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# LOOK AT ME!
# THE MIMETIC IMPERSONATION OF INDRA

a dissertation presented

by

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to

The Department of South Asian Studies

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LOOK AT ME! THE MIMETIC IMPERSONATION OF INDRA

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the impersonation of Indra in the Ṛgveda (conventionally Rigveda), arguing that a 'textualized self' emerges during performance. What does it mean to disguise oneself verbally during ritual sacrifice? In order to answer this question, I examine how the text conceives of poetic performance, a kind of speech act which occurs in the same time frame and spatial proximity of its speaker. Reference to that performance, I argue, is marked by proximal deixis and performative verbs, both of which characterize actors and events as being in the here and now of the text.

Through these traces, I distinguish two distinct Indras. One Indra is the mythological figure responsible for cosmogonic events, and the other is the present speaker. To collapse these two Indras into one is to collapse time and make the primordial Indra present at the performance. Stylistically, this is often accomplished through the so-called injunctive, a finite verb form which is temporally and modally unspecified; its use renders narrative time ambiguous. The hymns are not only linguistically marked, but articulate what I term a 'mimetic circle', in which the song presents itself as its first singing, establishes its origin, and imagines a future in which it shall be re-performed. Each new performance of the song repeats the mimetic circle, re-creating the connection between primordial Indra and the performer who asserts he is Indra. These 'mimetic circles' reveal a curious relationship beteen text and self which bears further investigation.

To pursue that investigation, I use the 'grammar of mimesis' developed by studying the impersonation of Indra to approach mimetic impersonation in the rest of the Ṛgveda. I find evidence that during the Soma sacrifice the seven priests mimetically impersonate the seven seers, who accompany Indra to the Vala cave to re-enact that cosmogonic event. The idea of a

‘textualized self’ restored to life in performance constitutes a developmental missing link between the Indo-European concept of 'immortality in song' and the notion of an immortal self reincarnated in body after body which is ubiquitous in Hinduism and other South Asian religions.

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*for Toni*

*my deodar*

# PROLOGUE

Indra is the anxiously awaited guest of honor in the Ṛgveda, an anthology of religious poetry estimated to have been created over three millennia ago. Its poets laud all the gods and invite them to the sacrifice, but their fondest wish is to welcome Indra. The Ṛgveda gets its name from the word *ṛc*, 'verse', for these are the verses which are recited during the performance of *śrauta* rituals, a tradition which has influenced South Asian religion and literature since its inception. Some of its poems, however, are neither lauds directed to the gods nor invitations to the sacrifice. Instead, they are sung from the perspective of a divine figure and directed to be heard by mortal worshippers on the earth. This impersonation is a striking reversal of the norm in the majority of the *sūkta*s or 'well-spoken (poems)' of the Ṛgveda. While several of these hymns have been studied as tokens of impersonation, a systematic and comparative treatment of them as a type has not been the subject of a dissertation despite the groundwork laid by Thompson 1997b. This dissertation limits itself to one species of mimetic impersonation: poems in which the speaker asserts himself to be Indra. I argue that these hymns of impersonation are truly 'mimetic,' because they present themselves as re-enactments of primordial events in the present, and that this re-enactment is ontologically homologous to the emulated original. That is, the texts do not present this change as merely a poetic device, but a real transformation of being. This re-creation of the past in the present is marked by a stylized use of language which I will call a 'grammar of mimesis', and through this grammar I theorize both the local action of these *sūkta*s as individual poems as well as how understanding the mimetic impersonation of Indra gives us insight into the logic of performance and the notion of self in the Ṛgveda.

In **Chapter 1**, I will examine how impersonation in the Ṛgveda has been studied up until now. This brief history of scholarship culminates with George Thompson's critical insight into the formal markers of impersonation which allowed philologists to understand cases of impersonation when the impersonated figure is not explicit. After this, I make my experiment design explicit by discussing what texts I select and why. The chapter closes with a discussion of

the notion of mimesis, and why it has the potential to be a probative lens for the study of impersonation.

**Chapter 2** lays out my approach for interpreting Ṛgvedic poetry. I argue that the Ṛgveda is highly polysemous, not only because of its diachronic contents, but because its poetry in many instances involves double meaning. I further argue that part of this double meaning is a product of relating mythological events to performative realities, thereby endowing the latter with the significance of the former. Here I theorize my 'grammar of mimesis' as one which consists of deictic traces which locate objects as spatially proximal to the speaker and actions as temporally proximal. My hypothesis is that texts have distinct theatres of reference, one is the frame-narrative of a singer singing a song, which I term the *adhiyajña* level, while the other is the narrative contents of that song. In mimetic impersonation, the speaker presents a mythological narrative as occurring at the present sacrifice.

In **Chapter 3** I test out this hypothesis by investigating the shortest case of Indra impersonation. In my case studies I will search for what I discursive phenomenon I call a **mimetic circle**. The mimetic circle, as we shall see, occurs when a text presents its performance as the first performance and expresses the expectation of future re-performances. In so doing, each performer in a succession of re-performances is providing an etiology for the song which simultaneously confirms the reality of the original and the faithful restoration of the copy. I will demonstrate that the mimetic circle is one of the ways these texts argue that they are true, and, as an extension of that truth, that they are transformative. In **Chapter 4**, I add three more cases in which the performer impersonates Indra. In these case studies, the performer appears to become Indra in order to benefit from his agency in a series of ritual enactment. These cases differ greatly with the two case studies in **Chapter 5**, where there is a distinction between verses committed to asserting the identity of Indra and verses which are not Indra specific, suggesting some degree of their significance is conferred by the awareness that they are being spoken by Indra. In this chapter, I will discuss the extent to which the identity of the speaker functions as a

container of the speech act, with implications for the Ṛgvedic notion of oral textuality and personhood.

**Chapter 6** is a pilot project. If mimetic impersonation transforms the speaker into Indra, what does this mean for the religious imagination of the Ṛgveda? This chapter builds the foundation for future projects which may conclusively demonstrate that the Vedic Soma sacrifice is constructed around priests impersonating their legendary prototypes.

## CHAPTER 1

## THE INVISIBLE MASK

Although impersonation has not been systematically studied in the Ṛgveda since George Thompson, poems in which speaking voices are in dialogue have long fascinated Vedic scholars beginning with Hermann Oldenberg in the late 19th century. Looking at these dialogue hymns, Oldenberg crafted an '*ākhyāna*-theorie'.[1] He hypothesized that pre-Vedic ritual must have had mythological prose narratives for which the Ṛgvedic hymns were the songs used at moment of aesthetic climax. The songs were committed to memory while the prose elements were not. For Oldenberg, the *ākhyāna*s, 'tales', of the later Vedic texts were degenerated forms of these lost frame narratives, corrupted because they were fixed in memory much later, generations after the Ṛgveda itself. Opposition to this theory took many forms,[2] but, for our purposes, the most interesting rejections comes from Sylvain Lévi and Leopold von Schroeder. Lévi noticed that the dialogue hymns, which were so vital to Oldenberg's *ākhyāna*-theorie, were, in fact, self-contained dramatic scenes which did not require any external narrative to be realized.[3] Leopold von Schroeder took this notion a step further, seeing the dialogue hymns as ritual theatre whose absent details contributed to the sacred mystery.

Leopold von Schroeder interpreted Vedic ritual through his understanding of the Elysian mysteries and Dionysian festivals of Classical Greece. For him, these public events promoted regenerative life-energy in the face of death, decay, and decrepitude. Reading von Schroeder,

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[1] See Oldenberg 1883:54-86 and Oldenberg 1885:52-83.

[2] See Patton 1993:230-2 or Patton 1996:46-8 for a discussion.

[3] Lévi (1890:307): "[Oldenberg] les considère presque tous comme les débris épars d'anciens morceaux épiques; la narration qui les encadrait, laissée à la libre improvisation du rhapsode, n'a jamais pris de forme arrêtée et s'est perdue; mais les paroles des dieux et des saints, consacrées par la sainteté des interlocuteurs, se sont conservées intactes, fidèlement transmises de bouche en bouche jusqu'à l'époque des diascévastes. L'hypothèse est ingénieuse, mais elle ne s'impose pas. L'exposition est en général si nette, le dialogue si bien suivi, qu'un commentaire narratif paraîtrait superflu."

one cannot help but think of Sigmund Freud, who lived in Vienna at the same time. Freud's concepts of libido and subconscious desire resonate with von Schroeder's theory of life festivals and mystery. The comparison is probative because von Schroeder's scholarship is very much the psycho-analysis of ritual. Consider this passage from *Mysterium und Mimus*:

> "The mimetic weapon dances of the Maruts, the Germanic sword dances, the dances of the Roman Salii, of the Curetes and Corybantes of Greece and Phrygia lead us, observing comparatively, to the inevitable conclusion that the young men of Aryan antiquity performed similar weapon dances, whereby the dancers represented deceased warrior spirits, the *animae militium interfectorum*. ... These spirits, however, were already considered to be virile phallic demons, which, throughout nature, produced growth, fertility and good crop yields."[4]

In *Mysterium und Mimus*, von Schroder tries to demonstrate that these dialogue hymns are Vedic mystery theatre, but his thoughts about the function of that theatre are guided by his theories of sexual life energy. The error on von Schroeder's part was a failure to distinguish the stylistic features common to Vedic poetry from the substance of a specific poetic argument. For example, the language of renewal and sexual generativity is found everywhere in the Brāhmaṇas, which are exegetical prose texts that provide footnotes to contemporaneous ritual practices. This type of rhetoric proliferates in the Brāhmaṇas, just as modern American political speeches make frequent mention of liberty, freedom, and God irrespective of the specific argument they are making. For that matter, philologists of the time were not looking for argumentation in mythology, but imagined a cosmology passively received and transmitted from generation to generation. Recall that Oldenberg's *akhyāna*-theorie assumes later Vedic narratives are corrupted by human error, rather than strategically re-using narratives to make new arguments.

### 1.1 On the Phenomenology of Text

The analyses of Vedic impersonation by Oldenberg, Lévi, and von Schroeder must be

[4] Schroeder 1908:476-478, translated by Arvidsson 2006:208.

understood from the context of the state of historical linguistics in the Fin-de-Siècle Europe. The study of text was contoured by the linguistic principle known as the Neogrammarian hypothesis: the *Ausnahmslosigkeit der Lautgesetze* 'the exceptionlessness of sound law'.[5] Sound laws took the form of mathematical equations which operate on language holistically as a mental system rather than at the level of the individual utterance. Thus, when a sound law sweeps through a language, it is both exhaustive and irreversible. If text were merely frozen language, and language were rule-governed, then a comparison of the languages of those texts would yield a relative chronology of those texts. The importance of this discovery is hard to understate, but is especially significant in the Vedic context because Hindu authorities maintained that all texts categorized as Veda were timeless, authorless, and eternal.[6] The discovery that the Vedic texts were not synchronous but rather composed over the span of centuries opened that which was hidden from the eye of history: The Vedic period. This discovery created a new way of thinking about the Vedas as revealing a lost history but, at the same time, tacitly imposing a notion of the text as an inert artifact, which is incompatible with the way both ancient Vedic texts represent themselves and Vedic informants depict the texts today. Consider this account from David M. Knipe's fieldwork among Vedic families of the Godavari delta:

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[5] Hermann Osthoff and Karl Brugmann (1878:1:xiii) present the Neogrammarian hypothesis in the Vorwort to the first volume of their *Morphologische Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiete der indogermanischen Sprachen*: "Aller lautwandel, so weit er mechanisch vor sich geht, vollzieht sich nach ausnahmslosen gesetzen, d. h. die richtung der lautbewegung ist bei allen angehörigen einer sprachgenossenschaft, ausser dem fall, dass dialektspaltung eintritt, stets dieselbe, und alle wörter, in denen der der lautbewegung unterworfene laut unter gleichen verhältnissen erscheint, werden ohne ausnähme von der änderung ergriffen."

[6] Clooney (1990:168): "*Apauruṣeyatva* is used here to simply dismiss the possibility that the *ṛṣi*s mights have a creative or authorial function in regard to the text. Jaimini's position is that they are secondary, peripheral, whatever their insights or personal qualities might be. That they speak and reach is required; the remainder of their experiences and abilities is simply irrelevant." He adds in a footnote: "It follows, of course, that there can be no divine authorship or the Veda. As we have already seen, the deities themselves are of secondary importance in the sacrifice, and cannot be assigned so central a role. For Jaimini, aissigning authorship to a divine creator would not be an improvement over recognizing human authorship, since it would involve the same shift, subordination of the sacrifice to the personal perspective of some being." See Clooney 1987 for further discussion of *apauruṣeyatva* 'authorlessness'.

> ""Oh, nothing much," replied Yajulu, "just discussing the texts." In mock horror Baballa immediately retorted, "What do you mean *just* the texts! *You* are the text!""[7]

While intended humorously, it is also very true. The Vedic texts survived three millennia not as manuscripts, but embodied in people committed to the unbroken tether of memory and performance. The phenomenology of performance, of transmission, and of text itself must frame everything Vedic.

### 1.2 On the Phenomenology of Disguise

Thinking about impersonation is a phenomenological exercise too. What does it mean to assert one's identity as another in poetry? What does it mean to disguise oneself in ritual? These questions must be considered before any analysis can begin. In 1983, Boris Oguibénine wrote on masks in Vedic ritual, coming to a singular insight about the ontology of disguise regarding *śrauta* rituals. The *śrauta sūtras* are ritual manuals composed after the Vedic period and which the native tradition does not consider *śruti*, 'revealed (knowledge)', but manuals of human composition. The rituals as described by these texts are highly aniconic when compared with other Hindu devotional traditions. There is no *mūrti*,[8] merely the priests clad in sacred thread directing their prayers to the fire altar and the sacrificial pole. In comparison with other more iconic traditions, Oguibénine remarks that Vedic religion: "remain[s] in the domain of discourse that does announce the disguising of representations". In other words, during the ritual one thing is referred to in terms of another thing, as though an act of disguise were taking place. Oguibénine offers as an example of this type of masking the *dakṣinā* cow who acts as a surrogate

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[7] Knipe 2015:71.

[8] The material embodiment of the god which is bathed, dressed, and fed as a welcome guest during modern Hindu *pūja* ceremonies. See Eck 1998:32-58.

for any ritual gift. He adds that in Vedic "disguises indicating virtual masks do not lead to the fabrication of corresponding material images, but the relation between real and virtual remains the same." Oguibénine borrows this notion of the 'virtual mask' from Claude Lévi-Strauss, who used the term 'virtual mask' in the second volume of *La Voie des masques* to distinguish the origin myth connected to the material mask used in North American Indian ritual from the material mask itself.[9]

I want to expand on the notion of the 'virtual mask', which Oguibénine suggests operates the same way in Vedic as Lévi-Strauss generalizes for North American Indians. Ritual actions are symbolic, they are not meaningful in-and-of themselves, but their importance is linked to what they signify. In performance, that signification is conveyed through speech. The narrative associated with the mask, rather than a physical description of the mask, would be the topic of speech in a ritual performance. For the physical characteristics of the mask are obvious, and the special origin of the mask obscure. The mask provides that narrative with a physical anchor, materializing it so that it can affect the material world, while the narrative endows the mask with significance. In that light, even when a physical mask is present the 'virtual mask' is the *real* disguise. For neither a mask composed of wood nor a mask composed of speech would be a functional disguise outside of the context of performance. Which is to say that, phenomenologically, ritual assertions of disguise function identically to disguises which use ritual props. In the Vedic case the physical component is not a mask but the performer's own voice and body.

### 1.3 Poetic Impersonation and Self-Assertion

Thompson 1997b prefers 'verbal mask' to 'virtual mask' in order to specify a disguise crafted by poetic technique. Thompson cites *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (ŚB) as a commentary on the consecration of the sacrificer which seems to suggest an ontological transformation from human

[9] Lévi-Strauss 1979:58-60

to divine:

ŚB 1.1.1.4-6: *dvayaṃ vā́ idaṃ ná tr̥tī́yamasti satyáṃ caivā́nr̥taṃ ca satyám evá devā ánr̥tam manuṣyà idám aham ánr̥tāt satyam úpaimī́ti tán manuṣyèbhyo devān úpaiti / sa vaí satyám evá vadet etad dha vaí devā́ vratáṃ caranti yát satyaṃ tásmāt te yáśo yáśo ha bhavati yá eváṃ vidvā́ṃtsatyaṃvádati / átha sáṃsthite vísr̥jate idám ahaṃ yá evā́smi sò 'smīty **ámānuṣa iva vā́ etád bhavati** yád vratam upaíti na hi tád avakálpate yád brūyā́d idám aháṃ satyād ánr̥tam úpaimī́ti **tád u khálu púnar mānuṣó bhavati** tásmād idám ahaṃ yá evā́smi sò 'smī́ty eváṃ vrataṃ vísr̥jeta /*

> This (world) is double, not triple: Only truth and untruth. The gods are truth, and man untruth. (The sacrificer says): "I approach truth from untruth, (truth) which approaches the gods from men". Thus, he should speak only truth. The gods travel to this oath which is truth. From it, they (are) glorious. He becomes glorious who knowing thus speaks the truth. But when (the sacrifice) is complete, (the sacrificer) releases (the oath, saying) "I am who I am." When he approaches that oath, **he becomes like a non-human**. For that is not proper should one say "I approach untruth from truth." **Obviously, he becomes a human again**, so (the sacrificer) should discharge the oath (by saying) "I am who I am".

Thompson then brings in Heesterman's analysis of this passage:

> "The Śatapatha stresses as the essential point that by undertaking the vow, the sacrificer becomes a different person. He transcends himself to become 'non-human.' Then, at the end of the ritual, he divests himself of his transcendent ritual persona and reverts again to his normal self." [10]

I think Thompson undersells the importance of this passage as just another piece of evidence that humans can become gods.[11] This passage is directly relevant to his project of poetic impersonation, because here the speaker enacts the transformation by making an assertion in 1st person in the form of *aham...asmi* 'I am'. For Thompson, the performative effect of *aham* will be of singular importance.

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[10] Heesterman 1991:148

[11] Thompson (1997b:152) "...there is the characterization of Brahmins as "human gods" (*manuṣya deva*)." He is referring to ŚB 2.2.2.6: *dvayā vaí devā́ devā́ḥ áhaivá devā átha yé brāhmaṇā́ḥ śruśruvā́ṃso 'nūcānās té manuṣyadevā́s téṣāṃ dvedhā́ vibhaktá evá yajña ā́hutaya evá devā́nāṃ dákṣiṇā manuṣyadevā́nām brāhmaṇā́nāṃ śuśruvúṣām anūcānā́nām* "Twofold are the gods. The gods are gods, but the priests who having heard (the Veda) are reciting, they are human-gods. Their sacrifice is divided two ways: only oblations for the gods and only gifts for the human-gods, the priests who having heard (the Veda) are reciting."

Thompson considers poetic impersonation from a comparative context, noting the repetitive use of explicit first person verbal grammar in Edmund Wilson's account of the Zuñi Shalako ceremony:

> "*I* have come," says the Shalako (i.e., the one impersonating the Shalako), "from the sacred lake, and *I have come* by all the springs." He enumerates all the springs that the Zuñis in their wanderings passed, when they were looking for a site for their town. "*I have come* to see my people. For many years *I have heard* of my people living here at been praying for them; and especially *I want* the women to be fortunate with their babies. *I bring* my people all kinds of seeds, all the different kinds of corn, and all the different kinds of fruit and wild green things. *I have been praying* for my people. *I want to see* them healthy. Yes, *I have worked* hard and prayed for all my people. *I do not want* any of the roots to rot. *I do not want* anyone to sicken and die, but *I want* everyone to stand firmly on his feet all year. This is how *I have prayed* for you."[12]

It is in comparison with this speech that Thompson queries self-assertion in the Ṛgveda. He notes first that:

> "...the most prominent place where this theme of self-assertion occurs is in those hymns that have been characterized by the native tradition itself as *ātmastuti*s, that is, "hymns of self-praise."[13]

Thompson distinguishes the native category of *ātmastuti*, 'self-praise', from his own diagnostic. He designates as *ahaṃkāra*, literally the 'I-maker' with the sense of 'self-assertion', the stylized usage of 1st person pronominal paradigm as a structuring device. So, while *ātmastuti* is an emic category for impersonation, *ahaṃkāra* is an etic one. Despite the distinction, Thompson demonstrates that etic *ahaṃkāra*s and emic *ātmastuti*s frequently overlap; formal self-assertion is a poetic technique employed to bring about that impersonation. While in some cases the impersonated speaker of an *ātmastuti* is explicit, as is fortunately the case with Indra, Thompson's *ahaṃkāra*s do not have an explicitly identified speaker. Thompson suggests that

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[12] From Wilson 1956, reprinted in abridged form in Lessa and Vogt 1979:288-96.

[13] Thompson 1997b:146

these *ahaṃkāra* hymns are indeed cases of poetic impersonation, but ones in which the speaking identity is tacitly suggested by a series of enigmatic riddles.

Thompson's flagship case of poetic impersonation is ṚV X.125, which *anukramaṇī*s attribute to a figure named Vāc Ambhṛṇī. The *anukramaṇī*s are paratexts which post-date the Vedic periods but provide indexical information regarding the hymns, for example their meter, their position within the collection, and their designated deity. Thompson's reading follows Toporov's argument[14] that Vāc, the divine personification of poetic speech, is encrypted into the poem phonetically. For example, Toporov suggests the combination of the onsets of ***vá****(subhiś)* ***c****(arāmi)* and ***vá****(sūnām)* ***c****(ikituṣi)* code Vāc.[15] For Toporov, however, the anagram is coding the human poet's name Vāc Ambhṛṇī like an artist's signature. While Toporov recognizes the proliferation of 1st person grammar as significant, he takes it as evidence for the encoding of the poet's identity, not a dramatic performance as Vāc herself. This is a chief point of departure for Thompson. The following text, translation, **emphasis**, and format are taken directly from Thompson (1997b:148) with minor typographical corrections on my part. Notice that, in addition to 1st person pronominal pronouns, Thompson **emphasizes** finite verbs in the 1st person singular.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | ***ahám*** *rudrébhir vásubhiś* ***carāmy*** */*<br>***ahám*** *ādityaír utá viśvádevaiḥ /*<br>***ahám*** *mitrā́váruṇobhā́* ***bibharmy*** */*<br>***ahám*** *indrāgnī́* ***ahám*** *aśvínobhā́ //* | I travel with the Rudras, with the Vasus, I [do], with the Ādityas and the All-Gods. I myself bear both, Mitra & Varuṇa, I myself [bear] Indra & Agni, I [bear] the two Aśvins |
| 2 | ***ahám*** *sómam āhanásam* ***bibharmy*** */*<br>***ahám*** *tváṣṭāram utá pūṣáṇam bhágam /*<br>***ahám dadhāmi*** *dráviṇaṃ havíṣmate /*<br>*suprāvyè yájamānāya sunvaté //* | I myself bear Soma that swells, I bear Tvaṣṭar, as well as Pūṣan and Bhaga. I myself establish wealth for the oblation-bearing, the cheerful, Soma-pressing patron. |
| 3 | ***ahám*** *rā́ṣṭrī saṃgámanī vásūnāṃ /*<br>*cikitúṣī prathamā́ yajñíyānām /*<br>*tā́m mā devā́ vy àdadhuḥ purutrā́ /* | I myself am queen, a treasury of riches, [I am] insightful, first among the gods worthy of sacrifice. As such, |

[14] Toporov, Vladimir N. 1981. "Die Ursprünge der indoeuropäischen Poetik." *Poetica*, 13:189-251

[15] Toporov 1981:236

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *bhū́riṣṭhātrām bhū́ri āveśáyantīm //* | the gods have divided up me in many places, me of many positions, me entering many forms. |
| 4 | ***máyā*** *só ánnam atti yó vipáśyati /*<br>*yáḥ prā́ṇiti yá īṃ śr̥ṇóti uktám /*<br>*amantávo* ***mā́ṃ*** *tá úpa kṣiyanti /*<br>*śrudhí śruta śraddhiváṃ te* ***vadāmi*** *//* | Because of me he who sees right eats food, as does who breathes & who hears what I say. Even the unaware rest upon me. Listen o famous one, I tell you what is to be famous. |
| 5 | ***ahám*** *evá svayám idáṃ* ***vadāmi***<br>*júṣṭaṃ devébhir utá mā́nuṣebhiḥ*<br>*yáṃ kā́maye táṃ-tam ugráṃ* ***kr̥ṇomi***<br>*tám brahmā́ṇaṃ tám r̥ṣíṃ táṃ sumedhā́m* | I myself, just as I am, I say that thing which is enjoyed by both gods and men alike. Whom I love I make ferocious, I make him a Brahmin, a Ṛṣi, I make him wise. |
| 6 | ***aháṃ*** *rudrā́ya dhánur ā́* ***tanomi***<br>*brahmadvíṣe śárave hántavā́ u*<br>***aháṃ*** *jánāya samádaṃ* ***kr̥ṇomy***<br>***aháṃ*** *dyā́vāpr̥thivī́ ā́* ***viveśa*** | I myself stretch the bow for Rudra so that his arrow kills the enemy of magical speech. I myself make battle-joy for the clan, I have pervaded both Heaven & Earth. |
| 7 | ***aháṃ*** *suve pitáram asya mūrdhán*<br>***máma*** *yónir apsv àntáḥ samudré*<br>*táto ví tiṣṭhe bhúvanā́nu víśvo-*<br>*'tā́mū́ṃ dyā́ṃ varṣmā́ṇópa* ***sprśāmi*** | I myself give birth to the father on its head. My womb that is in the waters, in the sea, there I straddle all the worlds, and I touch that sky with the top [of my head] |
| 8 | ***ahám*** *evá vā́ta iva prá* ***vāmi***<br>*ārábhamāṇā bhúvanāni víśvā*<br>*paró divā́ pará enā́ pr̥thivyā́í-*<br>*'tā́vatī mahinā́ sám* ***babhūva*** | I myself, just like the wind I blow forth, grasping all these creatures. Beyond the heaven, beyond this earth-thus have I come to be in my greatness. |

For Thompson, the impersonation of Vāc is strongly supported by a combination of the repeated use of 1st person morphology, the description of divine experiences, the focus on speaking and hearing, and the fact that for each riddling verse 'speech' seems to be the only consistently probative solution. In ṜV X.125.1-2, Vāc praises herself as the access to all the gods, for poetic speech is necessary for the ritual sacrifice, and thus it is really speech who bestows wealth on the patrons of the sacrifice. ṜV X.125.3 clearly puts speech 'first' among those to be worshipped, for speech must *first* be used *in order* to worship. This verse also speaks to the multiplicity of speech; the gods have placed her many places and she has entered many forms. ṜV X.125.4 suggest that the poet eats, sees, and breathes by virtue of hearing the speaker.

In other words, the poet gains from Vāc that which allows him to make his livelihood. The second half of the verse includes non-poets, even those who are unaware (*amantávo*) depend on her, and so must listen to what she has to say. ṚV X.125.5 reveals it is Vāc who has the power to make the one she loves a poet. In ṚV X.125.6-8, the speaker returns to her ability to direct the powers of the gods—stretching the bow of Rudra for example—as well as her ability to sustain the cosmos and her omnipresence.

In agreement with Thompson, I find that there is thematic ring here which is another structural support for Thompson's case for poetic impersonation. The poem begins and ends with the macrocosmic perspective of speech, but, in the poem's center, there is a revelation of the personal powers of Vāc. On the macrocosmic scale, Vāc, poetic speech, travels with the gods (ṚV X.125.1-3), she fills heaven and earth, and she grasps all creatures (ṚV X.125.7-8). The poem shifts from the macrocosmic description to the microcosmic when she asserts that she is divided up everywhere by the gods. Intimately, she tells the singular listener that she is the poet's livelihood, and she can make him a *brahmán* 'composer'. The poem begins to return to the macroscopic perspective when the speaker claims she stretches Rudra's bow in order to kill the one who hates the *brahmán*. Although Toporov noticed the importance of the "zweite Ebene" at the center of the hymn, both Toporov's and Thompson's treatment predate the landmark work on poetic structuring devices in Vedic by Joel P. Brereton[16] and Stephanie W. Jamison.[17] They discovered that a hymn's central position, often surrounded by concentric ring compositions, could be a place of focus, where the poem's underlying theme or arcane truth is encrypted.

| | |
|---|---|
| ṚV X.125.4d | *śrudhí śruta śraddhiváṃ te vadāmi //* |
| ṚV X.125.5a | *ahám evá svayám idáṃ vadāmi* |
| | Hear, famous one, something trustworthy: |
| | I speak to you; I say this myself: |

[16] Brereton 1999

[17] Jamison 2007

Notice that X.125.4d and X.125.5a seem to constitute a poetic nucleus where we find an emphasis on speaking, hearing, and trustworthiness (*śraddhivá*). Further, the speaker asserts she is really saying these things herself (*svayám*). These words command the attention of anyone who listens asserts the authenticity of what is being said because it is derived from the speaker's special identity. This gives us some insight into what constitutes a trustworthy text, as well as how impersonation can be part of a strategy to assert not just identity but truthfulness.

The capstone of Thompson's project is hymn ṚV IV.42. The *anukramaṇī*s name the legendary king Trasadasyu Paurukutsya as the *ṛṣi*, 'seer', and Indra and Varuṇa as the *devatā*s 'deities (to which the hymn is addressed)'. The following text, translation, **emphasis**, and form are taken directly from Thompson (1997:165-167) with minor typographical corrections on my part.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | ***máma*** *dvitā́ rāṣṭaráṃ kṣatríyasya*<br>*viśvā́yor víśve amṛ́tā yáthā naḥ*<br>*krátuṃ sacante váruṇasya devā́*<br>***rā́jāmi*** *kṛ́ṣṭér upamásya vavréḥ* | To me doubly belongs kingship, [me]<br>a warrior possessed of all full life, as<br>to us belong all immortals. The<br>gods follow the will of Varuṇa. I rule over<br>the clan of the highest caste. |
| 2 | ***aháṃ*** *rā́jā váruṇo* ***máhyam*** *tā́ny*<br>*asuryā́ṇi prathamā́ dhārayanta*<br>*krátuṃ sacante váruṇasya devā́*<br>***rā́jāmi*** *kṛ́ṣṭér upamásya vavréḥ* | I myself am king Varuṇa, upon me<br>they bestowed these first divine<br>powers. The gods follow the will of<br>Varuṇa. I myself rule over the clan of the<br>highest caste. |
| 3 | ***ahám*** *índro váruṇas té mahitvó*<br>*'rvī́ gabhīré rájasī suméke*<br>*tváṣṭeva víśvā bhúvanāni vidvā́n*<br>*sám* ***airayaṃ*** *ródasī* ***dhārā́yaṃ*** *ca* | I myself am Indra, am Varuṇa. By my<br>greatness these two wide, deep well-<br>fixed realms-like Tvastar, a knower<br>of all creatures, I have fit them together and<br>I have made them fixed. |
| 4 | ***ahám*** *apó apinvam ukṣámāṇā*<br>***dhārā́yaṃ*** *dívaṃ sádana ṛtásya*<br>*ṛténa putró áditer ṛtā́vo*<br>*'tá tridhā́tu prathayad ví bhū́ma* | I myself made the raining waters<br>swell up, I made the heaven fixed in<br>the seat of Truth. By means of Truth,<br>Aditi's son, the [son] of Truth, spread<br>out the three-based earth. |
| 5 | ***mā́ṃ*** *náraḥ sváśvā vājáyanto*<br>***mā́ṃ*** *vṛtā́ḥ samáraṇe havante*<br>***kṛṇómi*** *ājím maghávāhám índra*<br>***íyarmi*** *reṇúm abhíbhūtyojāḥ* | Me do the prize-winning well-horsed<br>heroes, me do they invoke when<br>ringed in battle. I, Indra the generous<br>patron, I perform in battle, I stir up the dust,<br>I with my dominating power. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | ***ahám*** *tấ víśvā* ***cakaraṃ*** *nákir* ***mā*** *daívyaṃ sáho varate ápratītam yán* ***mā*** *sómāso mamádan yád ukthó ʻbhé bhayete rájasī apāré* | I myself have created all these. No divine power can stop me [for I am] irresistible. When the soma juices have intoxicated me, [and] when the hymns, then both boundless regions fear. |
| 7 | *vidúṣ te víśvā bhúvanāni tásya tấ prá bravīṣi váruṇāya vedhaḥ tváṃ vṛtrấṇi śṛṇviṣe jaghanvấn tváṃ vṛtấṁ ariṇā indra síndhūn* | All creatures know of this about you These you proclaim to Varuṇa, you priest! You are known as one who has smashed dams [Vṛtras]. You, o Indra, have released the dammed up rivers. |
| 8 | *asmấkam átra pitáras tá āsan saptá ṛ́ṣayo daurgahé badhyámāne tá ấyajanta trasádasyum asyā índraṃ ná vṛtratúram ardhadevám* | These our fathers were there, the seven Sages, when Daurgaha was bound. They sacrificed so as to obtain for this [woman] Trasadasyu, who like Indra is a conqueror of dams, a demi-god! |
| 9 | *purukútsānī hí vām ádāśad dhavyébhir indrāvaruṇā námobhiḥ áthā rấjānaṃ trasádasyum asyā vṛtraháṇaṃ dadathur ardhadevám* | For Purukutsa's wife performed service to you two, with oblations and homage, Indra-Varuṇa. Then you two gave to her the king Trasadasyu, a smasher of dams [Vṛtras], a demi-god. |
| 10 | *rāyấ vayáṃ sasavấṃso madema havyéna devấ yávasena gávaḥ tấṃ dhenúm indrāvaruṇā yuváṃ no viśvấhā dhattam ánapasphurantīm* | Having won wealth, may we be intoxicated with it, [as] the gods with the oblation, [as] the cows with grain. O Indra-Varuṇa, grant us ever the milk cow that does not kick against us! |

Scholars have suggested a number of possible interpretations for this hymn. In fact, Thompson finds "many of the best Vedicists of the past one hundred years disagreeing about even such basic matters as who is speaking at any given moment in this hymn!"[18] For some, the hymn is a verbal contest between Indra and Varuṇa; any authorship by Trasadasyu is to be rejected because he is named within the hymn itself. Lommel 1951 suggested that only ṚV IV.42.1-6 were spoken by King Trasadasyu during his royal consecration, arguing that in the later ritual the king is likened to both Varuṇa and Indra through the epithets of *dharmapati* and *vṛtrahan* respectively. Schmitt 1992 follows this line of thinking, but argues instead that Varuṇa and Indra represent two kinds of seasonal kingship, both of which Trasadasyu claims for himself by impersonating

[18] Thompson 1997b:165

the two at a kingship ritual which takes place at the seasonal boundary.[19] At this seasonal boundary Varuṇa, the winter king of the collective settlement, was displaced by Indra, summer king of caravan dispersal and migration.[20] Thompson is amenable to Lommel and Schmitt's positions, particularly of the stylistic usage of 1st person grammar in the first six verses confirms for him that *someone,* Trasadayu or some descendant of his, is indeed impersonating Indra and Varuṇa:

> "The hymn's pretended, mythic, speakers, that is, the ones who are assumed to say "*ahám*" (or some variant) through much of the hymn, are Varuṇa (cf. stanza 2), Indra (stanza 3, also 5), and finally the poet himself, who is identified as Trasadasyu by the tradition. But this attribution is based on rather inconclusive clues culled from the text of stanzas 8 and 9 and is not at all certain. Vāmadeva, the arch-poet of the fourth book of the RV and presumed *purohita*, or domestic priest, for Trasadasyu, has also been suggested as the author of the hymn. But in all likelihood we are probably talking about a descendant of one or the other of these, rather than the distant figurehead himself, which in fact is frequently the case in the RV."[21]

Thompson makes an important methodological observation about how to proceed:

> "...how to do that in a way that will be philologically acceptable? Obviously we do not have direct access to this experience, nor to the pragmatic context of this performance, and the text seems to give few clues. But this does not mean that our only alternative is unbridled speculation, which will lead inevitably only to anachronism, such as we see in numerous popular accounts of Vedic. There is, I think a means of access to the speaker's experience that is purely textual."[22]

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[19] Schmidt (1992:340), "King Trasadasyu impersonates both Varuṇa and Indra by performing their functions according to the demands of the seasons." See Heesterman 1957 for an argument that the *rājasūya* is a yearly ritual of consecration, not inauguration, of the king. Heesterman (1957:10) presents his work thusly: "...it will be observed that the central *rājasūya* ceremonies cluster round the period of the turning of the year...[v]iewed in this light the *rājasūya* seems to be an abridgment of what originally must have been an unremitting series of yearly ceremonies with the object of regenerating the universe. The king took a central place in it."

[20] Kuiper 1979 argues that Indra and Varuṇa represent two oppositional halves of the cosmos. Kuiper (1979:44) points out that Varuṇa's epithet is *samrāj* 'hegemon', while Indra's title is *svarāj* 'independent'. Mitra honors Varuṇa with *kṣema* 'peace', while Indra is on the move driving about. Oberlies (1998:361) presents the Vedic ritual system as built around the rotating primacy of Indra and Varuṇa which seems to correlate with the behavior of the Vedic clans themselves. Thieme (1967:234) presents Vedic society as alternating between a period of fixed communal habitation (*kṣema*) and of going on the trek (*yoga*), when families dispersed with their herds.

[21] Thompson 1997b:167
[22] Thompson 1997b:169

I want to expand this notion of a "speaker's experience that is purely textual". Just as a performer puts on a divine verbal mask, the hypothetical 'real performer' behind the mask is just as much a poetic construction as Vāc, Indra, or Varuṇa. Taking "experience which is purely textual" seriously means taking reported experiences at face value: the informants are textual beings before they are human or divine ones.

Thompson's thoughts on the man in the verbal mask are revealing in this regard. For while ṚV IV.42.1-6 conforms to Thompson's *ahaṃkāra* pattern, the final four verses, ṚV IV.4'-10, do not. Yet it is only these final four verses which mention Trasadasyu and provide a narrative about him. Does this narrative contextualize the preceding *ahaṃkāra* as Trasadasyu impersonating Indra and Varuṇa? Thompson's admission, that "in all likelihood we are probably talking about a descendant of [Vāmadeva or Trasadasyu], rather than the distant figurehead himself" is remarkable to me, for it opens the door to a recursive impersonation, as the framing narrative allows successive generations of performers to *impersonate* their imagined ancestor, Trasadasyu, who is himself *impersonating* the gods Indra and Varuṇa. The broader implications of re-impersonation are not treated by Thompson, but if there is a tradition of re-performing the hymns associated with the memory of a "distant figurehead", then *all* Vedic hymns are impersonations by design or by accident because they have been re-performed by successive intermediate performers speaking, acting and reporting on textual experiences attributed to a first performer.

### 1.4 The Problem of Authorship

Here, I need to say something about why this dissertation limits itself to hymns in which Indra is the primary speaker. Impersonating a character in narration could potentially occur with humans, animals, plants, inanimate objects, abstract concepts, and so on. Why should Indra take prominence as an imitable subject? The vast majority of Vedic hymns are not presented as the perspective of a god but of a human poet whose primary concern is to *persuade the gods* in heaven to make the journey to be present at the sacrifice as honored guests. In that light, the

perspective of the gods represents the polar opposite of the most common speaker-listener relationship. That is, the 1st person is a figure typically in the 2nd person. When the impersonated god is the primary speaking character of a *sūkta*, a dramatic and iconic reversal of the usual relationship between praise-singer and recipient of praise has occurred.

I have restricted this study to impersonations of Indra alone, excluding cases of the impersonation of other gods and human figures such an ancient seers or legendary kings. Excluding mimesis of a human is a form of experimental control. Impersonating a human character introduces the problem of authorship. Is the human speaker who names himself the historical author? Or a human *dramatis persona* being played? A treatment of other forms of impersonation in the Ṛgveda, for example that of seers and kings, can logically follow only after a treatment of mimesis of the gods for the simple reason that the ambiguity of character-or-author is avoided by an historically impossible self.

