively highlighted, when the adaptation introduces another treat suitable to this fifth-century context: the tyrannical perspective.¹⁵⁷ The dramatic Polyphemus is still an anthropophagus ogre, just like his epic counterpart, but as was the case with several other features of the adaptation, there is more to this than meets the eye. On one hand, the Euripidean Cyclopes might not yet be oenophiles, but by looking at their expertise vis-à-vis high-grade meat, one is tempted to view them as *bons vivants*. This is evinced in the first of the two following passages from *Cyclops*.

On the other hand, the re-created text encourages its audience to make a connection between the image of the mythical ogre, literally devouring the heroes of yore, and that of any historical tyrant, figuratively devouring the ordinary citizens – and alongside them,

157 On Polyphemus' authority, see O'Sullivan & Collard (2013): "Polyphemus' status as tyrannical ogre is central to his characterization in *Cyclops*, and he is often referred to negatively by the chorus as their 'master' (34, 90, 163, etc.) while they are his slaves (24, 78, 79, 442). The monster as slave-owning despot marks a key difference in his identity from his Homeric counterpart while still retaining much of the savagery of his epic incarnation. For the audience watching at the City Dionysia in democratic Athens, Polyphemus' tyrannical leanings would intensify his villainy" (pp. 49-50).

the democratic ideal. In other words, the adapted Polyphemus remains a man-eating monster, albeit one with a newly found refinement, but he also becomes a slave-owning despot. These two functions are distributed according to those surrounding him: Odysseus is his potential meal, but Silenus and his Satyrs are the actual slaves of this one-eyed “master”, which is, precisely, the term used to refer to him in the second quoted passage from *Cyclops*.

Ὡς ἐφάμην, τοῖσιν δὲ κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ
 μνησαμένοις ἔργων Λαιστρυγόνος Ἀντιφάταο
 Κύκλωπος τε βίης μεγάλητορος, **ἀνδροφάγοιο**.

I spoke thusly, and they were brokenhearted, having remembered the deeds of Antiphates the Laestrygonian, and the violence of the greathearted, **man-eating** Cyclops.

(*Od.* 10.198-200)

γλυκύτατά φασι **τὰ κρέα** τοὺς ξένους φορεῖν.

They [sc. the Cyclopes] say that strangers bear **the tastiest flesh**.

(*Cyc.* 126)

τίνες ποτ' εἰσίν; οὐκ ἴσασι **δεσπότην**
 Πολύφημον οἷός ἐστιν ἄξενόν τε γῆν
 τήνδ' ἐμβεβῶτες καὶ Κυκλωπίαν γνάθον
 τὴν **ἀνδροβρῶτα** δυστυχῶς ἀφίγμενοι.

Who can they possibly be? They must not know what our **master** Polyphemus is like, since they have set foot in this inhospitable land, and they have unfortunately arrived at the **man-eating** jaws of the Cyclops.

(*Cyc.* 90-93)

[GO10] Euripides changes the role of the priest. Regarding Maron, the epic narrative is very thorough: he is the son of Euantes and the priest of Apollo. Presumably, when Odysseus met him, Maron would have been in the company of his wife and child. By “reverently embracing” the priest and his family, what would be meant is that they were let go unharmed, out of respect for the priestly condition of the father. Then comes the mention of the wine, which among several other epithets, is said to be of a divine nature. The story

evolves backwards, to a time before the encounter, and it focuses on the house that would be located somewhere within the wooded grove. Other characters are mentioned as well: the slaves, the handmaidens, and a housekeeper. And there is even a picture of the prosperous lifestyle antedating the arrival of Odysseus: husband and wife secretly enjoying the divinely sweet liquor, without a care in the world.

As much as the clever Odysseus from the Homeric Epics wants to show off, in this case by boldly claiming some sort of clairvoyance when anticipating the encounter with the ogre, the truly resourceful spirit is that of the author, who announces some key elements that will eventually tilt the scales in favor of the hero: not only is the wine's alcohol content so high as to require some significant diluting, but also the wineskin is large enough to get Polyphemus drunk. Talk about being keen – Homer lets almost nothing slide.

Going back to Euripides, the authorial decision here is to ignore Maron's relation to Apollo, and to provide him with a similar link to Dionysus: if the drink coming from the epic Maron is twice characterized as being divine, the dramatic Maron himself is divine. He goes from priest of a god to son of a god. Moreover, given the overarching triumph of Dionysus in the satyr drama, there is no need to justify the high standing given to Maron.

...ἀτὰρ αἶγεον ἄσκον ἔχον μέλανος οἴνοιο
 ἠδέος, ὃν μοι ἔδωκε Μάρων, **Εὐάνθεος υἱός,**
ἱρεὺς Ἀπόλλωνος, ὃς Ἴσμαρον ἀμφιβεβήκει,
 οὐνεκά μιν **σὺν παιδί περισχόμεθ' ἠδὲ γυναικί**
ἀζόμενοι· ὥκει γὰρ ἐν ἄλσει δενδρήεντι
 Φοίβου Ἀπόλλωνος. ὁ δέ μοι πόρεν ἀγλαὰ δῶρα·
 χρυσοῦ μὲν μοι ἔδωκ' ἔυεργέος ἑπτὰ τάλαντα,
 δῶκε δέ μοι κρητῆρα πανάργυρον, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
 οἶνον ἐν ἀμφιφορεῦσι δωδέκα πᾶσιν ἀφύσσας
 ἠδὺν ἀκηράσιον, **θεῖον ποτόν·** οὐδέ τις αὐτὸν
 ἠεῖδη **δμῶν** οὐδ' **ἀμφιπόλων ἐνὶ οἴκῳ,**
 ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἄλοχός τε φίλη **ταμίη** τε μί' οἴη.
 τὸν δ' ὅτε πίνοιεν μελιηδέα οἶνον ἔρυσθρόν,
 ἐν δέπας ἐμπλήσας **ὑδατος ἀνά εἴκοσι μέτρα**
 χεῦ', ὀδμη δ' **ἠδεῖα** ἀπὸ κρητῆρος ὀδώδει
θεσπεσίη· τότ' ἂν οὐ τοι ἀποσχέσθαι φίλον ἦεν.

τοῦ φέρον ἐμπλήσας **ἄσκον μέγαν**, ἐν δὲ καὶ ἦα
κωρύκῳ· αὐτίκα γάρ μοι οἴσατο θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ
ἄνδρ' ἐπελεύσεσθαι μεγάλην ἐπιειμένον ἀλκήν,
ἄγριον, οὔτε δίκας ἐὺ εἰδότα οὔτε θέμιστας.

Moreover, I had a goat-hide wineskin of sweet, dark wine, given to me by Maron, **son of Euanthes and priest of Apollo** – who, in turn, protected Ismarus. Because of that, we had **reverently embraced him, together with his wife and child** since he dwelled **in a wooded grove** of Phoebus Apollo. And he furnished me with some splendid gifts: he gave me seven talents of wrought gold, and he gave me an all-silver bowl, and having poured it into twelve whole jars, a sweet, unmixed wine, a truly **divine drink**. **In his house**, none of **the slaves or the handmaidens** knew about it, but only himself, his beloved wife, and a single **housekeeper**. And whenever they drank the honey-sweet, red wine, after filling one cup, he poured it **into twenty measures of water**, and a **divinely sweet** smell would come out of the bowl; then, it certainly was not easy to abstain from it. This is what I was carrying, after filling **a huge wineskin**, as well as some provisions in a leathern sack, for I anticipated, in my heroic spirit, going against a savage man, clad in great strength, and knowing neither justice nor laws.

(*Od.* 9.196-215)

καὶ μὴν Μάρων μοι πῶμ' ἔδωκε, **παῖς θεοῦ**.

And surely, Maron, **the son of the god** [sc. Dionysus], gave me the drink.

(*Cyc.* 141)

[GO11] The playwright changes the lot into a choice.¹⁵⁸ In book 9, during the final stages of planning the blinding, Odysseus leads his

158 On the change of the lot into a choice, see Hunter & Laemmlé (2020): “In *Cyclops*, by contrast, the satyrs make much of the question as to which of them will handle the fiery torch together with Odysseus (vv. 483-6, 630-45); here there is no talk of the lot, it is just assumed that Odysseus will give the command. In the end, of course, no satyr comes anywhere near the ‘serious action’, but it is at least worth asking whether Euripides’ employment of the motif implicitly recognises the improbability of Odysseus’ Homeric narration that his comrades drew lots for this ‘privilege’ and that the lot produced just the result Odysseus would have chosen anyway” (pp. 10-11).

companions, not by appointing them to join him, but by ordering them to draw lots. Unlike previous instances, such as when he sailed from the island of the goats with a small but undetermined number of companions, or when he walked towards the cave of the Cyclops with a group of twelve companions, now Odysseus does not decide who will participate in this last phase of the adventure. When the stakes are higher, the hero leaves the decision-making up to chance. However, there is an exact correlation between the hero's wishes and the author's plans: the four allotted men would have been chosen anyway. When Odysseus himself takes the last spot, the group adds up to five, but it is still presented in terms of four plus one.

In *Cyclops*, Odysseus' lips are sealed, and the Satyrs call him out on it. The two contrasting passages offer examples of questions, as if the characters were wondering whether the protagonist has forgotten his lines. The recurring image of drawing them up suggests the direct order of a general, instead of the open-ended option of blind fate, which would follow a drawing of lots. The funniest thing here is the fact that the brave companions from the epic have been ironically supplanted by the cowardly Satyrs from the play. If the reference began with the Chorus calling out the protagonist for his apparent forgetfulness, it ends with him calling them out for their cowardice.

αὐτὰρ τοὺς ἄλλους κλήρω πεπαλάσθαι ἄνωγον,
ὅς τις τολμήσειεν ἔμοι σὺν μοχλὸν αἰείρας
τρῖψαι ἐν ὀφθαλμῷ, ὅτε τὸν γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἰκάνοι.
οἱ δ' ἔλαχον τοὺς ἄν κε καὶ ἤθελον αὐτὸς ἐλέσθαι,
τέσσαρες, αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ πέμπτος μετὰ τοῖσιν ἐλέγμην.

Then, I ordered the others to determine **by lot** which one would venture with me, after raising the stake, to work it into his [sc. the Cyclops'] eye, when sweet sleep had come upon him. Those four whom I would have wished to choose **were allotted**, and after them, I took the fifth place.

(*Od.* 9.331-335)

ἄγε, τίς πρῶτος, τίς δ' ἐπὶ πρώτῳ
ταχθεῖς δαλοῦ κώπην ὀχμάσαι
Κύκλωπος ἔσω βλεφάρων ὥσας
λαμπρὰν ὄψιν διακναίσει;

Come on, **having been drawn up**, who will be the first, and who the one after the first, to grip the haft of the firebrand, and after thrusting it between the eyelids of the Cyclops, who will gouge out his bright eye?

(Cyc. 483-486)

οὔκουν σὺ **τάξεις** οὔστινας πρώτους χρεῶν
καυτὸν μοχλὸν λαβόντας ἐκκάειν τὸ φῶς
Κύκλωπος, ὡς ἂν τῆς τύχης κοινώμεθα;

Will you not **draw us up**, proclaiming those who, after grasping the stake, will be the first ones to burn out the eye of the Cyclops, so that we would partake of this fate?

(Cyc. 632-634)

[GO12] Lastly, the author maintains the hospitality.¹⁵⁹ The epic presents the whole encounter with the ogre as a sort of counterexample of hospitality, and the gifts are no exception to such rule. Instead of being fed a proper meal, Odysseus is intended to serve himself as a meal for the man-eating monster. Therefore, the place of honor at the table suddenly turns into the specials section on the menu. But there is a double entendre here: for the character, eating “Nobody last” means ingesting Odysseus, while for the audience, eventually, it signifies being unable to finish his meal.

The dramatic rendition substitutes one gift for several gifts, all of which can be read ironically in relation to the poetics of hospitality: the fire is not for getting dry and warm, but for getting cooked; the salt, although “fatherly”, is not a family heirloom coming from his father Poseidon, god of the sea, but merely the

159 On maintaining the gift of hospitality, see Shaw (2018): “The main theme that Euripides adopts from the Homeric original is the concept of *xenia*, the ancient notion of reciprocal hospitality...” (p. 75), and “Euripides adopts the theme of the guest-host relationship from Homer’s story of Polyphemus and Odysseus, using the terms *xenos* (guest/host) and *xenia* (guest-host relationship) twenty-three times in the short play. In addition, Odysseus asks if the Sicilians are ‘lovers of strangers’ (*philoxenoi*, 125), Polyphemus is twice called ‘guest-eater’ (*xenodaitumos*, 610 and *xenodaita*, 658), and Sicily is dubbed ‘unfriendly to guests’ (*axenon*, 91). These examples amount to about one mention of guests, hosts, or the guest-host relationship every twenty-six lines, an average that confirms the thematic importance of *xenia* in the play” (p. 76).

right seasoning; and the cauldron is described through the same wording that would be used for any fancy clothing that could have been exchanged during a more hospitable welcome, thus turning the raggedy urchin into a snappy dresser.

Οὐτιν ἐγὼ πύματον ἔδομαι μετὰ οἷς ἐτάροισιν,
τοὺς δ' ἄλλους πρόσθεν· τὸ δέ τοι **ξενίηλον** ἔσται.

I will eat Nobody last after his companions, and the others first: you will have this **gift of hospitality**.

(*Od.* 9.369-370)

ξένια δὲ λήψη τοιάδ', ὡς ἄμεμπτος ᾧ,
πῦρ καὶ πατρῶον ἄλα λέβητά θ', ὃς ζέσας
σὴν σάρκα δυσφάρωτον ἀμφέξει καλῶς.

So that I am not to blame, you will receive these **gifts of hospitality**: a fire, some fatherly salt, and a cauldron, which, having boiled, will duly clothe your ill-dressed body.

(*Cyc.* 342-344)

“Hey! Middle One, Come Quick!”

Book 1 of the *Mahābhārata* consists of nineteen minor books, and it serves to frame the story as a form of storytelling in and of itself. Minor book 1 introduces the bard Ugraśravas and the seers of the Naimiṣa forest, who are the interlocutors of this dialogue-like narrative; and minor book 2 provides two lists of contents: one, in one hundred books, and the other, in eighteen books. Then come several stories about snakes: in minor book 3, a quest for some earrings leads to a conflict with the snakes, and then, to a sacrifice of the snakes; in minor book 4, a bride falls prey to a snakebite; and in minor book 5, a marriage is key to put an end to the snake sacrifice.