There is a poem in Ṛgveda in which the ancient seer Viśvāmitra is in dialogue with two rivers, the Śutudrī and the Vipāś.[23] Was this hymn composed by an historical Viśvāmitra? Or is that impersonation a poetic conceit? Either way, the question of authorship does not arise when considering the verses placed in the mouths of the Śutudrī and the Vipāś. Whether their speech is the invention of an historical human named Viśvāmitra or of invisible and unnamed human authors, the rivers lack the humanity which is a prerequisite of historical authorship.[24]

The problem of authorship and attribution has a ready-made comparandum in the figure of Oisín, Latinized as Ossian, a mythological figure who narrates texts of the Fenian Cycle of Irish mythology. To this figure, James MacPherson attributed collections of poems which he

[23] ṚV III.33

[24] An assertion I stand by, despite the Whanganui in New Zealand and the Ganges and Yamuna in India recently having been extended the same legal status as humans. See "Whanganui River given legal status of a person under unique Treaty of Waitangi settlement" by Isaac Davison, published in the *Whanganui Chronicle* on March 15th, 2017 and "Uttarakhand HC declares Ganga, Yamuna living entities, gives them legal rights" by Anupam Trivedi and Kamal Jagati, published in the *Hindustan Times* on March 22nd, 2017.

published during the early 1760s, claiming to have translated them from Scottish oral traditions. MacPherson was denounced as a fraud by the end of the 18th century,[25] but for a time his poetry was extremely popular. Herder and Goethe numbered among his admirers. The Hungarian poet Sándor Petőfi thought Ossian the equal of Homer, writing "two pillars tower aloft—but to declare what glorious things there were!"[26] His likening of Ossian to Homer suggests that the popularity of MacPherson's poetry was due less, perhaps, to his own literary merits than to his attribution to Ossian and the romantic mystique associated with the long lost pagan world. Of course, the charge of forgery is interesting in and of itself, as it is predicated by a certain *in situ* notion of historical authorship which properly belongs to the late 18th century and thus would be anachronistic to retroject onto the Ṛgveda. For the purposes of this study the problem of authorship is happily laid aside by avoiding cases of the impersonation of human figures.

Finally, this dissertation concerns itself with Indra as opposed to other gods for the simple fact that there are six unambiguous cases of a monologues spoken by Indra, whereas the impersonation of the other gods is limited in number and often takes the form of dialogic hymns with two or more speakers. By comparing these six monologues,[27] a stylistic grammar for Indra mimesis can be firmly established and used as a starting point for further inquiries into Vedic impersonation of both human and divine figures.

### 1.5 The Problem of Detection

I also exclude from this study cases in which impersonation occurs only at the *ṛc* level. I do this for two reasons. The first is they do not disrupt the primary voice at the level of the hymn; thus, they tell us nothing about 'impersonation hymns' as a type. Impersonation of the

[25] See Lincoln (1999:50) for a brief discussion, but Trumpener 1997 for the phenomenon of 'bardic nationalism' more generally.

[26] Bowring 1866:190

[27] Strictly speaking, one of these case studies, ṚV X.165, is received as a dialogue between Indra and the Maruts. I will argue that this hymn has far more in common with the other Indra monologues than it does with the dialogue hymns.

Indra as a feature of the whole *sūkta*, as opposed to a single *ṛc*, is not necessarily a different phenomenon, but I cannot assume that it is necessarily the same either. Impersonation quarantined to the verse could be considered one of any number of poetic devices employed by the narrating poet such as quotation.

Directly reported speech, for example, should not be considered cases of impersonation but, rather, cases of quotation. Consider the following pair of verses:

ṚV VIII.77.1 *jajñānó nú śatákratur / ví pṛchad íti mātáram / ká ugrā́ḥ ké ha śṛṇvire //*

Being (just) born, he of a hundred intentions (=Indra) asked his mother "Who are the fierce? which ones (are) being heard about?"

ṚV VIII.77.2 *ā́d īṃ śavasí abravīd / aurṇavābhám ahīśúvam / té putra santu niṣṭúraḥ //*

So, Śavasī told him Aurṇavābha, Ahīśuva, (and others). "Son, let these be the challengers!"[28]

The second reason is that *ṛc*-level impersonation is extremely ambiguous because the speaking subject is often implicit. Impersonation at the *sūkta* level, gives us more material from which to collect clues about the speaking subject and infer the voice. There is a much greater potential to misidentify impersonation isolated in a verse. Consider one of the safer cases:

ṚV VIII.89.3 *prá va índrāya bṛhaté / máruto bráhma arcata /*
*vṛtráṃ hanati vṛtrahā́ śatákratur / vájreṇa śatáparvaṇā //*

Maruts! Sing forth a composition for high Indra!
The obstacle-smasher of a hundred intentions will smash Vṛtra
with a cudgel of a hundred joints.

[28] Indra's question and Śavasī's response are cases of direct speech and show parallelism: *ká ugrā́ḥ* 'who are the fierce?' is answered with *té niṣṭúraḥ* 'these are the (synonym for fierce)'. It is difficult to determine the precise semantic of *niṣṭur-*, but other *-tur* adjectives have an active sense 'the one conquering, overcoming' thought to be from √*tṛ* 'cross'. In this case, they are the ones which no one else can conquer except of course Indra. The association of *niṣṭur-* with *ugra-* is found in its one other attestation*: ugrā́ya niṣṭúre...gāyata* 'sing for the fierce one, for the powerful one!' (ṚV VIII.32.27). Finally, because *té santu* is in the plural rather than the dual, it is likely others were implied as well, perhaps recalling the figures from ṚV VIII.32.26*: áhan vṛtrám ṛcīṣama / aurṇavābhám ahīśúvam / himénāvidhyad árbudam //* "Verse-like he smote Vṛtra, Aurṇavābha, Ahīśuva; Arbuda he pierced during winter."

ṚV VIII.89.4 *abhí prá bhara dhṛṣatā́ dhṛṣanmanaḥ / śrávaś cit te asad bṛhát /:*
*árṣantu ā́po jávasā ví mātáro / háno vṛ́trāṃ jáyā súvaḥ //*

[Maruts:] "Bear (it) forth boldly, O bold-minded one:
there will be high fame for you.
Let the waters, the mothers, flow apart swiftly:
you will smash Vṛ́trá, you will win the Sun."

Notice that nothing explicit in the VIII.89.4 informs us that the Maruts are speaking. Instead the impersonation is conferred by the previous verse which commands the Maruts to sing forth (*prá arcata*) a composition (*bráhma*) for Indra. The connection between the two verses is established by the chiasmic pair (*vṛ́trāṃ hanati* '(that) he will smash Vṛ́tra' and *háno vṛ́trāṃ* 'you will smash Vṛ́tra'). Indeed, the Maruts say exactly what they are told to say, which establishes a very good case for impersonation in the *ṛc*. Without those clues, however, it would be very difficult to detect that the Maruts are the speaking characters. That is not to say a verbal mask of a single verse is impossible to detect, as the above example proves, but rather that the way forward is to first establish the properties of the phenomenon in its least ambiguous cases, where an explicit persona dominates the *sūkta* as the primary voice. For these reasons, I have eliminated from this study cases of impersonation limited to a single *ṛc* or where Indra is not the primary speaker[29] and focused on impersonation which constitutes the primary affectation of the *sūkta*.

### 1.6 Superficial Mimesis vs. Essential Mimesis

Having discussed the phenomenology of impersonation as well as my criteria for including a particular hymn in this study. I would like to now discuss the notion of mimesis, what it is, what qualifies an impersonation as mimetic, and why it is an interesting way of thinking about Vedic performance. First, we must reckon with the diversity of ways the word has been used. In Classical Greek *mímēsis* denotes 'imitation, representation'. However, a very narrow sense of 'imitation' has come to dominate Western intellectual history, in which the notion been applied predominately to formal similitude in art production. Specifically, mimesis

[29] For example, ṚV VIII.100.

concerns the aesthetics of imitating previous objects of art, as well as representations of objects imagined to be 'outside' of art such as the natural world. Thus, mimesis has become a tool to think about realism in literature, painting, and sculpture. Since the colonialist critique, the validity of the Western notion of mimesis to non-Western traditions has been questioned. Recently, art historians have been interested in recovering non-Western theories of aesthetic imitation, arguing that these theories can be more suitably applied to non-Western objects of art. Parul Dave-Mukherji, for example, has examined a particular theory of mimesis in Classical Indian *śilpaśāstra*s, 'art treatises', and the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the earliest Sanskrit treatise on dramaturgy. Dave-Mukherji emphasizes the disconnect between this form of mimesis and the Western notion:

> "*Anukr̥ti* and *Anukaraṇa Vāda* are the key terms in this essay which defy translation into English. Neither "mimesis" nor "a theory of mimesis" is an adequate translation."

Dave-Mukherji, however, is not rejecting the validity of mimesis as a category of comparison. In fact, she explicitly rejects the idea that mimesis is an *exclusively* Western phenomenon. It is not merely the comparative context which makes translation of 'mimesis' difficult, but

> "...what complicates a simple translation is the fact that the English term "imitation," with its Greek ancestor "mimesis," carries a long history of shifting usage from the time of Plato till today which does not, naturally, correspond to the etymology and history of the usage of the Sanskrit word [*anukr̥ti*] in the Indian context."[30]

Dave-Mukherji complicates the consensus that Classical Indian aesthetics are distinctly anti-mimetic. That consensus is represented in David Shulman's discussion of *saṃvāda*, 'similitude', at the end of the *Dhvanyāloka*:

> "Take a moment to consider what Ānandavardhana is saying. Ostensibly he is exploring what it means when one poet reproduces an idea or phrase used by another, but Ānanda's statement extends beyond the notion of the technical imitation to a more general theory of poetic production. Perfect verisimilitude, as in a reflection, is **valueless in art**; it is no more than a dead mechanical

[30] Dave-Mukherji 2016:72

> reproduction. Beautifully crafted paintings are no better than mirror images. They are utterly meaningless for artistic purposes. **Poetry is simply not mimetic**."[31]

For Shulman, mimesis is merely visual verisimilitude in art production. That notion of mimesis is extracted from the history of Western aesthetics of art production, and Shulman clearly has no problem employing the term to mean precisely that in his diagnosis.[32] Shulman's comment highlights an important problem with the complexities of the notion of similarity, which should not be reduced to the notion of 'superficial reproduction'. Two creative poets can be *similar* in that they are both creative, which is a different kind of similarity than a portrait *looking* the same as its subject. I want to explore this aspect of mimesis, that something can be *essentially similar* in ways that defy the primacy of visual form.

For example, the term mimesis has been used by anthropologists to indicate an act of copying that takes on some *essential aspect* of that which is copied without copying its *physical form*. Michael Taussig envisions mimesis as a kind of cognitive faculty:

> "...the mimetic faculty [is] the nature that culture uses to create second nature, the faculty to copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield into and become Other. The wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even **assume that character and power**."[33]

In *Mimesis and Alterity*, Taussig excavates the Fin-de-Siècle notion of mimesis in the West from its Orientalist cradle. Europe during the long 19th century considered 'imitation' to be a primitive thought process located in undeveloped cultures. Taussig is especially interested in James Frazer's laws of sympathetic magic. Frazer believed magic to be a precursor to "true religion". The first principle of Frazer's system of magic is the law of similarity, by which Frazer claims

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[31] Shulman 2012:72; **emphasis** mine

[32] I juxtapose Dave-Mukherji and Shulman not to suggest one is correct and the other is not but simply as instances of particular kinds of arguments about a particular kind of mimesis in scholarship on premodern South Asia. That argument is semantic, because they conceive of mimesis as a fundamentally different phenomenon than I do.

[33] Taussig 1993:xiii; **emphasis** mine.

"the magician infers that he can produce any effect he desires by imitating it."[34] Taussig points out that the so-called copy often has little visual likeness to that which is ostensibly copied, asking "how much of a copy does a copy have to be to be able to have an effect on what it is a copy of?"[35] Taussig notes that many cases in which Frazer invokes the law of similarity cannot be distinguished from cases of his other principle of sympathetic magic: the law of contact.

> "What makes up for this lack of similitude, what makes it a "faithful" copy, indeed a magically powerful copy... are precisely the material connections—those established by attaching hair, nail cuttings, pieces of clothing, and so forth, to the likeness. Thus does the magic of Similarity become but an instance of the magic of Contact—and what I take to be fundamentally important is not just that a little bit of Contact makes up for lack of Similarity or that some smattering of real substance makes up for a deficiency in the likeness of the visual image, but rather that all these examples of (magical) realism in which image and contact interpenetrate must have the effect of making us **reconsider our very notion of what it is to be an image of something**, most especially if we wish not only to express but to manipulate reality by means of its image."[36]

Taussig's comments reveal that the Fin-de-Siècle idea of mimesis greatly privileged visual likeness above likeness measured by all other senses individually and above the synthesis of the senses. Frazer interprets systems of correspondence as primarily a mediation between visual objects; he defers to the law of contact only when *he* fails to *see* a likeness. This reductive prejudice for visual sensation is one of a number of superficial ways late 19th century Orientalists thought about ritual. In particular, Frazer's division between similarity and contact effectively divides the relationship between copy and copied into visual icons and nonvisual indices. By doing so, Frazer endows the image as the only aspect of an object which can bear similarity. Removing the special status afforded to the act of seeing semblance collapses Frazer's laws of similarity and contact. This reorients us towards thinking about a *different* connection between the original and the copy in a fuller sensorium.[37]

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[34] Taussig 1993:52

[35] Taussig 1993:51

[36] Taussig 1993:57; **emphasis** mine.

Taussig, however, wants to save the mimetic baby from the Orientalist bathwater. Frazer's particular theory of mimesis was a product of its historical circumstances and constitutes but *one* theorization of the human faculty of mimesis. That is, *other* theorizations of mimesis are also products of their historical circumstances, each representing an historically conditioned attempt to theorize the behavior and rationale of imitation and repetition.[38]

Mimesis can be conceived of as a category of comparison whose individual mimeses are particular conceptualizations bound to particular histories. For other categories of this type, consider the notion of the body, which is often treated as universal despite the fact that its properties are culturally conditioned. The 'medical body' of medieval Europe, for example, is conceived of as subject to the influence of heavenly bodies in ways that the 'medical body' of modern Europe is not. Another example is language, a category of phenomena in which each member has its own particular grammar and history. The fact that English and Sanskrit have different grammars, were spoken by different people, and spoken in different eras, does not void the utility of the category 'language'. I would argue that 'Ṛgvedic mimesis' and 'Fin-de-siècle mimesis' are both members of a category 'mimesis', but each has its own particular grammar

[37] In this light, I see the aversion to 'perfect verisimilitude', equated by Shuman with mimesis, as an aversion to photocopying or imitation limited to a single gross dimension, without the dramatic multi-media sensorium that produces the aesthetic experience of the theatre. Kachru (2015:54) notices that in early Classical *kāvya* "language approaches visual representation at the moment where persons lose what makes them human." He observes that (2015:56) "the features which Kālidāsa may arguably have recalled from Aśvaghoṣa do not concern the grammatical texture, the curious distortion of the syntax, but the striking thought in the image of being like a likeness: that is, to lose the look of a real thing, when captured in the medium one might have thought best suited to it, and to be thereby reduced to a representation of oneself. The ideal of likeness, when mishandled by superficial treatments, can be reductive." I take that to mean likeness that is exclusively visual, that reduces being to an object passively seen, is such a deficient substitute for real ontological likeness, that it becomes a sign of difference, a negation of likeness. It is this truth the poets knew and Frazer missed.

[38] Perhaps the relatively recent discovery of mirror neurons is an example of a modern theory of mimesis. It should be noted, however, that there are already rival interpretations as to whether these neurons mediate action understanding or merely action selection. The difference amounts to whether they do the imitating or activated by imitation. Both versions are theories of imitation rooted in a certain biological ontology. Neither theory portrays the imitative act as 'primitive' despite being observed in primates. Imitation is simply theorized as a cognitive faculty. See Hickok and Hauser 2010 for a discussion.

and its own particular body.[39] Impersonation of Indra must be understood as an *in situ* concept in the Vedas "whereby representation may even assume that character and power [which belongs to the original]".[40] The task of this dissertation, then, is to complete the hermeneutic circle by excavating a theory of mimesis from the text and using that theory to make sense of the text.

### 1.7 Mimesis in Performance

Because scholars understand the history of the Western notion of mimesis as beginning with the Greeks, I want to briefly examine a passage from Plato's *Republic* which is of interest to me. This passage presents mimesis in a context essentially similar to the Vedic one: at the intersection of narration, persona, and performance:

> [Socrates:] As if he were someone else, shall we not say that he then assimilates thereby his own diction as far as possible to that of the person whom he announces as about to speak?
>
> [Glaucon:] We shall obviously.
>
> [Socrates:] And is not likening one's self to another speech (*phōnḗ*) or bodily bearing (*skhêma*) an **imitation** of him to whom one likens one's self?
>
> [Glaucon:] Surely.
>
> [Socrates:] In such case then it appears he and the other poets **effect their narration through imitation**. (*dià miḿseōs tèn diḗgēsin poioûntai*).
>
> [Glaucon:] Certainly.
>
> [Socrates:] But if the poet should conceal himself nowhere, then his entire poetizing and narration would have been accomplished without **imitation**.[41]

[39] I do not choose these two comparanda randomly. In the Vedic imaginary, both language and the body are conceived of as constituent elements in a compositional self. See Majcher 2016 for a thorough study of the 'compositional self' in the Ṛgvedic Āraṇyakas.

[40] Taussig 1993:xiii

[41] Republic 3.393c, trans. Shorey 1969; **emphasis,** *lexical citation,* and [Speaker:] marking mine.

Socrates explains to Glaucon that by affecting certain aspects of a character, the *phōnḗ*, 'sound', or the *skhêma*, 'form', poets "effect their narration through imitation." These elements of imitation, a performed voice and a performed body, suggests that here mimesis is restricted to this special occasion and, for Plato, likely excludes written quotation read aloud without such dramatic context.[42] Of course my intention here is not to read the Veda through the lens of Plato. Rather, I want to disrupt the expectation that a Vedic notion of mimesis should in any way resemble this strange modern notion of visual verisimilitude, when Plato insists mimesis is really all about performance. In fact, the actor cannot *not* double the character's *physical appearance*.[43] This is the difference between a superficial mimesis and an essential mimesis.

Rather than limit herself to the gross visual, Barbara Kowalzig stresses the importance of the full sensory experience to understanding ancient Greek performance:

> "Performance theory in ritual studies attempts to grapple with the long-felt recognition that ritual's effectiveness lies in its non-intellectual aspects: rituals are felt and experienced, not understood. At the basis of the definition of the register in which 'understanding' is generated through emotional and behavioral, rather than intellectual, involvement, lies the recognition that it is predominantly the **simultaneous presence of many media** in ritual, employed redundantly, that allows for aesthetic understanding and accounts for ritual's complex potential in society."[44]

Although Kowalzig has the "simultaneous presence of many media" of a specifically Greek chorus in mind, anyone who has observed the *śrauta* ritual in present-day Kerala or Andhra will recall the overwhelming multi-media experience of the ritual ground. The thick heat of its air, the aroma of its loam, the shadows of its thatch and the lowing of its livestock are merely the setting.

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[42] Otherwise, Plato's *Republic* would be considered mimetic as the text is framed as a dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon. The reader, however, does not assume the characters' *phōnḗ* or *skhêma*.

[43] Imagine if an actor happened to look exactly like the character he or she impersonates. This would be useless in theatre, where a character is made distinct from other characters by costume and mannerism, not by real physical differences.

[44] Kowalzig 2007:47, **emphasis** mine

Busy priests run about doing myriad tasks for the gods. Kowalzig stresses the psychological importance of this sensory overload:

> "Ritual's dramaturgy is intricate, often simultaneously employing elements such as role play, and text, music, song, and dance. All of these are geared towards the same thing, though none of them acts in the same way as another, nor would any of them make the same sense if performed on their own. Anthropology has borrowed from psychology the term 'synaisthesia' to describe the multifarious cooperation of many communicative means that compose ritual's highly representational character on the one hand, and its bold concreteness on the other."[45]

The moment of performance contains the full sensorium which allows for a more nuanced consideration of what exactly makes two objects similar in being rather than merely in seeming. By focusing on the passive resemblance of two objects, Fin-de-siècle scholars were oblivious to the active nature of likeness. Performance is about performing actions, and thus imitation is about *acting* in identical ways rather than *appearing* identical.

This insight, that mimesis in ritual is about copying performed activity, is found in Gregory Nagy's work on pre-Classical poetic performance. Nagy glosses mimesis as 're-enactment', arguing that the word has already undergone semantic broadening by the Classical period:

> "...not all imitation is reenactment because you can imitate someone or something without having to relive anything through ritual. Gradually, starting in the fifth century BCE, the primary meaning of mimesis as 'reenactment' became destabilized, and the new primary meaning became simply 'imitation'. This destabilization, caused by a gradual weakening of ritual practices in general, led to a new secondary meaning of mimesis, which can best be translated as 'representation'. Unlike reenactment as I have defined it, representation can be devoid of ritual."[46]

This notion of mimesis as a re-enactment, or a "reliv[ing]... through ritual", has been obscured by the reception of Plato and Aristotle in Western intellectual history. The mechanics of this re-enactment relies on emulating a model or performative prototype:

[45] Kowalzig 2007:47

[46] Nagy 2013:228

> "Mimesis is like Kierkegaard's repetition. When you *re-enact* an archetypal action in drama, you *imitate* those who re-enacted before you and who served as your *immediate* models. But the *ultimate* model is still the archetypal figure that you are acting out or re-enacting, who is coextensive with the whole line of imitators who had re-enacted the way in which their ultimate model acted, each imitating each one's predecessor. When it is your turn, your moment to re-enact something in this forward movement of mimesis, you become the ultimate model in that very moment. As a working definition, I will equate this moment of mimesis with *the poetic occasion.*"[47]

Nagy's mimesis never loses sight of this *poetic occasion*, the moment and context of performance, nor does it make the error of conflating imitation with visual verisimilitude. The purpose of mimetic performance is to re-create past actions in the present. In other words, what links the performer to the model is a similar *doing*.

Nagy locates a particularly striking case of mimesis in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo. The following portion of the hymn describes the Delian Maidens, muses who serves as models for the Delian chorus. In the hymn to Apollo, the narrator tells us that:

> They keep in mind men of the past and women too, as they sing the ***humnos***,
> and they enchant all different kinds of humanity.
> All humans' voices and rhythms they know how to **reenact** [***mimeîsthai***].
> And each single person would say that his own voice was their voice.
> That is how their beautiful song has each of its parts fitting together
> [*sunarariskein*] in place.[48]

Nagy notices that the text represents the Delian Maidens as performing the hymn, as if their choral performance, marked by singing and dancing, were essentially the *same thing* as the solo performance of the Homeric Hymn to Apollo. The way in which the choral and solo performances are the same, Nagy argues, is that they are both mimetic performances which re-enact their prototypes. The performance of this very hymn is a re-enactment of the meeting between Homer and the Delian Maidens.

> Keep me, even in the future, in your mind, whenever someone,
> out of the whole mass of earthbound humanity,
> comes here [to Delos], after arduous wandering, as a guest entitled to the rules of

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[47] Nagy 1994:415-416

[48] Homeric Hymn to Apollo, 160-4. See Nagy 2013:230

> hosting, and asks this question: "O Maidens, who is for you the most pleasurable of singers that wanders here? In whom do you take the most delight [*terpesthai*]?"
> Then you, all of you [Maidens of Delos], must very properly **respond** [***hupokrinesthai***] about me: "It is a blind man, and he dwells [*oikeîn*] in Chios, a rugged land,
> and all his songs will in the future prevail as the very best."
> And I in turn will carry your fame [*kleos*] as far over the earth
> as I wander, throughout the cities of men, with their fair populations.[49]

The narrator questions the Delian Maidens, and mimetically assumes their collective voice to identify himself as Homer, the blind man of Chios. Nagy points out that *hupokinesthai*, 'respond', has dramatic dimensions as well:

> "[*hupokrinesthai*] is related to the usages of the same verb *hupokrinesthai* and of its agent noun *hupokritēs* in prose, where these two words mean respectively 'act' and 'actor' in the context of the *theatron* 'theater', especially the theater of tragedy."[50]

Performative questioning is a theatrical technique typical of Greek tragedy known as *eirōneía* 'irony'. The *eirôn* is a performer who feigns ignorance of the plot, asking questions whose answer both actor and audience already know. To properly impersonate Homer, the performer must feign ignorance of his destiny. When the performer of the Homeric Hymn to Apollo asks, "O Maidens, who is for you the most pleasurable of singers that wanders here?" all in attendance are aware that the answer is Homer. Other theatrical features include the use of narrative space, for Homer "wanders here", in Delos, but will later wander "far over the earth." Another clue that this is intended as a re-enactment is its use of narrative time to anticipate a future in which this exchange will be re-enacted. Homer asks that the Maidens "Keep me, even in the **future**, in your mind" and the Maidens assert to the audience that "all his songs will **in the future** prevail as the very best" and Homer reciprocates by telling them "I in turn **will carry** your fame as far over the earth." These assertions about the future operate as etiologies of the present, specifically the Delian chorus and the Homeric tradition act as guarantors of each other's authenticity. The re-

[49] Homeric Hymn to Apollo 166-75. See Nagy 2013:230

[50] Nagy 2013:232

performance is crucial because assertions in the past are inaccessible until they have been made manifest in the present.

Let us return to the question Taussig puts to Frazer "How much of a copy does a copy have to be to be able to have an effect on what it is a copy of?"[51] Performative mimesis obviates the need for this question, because the re-enactment is not attempting to have an effect *on* its model but rather *duplicate* its actions in the present. The performance presents itself as a *re-*performance in order to reveal itself as precisely *not original* but a copy of some charter event that occurred long ago.[52] In this capacity, the copy can be said to have an effect on the original. If we think back to Ossian, recall MacPherson presented his poems to be English versions of Gaelic originals. These "translations" would be understood as being *different* in letter, but with the vague promise of *similarity* in spirit. MacPherson's performance, and I think it must be conceived of in that way, *did* have an effect on the originals—by creating them whole cloth in the imagination of his audience and qualifying them as historical and authentic.[53]

I have attempted here to make the case that mimesis could be a probative way of understanding poetic impersonation in the context of Vedic religion just as it is for Greek religion. The problem with mimesis is its history in the West as a phenomenon of resemblance

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[51] Taussig 1993:51

[52] Malinowski 1926 coined the term 'charter myth' for etiologies which justify contemporaneous norms.

[53] As a thought experiment, take the Mouse-trap, the name Hamlet gives to the play within his eponymous play. The play duplicates elements of Hamlet's father's murder in order to induce some mark of incrimination in the suspected killer, the dead king's brother Claudius. Evidently, an expectation common on both sides of the pond as evidenced by Patricia Cline Cohen's The Murder of Helen Jewett (1999:13): "Early American criminal legal practice had at one time set great store on the ritual moment of placing a murder suspect in direct confrontation with the victim's body." What fascinates me is the spectatorship of guilt. Hamlet merely suspects that his uncle is the murderer. Any performance of guilt by Claudius is 'proof', by means of a retrojection of his performed guilt onto the original event. Claudius's performance of guilt as an audience member of the Mouse-trap would be the only evidence available to the audience of Hamlet. If the performance is successful, then it ceases to be a real performance at all but becomes a copy of the first performance, a re-performance, which transforms Claudius' past crime from imagined to real. This experiment, I think, gives us some insight into the ways mimesis blurs the lines between the phenomenological and the ontological.

which prioritizes the gross visual. Here, I must stress a caveat. The Ṛgveda tell us frequently that poets are endowed with a special faculty of vision: *dhī*. They also receive *dhī*s, 'visions', from the gods. As such, the *language* of the visual is very important to the Ṛgvedic poet, but it must always be remembered that this a subtle and arcane vision not a biological one. The poet's vision is a cognitive metaphor, for they conceive of perceiving invisible realities as a form of special seeing. The Vedas are transmitted orally, and thus all accounts of "seeing" in the Vedas are filtered through the act of speaking and hearing.

## CHAPTER 2

## TRACING THE SACRIFICE

The previous chapter outlined the intent of this project to examine the role of hymns in which the speakers are Indras. In order to do that, it is necessary to lay out a theory of Ṛgvedic hermeneutics through which the text can be interpreted. The objective of this chapter is to provide a philological and narratological heuristic through which the text can be encountered as a necessary precondition to my case studies. The polyvalence of the lexicon, or 'double meaning', is often an obstacle to translation, but, in this chapter, it will be a vehicle allowing us to traverse the performative and narrative dimensions of the text.

'Double meaning' opens the door to the 'double scene'. For Lars Lönroth, who coined the term, a double scene occurs when the scene of the narrative mirrors the scene of the historical performance. Unlike Lönroth, however, I do not treat the performative occasion as a concrete historical performance but rather as a narrative level set in an imagined present moment that is no more historical than the mythology set in the past. In order to distance myself from relying on a 'real' performance, I will examine the notion of 'para-narration', a term coined by Luz Aurora Pimentel. Pimentel's 'para-narrative' is a sustained metaphorical narration which exists alongside the main narrative and which must be interpreted through that main narrative. Her theory is an attempt to theorize how readers understand that this second metaphorical narrative must be informed by and interpreted through the first narrative. I find this to be a probative way to think about the relationship between two levels reference in Ṛgvedic poetry. One narrative level contains mythological or cosmological events, while the other locates itself in the present moment at a ritual sacrifice. This theory does not depend on the existence of a 'real' performance, because the narrative level of the text which represents the performative occasion is not a 'real' occasion, but rather a rhetorical construct constituted by the text's tacit *expectations* about performance, about the relevance of its content for that performance, and about what an audience can reasonably infer.

These considerations will be necessary for studying the impersonation of Indra because there are two distinct Indras in my case studies. The first Indra is a character of mythology who did manly deeds in the primordial past and whose legends are recounted by the Vedic poets. The second Indra is the speaker, the verbal disguise which the Vedic performer dons, a figure located at the present ritual. This narrative about the present performance, the narrative level in which the verbal mask is located, I will label *adhiyajña*, 'pertaining to the sacrifice', a terminus technicus I borrow from the later Vedic texts. From there, I hypothesize that Vedic poetics systematically refer to the present performance through language deictically tagged for proximity to the speaker. This grammar of the *adhiyajña* level of narration will be the key to demonstrating that the impersonation of Indra is a mimetic re-enactment of the past in the present.

**2.1 Oral Traditions Produce Diachronic Texts**

In the following section, I begin with a general approach to orally composed, memorized, and transmitted texts as the foundation for making more specific arguments about narrative and performance in the Ṛgveda. The difficulty of Vedic poetics is not sui generis at all, but rather an expected consequence of the text's internal and external history. Vedic poetry has challenged its admirers throughout history, from Yaska, a grammarian who is believed to have lived at the end of the Vedic age, to the present author, and no doubt for generations to come. What exactly makes Vedic so enigmatic? For one, the songs of the Ṛgveda are very old. Any text which represents the beginning of a literary tradition is difficult because there are no older texts to use as a point of departure for either grammar or style. Already the Ṛgveda was difficult to interpret for the generations which immediately followed it, which did not have the benefit of modern comparative linguistics. Zeroing in on meaning in the oldest text in a tradition is a challenge because the texts which comment on its grammar and vocabulary are centuries younger. Vedic poetics can be studied through her sister language, Gāθic Avestan, but the two speech communities may have separated half a millennium or more prior to the composition of either

text, thus the reconstructed grammar and stylistics are blind to asymmetric innovations in each.[54] These sources, despite the intervening generations, are invaluable resources for making sense of the Vedas. If we approached Vedic from the grammar and style of Indic languages spoken today, they would be completely inaccessible.

Another major hurdle in attempting to decipher the Ṛgveda is its internal history. The Ṛgveda is a deeply diachronic text at every level. Those that collected and redacted it were not those that composed the majority of its poems. The effect of successive generations curating the text prior to its fixed form is a history of inclusion and omission of poems. In an evolving oral anthology, each generation applies its interpretive grid to the text, excising and adding that which conforms to a reified notion of what the corpus ought to be. Further, individual poets are diachronic composers, for they emulate their poetic predecessors, and that tradition of emulation archaizes the poetic register. A poet's access to memorized material allows them to internally borrow and redeploy archaic lexical items, grammatical rules, stock formula, and whole verses into new compositions. The text's internal history produces a surplus of forms and meanings, which in turn enhances the ability of the poet to craft complex and evocative imagery and wordplay.

### 2.2 In Defense of Double Meaning

In the following section, I will examine Karen Thomson's review of Jamison and Brereton 2014 and argue its assumptions about the semantics of the text are inconsistent with an anthology produced by the kind of oral tradition described above. From there, I will argue that semantic polyvalence, or 'double meaning', is widespread in Vedic poetics.

In 2014, Stephanie Jamison and Joel Brereton published their long-awaited English translation of the Ṛgveda. The last time the Ṛgveda had been translated in its entirety in English

[54] See Skjærvø 2015b:411.

was well over a century ago.[55] The new translation was harshly critiqued in a review by Karen Thomson titled "Speak for Itself".[56] For Thomson, the translation by Jamison and Brereton seemed to represent everything wrong with the academy. She went so far as to subtitle her review "How the long history of guesswork and commentary on a unique corpus of poetry has rendered it incomprehensible". A close study of her review, however, demonstrates an incomplete familiarity with the materials as well as an approach to translation which idealized the text and is incompatible with texts produced by oral tradition. Let us examine some key points of Thomson's review in order to avoid similar pitfalls going forward.

Thomson takes it as a fact that "the authors of the Brāhmaṇas had not understood [the poems of the Ṛgveda]", offering as an example of this apparent miscommunication *svadhā* which means 'self-determination' but which the Brāhmaṇas often taken as 'sacrificial drink'. For Thomson, this shows the Brāhmaṇas were composed by people who did not "understand" the Ṛgveda. She establishes this point in order to levy a criticism that Jamison and Brereton anachronistically retroject the Brāhmaṇas onto the Ṛgveda and, therefore, also do not "understand" the Ṛgveda.

At the conceptual level, Thomson misses the mark of what it means to "understand" a text. We "understand" the text, the Brāhmaṇas "understand" the text, and the composers of each hymn "understands" the text. We must reject the notion that there is a privileged insider who has perfect and unfettered access to all aspects of the text, precisely because Vedic poetry is a multi-generational process. Otherwise, since the collection and redaction of the text is younger than the composition of the hymns, we might say that, according to Thomson's sense of the word, the creators of the Ṛgveda did not "understand" the hymns. Since the family books, maṇḍalas II-VIII, are more archaic and likely predate maṇḍalas I and X, we might say that the Vedic poets of maṇḍala X did not "understand" the family books. Even the poet of the most archaic poem in the

[55] Ralph T.H. *Griffith*'s 1894 translation.

[56] Published by the *Times Literary Supplement* on January 8th, 2016

Ṛgveda is the beneficiary of an Indo-Iranian oral tradition which is not transparent to him. The Ṛgveda is a collection of individually composed poems re-composed, re-arranged, and received as meaningful by successive generations who re-interpreted the material. Eventually the composers of the Brāhmaṇas were those receivers. When Thomson ignores the diachrony internal to the Ṛgveda while emphasizing the diachrony outside of it, she is reifying the Ṛgveda into a monolithic synchronic entity with one correct "understanding", an ontology of the text not reflected by the real history of the document. By "letting the text speak for itself", Thomson is performing the very act of reception that the redactors of the Ṛgveda did as well as the composers of the Ṛgvedic Brāhmaṇas. By projecting a coherent synchronic unity onto the discrete diachronic elements of the text, the interpreter re-aligns its semantics to their own tacit ideological and cosmological commitments. A better way to approach the Ṛgveda is not to treat it as the unitary product of a time and a place, but to understand the history of its reception. There is an important lesson here concerning the power form imposes on content.

Thomson's critique, that *svadhā* referring to a 'sacrificial drink' in the Brāhmaṇas invalidates their composers' knowledge of the Ṛgveda, is misguided because it is uninquisitive. Rather than the see an error and move on, it is better to question how it is that a word meaning 'autonomy, independence' could come to mean a 'sacrificial drink'. The answer to such a question is likely to shed light both on the Middle Vedic and the Early Vedic period. In this case, the answer may lie in the complex political and religious history of the sacrifice in Vedic India. In the texts, society is presented as an alliance of pastoral clans. These alliances were temporary and had to be restored in a ceremony which involved portioning out and drinking Soma. The texts describe the sacrifice like a *magha*, 'gift-exchange (ceremony)', or a *vidatha*,[57] 'wealth distribution (ceremony)', and Indra as *maghavan* 'lord of that gift-exchange'. Even if participation may have been socially obligatory, the texts depict the Vedic gift-exchange as

[57] Kuiper 1974 takes the *vidatha* ceremony to be a nominal equivalent of *vi* + *dayate* 'distributes', arguing the *vidatha* is a lavish and costly distribution of wealth, something like a potlatch.

volitional and not coercive.[58] It is not hard to imagine that there might be a metonymic link between a ritual drink and the notion of self-determination, given that participation in the drinking ritual is depicted as volitional. From the Brāhmaṇas, we know that commentary on the ritual is theorized to operate in three theatres: *adhidevatā* or *adhidaiva*, 'at the gods', denotes a cosmic level, *adhiyajña*, 'at the sacrifice', denotes the level of performance, and *adhyātma*, 'at the self', denotes the personal level or internal state. The Brāhmaṇas use *bandhu*s, 'relationships', to link these theatres. It is a huge assumption then, to assume that *svadhā* was used to indicate a sacrificial drink outside of the *adhiyajña* context or that its use in a specific context to refer to a sacrificial drink was its universal usage. Rather, it is likely that we do not have access to the political realities that the Brāhmaṇas do. We read *svadhā* in a semantically bleached way reduced to its etymology *sva*-, 'self', + √*dhā*, 'place', rather than a nuanced history of its usage.[59]

In the following section, I will compare a verse translated by Thomson with one from Jamison and Brereton 2014. This comparison will highlight that Thomson's approach to translation privileges reductive semantics, so much so that the poetic image is completely erased. Let us begin with my own translation:

ṚV I.22.14 *táyor íd ghṛtávat páyo / víprā rihanti dhītíbhiḥ / gandharvásya dhruvé padé //*

The inspired ones lick through (their) visions the ghee-filled milk
of these two in the firm step of Gandharva.

[58] In the sense laid out in *Essai sur le don: forme et raison de l'echange dans les societes archaiques* by Marcel Mauss. Note, however, ritual performance is presented sometimes as a debt (*ṛṇa*) which I consider still volitional. See Jamison 2014 on the sacrifice as an inborn debt.

[59] It is indeed ironic that Thomson critiques others as biased by the Brāhmaṇical sources, for she is guilty of that as well. She decries the universally accepted "emendation" of the text by Max Müller which takes the manuscript reading of ṚV I.70.7 *ca rátham* to be, in fact, *carátham*. I say "emendation" because it is not an emendation at all. The *Ṛksaṃhitā* has no word boundaries and so inserting word boundaries is not an emendation of the *Ṛksaṃhitā*. The disagreement is with the *Ṛkpadapāṭha* text, which gives each word of the poetic anthology *in pausa*. Carefully study of the *Ṛkpadapāṭha* dates it to a later period than the *Ṛksaṃhitā*: roughly contemporaneous to the Brāhmaṇas. It is in fact Thomson who is retrojecting the reading of a much later text onto an earlier one.

Notice how similar my translation is to that of Jamison and Brereton (2014:115):

J&B: The inspired poets lick the ghee-filled milk of this very pair [=Heaven and Earth] with their poetic insights, in the firm footstep of the Gandharva.

Jamison and Brereton add brackets to indicate that *táyor íd* resumes the pair identified in the previous verse:

ṚV I.22.13 *mahī́ dyaúḥ pr̥thivī́ ca na / imáṃ yajñám mimikṣatām / pipr̥tā́ṃ no bhárīmabhiḥ//*

Let the great two, Heaven and Earth, mix this sacrifice for us
Let them carry us with their supports.

The content of ṚV I.22.13 is necessary for the interpretation of ṚV I.22.14. The previous verse tells us that Heaven and Earth are mixing (3rd du. imp. *mimikṣatām*) this sacrifice (*imáṃ yajñám*) which explains why in I.22.14 the milk (*payas*) is ghee-filled (*ghr̥távat*). The explicit metaphor here is that poets drink a sacrificial offering from Heaven and Earth. The implicit metaphor, in my opinion, is that the poets are the fires into which this mixture is offered. Agni typically licks his offering along his "tongues" (at metaphor for his flames) in the instrumental—perhaps the inst. pl. *dhītibhiḥ* fills this role in the metaphor—all together producing an evocative image of poets being like fires who are nourished by the mother and father of the cosmos. In her review, Thomson offers her own translation of ṚV I.22.14:

Thomson: In the productive plenty of heaven and earth
Poets indeed delight in their thoughts.

This translation does not resemble its source text in the slightest. Thomson, like Jamison and Brereton, interprets *táyor íd* to be a reference to Heaven and Earth, but has not represented the original pronoun in her translation, instead presenting the inference as if it were explicit in the text. More importantly, her translations are seriously problematic. She translates *ghr̥távat* as

'productive' which erases the existence of a noun *ghṛtá-*, 'ghee', and a suffix *-va(n)t-* 'possessing'. Thomson's translation of *rihanti* is similarly unjustified. I can only imagine she believes that 'poets licking' is intended to be a metaphor for 'the poets delight', but if she is correct, then she has removed the metaphor, removed the ability of the verbal to portray the visual which is at the heart of the poetic enterprise.