Minor book 6 offers a little perspective: Ugraśravas tells Śaunaka what Vaiśampāyana told Janamejaya, that is, the *Mahābhārata*, going back to its very own author, known as Vyāsa. And minor book 7 packs in several stories: the origins of gods and humans; the tales of Śakuntalā, Yayāti, and Mahābhīṣa; the awesomeness of

Vyāsa's stepbrother Bhīṣma; the tale of Māṇḍavya; the births and marriages of Pāṇḍu and Dhṛtarāṣṭra, together with the ensuing births of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas; the tale of Vyūṣitāśva; and as a colophon, the story of Ekalavya. The main subject of minor book 8 is the fire at the house of lacquer: after burning it down and leaving behind six corpses, the five Pāṇḍava brothers and their mother Kuntī set out for their forest adventures, which include the killing of Hiḍimba (minor book 9) and the killing of Baka (minor book 10).

After the tales of Tapatī, Vasiṣṭha, and Aurva from minor book 11, Draupadī becomes the common wife of the five Pāṇḍava brothers in minor book 12: Arjuna wins her by being able to string a bow and hit a target, and Kuntī instructs her sons to share what food they have obtained during the day. Such an atypical wedding calls for Vyāsa himself to narrate the tale of the five Indras in minor book 13. Following this alliance with the Pañcālas, the steward Vidura mediates between the parties in minor book 14; and as a result, by minor book 15, the Kauravas are left with Hāstinapura, and the Pāṇḍavas with Indraprastha.

Minor book 16 opens with the tale of Sunda and Upasunda, intended to regulate the married life of the group, and ultimately responsible for Arjuna's exile, during which he begets Babhruvāhana. Then comes the securing of another major ally: the Vṛṣṇis. In minor book 17 Arjuna abducts Kṛṣṇa's sister Subhadrā; and in minor book 18 he begets Abhimanyu. In closing, and as a preview of what is yet to come, minor book 19 portrays the deeds of Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa during the fire at the Khāṇḍava tract, from which only a few, including the *śārṅgaka* birds, manage to escape.

In contrast with the preceding motifs, the Sanskrit narrative about the ogre comes from two sources: the story of Hiḍimba and the story of Baka. The ogre Hiḍimba (*MBh.* 1.139-144) lives in a tree close to the wood where the Pāṇḍavas are sleeping. Having identified a potential meal, the man-eater instructs his sister Hiḍimbā to kill the humans, and then to bring them over, so that they might cook them together. Four of the brothers and their mother are asleep, but Bhīma is awake. Hiḍimbā falls prey to love at first sight, and after changing her monstrous appearance for

that of a beautiful woman, she confesses to him: his brother wants the whole family as his meal, but she prefers just him as a suitable husband.

Hiḍimba grows impatient and decides to finish the job all by himself. Self-confident enough, Bhīma rejects Hiḍimbā's offer to carry the whole family away. Hiḍimba is outraged by his sister's behavior, and he intends to kill her as well. Still confident in his abilities, Bhīma not only defends Hiḍimbā, but also attempts to defeat Hiḍimba without even waking up his family members. However, the havoc is stentorian. Kuntī wakes up first, and Hiḍimbā tells her what she had told Bhīma: she came for the meal but stayed for the eye candy. When the rest of the brothers wake up, Arjuna offers to help Bhīma, for as he says, ogres become mightier just before dawn. Bhīma quits horsing around, and he breaks Hiḍimba's body in half.

Then, Bhīma would have killed Hiḍimbā too if it was not for Yudhiṣṭhira. Persistently, Hiḍimbā asks Kuntī to let her marry Bhīma, but it is also Yudhiṣṭhira who ends up giving his blessing, which comes with some ground rules: they may love each other during the day, but Bhīma must return to his family at night. On the very same day of conception, she gives birth to Ghaṭotkaca, who is born already looking like a fully grown youth, and who vows to come and help the Pāṇḍavas when needed. The episode closes with Vyāsa leading them to the house of a Brahman priest at Ekacakrā, where the next adventure awaits them.

The ogre Baka¹⁶⁰ (*MBh.* 1.145-152) lives in a wood near the town where the Pāṇḍavas are staying. For some time, the brothers beg for alms, half of which feeds four of them plus their mother, and the other half of which barely suffices for the voracious Bhīma. One day, while the rest of the group is out begging, Kuntī notices the grief of the Brahman, and she exhorts Bhīma to help in whatever way possible. Mother and son find the Brahman at a crossroads: he is torn by the impossible choice of sacrificing either a member

160 As pointed by Hildebeitel (2001, p. 138), Baka relates to the Crane disguise of Yama-Dharma.

of his family or himself, which in the long run, would also mean sacrificing those who depend on him to survive.

Shortly thereafter, all the family members, one after another, turn to martyrs: his wife steps up by claiming that, as per female duty and having already granted him progeny, her own life is the only thing left for her to sacrifice; his older daughter volunteers too, after asserting that, since daughters are meant to be given away anyway, he might as well get it over with; and in an extremely moving scene, his younger son innocently boasts that he can kill the ogre with a straw that he picks up from the floor.

At this point, Kuntī reveals herself, and the Brahman fills in the gaps of the story: there is an ogre named Baka, who in exchange for protecting the village from other enemies, demands free meals in the form of rice and buffalos, as well as the humans who, by turns that come after several years, must take them over to him. Kuntī saves the day by offering Bhīma to take the place of the Brahman, with the sole condition that the latter does not breathe a word about it to anyone. When the other Pāṇḍavas return, Yudhiṣṭhira misjudges Kuntī's actions as rash, only to be immediately corrected both by her knowledge on duty and by Bhīma's record against ogres, as recently proven with the death of Hiḍimba.

The next day, Bhīma arrives at the wood with the food for Baka, which he tauntingly begins to eat. After ignoring him for a while, Bhīma eventually responds to Baka, who has uprooted a tree and thrown it at him, and fights back. A tree battle unfolds. Then, in another instance of his trademark move, Bhīma breaks Baka in half. When other ogres come to see what is happening, Bhīma threatens to do the same to them if they do not stop bothering the townsfolk. Baka's corpse is left at the city gate. Another day later, the townsfolk visit the Brahman looking for an explanation, but the Brahman, in compliance with his promise, just credits another unnamed Brahman for such superhuman deeds. Thus, the Pāṇḍavas manage to keep on living there for a while.

Regarding *The Middle One*, its sources include the *Hiḍimbavadhaparvan*, "The Book about the Killing of Hiḍimba" (*MBh.* 1.139-144) and the *Bakavadhaparvan*, "The Book about the

Killing of Baka” (*MBh.* 1.145-152).¹⁶¹ The plot of the play is as follows: After the standard invocation of the god Viṣṇu, the prologue has the stage manager introduce all the elements that will be key for the play: a father and a son, a Brahman and a rakshasa, a middle one. Then, the one and only act progresses from one encounter to the next: the Brahman Keśavadāsa and his family meet the rakshasa Ghaṭotkaca, Ghaṭotkaca meets the hero Bhīma, and Bhīma meets the female rakshasa Hiḍimbā.

During the first encounter, that of Keśavadāsa and his family with Ghaṭotkaca, the Brahman is walking, alongside with his wife and his three sons, when suddenly, a rakshasa starts chasing them. The mother and the sons fear his appearance, but the Brahman is put at ease by his words. Ghaṭotkaca presents himself as one who venerates Brahmans but is still willing to hunt them down, since his mother has instructed him to do so. Keśavadāsa proposes to ask the Pāṇḍavas for help because he knows them to be living close by. However, the eldest son provides him with three pieces of information that take him on an emotional rollercoaster: on that day, the Pāṇḍavas are away, attending a sacrifice; Bhīma was left behind, in charge of protecting the hermitage; but at that time, he has also departed, looking to get some exercise.

161 On the story of Baka as a secondary source for the adaptation, see Pavolini (1918/1920, pp. 1-2). See also Brückner (1999/2000): “The motives of the middle one and the substitution of a Kṣatriya for a Brahmin have structural parallels in the *MBh*-story of the killing of Baka (I.10.147, *Bakavadhaparvan*) as well as in the Śunaḥśepa-legend of the *Aitareya-Brahmaṇa* to which the text alludes almost literally (VII.15.7)” (p. 521); Salomon (2010): “Although Ghaṭotkaca does not figure in the story of the demon Baka, one may well surmise that this incident, given its proximity in the original epic, inspired the playwright’s elaboration of the older Ghaṭotkaca legends. Thus the *MV* can be understood as an adaptation and expansion of the original *Mahābhārata* legends about Ghaṭotkaca, partly by way of a ‘contaminatio’...” (pp. 7-8); and Sutherland Goldman (2017): “The theme of the unloved and unwanted middle child has antecedents in the Śunaḥśepa story, known in its earliest version in *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 7.15.14-18... The other most probable source of Bhāsa’s play, as noted by Devadhar, is the story of the demon Baka in the *Mahābhārata*” (p. 239). Cf. on the story of Śunaḥśepa as a secondary source for the adaptation, *AitBr.* 7.15.7 and *AitBr.* 7.15.14-18, as well as retellings in *MBh.* 13.3.6, *R.* 1.60.61, and *BhP.* 9.7 (Sutherland Goldman, 2017, p. 239, n. 45).

At this point, the eldest son asks Ghaṭotkaca to let them go, to which the rakshasa agrees, on the condition that Keśavadāsa relinquishes one of his sons. One after another, the Brahman, the wife, the eldest son, the middle son, and the youngest son voluntarily offer to sacrifice themselves. Ghaṭotkaca rejects the Brahman and the wife, for his mother would not be satisfied either by an old man or by a woman. After that, each parent chooses their favorite: he wants to keep the eldest, and she prefers the youngest. The unwanted middle son asks, as his dying wish, to go to a nearby pond and quench his thirst. But Ghaṭotkaca realizes that he is taking too long, and it is getting a little late for his mother's breakfast, so he decides to call him. The rakshasa does not know how to address him, and Keśavadāsa is only willing to go so far in helping him, so the eldest son tells Ghaṭotkaca that he just goes by "Middle One".

Calling for one "Middle One" (sc. the middle son), Ghaṭotkaca accidentally summons another "Middle One" (sc. Bhīma), which prompts the second encounter, between Ghaṭotkaca and Bhīma. They look at each other and it is as if they were looking in a mirror. Ghaṭotkaca asks Bhīma if he is another "Middle One", to which Bhīma replies that he is the one and only "Middle One". By then, Keśavadāsa recognizes Bhīma, and he does so just in time, for when the middle son comes back from his self-procured libation, there is already someone who can help. At this point, the audience learns that the action is set in the Kuru jungle, between the villages of Yūpa and Udyāmaka, on the day of the initiation of Keśavadāsa's cousin.

Ghaṭotkaca and Bhīma start talking, and as soon as the rakshasa mentions Hiḍimbā to be his mother, the hero recognizes him as his son, but he still decides to play along a little longer. Bhīma volunteers to step in on behalf of the middle son, arguing that the life of a Brahman is worth more than that of a Kshatriya. Then, Bhīma starts taunting Ghaṭotkaca, especially by insulting his paternal heritage, and this leads to the rakshasa fighting the hero. Ghaṭotkaca throws trees and mountaintops at Bhīma, he wrestles him, and he even attempts to bind him; but nothing seems to work. When Ghaṭotkaca mentions, one more time, that he is following

orders, Bhīma is reminded about Hiḍimbā, and he continues his path, towards the third and last encounter.

Hiḍimbā recognizes Bhīma just by looking at him, and she immediately scolds Ghaṭotkaca for his mistake. But Ghaṭotkaca wants proof of his wrongdoing: Hiḍimbā salutes Bhīma as her husband, and only then does Ghaṭotkaca finally recognize him. After the anagnorisis, father and son come together in an embrace. Figuratively out of the woods, Keśavadāsa is ready to get literally out of there as well, but Bhīma offers to take him to the hermitage where the Pāṇḍavas are staying, as an overdue token of hospitality. Keśavadāsa replies by claiming that him and his family having been given back their lives is more than enough. They go their separate ways, and the play ends as it began, with a prayer to Viṣṇu.

There are twelve procedures that the playwright displays in his adaptation: [SO1]¹⁶² he merges two stories into one, [SO2] he adds the father/son conflict, [SO3] he adds the chance, [SO4] he emphasizes the trees, [SO5] he ignores the sex, [SO6] he emphasizes the mistaken identity, [SO7] he changes the place, [SO8] he changes the time, [SO9] he changes the authoritarian figure, [SO10] he changes the role of the Brahman, [SO11] he changes the lot into a choice, and [SO12] he maintains the hospitality.

[SO1] (Ps.-)Bhāsa's merging of two stories into one would be an Indian example of *contaminatio*, i.e., incorporating material from another *Mahābhārata* episode into the primary episode which he is adapting.¹⁶³ The story of Hiḍimba functions as the primary

162 SO stands for "Sanskrit Ogre". Hence, numbers SO1-SO12 refer to the adaptation of *MBh. 1* into *The Middle One*. Once again, the list is limited to those examples that will allow me to argue for Greco-Roman parallelisms. Other techniques include changing Ghaṭotkaca's attitude towards Brahmans, maintaining the willing mother, changing the older sister into the eldest brother, maintaining the younger brother, adding the water offering, changing the husband/brother dilemma into the mother/father dilemma, and emphasizing Hiḍimbā's absence.

163 On the Roman use of *contaminatio*, see Brown (2015, para. 1). On the Indian use of *contaminatio*, see Pavolini (1918/1920, p. 1) and Salomon (2010, p. 8). Cf. Tieken's (1997) proposal about a merging of two aspects of an *upanayana* (initiation): "The play is concerned with the *upanayana* ceremony on more than one level. On one level we have the Brahman family on its way to attend a relative's son's initiation. On another level we have the task set for Ghaṭotkaca by his mother, which is reminiscent of the test set by the *guru*

episode: from its beginning, the ogress Hiḍimbā meeting the Pāṇḍava family turns into the ogre Ghaṭotkaca meeting the family of Brahmans; and from its ending, the encounter with the order-giving Hiḍimba becomes the encounter with the order-giving Hiḍimbā. The story of Baka provides most of the incorporated material: mainly, the Pāṇḍava family from the story of Hiḍimba is substituted for the family of Brahmans of the story of Baka. But as I will show, other stories also contribute with additional material: for instance, the father/son conflict comes from the story of Babhruvāhana (*MBh.* 14.78-82).