Her translation of *payas* as 'plenty' rather than 'milk' is an example of a different kind of semantic erasure. She has extracted a meaning from the root √*pī*, 'swell', and believes that the s-stem noun is an abstract derived from the verbal root, thereby meaning 'an increase' or 'plenty'. It is true that s-stems can produce verbal abstracts, but that is not always the case or else *uṣas-*, 'dawn', would have to be translated as 'a burning'. The word for dawn may have begun its life as a verbal abstract, but it certainly is no longer understood that way in the Ṛgveda. Here *payas-* as 'plenty' is untenable when taken in context of its own verse where it is adjacent to *ghṛtávat,* constituting a pair of dairy products, and the object of a verb *rihanti*, 'they lick', as well as the context of the previous verse, where Heaven and Earth are presented as mixing a sacrifice. Imposing a reading 'plenty' against that context is unjustified.

Imagine if instead of "full fathoms five thy father lies, of his bones are coral made, those are pearls that were his eyes, nothing of him doth remain but doth suffer a sea change into something rich and strange", Ariel had simply said "he drowned" or worse "he died in water". What is the purpose of producing a translation which fails to re-enact the poetic vision? The verbal image is important, as the Vedic poets themselves attest in this very verse in which they lick divine milk through their *visions* (*dhītíbhiḥ*).[60] It is easy to dismiss Karen Thomson as someone who has mistaken clean English for good philology, but she provides us with a teachable moment all the same. The Vedic poets again and again refer to their craft as crafting

[60] And many other places. See Elizarenkova (1995:15-6) for a brief summary or Gonda 1963 for an exhaustive monograph.

divine vision into poetic speech.[61] Poetic speech is impossible without poetic vision.[62] Poetry errs on the side of the opaque over the transparent, precisely so its audience can *see* something, not see through it. A good translation, then, re-enacts that experience and allows new audiences to see the invisible.

### 2.3 Double Entendre, Implication, and Ambiguity

From here, I would like to make the case for the existence of sustained double meaning in the Ṛgveda as a precondition to a discussion of narrative levels in the text. As stated, one vector for polysemy in the Ṛgveda is simply the product of poetics sourced in oral tradition. Poets produce novel compositions, but benefit from a vast store of memorized material from which they draw formulae and whose style they emulate. This reliquary of poetics is intrinsically diachronic, giving the poet access to more grammatical and semantic alternatives than a non-poet.

Another vector, however, is the aesthetics of suspense, suggestion, and wordplay in poetry. Establishing the existence of patterned and sustained double meaning is crucial to making the case for mimetic impersonation. Impersonation, after all, is a kind of double signification in which the speaker represents himself as well as the persona he emulates. Classical Sanskrit dramaturges and literary theorists identified two phenomena which I think are relevant to this kind of double meaning. Without proposing an orthogenetic link, let us simply consider these literary devices as useful conceptual models. The first, *śleṣa* is a kind of sustained double

[61] For example, ṚV III.2.1cd *dvitā́ hótāram mánuṣaś ca vāgháto dhiyā́ ráthaṃ ná kúliśaḥ sám ṛṇvati* "Just like an ax(man assembles) a chariot through vision the priests assemble (Agni) Hotar (of gods) and men." and ṚV IV. 2.14cd *ráthaṃ ná kránto ápasā bhuríjor ṛtáṃ yemuḥ sudhíya āśuṣāṇā́ḥ* "Like making a chariot by the work of two busy (hands), those of true vision have reached order, gaining speed." among other places. In ṚV III.2.1cd, Klein (1985:1:260) suggests a missing *devānām* may be implied by *mánuṣaś ca*.

[62] ṚV VIII.101.16 *vacovídaṃ vā́cam udīráyantīṃ víśvābhir dhībhír upatíṣṭhamānām / devī́ṃ devébhyaḥ pári eyúṣīṃ gā́m ā́ māvṛkta mártiyo dabhrácetāḥ* "Vāc is speech-knowledge moving upwards, being assisted by all the visions. Don't let a small-minded mortal wrench away (from us) the cow (=Vāc), the goddess, who has come from the gods."

entendre. In a *śleṣa* the individual words in a verse are polysemous; the result is two distinct sentences from one phonetic structure. In Yigal Bronner's *Extreme Poetry*, he crafts this sentence as an English example: "Gladly the cross-eyed bear" which, if heard aloud in performance, could also be interpreted as "Gladly the cross I'd bear".[63] In Classical Sanskrit poetics, an entire text can be effectively "bitextual" and sustain a double narrative.

The second literary device is *vyañjanā*, 'implication', whereby a meaning is not explicit but which the audience infers. It is difficult to study implication in the Ṛgveda, because, by its very nature, implied semantics leave fewer formal traces and emerge coherently only for the contemporaneous connoisseur. ṚV I.22.14, analyzed in the previous section, may be a good case for poetic suggestion. The verse presents poets licking up the milk/ghee mixture which Heaven and Earth pour as a sacrifice. It would be consistent with the imagery of the sacrifice, if the text were *implying* that poets are like sacrificial fires who eagerly lap up the poured offerings.

The possibility of *śleṣa* has been studied in the Ṛgveda by Stephanie Jamison in a recent article.[64] In it, she examines the first two verses of ṚV X.29, a hymn dedicated to Indra. She argues that the strange syntax of the opening verses codes a kind of formal "embryonic *śleṣa*" in which Agni and Indra are praised simultaneously. First, she identifies individual forms with double meaning. The form *kṣapā́vān*, for example, could be understood as *kṣapā́*, 'by night', + *vant*, 'having', perhaps a reference to Agni, 'fire', as humanity's nighttime protector. It can also be read as *pā́vant-*, 'protecting', the *kṣam*, 'Earth',[65] and thus perhaps be a reference to Indra. Jamison notes that early commentaries of the Ṛgveda break up the sandhi differently. The *Ṛkpadapāṭha* breaks up the sequence as *váne ná vā yó ní adhāyi cākáñ* 'whether he who is installed takes pleasure or not in wood', while Yaska analyzes the sequence as *váne ná vāyó ní*

[63] Bronner 2010:1

[64] Jamison 2015

[65] Although Jamison notes that this form surfaces elsewhere (ṚV I.70.5) with initial accent, *kṣápāvant-* 'earth-protector'.

*adhāyi cākáñ*, taking *vāya-* to be a derivative of *vi-* 'bird'.[66] This disagreement suggests that the syntax was ambiguous very early in the Vedic tradition. It also suggests that the ambiguity may be intentional, and thus a kind of bitextual approach is certainly warranted. The oldest text of the Ṛgveda, the *Ṛksaṃhitā*, has no word boundaries and gives us only *vánenávāyóníadhāyicākáñ*. Jamison notes *yóni,* 'womb', is also a possible reading[67] and a compelling one as Agni is often described as deposited in the womb, where the womb is a metaphor for the hearth. While Indra is explicitly mentioned here, he is called a *hotar-*, 'pourer', the priestly office to which Agni is usually assigned. For Jamison, this bitextuality allows the poet to praise Indra and Agni simultaneously. By addressing *nṝṇā́ṃ náriyo nṛ́tamaḥ*, 'the manly one, the best among men', Jamison points out the poet can do double duty in an artful way as both gods are frequently praised as manly.[68] I think it is also possible to conceive of this verse as a short praise for Agni encrypted into the opening of a long praise for Indra. Jamison notes that "[s]imultaneous reference is quite common in the Ṛg Veda; I will only mention here the devilish hymn V.44, where every verse is mystically applicable to both Agni and Soma."[69]

Another hymn highly relevant to this study is ṚV X.119. Thompson 2003 argues it is an *ātmastuti*, a poetic impersonation like the cases he studied in Thompson 1997b:

> "A proper view of the pragmatics of Vedic speech-acts, and in particular the pragmatics of *ātmastutis*, suggests that the particular role that is being played in this hymn is far less important than the fact itself that a poet, a human being and not a god, is indeed playing a role, like an actor in a Greek tragedy, perhaps, or perhaps rather like a Central Asian shaman, which in my view is a much more appropriate comparison."[70]

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[66] Agni is often described as a bird flying out of the wood.

[67] If the accent on *ní* is ignored.

[68] One might imagine the poem leaves it to the audience to decide who is the manliest. Is it Indra, Agni, the poet's human patron, or all three?

[69] Jamison 2015:165

[70] Thompson 2003

ṚV X.119 consists of a series of *gāyatrī*s, each of which consists of two unique dimeters followed by a third repeated dimeter which functions as a refrain. Thompson translates this refrain, *kuvít sómasyā́pām íti,* as "Have I drunk of the Soma? Yes!" He argues that the first two dimeters of each *gāyatrī* is a poetic impersonation as they contain fantastic assertions such as ṚV X.119.8ab *abhí dyā́m mahinā́ bhuvam* / *abhī́mā́m pr̥thivī́m mahī́m,* which he translates as "I have overwhelmed heaven with my greatness, I have overwhelmed this great earth." The verbal mask slips off when the performer speaks the refrain as a human being: *kuvít sómasyā́pām íti*.[71] Thompson goes further:

> "The refrain of this poem, then, is to be attributed not to this or that god or to some other mythological creature. No, it belongs, strictly speaking, to the poet who formulated it, whose emphatic repetition of the personal pronoun places him pragmatically at the very center of the hymn, as the person through whom the performance passes, and through whom the impersonated being—in my view, most likely, Agni—becomes manifest, palpable, or *satya'*, 'true,' for his audience."[72]

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[71] Potential evidence for Thompson's interpretation is found, I believe, in the use of *íti* in this hymn. Recall that Thompson translates *kuvít sómasyā́pām íti,* as "Have I drunk of the Soma? Yes!" Jamison and Brereton also translate this *íti* as the affirmative 'yes!' Let us examine Thompson's translation of the first verse as well as Jamison and Brereton 2014 and Geldner 1951. ṚV X.119.1 *íti vā́ íti me máno / gā́m áśvaṃ sanuyām íti / kuvít sómasyā́pām íti //.* Thompson 2003: "Yes, yes, this is my intention. I will win the cow, the horse. Yes! Have I drunk of the Soma? Yes!" Jamison and Brereton (2014:90): "Yes for sure! Yes (says) my mind: I could win cow and horse—yes!– Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!" Geldner (1951:345): "So, ja so ist mein Sinn: Ich möchte Rind und Roß verschenken. – Ich merke, daß ich Soma getrunken habe." Both Thompson and Jamison and Brereton render *íti* as an affirmative rather than is prescribed use in the later language as a quotative particle. Geldner on the other hand, translates *íti* as "so" in the first pāda and treats it as the quotative particle in pādas b and c. The affirmation is still there, but housed in the assertive particle *vai* which he translates as "ja".[71] My translation follows Geldner's in this regard: ṚV X.119.1 *íti vā́ íti me máno / gā́m áśvaṃ sanuyām íti / kuvít sómasyā́pām íti //* "This indeed (is) my thought: "I could win cow and horse." Have I just quaffed Soma?" If *íti* functions as a quotative particle here, then each refrain of *kuvít sómasyā́pām íti* is a return to the direct quotation of the thought. This strengthens Thompson's case that this hymn is an impersonation. If the human ritualist is the thinker of the thought "Have I have just quaffed Soma?", then presenting his thought as an external quotation further distances the speaking persona from the human performer. At the same time, the quoted thought is headed by an interrogative *kuvít.* It makes the sentence a question, and, like Greek *eirōneía,* a performance of feigned ignorance. This human ignorance contrasts with the stylized self-assertion of a divine figure which constitutes Thompson's *ahaṃkāra*.

[72] Thompson 2003

'Becoming *satya*' is notion to which I shall return shortly. For now, note that Thompson believes the impersonated figure of pāda a and b of each verse to be Agni, although he is open to the possibility of Indra. This manifestation of the divine in a physical body is not merely theatre, but an ontological transformation enacted by drinking Soma:

> "I think that it is legitimate to say that the impersonation that is clearly performed in this hymn shows the god in a palpably material form, embodied literally in the performer of the hymn."[73]

While Jamison and Brereton agree with much of Thompson's analysis of this hymn, they argue the performed persona is Indra, not Agni:

> "These boasts are most appropriate to Indra, who commonly manipulates cosmic entities who is most likely to engage in self-vaunting *ātmastuti*, and who is the archetypal soma-drinker among the gods.[74]

For Jamison and Brereton, the second to final verse of the hymn is the real epiphany of Indra:

ṚV X.119.12ab *ahám asmi mahāmahó / abhinabhyám údīṣitaḥ*

I am greater than great, I am sent up to the clouds.

Here they say he is "calling attention to his presence in the ritual arena.",[75] the final verse being something of an anticlimax:

ṚV X.119.13ab *gr̥hó yāmi áraṃkr̥to / devébhyo havyavā́hanaḥ /*

A house made suitable, I drive, conveying oblations to the gods.

The language of this verse is strongly suggestive of Agni, whose hearth is likened to a house and who conveys the oblations to the gods. For Jamison and Brereton, the speaking identity has shifted only in this final verse from Indra to Agni:

> "the fact that Agni speaks this verse does not require that he be the speaker in the rest of the hymn. In our view this verse, like many final verses, marks a

[73] Thompson 2003

[74] Jamison and Brereton 2014:1589

[75] Jamison and Brereton 2014:1589

> shift of subject or a coda. The speaker is indeed Agni. It seems possible that Indra's epiphany in the preceding verse has brought him face to face with the principal god of the ritual and the ritual ground, namely Agni, and that Agni borrows the rhetoric of Indra to make his own counter-boast and assert the importance of his own role—though his somewhat pedestrian self-comparison to a well-equipped household contrasts almost comically with the soaring and exuberant language of the rest of the hymn"[76]

That the speaker is Indra and then becomes Agni is a valid line of reasoning, but loses sight of Thompson's chief point: that the speaker is also always the poet. There must be a reason that ṚV X.119, unlike the other Indra *ātmastuti*s, makes no explicit mention of the deity or manly deeds associated with him exclusively. The hymns of mimetic impersonation which I shall study in the following chapters are characterized either by explicit mention of Indra or by vocabulary suggestive of Indra exclusively. Unlike Jamison and Brereton, I do not find anything particularly climactic or characteristic of Indra in ṚV X.119.12. It lacks any explicit reference to the "ritual arena" in which Indra is supposedly present. ṚV X.119.12 has an opening self-assertion in pāda a, *ahám asmi mahāmahó* "I am greater than great," but makes no mention of a ritual arena. Pāda b also lacks an explicit reference to the site of the ritual: *abhinabhyám údīṣitaḥ*, "I am sent up to the clouds," only indirectly suggests a terrestrial location for the speech event as the direction of travel away from the speech event is upwards to the clouds. As *údīṣita-* is a hapax, it cannot be argued to have a close association with either Agni or Indra. The only explicit deity is in the repeated refrain: Soma. So far, no one has attempt to argue that Soma is speaking. The omission of specific details suggests to me that perhaps the mysteriousness is intentional, and that the poet is crafting a double impersonation which the audience can interpret as Indra or as Agni, because the text is suggestive of both yet determinative of neither.

### 2.4 Performative Utterances and Narrative Assertions

We now turn to the topic of performative utterances in order to fit Thompson's theory of self-assertion into a broader theory of narrative assertion in the Ṛgveda. Dahl explains that

[76] Jamison and Brereton 2014:1589

"performative sentences represent a pragmatically marked type of context where the speaker utters the sentence and at the same time fulfils an act of the type specified by the verb."[77] The Paradebeispiel of this type is "I promise" in which the sentence describes the act of promising as well as enacting a promise. This 'enacting' is the illocutionary point of the sentence; speech brings that promise into being.[78] In Searle 1979's taxonomy of illocutionary acts, the promise would be classed as an assertive because in so promising, the performer asserts this promise is true.

Searle's other illocutionary categories are relevant to this study too. He classes "I ask" as a directive, for example, because the speaker directs the hearer to act. In presenting illocution as conforming to discrete categories, however, his taxonomy can be misleading. By the same logic that categorizes "I promise" as an assertion of truth, one can categorize "I ask" as an assertion rather than a direct, for by saying "I ask", I assert the sincerity that I do indeed truly ask. By this logic many illocutionary acts can be folded into the category of assertion. For Searle, a declarative speech act, in principle, changes reality in accordance with the content of that declaration,[79] while an assertive merely commits the speaker to the truth of the proposition.[80] Searle notes that declarations derive their illocutionary force from an extra-linguistic institution.[81] In practice, the distinction between the two types is often blurred. Consider the legal

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[77] Dahl 2010:81

[78] Notice this kind of illocution relies on a kind of "double meaning", for the audience must understand two levels of action, the meaning of the word 'to promise' as well as the significance of its 1st person form in marking the beginning of the period of time during which the promise is active.

[79] Such as 'you are fired.'

[80] Such as 'you are stupid.'

[81] Searle 1979:18 sees the verdict as a categorical overlapping of "assertive declarations". Rather than make a *sui generis* category, I think it is better to conceive of the verdict as a subtype of declaration which declares itself to be an assertion. That is the judge both declares someone guilty *making them guilty* and declares his declaration is an assertion of truth *making it an assertion of truth*. In juridical speech acts, the assertion of truth is conceptualized as the decision being a product of the correct interpretation of legal precedent.

verdict. Searle theorizes the verdict as an overlap of the assertive and the declarative,[82] because the judge declares someone guilty, *making* them guilty, yet simultaneously commits to the truth of the proposition that this person is guilty. This double illocution holds for all judicial decisions, which declare legal determinations yet also assert that these decisions are the correct or 'true' interpretation of legal precedent.[83]

The important point here is that the taxonomy of illocutionary acts, the difference between assertion and declaration, is determined by an extra-linguistic institution. The words 'guilty' or 'not guilty' do not alone change a person's legal status. If we instead think about this event as a ritual performance, the sentence receives its illocutionary force because it is an authorized ritual act performed by the judge as a ritual actor.[84] I would add that if we use Searle's terminology to approach the courtroom holistically, we might say the bailiff performs an illocutionary act when he performs the directive that 'all rise'. The illocutionary force of the imperative, however, is secondary to the perlocutionary effect of his utterance,[85] which identifies the person entering the room to be the proper ritual actor, cueing the audience that this person has special powers of speech at this 'legal occasion'. It is the legitimacy and authority invested in the court which elevates the judge's assertion to the status of declaration.

Mutatis mutandis, it is the legitimacy and authority of the Vedic sacrifice which determines if assertive utterances function as declaratives, but it is exactly that institution which we cannot access because it is external to the texts. In a sense, however, this is irrelevant, as the

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[82] Searle 1979:20 "assertive declarations"

[83] Dunn (2003:493): "Judges sustain the fiction that they interpret law, but never create it, by adhering to the doctrine of stare decisis. Stare decisis states that judicial decisionmaking should adhere to precedent."

[84] A great deal of literature exists which examines juridical pronouncements as speech acts. A few recent examples Dunn 2003, Ho 2006, and Bernal 2007.

[85] Perlocutionary effects are the intended, but not explicit results of performative utterances. For example, the illocutionary effect of 'could you pass the salt?' is to prompt the hearer to respond 'yes' or 'no', but the perlocutionary effect is to prompt the hearer to pass the salt.

assertive is performative by default and only depends on a shared notion of truth between speaker and hearer. Searle claims that "making a statement is as much performing an illocutionary act as making a promise, a bet, a warning, or what have you."[86] Consider a typical Yajurvedic mantra from the *Kaṭha Saṃhitā* (KaṭhS):

KaṭhS 1.2 *devásya tvā savitúḥ prasavè 'śvínor bāhúbhyāṃ pūṣṇó hástābhyām ā́dade*

You I take with the hands of Pūṣan, with the arms of the Aśvins,
at the pressing of heavenly Savitar.

What does this *yajus*, 'ritual formula', tell us? The verb (*tvā*...) *ā́dade*, '(You...) do I take', seems to be performative; like 'I promise', it describes what it enacts, but exactly what ritual action it enacts is ambiguous.[87] To the mere dilettante of Vedic sacrifice, the *adhvaryu* appears to be a human priest and one might imagine he comes equipped with human hands and human arms. *Kaṭhasaṃhitā* 1.2, however, asserts a different truth: that the speaker has the hands of Pūṣan and the arms of the Aśvins. That these are the hands of Pūṣan and the arms of the Aśvins is a reality otherwise invisible save for this assertion.[88] Through this *yajus*, the *adhvaryu* asserts his body into existence, narrating verbal masks over his hands and arms no different than those proposed by Oguibénine and Thompson in **Chapter 1**.

[86] Searle 1979:18

[87] Of course, we should not expect specific ritual details, for the ritual most likely involves kindling a fire, mixing a drink. These are mundane activities which only become significant when they signify something more: when the fire is a god and the drink is immortality. In other words, ritual actions are visible markers upon which significance is conferred by association with a meaningful narrative, the 'virtual mask' of Lévi-Strauss. They are not meaningful in isolation. The narrative, while meaningful, is not present without the material action, which materializes it at the event. All of which is to say that it is to be expected that Vedic poetry provides few ritual details, with the Āprī hymns being a notable exception to my generalization. The Āprī hymns can be summarized as praise of ritual sequences leading up to animal sacrifice rather than the Soma sacrifice. As such, they have a distinct set of aesthetic commitments and anxieties, which I wish to treat in a future work.

[88] Perhaps the *yajus* has a perlocutionary effect like that of the directive of the bailiff, who commands all in attendance to rise but by doing so gives the audience vital information about the person entering the room. The point here, however, is that the assertion is performative on its own.

## 2.5 The Double Scene in the Ṛgveda

While narration in lyric poetry like the Ṛgveda is not sustained in the way it is in epic poetry, like the *Iliad* or the *Mahābhārata,* it is narration nonetheless. In hymns which take the form of lists of divine feats, for example, the narrative may be limited to a single verse, while over the body of the song an argument is constructed by the succession of narratives placed in parallel. Following Laurie Patton's book *Myth as Argument*, I take these narratives and sequences of narratives as a strategy of argumentation. These arguments sometimes depend on implied similarities between seemingly unrelated phenomena. Consider Patton's observation regarding the *Bṛhaddevatā* (BD) of Śaunaka:

> "...the juxtaposition of a grammatical rule next to a cosmogonic myth is a way of "placing," and therefore making an argument about, both kinds of knowledge; such juxtaposition has its own kind of logic beyond the mere compiler's whim."[89]

How do we make argumentation through narration intelligible to us? As Patton says, the juxtaposition of narrative has its own kind of logic, and that logic is only fully accessible through the extra-linguistic social institution for which the material was compiled.[90] We do not have access to that social institution, which is an historical sacrifice, but we do have access to a level of narration embedded in the text which is *about* sacrifice, which is *about* the institution of performance interwoven with the other narratives of the text. Examining the juxtaposition of depictions of the performance with other narratives does not tells us about the historical sacrifice, but it does tell us how the historical sacrifice was conceptualized.

### 2.5.1 The Double Scene in the Vǫluspá

The Old Norse text the Vǫluspá or 'the prophecy of the seeress' has attracted scholarly attention due to elements indicating it was a performed text. The version of the text I will use is

[89] Patton 1996:xvii.

[90] The same extra-linguistic social institution which turns Searle's assertive into a declarative.

from the *Codex Regius* (R).[91] Its performative dimensions were first scrutinized by Lars Lönnroth in his 1978 piece *Den dubbla scenen*. Lönnroth coined the term 'double scene' to capture something he observed in the Vǫluspá. Namely, that the setting of the narrative seemed to mirror or re-create the scene of its historical performance. Lönnroth argues that a *vǫlva* 'seeress' addresses Óðinn, but the text is a 'double scene' which imports the performance context of an historical speaker and audience located at a farm in 13th century Iceland. On this basis, Thorvaldsen 2013 argues that this double scene may account for the deictic complexities in the Vǫluspá. Deixis is the system of reference which marks position with respect to the speech event. Because they are defined relative to the speech event, pronouns and verbs which mark the speaker (1st person) and hearer (2nd person) of the speech event are inherently deictic.[92]

While Thorvaldsen distances himself from a fixed historical setting, he studies the way speaker perspective is represented in the Vǫluspá, finding a speaker-listener complex which shifts between the *vǫlva* and Óðinn, a human performer and human audience, as well as a blend

[91] Jackson Crawford (p.c.): "Voluspá is the first poem in the thirteenth-century Old Icelandic manuscript GKS 2365 4to, known as *Codex Regius* or *Konungsbók*. The collection of poems therein is considered the core of the Poetic Edda, and many of the poems in this collection were probably composed considerably earlier than the manuscript in which they are preserved. Voluspá is also preserved, in an isolated context and in a somewhat different form with several additional stanzas that are usually considered later interpolations, in the slightly later Old Icelandic manuscript AM 544 4to (a portion of the book known as *Hauksbók*), and many of its stanzas are quoted by Snorri Sturluson (1179-1241) in his Prose Edda."

[92] Person pronouns do not have fixed semantic referents but must change in accordance with the context of each speech act. Otto Jesperson (1922:128) dubbed them "shifters": "The most important class of shifters are the personal pronouns. The child hears the word 'I' meaning 'Father', then again meaning 'Mother', then again 'Uncle Peter', and so on unendingly in the most confusing manner. Many people realize the difficulty thus presented to the child, and to obviate it will speak of themselves in the third person as 'Father' or 'Grannie' or 'Mary', and instead of saying 'you' to the child, speak of it by its name. The child's understanding of what is said is thus facilitated for the moment: but on the other hand, the child in this way hears these little words less frequently and is slower in mastering them. If some children soon learn to say 'I' while others speak of themselves by their name, the difference is not entirely due to the different mental powers of the children, but must be largely attributed to their elders' habit of addressing them by their name or by the pronouns."

of the two. When Óðinn is addressed, he is marked by specific epithets, like Valfǫðr, or the singular 2nd personal pronoun *þú*. The following represents a *vǫlva*-Óðinn scene:

R 1.5-8 *vilðo at ec ualfaþ$^{r}$ / uel fyr telia /*
*forn spioll fira / þa$_{/}$ e$^{r}$ fremst u$^{m}$ man /*

You wish, Valfǫdr, that I tell the past tales of men
the earliest that I can remember.[93]

The audience at the poem's beginning however is in the plural:

R 1.1-4 *Hliods bið ec / allar kindir / meiri oc mi$_{N}$i / mavgo heimdallar*

I ask all families to listen, the greater and lesser sons of Heimdall.

Not only is the poem's hypothetical audience here explicitly human, it is inclusive of different social strata. For Thorvaldsen, *hliods bið ec*, 'I bid you listen', is spoken by a human performer. He offers that: "to introduce a performance by asking a crowd for attention must be an almost universal phenomenon."[94] Many comparanda from the Ṛgveda corroborate his thought. Consider the following verse:

ṚV I.23.8 *índrajyeṣṭhā márudgaṇā / dévāsaḥ pū́ṣarātayaḥ /*
*víśve máma śrutā hávam //*

(You) whose chief is Indra, whose gang is the Maruts,
the gods, whose gifts are of Pūṣan, all hear my call!

This is a common use of the imperative in the Ṛgveda, in which the divine audience is commanded to pay attention to the performance. Is this the same as commanding a human audience for attention?

[93] English translations of *Codex Regius* are from Thorvaldsen 2013 unless otherwise noted.
[94] Thorvaldsen 2013:101

In Thorvaldsen's analysis, he argues that in certain parts the speaker seems to be addressing both Óðinn and a human audience simultaneously, as evidenced by:

R 29.5-10 *hv$^{er}$s fregnit mic / hvi freistiþ mi$^{n}$ / alt ueit ec oði$_{N}$ /*
*hvar þv a˛ga falt / ieno$^{m}$ me̲ra / mimis b$^{ru}{}_{N}$i //*

What do you want to know? Why do you try me? I know everything, Óðinn, where you hid the eye in the famous well of Mímir.

Although Óðinn is directly addressed, the 2nd person plural verbs *fregnit* 'you ask' and *freistiþ* 'you test' are directed towards an audience of humans who also wish to know.

Is this a feature of the Indo-Iranian poetic tradition too? Does the Ṛ̊gveda or the Gāθās[95] address their respective audiences in the 2nd person plural? Consider the following verse from the Avesta.

Y45.1a *aṯ frauuaxšiiā nū gūšōdūm nū sraotā*

Next, I will proclaim, now hear for yourselves and hear (it) now!

Just like the opening of the Vǫluspá (R 1.1-4), the poet uses 2nd person plural verbs (*gūšōdūm* and *sraotā*) to command his audience to pay attention. Can thinking about this listening audience give us insight into verses like:

Y28.2a *yə **vå** mazdā ahurā pairijasāi vohū manaŋhā*

I who wish to circumambulate **you** with good thought, Mazdā Ahurā

Here, the acc. pl. clitic *vå* 'you' does not agree with the vocative sg. epithets *mazdā* and *ahurā*. If we propose a performative context to the Yasna like that proposed for the Vǫluspá, we might speculate that these 2nd person plural verbs and pronouns are deictic traces, and that the singular entity to which that epithet *mazdā ahurā* refers may be, like Óðinn, only one member of a larger audience. Returning to Ṛ̊V I.23.8, I see no reason why *víśve*, 'all', from pāda c might not resume

[95] The Gāθās are the oldest textual strata of Avestan, the language of the 72 chapter *yasna* 'sacrifice' of the Zoroastrian tradition. References to the Gāθās will be marked with respect to their position in the Yasna (Y). The text edition used is Geldner 1889-96.

both the previous *dévāsaḥ*, 'gods', as well as include the humans present at the sacrifice. If so, both gods and humans present at the performance would be commanded to *máma śrutā hávam* 'hear my call!'. The Avestan Gāθās are a fertile site of comparison for the Ṛ̊gveda, not only because of their closely related languages but because the human performer of the *yasna* often speaks as Zarathuštra. Skjærvø 2002 argues that when the poet asserts himself to be the "real" Zarathuštra in Y43.8, the adjective *haiθiia-* has ontological significance:

> "the emphatic adjective "real, true" (*haiθiia-*, OInd. *satya-*), as we can see from its other occurrences in the Old Avestan texts, seems to be used to identify objects or person as "real, true" as indicated by their names, as opposed to things or persons that are just "called" something but are not "really" so. In the conceptual universe of the Old Avestan poet-sacrificer this is an important distinction, since, here, the saying "appearances deceive" which seems banal to us, takes on a truly ominous meaning."[96]

These assertions of truth are the real reality of the sacrifice: invisible to normal sight but manifest through verbalization. Skjærvø describes *haiθiia-* 'real, true' as an emphatic adjective used to assert something to be true. This reality is not self-evident: it must be asserted. This reminds me of something Thompson said about poetic impersonation in Ṛ̊V X.119. Impersonation makes Agni become "manifest, palpable, or *satya'*, 'true,' for his audience." Perhaps the adjective *haiθiia-* does the same for the figure of Zarathuštra in the performance of the Yasna. Unlike Agni, Zarathustra is a human figure, which invites speculation as to whether the texts were authored by an 'historical Zarathustra'. As already discussed in **1.4**, my study avoids this problem by focusing on the impersonation of immortal Indra.

### 2.5.2 Pimentel's Para-Narration

What does it mean to have elements of performance seemingly embedded in a textual narrative? To think more deeply about that, I want to discuss a notion called para-narration employed by Luz Aurora Pimentel. In Chapter 3 of her book *Metaphoric Narration:*

[96] Skjærvø 2002:33

*Paranarrative Dimensions in À la recherche du temps perdu*, Pimentel treats the baignoire scene in *Le côté de Guermantes.*[97] In this scene, the narrator goes to the opera, but the narrator's perceptions of the opera-hall are a blend of details reminiscent of a real opera hall as well as a fantastic watery domain replete with nereids and sea monsters. This conceited metaphor is, for Pimentel, a virtual space which is superimposed on the main narrative space.[98] Pimentel (1990:155) argues that in the 'baignoire' sequence "the main diegetic space, the theatre, is almost obliterated as the metaphoric marine world of nereid and tritons gradually takes over."[99]

Pimentel qualifies what happens to the main narrative as "almost obliterated" and "gradually take[n] over". That is, the narrative of an opera-hall and an undersea realm really co-exist, they blend together, repairing the breach in coherence introduced by the extended metaphor. For example, those the narrator identifies as nereids are marked by behaviors appropriate to the ladies of the opera. Proust's choice to homologize an opera hall to an undersea kingdom seems quite arbitrary, but Pimentel notes that the two narratives are anchored by a play on words: the term 'baignoire' itself. Colloquially, 'baignoire' referred to the lowest tier of the theatre in early 20th century France, but its unmarked meaning is a bathtub. Thus, the germ of this metaphoric elaboration is double meaning, and the coherence of the individual metaphors are mediated by this double meaning.

Another example given by Pimentel is from a short story by Julio Cortázar: *La noche boca arriba*. The protagonist of the story is in a motorcycle accident and is rushed to the hospital. In his pain, he begins to dip in and out of fevered dreams. He perceives the hospital less and less. In his dream, he is fleeing the Aztecs through swamp and jungle. The perceptions of the protagonist systematically correlate characters, instruments, and actions allowing the two

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[97] The third volume of Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu.*

[98] Although Pimentel is dealing with the literary use of metaphor, this thought experiment applies equally well to the cognitive metaphors found in the Ṛgveda. Simply put, in a cognitive metaphor one thing is conceived of in terms of another thing. For a study of cognitive metaphor in the Ṛgveda see Jurewicz 2010.

[99] By diegetic space, Pimentel means narrative space.

separate narrative universes to be mutually intelligible. We learn, for example, of the odor of the hospital through his perceptions of the reek of the swamp. There is no doubt he sees a surgeon before him in this passage:

> *...cuando abrió los ojos vio la figura ensangrentada del sacrificador que venía hacia él con el cuchillo de piedra en la mano*
>
> ...when he opened his eyes he saw the bloody figure of the sacrificer that came toward him with the stone knife in his hand.

Finally, the protagonist realizes that it was the hospital, the motorcycle accident, that entire world which was the dream. He has now returned to the true reality. The reader, however, understands the implication: he has died on the operating table.

Pimentel's notion of a para-narrative interests me because the concept is essentially an attempt to theorize the reader's awareness of the relationship between two narrative theatres. She also uses the perceiving character as something of an embedded 'model reader', who, like the actual reader has access to both worlds and understands the relevance of the narrative levels and the patterned, sustained, and repeated uses of metaphor. A future reader can appropriate the understanding of that perceiving character as a guide since it co-exists alongside the text. It is this conceptualization of para-narrative which I think is applicable to performed oral texts. The two narratives worlds which I will examine are the narrative content of performed poetry and the narrative which is nothing other than the patterned, sustained, and repeated references to its own poetic occasion.

In the case of Proust's baignoire scene, what is the main narrative (the opera house) and what is the para-narrative (the undersea realm) is quite clear. While Pimentel offers an interesting way to think about levels of narration, particularly when one level is conceived of in terms of another, the term para-narration cannot ultimately be applied to Vedic poetics because one level cannot be subordinated to another.[100]

[100] We might consider the actual performance to be the main level and the re-enacted mythological narrative to be the para-narration, but this is counter to the ontology presented to us by the text. We shall see in the following case studies that performance attempts to demote itself

### 2.5.3 Theorizing the *adhiyajña* Level of Narration

Rather than use the terms narration and para-narration, I shall borrow the terminology employed by the Vedic tradition itself, which conceived of Vedic knowledge as relating to three spheres: the sacrifice, the cosmos, and the self. Composed after the Vedic period proper, the *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra* presents the three together unambiguously:

ŚāṅkhGS 1.2.3-5 *śrutaṃ tu sarvān atyeti / na śrutam atīyād /*
*adhidaivam athādhyātmam adhiyajñam iti trayam /*
*mantreṣu brāhmaṇe caiva śrutam ity abhidhīyate //*

Knowledge surpasses everything, knowledge should not be passed over
What is threefold, pertaining to heaven, to the self, to the sacrifice,
Only what is in mantras and the Brāhmaṇa (commentary), is defined as *śruta.*

The text is a Gṛhyasūtra, a class of text concerned with domestic rites and not the performance of the *śrauta* sacrifices. This passage, however, is concerned with distributing food to priests qualified as worthy by virtue of their good *vāc*, 'voice', *rūpa*, 'figure', *vayas*, 'vigor', *śīla*, 'conduct', and *śruta*, '(revealed) knowledge'. Here, that knowledge is explicitly defined as Vedic mantras and the sacred commentary. It is further described as threefold because it pertains to the cosmos, the self, and the sacrifice. For this reason, the term *adhiyajña* makes an appropriate label for a level of narration about the sacrifice itself.

One way a Vedic *sūkta* can refer to the performance is through poetic self-reference of the type 'may this song be heard'. Self-reference of this type necessarily breaks away from narratives about the primordial past to fix the poetic eye on the present at the very moment in which the song is singing about itself. Poetic-self reference often takes the form of wishing for

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to re-performance, to argue it is not an original but a copy in order to make that origin real. In Pimentel's scheme, this would be as if the main narrative presented itself as a para-narrative in order to make its own para-narrative the main one. Even *La noche boca arriba* cannot be construed to be like this because although the protagonist accepts the para-narrative to be the main one, the reader does not. It is far simpler to accept the rhetorical parity of all levels of narration in the text.

the success of the song. The subject often appears in the plural, and a wish is made in the optative.

ṚV I.105.19ab *enā́ṅgūṣéṇa vayám índravanto / abhí ṣyāma vr̥jáne sárvavīrāḥ*

Through this hymn (*āṅgūṣa*), Indra in our company, all heroes,
may we be elite in our community.

The pronoun *enā́* 'by this one' suggests the song that will make the speakers pre-eminent is none other than ṚV I.105 itself. So, the first thing we know about the performance context is that this song is located at the performance; it is important not to trivialize that fact. For if the song conceives of itself as being sung at a performance occasion, and if it can talk about that performance occasion by self-reference and expressions of proximity, then there really is a thin story being told about this song being successfully performed at a competitive social event, and that story frames the contents of the rest of the song. That performance narration, then, accounts for the texts expectation that its audience also be located at the performance and that its audience understands why a particular text is germane to a particular ritual event. In other words, it is very similar to the expectation that the author of a written text has: that readers can grasp patterns in patterned, sustained, and repeated metaphors.

Since the song, from its own perspective, is always being sung by performer, traces of this level of reference are to be found in references which depict spatial and temporal proximity to the performer. Since the performer is always in the present, temporal proximity to the speaker should be in the present or immediate past. Evidence that the text locates at a social occasion is often found in the present is ubiquitous but especially striking in dialgoue hymns which are about the primordial past. An excellent example is ṚV X.10, which is a dialogue between Yama and Yamī, the first human pair. Each verse of the hymn alternates who is speaking. Although they are brother and sister, Yamī insists that Yama impregnate her in order to create the human race. She claims it to be the will of the gods, but Yama is recalcitrant—he believes it is anathema to the gods' will. Yama says:

ṚV X.10.4ab *ná yát purā́ cakr̥mā́ kád dha nūnám / r̥tā́ vádanto ánr̥taṃ rapema*

Uttering truths, we whisper something false
Which we have never before done, so now what?

In other parts of this dialogue, Yama and Yamī use forms of the dual, yet here verbs *cakr̥mā́* and *rapema* and present participle *vádanto* are all grammatically plural. Yet the conversation is set before the existence of humanity, so there should be no humans present other than Yama and Yamī. Why, then, the plurals instead of the dual? I believe the answer is found later in this very hymn. In the fifth verse, Yamī responds to Yama's claim that they whisper unprecedented things by giving a proper mythological precedent. Specifically, she says that they were created to be a domestic pair just like Earth and Heaven. Yama's response in verse six mocks her reasoning:

ṚV X.10.6 *kó asyá veda prathamásya áhnaḥ / ká īṃ dadarśa ká ihá prá vocat /*
*br̥hán mitrásya váruṇasya dhā́ma / kád u brava āhano vīciyā nŕ̥n //*

Who knows of the first day? Who has seen it?
Who will proclaim it here?
Since the domain of Mitra and of Varuṇa is high,
what perversions, O floozy, will you tell the men?