From the story of Hiḍimba, there are several elements that have been maintained, albeit with slight modifications. First, an ogre/ogress entrusts an ogress/ogre to bring back some humans for them to eat. The epic has Hiḍimba ordering Hiḍimbā; the play, Hiḍimbā ordering Ghaṭotkaca. Second, the entrusted ogress/ogre comes upon a family. The epic narrative portrays the Pāṇḍavas and Kuntī; the adaptation, the Brahman and his family. Third, the entrusted ogress/ogre ponders whether to follow the order or to act freely. The *MBh.* depicts Hiḍimbā's reflection on *strīdharmā* (wife duty), which leads her to choose her potential husband Bhīma over her brother Hiḍimba; the *MV*, Ghaṭotkaca's reflection on *kṣatradharma* (warrior duty), which leads him to choose sparing the life of a Brahman over following the order of a mother.

Fourth, the entrusted ogress/ogre fails to bring back the humans. Vyāsa makes Hiḍimbā act out of love, whereas (Ps.-)Bhāsa makes Ghaṭotkaca act out of respect. Fifth, a hero meets the entrusting ogre/ogress. The storyteller has Bhīma intentionally sticking around for Hiḍimba, while the playwright has Bhīma fortuitously stumbling onto Hiḍimbā. And sixth, the hero has a duel with the ogre. In the older version, Bhīma fights Hiḍimba to the death; in the newer one, he fights Ghaṭotkaca until the latter recognizes him as his own father.

(or his wife) for his pupil as part of the latter's initiation. After the successful completion of his task Ghaṭotkaca is reunited with his father and mother, which duplicates the return of the *snātaka* to his family. It may be asked if the sacrifice of the middle son of the brahmin should not be considered such a test as well" (p. 32).

Something similar could be said about the dialectics of tradition and innovation in terms of the story of Baka. First, the entrusted ogress/ogre comes upon a family. As a feature that is common to both the story of Hiḍimba and that of Baka, the family serves to establish the connection. In the epic, the family members are a Brahman, his wife, his older daughter, and his younger son; in the drama, they are a Brahman, his wife, and his three sons, i.e., the eldest, the middle one, and the youngest. Second, a single family member must be chosen for the entrusting ogre/ogress. In the epic narrative, the townsfolk sacrifice themselves by turns, and by the day on which the events take place, the Brahman's number is up; in the adaptation, the Brahman is directly asked to choose one of his sons as a victim.

Third, there is a discussion aimed at figuring out how to proceed. The *MBh.*'s arguments are that, with the death of the Brahman, his family will also die; that the lives of his two children are equally valuable; and that, if offered as a victim, his wife will probably be spared; the *MV*'s arguments, in turn, are that, with the death of the Brahman, his family will live; that the lives of his eldest and youngest sons are more valuable than that of his middle son; and that, if offered as a victim, his wife will definitely be spared. Fourth, the entrusting ogress/ogre does not receive the chosen family member. Vyāsa's choice is Bhīma, whom Kuntī offers as a substitute, and (Ps.-)Bhāsa's choice is Bhīma too, but in this case, he volunteers after appearing by chance.

Fifth, the potential victim requires an ablution. The storyteller presents the older daughter merely speaking about a water offering, whereas the playwright presents the middle son effectually going out for water. And sixth, the hero has a duel with the ogre. As was the case with the seemingly vulnerable family, the climactic duel is also a shared feature between the stories of Hiḍimba and Baka. In the Baka version, Bhīma fights Baka to the death; in the Ghaṭotkaca version, he fights Ghaṭotkaca until the latter recognizes him as his own father.

As an example of the postulated *contaminatio*, the following epic passages, respectively dealing with Ghaṭotkaca's birth from Hiḍimbā and with the Brahman's worries about Baka causing the

death of his family, are merged into a dramatic passage combining the ogre's miraculous birth and the family's threat of death. The epic birth on the day of conception is reinterpreted as the dramatic birth of a fire-like ogre from an ogress like a kindling stick. The former is marvelous for its celerity, the latter, for its symbolism. In addition, both sets of families are presented in terms of a Brahman accompanied by his wife and children.

bālo 'pi yauvanaṃ prāpto mānuṣeṣu viśāṃ pate |
sarvāstreṣu paraṃ vīraḥ prakarṣam agamad balī ||
sadyo hi garbhaṃ rākṣasyo labhante prasavanti ca |
kāmarūpadharāś caiva bhavanti bahurūpiṇaḥ ||

O lord of the people, although still a boy, he reached puberty among humans, and as a powerful hero, he attained great preeminence in every weapon. **Indeed, rakshasa women conceive and give birth on the very same day**, and their sons, assuming any shape at will, become multiform.

(*MBh.* 1.143.31-32)

na hi yogaṃ prapaśyāmi yena mucyeyam āpadaḥ |
putradāreṇa vā sārddhaṃ prādraveyam anāmayaṃ ||

I certainly do not see any means by which I could get rid of my misfortune, unless, **together with my wife and children**, I could run away to a safe place.

(*MBh.* 1.145.25)

eṣa khalu pāṇḍavamadhyamasyātmajo
hiḍimbāraṇīsambhūto rākṣasāgnir akṛtavairaṃ
brāhmaṇajanaṃ vitrāsayati
bhoḥ kaṣṭaṃ kaṣṭaṃ khalu **patnīsutaparivṛtasya**
brāhmaṇasya vṛttānto 'tra hi

Now, this son of the middle Pāṇḍava [sc. Bhīma], the fire-like rakshasa **born from the kindling stick known as Hiḍimbā**, terrifies the estate of Brahmans, who have no feud with him. How sad is this incident of the Brahman **surrounded by his wife and children!**

(*MV* 2.3-2.4)

[SO2] The playwright adds the father/son conflict.¹⁶⁴ As pointed out by Salomon (2010), this conflict is emphasized through an elaborate mirrored characterization, involving two literary techniques: repetition and key words. For instance, the same phrasing is used for/by both Bhīma and Ghaṭotkaca at *MV* 9b ~ *MV* 40.2, *MV* 24.6 ~ *MV* 40.17, *MV* 25.8 ~ *MV* 26.7, *MV* 26 ~ *MV* 27, *MV* 38.3 ~ *MV* 40.5, and *MV* 47.3 ~ *MV* 47.8; and the word *sadrśa-* (like) is used at *MV* 24.12, *MV* 25d, *MV* 38.3, *MV* 39b, *MV* 41d, *MV* 42a, *MV* 42d, *MV* 43d, and *MV* 49.16. (Ps.-)Bhāsa takes Hiḍimbā's description of Bhīma, which has a certain lechery to it when coming from the hankering ogress, and he transfers it into Ghaṭotkaca's and Bhīma's descriptions of each other. There is clearly a doubling going on here.

The father Bhīma and his son Ghaṭotkaca are the ones interacting in the play, and consequently, they are also the ones voicing their thoughts about each other. Among the various similarities between the two dramatic portrayals, one stands out because of its presence in the epic version as well: the comparison with a lion. On one hand, the epic Hiḍimbā praises Bhīma's arms, shoulders, and eyes. On the other hand, the dramatic Bhīma extols Ghaṭotkaca's eyes, waist, arms, and shoulders, whereas the dramatic Ghaṭotkaca exalts Bhīma's arms, waist, and eyes. However, beyond any topical characterization, the recurrence of the lion image certainly supports the view that there are adaptation techniques in play. Lastly, the claim by the ogress that such a man is husband material

164 On the addition of the father/son conflict, see Salomon (2010): "From a modern point of view, the *MV* is, most obviously, an archetypal oedipal drama. On this point, Woolner and Sarup remark rather laconically in the introduction to their translation (p. 141) that "the motif of a father meeting and sometimes fighting his own son unawares is familiar." Still, for all its striking parallels with the Oedipus legend, the *MV* shows in at least two significant respects characteristically Indian features. First, as Woolner and Sarup (*ibid.*) note, "That a hero should find a son in such a monster seems original." The second and more important difference is the culmination in a recognition and reconciliation between father and son; this, in keeping with the conventions of the Sanskrit drama, which, with rare exceptions (notably the *Karṇabhāra*, also attributed to Bhāsa) ends happily" (p. 8); and Sutherland Goldman (2017): "Bhīma's entrance into the story now sets up an Oedipal struggle between father and son, while the nonpresent mother hovers on the outskirts of the narrative. As in the original Oedipal myth, the son is unaware that this person who confronts him is his father" (p. 241).

is substituted for a generic compliment that both hero and ogre pay each other.

ayaṃ śyāmo mahābāhuḥ **siṃh**askandho mahādyutiḥ |
kambugrīvaḥ puṣkarākṣo bhartā yukto bhaven mama ||

May this dark-skinned one be my lawful husband – the one with strong arms, **leonine** shoulders, great splendor, shell-like neck, and lotus eyes.

(MBh. 1.139.14)

aho darśaniyo 'yaṃ puruṣaḥ ayaṃ hi
siṃhāśyaḥ **siṃh**adaṃṣṭro madhunibhanayanaḥ
snigdhaḡambhīrakaṇṭho
babhrubhrūḥ śyenanāso dviradapatihanur
dirghaviśliṣṭakeśaḥ |
vyūḍhorā vajramadhyo gajavṛṣabhaḡatir
lambapīnāṃsabāhuḥ
suvyaktaṃ rākṣasījo vipulabalayuto lokavīrasya putraḥ ||

Ah, this man is certainly good-looking – the one with **leonine** face, **leonine** fangs, eyes like wine, deep voice coming from his throat, deep-brown eyebrows, aquiline nose, elephantine jaw, long loose hair, wide chest, adamantine waist, elephantine gait, long arms, and thick shoulders. Endowed with great strength, he is clearly the son of an earthly hero, born to him from a rakshasa.

(MV 25.8-26)

aho darśaniyo 'yaṃ puruṣaḥ ya eṣaḥ
siṃhākṛtiḥ kanakatālasamānabāhur
madhye tanur garuḍapakṣavilīptapakṣaḥ |
viṣṇur bhaved vikasitāmbujapatranetro
netre mamāharati bandhur ivāḡato 'yam ||

Ah, this man is certainly good-looking – the one with **leonine** appearance, arms like palm trees, fine waist, and sides as painted as Garuḍa's wings. He could be Viṣṇu of eyes like open lotus leaves. He catches my eye like a recently arrived relative.

(MV 26.7-27)

Additionally, as is the case with *The Five Nights*, the anagnorisis of *The Middle One* draws materials from the story of Babhruvāhana (*MBh.* 14.78-82). This episode states that, during the horse sacrifice, the warrior Arjuna arrives at the kingdom of his son Babhruvāhana, who greets him with all due respect. However, Arjuna takes this as an insult, for it contravenes the duty of warriors, according to which a fight between the horse's guard and the kingdom's sovereign must ensue. Arjuna's accusations are aimed directly at Babhruvāhana's manliness. At this point, the naga Ulūpī intervenes, assuming a motherly role – Babhruvāhana's biological mother is, in fact, the princess Citrāṅgadā – and encouraging her putative son to seek the approval of Arjuna.

At first, Babhruvāhana fights from a chariot, and Arjuna does so from the ground. But once the son loses his horses, they proceed to an on-foot duel, during which Babhruvāhana severely wounds Arjuna: the latter drops dead and the former faints in a dead-like manner. Then, Citrāṅgadā laments her dead husband Arjuna, and blames it all on her co-wife Ulūpī, whom she asks to fix it, or else she will starve herself to death. Shortly thereafter, Babhruvāhana regains consciousness and, looking for an atonement that would fit such a contemptible deed as parricide, he too is determined to starve himself to death. And just as she had been responsible for Arjuna dying, Ulūpī must be credited for him coming back to life. She summons a miraculous jewel, which Babhruvāhana then places on Arjuna's chest. The revived hero has no memory of what has happened, and he is even baffled as to why there are so many long faces around him.

In retrospect, Ulūpī claims, it has all been for the best, since Arjuna dying means him being able to reach heaven, something that he would not have been allowed to do if he did not expiate the offence of killing his grandfather Bhīṣma while he was fighting someone else. Since Ulūpī had overheard the godly Vasus talking about cursing Arjuna to death, she had asked her own father to try his best to reduce the punishment. And the outcome was favorable, for a temporary death is certainly better than a lasting one.

Now, the adaptation reverses the sequence of events: instead of progressing from the revelation that Ulūpī is the mother to the

encounter between Babhruvāhana and his father Arjuna, it first presents the father/son encounter, during which Bhīma comes to the full realization that Ghaṭotkaca is his son, while Ghaṭotkaca comes to the partial realization that Bhīma is a Kshatriya, and only then does it introduce the character of the mother Hiḍimbā, who, instead of introducing herself as such, openly addresses Bhīma as her husband, thus contributing to the completion of Ghaṭotkaca's anagnorisis. All three anagnorises reverberate backwards, as they should: Bhīma understands straightaway, by focusing on Ghaṭotkaca's pride; Ghaṭotkaca goes through two steps, by comprehending, first, Bhīma's general pride, and then, Bhīma's specific link to him.

ulūpīm māṃ nibodha tvaṃ **mātaraṃ** pannagātmajām |
 kuruṣva vacanaṃ putra dharmas te bhavitā paraḥ ||
 yudhyasvainaṃ kuruśreṣṭhaṃ dhanaṃjayam arimḍama |
 evaṃ eṣa hi te prīto bhaviṣyati na saṃśayaḥ ||

Know me to be Ulūpī, your [sc. Babhravāhana's] **mother** and the daughter of a naga. O son, follow my orders and your merit will be supreme. O enemy-tamer, fight with Dhanaṃjaya [sc. Arjuna], the best of the Kurus, for in this way, he will doubtless be pleased with you.

(MBh. 14.78.11-12)

evaṃ hiḍimbāyāḥ putro 'yam
 sadṛśo hy asya **garvaḥ**

So, he [sc. Ghaṭotkaca] is the son of Hiḍimbā. Then, his **pride** is fitting.

(MV 38.2-38.3)

evaṃ kṣatriyo 'yam
 tena **garvaḥ**

So, he [sc. Bhīma] is a Kshatriya. That is the reason for his **pride**.

(MV 40.4-40.5)

GHAṬOTKACAḤ
kaḥ pratyayaḥ

HIḌIMBĀ
eṣa pratyayaḥ
jayatv āryaputraḥ

GHAṬOTKACA
What is your proof?

HIḌIMBĀ
This is my proof: Glory to my **husband** [sc. Bhīma]!

(MV 48.23-48.25b)

[SO3] The author adds the chance.¹⁶⁵ Even though chance has little to do with the story of Hiḍimba, *The Middle One's* plot advances from one lucky break into the next one. This could be owed to the fact that the story of Baka does factor in chance, when explaining why Bhīma is available for the match to begin with: his brothers went begging for alms, but someone had to keep Kuntī company. Likewise, the play stresses, by means of a threefold explanation, why Bhīma happens to be at the crime scene in the first place: the Pāṇḍavas are out, not begging for alms, but attending a sacrifice; Bhīma is in, not keeping his mother company, but holding the fort by protecting the hermitage; and in an unexpected twist, Bhīma is also momentarily out, trying to get some exercise. This last step is crucial for introducing the mistaken identity. But more on that later.

tataḥ kadā cid bhaiḥṣāya gatās te bharatarṣabhāḥ |
saṅgatyā bhīmasenas tu tatrāste pṛthayā saha ||

Then, one day, the bulls of the Bharatas [sc. the Pāṇḍavas] went begging for alms, but **by chance**, Bhīma remained there together with Pṛthā [sc. Kuntī].

(MBh. 1.145.8)

tasmād āśramād āgatena kenacid brāhmaṇena
śatakumbhaṃ nāma **yajñam anubhavitum** maharṣer
dhaumyasyāśramaṃ gatā iti

¹⁶⁵ On the addition of chance, see also Salomon (2010): “The latter [sc. the Brahman] introduces himself as Keśavadāsa, explaining that he was on the way to his maternal uncle’s home when he was attacked by the demon Ghaṭotkaca (32)” (p. 6).

A Brahman who came from that very hermitage told me that they had gone to the hermitage of the great seer Dhaumya **to help during the sacrifice** called “The one of the hundred vessels.”

(MV 11.3)

tāta na tu sarva eva
āśramaparipālanārtham iha sthāpitaḥ kila madhyamaḥ

O father, but not all of them went. The middle one was stationed here **for the sake of protecting the hermitage.**

(MV 11.5-11.6)

sa cāpy asyāṃ velāyāṃ **vyāyāmaparicayārtham**
viprakṛṣṭadeśa itī śrūyate

And it is said that, at this moment, he too is at remote location **for the sake of getting some exercise.**

(MV 11.8)

[SO4] (Ps.-)Bhāsa emphasizes the trees.¹⁶⁶ Tree uprooting becomes something of a leitmotif in the story of Baka: after a quick mention of the shattering of trees and creepers in chapter 141, chapter 151 alone includes three such references. In the first one, Baka pulls up a tree and attacks Bhīma with it. The phrasing, specifically the repetition of rage as a catalyst, suggests that this first uprooting should be taken in tandem with that from chapter 141. In the second one, Baka lifts several trees and throws them at Bhīma, who returns the favor by doing the same. In this case, the wording reverberates into that of the adaptation, which highlights the idea of throwing.

In the third and last reference, one reads that both Baka and Bhīma can pulverize trees. Once again, the phrasing draws our attention back to the uprooting from chapter 141, particularly to the shattering. Furthermore, there are a couple of additional details in the epic passages from which the play profits. These trees

166 On the emphasis on the trees, see Sutherland Goldman (2017): “Ghaṭotkaca uproots huge trees to use as weapons, much in the manner of Baka in the *Mahābhārata* story, and finally he uproots the peak of a mountain” (p. 242).

are huge, and as a result, the mighty warriors must struggle to take them out/lift them up/pull them up.

babhañjatur **mahāvṛkṣāṃl** latās **cākarṣatus** tataḥ |
mattāv iva **susamrabdhau** vāraṇau ṣaṣṭihāyanau ||

Then, they **shattered huge trees** and tore off creepers, as if they were a couple of **greatly enraged**, sixty-year-old elephants in musth.

(MBh. 1.141.23)

tataḥ sa **bhūyaḥ samkrudho vṛkṣam ādāya** rākṣasaḥ |
tādayiṣyaṃs tadā bhīmaṃ punar abhyadravad balī ||

Then, **having taken out a tree**, the mighty rakshasa, still **more enraged** and trying to wound Bhīma, attacked him once more.

(MBh. 1.151.12)

tataḥ sa punar **udyamya vṛkṣān** bahavidhān balī |
prāhiṇod bhīmasenāya tasmai bhīmaś ca pāṇḍavaḥ ||
tad **vṛkṣayuddham** abhavan **mahīruhavināśanam** |
ghorarūpaṃ mahārāja bakapāṇḍavayor **mahat** ||

Then, once more **having lifted trees** of many kinds, the mighty one **threw** them at Bhīma, and the Pāṇḍava Bhīma at him. O great king, and a **huge** battle with **trees** arose between Baka and the Pāṇḍava, which was awful to look at and caused the destruction of those **trees**.

(MBh. 1.151.15-16)

tayor vegena mahatā pṛthivī samakampata |
pādapāṃś ca **mahākāyāṃś cūrṇayām āsatus** tadā ||

The earth shook with their great impetuosity, and they **pulverized trees** of **huge** trunks.

(MBh. 1.151.20)

katham katham anrtam ity āha kṣipasi me gurum
bhavatv imaṃ **sthūlaṃ vṛkṣam utpāṭya praharāmi**
katham anenāpi na śakyate hantuṃ kiṃnu khalu kariṣye
bhavatu drṣṭam
etad girikūṭam **utpāṭya praharāmi**

How dare you say that it is not true? You insult my father! So be it. **Having pulled up this huge tree, I will throw** it at him. How is it that, even with this, it is not possible to kill him? What can I possibly do? That's it, I've got it! **Having pulled up** this mountaintop, **I will throw** it at him.

(MV 43.3-43.6)

[SO5] The playwright ignores the sex.¹⁶⁷ Vyāsa's account of the sexual union between Bhīma and Hiḍimbā is quite detailed. Assuming an active role, Hiḍimbā not only seems to ask Kuntī for Bhīma's hand, but also carries Bhīma like a bride after laying hold of him. The copulating is presented almost like a Hierogamy, with special emphasis on the nature around them: from mountaintops to ocean floors, the close-up of their lovemaking resembles the journey through an *axis mundi*. With great narrative skill, the enjoyable landscape is smoothly transformed into an act of carnal enjoyment. After all, Hiḍimbā herself had chosen, over the ephemeral pleasure of eating Bhīma, the enduring one of marrying him (*MBh.* 1.139.16).

(Ps.-)Bhāsa remains silent on this subject. This notwithstanding, there is more than one double entendre. For example, the Brahman's wife from the epic says that, since the law is so clear in prohibiting the killing of a woman, even a poorly informed individual should spare her (*MBh.* 1.146.29-30); but the Ghaṭotkaca from the drama speaks of his mother not having any "desire" for a woman, nor for an old man. Perhaps the land and sea imagery from the source text has not become a literal surf and turf in the reworking, and perhaps the references to "eating", by means of sexual innuendo, are conveying the idea of "eating up".

167 On the ignoring of the sex, see Sutherland Goldman (2017): "Like other *rākṣasī* figures, such as Śūrpaṅakhā, Surasā, and Siṃhikā, Hiḍimbā too desires to "eat." Her voracious oral consumptive urges can also be seen as representative of her libidinal desires" (p. 235), and "The intersection of libidinal and gustatory desire creates a tension that Bhāsa employs in his drama to draw his character of Hiḍimbā. At the opening of the story the two traits that are most crucial in her construction are: (1) that she is a *rākṣasī*, which for the audience immediately associates her with negative libidinal and gustatory urges, and who, like the female vampire, is abject as she disrupts identity and order; and (2) that she is a mother, a fact also known from the epic story" (p. 236).

tatheti tat pratijñāya hiḍimbā rākṣasī tadā |
 bhīmasenam upādāya ūrdhvam ācakrame tataḥ ||
 śailaśrṅgeṣu **ramyeṣu** devatāyataneṣu ca |
 mṛgapakṣivighuṣṭeṣu **ramañīyeṣu** sarvadā ||
 kṛtvā ca paramaṃ rūpaṃ sarvābharaṇabhūṣitā |
 saṃjalpantī sumadhuraṃ **ramayām āsa** pāṇḍavam ||
 tathaiva vanadurgeṣu puṣpitadrumasānuṣu |
 saraḥsu **ramañīyeṣu** padmotpalayuteṣu ca ||
 nadīdvīpapradeśeṣu vaiḍūryasikatāsu ca |
 sutīrthavanatoyāsu tathā girinadīṣu ca ||
 saharasya pradeśeṣu mañihemaciteṣu ca |
 pattaneṣu ca **ramyeṣu** mahāśālavaneṣu ca ||
 devāraṇyeṣu puṇyeṣu tathā parvatasānuṣu |
 guhyakānāṃ nivāseṣu tāpasāyataneṣu ca ||
 sarvartuphalapuṣpeṣu mānaseṣu saraḥsu ca |
 bibhratī paramaṃ rūpaṃ **ramayām āsa** pāṇḍavam ||

After promising that she would proceed thusly and laying hold of Bhīma, the rakshasa Hiḍimbā strode upwards. On the **enjoyable** mountaintops and in the resting places of the gods, which are always **enjoyable** and resounding with deer and birds, having taken on a superb form, embellished with all sorts of ornaments, and speaking in a gentle manner, she **carnally enjoyed** the Pāṇḍava. Likewise, in thick forests, on mountains of flowering trees, by **enjoyable** ponds covered with lotuses and water lilies, on river islands of chrysoberyl-rich sands, by mountain streams of sacred woods and waters, on ocean floors scattered with gemstones and gold, in **enjoyable** towns, in woods of giant timber trees, in holy forests of the gods, on various mountaintops, in the dwelling places of the demigods, in the resting places of the ascetics, and by Lake Mānasa which bears fruits and flowers in every season, having taken on a superb form, she **carnally enjoyed** the Pāṇḍava.

(MBh. 1.143.19-26)

na khalu strījano ’**bhīmatas** tatrabhavatyā

Certainly not, my venerable mother does not **desire** a woman.

(MV 15.4)

ā vṛddhas tvam **apasara**

You are too old, **away with you!**

(MV 15.6)

[SO6] The author emphasizes the mistaken identity.¹⁶⁸ In *MBh.* 1, during his dialogue with his wife, the Brahman sometimes digresses, in a sort of inner monologue. For instance, when picturing a scenario where he gives up one of his children, he voices the *vox populi* about a son being more valuable than a daughter, but he does so only to immediately disagree with the view. For him, son and daughter are equal. In *MV*, the love of the father is split into the wants of the father and those of the mother. Although gender does not make a difference, age apparently does, for the eldest and youngest sons are chosen over the middle one. Within a family of five, the fact that each parent has their favorite results in the exclusion of two of the sons. In the end, all this is just a necessary step towards the scene of the mistaken identity, leading to the climactic anagnorisis.

Interactions of characters with their doppelgangers are not uncommon in the *Mahābhārata* as a whole, and certainly not in the ogre stories under discussion. The story of Hiḍimba evinces a sort of bilateral symmetry between the male Hiḍimba and the female Hiḍimbā. One can even argue that the story of Hiḍimba, highlighting the martial side of the coin, is in fact, a masquerade for the story of Hiḍimbā, emphasizing the amatory aspect, together with its genealogical repercussions. Instead of a tale about hate and death, when looked at from the right angle, it becomes one about love and life.

Not unlike this, the story of Baka does not fail to at least suggest a twofold nature. As anyone who has seen a crane roosting can attest, this namesake bird tucks one of its legs up into its body to keep it warm, thus giving the appearance of being one-legged. If Hiḍimba represents an entity that is doubled by means of the

168 On the emphasis on the mistaken identity, see Salomon (2010): “As a drama of mistaken identity, the *MV* actually turns on not one but two confusions: the confusion between the two “middle brothers” (the Brahman boy and Bhīmasena), and the misunderstanding between Bhīmasena and Ghaṭotkaca as to their real identities and relationship. Although these are essentially distinct incidents (the first being something of a dramatic decoy, or in traditional terms an *upakathā*), the poet cleverly intertwines them at the critical juncture of Bhīmasena’s first appearance on stage (24/25)” (pp. 9-10).

sibling theme, Baka literally becomes a divided individual, once the hero subdues him with his strong grip and splits him in half.

A close reader like (Ps.-)Bhāsa would have undoubtedly noticed the many commonalities between these back-to-back stories about splitting identities (Hiḍimba/Hiḍimbā and Baka/the crane-like, half-and-half ogre), and here, he would have found inspiration for a nip and tuck *contaminatio* of his own, in which both ogre stories run neck and neck, thus managing to keep the audience's attention. If an adaptation is already *dviguṇa*-, "twofold", for bringing together the old and the new, a *contaminatio* is so on yet another level, by profiting from two sources. In a creative process that would have been anything but derivative, the author would have picked up the pieces of these broken ogres and sewn them back together in this "*bhāsa-saṃdha*- (joined by (Ps.-)Bhāsa)" re-creation.

In such reinterpretation, the two blood-related ogres/two bloody halves of the same ogre become two unrelated people, who happen to share the same spot within their respective family trees: having older and younger brothers, they are both middle sons. What better way to adapt the themes of multiplication and division than by presenting "two middle ones"? The ambiguity is key: Ghaṭotkaca needs a name to call back the young Brahman, but the father is not going to be responsible for providing him with the final nail in the coffin, so when ambiguously asked what his name is/what he is called, his older brother replies by referring to him as "the ascetic middle one" (i.e., the middle son). Little does he know that "the heroic middle one" (i.e., Bhīma) is just about to set him and his family free.

GHATOTKACAḤ

...atha kinnāmā tava putraḥ

VRDDHAḤ

etaḍ api na śakyaṃ śrotum

GHATOTKACAḤ

yuktaṃ bho brāhmaṇakumāra kinnāmā te bhrātā

PRATHAMAḤ

tapasvī **madhyamaḥ**

GHATOTKACAḤ
madhyameti sadṛśam asya
 aham eva yāsyāmi
 bho bho **madhyama madhyama** śighram āgaccha

GHATOTKACA
 ...But what is the name of your son?