By saying "Who knows the first day? Who has seen it?", Yama critiques the validity of her knowledge of the primordial precedents. Far more interesting is *ka iha pra vocat* "who proclaims it here?" Where is this *iha* 'here'? The colligation *pra* + √*vac* is typically used to describe the act of public performance of poetry, most famously *índrasya nú vīríyāṇi prá vocaṃ* "I proclaim forth the manly deeds of Indra."[101] In a preliterate society, public knowledge and memory are constituted by public performance. Yama thus extends his criticism by asking who here, at this present performance, will perform the knowledge of the first day. Presumably, the singer mentions the height of the domain of Mitra and Varuṇa because it is in heaven: so far away the gods might not hear the untruths Yamī is telling. This confirms the scene is terrestrial. Everyone *iha*, here on Earth at the present performance, however, can hear. So, Yama asks Yamī what

[101] From ṚV I.32.I. Evidently an inherited Indo-Iranian formula, cf. *āṯ frauuaxšiiā* 'next, I will proclaim" which opens the first six verses of Y45.

falsehoods she will tell the men. Yama and Yamī have stepped through the narrative barrier from their past setting, where they are the only two humans, into the present where an audience of humans is gathered. It is this audience which I believe accounts for the use of plurals *cakr̥mā́*, *rapema*, and *vádanto* in Ṛ̊V X.10.4.

### 2.6 Deixis as a Marker of Present Performance

Beyond poetic self-reference, what are other formal markers of the temporal and spatial present? We might think of deixis in the terms laid out by Bühler:

> "Dass drei Zeigwörter an die Stelle von Origo gesetzt werden müssen, wenn dies Schema das Zeigfeld der menschlischen Sprache repräsentieren soll, nämlich die Zeigwörter *hier*, *jetzt*, *ich*."[102]

Deixis is essentially a system of reference whose axes meet in the speaker, which explains why we can speak of words like "here", "now", and "I" as characterized by proximal deixis. It is just these three axes of space, time, and perception that will mark our *adhiyajña* level of narration.

#### 2.6.1 Reported Perception

Speaker perceptions and experiential states are marked as belonging to the frame narrative of present performance because the information is private and inaccessible except through acts of reporting by the speaker in the present. Consider the following verse in which the speaker reports on his perception:

Ṛ̊V I.163.4c *utéva me váruṇaś chantsi arvan*
and appear to me, O racehorse, like Varuṇa!

This verse appears in a hymn dedicated to the sacrificial horse and is part of a mythological narrative about the origin of the horse. We would expect the 1st person to be the locus of

[102] Bühler 1934:102

experience, but the point here is that the search must be expanded to verbs in which internal experience is the result of reporting external stimula anywhere in the speaker's sensorium. These stimuli may be marked by the 2nd person, like *chantsi.*[103] Reports of perception may not be marked by a finite verb at all. In such cases, we must evaluate any narrative assertion as a potential reported perception of the speaker on a case by case basis.

### 2.6.2 Textual Deixis as Reported Perception

Let us consider a form of deixis which is neither explicitly spatial or temporal but is better termed textual deixis. That is, a reference to something already said, as in 'that's terrible!' in which 'that' refers to the speech act to which it is responding. Referring to a previously discussed topic depends on both speaker and hearer knowledge of that previous discussion, and that dependence of shared knowledge belies a dependence on a shared experience of the prior speech act. Textual deixis, in the context of performance at least, operates like a reported perception.

Kupfer argues the pronoun *etád* is text-deictic[104] and functions either in a contrastive[105] or topicalizing[106] capacity. Both these functions are types of textual-deixis and rely on shared perceptions of the text between speaker and hearer. Consider ṚV VII.19.10a *eté stómā narā́ṃ nr̥tama túbhyam* 'these praise-songs of the men, O manliest one, are for you'. Here the praise

[103] The form *chantsi* is a si-imperative derived from the haplology of s-aorist subjunctive *chand-s-a-s-i. See Szemerényi 1966. The type is attested already in Indo-European (see Jasanoff 1986 and 1987). Therefore, the -si imperatives were likely old already in Indo-Iranian, and seem to have been used in Vedic as an analogical model to generate new imperatives in -i (see Jasanoff 2002).

[104] Kupfer (2002:164-5): "Deixis am Phantasma muß nicht ausgeschlossen werden, ein Zusammenhang mit personaler oder temporaler Deixis hat sich nicht gezeigt. Das demonstrativpronomen *etád* wird texteigendeiktisch gebraucht."

[105] Kupfer (2002:160): "Das demonstrativpronomen *etád* wird in seiner Hauptfunktion dazu gebraucht, einen Gesprächsgegenstand kontrastiv hervorzuheben."

[106] Kupfer (2002:161): "Daneben hat das Demonstrativpronomen *etád* noch die Funktion, die Aufmerksamkeit des Hörers auf einen Gesprächsgegenstand zu lenken."

songs (*stoma*-) of the men (*nṛ*-) are characterized by *eté* 'these' a text-deictic pronoun. This pronoun connects the praise songs of the men to the poems (*uktha*-) which men (*nṛ*-) are announcing in the previous verse: ṚV VII.19.9b *náraḥ śaṃsanti ukthaśā́sa ukthā́* 'the men, as announcers of poems, announce the poems'. As a text-deictic pronoun, the *etád* pronominal paradigm is formally neutral in terms of spatial and temporal deixis, yet it acquires deictic value contextually, by being construed with something independently established as having deictic value. In this case, the present-time reference of *śaṃsanti* 'they announce' is extended through text-deictic *eté* to the praise songs (*stoma*-) in the following verse marking them as either being sung in the present or the immediate past if they the singing has just finished.

### 2.6.3 Temporal Deixis

The next example comes from a dialogue in which Saramā speaks to the Paṇis, telling them Indra and the Aṅgirases are coming for the cows. She reports that:

ṚV X.108.10 *nā́hám veda bhrātṛtvám nó svasṛtvám / índro vidur áṅgirasaś ca ghorā́ḥ / gókāmā me achadayan yád ā́yam / ápā́ta ita paṇayo várīyaḥ //*

I do not know about brotherhood (and) sisterhood for us.
Indra and the dread Aṅgirases know.
When I came (from there), they seemed to me desirous of cattle,
Go away from here, Paṇis, to somewhere wider!

The human performer impersonating the divine Saramā reports her experience of how Indra and the Aṅgirases appeared. Although the verb *achadayan* 'seemed' is marked past tense, the performative act of reporting is happening at the present moment. Notice, too, that Saramā tells the Paṇis to *ápā́ta ita*, 'go away from here',[107] locating the scene of the narrative in the same place as the singing of the song itself. The imperative *ita* like *chantsi* locates the narrative in the present moment, a timeframe which is temporally proximal to the speaker.

[107] Parsed as preverb *apa*, 'away', adverb *ataḥ,* 'from here', and 2nd person plural imperative *ita* 'go'.

I want to explore a few ways that the verb can indicate temporal proximity to the speaker. Present indicatives, by virtue of announcing what is happening, are located in the present moment. Imperatives, by virtue of commanding someone to do something which is not yet done, locates the command in the present regardless of stem aspect.[108] Dahl argues against a progressive or imperfective aspect for the present stem and instead for a neutral aspect.[109] This is a reasonable inference, Dahl claims, [110] as the present stem is used for performative sentences. Consider the following:

ṚV I.164.34 *pr̥chā́mi tvā páram ántam pr̥thivyā́ḥ / pr̥chā́mi yátra bhúvanasya nā́bhiḥ / pr̥chā́mi tvā vr̥ṣṇo áśvasya rétaḥ / pr̥chā́mi vācáḥ paramā́ṃ vío̍ma //*

I ask you about the far end of the earth, I ask where existence's navel is
I ask you about the seed of the stallion, I ask you the utmost heaven of Speech.

Here *pr̥chā́mi*, 'I ask', is a performative because "performative sentences represent a pragmatically marked type of context where the speaker utters the sentence and at the same time fulfils an act of the type specified by the verb."[111] One can pose a question without using interrogatives at all, by simple declaring that one is asking; *pr̥chā́mi* does precisely that. In fact, this particular verse has been studied by George Thompson as a *brahmodya*, 'to be uttered by a

[108] Semantic differences between present imperatives and aorist imperatives being moot here, but proposed in Baum 2006 and responded to in Jamison 2009.

[109] Dahl (2010:178): "In any case, the fact that Present Indicative forms are vague between an overlapping and a sequential interpretation in relative clauses can be straightforwardly accounted for by assuming that it denotes the neutral aspect, hence predicating a general overlap relation between reference time and event time (t'⊗tE). This, in turn, can either be interpreted as the implicature that event time properly includes reference time (t'⊂tE) or as the implicature that reference time properly includes event time (tE⊂t')."

[110] Dahl (2010:171) on the present as a performative: "...the Present Indicative only represents one among several morphological categories which are used in performative sentences in Early Vedic (cf. also Dahl 2008b). It is therefore reasonable to take this piece of evidence as yet another indication that the Early Vedic Present Indicative does not represent a progressive category, but rather denotes the general imperfective or neutral aspect."

[111] Dahl 2010:81

priest', which is a kind of ritualized riddle.[112] The performer is not really asking to learn the answer. He knows the answer. In fact, he provides the answer in the next verse.

ṚV I.164.35 *iyáṃ védiḥ páro ántaḥ pṛthivyā́ / ayáṃ yajñó · bhúvanasya nā́bhiḥ /*
*ayáṃ sómo vṛ́ṣṇo áśvasya réto / brahmā́yáṃ vācáḥ paramáṃ víoma //*

This altar is the far end of the Earth, this sacrifice is existence's navel
This Soma is the seed of the stallion, this composition is Speech's utmost heaven.

Like the Greek *eirôn,* the asking is performative and the ignorance feigned. The performer uses these questions to presage his answer, where he will reveal the solution. Lest we limit performatives to verbs describing speech acts, Dahl also cites ṚV I.171.1ab: *práti va enā́ námasāhám emi / sūkténa bhikṣe sumatíṃ turā́ṇām /* "I go to you with this reverence; with this well-spoken (hymn), I beg the good will of the mighty." Here both active voice *emi* 'I go' and middle voice *bhikṣe* 'I beg' are 1st person present stems and operate as performatives just like *pṛchā́mi,* each enacting the very event they describe.

In addition to imperatives and present indicatives, Dahl argues that "the Aorist Indicative in some cases seems to be used as the head of performative sentences.[113] As examples of such a sentence, he cites ṚV II.35.1a *úpem asṛkṣi vājayúr vacasyā́ṃ* "Desiring the prize, I release it: my verbal skill". The verb here is an aorist indicative *asṛkṣi*. Although the augment marks the verb as being in the past,[114] the aspect of the aorist is perfective. This perfective aspect indicates the action has just been brought to completion, and perhaps this explains why the aorist can be used as a performative in much the same way as the present stem. This conforms to the observation of Jamison and Brereton that the aorist is:

[112] Thompson 1997a:17

[113] Dahl 2010:296

[114] Dahl 2008:20-21 Theorizes that performative sentences have a covert adverbial which characterizes the action as happening 'just now' which allows the aorist indicative to be used as a performative the time interval between the event and the present moment is conceived of as minimal.

> "...often used to express the immediate past (in English, "has [just] done" vs. "did") and is therefore frequently encountered in ritual situations, in which the poet announces a sacrificial act as just completed (like the kindling of the fire) or a poem just composed."[115]

Hoffmann, in his ground-breaking work on the subject, *Der Injunktiv im Veda*, studies a number of so-called aorist injunctives or aorists not marked by the augment. I say so-called because, these forms often do not enjoin anything. So-called 'injunctives' are finite verbs with secondary endings that lack the augment, and thus are like other finite verbs except that they are underspecified in terms of tense and modality.[116] We use the misnomer 'injunctive' because in some cases the underspecified mood is specified by the context. For example, the syntax of prohibition which employs the prohibitive *mā́* followed by the 'injunctive' rather than a modally specified imperative or optative. Dahl[117] points out that Hoffman's injunctives *vocam* and *gāsi*[118] are performative just like an augmented aorist. Indeed, given the potential for ritual performativity which seems fertile in the aorist's perfective aspect, we might expect the augmentless aorist to surface as a performative verb *par excellence*. The following verse is a case of such a verb:

ṚV VII.88.2ab *ádhā nú asya saṃdṛ́śaṃ jaganvā́n / agnér ánīkaṃ váruṇasya maṃsi /*

Then having gone to the sight of him, I realize Agni's face (is) Varuṇa's.

The 1st singular s-aorist *maṃsi* lacks an augment, leaving the time of this event ambiguous. Is this event set in the past, when the seer first saw sight him? Or does this thought happen whenever he takes sight of him? This, I believe, is a controlled use of ambiguity, prohibiting an audience from restricting the verbal event to the past. Dahl (2010:117) notes that:

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[115] Jamison and Brereton 2014:60

[116] Dahl (2010:243): "In general, the so-called Injunctive seems to have little, if any temporal or modal content." See Kiparsky 1968, 1998, and 2005 for additional treatments of the Injunctive.

[117] Dahl 2010:332

[118] Hoffman 1967:252–253

> "Being radically underspecified with regard to tense and modality, the Injunctive may be hypothesized to pick up its temporal and modal interpretation from the immediately surrounding context and to be assigned a default tense and mood value, probably **present tense** (t0⊆t') and neutral/indicative mood, unless otherwise specified by the context."[119]

As the performer of this hymn claims to be the great seer Vasiṣṭha,[120] the use of the augmentless aorist here may be a way of effecting an impersonation of the legendary figure, making him speak at the present sacrifice, re-enacting his moment of realization.

That augmentless forms of the aorist have present value by default is important, for as we noted earlier presents are one of the chief sources of performative verbs. In addition to augmentless aorists, augmentless imperfects may have the potential to be performative too. Dahl argues that:

> "the Early Vedic Imperfect has a general past time reference, but that it is not found in immediate past contexts. Moreover, it was argued that the Imperfect is compatible with a completive-sequential as well as a progressive-processual reading and that it is mostly used to denote a single, specific past situation but can also, to some extent at least, be used with an iterative-habitual reading."[121]

In other words, the imperfect is an aspect-neutral preterit which has the same scope as the present indicative except it is limited to the past. Since it has non-immediate past time reference, it cannot be used as a performative like the aorist indicative, present indicative, or imperative. Stripped of its augment, however, the imperfect is no longer restricted to the non-immediate past and gains all the performative possibilities of the present indicative. This may be another strategy which allows narration about the mythological events, to be present as occuring at the present performance.

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[119] **Emphasis** mine.

[120] At least the hymn opens with a call for Vasiṣṭha to present a poem to Varuṇa (ṚV VII.88.1ab: *prá śundhyúvaṃ váruṇāya práyiṣṭhām / matíṃ vasiṣṭha mīḷhúṣe bharasva /* 'Bring forth to Varuṇa, O Vasiṣṭha, something beautiful, the dearest thought to the rewarder') which sets the stage for Vasiṣṭha to speak.

[121] Dahl 2010:216

Of course, there are other ways other than finite verbs and adverbs to mark a sentence for present time value. Consider this verse:

ṚV V.40.8 *grā́vṇo brahmā́ yuyujānáḥ saparyán / kīríṇā devā́n námasopaśíkṣan /*
*átriḥ sū́ryasya diví cákṣur ā́dhāt / súvarbhānor ápa māyā́ aghukṣat //*

The composer having yoked the stones (is) worshipping,
with mere reverence seeking the gods.
Atri set the eye of the Sun in heaven
and banished the powers of Svarbhanu.

Here we see two diptychs in juxtaposition: two actions presented in parallel. The second diptych is marked by the aorist indicative and has a past reference to mythological content, while the first diptych, referring to the ritual performance, lacks a finite verb. Following Patton's premise that juxtaposition itself is a strategy of argumentation,[122] I argue that this juxtaposition may be presenting to two actions in parallel in order to indicate they are connected if not analogous.

In the second diptych we have a self-contained narrative. Atri, an ancient seer, set the eye of the Sun in heaven and banished the magical powers of Svarbhanu. In the first diptych, the *brahmán,* a priest, has yoked the stones, which means he has made Soma and is doing ritual performance. Read as a nominative absolute, the two seem utterly disconnected. One half of the verse concerns a priest who makes Soma and does a ritual, and the other half concerns a mythological figure who puts the eye of the Sun in the sky. The first diptych has no finite verb or copula at all and thus is a temporally ambiguous nominative absolute, thus achieving much the same effect as a verb which lacks the augment. My hypothesis is the two are being fundamentally equated, that when [a *brahmán*-priest does the ritual] = [Atri set the eye of the Sun in the sky]. If so, the present ritual actions are being depicted as re-enacting events of cosmic significance. This constitutes another way mythological narratives can be drawn into the narrative frame of the present performance.

[122] Discussed in **2.5**.

In the second diptych, *ā́dhāt* may be an attractive candidate for a performative verb. The aorist *ā́dhāt* may or may not bear an augment, its phonetic realization is erased by the preverb *ā́*. In cases like this, we must resort to the notion of audience perception. Specifically, that only an unambiguous augment can mark a verb as having an unambiguous past reference. It is worth mentioning that among the deictic adverbial particles in the Ṛ̊gveda, *ā́* deserves special attention going forward. As a free adverb, it marks direction towards the speaker, and thus directs the listener to the here and now. This is, however, not always the case when soldered onto the verb stem as a prefix.

### 2.6.4 Spatial Deixis

We have seen instances already where spatial proximity to the speaker is marked by adverbs (like *iha* and *atra*). There are many instances, however, where proximal spatial deixis is achieved through use of a deictic pronoun. That the value of these deictic pronoun as spatial, rather than anaphoric, was first observed in the Brāhmaṇas. Proximal deictic pronouns in the Brāhmaṇas refer to objects located on the sacrificial grounds near the speaker, like the fire altar, while distal deictic pronouns refer to heavenly phenomena, like the Sun. That seems to be their use in the Ṛ̊gveda too. Consider:

ṚV X.159.1ab *úd asaú sū́riyo agād / úd ayám māmakó bhágaḥ /*
Up yon Sun went, up (went) this little lot of mine.

The Sun is qualified with distal deictic *asaú*. The speaker's good fortune is depicted as near the speaker with the proximal pronoun *ayám*. Its close connection to the speaker is emphasized with the 1st person demonstrative adjective *māmaka-* 'my little'. Regarding *asaú*, Kupfer explains that:

> "Die überwiegende Zahl der Belege des Demonstrativpronomens *adás* spricht für die Annahme eines fern deiktischen Gebrauchs."[123]

Kupfer offers ṚV VIII.91.2 as an example of this überwiegende Zahl:

ṚV VIII.91.2 *asaú yá éṣi vīrakó / gṛháṃ-gṛhaṃ vicā́kaśad /*
*imáṃ jámbhasutam piba / dhānā́vantaṃ karambhíṇam /*
*apūpávantam ukthínam //*

> You over there, the little hero who peeks is coming to house after house;
> Drink this pressed-by-jaws, served with grain, gruel, cake, and recitation.

For Kupfer, *gṛháṃ-gṛhaṃ* 'house after house' is sufficient proof of distance from the speaker. Notice there are other possible markers of distance here. The proximal *imám* once again sets up an opposition between the local sacrifice and Indra's other options, represented by *gṛháṃ-gṛhaṃ*. It is not possible to determine absolutely if *éṣi* bears the directional *á́* preverb, but that is a reasonable translation in light of the accent on *vicā́kaśad* which suggests it is the verb in the dependent clause set off by *yá*. The main clause then should be *asaú...eṣi*: the verb *éṣi* would not receive an accent from its location in a subjoined clause,[124] which suggests its accent is due to something else. The preverb *á́* 'here, hither' is an attractive candidate.[125]

The pronouns like *ayám* and *idám* carry proximal spatial deixis. Kupfer notes that:

> "Explizit deiktisch wird das Demonstrativpronomen nur dann gebraucht, wenn es akzentuiert ist. Im Vedischen wird Raumdeixis bei deisem Lexem über den Akzent, nicht über den Wortform oder den Stamm dieses Demonstrativpronomens ausgedrückt."[126]

This paradigm of pronouns, then, is only marked by proximity to the speaker when its members bear the accent; otherwise they are anaphoric:

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[123] Kupfer 2002:83

[124] See Klein 1992.

[125] A final thought: Indra is depicted as a *vīraka-* 'little manly one' which may also suggest distance, if he is being depicted as small to convey that he is far away. A narrative about Indra visiting sacrifices is invoked to direct Indra to come to the present performance.

[126] Kupfer 2002:330

> "Die Annahme eines nahdeiktischen Gebrauchs für die orthotonen Formen des Demonstrativpronomens *idám* wird gestützt durch Fälle wie Rv VII,74,1, wo das Demonstativpronomen im Nominativ koreferentiell zu der Verbalendung der ersten Person, d.h. den Sprecher, vorkommt."[127]

Kupfer cites ṚV VII.74.1 as evidence of the proximal value of the accented pronoun. In fact, ṚV VII.74.1 has two pronouns from this paradigm:

ṚV VII.74.1 ***imā́*** *u vāṃ díviṣṭaya / usrā́ havante aśvinā /*
***ayáṃ*** *vām ahve ávase śacīvasū / víśaṃ-viśaṃ hí gáchathaḥ //*

These day-rites, Aśvins, (are) heifers calling to you two
As this one here, I have called to you two for help,
you two whose goods are powers, so that you will go to clan after clan.

The sequence of time suggests that the performer has just completed the day-rites which are now calling to the Aśvins. The poetic conceit is personification. That rituals can 'call', like people, is a metonymic extension of the calling which the speaker has just performed. This metonymic extension itself implies a connection between the day-rites and the performer, but *imā́* 'these' formally expresses their proximity to him. In the following diptych, *ayáṃ* takes this one step further, as it is the only potential subject for finite verb *ahve* 'I called'; the proximal pronoun *ayáṃ* is functionaling as an alternative to the 1st person pronoun *aham*.

Let us consider another use of repeated proximal deixis which shifts the setting of a narrative out of myth and into the domain of the song's performance. ṚV X.135 opens with this verse:

ṚV X.135.1 *yásmin vṛkṣé supalāśé / devaíḥ sampíbate yamáḥ /*
*átrā no viśpátiḥ pitā́ / purāṇā́m ánu venati //*

Under which tree of good leaf Yama drinks together with the gods
Our father, clan-master, seeks the ancestors there.

The establishing shot is Yama's world, where he holds symposium under a special tree as lord of the dead. The first verse of this hymn introduces a tension: that the final destination of our dearly departed is unknown and his future is in peril. The final verse of this hymn resolves that tension.

[127] Kupfer 2002:111

ṚV X.135.7 ***idáṃ*** *yamásya sā́danaṃ / devamānáṃ yád ucyáte /*
***iyám*** *asya dhamyate nāḷī́r /* ***ayáṃ*** *gīrbhíḥ páriṣkr̥taḥ //*

This is Yama's seat, which is called the house of the gods
This his pipe is being blown, this one is surrounded by song

The ambiguous location of the narrative of Yama's symposium is now returned to the present with this triplet of proximal deictic pronouns: *idáṃ... sā́danaṃ,* 'this seat', *iyám... nāḷī́r* 'this pipe', and *ayám* 'this one'. Like ṚV VII.74.1, the speaker is using *ayám* to refer to himself, revealing that he is Yama. The epiphany of Yama makes Yama present at the performance, allowing him to speak to the audience directly.

### 2.7 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have tried to make the case that Vedic poetry makes frequent use of double meaning, and that double meaning and the double scene are a probative ways to think about Ṛgvedic performance. When a poet performs a mythological narrative and refers to the present performance, he is making a claim about the significance of that present performance. He is verbalizing that something is true, even if it is otherwise invisible to the audience. This takes its smallest form in KaṭhS 1.2, which asserts "You I take with the hands of Pūṣan, with the arms of the Aśvins" and a much more elaborate form in the poetic impersonation marked by Thompson's *ahaṃkāra*. By doing so, the performer enacts a persona and uses performative verbs and narrative assertions in the present. This notion of performativity in the present will guide my case studies, as I examine the impersonation of Indra by paying careful attention to deictic traces which suggest temporal, spatial, and perceptual proximity to the speaker. These traces of the here and now mark what I have termed the *adhiyajña* level of narration. Using these discrete narrative levels, I will demonstrate that this impersonation is indeed mimesis. To do so, it is not sufficient to to demonstrate that the hymn depicts itself as a ritual enactment. I must make the case that it depicts itself as *re*-enactment. To be mimetic, as I have defined it, the performance must present itself not just as a performance but as a re-performance in the present of its "first performance" which occured in the past.

## CHAPTER 3

## THE EYE WITNESS

In this chapter I shall analyze the mimesis of Indra in the shortest of his impersonations: ṚV IV.26. My hypothesis in **Chapter 2** was that the stylized use of proximal deixis constitutes an *adhiyajña* level of discourse, through which the speaker makes mythological or internalized realities present and public. As I have articulated, in **Chapter 1**, a notion of mimesis as a ritual re-enactment, I must in this case studyfind evidence that the text depicts itself not merely as a speech act but as a speech re-enactment. Here is the challenge: how can a text do both? How can a text both present itself as a speech act which is occurring in the present and as a re-creation of a speech act in the past? We can find a model for this in the dialogue between Homer and the Delian Maidens. About Homer, the Maidens assert: "all his songs will in the future prevail as the very best", and Homer responds by saying "...I in turn will carry your fame [*kleos*] as far over the earth."[128] In so doing, the performance both depicts itself as 1) occurring in the past and 2) asserts that it will be re-enacted in the future. When the poem sets up its own origin, its "first singing", and suggests that it will be re-performed, it is making an implicit argument that the present performance is a faithful re-creation of that origin. I term this phenomenon a **mimetic circle**. If the impersonation of Indra is re-enactive, it may be evidence of a mimetic circle. Mimetic circles operate as a kind of pedigree or charter for the occasion. As the re-enactment occurs at a performance occasion, the mimetic circle might locate the 'first singing' at a notionally similar performance occasion. In other words, a good place to look for mimetic circles are in double scenes. The mimetic circle manifests the logic of ritual, that performative speech is effective precisely because it is an ontological re-creation of a primordial speech which was effective. While testing out my *adhiyajña* theory, I will also be on the lookout for such a mimetic circle.

[128] Homeric Hymn to Apollo 173-74. See discussion in **1.7**.

in ṚV IV.26 should probably be considered a form of the riddling type studied by Thompson 1997b. Like ṚV X.125, it conforms closely to the *ahaṃkāra* formation and never names Indra explicitly. It relies on the knowledge of the audience to identify the speaker. The clues about the speaker's identity culminate with the story of how Soma came to earth. The agenda of ṚV IV.26 is the etiology of Soma, and the poet impersonates Indra to give Indra's eye witness testimony to events observed during his immortal span.

### 3.1 *ahám mánur abhavaṃ sū́riyaś ca* (ṚV IV.26)

I became Manu and Sūrya. I am Kakṣīvan the inspired seer.
I direct myself down to Kutsa, scion of Arjuna, I (am) the poet Uśanā: Look at me!
I gave the Earth to the Ārya, I (gave) rain to the worshipping mortal,
I led the lowing waters, my will the gods followed.
Euphoric, I sundered the forts of Śambara, nine and ninety at once
The hundredth (was) inhabited, a totality, when I gave aid to Divodāsa Atithigva.
Maruts! Let the bird be at the front of birds, Let the swift-winged eagle be at the front of eagles!
He of good feather, with wheel-less autonomy, carries the oblation, tasty to the gods, to Manu.
When the bird sped by thought carries (it) from there shaking, he was just released along the broad path. He has travelled swiftly by Somic sweet and fame the eagle finds for himself here.
The unswerving eagle taking the stalk, the bird, (carrying) from afar the delightful exhilaration.
Holding firm, he bears Soma in company of the gods, having received it from yon heaven above.
The eagle, having taken the Soma, carried it to a thousand pressings, unlimited and simultaneous.
Here, fullness abandoned the ungenerous ones.
In the exhilaration of Soma, the wise ones (abandoned) the foolish.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

The *Bṛhaddevatā* (BD) categorizes ṚV IV.26, where Indra is mimetically impersonated, as the *katthanā* 'bragging' type.[129] In ṚV IV.27, the poet speaks as Soma, and the hymn closes with Indra drinking Soma. ṚV IV.28 returns to a human perspective lauding both; as the three hymns together seem to constitute one dramatic scene, they may have been used in tandem in a ritual application. It is from ṚV IV.26 that this dissertation takes its title: *Look at Me!* a translation of *páśyatā mā* from the fourth pāda of ṚV IV.26.1:

[129] BD 51b *katthanā syād ahaṃ manuḥ*

ṚV IV.26.1 *ahám mánur abhavaṃ sū́riyaś ca / aháṃ kakṣī́vāṁ ṛ́ṣir asmi vípraḥ /*
*aháṃ kútsam ārjuneyáṃ ní ṛñje / aháṃ kavír uśánā páśyatā mā //*

I became Manu and Sūrya. I am Kakṣīvan the inspired seer
I direct myself down to Kutsa, scion of Arjuna, I (am) the poet Uśanā:
Look at me!

Note that while this verse and the two that follow are characterized by the repeated use of the stylized first person grammar which constitutes the core of Thompson's *ahaṃkāra* 'self-assertion' type and the *anukramaṇī* tradition ascribes this hymn to Indra, there is no explicit mention of Indra anywhere in this hymn. In the first verse, the speaker suggests he is Indra only in pāda c, by presenting himself as he who sends himself down to Kutsa. The other pādas, however, add four more figures to the speaker's mimetic self-assertion. First, Manu, the first human sacrificer, and then Sūrya, the Sun. Pāda b adds the seer Kakṣī́van and pāda d Kavi Uśanā. This constitutes a total of five figures asserting their identity. There are two ways of interpreting this string of self-assertions. The first is in isolation: the poet asserts himself to be many figures in a series, then segues into the impersonation of Indra. The second is to take the speaker as already being Indra, and that it is Indra from the outset who claims he can become Manu, Sūrya, Kakṣī́van, and Kavi Uśanā. I personally favor the former, but the latter would be within Indra's shape-changing wheelhouse. Rather than ask who speaks this first verse, the final words of the verse, *páśyatā mā* 'look at me!' demands we consider who is listening. These listeners are the audience of the sacrifice. This audience should not be considered historical, of course, but rather a rhetorically constructed audience located in the *adhiyajña*-narrative frame, an audience which Indra or Manu or Kavi Uśanā can address directly.

ṚV IV.26.2 *ahám bhū́mim adadām ā́riyāya / aháṃ vṛ́ṣṭíṃ dāśúṣe mártiyāya /*
*ahám apó anayaṃ vāvaśānā́ / máma devā́so ánu kétam āyan //*

I gave the Earth to the Ārya, I (gave) rain to the worshipping mortal
I led the lowing waters, my will the gods followed.

Cues that the impersonated figure is Indra rest primarily on this verse and the one that follows it.

Notice here we have a sustained self-assertion of events typically ascribed to Indra: he gives victory to the Ārya coalition, he provides rain and releases waters in response to sacrifice, and the gods recognize him as leader. The name Indra remains absent; identification depends on the expectation that the audience knows these are the deeds of Indra.

These deeds are not formulated in the way that Indra's deeds usually are. There is neither mention of the *vajra* nor of striking Vṛtra here. In fact, any of these actions, while suggestive of the identity of Indra, could have double reference. In addition to mythological events, they could refer to ritual sequences involving the earth of the ritual ground and the waters used for Soma pressing. The ambiguity between ritual and narrative is a feature common to all impersonations of Indra and may be a product of a 'double scene' strategy in which Indra speaks at a sacrifice and Indra's speech will be re-performed at sacrifices. Reimaging well-known narratives in vaguely sacrificial ways is a stylistic tool seen abundantly in the Ṛgveda, not just during impersonation, and is further evidence of the ritual context for which these poems were composed and the anthology created. ṚV IV.26.2, however, is a good cautionary tale. While the verse is characterized by Thompson's *ahaṃkāra* formation (*ahám* 3x, *máma* 1x), it lacks other deictic traces of spatial and temporal proximity to the speaker which I hypothesized constituted an *adhiyajña* narrative level. That seems to be the case in the following verse too.

ṚV IV.26.3 *ahám púro mandasānó ví airaṃ / náva sākáṃ navatíḥ śámbarasya /*
*śatatamáṃ veśíyaṃ sarvátātā / dívodāsam atithigváṃ yád ā́vam //*

Euphoric, I sundered the forts of Śambara, nine and ninety at once
The hundredth (was) inhabited, a totality,
when I gave aid to Divodāsa Atithigva.

This is a narrative about the past, with no deixis used to draw the past into the present. The speaker does claim to be euphoric (*mandasāná-*) the trademark mental state of Indra under the influence of Soma. Since this event is depicted as occurring in the past, it contributes to the impersonation of Indra, by making public that the speaker had the same mental state as Indra. Since the reported experiential or perceptual state does not occur in the present, however, it does

not draw the narrative into the *adhiyajña* level.

The *anukramanī* paratexts tell us that only the first three verses of the text are spoken by Indra, positioning the remaining verses in the voice of Vāmadeva Gotama, the legendary seer to whom much of the IV$^{th}$ maṇḍala is attributed. Jamison and Brereton suggest, however, that the entire hymn is an impersonation of Indra.[130] It is not unreasonable to assume that with the end of the formal *ahaṃkāra* structure, the impersonation would come to an end. I, however, agree with Jamison and Brereton in seeing the impersonation of Indra as continuing throughout the hymn. Like Patton, I see juxtaposition as making an argument. The purpose of the *ahaṃkāra* in ṚV IV.26.1-3 is not only to hint that Indra is speaking, but to establish Indra as the speaker of the hymn. Once Indra's identity as the speaker is established, the poet can say something which benefits from that identity.

The *ahaṃkāra* is the set-up, the framing device which places the following verses in the voice of Indra. The identity of Indra will be necessary to authenticate the etiology of Soma which comes next. Notice that the following speech of Indra, ṚV IV.26.4-7 lacks the *ahaṃkāra*, but is replete with deictic traces of the present performance.

ṚV IV.26.4 *prá sú ṣá víbhyo maruto vír astu / prá śyenáḥ śyenébhiya āśupátvā /*
*acakráyā yát svadháyā suparṇó / havyám bháran mánave devájuṣṭam //*

Maruts! Let the bird be in front of the birds,
Let the swift-winged eagle be at the front of eagles!
He of good feather, with wheel-less autonomy,
carries the oblation, tasty to the gods, to Manu.

This verse begins the etiology of Soma. The Maruts are a group whose primary characteristics are their youthful beauty and masculinity, they are not individuated, and they always travel collectively. They are sometimes Indra's companions.[131] Recall that von Schroeder

[130] Jamison and Brereton 2014:600

[131] Of course, this is not always the case, sometimes Indra is alone and the poets wish for him to join the Maruts: ṚV VIII.96.7cd: *marúdbhir indra sakhiyáṃ te astu / áthemā́ víśvāḥ pṛ́tanā jayāsi //* "Indra, let your alliance be with the Maruts, so that you will win all these fights."

likened the Maruts to the Roman Manes the spirits of the dead warriors of the clans, mimetically revived in dance.[132] More recently, Jarrod Whitaker suggests the Maruts are masculine idealizations of the men of the Vedic clans. The following translation is that of Whitaker (2011:16):

ṚV VII.56.5 *sā́ víṭ suvī́rā marúdbhir astu / sanā́t sáhantī púṣyantī nṛmṇám*

Let this clan be well manned through the Maruts;
[this clan] dominating from of old, fostering manhood.

He comments that "…in the above stanza, the Maruts are the instruments through which the clan obtains men who are manly and warlike, and perhaps such warriors are even identified with their divine masculine counterparts." The Maruts may be mimetic counterparts to the audience of this hymn, for if the addressees of *paśyatā mā* are to be understood as the men of the clans or other priests, the human audience of this poem, then addressing them as Maruts makes them ideals of youth and masculinity. As opposed to the two previous verses, in which Indra narrates the past to establish his identity, the use of the vocative *maruto* and the imperative *prá... astu* locates the events of this verse in the present. The Maruts are frequently referred to as birds or eagles in Vedic poetry. If the Maruts are these eagles and the audience in the *adhiyajña* level are being addressed as Maruts, then the audience is being referred to as eagles. If so, then Indra is commanding that the Soma bearing-bird be in front of them.[133] With this shift to the present we see our first injunctive form, the augmentless *bhárat* which is temporally ambiguous. Did the bird bear Soma in the past, or does he do it now in the present? The presence of the imperative suggests the augmentless form should be read as occuring in the same time frame: the present.

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[132] See **Chapter 1**.

[133] It is pure speculation, but perhaps in the ritual the Soma plant is in front of the ritual participants.

ṚV IV.26.5 *bharád yádi vír áto vévijānaḥ / pathórúṇā mánojavā asarji /*
*tūyaṃ yayau mádhunā somiyéna / utá śrávo vivide śyenó átra //*

When the bird sped by thought carries (it) from there shaking,
he was just released along the broad path. He has travelled swiftly
by Somic sweet and fame the eagle finds for himself here.

This verse describes the journey of the Soma-bearing bird from Heaven to the Earth. All the verb forms in this verse conform to the expectations laid out in **Chapter 2.** The reprised *bhárad* is still temporally ambiguous becuase it lacks the augment, and the aorist passive *asarji* is a recently completed action just prior to the present moment and possibly performative. In the second diptych, we see two perfects *yayau* 'has driven' and *vivide* 'finds'. For Dahl perfects have anterior aspect, which for our purposes means that they cannot be performatives but they can refer to the present.[134] Through these verbs, this verse narrates the primordial flight of the Soma bird as though it were happening right now, at the same time as the singing of the song.
In addition to present time, the last word of the verse *átra* suggests proximal space. Indra, speaking at the present moment, asserts *śrávo vivide śyenó átra* 'the eagle finds fame here'. The *śravas* 'fame' is aural renown, built to the verbal root √*śru* 'to hear'. That this *śravas* is heard *átra* 'here' suggests that it is this very hymn being sung in the present. Not only is the etiology of Soma being made present at the performance,[135] but if *śravas* is poetic self-reference, if the fame is ṚV IV.26, then the song has provided itself an etiology. The origin of its first performance was when the Soma bird first arrived at Manu's sacrifice and was praised with this song. This verse is a crucial component of a mimetic circle.

ṚV IV.26.6 *ṛjīpī́ śyenó dádamāno aṃśúm / parāvátaḥ śakunó mandrám mádam /*
*sómam bharad dādṛhāṇó devā́vān / divó amúṣmād úttarād ādā́ya //*

The unswerving eagle taking the stalk, the bird, (carrying) from afar the delightful exhilaration. Holding firm, he bears Soma in company of the gods,
having received it from yon heaven above.

[134] Dahl 2010:82

[135] Poetic self-reference being one of the most readily identifiable signs of the *adhiyajña* level of narration, see **Chapter 2**.

The following two verses seem to anticipate and assuage possible problems with this narrative. ṚV IV.26.6 seems to address the potential anxiety about the wrath of the gods due to the theft of Soma from heaven. The verse stresses that although the bird has taken the Soma *divó amúṣmād úttarād* 'from yonder high heaven' he has not robbed the gods, but rather is *devā́vān* 'in the company of the gods' here at the present sacrifice. If the ritual participants can be referred to as Maruts, it does not seem problematic for the human audience to be conflated with the *deva*s either.

ṚV IV.26.7 *ādā́ya śyenó abharat sómaṃ / sahásraṃ savā́ṁ̀ ayúṭaṃ ca sākám /*
*átrā púraṃdhir ajahād árātīr / máde sómasya mūrā́ ámūraḥ //*

The eagle, having taken the Soma, carried it to a thousand pressings,
unlimited and simultaneous. Here, fullness abandoned the ungenerous ones.
In the exhilaration of Soma, the wise ones (abandoned) the foolish.

The verb *bharat* has a prominent role in the theft of Soma. It appears 4x in the hymn, but only here, in its final iteration, is it marked with the augment. Placing the event in the past, the final verse provides a kind of retrospective about the plurality of the Soma sacrifice. There are many Soma pressings in competition with one another, and that fact must be accommodated by this etiology of Soma. The Soma-bearing eagle brought Soma without limit (*ayútaṃ*), simultaneously (*sākám*) to a thousand pressings. While Soma may be present at a thousand pressings only *átrā* 'here' did the Fullness (*púraṃdhi*) leave behind Frugality.

This etiology does more than assert that there are many Soma sacrifices and this one is supreme. The aesthetic peak of the hymn *śrávo vivide śyenó átra* 'fame the eagle finds here' opened the mimetic circle. The final verse tells us that the eagle brought Soma to many sacrifices. This closing thought explains the present state of affairs as the result of a past event which was depicted as present just prior to this verse. I see this verse as closing and completing the mimetic circle. The truth of the mythic narrative of the Soma-bearing bird depends on the present performance to reveal it, but the authenticity of that present performance depends on it

being a successful re-enactment of its own “first performance”. The two narratives, past and present, seek to mutually authorize each other, and this is accomplished by the continuity of Indra as narrator who was present then and is present now. Becoming Indra, then, is a way to authorize a kind of speech as true, by re-performing a true speech Indra gave in the past relaying events to which Indra was eye witness. Having used ṚV IV.42 as a kind of trial run, we are now prepared to examine the longer and more complicated instances of the impersonation of Indra.