OLD MAN
 I cannot tell you this either.

GHATOTKACA
 That makes sense. Hey! Young Brahman, what is the name
 of your brother?

FIRST SON
 The ascetic **middle one**.

GHATOTKACA
 “**Middle one**” – how fitting is that! I will go myself. Hey!
Middle One. Hey! **Middle One**, come quick!

(MV 24.8-24.14)

Lastly, the fact that the two characters that trigger the scene of mistaken identity are brothers could be explained by considering its parallelisms within Greco-Roman theater: from Μέση (Middle Comedy), the works of Antiphanes’, Anaxandrides’, Alexis’, Aristophon’s, and Xenarchus’ fragmentary *Twin Brothers*; from Νέα (New Comedy), Menander’s and Euphron’s fragmentary *Twin Brothers*; from *fabula togata* (comedy in Roman dress), Titinius’ fragmentary *Female Twin*; from Atellan comedy, Pomponius’ fragmentary *The Twin Brothers Maccus*, and Novius’ fragmentary *Twin Brothers* and *The Two Dossennuses*; from Mime, Laberius’ fragmentary *Little Twins*; and from *fabula palliata* (comedy in Greek dress), Plautus’ *Bacch.* 568 ff. and *Men.* 273 ff.¹⁶⁹

[S07] (Ps.-)Bhāsa profits from changes of space and time for his adaptation. Regarding spatial locations, in the epic, the story of Hiḍimba takes place in an unnamed wood, and the story of Baka in a city called Ekacakrā. The transition from one ogre to the

¹⁶⁹ See Panayotakis (2020, pp. 94-95).

other entails, as well, a change from nature to culture, and from the indistinctness of the former to the delimitation of the latter. The drama, once again, merges bits and pieces, and it does so in a creative manner: the key places are two villages in a jungle. Since Keśavadāsa – this newly christened “Servant (*dāsa*-) of Kṛṣṇa (*keśava*-)” – walks from his hometown to the house of his maternal uncle, his route through the ogre-infested jungle constitutes the ideal background for what the dramatist has in mind.

tatra teṣu śayāneṣu hiḍimbo nāma rākṣasaḥ |
avidūre **vanāt** tasmāc chālavṛkṣam upāśritaḥ ||

While they were sleeping there, a rakshasa named Hiḍimba had taken refuge in a *śāla* tree not far from that **wood**.

(*MBh.* 1.139.1)

ekacakrām gatās te tu kuntīputrā mahārathāḥ |
ūṣur nāticiraṃ kālaṃ brāhmaṇasya niveśane ||

Then, the combatant sons of Kuntī [sc. the Pāṇḍavas] went to **Ekacakrā**. For a short time, they lived in the house of a Brahman.

(*MBh.* 1.145.2)

ahaṃ khalu kururājena yudhiṣṭhiraṇādhiṣṭhitapūrve
kurujāṅgale yūpagrāmavāstavyo māṭharasagotraś ca
kalpaśākhādhvaryuḥ keśavadāso nāma brāhmaṇaḥ
tasya mamottarasayāṃ diśy udyāmakagrāmavāsī mātulaḥ
kauśikasagotro yajñabandhur nāmāsti

I am a resident of the **Yūpa village in the Kuru jungle**, which was previously governed by the Kuru-king Yudhiṣṭhira, a Brahman of the Māṭhara lineage, and a priest of the Kalpa school. My name is Keśavadāsa. I also have a maternal uncle who lives up north in the Udyāmaka village, a member of the Kauśika lineage named Yajñabandhu.

(*MV* 31.12-13)

[S08] As for the change in time, the playwright trims his sails to suit the theatrical convention. According to Bharata,¹⁷⁰ “The *vyāyoga* should be fashioned, by knowers of the rules, as one whose body is a well-known hero, employing few women, and **lasting one day** [*vyāyogas tu vidhijñaiḥ kāryaḥ prakhyātanāyakaśarīraḥ | alpastrījanayuktas tv **ekāhakṛtas** tathā caiva*]” (*Nāṭyaś.* 18.90).

The epic has the Pāṇḍava brothers and their mother Kuntī living for a short time in the wood during the story of Baka: the action begins at night (when the heroes are sleeping), the climax of its martial component comes just before dawn (when ogres become mightier), and the climax of its amatory component stretches throughout the day (when the couple is allowed to consummate the marriage), so that the action may end by the next night (when the fully grown youth has already been born). Nonetheless, their residency during the story of Baka is neither too short nor too long; instead, it goes on for an amount of time that is just right. This means that, at least, several days go by.

The adaptation has the best of both worlds. From the first story, it re-creates the one-day time lapse; from the other, the timely ritual involving one of its participants and lasting several days. Hence, the epic daughter’s intended “marriage-like funeral [*vivāhasadrśy antyeṣṭi*]” becomes the dramatic cousin’s actual *upanayana* (initiation). If the author of *The Middle One* minimizes the sexual aspects that spread through his source, he also magnifies the religious ones. After all, adaptations are not only about filling in a plot and getting rid of some of its parts, but also about calling the shots and taking a stand.

tathā tu teṣāṃ vasatāṃ tatra rājan mahātmanām |
aticakrāma **sumahān kālo** ’tha bharatarṣabha ||

O king, O bull of the Bharatas, while those eminent ones
were living there in that manner, **a good amount of time**
passed by.

(*MBh.* 1.145.7)

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

tasya putro**panayanā**nubhavanārthaṃ sakalatro 'smi
prasthitaḥ

For the sake of taking part in **the initiation** of his [sc. the
maternal uncle's] son, I set out together with my wife.

(MV 31.14)

[SO9] The author changes the authoritarian figure by merging Hiḍimba ordering Hiḍimbā and Kuntī ordering Bhīma into Hiḍimbā ordering Ghaṭotkaca.¹⁷¹ Hiḍimba ordering Hiḍimbā is a scene from the epic story of Hiḍimba. The epic Hiḍimba instructs his sister Hiḍimbā to go near the humans, find out who they are, kill them by herself, and bring them back for them to cook together. Similarly, the dramatic Hiḍimbā instructs her son Ghaṭotkaca to search for humans and then bring some of them back. The phrasing is very close, as seen in the following quotations.

upapannaś cirasyādyā bhakṣo mama manaḥpriyaḥ |
snehasravān prasravati jihvā paryeti me mukham ||
aṣṭau daṃṣṭrāḥ sutīkṣṇāgrās cirasyāpātaduḥsahāḥ |
deheṣu majjayiṣyāmi snigdheṣu piṣiteṣu ca ||
ākramya mānuṣaṃ kaṇṭham ācchidya dhamanīm api |
uṣṇaṃ navaṃ prapāsyāmi phenilaṃ rudhiraṃ bahu ||
gaccha jānihi ke tv ete śerate vanam āśritāḥ |
mānuṣo balavān gandho ghrāṇaṃ tarpayatīva me ||
hatvaitān mānuṣān sarvān **ānayasva** mamāntikam |
asmadviṣayasuptebhyo naitebhyo bhayam asti te ||
eṣāṃ māṃsāni saṃskṛtya mānuṣānāṃ yatheṣṭataḥ |
bhakṣayiṣyāva sahitau kuru tūrṇaṃ vaco mama ||

Today, at last, I [sc. Hiḍimba] have obtained my favorite food. Those flowing with fat make my mouth water and I keep licking my lips. Into their bodies and their fatty flesh, I will sink my eight, sharp-pointed teeth, which are unbearable when they bite after such a long time. Having approached their human throats and cut their arteries, I will drink their blood, which will be warm, fresh, bubbling, and abundant. **Go and find out** who those are who are lying down, having

171 On changing the authoritarian figure, see Sutherland Goldman (2017): “Note, too, that as in Bhāsa’s play, it is the mother’s [sc. Kuntī’s] command that must be obeyed and her judgment, although at first questioned by Yudhiṣṭhira, is never really doubted” (p. 240).

come to the wood. The strong aroma of humans seems to sate my scent. **Having killed** all those humans, **bring** them to me. Do not be afraid of those who are sleeping on our turf. Having cooked the flesh of those humans at leisure, we [sc. Hiḍimba and Hiḍimbā] will eat it together, so, quick, obey my orders.

(*MBh.* 1.139.5-10)

...putra mamopavāsanisargārtham asmin vanapradeśe
kaścīn mānuṣaḥ **parimrgyānetavyeti**

...O son, **having searched for** a human in this wooded region, you [sc. Ghaṭotkaca] **must bring** him to me [sc. Hiḍimbā] for the sake of breaking my fast.

(*MV* 11.18)

Kuntī ordering Bhīma is a scene from the epic story of Baka.¹⁷² The epic Kuntī commands her son Bhīma to fill in for the victim, so that he can appease the ogre's hunger. In this way, he can both pay their host back for his hospitality and pay it forward to the townsfolk, who have just about had it with this long-lasting tyrant. Correspondingly, the dramatic Hiḍimbā commands her son Ghaṭotkaca to fill the vacancy of the victim, so that he can appease her hunger. Once again, there are similarities in the phrasing, as can be appreciated in the next quotations.

mamaiva vacanād eṣa kariṣyati paramtapaḥ |
brāhmaṇārthe mahat kṛtyaṃ moṣkāya nagarasya ca ||

By my [sc. Kuntī's] **order**, the destroyer of his enemies [sc. Bhīma] will do a great deed for the sake of the Brahman and for the liberation of the town.

(*MBh.* 1.150.4)

asti me tatrabhavatī jananī
tayāham ājñāptaḥ...

I [sc. Ghaṭotkaca] have a venerable mother. **She** [sc. Hiḍimbā] **ordered** me to...

(*MV* 11.17-11.18)

¹⁷² Cf. Kuntī ordering the five Pāṇḍavas to share Draupadī as their common wife (*MBh.* 1.182.2).

[SO10] The most substantial changes in the adaptation come from (Ps.-)Bhāṣas's handling of the family of Brahmins. For a start, he changes the unwilling father into a willing father. The epic Brahmin lets emotion get the better of him. Before, he was afraid of the ogre; now, he is also angry at his wife. He wanted safety but could not secure it. And he talked a lot but achieved nothing. Now, he blames his wife for his own faults. He is condescending and disrespectful. And he can only see what affects him directly: when imagining the death of his family, he thinks not about their suffering, but about his loss; and when considering them living, he demonstrates not compassion, but guilt. Simply put, he does not want to die, hence the going in circles.

In contrast, the dramatic Brahmin's words are as straightforward as his thoughts: instead of picturing his years ahead, he reflects upon those left behind; and instead of putting himself first, he thinks of his children. Where one character hesitates about whether he is going to be able to live with himself, the other is certain that he is going to be sacrificed and he dives into an altruistic death without giving it a second thought. As for the sacrifice itself, the imagery is clearly Vedic: it is phrased in terms of him offering (*hu*) to the fire (*agni*-), in agreement with the precepts (*vidhi*-).

yatitaṃ vai mayā pūrvam yathā tvaṃ vettha brāhmaṇi |
 yataḥ kṣemaṃ tato gantuṃ tvayā tu mama na śrutam ||
 iha jātā vivṛddhāsmi pitā ceha mameti ca |
 uktavaty asi durmedhe yācyamānā mayāsakṛt ||
 svargato hi pitā vṛddhas tathā mātā ciraṃ tava |
 bāndhavā bhūtapūrvāś ca tatra vāse tu kā ratiḥ ||
 so 'yaṃ te bandhukāmāyā śṛṇvantiyā vaco mama |
 bandhupraṇāśaḥ saṃprāpto bhṛśaṃ duḥkhakaro mama ||
 athavā madvināśo 'yaṃ **na** hi śakṣyāmi kaṃ cana |
 parityaktum ahaṃ bandhuṃ svayaṃ jīvan nṛśaṃsavat ||

O my Brahmin wife, as you know, I have previously tried to go where we would be safe, but you did not listen to me. O dim-witted one, when constantly asked by me, you kept saying that you were born and raised here, and so was your father. Now, your aged father is long gone, as is your mother, and all your relatives are deceased; then, what pleasure is there left in living here? While you were longing for your

family and not listening to my advice, I have undergone the destruction of my family, which causes great sorrow for me. Rather, this will be my own destruction, for I **will not be able** to abandon any of my own relatives and continue to live while filled with cruelty.

(*MBh.* 1.145.26-30)

kṛtakṛtyaṃ śarīraṃ me pariṇāmena jarjaram |
rākṣasāgnau sutāpekṣī **hoṣyāmi** vidhisamskṛtam ||

My body, decrepit from old age, has fulfilled its duty. Thinking of my children, I **will offer** it, purified by the precepts, to this fire-like rakshasa.

(*MV* 15)

[SO11] The playwright changes the lot into a choice. In the epic story of Hiḍimba, the Pāṇḍavas come across the ogre by chance; however, in the epic story of Baka, what is at stake is not if someone will face the ogre, but who it will be. The people of Ekacakrā have come to terms with eventually sacrificing themselves to Baka in exchange for both protection from fiercer adversaries and a meagre life waiting on death row. They die one by one, and their turn always comes. There is no escape and no hope for freedom. Contrarywise, by converting the one-by-one sacrifice into a single sacrifice, and by substituting the passive waiting for one's turn for an active pondering of strengths and weaknesses, the author of *MV* tinges both the notion of freedom and the character of the ogre.

ekaikaś caiva puruṣas tat prayacchati bhojanam |
sa **vāro** bahubhir varṣair bhavaty asutaro naraiḥ ||
tad**vimokṣāya** ye cāpi yatante puruṣāḥ kva cit |
saputradārāṃs tān hatvā tad rakṣo bhakṣayatya uta ||

One by one, people present him with food, and, after many years, every man's **turn** becomes unavoidable. And as per those people who at some point try to **free** themselves from him, having killed them, alongside their wives and children, the rakshasa eats them too.

(*MBh.* 1.148.7-8)

patnyā cāritrasālinyā dviputro **mokṣam** icchasi |
balābalaṃ parijñāya putram **ekaṃ** visarjaya ||

You want your **freedom** as a father of two, together with your well-behaved wife. **Having pondered their strengths and weaknesses**, give up **one** of your sons.

(MV 12)

[SO12] Lastly, the author maintains the hospitality. According to the epic, a Brahman's life is the most valuable treasure, and in turn, a Brahman's death is the greatest sin. Similarly, well-done hospitality can result in unimaginable benefits, and poorly done hospitality can be the cause of much distress. Even if the death of the head-of-the-household Brahman could arguably be regarded as comparable to that of the pretend-Brahman Bhīma, the latter is also a guest of the former. Here, the play offers one last example of time management: the theme is dealt with, not at the beginning, but at the end; and in consequence, it does not constitute an impediment, but a corollary. If taking a life is an inhospitable deed, giving it back is the ultimate gift.

nāham etat kariṣyāmi jīvitārthī kathaṃ cana |
 brāhmaṇasyā**ātithēś** caiva svārthe prāṇair viyojanam ||

Clinging to my [sc. the Brahman's] own life, I would never prompt this: the loss of a life for my own benefit – much less that of a Brahman and **a guest** [sc. Bhīma]!

(MBh. 1.149.4)

kṛtam **ātithyam** anena jīvitapradānena

By giving us [sc. the Brahman and his family] back our lives, you [sc. Bhīma] have fulfilled your **hospitality**.

(MV 50.1)

(Plautine) Mistaken Identities

Following the analysis of the ogre motif in *Od.* 9 and *Cyclops*, as well as in *MBh.* 1 and *The Middle One*, I have identified three instances

of possible Greek influence in the adaptation techniques: [OM1]¹⁷³ *contaminatio of two epic stories into a single play*, [OM2] *dramatic themes which have no precedent in the source texts are added with the intention of providing an emphasis*, and [OM3] *spaces, times, characters, and themes are changed in the plays, which otherwise would be dramatizations and not adaptations*.

[OM1] *Contaminatio of two epic stories into a single play*. Regarding *Cyclops*, the characters of Silenus and the Satyrs, likely coming from the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* (GO1), are included by reason of their relevance within the new literary genre of the satyr drama, but they are also employed to focus the audience's attention on Dionysus' wine, instead of Odysseus' trickery. Thus, the epic's serious sneakiness is re-created as the play's humorous straightforwardness. Similarly, in *The Middle One*, the characters of the Brahman and his family, likely coming from the *Bakavadhaparvan* (SO1), shed a new light on a not-so-black-and-white Ghaṭotkaca.

[OM2] *Dramatic themes which have no precedent in the source texts are added with the intention of providing an emphasis*. The father/son conflicts surrounding the encounter of Odysseus and Polyphemus, on one side (GO2), and the encounter of Bhīma and Ghaṭotkaca, on the other (SO2) is one of two major additions. The other one is that of Chance (GO3) / chance (SO3), which is, indeed, a key component in Greco-Roman theater from Euripides onwards.¹⁷⁴ These parallelisms would make perfect sense by assuming a certain familiarity with Greco-Roman sources.

When considered as instances of Greco-Indian *anukaraṇa*, both procedures would be characterized by change: a Greek text (*Cyclops*) with heavenly fortuity (Chance) and a conflict between a father and a son (Silenus and the chorus of Satyrs) which has been adapted from a source (*Od.* 9) with a similar conflict (Poseidon and Odysseus), would have become an Indian text (*The Middle*

173 OM stands for "Ogre Motif". Hence, numbers OM1-OM3 refer to the proposed influences from *Cyclops*' adaptation of *Od.* 9 into *The Middle One*'s adaptation of *MBh.* 1.

174 For "chance" in Euripides (e.g., *Alc.* 785 and *Ion* 1512-1514) and "Chance" in Euripides (e.g., *IA* 1136), see Busch (1937).

One) with earthly fortuity (chance) and a conflict between a father and a son (Bhīma and Ghaṭotkaca) which has been adapted from a source (*MBh.* 14) with a similar conflict (Arjuna and Babhruvāhana). Moreover, the addition of the father/son conflict, coming from the story of Babhruvāhana, further supports the claim of *contaminatio*, which may very well have been close to the procedure that Euripides himself utilized for his *Cyclops*.¹⁷⁵

In both cases, the addition of the conflict appears to be directly related to certain thematic emphases. On one hand, while the Greek hero blinds the ogre with the trunk of a tree (GO4), the Sanskrit hero ends up facing the ogre-like character in a tree battle (SO4). On the other hand, sex as a subject matter offers some interesting contrasts. In *Cyclops*, Polyphemus expresses his intention to “sleep” with Silenus (GO5). This explicit, homosexual desire aimed at the father figure would have been substituted, in *The Middle One*, for an implicit, heterosexual desire aimed at the son figure, when Hiḍimbā is said to prefer to “eat (up)” one of the Brahman’s sons (SO5).

At the very core of the Sanskrit play lies the emphasis on the mistaken identity (SO6), as the title *The Middle One* suggests. Similarly, Odysseus’ play on words when introducing himself as Nobody is probably among the best-known ruses in world literature (GO6). However, mistaken identity proper is a much more common procedure within Roman theater. Considering only non-fragmentary plays, Plautus (254-184 BCE)¹⁷⁶ stands out among Roman playwrights when it comes to mistaken identities involving siblings. For instance, in *Bacch.* 568 ff., when asked if he is, indeed, the lover of the courtesan called Bacchis, a young man answers with the revealing fact that there are, indeed, “two Bacchises [*duas... Bacchides*]”, i.e., two courtesans that go by the same name,

175 On *contaminatio* in *Cyclops*, see Shaw (2018): “Euripides has rewritten a traditional myth in a humorous, self-conscious, and comedic manner, making Odysseus and his men the pirates of the Homeric Hymn as he combines two famous stories into a single satyr play” (p. 104).

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

and that are sisters. But the mistake is subject to a much more elaborated treatment in *The Two Menaechmuses*.

There are eleven examples of mistaken identity in *The Two Menaechmuses*.¹⁷⁷ The plot of the play is as follows: Menaechmus and Sosicles are the twin brothers that were born to a merchant. During a trip, Menaechmus got lost and ended up being adopted by another merchant and taken to a different city, where he now lives, unhappily married, and is having an affair with a courtesan. After many years of unfruitful searching, Sosicles, who was renamed as Menaechmus in honor of his presumably dead brother, finally arrives at the city where his long-lost brother resides. But now, they are not only twins, but also namesakes. A great portion of the play (*Men.* 273-1059) is dedicated to exploiting this authorially carved coincidence, until in the end, they recognize each other. As seen from this outline, the three key aspects from the Sanskrit play are present here as well: the brothers, the mistaken identity, and the anagnorisis.

The first four examples of mistaken identity involve the newly arrived “Menaechmus (Sosicles)” being taken for the well-known Menaechmus. One after the other, a cook (*Men.* 273-350), a courtesan (*Men.* 351-445), a parasite (*Men.* 446-523), and a maid (*Men.* 524-558) err in their assumptions and believe the newcomer to be their neighbor. The scene with the cook closely resembles the beginning of Bhīma’s and Ghaṭotkaca’s exchange during their encounter. One shared feature is that a brother, who is being mistaken for another brother, is addressed by a third party. In the Roman play, Cylindrus, mistaking Menaechmus (Sosicles) for Menaechmus, addresses him as such; in the Sanskrit play, Bhīma, believing the form of address “Middle One” to refer to him, comes to meet Ghaṭotkaca. Even their names, although etymologically unrelated, are phonetically similar: *me-naech-mo-* vs. *ma-dhya-ma-*.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ See Panayotakis (2020, p. 97).

¹⁷⁸ On another phonetical similitude relating to the ogre motif and possibly owing to an Indian borrowing from the Greco-Roman world, see Wulff Alonso (2008a): “En términos puramente lingüísticos, no deja de ser interesante que los nombres de los hermanos sean el mismo, pero en femenino en los dos casos (Hidimba, Hidimbā, Caco, Caca) e incluso la similitud fonética entre este Caco-Caca y el nombre de otro *rakshasa* muerto

Another point of encounter is that the addresser asks a question about identity. In *The Two Menaechmuses*, Cylindrus rhetorically asks Menaechmus (Sosicles) about who he is; in *The Middle One*, Ghaṭotkaca genuinely asks how Bhīma can possibly be a “Middle One” as well. A final commonality is the fact that both addressees respond in the negative. Menaechmus (Sosicles), as expected, denies any sort of acquaintance with Cylindrus; but Bhīma, instead of asserting his own identity, unexpectedly denies anyone else’s. As discussed, oddity is key when considering borrowings.

Cyl.	(...) Menaechme , salve.
Men. S.	Di te amabunt quisquis es.
Cyl.	Quisquis <sum? non tu scis, Menaechme, quis> ego sim?
Men. S.	Non hercle vero...
Cylindrus.	(...) O Menaechmus , hello.
Menaechmus (S).	May the gods be kind to you, whoever you are.
Cylindrus.	Whoever <I am? Do you not know, Menaechmus, who> I am?
Menaechmus (S).	By Hercules, I truly do not .

(*Men.* 278-280)

GHATOTKACAḤ

(...)

bho **madhyama** tvāṃ khalv ahaṃ śabdāpayāmi

por Bhīma que aparece inmediatamente después de éste, Baca... [From a purely linguistic point of view, it is interesting that the names of the siblings are the same, but in the feminine in both cases (Hiḍimba, Hiḍimbā, Cacus, Caca), and so are the phonetic proximity of the Cacus-Caca and the name of the other *rākṣasa* killed by Bhīma, who appears immediately after this one, Baka...]” (p. 385).

BHĪMASENAḤ
ataḥ khalv ahaṃ prāptaḥ

GHAṬOTKACAḤ
kiṃ bhavān api madhyamaḥ

BHĪMASENAḤ
na tāvad aparāḥ

GHAṬOTKACA
(...)

Hey! “**Middle One**”, now I am raising my voice for you!

BHĪMASENA
But that is why I came.

GHAṬOTKACA
How are you also “Middle One”?

BHĪMASENA
So far, **no** other is.

(MV 27.1-27.4)

The scene with the courtesan offers an *ad hoc* lineage which recalls the next portion of Bhīma’s and Ghaṭotkaca’s exchange during their encounter. In Plautus, when the interlocutor is listing biographical and historical details relating to the mistakenly identified brother, her style is simple: use of the second person, one mention of the name, reference to specific characters and spaces, all followed by a reply in the negative. In (Ps.-)Bhāsa, when the mistakenly identified brother is enumerating mythological and philosophical facts concerning himself, his style is complex: use of the first person, several mentions of the name, allusion to general characters and spaces, all crowned by a reply in the affirmative. Here, the key procedure would be reversal.

- Erot. Non ego **te** novi **Menaechmum**,
 Moscho prognatum patre,
 qui Syracusis perhibere natus esse in
 Sicilia,
 ubi rex Agathocles regnator fuit et
 iterum Phintia,
 tertium Liparo, qui in morte regnum
 Hieroni tradidit,
 nunc Hiero est?
- Men. S. **Haud falsa**, mulier, praedicas. (...)
- Erotium. Do I not know **you** to be
Menaechmus, the son of your father
 Moschus, who was born – so they
 say – in Syracuse in Sicily, where
 king Agathocles ruled, and secondly
 Phintia, and thirdly Liparo, who, at
 his death, left the kingdom to Hiero,
 and now Hiero is king?
- Menaechmus (S). O woman, you utter **no falsehood**. (...)
 (*Men.* 409-412)

BHĪMASENAḤ

madhyamo 'ham avadhyānām utsiktānām ca **madhyamaḥ** |
madhyamo 'ham kṣīter bhadra bhrātṛṇām api
madhyamaḥ ||

GHAṬOTKACAḤ

bhavitavyam

BHĪMASENAḤ

api ca
madhyamaḥ pañcabhūtānām pārthivānām ca
madhyamaḥ |
 bhava ca **madhyamo** loke sarvakāryeṣu **madhyamaḥ** ||

BHĪMASENA

I am the “**Middle One**” of the immortals, and the “**Middle One**” of the haughty ones. O good sir, I am the “**Middle One**” of the earth, and the “**Middle One**” even of my brothers.

GHATOTKACA

So be it.

BHĪMASENA

Moreover, I am the “**Middle One**” of the five elements, the “**Middle One**” of the kings, the “**Middle One**” in worldly existence, and the “**Middle One**” in all its affairs.

(MV 28-29)

When considered as instances of Greco-Indian *anukarāṇa*, the procedures at play in these last two pairs of passages would be characterized, respectively, by oddity and reversal: a Roman text (*The Two Menaechmuses*) where a character expectedly denies his acquaintance with someone else (Menaechmus (Sosicles) referring to Cylindrus) and listens to specific details about him (immediate family and place of birth), would have become an Indian text (*The Middle One*) where a character unexpectedly denies anyone else’s identity (Bhīma referring to the second son) and speaks of general facts about himself (role within all of existence).

Continuing with the theme of mistaken identity in the Roman play, the fifth and sixth examples involve the well-known Menaechmus being mixed up with the newly arrived Menaechmus (Sosicles). This happens first to the wife (*Men.* 559-674) and then to the courtesan (*Men.* 675-700). With surgeon-like precision, the playwright juxtaposes, not only the two women making the same mistake, but also as the seventh example, the same woman wrongly identifying the two brothers (*Men.* 701-752), and as the next two examples, her father wrongly identifying the two brothers too (*Men.* 753-881 and *Men.* 882-965). The last two examples (*Men.* 966-1049 and *Men.* 1050-1059) relate to a slave taking, first, Menaechmus for Menaechmus (Sosicles), and then, the other way around.

The anagnorisis of the Roman twins is also worth discussing in tandem with that of the Indian middle brothers. A previous step for any kind of realization is the admission of having been wrong about something. This is a point that the Roman playwright explicitly makes: Menaechmus talks about being mistaken (*erro*). But just before wrapping things up, he also incorporates one last pun, concerning the notion of being set free (*libero*). Because of the

saving (*servo*), which sounds a lot like a serving (*servo*), the master (*erus*) is now compelled to manumit his supposed slave. In turn, the Sanskrit playwright seems to be operating on a more implicit level: there is no mention of a mistake, but there is one allusion to the idea of being set free (*muc*). Furthermore, although no terms for masters or slaves are used, the selected verb (*anu-* + *gam*) at least suggests it, since it can mean both “follow” and “obey”. It can even mean “imitate”, thus winking at an eventual, overarching *anukaraṇa*, now marked by its obliqueness.