# CHAPTER 4

# THE MAN OF ACTION

In the previous chapter, we saw that when the poet presents himself as Indra, he presents himself as having Indra's speech, memories and knowledge. In the following case studies, we shall see that the performer presents himself as possessing the body, mood, and senses of Indra as well. The importance of Indra's memory of the past is important here too as it was in ṚV IV.26. In the following three cases studies, however, the purpose of impersonating Indra seems to be to duplicate Indra's effectiveness as an agent of change, by emulating Indra's behavior and re-enacting his deeds. Yet, when Indra is emulated, he often behaves much more like a poet-priest than a warrior-king. This is to be expected, for the human performer is a poet-priest and not a warrior-king. In ṚV X.48-49, Indra promotes the sacrifice as the only way to win him over, for he elevates the sacrificer to supremacy. The speaker enumerates a long list of legendary figures which Indra has promoted to kingship as a track record of his success. In ṚV I.165, Indra is in an altercation with the Maruts at the site of a sacrifice. The Maruts claim the offerings of the sacrifice for themselves, while Indra notes that the hymns are dedicated to him alone. Using his immortal memory as something like legal precedence, Indra resolves the rebellion of the Maruts and restores social order. He goes further, altering the sacrifice to include them as his entourage. The performer employs Indra's illocutionary abilities to do something impossible for a mere human. In all three case studies, we shall see a great proliferation of performative verbs, with a strong preference for verbs built from the root √*kṛ* 'do'.

## 4.1 Indra Vaikuṇṭha

The following pair of hymns closely conform to Thompson's *ahaṃkāra* model. Like ṚV IV.42, but unlike ṚV X.125 and ṚV IV.26, the poet explicitly identifies himself as Indra. In both ṚV X.48 and ṚV X.49, this revelation occurs in the second verse. Both hymns are demonstrations of the poet's thorough knowledge of Indra's deeds: both the well-known and the

obscure. Part of this demonstration maybe a kind of memory trial in which the poet puts his knowledge of Indra to the test, as a kind of proof that his memory is no different than Indra's memory. In these hymns, we see Indra as a "fixer". The opening theme is that Indra wins the prize on behalf of his patrons. The deeds he enumerates are not fully articulated narratives, but more like a list of works cited. This list of interventions, by which Indra elevated a legendary figure to supremacy, constitute an argument about the advantages of an alliance with Indra and thus the advantage of patronizing the sacrifice and the poet-sacrificer.

In ṚV X.48, Indra cites a litany of manly deeds which establish his martial prowess and competitive supremacy. Jamison and Brereton note that the "hymn also emphasizes, more than [ṚV] X.48, the importance of the sacrifice in strengthening Indra and securing his help."[136] Despite this difference, there are considerable stylistic similarities between ṚV X.48 and ṚV X.49. The first pāda of each verse has similar syntax and vocabulary:

| | |
|---|---|
| ṚV X.48.1 | ***ahám*** *bhuvaṃ* ***vásunaḥ pūrviyás*** *pátir* |
| | I become the primordial master of wealth |
| ṚV X.49.1 | ***aháṃ*** *dāṃ gṛṇaté* ***pū́rviyaṃ vásu*** |
| | I give primordial wealth to the one singing. |

Although the phraseology is similar, notice the claims are slightly different. In the former, the Indra asserts himself to be the first master of wealth while, in the latter, the Indra asserts that he gives primordial wealth to the singer. After analyzing both hymns, I will make the case that these two hymns are to be treated in tandem, as one Indra Vaikuṇṭha speech event.[137]

[136] Jamison and Brereton 2014:1456

[137] Indra Vaikuṇṭha is the attribution given in the Vedic paratexts. The epithet Vaikuṇṭha has no good etymology. It must derive from a *vikuṇṭha*, but that is the best we can do. I strongly suspect it to be, ultimately, a derivative of *vi* + √*kṛ* or √*kṛt,* like vikaṭa 'hulking' < **vikṛta* 'changed'. The nasal would not be difficult to explain, consider *kṛntatra* 'cutting' from √*kṛt*. My bias is because both hymns frequently use a verb of √*kṛ* in the first person, especially 1st sg. aorist injunctive *karam*.

### 4.1.1 *ahám bhuvaṃ vásunaḥ pūrviyás pátir* (ṚV X.48)

I become the primordial master of wealth; I amass prizes continuously.
They call to me like family members (do) to a father, I portion out food to the offerer.
I, Indra, (created) the plate (and) the breast of Atharvan.
For Trita, I created the cows of the serpent.
I take from the Dasyus manliness and herds striving for Dadhyañc and Mātariśvan.
My metallic breaker, Tvaṣṭar crafted. The gods worked according to my plan.
My face is like the Sun's: hard to cross. (so) they recognize me (instead)
by the deed done and to be done.
I (win) the bovine and equine livestock (and) golden Fullness by that which is fit to be hurled.
I cut down many thousands for the offerer,
when poetry-possessing Soma (drinks) exhilarated me.
I, Indra, have never been denied the prize, nor do I ever pause for Death.
Pressing Soma, beg me a good! Pūrus you will not suffer in my alliance.
These panting ones who made themselves fight Indra (and his) breaker.
Calling (me) out, I strike (them) down with a strike in pairs.
(I), the unbending one, saying hard things to the bending ones.
Here, one against one I am the overpowerer, but what will two fearless ones (do)?
And what will three do? Like chaff on the threshing floor, I strike many times.
Why do they blame me, (my) Indra-less rivals?
I make Atithigva for the Guṅgus. I hold like the drink what triumphs over obstacles among the clans. In the slaying of Parṇaya, Karañja, and Vṛtra the Great, I had made myself famous.
Namī Sāpya appears at the front for me, for the drink, to enjoy.
In the search for cows again he makes for himself the alliances.
When I give (him) the missile in (his) meetings,
then I make him praiseworthy, the subject of poetry.
It is obvious when Soma is within someone, the cow-protectors reveal the other.
That one, desiring to fight the sharp-horned bull, stands bound inside the thick of deception.
The realm of the Ādityas, Vasus, and Rudriyas, I, god of gods, do not diminish

They've crafted me for good vigor (to be) undeprivable, unscatterable, unconquerable.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

Jamison and Brereton describe the contents of ṚV X.48 as acts of braggadocio which "range over Indra's many accomplishments, but especially focus on his victories in battle and what he has won thereby—a warrior's boast, in other words. Some of the exploits are obscure, indeed mentioned only here."[138] The presentation of Indra's deeds, however, manifests in some different ways than when they are proclaimed to Indra in the 2nd person. This may be the case because there is a human poet-sacrificer hidden behind the verbal mask of Indra. Even well-

[138] Jamison and Brereton 2014:1454

known legendary feats are often re-formulated in ways which make them resemble the poetic competition or sacrificial actions. The following verse is an excellent example as *aháṃ dhánāni sáṃ jayāmi śáśvataḥ* "I amass prizes continuously" is an assertion which could be proclaimed by Indra or a prize-winning poet.

ṚV X.48.1 *aháṃ bhuvaṃ vásunaḥ pūrviyás pátir / aháṃ dhánāni sáṃ jayāmi śáśvataḥ / mắṃ havante pitáraṃ ná jantávo / aháṃ dāśúṣe ví bhajāmi bhójanam //*

I become the primordial master of wealth; I amass prizes continuously
They call to me like family members (do) to a father,
I portion out food to the offerer.

This verse sets up the rest of the poem as the list of prizes that Indra has won, conversely each verse of the poem could also be a "prize" that the poet has received in the form of poetic knowledge. The poem itself is the wealth of which he has become the primordial master.[139] Notice that by asserting himself to be the *pūrviyá* 'primordial' master he says he has become chronologically "first". This is a key element in setting up a mimetic circle.

Except for ṚV X.48.10, all verses of this hymn conform to Thompson's *ahaṃkāra* formation. The opening of the hymn is verbally similar to ṚV IV.26, but here the verb in second position is *bhuvaṃ* 'I become' rather than *abhavaṃ* 'I became'. Recall that in ṚV IV.26, I argued that the speaker narrates an account of his past deeds in order cue the audience that this is Indra, so that he can then speak as Indra in the present. In ṚV X.48, however, we begin in the present. In ṚV IV.26 the *ahaṃkāra* has limited to this past narration, while the deictic traces were limited to the speech Indra directs to the Maruts once his identity is established. Here we shall see the both *ahaṃkāra* and traces of the *adhiyajña*-level of narration operating in tandem. Despite these differences, the similarities are striking, it appears that the impersonation is initiated by an assertion not merely that the speaker *is* someone but *becomes* someone.

Although Jamison and Brereton find ṚV X.48 to be much less concerned with ritual than

[139] Vāc describes herself in ṚV X.125.3: *aháṃ rā́ṣṭrī saṃgámanī vásūnāṃ / cikitúṣī prathamā́ yajñíyānām* "I am queen, a treasury of wealth (*vasu*-), discerning, first (*prathama*-) among those worthy of sacrifice". This seems to establish the poetry is considered both as a form of wealth and as primordial.

ṚV X.49, references to ritual practice do appear. Note that *aháṃ dāśúṣe ví bhajāmi bhójanam* "I portion out food to the offerer" is marked for ritual activity explicitly by *dāśvāṁs-* 'offerer', and in that capacity 1st person sg. present may be performative. Sometimes the sacrifice is depicted as a banquet to which the gods come as dinner guests. The parallel placement of ***sáṃ*** *jayāmi śáśvataḥ* and ***ví*** *bhajāmi bhójanam* seems to play on the iconic opposition of *sám* 'together' and *ví* 'apart' through which the speaker claims mastery over all forms of trafficking wealth: collecting it and dividing it.

ṚV X.48.2 *ahám índro ródho vákṣo átharvaṇas / tritā́ya gā́ ajanayam áher ádhi /*
*aháṃ dásyubhyaḥ pári nṛmṇám ā́ dade / gotrā́ śíkṣan dadhīcé mātaríśvane //*

I, Indra, (created) the plate (and) the breast of Atharvan.
For Trita, I created the cows of the serpent. I take from the Dasyus,
manliness and herds, striving for Dadhyañc and Mātariśvan.

The poet does not wait long to reveal himself to be Indra. The reasoning seems to be that rather than refer to well-known Indra deeds, here the poet appropriates deeds attributed to other figures and claims to be the secret agent, the "fixer", that made those events happen. Indra and Trita seem to have some mythological parallels, leading some to speculate that Indra has appropriated some of the narrative material of Trita.[140] This verse careful avoids the usual lexicon associated with Indra's seizure of the cows by invoking neither Vṛtra nor the Vala cave. Indra's account both encroaches on a narrative about Trita raiding the serpent's cattle while keeping it distinct from Indra's own fight with Vṛtra. If the two myths are in competition, such an assertion allows Indra to take credit for both.

Indra also asserts himself to be the breast of Atharvan. Perhaps this is the meant to indicate a breastplate[141], but the *rodhas-*, 'bank', which can mean an obstruction or fortification,

[140] Trita is said to have split the Vala cave (ṚV I.52.5) slain Vṛtra (ṚV I.187.1), and dominated Tvaṣṭar's son (ṚV II.11.19). All these deeds are usually attributed to Indra. Far more often Trita is depicted as stealing cows without mentioning Vala explicitly.

[141] See Jamison and Brereton 2014:1455.

may already by a metaphor for the breastplate. If so, then the poet may be presenting the two as a merism, that he is both the breast and the breastplate; he is both the armor and that which is armored. Indra as breastplate is a straightforward image: he is protection. The breast, however, is often a metonymic representation of the heart, the source of poetic inspiration and insight. Indra, therefore, acted on behalf of Trita and Atharvan. Atharvan is a mythical figure with little narrative attached besides being the father of Dadhyañc. It is likely that he represents the archetype of the fire-priest. Indra thus presents himself as beneficial both to those who wish to acquire cattle and to the priest.

The *vásu* 'wealth' over which the speaker claims to be *páti* 'master', is the credit for the deed. This re-attribution to Indra agrees with the theme of the first verse: *dhánāni sáṃ jayāmi śáśvataḥ* 'I amass prizes continuously'. Notice in the second diptych the action shifts to the present. Indra claims to take the herds and the manliness from the Dasyu as though the two were similar commodities. That the Dasyus lack manliness conforms to attitudes expressed elsewhere in the Ṛgveda. Rather than an etiology for the absence of manliness among the Dasyus, the verb is in the present may indicate it is performative,[142] and the performance of this assertion is what robs the Dasyus of their manliness.[143]

ṚV X.48.3 *máhyaṃ tváṣṭā vájram atakṣad āyasám / máyi devā́so avṛjann ápi krátum / mámānīkaṃ sū́riyasyeva duṣṭáram / mā́m ā́ryanti kṛténa kártuvena ca //*

My metallic breaker, Tvaṣṭar crafted. The gods worked according to my plan.
My face is like the Sun's: hard to cross, (so) they recognize me (instead)
by the deed done and to be done.

Notice the temporal pattern follows that seen in the previous verse, where the first diptych is set

[142] Notice *ā́dade* is the same verb used in the yajus discussed in **Chapter 2** (KaṭhS 1.2 *devásya tvā savitúḥ prasavè 'śvínor bāhúbhyāṃ pūṣṇó hástābhyām* ***ā́dade*** "You I take with the hands of Pūṣan, with the arms of the Aśvins, at the pressing of heavenly Savitar.")

[143] Rather than believe Dasyus refer to a concrete group, it seems likely to be a rhetorically constructed culturally exterior "other". If the Dasyus are such a construct, the term can be used to refer to and defame new "others" with each re-performance.

in the past and the second in the present. The same theme of Indra taking credit prevails here. The mythological actions of the other gods in the past are merely extensions of Indra's design. Indra says that his face is like the Sun's: hard to cross. I take this to mean he blazes brightly, so it is difficult to look at him. I think the poet is saying that it is difficult to recognize Indra by visual appearance, so humans instead recognize Indra by these past deeds (*kṛ́tá*) as well as future ones (*kártuva*) that they hope Indra will do on their behalf. This is consistent with the text's strategy of re-attribution, whereby Indra is revealing himself as the true cause of the victories of others. It even seems to theorize the temporal division in these verses which places one diptych in the past and one in the present, a deed done and a deed he is about to do. This assertion is also consistent with poetic impersonation; someone wearing a spoken mask would deprioritize the gross visual in favor of the seeing through poetry, which is the only manner primordial deeds can be encountered.

ṚV.48.4 *ahám etáṃ gavyáyam áśviyam paśúm / purīṣíṇaṃ sā́yakenā hiraṇyáyam / purū́ sahásrā ní śiśāmi dāśúṣe / yán mā sómāsa ukthíno ámandiṣuḥ //*

The bovine and equine livestock, I win it to golden Fullness by that which is fit to be hurled. I cut down many thousands for the offerer, when the poetry-possessing Soma (drinks) exhilarated me.

ṚV X.48.4 breaks the pattern of reference to the past, locating the action in the present *ní śiśāmi dāśúṣe* "I cut down for the offerer" occurs immediately after the Soma drinks exhilarate him (3rd pl. aorist indicative *amandiṣuḥ*). The equine or bovine livestock the speaker claims for himself is both a fitting prize for a poet or for Indra. The use of textual deictic *etám*, 'this one', is opaque to me. It is possible "livestock mentioned earlier" refers to an agreed upon sacrificial fee. The speaker wins this by that *sāyaka-* 'the which is fit to be hurled'. This may be Indra's *vajra*, 'breaker', and the golden Fullness may be the Sun which Indra is often depicted as winning.[144]

[144] In fact, in the next chapter there will be a verse which mentions the "Fullness" of the Sun (ṚV X.27.21b *aváḥ sū́ryasya bṛhatáḥ púrīṣāt* "beneath the height and fullness of the Sun").

The avoidance of using *vajra* explicitly may indicate that the *sāyaka-* is the poem itself,[145] which the poet uses to win his prize, a cow or a horse. That may explain the avoidance of explicit mention of the Sun, as reified "Fullness" may mean stand for 1st prize at the contest.
This verse then, blends the character of Indra with that of a poet at a contest who also 'cuts down thousands' of rivals for the patron and is exhilarated by Soma. This makes a poetic Indra fully present at the *adhiyajña*-narrative level of discourse. In fact, verses ṚV X.48.4-7 locate themselves entirely at the performance.

ṚV X.48.5 *ahám índro ná párā jigya íd dhánaṃ / ná mr̥tyáve áva tasthe kádā caná / sómam ín mā sunvánto yācatā vásu / ná me pūravaḥ sakhiyé riṣāthana //*

I, Indra, have never been denied the prize nor do I ever pause for Death.
Pressing Soma, beg me a good! Pūrus you will not suffer in my alliance.

Notice all the verbal morphology denoting present time: perfects *jigye* and *tasthe*, present imperative *yācatā,* and subjunctive *riṣāthana* directed to the audience.[146] What these verses lack in mythology, they make up for in emphatic self-assertion. ṚV X.48.5-7, the three verses in the center of the hymn, all contain the word Indra.

ṚV X.48.6 *ahám etā́ñ chā́śvasato duvā́-duvā / índraṃ yé vájraṃ yudháye ákr̥ṇvata / āhváyamānāṁ áva hánmanāhanaṃ / dr̥̄ḷhā́ vádann ánamasyur namasvínaḥ //*

These panting ones who made themselves fight Indra (and his) breaker.
Calling (me) out, I strike (them) down with a strike in pairs.[147]
(I), the unbending one, saying hard things to the bending ones.

[145] Poems are frequently likened to arrow, recall that in ṚV X.125.6 that the poet, impersonating Vāc, the goddess of Speech, declares: *aháṃ rudrā́ya **dhánur** ā́ tanomi brahmadvíṣe **śárave** hántavā́ u* "I stretch the **bow** for Rudra, for the **arrow** to strike the hater of the composition"

[146] Of course, when the poet refers to the audience as Pūrus, he is addressing the audience as though they were their legendary ancestors. The Pūrus are no more an historical audience here than the Maruts were in ṚV IV.26.4. Likely, this is a similar kind of mimetic euphemism.

[147] I think *duvā́-duvā* 'two-by-two' highlights the remarkable fact that Indra can strike down two foes with one blow.

The speaker lauds his own victory against the panting ones (*śā́śvasant-*) who made themselves fight Indra. The language of the verse is again very reminiscent of poetic competition; the rival poets are out of breath and panting. I believe this verse is supposed to be humorous. The rivals made themselves (*ákṛṇvata*) fight Indra. That is, these rival poets were most likely invoking Indra and his *vajra* in their praise song, calling out to him to act on their behalf.[148] The comic aspect is that Indra did appear in response to their calls—but on behalf of the rival poet who mimetically impersonates him! The final pāda confirms that the weapon which strikes down rivals is verbal in nature. For the speaker says 'hard things', and while *namas* typically means 'reverence' here the figura etymologica which juxtaposes *anamasyu-*, 'unbending', and *namasvin*, 'having a bend', must be interpreted as more than reverence but total submission in the face of his verbal supremacy.

ṚV X.48.7 *abhī́dám ékam éko asmi niṣṣā́ḷ / abhī́ duvā́ kím u tráyaḥ karanti /*
*khále ná parṣā́n práti hanmi bhū́ri / kím mā nindanti śátravo anindrā́ḥ //*

Here, one against one I am the overpowerer.
but what will two fearless ones (do)? and what will three do?
Like chaff on the threshing floor, I strike many times.
Why do they blame me, (my) Indra-less rivals?

The *Bṛhaddevatā* uses this verse as an example of *kṣepa* 'scorn',[149] a notion which seems to capture the mock fear of the speaker as Indra wonders aloud if two or three rivals could defeat him and the feigned ignorance in wondering why they scorn him. Two clues mark Indra as the speaker. The first is present tense *hanmi*, 'I strike', an iconic Indra action. The second is that his rivals are defined as *anindrá-* 'non-Indras', sustaining the joke of the previous verse that, since our poet is Indra, of course they are Indra-less. The use of the verb *nindati,* 'they blame', is also

[148] There may be a double entendre in *āhváyamāna-* perhaps like English 'calling out' which can have the sense of challenging but also summoning. Depending on the object, 'She called him out' vs. 'She called out to him'.

[149] BD 49d *kṣepo 'bhīdam iti tv ṛci*

evocative of the poetic competition where the poet's rivals are often characterized as blamers.[150]

ṚV X.48.8-9 returns to the pattern set up by ṚV X.48.2-3:

ṚV X.48.8 *ahám guṅgúbhyo atithigvám íṣkaram / íṣaṃ ná vṛtratúraṃ vikṣú dhārayam / yát parṇayaghná utá vā karañjahé / prā́hám mahé vṛtrahátye áśuśravi //*

I make Atithigva for the Guṅgus, I hold like the drink
what triumphs over obstacles among the clans.
In the slaying of Parṇaya, Karañja, and Vṛtra the Great,
I had made myself famous.

This verse and the one that follows it resume the stylistic features of ṚV X.48.2-3, in which one diptych is located in the present and one in the past. The first diptych employs augmentless atemporal injunctives *íṣkaram* 'I make' and *dhārayam* 'I hold' while the second diptych has pluperfect *áśuśravi* 'I had made myself heard'. The primordial deeds that made him famous are set in the past, but it is not clear when Indra installs Atithigva. The installation of Atithigva is ambiguous and perhaps bi-temporal. Notice the two injunctives are similar to verb forms which appeared in ṚV IV.42 in **Chapter 1**: injunctive *dhārayam* 'I hold' (2x) and present *kṛṇómi* 'I make' were followed by perfect injunctive *cakaram* 'I have made'.[151] We might imagine the obstacle-overcoming drink is Soma and that the speaker claims to hold what is obstacle destroying like the (Soma) drink does.[152] He does this among the clans (*viś-*)which is to say in

[150] A typically examples is ṚV VI.52.*2b bráhma vā yáḥ kriyámāṇaṃ nínitsā*t "...or he who desires to blame the composition being made." In the following verse, the 'blamer' is clearly a rival poet-sacrificer sweating from his own performance: ṚV V.42.10cd *yó vaḥ śámīṃ śaśamānásya níndāt / tuchyā́n kámāṃn karate siṣvidānáḥ* "who blames the labor of our announcement will sweating make his wishes vain." The Avestan form *naēnaēstaro* (Y35.2) < *naid-tṛ suggest it may be an old poetic trope indeed. See Skjærvø 2002 for a discussion.

[151] The vocabulary of holding (√*dhṛ*) wealth (*vasu*) in this hymn seems to represent a broader Indo-Iranian conception of kingship as the holder of wealth. Consider the Achaemenid King Dārayavauš < Proto-Iranian *dāraya-vahu- < Proto-Indo-Iranian *dhāraya(t)-vasu- 'he who is holding wealth'.

[152] What does this mean? Compare ṚV I.32.14d *śyenó ná bhītó átaro rájāṃsi* "(Indra), like the frightened eagle you crossed the atmosphere". The *ná* particle of simile retains its sense of implicit negation. Indra is like an eagle, but not an eagle. The metaphorical designation 'eagle/bird' typically belongs to Agni, the Sun, or the Maruts. I think the simile here serves both to suggest he was not really frightened as well as disambiguate him from these other figures. When the speaker says *íṣaṃ ná vṛtratúraṃ vikṣú dhārayam*, I think another implicit disambiguation is occurring. Indra contains the capacity to overcome obstacles like the Soma

public at the Soma sacrifice. It may be understood that this event occurred both in the past but also in the present as a re-enactment. We do not need to know precisely what symbolic value to understand that he is endowing his actions with some symbolic value and presenting them as a restoration of some past state of affairs.

ṚV X.48.9 *prá me námī sāpyá iṣé bhujé bhũd / gávāṃ éṣe sakhiyā́ kṛṇuta dvitā́ /*
*didyúṃ yád asya samithéṣu maṃháyam / ā́d íd enaṃ śáṃsiyam ukthíyaṃ karam //*

Namī Sāpya appears at the front for me, for the drink, to enjoy.
In the search for cows again he makes for himself the alliances
When I give (him) the missile in (his) meetings
then, I make him praiseworthy, the subject of poetry.

Injunctives *prá...bhũd* and *kṛṇuta* seem make assertions in the present, suggesting that *karam* is a performative verb. Like *íṣkaram*, it enacts something. As in the previous verse, instead of Indra being a divine king, he appears more as a divine kingmaker. Elevating someone to kingship is usually the task of the priest. This narrative is completely temporally ambiguous, as all four of its verbs are injunctives. The narration of a figure Namī Sāpya runs like a commentary on what Indra is seeing now. These are the significant realities he maps onto the present, and this is the invisible truth he asserts is happening now. Namī stands at the front to attain the drink and Indra. Presumably the drink is the same one mentioned in the previous verse (*iṣ*-). The drink that overcomes obstacles is Soma. He makes his alliances again, this *kṛṇuta dvitā́* perhaps suggesting the alliances are seasonally renewed. This is a model of ideal Vedic kingship: he leads, he drinks, he renews alliances, he wins cows. Notice that when he appears at the front it is for Indra and for Soma. I suspect the two are a pair because drinking Soma is the most direct way to emulate like Indra. If so, then perhaps Indra's gift of missle for his battles is how he completes the assimilation. While the missile is his weapon in battle, but it may also be a poem sung at the

drink. In other words, he has the same ability as Soma but he is not Soma. How can this be? I think the implication is he contains Soma.

sacrifice.[153] This kind of missle is the type a poet might provide his patron. Note that Indra makes (*karam*) Namī praiseworthy (*śáṃsiyam* 'to be announced') and the subject of poetry (*ukthíyaṃ* 'to be hymned'). We see this Indra not only makes himself famous but makes others famous. By singing this song, he praises Namī, acting like a poet.

The following verse is the only one in this hymn which deviates from the *ahaṃkāra* pattern; it lacks both 1st sg. pronominal forms and 1st sg. verbal forms. The verse is something of a riddling statement, but one which does offer some explanation of the phenomenon of impersonation.

ṚV X.48.10 *prá némasmin dadṛśe sómo antár / gopā́ némam āvír asthā́ kṛṇoti /*
*sá tigmáśṛṅgaṃ vṛṣabháṃ yúyutsan / druhás tasthau bahulé baddhó antáḥ //*

It is obvious when Soma is within someone, the cow-protectors reveal the other
That one, desiring to fight the sharp-horned bull,[154]
stands bound inside the thick of deception.

First, both perfects *dadṛśe*, 'is visible', and *tasthau*, 'stands', and the syntagm *āvír... kṛṇoti,* 'makes visible', locate the verse in the present. There is no temporal ambiguity here, as was the case in the previous verse. Soma would 'be visible' in the speaker, of course, if the speaker is Indra. Drinking Soma is one of Indra's most iconic activities. Poets drink Soma to perform. The absence of Soma in the rival is perhaps made obvious by his poor performance. The poet takes off the verbal mask to reveal that the mimetic transformation into Indra depends on the Soma inside him because Soma makes the poet unbeatable, and Indra is, above all, unbeatable. This is

[153] The sacrifice is often depicted as a contest or a battle. For example, the famous *dāśarājñá* hymn (ṚV VII.18) freely mixes martial and sacrificial imagery.

[154] It seems clear that the 'sharp-horned bull' is often Soma (c.f. ṚV IX.97.9). However, there are cases where it seems to refer to Indra (c.f. ṚV VII.19.1) or Agni (c.f. ṚV VII.16.39). It may be that the sharp-horned bull refers to either Soma or anyone who has ingested Soma. The adjective may be linked to the concepts of sharpening (√*śā,* 'sharpen', or *tejas*, 'sharp (light)', which, like the light of the Sun, is too 'sharp' to look upon), See Jurewicz (2010:266-7) for a treatment of sharpening as a cognitive metaphor. She writes "The cognizing subject is metaphorically conceived as being sharpened by Soma", adding "the idea of sharpness highlights the dangerous nature of the activity performed by [the Aṅgirases]."

not an ideal mimetic circle. Although we have a 'double scene' throughout, we do not have a real etiology of the song. Why is Indra telling us this and why was this speech re-enacted? The answer may be in the final verse.

ṚV X.48.11 *ādityā́nāṃ vásūnāṃ rudríyāṇāṃ devó devā́nāṃ ná mināmi dhā́ma /*
*té mā bhadrā́ya śávase tatakṣur / áparājitam ástṛtam áṣāḷham //*

The realm of the Ādityas, Vasus, and Rudriyas, I, god of gods, do not diminish.
They've crafted me for good vigor,
(to be) undeprivable, unscatterable, unconquerable.

After the brief view behind the curtain in ṚV X.48.10, the speaker performs one final *ahaṃkāra*, in which he claims to be *devó devā́nāṃ* 'god of gods' and to never diminish the realm. The speaker claims that the gods have crafted (*tatakṣur*) him to be undeprivable (*áparājitam*), unscatterable (*ástṛtam*), and unconquerable (*áṣāḷham*). The *ná mināmi dhā́ma* "I do not diminish the realm" is probably to be read as performative. The perfect *tatakṣur* is not performative, but it does relate a current state of affairs. The resolution of this demonstration of Indra's competitive supremacy is that he is crafted such that he cannot be denied the prize, he cannot be disrupted, he cannot be overcome. That alone is motivation to emulate Indra and to re-create his speech act. Indra gives may reasons within this hymn why he would be an imitable figure. The gods craft whoever recites this hymn to be unbeatable and supreme. Still, this is not quite a complete mimetic circle as I have theorized it. We have the logic of its re-enactment in ṚV X.48.9-10, but we do not have a clear etiology for the "first singing" of the hymn.

A few thoughts to keep in mind as we approach the next hymn is that although Indra boasts of his martial prowess, the hymn is deeply committed to the performance of poetry and the drinking of Soma. The hymn frequently pairs past mythological reference with present *adhiyajña* reference almost exclusively through the use of present tense verbs and injunctives. We did not see, on the other hand, much use of the proximal deictic pronouns at all.

### 4.1.2 *ahám dā̃ṃ gṛṇaté pū́rviyaṃ vásu* (ṚV X.49)

I give to the singer ancient wealth; I make a composition growing for me.
I become the impeller of the patron of the sacrifice,

I prevail over the non-sacrificers in every contest.
The divinities of heaven, earth, waters, and kin grant me the name Indra.
I (take) two swift promised golden stallions, I boldly take the breaker for power.
I pierce the poet's garb with strikes, I helped Kutsa with these helps.
(I am) the piercer of Śuṣṇa, I control the weapon,
I, who have not given the name Ārya to the Dasyu.
I, like a father, (go to) the Vetasus for (their) support,
I make Tugra and Smadibha subject to Kutsa. I appear (at the front) in the sacrificer's command.
When I (appear) at the front in the contest for Tuji, (his) own (people) are unable to be assailed.
I make Mṛgaya subject to Śrutarvan, when he yielded himself to me through the proper-ordered path. I make the resident bend for Āyu, I made Paḍgṛbhi subject to Savya.
When (he was) increasing and broadening (me) in proper order, I am he who (makes)
Navavāstva he whose chariot is high. I, Vṛtrahan, break the Dāsa like Vṛtras.
In the distance beyond the atmosphere, I make the luminous (spaces).
I drive around with the Sun's swift ones, (being) conveyed by Etaśas and strength.
When Manus' pressing says to me (it is) for garb, then I drive the crafty Dāsa with blows.
I am the slayer of the seven, more Nahus than Nahus, I made Turvaśa and Yadu famous.
I reduce another power with power. I increase the nine and ninety (to be) proud.
I, the bull, hold seven streams, flowing and channeling upon the earth.
I, of true intent, cross over the floods, I find a path for Manu's wish by fighting.
Among them, I hold that which was not among them; not even heavenly Tvaṣṭar
held the glowing. I compete (to win) in the udders and bellies of cows, the sweeter than sweet:
Soma, mixed and swollen.
So, Indra has drawn to himself gods and men through action,
the gift-lord, whose gift is true, at the front by action.
You whose steeds are golden, possessor of power, whose praise is his own,
the powerful sing about all those (deeds) of yours.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

Concerning this hymn, Jamison and Brereton note that:

> "As for verbs, the hymn is dominated by the injunctive, with nearly twenty such forms. This morphological skewing contrasts with the patterns in the preceding hymn, which has a wider range and more balanced selection of tenses and moods. The reasons for the prominence of the injunctive are not clear to us and, somewhat surprisingly, Hoffmann fails to treat this hymn systematically in his monograph on that verbal form."[155]

We saw the repeated use of the injunctive *bharat* in **Chapter 3** in ṚV IV.26. We also saw several cases of the injunctive in the previous hymn in this chapter. ṚV X.48 opened with the injunctive *bhuvaṃ* 'I become', but we also saw *íṣkaram*, *dhārayam*, *bhũd*, *kṛṇuta*, *maṃháyam*, and *karam*. Injunctive forms of √*dhṛ* 'hold' and √*kṛ* 'make' also appeared in ṚV IV.42 in

[155] Jamison and Brereton (2014:1456) refer to Hoffman 1967 *Der Injunktiv im Veda*.

**Chapter 1**. As we shall see, the injunctives from √*dhṛ*, √*kṛ*, and √*bhū* 'become' reappear in ṚV X.49. I will demonstrate that these injunctive forms, by virtue of the absence of formal markers of mood and tense, are being used to merge the mythological past and present performance.

ṚV X.49.1 *ahám dām̃ gṛṇaté pū́rviyaṃ vásu / ahám bráhma kṛṇavam máhya várdhanam /*
*ahám bhuvaṃ yájamānasya coditā́ / áyajvanaḥ sākṣi víśvasmin bháre //*

I give to the singer ancient wealth; I make a composition growing for me
I become the impeller of the patron of the sacrifice,
I prevail over the non-sacrificers in every contest.

The hymn opens in parallel fashion to the previous one. The speaker is not yet explicitly identified as Indra, only as the bestower of primordial wealth on a singer.[156] The verse plays on the ambiguity of dative *mahya* as possessive and benefactive, for the speaker crafts a *bráhman* which is his but also increasing (*vardhanam*) himself. That is the ideal effect of a hymn on Indra, yet behind the mask it is true of the poet crafting this very hymn. In the second diptych, the speaker claims to induce the patron to sacrifice and prevail in contest over non-sacrificers, again blending the behaviors of Indra and the human poet. Notice that injunctives *dām̃*, *kṛṇavam, bhuvaṃ,* and *sākṣi* place this verse in a temporal abyss. Are these things that Indra did in the past or the poet does in the present?

ṚV X.49.2 *mā́m dhur índaraṃ nā́ma devátā / diváś ca gmáś ca apā́ṃ ca jantávaḥ /*
*ahám hárī vṛ́ṣaṇā vívratā raghú / ahám vájraṃ śávase dhṛṣṇú ā́ dade //*

The divinities of heaven, earth, waters, and kin provide me the name Indra.
I (take) two swift promised golden stallions, I boldly take the breaker for power.

Like in the previous hymn, the second verse names Indra explicitly. Here the speaker claims he was named Indra by various entities. The *devátā*s, 'divinities', of the heavens are surely the gods. Likewise, we would imagine that the *devátā*s of the earth and of the waters are supernatural beings. That the *devátā* of the *jantu*, 'kinfolk', also name him Indra is very interesting. For if the

[156] Recall in the last hymn where I suggested the primordial wealth may be poetry.

*devátā diváś* is to be taken as the *deva*s, the rulers of the heavens, then the *devátā jantavaḥ* may be ancestor spirits or perhaps a euphemism for present elites.[157] Either way, the verse adds society as the fourth element to the aerial, terrestrial, and aquatic spheres, suggesting a totality of the cosmos established his name. The use of injunctives is noteworthy here too. For the divinities *dhur nāma*, 'grant the name', perhaps suggesting the mythological figure Indra first received his name this way. It also means that the divinities grant this mortal performer the name 'Indra' now. That this is a performative verb is suggested by the aorist aspect. We see the 1st sg. middle present *á́ dade* 'I take' again,[158] it appears in the second verse of the hymn just as it appeared in the second verse of ṚV X.48:

| ṚV X.48.2c | ṚV X.49.2d |
|---|---|
| [*aháṃ dásyubhyaḥ pári nṛmṇám* ***á́ dade***] | [*aháṃ vájraṃ śávase dhṛṣṇú* ***á́ dade***] |

Stylistic patterns of this type suggest to me a ritual application, on the grounds that becoming Indra is follows the same steps. The poem reveals that logic by which one enacts the persona of Indra. His name is revealed and his attributes are taken up with the same verb and at the same moment in each poem.

ṚV X.49.3 *ahám átkaṃ kaváye śiśnathaṃ háthair / aháṃ kútsam · āvam āḅhír ūtíbhiḥ /*
*aháṃ śúṣṇasya śnáthitā vádhar yamaṃ / ná yó rará ā́riyaṃ nā́ma dásyave //*

I pierce the poet's garb with strikes, I helped Kutsa with these helps.
(I am) the piercer of Śuṣṇa, I control the weapon,
I, who have not given the name Ārya to the Dasyu.

[157] The use of *deva* and *devī* to address the king and queen is amply attested in Classical Sanskrit drama. The early inscriptional record of India also shows the use of *deva* to mean both god (as in Aśoka's epithet *devānampiyo* 'beloved of the gods' (which would be Sanskrit *devānām priyaḥ*) and lord. I suspect that may be the case in the Ṛgveda too, that chieftains of the clans may be the adhiyajña referent of vocatives *viśve devāḥ*. Determining if there is regularity in this euphemism is a desideratum.

[158] Seen first in this dissertation in KaṭhS 1.2.

Here the text has the same style as ṚV X.48. The speaker claims credit for a variety of deeds. He merely cites the myths of Kutsa and of Śúṣṇa alongside the deed of piercing the cloth for the poets (*kavi*s). Perhaps piercing the poet's garb is a metaphor for establishing the vocation of poet. Whether this piercing of the cloth (*atka*) is set in the primordial time for the first poets or for the poets at the performance is ambiguous. The injunctives *śiśnathaṃ* and *yamaṃ* allow for the possibility that these deeds are being re-enacted at the present performance. The verbal form marked as a preterit by the augment *āvam* 'I helped' is paired with instrumental plurals *ābhír ūtíbhiḥ* 'these helps'. The form *ābhír*, because it bears the accent, has proximal deictic value. So here we see a verb describing a past event, but one accomplished with helps (*ūti*-) which is spatial close to the speaker. The past is therefore equated with this present help.

ṚV X.49.4 *ahám pitéva vetasū́r abhíṣṭaye / túgraṃ kútsāya smádibhaṃ ca randhayam / ahám bhuvaṃ yájamānasya rājáni / prá yád bháre túјaye ná priyā́dhṛ́ṣe //*

I, like a father, (go to) the Vetasus for (their) support,
I make Tugra and Smadibha subject to Kutsa.
I appear (at the front) in the sacrificer's command.
When I (appear) at the front in the contest for Tuji,
(his) own (people) are unable to be assailed.

The use of injunctives *randhayam* and *bhuvaṃ* continues the pattern of re-enacting the past in the present. Like the previous hymn, the speaker claims to act on behalf of (or as a proxy of) some mythological figure, but these figures exist only as citations. Since the narration is, the important information is the hierarchical relationship that one figure has to another. Indra may be interested in mapping ancient power relationships onto the present performance. For example, it is not clear exactly what narrative the phrase like 'I made Tugra and Smadibha subject to Kutsa' signifies, but consider for a moment that if we take the absence of time in injunctives seriously, then a relationship 'make X subject to Y' is being enacted in the present. The proper names of "Tugra" and "Kutsa" may be euphemisms for unnamed human beings. Kutsa likely refers to the patron of the sacrifice and Tugra his rival. After all, if a human poet can impersonate Indra, why

should Tugra and Kutsa not also be verbal disguises?[159] An advantage to ritual euphemism of this kind is that the same legendary figures can be used again and again to re-map social power for different patrons.[160] It seems the pāda c and d must be read together to assemble the verbal action. I would argue that the *bhuvaṃ*, which is explicit in pāda c, is implicit in pāda d. There it is construed with *pra*, where *pra... bhuvaṃ* has the sense 'I become present at the front'. I think it we must understand this *pra* as implicitly modifying the *bhuvaṃ* of pāda a. So, in the myth of pāda d, Indra appears at the front at the contest of Tuju. At the adhiyajña level, in pāda c, Indra appears at the front at the behest of the sacrificer as his champion. I think the two levels of narration are juxtaposed in this way to present them as homologous.

ṚV X.49.5 *aháṃ randhayam mŕ̥gayaṃ śrutárvaṇe / yán mā́jihīta vayúnā canā́nuṣák /*
*aháṃ veśáṃ · namrám āyáve 'karam / aháṃ sávyāya páḍgr̥bhim arandhayam //*

I make Mr̥gaya subject to Śrutarvan,
when he yielded himself to me through the proper-ordered path.
I make the resident bend for Āyu, I made Paḍgr̥bhi subject to Savya.

The speaker reveals that Śrutarvan did not defeat Mr̥gaya alone. It was the former's sacrificial offering to the speaker, to Indra, which compelled him to subjugate the latter on his behalf. The use of the injunctive *randhayam* and *karam*[161] suggests that he is subjugating Mr̥gaya now; for he who does the proper ritual sequences, who acts like Śrutarvan, he can subjugate Mr̥gaya

[159] Kālidāsa is theorized to have praised his Gupta rulers by proxy as well. An onomastically transparent example being the *Kumārasambhavam* which was composed during the reign of Kumāragupta I.

[160] Both in different geographical locations as well as subsequent generations.

[161] Note the following *ájihīta* should probably be read with the augment, as the accent is no doubt proper to its augment because the verb is in a dependent clause governed by *yád*. The accent could not belong to enclitic *mā* 'me'. The absence of the augment means *karam* can be interpreted as either an injunctive or an aorist indicative *'karam* whose augment is lost to *abhinihita* sandhi. The very fact that it is ambiguous proves my point, that without an overt augment the determination of tense is not possible.

again.[162] The details of the myth of Śrutarvan or Āyu are omitted because they are irrelevant to the discursive objective of this verse, which is to map the target relationship onto present circumstances.[163]

The following two verses constitute a brief journey to heaven and back:

ṚV X.49.6 *aháṃ sá yó návavāstvam bṛhádrathaṃ / sáṃ vṛtréva · dā́saṃ vṛtrahā́rujam /*
*yád vardháyantam pratháyantam ānuṣág / dūré pāré rájaso rocanā́karam //*

When (he was) increasing and broadening (me) in proper order,
I am he who (makes) Navavāstva he whose chariot is high.
I, Vṛtrahan, break the Dāsa like Vṛtras.
In the distance beyond the atmosphere, I make the luminous (spaces).

ṚV X.49.7 *aháṃ sū́ryasya pári yāmi āśúbhiḥ / prá etaśébhir váhamāna ójasā /*
*yán mā sāvó mánuṣa āha nirṇíja / ṛ́dhak kṛṣe · dā́saṃ kṛ́tviyaṃ háthaiḥ //*

I drive around with the Sun's swift ones, (being) conveyed by Etaśas and strength.
When Manus' pressing says to me (it is) for garb,
then I drive the crafty Dāsa with blows.

ṚV X.49.6 relies heavily on the metaphor of mutual and reciprocal increasing. The speaker is he who elevates Navavāstva to the high chariot because of Navavāstva's ritual actions which broaden (*pratháyantam)* and grow (*vardháyantam)* Indra. Indra becomes tall enough to make the luminous spaces in heaven; from there, he is presumably big enough to put Navavāstva on a high (*bṛhad-*) chariot. The verse inter-relates the sacrificial, the cosmological, and social hierarchies. As an overt and unambiguous augment does not appear on *rujam* or *karam*, nothing explicitly marks them as past tense. In the absence of past tense marking, they can function like presents and be used in performative utterances. In that capacity, we see Indra re-enacting his cosmogonic

[162] A plausible interpretation for *ānuṣák* which also works for the following verse in which it is resumed.

[163] One oddity is the augment on *arandhayam* in pāda d, for which I cannot provide a fully convincing account. Paḍgṛbhi and Savya are only construed as names on the basis of syntactic parallelism to Mṛgaya and Śrutarvan. It may be that they are not names at all but ritual implements or actions, and if so may constitute a narration of ritual actions rather than performative one. Elsewhere *savya-* could mean 'the left (side)' and *paḍgṛbhi-* some sort of 'foot strap' If so, Indra could be explaining how he set up a ritual relationship as a precedent in pāda d, juxtaposing it with the performative mapping he does in pāda c.

deeds by saying *dā́saṃ vr̥trahā́rujam* "I, Vr̥trahan, break the Dāsa" and *rocanā́karam* "I make luminous (spaces)". The speaker is able to do these deeds because Navavāstva has strengthened him through ritual. In Ṛ̊V X.49.7 the poet returns from heaven's luminous spaces, driving with the swift (horses) of the Sun to Manu's sacrifice. In a sense, Indra takes the audience with him, enacting this journey by narrating it in the present.

Ṛ̊V X.49.8 *aháṃ saptahā́ náhuṣo náhuṣṭaraḥ / prā́śrāvayaṃ śávasā turváśaṃ yádum /*
*ahám ní anyáṃ sáhasā sáhas karaṃ / náva vrā́dhato navatíṃ ca vakṣayam //*

I am the slayer of seven, more Nahus than Nahus,
I made Turvaśa and Yadu famous.
I reduce another power with power. I increase the nine and ninety (to be) proud.

Notice the augment that is on the 1st person sg. imperfect causative *prā́śrāvayaṃ*.[164] Due to the augment, we know that the action is firmly located in the past. Recall that Ṛ̊V X.48.8 was the verse in that hymn in which the perspective of the hymn shifts from the present performance back to its initial pattern of the juxtaposition of past events and present ones. Ṛ̊V X.49.8 shifts in the exact same way, juxtaposing Indra's exploits in the past characterized by a verb with the augment with augmentless verbs which seem occur in the present. The speaker claims that he makes inferior (*ní karaṃ)* the power of another by his power but also that others he increases (*vakṣayam*). Indra increases an unnamed lot of ninety-nine to be *vrādhat-* 'proud'. I think Indra is referring to the men of the allied clans. The one he reduces is simply referred to as *anyáṃ* 'the other' but the sense of *śatru* 'rival' is probably operative.[165] The number ninety-nine is purely a stylistic device to indicate a near, but incomplete, totality. Recall in Ṛ̊V IV.26.3, when Indra demolishes the ninety-nine forts of Śambara in one stroke, striking the final one, where Śambara lived, separately. This use of number must reflect the same logic of totality, the ninety-nine

[164] Another stylistic similarity located in the same place in the hymn, Ṛ̊V X.48.8 has *pra...áśuśravi.*

[165] Recall Ṛ̊V X.48.7d *kím mā nindanti śátravo anindrā́ḥ* 'Why do my Indra-less rivals blame me?'

*vrādhat-* and the one *anya-* add up to a hundred. Indra can embolden all his allies and still diminish the lone rival.

ṚV X.49.9 *ahám saptá sravato dhārayaṃ vṛ́ṣā / dravitnúvaḥ pr̥thiviyā́ṃ sīrā́ ádhi /*
*ahám árṇāṃsi ví tirāmi sukrátur / yudhā́ vidam mánave gātúm iṣṭáye //*

I, the bull, hold the seven streams, flowing and channeling upon the earth.
I, of true intent, cross over the floods, I find a path for Manu's wish by fighting.

Here the speaker claims to hold[166] the seven streams. The seven streams encapsulate the Ṛgvedic notion of the culturally interior world. These seven rivers are often equated with the seven rivers of the Panjab; whether these in fact are seven historical rivers immaterial, as a totality of habitable space would likely be conceive of as having seven divisions regardless. When the speaker claims that by fighting he finds a path for Manu's wish, the juxtaposition of Manu's wish with this supremacy across the seven streams correlates the two and presents sacrificial and martial power as homologous entities.

Note the temporal ambiguity in the injunctive pair *dhārayaṃ* 'I hold' and *vidam* 'I find'. If read as having a past setting, they refer to Indra's releasing of the waters after defeating Vr̥tra which was done for the sake of Manu.[167] On the other hand, taken with present verb *ví tirāmi* 'I cross over' the injunctives can also be read as occurring in the now, at the present sacrifice. Indra finds a path for Manu's wish, this very sacrifice, by re-enacting crossing the floods.

ṚV X.49.10 *ahám tád āsu dhārayaṃ yád āsu ná / devā́ś caná tváṣṭā ádhārayad rúśat /*
*spārháṃ gávām ūdhassu vakṣáṇāsu ā́ / mádhor mádhu śvā́triyaṃ sómam āśíram//*

Among them, I hold that which was not among them; not even heavenly Tvaṣṭar held the glowing. I compete (to win) in the udders and bellies of cows, the

[166] The use root √*dhr̥* 'hold' to indicate both containing and controlling/ruling is seen throughout Indo-Iranian.

[167] ṚV I.32.8ab *nadáṃ ná bhinnám amuyā́ śáyānam máno rúhāṇā áti yanti ā́paḥ* "The rising waters pass over (Vr̥tra, who was) like a reed split lying on yonder path, to Manu." Notice this verse too occurs in the present, which perhaps suggests it is re-enacting the defeat of Vr̥tra at the seasonal release of waters in the Summer. Manu is most likely a metonym for humanity.

sweeter than sweet: Soma, mixed and swollen.

We have seen *dhārayaṃ* used to refer to Indra containing something.[168] The injunctive *dhārayaṃ* appears again, but this time reference to Soma is explicit. Recall that in ṚV X.48.10, the topic was also the Soma drink and its ability to make one a winning competitor. Some confirmation that this is how the augmentless forms are to be understand appears in the constrast between *dhārayaṃ* and *adhārayat*. That is, not even Tvaṣṭar even held (*adhārayat*) the glowing (*rúśat*), Indra holds (*dhārayaṃ*) it first. This resonates with the opening theme of the hymn: Indra being the master of primordial wealth (poetry), for he is the first drinker of Soma. This recapitulates the logic of ṚV X.48.10, that if Indra has Soma within him and I have Soma within me, that if Indra is victorious and I am victorious, then I indeed am Indra. As I argued before, this is part of a mimetic circle because it explains why it is that drinking Soma and singing this song is a re-enactment of Indra drinking Soma and singing this song. What we do not have yet, is a verse which gives an etiology for the song, a moment of poetic self-reference when Indra explains why this song is performed and why it shall be re-performed. We find that in the following verse:

ṚV X.49.11 *evā́ devā́ṁ índaro viviye nṝ́n / prá cyautnéna maghávā satyárādhāḥ /*
*víśvā ít tā́ te harivaḥ śacīvo / abhí turā́saḥ svayaśo gṛṇanti //*

So, Indra has drawn to himself gods and men through action
The gift-lord, whose gift is true, at the front by action.
You whose steeds are golden, possessor of power, whose praise is his own,
The powerful sing about all those (deeds) of yours.

The final verse does something which did not occur in ṚV X.48, one of the few asymmetries between these two hymns. It breaks the impersonation and address Indra. It seems to sum up the previous act of impersonation with *evā́* 'thus'. Only here does the 2nd person sg. enclitic *te* appear. We are told Indra has gathered gods (*devā́ṁ*) and men (*nṝ́n*) around himself (*viviye*). The

[168] ṚV X.48.8b: *íṣaṃ ná vṛtratúraṃ vikṣú dhārayam* 'I hold like the drink, what is obstacle-overcoming (one) among the clans'.

verb is a perfect, thereby relating present time. He does so by this very hymn, the *cyautna*,[169] 'action', which itself contains his various featss and thereby makes him stand at the front (*prá* with a gapped copula).[170] This scene provides a narrative for the first performance of this song as well as its re-performance. We are told Indra performed this great *ātmastuti* in order to win over to his side gods and men. Now they emulate his singing of his owns deeds by singing (*gr̥ṇanti*) his deeds back to him in response. Indeed, any performer of this very hymn is continuing the institution set up in this verse of Indra singing about his deeds to his allies so that they sing back to him. Notice the hymn's final word is *gr̥ṇanti* while its verse opens *aháṃ dāṃ* ***gr̥ṇaté*** *pū́rviyaṃ vásu* "I give the singer ancient wealth". The text seems to be telling us that this song (and its contents) is the ancient wealth which Indra has given to an unbroken succession of singers. This is precisely the kind of mimetic circle we had hoped to find, which provides an etiology for its own performance, a charter for its future singing, and a self-referential confirmation of its successful transmission.

### 4.1.3 Concluding Thoughts

I have demonstrated that these two hymns share numerous similarities. They both frequently juxtapose ancient myths with present sacrificial events. In Ṛ̊V X.48.3, Indra tells us that people recognize him by deeds done (*kr̥tá*) and to be done (*kártuva*). Indeed, both hymns make abundant use of the verbal root √*kr̥*, as well as √*bhū* and √*dhr̥*. These verbs are the best candidates for performatives. Both hymns rely heavily on a combination of Thompson's *ahaṃkāra* and the stylized use of verbs. Further, they frequently appear in the injunctive, which I

[169] Cognate with Avestan *šîiaoθna* 'act, action' very possibly a ritual action.

[170] We see in this hymn a number of times when *prá* is used to mean 'at the front' with an explicit or a gapped copula. I had not considered in my initial analysis of ways to make the speaker present this particular preverb. Recall we all also saw *prá.... astu* in Ṛ̊V IV.26, when Indra tells the Maruts to let the Soma bird stand at the front of birds. I am curious as to what it means to 'stand at the front'. Is this a ritual stage direction? Does it indicate presence? Or does it mean 'act as a model (for emulation)?' Going forward we should pay attention uses *prá* of this type.

predicted would be a way of making past events temporally ambiguous in order to re-enact them in the present, and, in so doing, endow ritual acts with mythological significance. Just as *bharat* seemed to be the star of ṚV IV.26, *karam* was dominant here. Notice that these hymns almost never use proximal deictic pronouns,[171] which runs counter to my prediction from **Chapter 2**. Perhaps Indra's use of performative verbs and the *ahaṃkāra* is sufficient to draw the audience into the present. This raises the question, if we find a hymn of mimetic impersonation without the *ahaṃkāra* formation, would proximal deictic pronouns step in the fill the gap? Both hymns also hint that this transformation of being is made possible through Soma. Only ṚV X.49, however, has a clear mimetic circle in its eleventh verse. It is possible, of course, that not every mimetic impersonation will have an explicit mimetic circle. Finding one, however, is positive evidence that my hypothesis is correct. It is also possible that ṚV X.48 and ṚV X.49 were part of one performance event and the final verse of ṚV X.49.11 acts as a charter event for both hymns. Evidence for this interpretation is found in the following hymn. ṚV X.50 is part of the Indra Vaikuṇṭha cycle. Recall that in both ṚV X.48 and ṚV X.49 Indra is explicitly named on the second verse. The second verse of ṚV X.50 on the other hand makes it quite clear that the speaker is a human:

ṚV X.50.2ab *só cin nú sákhyā náriya iná stutáś / carkṛ́tiya índaro **mā́vate náre** /*

Indeed, he is praised by (his) ally as manly and able.
Indra (seems) worthy of fame **to man like me**.

So, we see that in this final hymn, the singer, inspired by Indra's gift of song, sings back to him. Every time this Vaikuṇṭha litany is performed, both the origin of the cycle and its successful reciprocation are re-created.

### 4.2 *káyā śubhā́ sávayasaḥ sánīḷāḥ* (ṚV I.165)

By what beauty are same-strength same-origin Maruts assembled?
By what idea? From what these antelopes? The bulls, seeking goods, sing (their) growl.
Whose compositions have the youths savored?

[171] The few instances of textual deictic pronouns also seem to contribute little.

Who has turned the Maruts hither to the ceremony?
By what great thought do we bring (them) to rest, like eagles darting in the atmosphere?
From what, Indra, although being great, do you drive alone? Why is it like this for you,
lord of the host? Request to be joined with the beautiful ones, possessor of golden steeds,
you should tell us what of yours (is) for us.
The compositions, the thoughts, the pressings are my welfare.
The growl rises, the stone is offered to me.
Here, they herald and hope for me, these (two) golden (steeds) convey us here.
We, being yoked with our closest (horses), (our) bodies being beautified by
(horses) of our own command, we now yoke antelopes up by our great (powers). Indra!
So now you have experienced our self-determination.
Maruts, where was this self-determinations of yours,
When you together set me alone to serpent-slaying? For I am fierce, terrible, and terrific,
(so) I bent (the self-determination) of every rival with weapons.
You have done much through our joint manly ventures, O Bull,
for much shall we do, O mightiest Indra, by intent when we so wish O Maruts.
I slay Vṛtra, Maruts, through my Indra-ness, having become mighty with my own fury.
I, breaker-armed, for Manu have made these waters shining for all and easy going.
There is no one here, Gift-lord, unpushable to you. Among the gods no one is known to be like
you (either). (Since) neither one being born nor one born will achieve (them),
(So) do (those deeds) which are to be done, O one grown forth!
Even (if I am but) one, let my power be pervasive!
Having become bold through which poetic conception,
I shall do (these deeds) for myself! For I am known to be powerful, O Maruts!
What (acts) I move, Indra alone is their master.
This praise has exhilarated me here, O Maruts!
Which is a composition you have made worthy for me to hear, O men!
For Indra, the bull, the one of good skirmish, for me
the allies (have made it worth to hear) for the ally, through their bodies for the body.
Only in this way do these (ones) reflect me (by emulation):
receiving fame and drink as (my) blameless (entourage)
Maruts! Worthy to be seen together and of shining color
you just now seemed (good) to me, and (so) you shall seem (good) to me.
Who has given to you here, Maruts?
Allies! drive forth here to allies as inspirers of thoughts, remarkable ones!
Become of these (as he is): aware of my truths.
Like when a singer makes a gift-presentation to gift-friend
Mānya's wisdom has been presented to us,
Maruts, turn hither to the inspired one. These compositions the singer sings for you.
This is your praise, Maruts, this song of singer Māndārya Mānya
With the drink, may he request détente here for the body.
May we see the drink (and) the settlement whose drops are lively.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

The following study appears, at first blush, to break with my exclusion of dialogue hymns from my study of impersonation. Yet, *Bṛhaddevatā* 4.46-49 summarizes the plot of ṚV I.165 as a dialogue in which Indra and the Maruts dispute over the possession of the offerings of a sacrifice. Stanley Insler suggested that this hymn is part of an *aindramāruta* epic which functions

as a charter justifying the inclusion of the Maruts at the midday pressing (formerly dedicated to Indra alone).[172] I include this hymn in my study, despite this categorization, because it diverges in many ways from the other dialogue hymns. Well-known dialogue hymns like Yama and Yamī (ṚV X.10), Purūravas and Urvaśī (ṚV X.95), and Saramā and the Paṇis (ṚV X.109) alternate verses. These hymns divide speaking time relatively equally. I will demonstrate that in ṚV I.165, Indra is the primary speaker who is only briefly interrupted by the unnamed leader of the Maruts. The leader of the Maruts speaks but four of the fifteen verses of this hymn, and two of these verses praise Indra no differently than if a human poet were praising Indra. I will demonstrate that, formally, it is better to think of ṚV I.165 as an Indra monologue with a twist than a full-fledged dialogue. Because this hymn is not marked as strongly as other impersonations with the *ahaṃkāra* pattern, the text seems to compensate by other strategies which make Indra present. The most obvious of these is its explicit 'double scene'; Indra and Maruts speaks at a sacrifice set in the past, while the hymn is performed at a sacrifice set in the present.

ṚV I.165.1 *káyā śubhā́ sávayasaḥ sánīḷāḥ / samāniyā́ marútaḥ sám mimikṣuḥ /*
*káyā matī́ kúta étāsa eté / árcanti śúṣmaṃ vṛ́ṣaṇo vasūyā́ //*

By what beauty are same-strength same-origin Maruts assembled?
By what idea? From what these antelopes?
The bulls, seeking goods, sing (their) growl.

ṚV I.165.2 *kásya bráhmāṇi jujuṣur yúvānaḥ / kó adhvaré marúta ā́ vavarta /*
*śyenā́m̐ iva dhrájato antárikṣe / kéna mahā́ mánasā rīramāma //*

Whose compositions have the youths savored?
Who has turned the Maruts hither to the ceremony?
By what great thought do we bring (them) to rest
like eagles darting in the atmosphere?

The establishing shot of the hymn is an unknown speaker witnessing the arrival of the Maruts. The series of interrogatives in the first two verses sets up tension which will be resolved later in

[172] *non vidi*. Jamison and Brereton (2014:361) cite a lecture Insler delivered in April of 2002, "The Development of the Vedic Soma Sacrifice." at the South Asia Seminar at The University of Texas at Austin.

the hymn.[173] The poet asks what beauty and what idea attracted this assemblage. I will demonstrate that idea is the performance of this poem itself, and that resolving the tension created by these interrogatives is one of the formal strategies this hymn employs in setting up its mimetic circle. The final pāda of the first verse tells us these Maruts are singing bulls, foreshadowing that they will sing back to the speaker.[174] The second verse asks us whose compositions the youths enjoy and who turned them to the ceremony. Jamison and Brereton's treat aorist injunctive *rīramāma* as part of a quoted thought.[175] That interpretation depends on foreknowledge that Indra is the speaker of these verses, and he is imagining what humans at the ritual are thinking. Yet all we know about this speaker, so far, is that he is located at the ritual too, for the Maruts are turned *ā* 'hither' to the *adhvara-* 'ceremony'. The interrogatives *kasya* 'whose' and *ko* 'who' are ambiguous for a reason. They build the anticipation that the poet singing here has a special identity. He does, he is Indra, but that fact has not yet been revealed and remains in suspense. The use of the plural is one of the ways human poets express their collective performative efforts in the Ṛgveda,[176] and I think the use of the 1st person plural *rīramāma*, 'we bring to a stop', is part of this strategy to build tension and delay the revelation that the speaker is Indra. As we shall see, the final verb of the hymn, *vidyāma*, returns to the perspective of the 1st pl. Imagine watching a play where the first lines are spoken before the

[173] What I think is an instance of a phenomenon identified by Jamison 2006 as poetic repair, and which Jamison and Brereton (2014:67) succinctly define as when "[t]he poet sets a problem—lexical, syntactic, or thematic—earlier in the hymn and then "repairs" this problem later in the hymn by substituting the expected word, syntactic construction, or thematic element for the problematic one."

[174] Just as we saw in ṚV X.49, in which the speaker assert he is giving primordial wealth to the singer in the first verse, then Indra sings his deeds, and at the end of the song the audience sings back the deeds of Indra.

[175] Jamison and Brereton (2014:361) "In whose sacred formulations have the youths found delight? Who turned the Maruts here to the rite, (thinking,) "By what great thought shall we bring them to rest, soaring like falcons in the midspace?"

[176] This is also a feature of Avestan ritual speech. Consider the triple set of 1st pl. present indicative verbs found in the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti: *dadəmahicā ciṣmahicā huuąmahicā* 'we place (it) and we assign (it) and we impell (it)' presumably describing the ritual placement, verbal/mental dedication, and upward journey of the oblation.

curtain opens, before the costumed characters appear on the stage. The curtain only opens in the next verse, not when Indra speaks, but when he is explicitly addressed:

ṚV I.165.3 *kútas tuvám indara mā́hinaḥ sánn / éko yāsi satpate kíṃ ta itthā́ /*
*sám pr̥chase samarāṇáḥ śubhānaír / vocés tán no harivo yát te asmé //*

From what, Indra, although being great, do you drive alone?
Why is it like this for you, lord of the host?
Request to be joined with the beautiful ones,
Possessor of golden steeds, you should tell us what of yours (is) for us.

The as-yet unidentified speaker asks why Indra is alone, that is without entourage, since he is great and *satpati* 'lord of beings'. The powerful, evidently, always travel with retinue. The speaker tells Indra to ask that he be joined (*samarāṇa-*) with the beautiful ones, (*śubhāna-*). The verbs *sam pr̥chase* 'ask for your benefit' and *voces* 'you should say' are requests that Indra speak, informing the audience that the next verse will be Indra's response. When the Maruts ask Indra what he has for them (*yát te asmé* 'what of yours (is) for us'), it very much appears that the speaker is asking Indra for an offering or tribute. Indra proceeds to explain how things work. He does not give offerings; he is offered to.

ṚV I.165.4 *bráhmāṇi me matáyaḥ śáṃ sutā́saḥ / śúṣma iyarti prábhr̥to me ádriḥ /*
*ā́ śāsate práti haryanti ukthā́ / imā́ hárī vahatas tā́ no ácha //*

The compositions, the thoughts, the pressings are my welfare.
The growl rises, the stone is offered to me.
Here, they herald and hope for me, these (two) golden (steeds) convey us here.

Indra claims the compositions, thoughts, and Soma pressings are his by virtue of the fact that the performances announce him (*śāsate*) and long for his presence (*práti haryanti*). His two golden steeds convey him hither. Notice the use of proximal deixis in this diptych. The pair of golden steeds are characterized with pronoun *imā́* 'these two' which marks this as close by the speaker. The adverbs *ā* and *acha* begin and end the diptych, directing the action towards the speaker, who is located at the performance. It is possible that the 1st pl. enclitic *naḥ* 'us' refers to Indra and his two horses as a group of three. It is also possible that the plural pronoun, like the 1st plural finite

verb *rīramāma,* is a way the poet refers to all the sacrificial participants. In ṚV X.49.7, Indra drives with Sun's swift (horses), and, by virtue of using the present (*pari... yāmi*), I argued that he takes the audience with him. Something like this may motivate the use of the 1st plural enclitic.[177] Another aspect of this verse which blends Indra and the Maruts and the human performers is the *śúṣma* which rises for Indra. Yet in the first verse we learned that *árcanti śúṣmaṃ vr̥ṣṇo*, 'the bulls sing the growl', where the bulls refer to the Maruts. How could the Maruts not know they are singing for Indra? I suspect it is because the Maruts are the verbal mask which human participants wear.[178]

ṚV 1.165.5 *áto vayám antamébhir yujānā́ḥ / svákṣatrebhis tanúvaḥ śúmbhamānāḥ / máhobhir étāṁ úpa yujmahe nú / índra svadhā́m ánu hí no babhū́tha //*

We, being yoked with our closest (horses), (our) bodies being beautified by (horses) of our own command, we now yoke antelopes up by our great (powers). Indra! So now you have experienced our self-determination.

In the following verse the Maruts respond to Indra's claim. They cannot deny that the offerings are dedicated to Indra. Instead, they laud their martial prowess; I think the implication is they can seize the sacrificial offerings by force. The Maruts have arrived with many horses and on top of that, they have added a second row of antelopes for extra power.[179] Pādas b and d form a pair on

[177] A phenomenon observed in my discussion in **Chapter 2:** 1st plurals *cakr̥má*, *rapema*, and masculine plural participle *vádanto* from ṚV X.10.4.

[178] Perhaps other priests singing in a chorus, or more generally the men of clans which constitute the audience. C.f. Indra addressing the audience as Maruts in ṚV IV.26.4.

[179] Note pāda a and c form a pair in order to answer the question set up in the first verse, *kúta étāsa eté* 'from what (reason) these antelopes?' Pāda a átas answers kútas while pāda b *étāṁ úpa yujmahe* resumes *étāsa eté*. This is interesting for two reasons. The first is that structural features like these can be used to reason out verses and in this case justify that pāda a and c are construed together and therefore confirm my analysis that pāda b and d are construed together. In fact, every lexical item inquired about in the first two verses is resumed later in the text, acting as a guide to this hymn. The second reason is that *eté* as discussed in **Chapter 2** is text deictic, meaning it should refer to something proximal in speech (rather than space or time), but as it appears in the first verse how can it? The answer seems to be that text deixis does not merely look backwards but forward. It is possible that the pronoun is not always truly text deictic, and may have the anaphoric/kataphoric which are normally the domain of the *sa*/*ta*- pronoun.

the basis of *svakṣatra* and *svadhā*. Most translators of the Ṛgveda have read *svákṣatrebhis* in pāda b refers to the horses of the Maruts.[180] In two of its three other attestations in the Ṛgveda, however, the adjective *svákṣatra* modifies the noun *mánas*,[181] in both cases that *mánas* is characterized as *dhṛṣát* 'bold'. As both horses and intentions convey the Maruts to the sacrifice, the sequence *svákṣatrebhis tanúvaḥ śúmbhamānāḥ* may be a metaphor which conceives of willpower in terms of horsepower.[182] In pāda d the Maruts conclude by telling Indra he has just experienced their *svadhā* or 'self-determination' which seems to support the interpretation of *svákṣatra* not 'self-guided' horses but rather guided by the minds of the Maruts who follow their 'own commands'. The horse is closely associated with military power.[183] The implication is that it matters little if the sacrificer intended the offerings to go to Indra, because the Maruts have plans of their own. In essence, the Maruts have verbally threatened Indra's property rights. By what great thought will he stop them?

ṚV I.165.6 *kúva syā́ vo marutaḥ svadhā́ āsīd / yán mā́m ékaṃ samádhattāhihátye /*
*ahám hí ūgrás taviṣás túviṣmān / víśvasya śátror ánamaṃ vadhasnaíḥ //*

Maruts, where was this self-determinations of yours,
When you together set me alone to serpent-slaying?

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[180] Oldenberg (1909:161) "*antamébhir* und *svákṣatrebhis* auf Rosse bezüglich"; Geldner (1951:238): "selbstherrlichen (Rossen)"; Jamison and Brereton (2015:361): "(horses) that guide themselves". A dissenting opinion is Grassmann's (1872-5:1621), who adds to the dictionary entry *marúdbhis*, indicating that the Maruts are *svákṣatra*. Grassmann (1872-5:520) lists the *tanúvaḥ* which appears in ṚV I.165.5 as an accusative plural. It seems that in Grassman's reading, pāda b was the object of the verb in pāda c "we now yoke up antelopes….(their) bodies being beautified by (our) *svákṣatra*."

[181] *svákṣatraṃ yásya dhṛṣató dhṛṣán mánaḥ* (ṚV I.54.3b) "bold is he whose bold mind has its own command." *svákṣatraṃ te dhṛṣán mánaḥ* (ṚV V.35.4c) "your bold mind has its own command." The third attestation has verbal root √*man*, but not otherwise comparable: *kád u priyā́ya dhā́mane manāmahe svákṣatrāya sváyaśase mahé vayám* (ṚV V.48.1ab) "what shall we conceive for the dear abode for the great one which has its own command, its own glory?"

[182] P. Oktor Skjærvø (p.c.) points out that in Y46.3 of the Zoroastrian Yasna the *xratauuō* 'guiding thoughts' are called *uxšānō asnąm* 'the oxen of days.' A striking parallel in that intentions are likened to draft animals. Vedic *kratu-* 'intention' cognate of Av. *xratu-* appears later in this very hymn, in ṚV I.165.7.

[183] Consider ṚV I.162.22d: *kṣatráṃ no áśvo vanatāṃ havíṣmān* 'may the oblation-bearing horse win us rule.'

For I am fierce, terrible, and terrific,
(so) I bent (the self-determination) of every rival with weapons.

Indra scorns the *svadhā* of the Maruts, asking where it was when he was made champion against Vṛtra. Notice the verb *samádhatta* 2nd pl. present active imperfect 'you placed (me) together' with root √*dhā* 'to place' and preverb *sam* 'together' plays on an iconic opposition of *sva*(*dhā*) and *saṃ*(*dhā*).[184] The Maruts relinquished their autonomy to Indra because only he was fit to fight the primordial serpent. Since he bent the self-determination[185] of all rivals with weapons, he has greater martial might than the Maruts. Notice Indra counters the verbal threats of the Maruts in the present with his memory of the past. This resolves the dramatic question *kutas... éko yāsi satpate kíṃ ta itthā́* 'From what, do you drive alone, lord of the host, why is it like this for you?' The answer is because he fought Vṛtra alone. By singing about his own manly deeds, he reminds the Maruts of the past state of affairs when they were hierarchically subservient to Indra and restores that state of affairs to the present, transforming the Maruts from his antagonists to his praising entourage in the following verses. This is remarkably similar to ṚV X.49.11, in which Indra's song of his own deeds inspires gods and men to sing back to him:

ṚV I.165.7 *bhū́ri cakartha yújiyebhir asmé / samānébhir vṛṣabha paúṃsiyebhiḥ /*
*bhū́rīṇi hí kṛṇávāmā śaviṣṭha / índra krátvā maruto yád váśāma //*

You have done much through our joint manly ventures, O Bull,
For much shall we do, O mightiest Indra, by intent when we so wish O Maruts.

These Marut verses show the inherent instability in speaking as an individual Marut, whose defining feature is they are legion. In a sense, the nameless mouthpiece of the Maruts is hardly

[184] Notice that *sam* + √*dhā* is also refers to assembling something, which is reminiscent of the assertion from ṚV X.48.11, that *té mā bhadrā́ya śávase tatakṣur / áparājitam ástṛtam áṣāḷham* "(the gods) has crafted me for good vigor, (to be) undeprivable, unscatterable, unconquerable." The idea of a 'created/assembled Indra' would be particularly useful towards his mimetic re-enactment, as he is being created here in performance.

[185] I supply an elided *svadhā́m* here as the direct object *ánamaṃ*, as an available acc. object. Compare similar syntax ṚV VIII.97.12a *nemíṃ namanti cákṣasā / meṣáṃ víprā abhisvárā /* 'the inspired (poets) bend the rim with their (poetic) eye, the ram with their shout'. Both cases active voice √*nam* is constructed with a noun in the inst. and an acc. object.

distinct from the nameless poet who would wear a verbal mask. From here on out the Maruts speak only to praise Indra. The absence of a proper Marut mask is formally manifest here, for the speaker addresses both Indra and the Maruts in the vocative. Note that if we imagine a human poet addressing Indra and the Maruts, then the poet is making typical use of 1st person plural to speak collectively all the human participants on the ritual ground and claiming those human participants have many manly deeds in common with Indra and the Maruts.[186] A fascinating aspect of ṚV I.165 is that the impersonation of Indra is constantly interrupted and therefore must constantly be resumed. Each time the mask of Indra is restored the speaker must refer to the *adhiyajña* level of narration theorized in **Chapter 2**.

ṚV I.165.8 *vádhīṃ vṛtrám maruta indriyéṇa / svéṇa bhā́mena taviṣó babhūvā́n /*
*ahám etā́ mánave viśvā́ścandrāḥ / sugā́ apáś cakara vájrabāhuḥ //*

I slay Vṛtra, Maruts, through my Indra-ness,
Having become mighty with my own fury
I, breaker-armed, for Manu
Have made these waters shining for all and easy going.

This is the second instance in ṚV I.165 which conforms to Thompson's *ahaṃkāra* formation. Note the self-assertion of *ahám etā́ mánave* in pāda c is surrounded by 1st sg verbs *vadhīm* and *cakara* in pādas a and d respectively. The nom. sg. *ahám* appears in two other places in this hymn. We see *aháṃ hí ūgró* appear in both ṚV I.165.5 and ṚV I.165.10, forming a perfect ring around the *ahám etā́ mánave* of ṚV I.165.8, which is located in central of the hymn, and suggests a special focus is being placed on this verse.[187]

[186] The speaker claims that just as Indra has done many deeds (*cakartha* 'you have done'), they shall do many deeds (*kṛṇávāmā* 'we shall do'). The appears of √*kṛ* verbs in succession is reminsicent of our observations regarding √*kṛ* in the Indra Vaikuṇṭha hymns, but notice that neither of these uses (by virtue of anterior aspect on the perfect and future reference of the subjunctive) is properly performative. There is the possibility, however, that they foreshadow performative uses of √*kṛ* later in the hymn.

[187] Following Brereton 1999 and Jamison 2007.

There are numerous items of interest in this verse. The injunctive *vadhīṃ* 'I slay' follows the pattern seen thus far of re-creating past myths in the present. He slays Vr̥tra now, after having become (*babhūvāṃs-*) mighty (*taviṣa-*) through his passion or furor (*bhāma-*). This perfect active participle *babhūvāṃs-* is built from √*bhū*, as were *abhavam* and *bhuvam* of Ṛ̊V IV.26 and Ṛ̊V X.48-49 respectively; in the context of an impersonation hymn, such a statement also seems to present being Indra as a real ontological transformation. The speaker reports that he has been transformed by the strong emotion (*bhāma*)[188] which is the proprietary mental state of Indra (so denoted by *sva-* 'own') and glossed as *indriya-* 'Indra-ness'. In otherwords, the performer tells his audience that he slays the obstacle whenever he becomes mighty through his Indra-ness which is his Indra-mental state. This is a case of reported perception. The otherwise private mental state is publicly performed, drawing the audience to the moment of reporting.

The 1st person sg. perfect *cakara* 'I have made' indicates this is the current state of these waters, not their status in the past or the future. They are easy-going now, suggesting that the text portrays its performance at the time of year when the rivers are not flooding. The use of text deictic *etā́ḥ* most likely refers to the waters associated with the Vr̥tra story, as in 'those well-known waters', perhaps connecting the mythical waters to the present rivers. The waters are *viśváścandra* 'shining for all', referring to them by a visual characterization regardless of if the sense is visible by physical sight or poetic vision. In fact, I do not think the sense is physical sight at all. In the same way that the speaker has become powerful through his *indriyéṇa / svena bhāmena* 'through (his) Indra-ness, his own wrath', ritual waters can become the primordial water's released after the slaying of Vr̥tra. Despite the assertion that they 'shine for all,' their light is visible only to poetic sight. There is a possible wordplay here with *bhāma-*, 'light', (homophone of *bhāma-* 'wrath'), which may suggest that Indra, like the waters, is luminous.

[188] C.f. Ṛ̊V I.114.8c *vīrā́n mā́ no rudara bhāmitó vadhīr* "Being wroth, Rudra, do not slay our men!" appears with √*vadh* 'slay' as well.

Again, the speaker does not shine with physical light but rather a verbal light. It is a performative assertation to insist that something physically invisible is actually luminous.

ṚV I.165.9 *ánuttam ā́ te maghavan nákir nú / ná tvā́vāṁ asti devátā vídānaḥ /*
*ná jā́yamāno náśate ná jātó / yā́ni kariṣyā́ kṛ́ṇuhí pravṛ́ddha //*

There is no one here, Gift-lord, unpushable to you.[189]
Among the gods no one is known to be like you (either).
(Since) neither one being born nor one born will achieve (them),
(So) do (those deeds) which are to be done, O one grown forth!

The response to Indra bears no trace of a distinct Marut persona; this verse seems typically of other Vedic hymns which praise Indra in the 2nd sg. The adverb *ā* 'here, hither' locates Indra as present at the sacrifice. The speaker uses 2nd person sg. imperative *kṛ́ṇuhí* 'do!' directs Indra to do deeds. Indra is referred as *pravṛ́ddha* 'grown forth'. Just as elswhere in Vedic, praise poetry addressed to Indra powers him up so that he can do great things. The poet asserts a truth: Indra is now powered up. Indra evidently agrees:

ṚV I.165.10 *ékasya cin me vibhú astu ójo / yā́ nú dadhṛ́ṣvā́n kṛ́ṇávai manīṣā́ /*
*ahám hí ūgró maruto vídāno / yā́ni cyávam índra íd īśa eṣām //*

Even (if I am but) one, let my power be pervasive!
Having become bold through which poetic conception,
I shall do (these deeds) for myself!
For I am known to be powerful, O Maruts!
What (acts) I move, Indra alone is their master

The first pāda returns to the theme of the singularity of Indra. ṚV I.165.3: ***éko*** *yāsi satpate kíṃ ta itthā́*, "why do you drive *alone*, lord of beings?", is resumed in ṚV I.165.6 *yán mā́m* ***ékaṃ*** *samádhattāhihátye*, "when you together put me *alone* to serpent-slaying." He drives alone because he alone faced Vṛtra, but even alone, ṚV I.165.10 tells us, his power (*ojas*) is pervasive

[189] Possibly an adverb from the past passive participle of *anu + √dhā 'admittedly'. Reading that nobody is *a-nud-ta 'unpushable' to Indra, agrees with another epithet of Indra *acyuta-cyut* 'mover of the unmovable' attested 2x in the Ṛgveda.

(*vibhu*). The tension surrounding the solitude of Indra is resolved, for pervasive power, radiating out from a center point, is very much how sovereignty is conceived of in Vedic poetry.[190]

In ṚV I.165.5, I demonstrated that *svakṣatra* 'autonomy, own command' was frequently colligated with having a bold mind (a *manas*- which is *dhṛṣat*-). Here Indra has become bold (*dadhṛṣvāṃs*-) through the poetic thought (*manīṣā*-) again juxtaposing forms built to roots √*dhṛṣ*, 'to dare, be bold', and √*man*, 'to think', respectively. The term *manīṣā*, '(poetic) thought', refers to the praise which Indra has just received from the Maruts.[191] This is a case of hymnic self-reference. The Maruts' *manīṣā* powered up Indra until he is fully grown (*pravṛddha*-). First, Indra asserts that he has become (*babhūvāṃs*) mighty (*taviṣa*-), and then he asserts that he has become bold (*dadhṛṣvāṃs*-) too. Compare this verse with ṚV X.49.2d *aháṃ vájraṃ śávase dhṛṣṇú ā́ dade* "I boldly take the breaker for vigor." In ṚV X.49 this is inaugural for Indra. He has asserted that the gods gave him his name and that he takes his characteristic *vajra*; the poet enacts the persona of Indra through this verse.