- Mes. Ergo edepol, si recte facias, **ere**, med emittas manu.
- Men. **Liberem** ego te?
- Mes. Verum, quandoquidem, **ere**, te **servavi**.
- Men. Quid est?
adulescens, **erras**.
- Mes. Quid, **erro**?
- Men. Per Iovem adiuro patrem,
med **erum** tuom non esse. (...)
- Messenio. O **master**, if by Pollux you did the right thing, you would then grant me my freedom.
- Menaechmus. Me **setting** you **free**?
- Messenio. Surely, seeing that I **saved** you, O **master**.
- Menaechmus. What was that? O young man, you **are mistaken**.
- Messenio. How **am** I **mistaken**?
- Menaechmus. I swear by Father Jupiter that I am not your **master**.

(Men. 1023-1026)

BHĪMASENAḤ

(...)

bhoḥ puruṣa **mucyatām**

GHATOTKACAḤ

na **mucyate**

BHĪMASENAḤ

bho brāhmaṇa grhyatām tava putraḥ
vayam enam **anugamiṣyāmaḥ**

BHĪMASENA

(...)

Oh, **set** the man **free!**

GHATOTKACA

He is not **being set free.**

BHĪMASENA

Dear Brahman, take your son. We **will follow** him.

(MV 39.2-39.6)

When the recognition finally takes place, there is mention of the proofs that led to it. In this sense, both the Roman and the Sanskrit anagnorises would be following Aristotle's (*Poet.* 1452a28 ff.) subtype of ἡ διὰ τῶν σημείων (the one by signs). On the Roman side, the newly arrived Menaechmus (Sosicles) experiences a change from ignorance (believing Menaechmus to be a stranger) to knowledge (realizing that Menaechmus is his brother), which results in friendship (the rekindling of their brotherly bond) and great prosperity (Menaechmus has inherited a lot of wealth). On the Sanskrit side, Ghaṭotkaca experiences a change from ignorance (believing Bhīma to be an enemy) to knowledge (realizing that Bhīma is his father), which also results in friendship (the rekindling of their father/son bond) and great prosperity (no "Middle One" dies). It appears to be another case of change.

- Men. S. **Signa** adgnovi, contineri quin
complectar non queo.
mi germane gemine frater, salve. ego
sum Sosicles.
- Menaechmus. S. I recognize **the proofs**: I cannot help
but embrace you! Hello, my brother,
my twin brother. I am Sosicles.

(Men. 1124-1125)

GHATOTKACAḤ
kaḥ **pratyayaḥ**

HIḌIMBĀ
eṣa **pratyayaḥ**
jayatv āryaputraḥ

GHATOTKACA
What is your **proof**?

HIḌIMBĀ
This is my **proof**: Glory to my husband!

(MV 48.23-48.25b)

When considered as instances of Greco-Indian *anukaraṇa*, the procedures at play in these last two pairs of passages would both be characterized by change: a Roman text (*The Two Menaechmuses*) where an actual slave (Messenio) obtains his freedom after the newcomer (Menaechmus (Sosicles)) takes part in an anagnorisis requiring proof, would have become an Indian text (*The Middle One*) where a soon-to-be-enslaved person (the second son) obtains his freedom after the newcomer (Bhīma) takes part in an anagnorisis requiring proof.

[OM3] *Spaces, times, characters, and themes are changed in the plays, which otherwise would be dramatizations and not adaptations.* Both adaptations change their location: from Homeric fiction to Sicilian quasi fact (GO7), and from a wilderness (in the story of Hiḍimba) and a town (in the story of Baka) to the wilderness between two towns (SO7). Nevertheless, time stands out as a more relevant intersection: not only do both dramas adhere to dramatic

convention (*Poet.* 1449b11-14 ~ *Nāṭyaś.* 18.90) in compressing the action of several days into just one roundtrip of the sun (GO8 ~ SO8), but also both dramatists seem to have quite a few tricks up their sleeves when it comes to managing time. Since the audience of an adaptation is, presumably, familiar with the plot, this constitutes a major asset, as well as an adequate place for undertaking any examination of an author's creativity and criticality¹⁷⁹ within his respective tradition.¹⁸⁰

Euripides changes the timing of the ram trick, the boulder trick, and the name trick. These well-known episodes go from the epic's boulder-name-ram sequence to the play's sequence of ram-boulder-name. If getting a laugh out of a canonical text such as the *Odyssey* is already a form of critique, scrambling its narrative points in the same direction. Now, (Ps.-)Bhāsa is no stranger to such subtleties, given that he also merges time as part of his seeming *contaminatio* of the stories of Hiḍimba and Baka.

In terms of characterization, the Greek author shapes the tyrant Polyphemos as a more up-to-date authoritarian figure (GO9), as does the Sanskrit author by fusing the authoritative rakshasa from the story of Hiḍimba and the authoritative mother from the story of Baka into the rakshasa-mother Hiḍimbā in the story of Ghaṭotkaca (SO9). The priest (GO10) / Brahman (SO10), as a religious figure sending off the hero with the provisions that he will need to face the ogre, is subject to changes in both adaptations. So too is the

179 For criticality in *Cyclops*, see Shaw (2018): "There are a few apparent intertexts, but on the whole the *Cyclops* goes beyond translating Homer for the stage. Instead, it functions more as a form of early literary criticism than of straightforward imitation" (p. 98); and Hunter & Laemmle (2020): "*Cyclops* offers a recasting of the Homeric story which amounts in fact to an interpretation, a 'critical reading' of it" (p. 17).

180 For tradition relating to *Cyclops*, see Hunter & Laemmle (2020): "Euripides' *Cyclops* both bears witness to, and was very likely formative for, an exegetical tradition which persistently wondered whether Odysseus was telling the truth and how things might 'really' have happened, if we had reports which did not emanate from the hero himself. Most of our evidence for that tradition comes from much later in antiquity and the Byzantine period – the Greek literature of the Roman empire, the scholia on Homer and the Homeric commentaries of Eustathius – but Euripides' satyr-drama is itself in part a commentary on the events of *Odyssey* 9, and one whose spirit finds some of its closest parallels in that later tradition" (p. 10).

drawing of lots (GO11 ~ SO11). And yet, many of the old themes remain, e.g., hospitality (GO12 ~ SO12).

To recapitulate, from the ogre motif, I propose a Greek influence from *Od.* 9 and *Cyclops* into *MBh.* 1 and *The Middle One*. Three adaptation techniques stand out: *contaminatio* (OM1), theme addition-cum-emphasis (OM2), and changing of spaces, times, characters, and themes (OM3). Considering the proposed Greco-Indian *anukaraṇa*, the influence would be marked by change. Additionally, I propound four Greco-Roman borrowings for the ogre motif: the response in the negative, characterized by oddity; the *ad hoc* lineage, defined by reversal; the end of the enslaving, distinguished by change; and the anagnorisis, differentiated by change as well. All four would come from *The Two Menaechmuses*.

Emily B. West's Ogres

Modern critics have highlighted the relevance of the aforementioned sets of texts, selected through the criterion of the ogre motif, when examining ancient methods and contexts of adaptation.¹⁸¹ However, just a perusal of the previous footnote

181 For the Greco-Roman world, see O'Sullivan & Collard (2013): "Euripides' engagement with his Homeric model does not, however, simply entail a dramatization of the epic encounter between Odysseus and Polyphemus" (p. 41); Shaw (2018): "Euripides manipulates the Homeric plot to fit important themes of satyr drama, and to draw particular social, religious, and historical connections to Athens" (p. 65), "This created a performative fusion that helped make satyr drama a particularly self-reflective genre, where authors were not only engaging with the earlier literary sources of the myth being presented, but were also engaging with all other earlier satyr plays" (p. 69), and "Odysseus here [sc. *Cyc.* 375-376] states that the horrors which took place in the cave are the stuff of stories (*mūthois*), but the term *mūthos* also signifies 'myth', which creates a fascinating and overt reference to the mythological tale found in Homer's *Odyssey*" (pp. 101-102); and Hunter & Laemmle (2020): "'What might have *really* happened between Odysseus and the Cyclops?' is the question which *Cyclops* sets out to dramatise, and it can do this with a generous dose of irony because we are no longer at the mercy of Odysseus' own narration. Much of the fun of *Cyclops* is that all the characters, including even the Cyclops, know 'the Homeric script' and apparently allude to it with great freedom, but just as important for the spirit of the play is the (alternative) reality which it opposes to the Homeric Odysseus' narration" (p. 12), "Far from seeking to conceal the Homeric narrative which underlies his drama, Euripides revels

evinces that this has happened much more often in studies framed within the Greco-Roman world than in those dealing with India, and this is especially true for (Ps.-)Bhāsa.¹⁸² But it is not all bad news. For instance, some work carried out in the field of Indo-European studies, like that by E. B. West (2005/2006), may also come in handy for an analysis presupposing cultural contact. There are deep, structural similarities between the Greek epic's ogre motif and the Sanskrit epic's ogre motif, and as a result, there is still more ground to cover for an adequate comparison of their two dramatic adaptations.

If my interpretation is correct, seven of E. B. West's (2005/2006) "thematic similarities" could have been direct borrowings from *Cyclops* into *The Middle One*, according to my numbering GO3 ~ SO3 (the addition of Chance/chance), GO4 ~ SO4 (the emphasis on the tree/trees), GO5 ~ SO5 (the emphasis on/ignoring of the sex), GO6 ~ SO6 (the emphasis on the mistaken identity), GO9 ~ SO9 (the change of the authoritarian figure), GO10 ~ SO10 (the change of the role of the priest/Brahman), and GO11 ~ SO11 (the change of the lot into a choice).

The hero leaving those close to him behind in *Od.* 9 and in *MBh.* 1 could be the trigger for incorporating Chance/chance as a factor in *Cyc.* and in *MV*.¹⁸³ In the Greek play, Odysseus faces the entire episode alone (GO3), because his companions have been

in the knowledge shared by characters and audience of that model" (p. 18), and "The dramatisation of an entire episode from the Homeric poems... is a particularly marked way of exposing the relationship between epic and drama and between Homer and the tragic poets" (p. 20). For India, see Salomon (2010): "As in the others [sc. the other *MBh.*-inspired plays], the author of the *MV* freely reworked the source material, expanding on various incidents and characters of the original" (p. 7).

- 182 On the relative lack of literary studies on (Ps.-)Bhāsa, see Brückner (1999/2000): "Detailed literary analyses and appreciations of the dramas are still wanting" (p. 503, n. 4); and Sutherland Goldman (2017): "...little attention has been given over to serious analysis of the plays themselves... the plays as literary and performative pieces seem largely to get bypassed" (p. 229). The latter is focusing, precisely, on *The Middle One*.
- 183 On the hero leaving those close to him behind in the Greek and Sanskrit epics, see E. B. West (2005/2006): "Odysseus leaves most of his men behind on the island of the wild goats (*Od.* 9.116-76) when he takes his handpicked band of men to explore the island of the Cyclopes. Though Bhīma takes no one else with him to his meeting with Baka, he leaves his mother and

substituted for the Satyrs. Along the same lines, in the Sanskrit play, Bhīma stands alone during the encounter (SO3), while his brothers and mother, at first, continue to sleep, and then, wake up to witness his prowess.

καὶ μὴ ᾿πί καλλίστοισι Τρωικοῖς πόνοις
αὐτόν τε ναύτας τ' ἀπολέσῃτ' **Ὀδυσσεά**
 ὑπ' ἀνδρὸς ᾧ θεῶν οὐδὲν ἢ βροτῶν μέλει.
 ἢ τὴν τύχην μὲν δαίμον' ἠγείσθαι χρεῶν,
 τὰ δαιμόνων δὲ τῆς τύχης ἐλάσσονα.

And after his most beautiful Trojan endeavors, do not destroy **Odysseus himself** and his sailors at the hands of an individual to whom there is no care for gods or men. Otherwise, we will have to regard Chance as a deity and the deities as inferior to Chance.

(Cyc. 603-607)

tāta na tu sarva eva
 āśramaparipālanārtham iha sthāpitaḥ kila **madhyamaḥ**

O father, but not all of them went. **The middle one** was stationed here for the sake of protecting the hermitage.

(MV 11.5-11.6)

The trees, which were already relevant to the plots of *Od.* 9 and *MBh.* 1, would have been further exploited in *Cyc.* and *MV*.¹⁸⁴ In the Greek play, the prudent Odysseus goes over his entire plan before setting the wheels in motion (GO4). The stake of olive is crucial to his goal. In the Sanskrit play, Ghaṭotkaca follows in the footsteps of his epic begetter by easily uprooting a tree (SO4). In this case, the tree itself does not suffice, but it still contributes to the mirrored delineating of the father Bhīma and his son Ghaṭotkaca.

brothers behind at the house of their brahmin host. Both departures take place at dawn (*Od.* 9.170; *Mbh.* 1.151.1)...” (p. 131).

184 On the trees in the Greek and Sanskrit epics, see E. B. West (2005/2006): “In a foreshadowing of his eventual doom, Polyphemus enters the cave and throws down a load of wood, scaring the men with its tremendous crash (*Od.* 9.233- 5)... In the Baka narrative, the conflict’s signature weapon is introduced as Bhīma continues to eat the food-offering, ignoring the *rākṣasa*’s yells and threats. Infuriated, Baka uproots a tree to use as a weapon (*Mbh.* 1.151.12)” (pp. 139-140).

κώμου μὲν αὐτὸν τοῦδ' ἀπαλλάξαι, λέγων
 ὡς οὐ Κύκλωψι πῶμα χρῆ δοῦναι τόδε,
 μόνον δ' ἔχοντα βίοτον ἠδέως ἄγειν.
 ὅταν δ' ὑπνώσση Βακχίου νικώμενος,
ἀκρεμῶν ἐλαίας ἔστιν ἐν δόμοισί τις,
 ὃν φασγάνῳ τῷδ' ἐξαποξύνας ἄκρον
 ἐς πῦρ καθήσω· κᾶθ' ὅταν κεκαυμένον
 ἴδω νιν, ἄρας θερμὸν ἐς μέσην βαλῶ
 Κύκλωπος ὄψιν ὄμμα τ' ἐκτῆξω πυρί.