Having re-enacted Indra's primordial deeds in ṚV I.165.8, he now asserts, in ṚV I.165.10, that he has ontologically transformed. He has taken on both Indra's physical state (becoming mighty) and mental state (becoming bold). Now that this transformation has been enacted, he can do new actions as Indra. He will now do the deeds (*yā... kṛṇavai*) which needed doing in ṚV I.165.9 (*yāni kariṣyā*). Like in ṚV X.48 and ṚV X.49, we see the use of forms of √*kṛ* 'do'. This is an ideal root for performative sentences precisely because 'I do' is so semantically empty it could be used for any ritual action.[192] These actions are the referent of the

[190] Vedic ritual frequently expresses the notion of sovereignty in terms of controlling the four directions (*diś*). Sovereignty defines the center and radiates outwards; this is also the model for the spread of fame. In the famous *Purusasūkta* (ṚV X.90), the primordial man is divided and *díśah śrótrāt* '(they made) the directions from his ear". Power, in the Vedic world, is spread orally too.

[191] ṚV I.165.7 and ṚV I.165.9

[192] As evidence by its use in the grammatical tradition. The form *pacati* is glossed as *pākam karoti*. Indicating that √*kṛ* was a verb of enacting some event with no content otherwise. Of course, *karman* 'action' is and specifically as 'ritual action' is independent confirmation.

neuter plural relative pronoun *yāni* in pāda d, which is the object of 1st sg. *cyavam*. When the speaker asserts *yā́ni cyávam índra íd īśa eṣām* '(for) which (deeds) I move, only Indra is their master'.[193] Whatever the performer does he does so as Indra with the full causal efficacy of Indra. The augmentless *cyávam*,[194] although a hapax, follows the pattern predicted in **Chapter 2**. The indeterminacy in tense allows scenes of the past to bleed into the *adhiyajña* narrative level. Indra says this verse to the Maruts in the past, yet the performer exists in the present claiming the actions he now takes will be Indra's alone. The *íd* following *índra* participates in the theme of Indra's singularity. The exclusive agency of Indra banishes the possibility that a mere human performer is doing something insignificant. In this context, *cyávam* 'I move' may have a sense of 'I enact' much as in English one speaks of passing a motionto refer to the enactment of a new legal statute. Is Indra about to enact a new sacrificial statue?

ṚV I.165.11 *ámandan mā maruta stómo átra / yán me naraḥ śrútiyam bráhma cakrá / índrāya vṛ́ṣṇe súmakhāya máhyaṃ / sákhye sákhāyas tanúve tanū́bhiḥ //*

This praise has exhilarated me here, O Maruts!
Which is a composition you have made worthy for me to hear, O men!
For Indra, the bull, the one of good skirmish, for me
the allies (have made it worth to hear) for the ally,
through their bodies for the body.

In the first pāda of this verse, the speaker asserts that the praise song (*stoma*-) has exhilarated him (*amandat*) here (*atra*). The poetic self-reference is even clearer here, because the adverb *atra* locates it at the present sacrifice.[195] In the second pāda, the speaker tells us about this *stoma,* that it is a *bráhman* 'composition' which his addressees have made worthy for him to hear (*śrutiya*- 'to be heard'). In the first pāda the addreess are the Maruts, while in the second

[193] Since *īśe* is both the 1st and 3rd person sg. middle indicative, both senses 'I do' and 'Indra does' are present.

[194] While *cyavam* is a hapax, its root √*cyu* 'push, budge' surfaces the epithets of Indra *cyutacyut* 'budger of the unbudgable', which presumably a reference to his opening the Vala cave, and the root of noun cyautna seen previously in ṚV X.49.11. It is also cognate with Avestan *šiiaoθna*, and I am suspicious it may have had a ritual application at the Indo-Iranian level like √*kṛ* seems to have in Vedic.

[195] Like ṚV IV.26.5, where the bird has found fame *átra* 'here'.

they are mortal men (*nr̥*-).[196] Recall that the nameless representative of the Maruts speaks much as any Vedic poet praising Indra would. Now, Indra addresses the Maruts collectively but calls them men and tells them they successfully sung him a song. Indra breaks through time, as it were, and speaks to the humans singing at this very sacrifice. He addresses them both as men and as Maruts for they are re-enacting the part of the Maruts in this dramatic scene. The possible mimetic relationship between the Maruts and the men of the clans suggested by Jarrod Whitaker has been discussed already,[197] but the evidence is particularly strong here as the Maruts are doing things appropriate to the men of the clans: singing to Indra and exhilarating him. When he says the praise-song exhilarated him (*amandat*), the verb is the same as that which characterizes the mental exhilaration of Soma. This is another case of a reported experiential state or perception. The speaker performs his private internal state, making it public at the present sacrifice. As this internal state is a proprietary state of Indra, it contributes to the impersonation of Indra. It also represents a normative model for what praise poetry is supposed to do. When Indra is praised, he is supposed to be exhilarated. This verse depicts the idealized outcome of performance and, thus, is ideal for emulation.

Pāda d begins with dat. sg. *sákhye* 'for the ally' followed by the nom pl. *sákhāyas* 'allies' for whom I supply a gapped 3rd pl. perfect *cakrur*, 'they have made', by re-inflecting *cakra* from pāda b. This passage has been treated extensively by Proferes 2007, for it features in his

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[196] A counter theory is that *nr̥* which gives Classical Sanskrit nara 'man' does not, in fact, mean 'man' in Vedic but perhaps a divine male. Verses like this one could give creedence to that position, but in my opinion it is a misunderstanding of the verbal masking of Vedic poetics, in which mortal men are euphemized as Maruts, that would restrict the definition to 'divine male'. As the later Sanskrit *nara* means 'man' and the Greek cognate *anḗr* means 'man', it makes good sense to me to take this *nr̥* as 'man' and place the burden of proving otherwise on those who think it has a more particular semantic. Mayhofer (1996:20) glosses the verbal root *NART* as "tanzen, sich rhythmisch oder mimisch bewegen". The root appears to be an t-extension of *nr̥*. The sense may be comparable to the English usage 'to man the battlestations', which simple means to have all the positions operated by the requisite number of men. In the context of a performance, the various priestly roles played in the sacrifice must be 'manned'. It is easy to see how √*nr̥t* could come to mean 'to perform a role' and become restricted to the dramatic arts of acting and dance.

[197] Whitaker (2011:16)

discussion of the *tānūnaptra* rite.[198] In the etiological myths regarding this ritual pact, the pact-members deposit their bodies into the body of Indra or the house of Varuṇa. For Proferes, this verse is suggestive of an early *tānūnaptra* because of *tanúve tanū́bhiḥ* 'for the body with (their) bodies'. The alliance of the clans is conceptualized as multiple bodies entering into one body.[199] We see this in the many bodies of Agni, which are all the domestic hearths of the clans; their combined light and energy is Agni Vaiśvānara: the fire of clan alliance. For Proferes, the great body here is Indra, a metaphor for the body politic of the alliance. This body is formed by the entrance of the Maruts into it; the bodies of the Maruts represent the human clans.[200] We have already seen the bodies of the Maruts in ṚV I.165.5b *svákṣatrebhis tanúvaḥ śúmbhamānāḥ* 'bodies being beutified by self-command'. The bodies of the Maruts are beautiful due to their independence and autonomy, but in ṚV I.165.6, Indra reveals the Maruts sacrificed their *svadhā*, 'self-determination', when they *sám* + √*dhā*, 'put him together', for the task of slaying the serpent. This notion of forming a pact may well be recapitulated in *tanúve tanū́bhiḥ* it is certain that a pact-like relationship exists between *sakhi*s 'allies'. The idea that Indra's body is a pact may be corroborated by ṚV X.48.11, that *té mā bhadrā́ya śávase tatakṣur*, '(the gods) fashioned me for good vigor', where the gods are the pact-members. What insight does this give us for the verse as a whole then?

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[198] Proferes (2007:51-52): "Though various versions of the Tānūnaptra myth, the outline of the narrative is straightforward. Various separate groups of gods (*deva*), each with its own chief—the social organization of the gods in this context has been described as a federation of clans—refuse to submit to the superiority of another among them, and fall out among themselves. As a result of their lack of solidarity, their enemies, the Asuras, threaten to overcome them. In order to defend themselves effectively against the Asuras' assault, the gods unite. They institute a formal pact among themselves, accomplished by depositing together what are referred to as their "own proper bodies" (*priyā́s tanvàḥ*)."

[199] Proferes (2007:57): "Understanding the use of *tanū* here is an articulation of the idea of a collective body politic composed of the individual bodies would make just as good if not better sense of the expression than reading it as a reflective pronoun. Even if the prosaic interpretation is adopted, however, it can still be argued that the juxtaposition of *sakhi* and *tanū* could not but have recalled to the listener's mind the thematics of the Tānūnaptra, provided of course that this rite or something similar did in fact exist in the Ṛgvedic period."

[200] Proferes points out that in the Kaṭha account of the *tānūnaptra*, Indra is identified with the Sun, the highest fire. See KS 24.9.10 *asau vā āditya indras.*

The human performer asserts himself to be Indra and his audience to be Maruts. The relationship between them of allies is a relationship which Indra enacts between himself and the Marut chorus. It is this relationship which the speaker re-enacts onto his listeners. By re-enacting an Indra who is pleased at the successful performance of the Maruts, the speaker re-enacts the assertion that the present performance is a successful one. It does this in addition to whatever other ritual act the hymn is engaged in. The performance of a harmonious relationship between Indra and the Maruts is being mapped onto the people present at the sacrifice. To realize this harmony in the present, I will demonstrate that the poem creates for itself a mimetic circle where the song establishes its origin and its result, and articulates its logic of re-enactment.

ṚV I.165.12 *evéd eté práti mā rócamānā / ánediyaḥ śráva éṣo dádhānāḥ /*
*saṃcákṣiyā marutaś candrávarṇā / áchānta me chadáyāthā ca nūnám //*

Only in this way do these reflect me (by emulation):
receiving fame and drink as (my) blameless (entourage)
Maruts! Worthy to be seen together and of shining color
you just now seemed (good) to me, and (so) you shall seem (good) to me.

A clever feature of this verse is that *prati,* when taken with *rócamānā* is analyzable as (*práti* + *ruc* 'shine back' = 'reflect'). The placement of 1st sg. enclitic pronoun *mā* produces a sequence *práti mā* which, save for the accent, is identical to inst. sg. f. noun *pratimā́* 'by copy, imitation' which seems to make the case for translating *práti mā rócamānā* as 'reflecting me (by emulation)' substantially stronger. Emulating Indra, they receive *śravas*-, 'fame', and *iṣ*- 'drink' (presumably Soma). As we saw in ṚV IV.26.7, where the bird finds *śravas* at the present performance, the installation of *śravas* here (*ā*) may be a similr case of poetic self-reference, where the fame here is this very praisesong which acts as a charter for the inclusion of the Maruts at the sacrifice. I argued ṚV IV.26.7 was part of a mimetic circle, and I think this verse is too.

In addition to *rócamānā*, from *ruc* 'shine', this verse contains three other roots pertaining to the visual faculty: √*cakṣ* 'to see', √(*ś*)*cand* 'to be bright', and √*chand* 'to appear'. In the close of

**Chapter 1**, I said that although Vedic poetry often uses the language of the visual, this vision not gross physical sight, but to a special 'poetic vision' which allows the poet to see the invisible. It is just this poetic vision which I think the speaker employs in this verse. Recall previously that Indra addressed the *naraḥ* 'men' calling them Maruts. He now asserts these nameless men, who exist at the *adhiyajña* level, reflect him. He addresses them as Maruts and asserts that they are *saṃcákṣiya-*, '(worthy) to be seen together',[201] and *candrávarṇa-* 'of shining colors'. This depiction of their appearance must be understood as their 'poetic appearance'. It is a verbal mask, a luminous mien, placed upon the addressees. By asserting that he sees them this way, they become this way. This illocution is confirmed by the following pair of verbs: 2nd pl. aorist indicative *áchānta* 'you just now seemed' and 2nd pl. present subjunctive *chadáyāthā* 'you (will) seem'. Indra is reporting on his perceptions, he perceives them to be shining and colorful because he sees the invisible truth. The first verb is an aorist and has the aorist's perfective aspect. By praising Indra, he immediately saw them in a positive light. The following verb, however, looks forward to the future. The implication seems to be that because they will praise him again and emulate him again, they will re-appear in this positive light. The aorist indicative and subjunctive is a strategic juxtaposition of the immediate result of this hymn and the result of future re-performances. The verse explains how to restore good relations between Indra and the Maruts in the future. By re-enacting this *stoma*, by playing the becoming Indra and the Maruts, human men will receive a share of the Soma and fame; they will become free from blame.[202]

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[201] I think the sense is, together as one irreproachable warrior band. Consider As for singular *ánediyaḥ*, Oldenberg (1909:162) takes the form as modifying a gapped *gaṇa* 'troop.' Regardless of what singular noun this modifies, the point here is change in number to the singular. Only as a united whole can the Maruts receive their drinks and glory. I suggest that *ánediyaḥ* here has the sense 'free of blame' which means both the active 'not scorning' as rivals might but also 'not being scorned' forgiven for challenging Indra. Recall the use of the root √nid in ṚV X.48.7. This recapitulates the theme of Indra's singularity (*eka*) so dominant in this hymn. If the Maruts are to truly emulate him, they must be as one.

[202] Ultimately, answering the Maruts in ṚV I.165.3d *vocés tán no harivo yát te asmé* "you should tell us what of yours (is) for us." If the audience anticipates that the Maruts will submit and become reflections of Indra, I wonder if this demand for tribute earlier in the hymn is intended to be comical.

ṚV I.165.13 *kó nú átra maruto māmahe vaḥ / prá yātana sákhīm̐r ácha sakhāyaḥ / mánmāni citrā apivātáyanta / eṣā́m bhūta návedā ma ṛtā́nām //*

Who has given to you here, Maruts?
Allies! drive forth here to allies as inspirers of thoughts, remarkable ones!
Become of these (as he is): aware of my truths.

Recall that ṚV I.165.1-3 deploys a series of rhetorical interrogatives to introduce the scene of the Maruts descending upon the sacrifice. As the hymn begins to close, another interrogative appears, signaling a stylistic return to the beginning of the poem. This is a dense and challenging verse to interpret, and its final pāda is particularly cryptic. Similar passages, however, exist elsewhere in the Ṛgveda, for example: ṚV IV.24.4c: *devó bhuvan návedā ma ṛtā́nāṃ* "the god will become aware of my truths." This verse contains a nom. sg. m. s-stem *návedas*.[203] It seems that the phrase seen in ṚV I.165.13d is a redeployment of that in ṚV IV.24.4c with some adjustments. Every other instance of *navedas*-, 'aware', in the Ṛgveda is accompanied by a form of √*bhū*[204] (except for ṚV I.79.1 which contains no finite verb and must be understood as having a gapped copula[205]). So *návedā ma ṛtā́nāṃ* in isolation would probably be understood with a gapped copula: 'he becomes aware of my truths.' In ṚV I.165.13d *návedā* is still a nom. sg. m. which should be understood with gapped material: *eṣā́m bhūta* (*návedaso*),

[203] Grassmann (1872-5:716) believed the with the rare prefix *ná* believed to be cognate with Greek ἀνά 'up, over', but Mayrhofer (1996:26) promotes the hypothesis that návedas is the product of a word-boundary error by which *bhūtaná#vedasaḥ > bhūta#návedasaḥ*. I find the latter hypothesis very problematic. First of all, it requires more errors than word boundary on the part of the redactors of the text: *bhūtaná* would only bear the accent in a dependent clause. This dependent clause would need *vedasaḥ* to be an unaccented vocative. With the re-analysis of the accent on the noun, the redactors of the text are asked to not only false parse two words, but to misidentify the clause as independent and the vocative as a nominative. Secondly, we do not have attested a *bhūtaná vedasaḥ* that could actually be read ambiguously, as ṚV I.165.13 attests *bhūta návedā*, which would have to be built from an a-stem *náveda*** while every other attestation in the Ṛgveda is an s-stem.

[204] *tríś cin no adyā́ bhavataṃ navedasā* (ṚV I.34.1a), *bhúvo návedā ucáthasya návyaḥ* (ṚV V.12.3b), *víśvasya tásya bhavathā návedasaḥ* (ṚV V.55.8c) *návedaso amṛ́tānām abhūma* (ṚV X.31.3d)

[205] *śúcibhrājā uṣáso návedā* (ṚV I.79.1c). At ten syllables, this *triṣṭubh* is missing one syllable. Perhaps a single silent beat housed an understood *bhūt*.

(*devo bhuvan*) *návedā ma ṛtā́nām*. That is the Maruts should become *navedas*-, 'aware', of these *ṛta*s, 'truths', just as the subject is. Who is this implicit subject? For ṚV IV.24.4c, the *deva* is Indra. Indra makes sense here too, as it would resolve ṚV I.165.5, in which the Maruts assert that Indra has become aware of their self-determination (*svadhā́m ánu hí no babhū́tha*). The subject of *návedā* resumes the *ko* from ṚV I.165.13a. It is certainly true that Indra has given something to the Maruts (*kó māmahe* 'who has given'), but this giving is specified by *atra* 'here'. So, the *kó* 'who?' is not any Indra, but an Indra at the present performance. If *ko* is the Indra the poet is impersonating, then *ko* is the performing poet as well. This resolves the series of questions asked in the first two verses of the hymn. The *ko* of this verse is the same as in ṚV I.165.2d: *kó adhvaré marúta ā́ vavarta* 'who has turned the Maruts here to the ceremony?' That the truths which the speaker commands his audience to know are *me* 'mine' and text-deictic *eṣā́m* 'these ones' indicates the *ṛta*s have been mentioned in this very speech act, which suggests that they are the verses of this very hymn.

Pāda b also merits comment, since it reuses the noun *sakhi*- 'ally'. The speaker commands the listeners to drive fort *achā* 'hither' to this present pormance as *sakhāyaḥ*, 'allies', to their *sakhīm̐r* 'allies'. How these two sets of allies relate seems to be laid out in the previous verses, where we learned that the Maruts made the *bráhman* worthy to hear for Indra, *sakhāyaḥ*, 'allies', *sakhye* 'for the ally'. ṚV I.165.11 informed us that these Maruts are here (*atra*), they are men (*naraḥ*), and allies (*sakhāyaḥ*). The alliance in ṚV I.165.11 is being invoked in ṚV I.165.13, so that the speaker can summon the divine Maruts to come here to join their fellow "Maruts" (the humans present at the performance). As Indra enacted this arrangment, he is the only one who can re-enct it.

ṚV I.165.14 *ā́ yád duvasyā́d duváse ná kārúr / asmā́ñ cakré · māniyásya medhā́ /*
*ó ṣú vartta maruto vípram ácha / imā́ bráhmāṇi jaritā́ vo arcat //*

Like when a singer makes a gift-presentation to gift-friend
Mānya's wisdom has been presented to us,
Maruts, turn hither to the inspired one.
These compositions the singer sings for you.

The performer is still impersonating Indra when he says the Mānya's *medhā* has been presented (*ā... cakre*)[206] to us (*asmāñ*). The term *medhā́* is done little justice by English 'wisdom', and although its etymological history[207] is most likely obscured to the Vedic poet, the word is better conceived of as 'received wisdom'. In the performance context, I think this 'received wisdom' is something like a transmitted memory of the scene of ṚV I.165. Its presentation to *asmāñ* 'us' must be the performance by humans for the benefit of Indra and the Maruts. The presentation of this *medhā* is likened to what a singer does for his *duvás*- 'gift-exchange partner' by performing a reciprocal *dúvas* 'gift-exchange presentation'.[208] The gift-exechange is a ritual gift and, like poetry, is a performance. The obligation the gift-exchange imposes occurs at two levels. Indra has given the Maruts a place at the sacrifice, they must reciprocate by being his entourage. At the *adhiyajña* level, this *medhā* is presented to the Maruts, and the Maruts are expected to reciprocate. Indra commands the Maruts to turn here (*vartta...acha*) to the inspired poet, who sings (*arcat*) these compositions (*imā́ bráhmāṇi*) using proximal deixis to refer to the verses just uttered for them, echoing the *bráhmāṇi* and *ā́ vavarta* from ṚV I.165.2 as well as the *arcanti* from ṚV I.165.1. This verse resolves some of the questions of ṚV I.165.2 (*kásya bráhmāṇi jujuṣur yúvānaḥ / kó adhvaré marúta ā́ vavarta* 'whose compositions have the youths savored? who has turned the Maruts here to the sacrifice?') it may be that we now have an answer for *sám mimikṣuḥ / káyā matī́* ('by what thought are the Maruts assembled?'): the *medhā* is that

[206] This reading makes the *yád*-clause self-contained, such that *ā́* is not to be construed with *duvasyā́d*.

[207] The form *medhā́* etymologically from *mn̥s 'thought' + √*dhā* 'put, place' is no doubt an opaque formation to the Vedic poet, but similar notions may still be operative in the Vedic period (as evidenced by the later form *mandhātar*-). At least the father-to-son transmission ritual of the late Vedic period suggests that *manas* can still be the object of *dhā*. ŚāṅkhĀ 4.15(=KausU 2.15): *mano me tvayi dadhānīti pitā / manas te mayi dadha iti putraḥ*"' Let me place my mind in you' (says) the father 'I place your mind in me' (says) the son."

[208] Presumably from *deh3 'give' > *dh3-u, then, by metathesis, *duh3- and from this new root an s-stem *dúvas* which no longer resembles √*dā* 'give' on the surface. See Mayrhofer 1992:734.

thought.[209] In answering these questions and turning the Maruts here, the speaker is creating a something very much like a verbal möbius strip,[210] with the last verse returningto the first verse in perpetual re-enactment.

ṚV I.165.15 *eṣá va stómo maruta iyáṃ gī́r / māndāriyásya māniyásya kāróḥ /*
*ā́ iṣā́ yāsīṣṭa tanúve ʻvayā́ṃ / vidyā́meṣáṃ vṛjánaṃ jīrádānum //*

This is your praise, Maruts, this song of singer Māndārya Mānya
With the drink, may he request détente here for the body.
May we see the drink (and) the settlement whose drops are lively.

As we approach the concluding wish of the hymn, notice that in addition to adverbs of proximal deixis, like *acha,* the *bráhmāṇi*, 'compositions', are themselves qualified as *imā́* 'these ones'. The use of text deictic *eṣá... stómo* 'this praise' refers back to the *stoma* that exhilarated Indra in ṚV I.165.11. That *stoma* is being equated with *iyáṃ gī́r* 'this song'. The speaker is placing the scene of the song in the past and saying that praise sung then is the same as this one (*iyám*) being sung now. While *imā́ bráhmāṇi* refers to a plurality of verses and *iyáṃ gī́r* refers to the song as a unified whole, the strategy of poet self-reference is the same. The final assertion confirms the mimetic circle established earlier in the text. Just as Indra establishes both the original conditions and the conditions of re-enactment for the song, here the song confirms that it has indeed been successfully re-enacted. The speaker asserts that the singer should now request forgiveness[211] for the body (*tanúve*). This body resumes the use of *tanúve* seen earlier where it directly referred to

[209] I do not mean to assert a special close connection between *medhā* and *mati* ıust because they share grammatical gender. The *medhā* is also the solution to *kéna mahā mánasā rīramāma.*

[210] To those unfamiliar with the concept, a möbius strip is a single strip of paper twisted one and connected at the ends. Unlike a circle of paper which has two sides, the outside of the circle and the inside, the möbius strip twists from out to in and in to out creating one surface. I think this is an apt metaphor for the dynamic poetics of performance in this hymn, which dart between its two sides, past narrative and present performance, in an endless loop which connects the end to the beginning.

[211] Following Oldenberg's (1909:165) reading of *ʻvayā́ṃ* as from *ava-yā* 'a going down' of tension and hostility which generally connotes reconciliation or appeasement. The theme of unity and détente is present throughout the hymn.

Indra perhaps as a symbol of a unified body politic. That this body is a social body finds support in the second wish. The speaker wishes, now in the 1st person plural, for drinks and a settlement qualified as 'having quick drops'. That is a presumably the wish to have the Soma drink and a community which amply patronizes the Soma sacrifice. The degree to which pāda d should be intergrated into the main argument of the hymn is unclear, however, as it is a refrain repeated elsewhere.[212]

In summary of this hymn, let us examine the structure of ṚV I.165:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1-2: | The speaker asks who was it that turned the Maruts here. |
| 3-5: | The Maruts interrogate Indra, Indra claims the sacrifice, the Maruts threaten him. |
| 6-10: | Indra peforms an *ahamakāra* and the Maruts with praise after each verse. |
| 11-12: | Indra asserts the men's song has exhilirated him. Indra asserts that the audience reflects him; now and in the future they get a share of the sacrifice. |
| 13-15 | The speaker asks the Maruts who has given to the Maruts, and commands them to be aware of these true verses. He commands the Maruts to turn here to the singer's song, and reciprocate the gift. |

The reciprocation expect of the Maruts is for the sake of the body (tanū), which seems to be a cognitive metaphor for a harmonious society with a unified power structure. In addition to being a verbal mask for singers, the Maruts also appear to represent the numerous and dispersed clans of the Vedic peoples. Their gift to Indra is praise and recognition of his supremacy. The gift-exchange between the Maruts and Indra provides a model for the assembled clans to present their give up their autonomy to the patron of the Soma sacrifice who is the new leader of the alliance. The ritual dimensions of this scene are readily apparent, not only from the explicit 'double

[212] In fact, appears *vidyā́meṣáṃ vr̥jánaṃ jīrádānum* (21x) as the final pāda of a hymn in maṇḍala I. It is a veritable model of conservative scansion: — — — — ∪ ∪ — — — ∪ — —. For *tristubh*s that means only iamb or spondees in the opening, an anapest after the caesura, and then closing trochees. A future project would be to analyze these closing refrains, as I suspect they are highly conservative in meter and often make an optative wish for the success of the performance. If so, this phenomenon may be thought of as 'safety clauses' which poets a reliable dismount to conclude a performance.

scene', but through the use of performative verbs (especially √*kṛ*), poetic self-reference, proximal deicitic pronouns, and the many reported perceptions of the speaker.

I must stress that ritual enactment is not necessarily re-enactment. Fortunately, the logic of re-enactment finds expression everywhere in this hymn. A Marut persona is really only in operation for ṚV I.165.3 anf ṚV I.165.5, where the Maruts defy Indra. This is a set up for Indra's *ahamakāra*, at which point the Maruts behave like human men praising Indra at a sacrifice. Indra, powered up, installs the Maruts as his entourage so long as they reflect him they will have a share. This is true for the human audience as well, they receive glory and Soma so long as they emulate Indra. The speaker emulates Indra in order to re-activate the reciprocal gift-giving between Indra and the Maruts. The heavenly Maruts are called allies and commanded to come to their allies on the ritual ground, the human "Maruts" at the sacrifice. Thus it is the poet re-enacting Indra who turns the Maruts here, restoring the first verse in which the Maruts are turned here, and setting up an endless cycle of mimesis.

## CHAPTER 5

## THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES

In this chapter, we shall see our most hermeneutically challenging cases of the impersonation of Indra. In both ṚV X.27 and ṚV X.28, Indra appears at a sacrifice to riddle those present with the secrets which connect society, the sacrifice and the cosmic order. Here, there is a division between these riddle-verses and the verses used to establish the speaking identity of Indra. The impersonation of Indra, in general, is marked by the deictic traces predicted in **Chapter 2** and confirmed in **Chapter 3** and in **Chapter 4**. The riddling verses, however, are not marked with deictic traces in this way. It seems that we have a form of the division seen in ṚV IV.26, in which one half of the hymn constructs an Indra persona and the other half depended on the audience's awareness of that Indra persona to extend his voice throughout the entirety of the spoken account. These riddles betray nothing that requires Indra to be the speaker, yet the structure of these hymns makes it clear that it is very important that Indra is the source of these riddles. That suggests that authority and legitimacy are being conferred onto these verses by the mere fact of being spoken by Indra. This chapter, then, is a deeper study of identity as an authorizer of the text or as a kind of paratext. Paratexts present text; they take the form of a title page, a colophon, etc. How do oral texts present themselves? Perhaps thinking about speaker identity as a paratext is a probative way of thinking about the phenomenology, and even the ontology of text, in the ancient preliterate societies.[213] By framing this collection of riddles as the speech act of Indra, the identity of Indra permeates them, depicting them as having a divine source and as a unified whole. Recall that in the previous chapter we saw an Indra who was more priest-like and more poet-like than his typical 2nd person portrayal. Here, Indra goes a

[213] For more in depth theorization of the paratextual nature of authorship, attribution, and scenes of transmission see Jacqueline Vayntrub's treatment of ancient Israelite works (Vayntrub 2016 and forthcoming) and Heng Du's treatment of the early Chinese written tradition (forthcoming dissertation, Harvard University).

step further, for he is no mere enthusiast of the Soma sacrifice, but a master and a teacher of sacred arcana and cosmic knowledge.

### 5.1 *ásat sú me jaritaḥ sā́bhivegó* (ṚV X.27)

He will be overflowing for me, singer, when I strive for the pressing patron.
I am striking the no-milk giver, the crooked empty man perverting the truth.
"If I lead together to battle the puffed up and godless with the body,
Back home, I will cook a bulging bull for you, I (will) pour down a fifteenth hot pressing."
I know not that one who says this after having beaten the godless in meeting,
but when they see the meeting (will be) tumultuous, only then do they offer to me two bulls.
When I was in unknown settlements, all were gift-lords of me being (present)
Else I overpower the empty one here even being at rest,
Having seized the foot, I waste him on the mountain.
They do not contain me within a settlement. Neither do the mountains, now that I think about it.
The small-eared fear my sound, it sets dust in motion for days.
He sees here the Indra-less drinking the boiled, cutting shanks, acting as masters for an arrow
or (he sees) those who scorn (him as their) ally, upon them may the rims roll quickly!
You became, you increased, and you reached (your) span!
The one before will break (the prize), the one after will break (the prize).
The two covers do not encompass, the one who has been active
on the far side of this atmosphere.
Dispersed, the cows devoured the stranger's grain.
I spied them roaming together with their cowboy.
The calls of the stranger surrounded them on all sides; how will (their) own master enjoy them?
When I interweave the people's barley-eaters and grain-eaters inside a wide field
Here the yoked will seek the unbinder, but he who desires will yoke the unyoked.
And only here, will you realize my true speech, (that)
I will release together biped and quadruped.
Who here will fight the bull with women? Out, his prize, I, the unbeatable one, shall divvy.
He whose daughter is eyeless, who knowing she is blind, permits (her engagement)?
Which of the two unleashes wrath against him?
The one who conveys her, or the one who requests her (as bride)?
How more pleased is the maiden than the groom by a choice gift from bachelors.
A good maiden becomes decorated when she wins for herself her own ally among the people.
At the foot he has swallowed, he eats what he faces. He has set head with head as protection
Seated, he burns upright in the lap. Facing down he goes along the upstretched Earth.
Tall is the shadeless and leafless steed. The mother has stopped; untied, the embryo eats.
Licking another's yearling she moos; by what being does the milch cow deposit her udder?
Seven heroes came up from below, eight from above they joined.
Nine in the west came with grain sacks, ten in the east cross the back of the rock.
One dark red one (is) common to the ten. Having circumambulated him,
they send him to (their) intention. To (her) breasts the satisfied mother bears
the well-placed embryo who wants for nothing.
A fat ram the heroes cooked for themselves; dice were cast to play.
Two roam the high dune within the waters, bearing the filter, purifying.
Shrieking, they dispersed from each other, for some will cook, for half will not cook.
"This one here," heavenly Savitar said that to me.
"Only he whose wood and ghee are food will win."
I spied the wagon-train travelling from afar, rolling without wheel autonomously.
It hounds the generations of the stranger's folks, diminishing (their) tails, (it is) ever newer.

These two oxen belonging to the Killer, yoked for me,
Don't drive them away, wait a moment!
The waters reach his target, and he is become the Destroyer under the Sun.
This here, which is the breaker, has twirled many times
below the fullness and height of the Sun.
Fame, surely, yet there is another beyond this: that which the elders cross without wavering.
Bound at tree after tree the cow will cry, then man-eating birds will fly.
All this world will fear (even) while pressing for Indra and striving for the seer.
The first of the gods stood at the measuring, the next of them arose from the trenches,
Three water-based ones heat the Earth, two convey a babbler to fullness.
This is your Life (and your Death!) Understand that!
Never hide something like this at the meeting!
When the Sun makes itself visible it hides the Mist.
His foot is released like from a garment.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

Jamison and Brereton characterize ṚV X.27 as "one of the most obscure and also one of the most intriguing hymns in the Ṛgveda."[214] The chief source of its interpretive difficulties are its many riddles. Even without solving them, it should prove interesting to attempt to understand why impersonating Indra was evidently a necessary precondition to performing these riddles. While any given individual riddle may have little bearing on my thesis, a relevance emerges from the sum of its parts. No better pāda could open this hymn than *ásat...abhivegó* for this poem 'will be overflowing'. What follows is an overwhelming flood of poetic riddles that seem to spill out of its container and fill up the cosmos.

ṚV X.27.1 *ásat sú me jaritaḥ sā́bhivegó / yát sunvaté yájamānāya śíkṣam /*
*ánāśīrdām ahám asmi prahantā́ / satyadhvŕ̥taṃ vr̥jināyántam ābhúm //*

He will be overflowing for me, singer, when I strive for the pressing patron.
I am striking the no-milk giver, the crooked empty man perverting the truth.

The first verse of ṚV X.27 suggests impersonation, not by naming the speaker but by addressing the *jaritar*, 'singer', in the vocative. As the poet is the *jaritar*, this creates distance between the verbal mask and the performer's mundane human identity. The speaker strives (*śíkṣam*) for the

[214] Jamison and Brereton 2014:1412

sake of the patron of the sacrifice (*yajamāna*-) just as a priest does. The second diptych returns Indra to his martial aspect. He asserts he is *prahantar*-, 'striking', but whom does he strike? Those who are not generous sacrificers (*anāśīrdā*-, 'not giving milk-mixture', *ābhu*- 'the empty (handed man)'. It should be noted here that the milk mixture (*āśir*) is most likely a mixture containing Soma.[215]

ṚV X.27.2 *yádī́d aháṃ yudháye saṃnáyāni / ádevayūn tanúvā śū́śujānān /*
*amā́ te túmraṃ vr̥ṣabhám pacāni / tīvráṃ sutám pañcadaśáṃ ní ṣiñcam //*

"If I lead together to battle the puffed up and godless with the body,
Back home, I will cook a bulging bull for you,
I (will) pour down a fifteenth hot pressing."

Scholars place ṚV X.27.2 in the voice of the addressed *jaritar*, 'singer', but I think this is incorrect. For the speaker promises that after Indra has given him success in battle, he will sacrifice a bull to him back home. This is not what Indra wishes to hear; sacrifices are offered before the gods act on behalf of their devotees. Instead, I will attempt to show that this is Indra paraphrasing the false promise of poet who will not keep his word once the battle is over. To do so, I must analyze some of the syntax of this verse.

The use of *tanúvā* here, however, is usually treated as a frozen formula with *śūśujāna*-.[216]

[215] Mayrhofer (1992:178) does not analyze this as coming from *āśir*-, and instead from *āśiṣ* 'wish' (<*ā* + zero grade of *śās). This does not follow for me. We have similar forms attested (*āśīrvant*-, 'having mixed milk', and *āśīrta*- 'mixed with milk'), and in this particular verse there is mention of something *abhivega*- 'overflowing, spilling over' which must refer to the generous offering of Soma which motivates Indra to strive for the sake of the patron. So far, Soma has played a significant role in ritually becoming Indra. The presence of Soma was transparent in ṚV IV.26 and ṚV X.48-49. In ṚV I.165 it is a little more ambiguous as it is the Maruts *stoma* 'praise song' which exhilarates Indra (√*mad*) but hints that Soma is being drunk persist by reference to the *iṣ*, 'drink', portioned to the Maruts and used to call the Maruts in the final verse (*ā́ iṣā́ yāsīṣṭa tanúve ʿvayā́ṃ* "with the drink may he request détente for the body".

[216] Geldner (1951:165) compares the colligation of *tanúvā śūśujānān* with ṚV X.34.6 arguing that "In beiden Stellen bezeichnet es die zur Schau getragene Zuversicht." His analysis of ṚV X.27.2 then, rests on a reading of ṚV X.34.6 where *tanúvā śū́śujānaḥ* constitutes a formula, so fixed, in fact, must this formula be that in ṚV X.27.2 *tanúvā* cannot inflect with the expected plural *tanūbhiś śū́śujānān** which would accompany the reading 'puffed up with their own bodies'.

In my appraisal of Geldner's evidence, I find little that convinces me that *tanúvā* and *śū́śujānaḥ* form a syntagm let alone a stock formula or frozen colligation.[217] Since I do not take *tanúvā śū́śujānaḥ* of ṚV X.34.6 as a fixed formula, I cannot use it as evidence that the *tanúvā śū́śujānān* of ṚV X.27.2 is also a fixed formula.[218]

Which is to say that the verse must be interpreted in its own context, particularly in light of **Chapter 4**. We see here, as we saw in ṚV X .48-49, the connecting of two narrative levels effected by a juxtaposition of a ritual and a martial setting. The speaker asserts he will assemble for battle with a *tanū-*, 'body', alongside asserting that he will cook a bull for Indra and pour Soma. Notice the ambiguity of the recipient of the Soma in pāda d, for the speaker says *ní ṣiñcam* 'I pour down' presumably in offering to Indra but also quaffing the hot drink himself. Like *śíkṣam,* from the previous verse, *ní ṣiñcam* must be read with present value. I do not think *ní ṣiñcam* is being used as a real performative here, however, because Indra is paraphrasing a poet. It may however be a parody or an imitation of performative speech. In paraphrasing a disingenuous poet, Indra may be using the verb as a mock performative. The more important observation here, is that the speaker presents a relationship between martial endeavors and

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[217] The object of comparison is ṚV X.34.6ab: *sabhā́m eti kitaváḥ pr̥chámāno jeṣyā́mī́ti tanúvā śū́śujānaḥ* "The gambler goes questing to the assembly, (saying) 'I will win!' to myself, being puffed up." It is just as likely that *tanúvā* 'by himself' here goes with *jeṣyā́mī́ti* 'I will win!' rather than a question associated with *pr̥chámāno* 'questing' across the pāda boundary. Other uses of *pr̥chámāna-* in the Ṛgveda are not self-questioning, but are paired with a verb of motion: ṚV VII.1.23d: *yáṃ sūrír arthī́* ***pr̥chámāna éti*** "To whom the enterprising patron goes questing."; ṚV IX.97.34c: *gā́vo* ***yanti*** *gópatim* ***pr̥chámānāḥ*** "The cows go questing to the cow-herd."; ṚV IX.97.35b: *sómaṃ víprā matíbhiḥ* ***pr̥chámānāḥ*** "Soma do the inspired (go) questing with (their) thoughts."; ṚV X.85.14a: *yád aśvinā* ***pr̥chámānāv áyātaṃ*** "When the Aśvins drove questing." Notice all cases of present middle participle are paired with a verb of motion from √*i* 'go' or √*yā* 'drive' except ṚV IX.97.35b, but we can understand a gapped *yanti* here on the basis of the previous verse ṚV IX.97.34d *sómaṃ* ***yanti*** *matáyo vāvaśānā́ḥ* 'Soma do bellowing thoughts go (questing)'. Therefore, a better read of ṚV X.34.6 is to respect the pāda boundary and take pāda a *sabhā́m* ***eti*** *kitaváḥ* ***pr̥chámāno*** as one unit "the gambler goes questing to the assembly" and pāda b as one unit *jeṣyā́mī́ti tanúvā śū́śujānaḥ* "(saying) 'I will win!' to myself, being puffed up." Compare ṚV VII.86.2ab *utá sváyā* ***tanúvā sáṃ vade*** *tát kadā́ nú antár váruṇe bhuvāni* "and I say to my own body: 'when will I be inside Varuṇa?'

[218] The adjacency of the two words must be explained in some other way. I think their respective positions is more easily explained as a product of preference in *triṣṭubh*s for a caesura which scans ∪ ∪ — — and a cadence which scans — ∪ — — than an inherited formula.

sacrificial ones. What kind of relationship exactly?