I intend to keep him away from that revel, by telling him that there is no need for him to give this drink to the Cyclopes, but to go through life pleasantly, keeping it to himself. Once he becomes drowsy, overcome by Bacchus, there is **a stake of olive** in his abode, whose tip, after sharpening it with this sword, I will put into the fire. When I see it kindling, having lifted it while still glowing, I will thrust it into the mid-forehead eye of the Cyclops and melt his eye with the fire.

(Cyc. 451-459)

katham katham anrtam ity āha kṣipasi me gurum
 bhavatv imaṃ **sthūlaṃ vṛkṣam** utpāṭya praharāmi
 katham anenāpi na śakyate hantuṃ kiṃnu khalu kariṣye
 bhavatu dṛṣṭam
 etad girikūṭam utpāṭya praharāmi

How dare you say that it is not true? You insult my father! So be it. Having pulled up this **huge tree**, I will throw it at him. How is it that, even with this, it is not possible to kill him? What can I possibly do? That's it, I've got it! Having pulled up this mountaintop, I will throw it at him.

(MV 43.3-43.6)

The detail of female ogres in both epics could be related to the treatment of sex in both plays.¹⁸⁵ *Cyclops* emphasizes Polyphemus' pleasure (GO5), and it creates a hierarchy thereof, placing youths

185 On female ogres in the Greek and Sanskrit epics, see E. B. West (2005/2006): "Both stories [sc. the *Cyclopeia* and the *Kirmiravadhaparvan*] are loosely paired with other encounters with man-eating giants, both of which open with interactions with less hostile female ogres (i.e. Odysseus' encounter with the Laistrygonas at *Od.* 10.80-132, and the Pāṇḍavas' encounter with brother/sister Hiḍimba and Hiḍimbā at *Mbh.* 1.139-43)" (p. 129).

over women. *The Middle One*, in turn, ignores the subject, but it still leaves some telling details: Hiḍimbā's desire (SO5), which is both dietary and carnal, is directed neither at women nor at old men.

ἄλις· Γανυμήδη τόνδ' ἔχων ἀναπαύσομαι
 κάλλιον ἢ τὰς Χάριτας. **ἡδομαι** δέ πως
τοῖς παιδικοῖσι μᾶλλον ἢ **τοῖς θήλεσιν**.

Enough! I will sleep more beautifully with this Ganymede than with the Graces. Anyway, I take more **pleasure in youths** than **in women**.

(Cyc. 582-584)

na khalu **strījano 'bhimatas** tatrabhavatya

Certainly not, my venerable mother does not **desire a woman**.

(MV 15.4)

ā **vṛddhas** tvam apasara

You are too **old**, away with you!

(MV 15.6)

The name trick from the *Odyssey* and the *Mahābhārata*, which also entails the provocation, the call for help, and the insufficient response, could have had an impact on the playfulness that surrounds the mistaken identities in the dramatic versions.¹⁸⁶ The

186 On the name trick in the Greek and Sanskrit epics, see E. B. West (2005/2006): "The trick of the name is the hallmark of the *Odyssey's* story. At 9.355-6, the inebriated Cyclops asks for Odysseus' name, claiming he wants to give him a guest-gift. Odysseus recognizes that the overture is a trap, and gives his famous response (*Od.* 9.366-7)... But the most compelling argument for a lost name-trick in the story lies in a peculiar minor detail. Baka makes a final desperate rush for Bhīma "having trumpeted out his/ the name" (*nāma viśrāṅya*, *Mbh.* 1.151.17) There is no explanation given for the utterance, it is not a battle convention in the epic, and Bhīma has taken great care to be anonymous" (pp. 142-144). On the provocation, see E. B. West (2005/2006): "After calling out to Baka, Bhīma sits down and eats the food he has brought until he is discovered by the ogre (*Mbh.* 1.151.3-5)... The *Odyssey's* version lacks a deliberate attempt to inflame the monster here, postponing it until Odysseus' ill-advised decision to shout out his name to Polyphemus at 9.473-80 and 491-505, but at this point Odysseus confesses to a certain stubbornness which prevents him from taking his companions' advice to plunder the cave and leave (*Od.* 9.224-30). Though Polyphemus

Greek playwright has the Satyrs mock Polyphemus not for being blinded, but for being fooled by his blinder, who has the double name of “Nobody”/Odysseus (GO6). And the Sanskrit playwright presents the first son as causing a confused Ghaṭotkaca to end up going after the wrong prey, because there are two different people who answer to the name “Middle One” (SO6).

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ

Οὔτις μ' ἀπώλεσ'.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἄρ' οὐδεὶς <σ'> ἠδίκηι.

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ

Οὔτις με τυφλοῖ βλέφαρον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἄρ' εἶ τυφλός.

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ

†ως δὴ σὺ†.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ πῶς σ' οὔτις ἄν θεῖη τυφλόν;

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ

σκώπτεις. ὁ δ' Οὔτις ποῦ 'στιν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐδαμοῦ, Κύκλωψ.

CYCLOPS

Nobody destroyed me.

does not actually spot the men until he has lit his fire at 9.251, Odysseus and his companions are surprised in the act of eating the Cyclopes' carefully laid-up cheeses (*Od.* 9.231-3)" (pp. 136-137). On the call for help, see E. B. West (2005/2006): "The wounded Polyphemus calls out to the other Cyclopes (*Od.* 9.399-402)... Just as the Cyclopes' yells draw the other Cyclopes, Baka's shouting of the name and his dying scream bring the other *rākṣasas*, in much the same way Page hypothesized that Polyphemus' fellows would react to their leader's cries (*Mbh.* 1.152.1)" (pp. 144-145). And on the insufficient response, see E. B. West (2005/2006): "In the *Odyssey*, the other Cyclopes are taken in by the trick of the name, and, failing to understand the urgency of Polyphemus' situation, they abandon him (*Od.* 9.409-13)... In the *Mahābhārata*, Baka's household members are easily cowed and pose no threat to Bhīma or the town (*Mbh.* 1.152.2-5)" (p. 145).

CHORUS

Then, **nobody** did wrong to you.

CYCLOPS

Nobody blinds me right in my eye.

CHORUS

Then, you are not blind.

CYCLOPS

<Oh, that you were!>

CHORUS

And how could nobody make you blind?

CYCLOPS

You are mocking me. But where is this **Nobody**?

CHORUS

O Cyclops, he is nowhere.

(Cyc. 672-675)

GHAṬOTKACAḤ

...atha kinnāmā tava putraḥ

VRDDHAḤ

etad api na śakyam śrotum

GHAṬOTKACAḤ

yuktaḥ bho brāhmaṇakumāra kinnāmā te bhrātā

PRATHAMAḤ

tapasvī **madhyamaḥ**

GHAṬOTKACAḤ

madhyameti sadṛśam asya

aham eva yāsyāmi

bho bho **madhyama madhyama** śighram āgaccha

GHAṬOTKACA

...But what is the name of your son?

OLD MAN

I cannot tell you this either.

GHAṬOTKACA

That makes sense. Hey! Young Brahman, what is the name of your brother?

FIRST SON

The ascetic **middle one**.

GHAṬOTKACA

“**Middle one**” – how fitting is that! I will go myself. Hey!
Middle One. Hey! **Middle One**, come quick!

(MV 24.8-24.14)

The ogre/ogress as a loner, a man-eater, and a giant in the two narratives could be responsible for their depiction as an authoritarian in the two adaptations.¹⁸⁷ Euripides’ Polyphemus is a tyrant (GO9), who treats the Satyrs as a master would his slaves, and who regularly feasts on human flesh. Not unlike this, (Ps.-) Bhāsa’s Hīḍimbā is a bossy mother (SO9), who demands for her meal to be promptly served.

τίνες ποτ’ εἰσίν; οὐκ ἴσασι **δεσπότην**
 Πολύφημον οἷός ἐστιν ἄξενόν τε γῆν
 τήνδ’ ἐμβεβῶτες καὶ Κυκλωπίαν γνάθον
 τὴν **ἀνδροβρῶτα** δυστυχῶς ἀφιγμένοι.

187 On loner ogres in the Greek and Sanskrit epics, see E. B. West (2005/2006): “When we are introduced to the Cyclops at *Od.* 1.70-1, he is described as ἀντίθεον Πολύφημον, ὄου κράτος ἐστί μέγιστον / πᾶσιν Κυκλώπεσσι. ‘Godlike Polyphemus, whose power is the greatest among all the Cyclopes.’... In contrast with the initial depiction of Polyphemus as a leader, on the onset of the *Cyclopeia* we are told that οὐδὲ μετ’ ἄλλους / πωπλεῖτ’ ἀλλ’ ἀπάνευθεν ἐὼν ἀθεμίσται ἦδη, ‘nor with the others / did he consort, but stayed away, thinking lawlessly’ (*Od.* 9.188)... Baka, too, is initially described a king, an *asurarāt...* *bālī*, ‘a strong Asura king,’ (*Mbh.* 1.148.4), who is *īso janapadasyāsya purasya ca mahābalaḥ*, ‘extremely powerful, lording it over this countryside and town’ (*Mbh.* 1.148.3). After the battle we learn that he possesses both a house and servants (*Mbh.* 1.152.1), but during the encounter itself he is nothing but a fearsome and uncivilized brute in the jungle (*Mbh.* 1.151.1)” (pp. 129-130). On man-eating ogres in the Greek and Sanskrit epics, see E. B. West (2005/2006): “At *Od.* 10.200, the Cyclops is remembered as an ἀνδροφάγος, ‘man-eater,’ and at 9.297 he lies down to sleep ἀνδρόνεα κρέ’ ἔδων, ‘having fed on human flesh.’ At 9.347, while offering him the wine, Odysseus uses the same words to refer to the human flesh Polyphemus has eaten. Finally, at 9.374, he vomits up ψυμοί τ’ ἀνδρόμεοι, ‘chunks of human [meat].’ Baka is repeatedly called a ‘man-eater’ (*puruṣāḍakah*, at *Mbh.* 1.148.4; 1.150.26; 1.151.1; 1.152.6), whose preferred food is human flesh (*manuṣamāṃṣa*)” (p. 131). And on giant ogres in the Greek and Sanskrit epics, see E. B. West (2005/2006): “Polyphemus’ size, like most of his other qualities, is both amazing and terrifying (*Od.* 9.190-2)... In the same vein, the immense, lifeless body of Baka is a source of both wonder and horror to the liberated townspeople (*Mbh.* 1.152.8-9)” (p. 133).

Who can they possibly be? They must not know what our **master** Polyphemus is like, since they have set foot in this inhospitable land, and they have unfortunately arrived at the **man-eating** jaws of the Cyclops.

(Cyc. 90-93)

...putra mamopavāsanisargārtham asmin vanapradeśe
kaścīn **mānuṣaḥ** parimṛgyānetavyeti

...O son, having searched for **a human** in this wooded region,
you **must bring** him to me for the sake of breaking my fast.

(MV 11.18)

The priestly head of the family appearing both in the *Odyssey* and in the *Mahābhārata* could have determined the family trees in the theater versions.¹⁸⁸ The Greek playwright presents Maron as a son (GO10), thus recognizing his link to Apollo, while downplaying it for the sake of his Dionysus-favorable reworking. Taking a similar approach, the Sanskrit playwright showcases Keśavadāsa as a father (SO10), not without acknowledging the willingness of his relatives to come to his rescue, and yet causing the character himself to shine in a new light, thanks to that wisdom that only comes with old age.

καὶ μὴν Μάρων μοι πῶμ' ἔδωκε, **παῖς** θεοῦ.

And surely, Maron, **the son** of the god [sc. Dionysus], gave me the drink.

(Cyc. 141)

kṛtakṛtyaṃ śarīraṃ me pariṇāmena jarjaram |
rākṣasāgnau **sutāpekṣī** hoṣyāmi vidhisamskṛtam ||

188 For the priestly head of the family in the Greek and Sanskrit epics, see E. B. West (2005/2006): “Odysseus’ meeting with Polyphemus is preceded by a brief aside describing the origin of the wine that figures so prominently in the episode. It was a gift from Maron, a priest of Apollo, in a carry-over from the preceding encounter with the Kikonians (*Od.* 9.196-200)... Where the *Odyssey* briefly mentions the existence of Maron’s wife and son, the *Mahābhārata* contains 36 verses of the wife nobly offering to sacrifice herself to the monster (*Mbh.* 1.146.1-36), and a vignette of the lisping baby son telling his parents not to cry and offering to kill the ogre with a straw (*Mbh.* 1.147.20-22)” (pp. 134-135).

My body, decrepit from old age, has fulfilled its duty. Thinking of my **children**, I will offer it, purified by the precepts, to this fire-like rakshasa.

(MV 15)

Lastly, the precedent of drawing lots in the two narratives, together with its re-interpretation as a choice in the two adaptations, could be seen as a direct imitation.¹⁸⁹ Homer's Odysseus orders his companions to draw lots, but Euripides' just orders the Satyrs to line up. Which of them would be the ones that are going to help him is completely up to them (GO11). Likewise, Vyāsa's townsfolk die by turns, whereas (Ps.-)Bhāsa's Brahman must choose which of his sons to sacrifice (SO11).

ἄγε, τίς πρῶτος, τίς δ' ἐπὶ πρώτῳ
ταχθεὶς δαλοῦ κώπην ὀχμάσαι
Κύκλωπος ἔσω βλεφάρων ὥσας
λαμπρὰν ὄψιν διακναίσει;

Come on, having been drawn up, **who** will be the first, and **who** the one after the first, to grip the haft of the firebrand, and after thrusting it between the eyelids of the Cyclops, who will gouge out his bright eye?

(Cyc. 483-486)

patnyā cāritrasālinyā dviputro mokṣam icchasi |
balābalaṃ parijñāya putram **ekaṃ** visarjaya ||

You want your freedom as a father of two, together with your well-behaved wife. Having pondered their strengths and weaknesses, give up **one** of your sons.

(MV 12)

189 On the drawing of lots in the Greek and Sanskrit epics, see E. B. West (2005/2006): "In the *Mahābhārata*, the brahmin describes the system whereby the villagers pay tribute to Baka (*Mbh.* 1.148.6-8)... Later, the drawing of lots to determine who will wield the olive log is in the same vein as the turn taking described in the *Mahābhārata*; it is a cold-blooded determination of who must face down the ogre (*Od.* 9.331-3)" (p. 138).