Again, it is not clear what singular *tanū* means in this verse, however in the context of *saṃnáyāni*, which Grassmann claims can take an instrumental with the sense that "jemand [acc.] womit [instr.] beschenken,"[219] we might want to consider a more idiomatic alternative especially since the accent does not reside on *saṃ* but on the verbal stem, suggesting lexicalization. 'The body' referred to here may be, as we saw in ṚV I.165 referring to a single political body assembled from smaller social groups.[220] This single united body politic is represented in performance as Indra who, as chief of the gods, is a proxy of the patron of the sacrifice who aspires to be sovereign of such a body politic. It would be appropriate for the *tanū* 'the body' to be Indra for two reasons. First, he can fight the godless like no one. Second, the cooking of a bull and the pressing of Soma is a prerequisite to bringing Indra to the table. The social institution of the sacrifice creates the social occasion which assembles the dispersed clans in one place, forming them into a public which is conceived of as a body. Therefore, the sacrifice must precede the battle to assemble the men of the clans into one allied fighting force which is nothing other than Indra's body. Cooking a bull later, back home, represents a chronologically inverse order of events, in which an allied fighting force goes into battle before the event which brokers the alliance.

ṚV X.27.3 *nā́hám táṃ veda yá íti brávīti / ádevayūn samáraṇe jaghanvā́n /*
*yadā́vā́khyat samáraṇam ṛ́ghāvad / ā́d íd dha me vṛ́ṣabhā́ prá bruvanti //*

I know not that one who says this after having beaten the godless in meeting
but when they see the meeting (will be) tumultuous,
only then do they offer to me two bulls.

When Indra says, "I do not know the one who says this (*íti*)," it places ṚV X.27.2 in the voice of Indra. Thus, we should not conceive of the mimesis of Indra as having been disrupted in ṚV

[219] Grassmann (1873:738)

[220] Again, a line of argumentation which follows Proferes appraisal of ṚV I.165 as reflecting an early form of the *tānūnaptra* rite.

X.27.2 and then resumed in ṚV X.27.3. Rather the performer has impersonated Indra throughout. ṚV X.27.2 does not represent a moment when the poet removes the verbal mask of Indra, but rather Indra paraphrases a priest who dos things in the improper sequence as a negative example. In so doing, he can frame the infidelity of the victorious and the generosity of the desperate as not just as contemptible but as ignorant of ritual. Why is this relevant? For one, because Indra is demonstrating his insight into the human condition. He understands people: the limits of their generosity and the effects of fear on thrift. This kind of wisdom is a characteristic of the mythological sovereign.[221] Yet Indra's upcoming riddles about society and the cosmos also make sacrifice the key to understanding humanity and the universe. I think the presentation is an attempt to articulate a notion of a proper sovereign as not just generous towards priests and poets but a poet-priest himself.

ṚV X.27.4 *yád ájñāteṣu vṛjáneṣu áśaṃ / víśve sató maghávāno ma āsan /*
*jināmi vét kṣéma ā́ sántam ābhúm / prá táṃ kṣiṇām párvate pādagṛ́hya //*

When I was in unknown settlements, all were gift-lords of me being (present)
Else I overpower the empty one here even being at rest,
Having seized the foot, I waste him on the mountain.

A frequent topic of Indra hymns is the anxiety that his absence is due to his presence at a rival's sacrifice. The cleverness of this verse is that Indra admits that, yes, he does visit other communities both as guest of the generous and to destroy the ungenerous. This continues the main topic of Indra's lecture: generosity. It also ameliorates the absence of Indra, since his absence could mean he is destroying a stingy rival. He overpowers him just as he destroys the one on the mountain (*táṃ... párvate*), perhaps an allusion to Vṛtra who ungenerously penned up the waters. Notice the absence of the augment on *kṣiṇām* 'I waste, destroy' patterns with the

[221] The readiest example to a Western audience is the Biblical figure of Solomon, but the archetypical 'wise king' in mythological narratives is frequently made culturally interior by being portrayed as ethical, intelligent, and insightful. In the Sanskrit tradition, figures like Janaka, Yuddhiṣṭhira, and Vikramāditya all conform to this pattern.

characteristic use of the injunctive, in which an action which took place in the past is made temporally ambiguous so that it can occur here at this present performance occasion. Just as Indra destroyed Vṛ̥tra, the poet-priest "destroys the one of the mountain" someone on high who acts ungenerously like Vṛ̥tra.[222]

ṚV X. 27.5 *ná vā́ u mā́m̥ vr̥jáne vārayante / ná párvatāso yád ahám manasyé /*
*máma svanā́t kr̥dhukárṇo bhayāta / evéd ánu dyū́n kiráṇaḥ sám ejāt //*

They do not contain me within a settlement.
Neither do the mountains, now that I think about it.
The small-eared fear my sound, it sets dust in motion for days.

This verse continues the anxiety that Indra is beholden to a rival. Indra assures his audience that he cannot be checked or restrained by any one community. While Indra receives the offerings of many, he is not beholden to any *exclusively*. The mountain both represents a geographically broader range than the settlement, but also an object of comparison for Indra's great size. This is a cunning way of circumventing the absence of Indra by not denying it, but rather encouraging generous sacrifice to attract his presence which is, of course, the livelihood of the poet-priest. The speaker says the small-eared fear his sound (*svana-*); perhaps their small ears imply he makes a loud noise too big for them. The use of verb (*manasyé*) to represent Indra's inner mental state is interesting too; it conforms to the pattern of reported perception being located in the present at the *adhiyajña* level. Up until now, we are missing either an explicit identification of the speaker with Indra (as we had in Ṛ̥V I.165 and Ṛ̥V X.48-49) or references to his iconic manly deeds (as was the case in Ṛ̥V IV.26). The suspense is released in the following verse:

[222] The form *pādagŕ̥hya* 'having grabbed him by the foot' is a bit mysterious to me, since snakes like Vṛ̥tra do not have feet (Ṛ̥V I.32.7a *apā́d ahastó apr̥tanyad índram* 'He fought Indra without feet without hands'). Thompson (1995:9) argued that though "*pāda* is not attested with any metrical sense whatsoever in early Vedic, it is clearly attested as a unit of measure, e.g. at Ṛ̥V X.90.3--4, where together with *tripā́d*, it adds up to the four "quarters" or "portions" of the primordial *puruṣa* (these stanzas are frequently compared to Ṛ̥V I.164.45, with its four portions"—*padā́ni*—of Vāc)." Perhaps the sense is simply 'fraction', and Indra destroys him after taking the stingy patron's insufficient offering.

ṚV X.27.6 *dárśan nú átra śr̥tapā́m̐ anindrā́n / bāhukṣádaḥ śárave pátyamānān / ghr̥ṣúṃ vā yé ninidúḥ sákhāyam / ádhy ū nú eṣu paváyo vavr̥tyuḥ //*

He sees here the Indra-less drinking the boiled, cutting shanks,
acting as masters for an arrow or (he sees) those who scorn (him as their) ally.
Upon them may the rims roll quickly.

This verse represents the capstone of a speech about generosity, breaking the impersonation here to bring the speech to its resolution. The speaker asserts that the chariot's tread should crush those who hold symposium without Indra or who scorn him as an ally. The adjective *anindra-* 'indra-less' is the first mention of Indra at all in this hymn.[223] The familiar themes of scorning and alliance are in this verse, but the tension is heightened by *dárśan nú átra* 'he sees here'. The speaker asserts that Indra is watching this very performance. In doing so, he is reporting that Indra's visual experience is here and thus so is Indra.

One of the interesting features about ṚV X.27 is its length. At 24 verses, it is 9 verses longer than the next longest hymn in which Indra is the speaker (ṚV I.165). This length means it has numerous sections. Jamison and Brereton divide this hymn down the middle into ṚV X.27.1-12 and ṚV X.27.13-24. They subdivide this first half into three sections: 1-7, 8-10, and 11-12.[224] I would divide this hymn slightly differently. In my estimation, 1-6 constitutes one section in which Indra gives a speech about generosity and raises the anxiety that Indra can and does visit other sacrifices. The section closes when the poet wishes the ungenerous be destroyed.[225] This first section seems inaugural, it appears to be an impersonation of Indra whose primary purpose

[223] The sense 'without Indra' is probably, but it is also possibly 'non-Indras'. Consider the analysis by Kuiper (1983:222) "If however our conclusion is correct that the human *maghavan* personifies Indra, the question arises whether it is probable that persons could have impersonated their god and re-enacted his creative act at any other time but during festivals of a definite character, which then must have celebrated the god's primordial act." Recall ṚV X.27.4b *víśve sató maghávāno ma āsan* "All were gift-lords of me being (present)". Are these *maghavan*s emulating Indra? Are the *anindra* who merely *śárave pátyamānān* "act as masters for an arrow" specifically not emulating Indra? Recall from ṚV I.165.12a that Indra tells the Maruts they reflect him, and in ṚV X.48.7d the speaker says *kím mā nindanti śátravo anindrāḥ* "why do these *anindra* rivals scorn me?"

[224] Jamison and Brereton (2014:1412)

[225] Possibly as warning being issued to the poet's own patron.

is to empower Indra through *ātmastuti*. Having done so, ṚV X.27.7 functions as a transition between Indra's first speech and his second.

ṚV X.27.7 *ábhūr u aúkṣīr ví u ā́yur ānaḍ / dárṣan nú pū́rvo áparo nú darṣat /*
*duvé paváste pári tā́m ná bhūto / yó asyá pāré rájaso vivéṣa //*

You became, you increased, and you reached (your) span!
The one before will break (the prize), the one after will break (the prize).
The two covers do not encompass,
the one who has been active on the far side of this atmosphere.

This verse begins with this series of three aorist indicatives (*ábhūr, aúkṣīr* and *ví... ānaḍ*) which seem performative and thus refer to events occurring in the *adhiyajña* frame. These aorists conform to the usage of the aspect described in **Chapter 2** which promoted the argument of Dahl that the perfective aspect of aorists, which produce completed actions in the immediate past, disposed it towards performative verbs. If these aorists signify the immediate result of performing this Indra *ātmastuti*, then Indra has appeared here, increased in power, and attained a full span as the direct consequence of that *ātmastuti*. A sort of cause and effect is suggested whereby the performance of ṚV X.27.1-6 produces on Indra the effect of becoming (=appearing), increasing in strength, and attaining a lifespan (*ā́yur)*. The *āyus*-, '(life)span', may also be a reference to the duration of his presence during the ritual performance. Following this string of aorists are two instances of the 3rd sg. active aorist subjunctive *darṣat*. On the basis of similar passages,[226] I interpret this 'breaking' to indicate winning a prize. This may be because a

[226] A few examples in which something is broken like a fortress: ṚV VIII.32.5: *sá gór áśvasya ví vrajám / mandānáḥ somiyébhiyaḥ / púraṃ ná śūra darṣasi //* "You there, being exhilarated, break open the pen of cow and horse for your fellow Soma drinkers, like a hero (breaks open) a fortress.", ṚV VIII.6.23 *ā́ na indra mahī́m íṣam / púraṃ ná darṣi gómatīm / utá prajā́ṃ suvī́riyam //* "For us, Indra, break here the great refreshment, like a fortress full of cows, and offspring and good manliness.". A few examples in which something is broken like a prize or booty: ṚV V.39.03d *ā́ vā́jaṃ darṣi sātáye /* "Here you break the prize to be won". ṚV VIII.033.03b *vā́jaṃ darṣi sahasríṇam /* "You break the prize which holds the thousand.", ṚV IX.68.07d *nṛ́bhir yató vā́jam ā́ darṣi sātáye /* "From which, with men, you break the prize to be won." ṚV X.69.3d *sá vā́jaṃ darṣi sá ihá śrávo dhāḥ /* "You (here) break the prize, here you establish fame."

barrier blocking access to the prize is broken or perhaps the operative metaphor is that breaking up a collection of wealth allows it to be re-distributed. So, I think rather than take pāda b as referring to opponents who will shatter,[227] I would argue that aorist *darṣat* has a ritual referent just as the previous aorists do. The one before (*pū́rva-*) would be a previous Indra who appeared at an ancient performance, while the one after (*ápara-*) is that Indra who will appear at a future performance and break (that is seize and distribute the prize).[228] This agrees with the contents of pāda a, which establishes that Indra has appeared here, grown strong, and attained a lifespan. The *pūrva-* 'prior' and *apara-* 'next' maybe refer to previous and future sacrifices or sacrificial patrons, or even performances of this hymn. Whatever the references, it certainly is engaged in a consideration of the past and the future as identical iterations of the same action of breaking. That is an important observation when examining the text for evidence of mimetic circles.

The following verse opens the second speech. The poet asks Indra a question, so that he might answer it. Now that the first speech has powered Indra up, and his identity as speaker secured, this Indra is free to demonstrate his knowledge.

ṚV X.27.8 *gā́vo yávam práyutā aryó akṣan / tā́ apaśyaṃ sahágopāś cárantīḥ /*
*hávā íd aryó abhítaḥ sám āyan / kíyad āsu svápatiś chandayāte //*

Dispersed, the cows devoured the stranger's grain.
I spied them roaming together with their cowboy.
The calls of the stranger surrounded them on all sides;
how will (their) own master enjoy them?

The use of interrogative *kíyad* 'to what extent?' poses a question, but not one which can be answered simply. The use of *apaśyaṃ* 'I spied' suggests the speaker has an enigmatic vision to share as the verb appears in other riddle contexts.[229] The operative metaphor here is that the

[227] As in Jamison and Brereton 2014:1415.

[228] Perhaps as imagined judge of a poetic contest or as one who re-enacts the breaking open of the Vala cave and the release of its treasures.

[229] The first person imperfect *apaśyaṃ* 'I spied' is attested in the famous riddle hymn no fewer than three times, and verse I.164.31 has particular lexical resonances with X.27.8: *ápaśyaṃ gopā́m ánipadyamānam / ā́ ca párā ca pathíbhiś cárantam / sá sadhrī́cīḥ sá víṣūcīr vásāna / ā́*

people are like cattle; when they disperse, they become stolen away by the stranger (*ari-*). [230] The *ari* is not culturally exterior by any means, but he does seem to be a man from another *viś-* 'clan'. Clans seem to have engaged in seasonal skirmish usually in the form of the cattle raid. Rather than seize by force, this stranger uses calls (*háva-*) to rustle cattle, which suggests perhaps a rival sacrificer forming alliances. As the poet sees these cattle together with their cowboy (*sahágopā*), the suggestion may be the that the question is for the cowboy who knows these cows best. Based on ṚV I.164.31, I take that cowboy (*gopā-*) to be Indra. Just as the cowboy knows the behavior of the cows, Indra knows the behavior of the clans. The anxiety of the question revolves around the dispersal of the clans following their season of living in closer quarters.[231] Will the old status quo persist? Or will the "cows", the folk of the clans, be seduced by a new boss? We might say these are seasonal as well as social anxieties, and Indra asserts in the next two verses (ṚV X.27.9-10) that he can re-order social hierarchies and that he will explain how. As we shall see, however, his explanation is a series of opaque riddles about the sacrifice.

ṚV X.27.9 *sáṃ yád váyaṃ yavasā́do jánānām / aháṃ yavā́da uruájre antáḥ /*
*átrā yuktó avasātā́ram ichād / átho áyuktaṃ yunajad vavanvā́n //*

When I interweave the people's barley-eaters
and grain-eaters inside a wide field
Here the yoked will seek the unbinder,
but he who desires will yoke the unyoked.

The answer to the previous verse is also a riddle. Recall the conceit of ṚV X.27.8 is that Indra is a cowboy and the clans are cattle who flock to whomever calls them with the promise of food.

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*varīvarti bhúvaneṣu antáḥ //* "I spied the restless cowboy wandering hither and yon along the trails, dressing as those coming together, as those departing, he travels among beings." This cowboy who can appear as someone arriving as a gather and then leaving sounds a lot to me like Indra, the desired guest.

[230] See Proferes (2007:17) "When the clans united under a mutually agreed-upon leader, not only did they pledge allegiances to him, but they also created a pact among themselves.

[231] See Proferes (2007:17) "The process of the alternating unification and dispersal of the clans has been connected to the settlement pattern of the Vedic groups. This was characterized by alternating periods of more or less fixed habitation (*kṣéma*) and mobilization (*yóga*)."

Indra responds by saying he will interweave the eaters of grass and the eaters of grain in a wide field.[232] That this field is here (*átrā*) 'here' is significant. The field into which cows and men are placed is the sacrificial grounds of this present performance. By this, the speaker asserts that the totality of society is present at this sacrifice. This is the social occasion at which the yoked (*yukta-*) will seek the unbinder (*avasātar-*) and the one who wishes will yoke (*yunajat*) the unyoked (*ayukta-*). We are to understand that the sacrifice is where the social hierarchy is reorganized at will (notice verbs of volition: √*icch*, 'seek', and *vavanvaṃs-*'having desired').[233] Just as the yoking of cattle indicates a transference of wealth, the yoking of men, which indicates acquiring their fealty and support, can be conceived of as a transference of social capital.

Most interesting here is the verb of the 1st person *saṃ...vayaṃ* 'I weave together'. Faced with the anxiety of society's dispersal, Indra says he can re-integrate society. In so doing, he uses pastoral metaphors of yoking and unbinding, but these also participate in his weaving metaphor. In a metaphor in which society is a woven textile, yoking and unbinding may refer to the threads on the loom which are being connected or separated.[234] Indra can re-weave the image. Poetic speech is often conceived as being woven. Jamison and Brereton (2014:70) note that the "poets

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[232] The distinction between *yavasā́d* 'grass-eater' and *yavā́d* 'grain-eater' may recapitulate that famous Indo-European merism [men + cattle]. A merism is a synecdoche in which a totality is expressed by contrasting parts. For example, "he searched high and low" = "he searched everywhere". In this case, the merism [men + cattle] refers to the totality of a pastoral society. In this case, the grass-eaters are the cattle and the grain-eaters are the men. The speaker's assertion that 'I weave together... into a wide field' suggests he places cows and men into a safe settled space conforming the usage Watkins noticed, that [men + cattle] is frequently the object of a verb meaning [protect]. That this is the proper reading is confirmed by *dvipā́d* 'biped' and *cátuṣpād* 'quadruped' in the following verse, and suggestive that speaker is making tacit assertions about social structure. See Chapter 17 of Calvert Watkins' seminal book *How to Kill a Dragon* (1995).

[233] The impulse for sacrifice is of course a wish, and it is known as late as the Classical period that (*jyotiṣṭomena*) *svargakāmo yajeta*. Desire is also the germ of poetry and, indeed, the entire universe as ṚV X.129.4ab declares: *kā́mas tád ágre sám avartatā́dhi mánaso rétaḥ prathamáṃ yád ā́sīt* 'in the beginning, desire turned that which was the first seed of mind'. It bears mentioning here that the rhetoric of volition tells us nothing historical. The phenomenon of gift-exchange, first observed by Mauss, is cross-culturally characterized by the rhetoric of volition despite being functionally obligatory.

[234] See **Chapter 6** for a discussion on threads as a cognitive metaphor for patrilineal lineage.

frequently mention weaving (e.g., I.115.4), which is similar to the intricate patterns of hymn composition and sacrifice (VI.9.2–3, X.101.2, 130)."[235] When Indra conceives of social integration through the language of weaving, he is suggesting that he will do so at the sacrifice.

ṚV X.27.10 *átréd u me maṃsase satyám uktáṃ / dvipác ca yác cátuṣpāt saṃsṛjáni / strībhír yó átra vṛ́ṣaṇam pṛtanyā́d / áyuddho asya ví bhajāni védaḥ //*

And only here, will you realize my true speech,
(that) I will release together biped and quadruped.
Who here will fight the bull with women,
out, his prize, I, the unbeatable one, shall divvy.

Indra praises himself as undefeatable, depicting his opponent as someone who would fight the bull with women in pāda c. This statement may be an attempt by the speaker to emasculate to his opponent by depicting his allies as women. I think it is better to analyze it as a metaphor in which the women refer to the rivers.[236]

The presence of female antagonists assaulting a symbol of male sexuality reminds me of the phase of the *aśvamedha* ritual when four women exchange provocative *brahmodya* riddles with the four main priests. I suspect that these four women and the horse represent the totality of the Vedic peoples, often described as the *pañcajana* 'the five(fold) folk'. This adjective must represent how the Vedic peoples understood their civilization as having a center defined by the current sovereign; the rest of the populace dwelt in the four cardinal directions relative to the center. The *aśvamedha* is a grand sovereignty ritual whereby a horse, as proxy for the king,

[235] It is not only similar in intricacy, but beautiful woven textiles are luxury goods which only elites could afford. The comparison is a strategy by which poets argue that poetry too is luxury good which, like textiles, contains imagery, and, like textiles, fetches a high price.

[236] Consider ṚV V.30.9a *stríyo hí dāsá áyudhāni cakré* "for the *dāsa* made (his) women (his) weapons" in light of ṚV I.32.11ab *dāsápatnīr áhigopā atiṣṭhan / níruddhā ā́paḥ paṇíneva gā́vaḥ* / "The wives of the *dāsa*, having a snake for a cowboy, the waters stood obstructed like cows by a Paṇi". This verse compares the obstruction of the waters by Vṛtra to the obstruction of cows by Paṇis in the Vala myth. They describe the waters as *dāsápatnī* 'the wives of the Dāsa' and thus depict Vṛtra as a *dāsa.* I think this suggests that the women of ṚV V.30.9a are likewise the flooding rivers weaponized against Indra.

wanders his subjugated neighbors' terrain freely and then is sacrificed. Just as the victorious sovereign is represented in the *aśvamedha* by the horse, the four women are metaphors representing the four conquered cardinal directions which themselves are metonyms for the clans that dwell to the North, South, East, and West of the conqueror. These total five, summing up to the *pañcajana*. I do not wish to insinuate this is a ritual reference to a proto-*aśvamedha*, but simply point out that 'attacking the bull with women' may be a more complex polemic than previously realized. Perhaps this metaphor conceives of hegemony in terms of masculinity and spatial centrality and political inferiority in terms of femininity and spatial periphery,[237] a cognitive metaphor which the later *aśvamedha* seems to recapitulate. Rather than the four directions, however, here the women may be the seven rivers which divide the Vedic world.[238]

In ṚV X.27.10 the use of *átra...u* resumes the previous *átrā* giving the sense 'here...and only here' showing a close connection between ṚV X.27.8-10 and an extension of the same conceited metaphor.[239] He asserts his true speech (*satyám uktáṃ*) is one which can be realized *átra* 'here'. Notice that the verb *maṃsase* 'you will realize' comparable to demanding the audience's attention,[240] The form *satyám uktáṃ* is etymologically related to *sūkta-* and may be semantically homologous.[241] If so, it means the poetic speech he is performing here, at the present sacrifice. Therefore, this *satyám uktáṃ* must refer to either this very hymn in toto or to

[237] The term *vr̥ṣan-* is by default an uncastrated male bovine, but sometimes we see *vr̥ṣan- aśva-* 'bull horse' which seems to indicate a stallion. See also Jamison 1996 for a treatment of X.86, in which she reads the hymn as a mock-*aśvamedha* and the figure of the *vr̥ṣākapi* as the mock-sacrificial horse. I think the point is that the *vr̥ṣan-* is the upper limit of virility and masculinity in a large powerful animal: an 'alpha' if you will. Perhaps the same cognitive metaphor operative in the *aśvamedha*, which conceives of geopolitical power at the intersection of both masculinity and centrality, is operative ṚV X.27.10.

[238] Recall the discussion of ṚV X.49.9a *aháṃ saptá sraváto dhārayaṃ vr̥ṣā* "I, the bull, hold the seven streams".

[239] See Klein 2016 on the use of particle *u.*

[240] Comparable to the verbal forms seen in the Vǫluspá and the Gāθās discussed in **2.5.1**.

[241] *$h_1$sn̥tyo- and *$h_1$su both from *h1es- 'to be'.

the remainder of the hymn.

Recall that Indra began this speech in response to the question of ṚV X.27.8d *kíyad āsu svápatiś chandayāte* 'how will their own master enjoy them?' How will last year's sovereign maintain his position? While ṚV X.27.9-10 does not constitute a direct answer, Indra is essentially saying come to the sacrifice and find out. He says we will weave together society (*sam...vayam*). When everyone is assembled here (he uses *átra* 3x in ṚV X.27.9-10), you will realize (*maṃsase*) the following true speech (*satyám uktáṃ*). While Indra does not directly say that the *svapati* can regain his position of power among his people through sacrifice, he does say the sacrifice is where the answer will be revealed.[242] The text then pivots to a series of riddles about the sacrifice. As we shall see, all these riddles make knowledge of the sacrifice synonymous with knowledge about society and cosmos. No individual riddle is a direct answer to the question posed by *kíyat*, but as each verse concerns the sacrifice, and specifically must be solved through sacrificial knowledge, the answer may be that the knowledge of the secrets of the sacrifice itself gives one power over the social rivals and cosmic forces.

ṚV X. 27.11 *yásyānakṣā́ duhitā́ jā́tu ā́sa / kás tā́ṃ vidvā́m̐ abhí manyāte andhā́m /*
*kataró menám práti tám mucāte / yá īṃ váhāte yá īṃ vā vareyā́t //*

He whose daughter is eyeless, who knowing she is blind, permits
(her engagement)? Which of the two unleashes wrath against him?
The one who conveys her, or the one who requests her (as bride)?

ṚX.27.12 *kíyatī yóṣā maryató vadhūyóḥ / páriprītā pányasā vā́riyeṇa /*
*bhadrā́ vadhū́r bhavati yā́t supéśāḥ / svayáṃ sā́ mitráṃ vanute jáne cit //*

How more pleased is the maiden than the groom by a choice gift from bachelors.
A good maiden becomes decorated
when she wins for herself her own ally among the people.

Verses ṚV X.27.11-12 contrast improper and proper nuptials. The solution of the riddle,

[242] Presumably because the Soma sacrifice is the social event at which the hegemon is consecrated, and of course it is in the poet-priests best interest to promote the sacrifice.

however, is that the maiden is Vāc 'poetic speech'. Good poetry is adorned with visions.[243] It follows, therefore, that the blind daughter of ṚV X.27.11 is bad poetry and the father a bad poet. Who receives the blame? The priest who will convey the poem (*váhāte*), or the tasteless patron who courts it (*vareyā́t*)? On the other hand, the beautiful maiden of ṚV X.27.12 delights in the poetic adornments the poet gives her and chooses him as a *mitra* 'ally', relying on a conflation of the *svayaṃvara* bride-choice ritual,[244] the establishment of an alliance, and, the choosing of the winner of the poetry contest by Vāc.[245]

ṚV X.27.13 *pattó jagāra pratiáñcam atti / śīrṣṇā́ śíraḥ práti dadhau várūtham /*
*ā́sīna ūrdhvā́m upási kṣiṇāti / níaṅṅ uttānā́m ánu eti bhū́mim //*

At the foot he has swallowed, he eats what he faces.
He has set head with head as protection
Seated, he burns upright in the lap.
Facing down he goes along the upstretched Earth.

ṚV X.27.14 *bṛ́hann achāyó apalāśó árvā / tasthaú mātā́ víṣito atti gárbhaḥ /*
*anyásyā vatsáṃ rihatī́ mimāya / káyā bhuvā́ ní dadhe dhenúr ū́dhaḥ //*

Tall is the shadeless and leafless steed.
The mother has stopped; untied, the embryo eats.
Licking another's yearling she moos,
by what being does the milch cow deposit her udder?

This pair of verses seem to be riddles as well, ṚV X.27.13 describes for Agni and ṚV X.27.14 his parents, the two kindling sticks. The upper kindling stick depicted as a tree, since it is upright, and a horse (*arvant-*) due to its speed. He is the tacit father in the sexual pair which creates Agni as the lower kindling stick is portrayed as the "biological" mother who lies still after the fire is kindled. The embryo is untied (*víṣita-* the past passive particple from *vi* + √*sā*

[243] Recall the discussion in **2.2**.

[244] Lexically, [*vā́riyeṇa...svayáṃ...vanute*] strongly suggests to an allusion to the *svayaṃvara* ceremony.

[245] Recall from the impersonation of Vāc the amorous relationship she has with the poet: ṚV X.125.5cd *yáṃ kāmáye táṃ-tam ugráṃ kṛṇomi tám brahmā́ṇaṃ tám ṛ́ṣiṃ táṃ sumedhā́m* "Whom I love, that one I make a composer, that one a seer, that one of good wisdom."

'tie') which perhaps, continuing with the birth-imagery, means disconnected from the placenta. The newly created fire, no longer "fed" by its Mother the kindling stick, must eat. The milch cow of the second diptych, is his "adopted" mother. This cow, Vāc, acts a wet nurse to the new flame.

ṚV X.27.15 *saptá vīrā́so adharā́d úd āyann / aṣṭóttarā́ttāt sám ajagmiran té /*
*náva paścā́tāt sthivimánta āyan / dáśa prā́k sā́nu ví tiranti áśnaḥ //*

Seven heroes came up from below, eight from above they joined.
Nine in the west came with grain sacks, ten in the east cross the back of the rock.

ṚV X.27.16 *daśānā́m ékaṃ kapilā́ṃ samānā́ṃ / tā́ṃ hinvanti krátave pā́riyāya /*
*gárbham mātā́ súdhitaṃ vakṣáṇāsu / ávenantaṃ tuṣáyantī bibharti //*

One dark red one common to the ten, having circumambulated him.
They send him to (their) intention. To (her) breasts,
the satisfied mother bears the well-placed embryo who wants for nothing.

While it is clear this verse and those that follow refer to the sacrifice, it is not clear exactly what they describe. Notice that ṚV X.27.15 contains a sequence of consecutive numerals: 7, 8, 9, and 10. It may be that these numbers correspond to certain sacrificial actions or perhaps social groups. On the other hand, it is worth considering that these numerals have no fixed referents. Remember that these are riddles; part of their aesthetic is mystery. These numbers are made more mysterious and more aesthetic by being left to the audience's imagination. Some primordial assembly is occurring, and the verse counts upward to reach ten.

ṚV X.27.16 seems to describe the igniting of a fire by ten fingers, its circumambulation, and then transportation either to heaven or to another altar. The embryo having been 'fed' wants for nothing (*avenant-* 'not seeking'), while the mother is satisfied (*tuṣáyantī*). The image is perhaps a cow and her calf, the former no longer bleating, the latter no longer hungry. Perhaps the mother cow is Vāc whose songs feed Agni.

ṚV X. 27.17 *pī́vānam meṣám apacanta vīrā́ / níuptā akṣā́ ánu dīvá āsan /*
*duvā́ dhánum bṛhatī́m apsú antáḥ / pavítravantā carataḥ punántā //*

A fat ram the heroes cooked for themselves; dice were cast to play.
Two roam the high dune within the waters, bearing the filter, purifying.

ṚV X.27.18 *ví krośanā́so víṣuañca āyan / pácāti némo nahí pákṣad ardháḥ /*

*ayám me deváḥ savitā́ tád āha / drúanna íd vanavat sarpírannaḥ //*

Shrieking, they dispersed from each other,
for some will cook, for half will not cook.
"This one here," heavenly Savitar said that to me,
"Only he whose wood and ghee are food will win."

So many possibilities exist for ṚV X. 27.17 that it is useless to speculate. In its second diptych, *pavitravant-*, 'having a filter', and *punant-*, 'purifying,' may refer to the purification of Soma. At the same time, since a pair roam *dhánum bṛhatī́m apsú antáḥ*, 'the high dune within the waters', the scene seems to depict a heavenly or primordial setting. These references may also be asterisms.

ṚV X.27.18 marks the final riddle of this section. It resonates with the theme of Indra's first speech (X.27.1-6) of his opposition to non-sacrificers. The world is presented as twofold, some sacrifice with fire and some without. Savitar reveals that this one here (*ayám*) whose wood and ghee are food, will win. Even without the clue provided by proximal deixis, the referent of *ayám* must be Agni. While we were not able to determine the significance of the previous verse, we know it portrays groups (heroes cooking a ram, dice case down, two purifiers) which separate in the following verse. The heroes, like the dice, disperse. Through his knowledge of sacrifice Indra reveals that Savitar asserted Agni to be the winning element. Those that do offer sacrifice will triumph over those that do not. That is the hymn's opening theme; whereas before it was directly asserted by Indra in *ātmastuti* form, now that assertion has been presented again as a primordial and esoteric truth. Sacrifice, however, is also impliclty presented as the solution to dispersal.

The return of verse initial *ápaśyaṃ*, 'I spied', in the following verse suggests a break with the previous topic and the beginning of a separate riddle section, just as the previous *apaśyam-* verse (ṚV X.27.8) marked the beginning of ṚV X.27.9-18. At this point, the hymn becomes markedly harder to decipher. The next shifts away from juxtaposing society and the sacrifice and instead is concerned with time, mortality, and mimesis itself.

ṚV X.27.19 *ápaśyaṃ grā́maṃ váhamānam ārā́d / acakráyā svadháyā vártamānam /*
*síṣakti aryáḥ prá yugā́ jánānāṃ / sadyáḥ śiśnā́ praminānó návīyān //*

> I spied the wagon-train travelling from afar, rolling without wheel autonomously.
> It hounds the generations of the stranger's folks,
> diminishing (their) tails, (it is) ever newer.

The image seems to code the idea of the year as a wagon-train, but it is certainly not as transparent as other riddles about time.[246] This caravan eternally hounds the stranger's folks. The stranger, a hypothetical rival whose generosity draws the people away from last year's king, appeared previously in the last *apaśyam*-verse (ṚV X.27.8). This wagon-train is said to shorten the tails of the stranger's folks. These 'tails' may represent penises,[247] which one could interpret literally, that old age brings on impotence, but, in my appraisal, it is a metaphor for lineage.[248] In a patriarchal society, male genealogy often determines social rank. Time, however, effaces cultural memory and thereby effaces ancestry. The reference to the *yuga*s 'generations' seems to corroborate this analysis. When people disperse, shared memories and social hierarchies dissolve. When the year is newer (*návīyān*), the folks re-integrate to learn their "tails" (and their tales) have diminished. It is important to recognize the all-consuming force that is time to an oral tradition. It is in the face of this anxiety that generations of poets commit their ancestors' songs to memory.

The speaker sees all this from afar (*ārā́d*). If this *ārā́d* is taken to mean from outside the year, it may indicate that the speaker is immortal Indra.

ṚV X. 27.20 *etaú me gā́vau pramarásya yuktaú / mó ṣú prá sedhīr múhur ín mamandhi / ā́paś cid asya ví naśanti árthaṃ / sū́raś ca marká úparo babhūvā́n //*

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[246] ṚV I.164.48 *duvā́daśa pradhā́yaś cakrám ékaṃ / trī́ṇi nábhyāni ká u tác ciketa / tásmin sākáṃ · triśatā́ ná śaṅkávo / arpitā́ḥ ṣaṣṭír ná calācalā́saḥ //* "Twelve fellies, one wheel, three hub-parts: who recognizes that? Fitted in that (wheel), like three hundred and sixty pegs, they go and come." In this riddle, the wheel is the year and the 360 pegs are its days. They go, but they come again next year like a peg which passes but rotates back around. The twelve felloes are the months and the three hub-parts are the three seasons. The compositional metaphor works by equating constituent parts of two objects rather than the two objects directly. So, the [wheel = the year] because [months = fellies], [seasons = hub-parts], and [pegs = days].

[247] The word *penis* itself referring to both the male sexual organ and an animal's tail in Latin.

[248] See Nikolaev 2015, in which the author argues that Latin *prōsāpia* 'lineage, stock' is etymologically related to *sopiō*, *-ōnis* 'penis'. The same logic applies here.

These two yoked oxen are for me, the Killer,
Don't drive them away, wait a moment!
The waters reach his target, and he is become the destroyer under the Sun.

The text deictic *etaú* suggests this pair of oxen has been mentioned before, perhaps they are the pair of bulls that Indra claimed for himself in ṚV X.27.3. The term *pramara-* is difficult to interpret, but ŚB attests to a *pramāraya-*, 'to put to death', which suggests the act of execution. Before these cows are led away to slaughter, the speaker commands the hearer to pause a moment.[249] In the second diptych, the waters reach the aim of someone who then becomes the destroyer under the sun. This is at once both suggestive of the figure of Indra who released the waters and cows in mythological narrative, as well as the waters of unction involved in the Vedic rituals of consecration. The success of the waters allows this figure to become the destroyer under the Sun, which I think must be taken to mean the terrestrial manifestation of Indra. Note that the hymn, until now, has carefully avoided using the name Indra (other than *anindra-* in ṚV X.27.6), perhaps to build suspense. The *marka-*, 'destroyer', is located beneath the Sun; this suggess he exists here on Earth. The form *babhūvā́n* conforms to the use of √*bhū* seen in the previous chapters where it characterized the transformation of the speaker. The indication is that Indra is like a terrestrial Sun, in so far as like the Sun, which measures the Year, he destroys. Through royal unction the patron of the sacrifice becomes this Indra who is destructive like time. From here, it follows that the patron of the sacrifice as Indra, is like a terrestrial Sun and has become the Year. It is interesting to note that the later Brāhmaṇas often equate the *yajamāna*

[249] Who is the hearer? I think it may be the Sun. If so this command to pause may be a reformulation of the narrative in which Indra crushes the cart of dawn or rips a wheel off the chariot of the Sun, thereby stopping time. The two oxen may draw that cart. ṚV II.15.6ab *sódañcaṃ síndhum ariṇān mahitvā́ / vájreṇā́na uṣásaḥ sám pipeṣa /* "He let loose the river (to flow) upwards with might, with the breaker he demolishes the cart of dawn." Are we to understand the river flow backwards because, by destroying the cart of Dawn, he reverses time? Perhaps not Dawn, the *pramara-* may be a re-conceptualization of the Sun as the time, since the Sun measures out the days and the year, and thus death itself. This could explain why the wagon-train [=Year] is *acakra* "wheelless" if Indra ripped a wheel off the Sun's chariot. Even this little is rather speculative. We know the poets can conceive of the eye of the Sun disappearing for a moment from ṚV X.X.9b *sūryasya cáksur múhur ún mimīvāt* "(She) would make the eye of the Sun disappear for a moment", so it is not unreasonable that he could be commanded to *múhur ín mamandhi* 'halt for a moment'.

with the *saṃvatsāra* ‘year’.

ṚV X.27.21 *ayáṃ yó vájraḥ purudhā́ vívr̥tto / aváḥ sū́ryasya bṛhatáḥ púrīṣāt /*
*śráva íd enā́ paró anyád asti / tád avyathī́ jarimā́ṇas taranti //*

This here, which is the breaker,
has twirled many times below the fullness and height of the Sun.
Fame, surely, yet there is another beyond this:
that which the elders cross without wavering.

Proximal deictic *ayáṃ*, as seen previously, could refer to a ritual prop, or, metonymically, to the speaker himself.[250] The topic seems to be again about the notion of time. The words *purudhā́ vívr̥tto* ‘turned out many times’ indicates this *vajra* here has been brandished time after time on Earth. Indra is not criticizing the use and efficacy of violence. Instead, this verse is in contrast the previous one, in which the speaker present himslef as a terrestrial destroyer. The speaker promises there is another kind of glory in addition to that which exists on Earth, and it is for those who fearlessly cross over to a place which is implicitly not under the Sun: the heavenly world. It is likely the intention is that sacrifice is not just a means to temporal power, but the world of the ancestors. Remember that *śravas* is a kind of immortality in song granted for doing famous deeds.[251] The choice of the word *śravas* is suggestive that immortality beyond the Sun awaits those who die on Earth.

ṚV X.27.22 *vr̥kṣé-vr̥kṣe níyatā mīmayad gaús / táto váyaḥ prá patān pūruṣā́daḥ /*
*áthedáṃ víśvam bhúvanam bhayāta / índrāya sunvád r̥ṣaye ca śíkṣat //*

Bound at tree after tree the cow will cry, then man-eating birds will fly.
All this world will fear (even) while pressing for Indra and striving for the seer.

This verse is very unclear to me. Jamison and Brereton suggest that the cow bound in the tree is in a dormant Agni, latent in wood, and that the man-eating birds are the sparks coming off the

[250] Seen many places but especially clear in *ayáṃ...emi* “Here I go.” (ṚV VIII.100.1a)

[251] Expressed by the cognate formula for ‘inexhaustible fame’ Greek *kléos áphthiton* and Vedic *śravas aksiti*. Lincoln (1991:15) “In a universe where impersonal matter endured forever but the personal self was extinguished at death, the most which could survive of that self was a rumor, a reputation. For this, the person craving immortality—a condition proper only to the gods and antithetical to human existence—was totally reliant on poets and poetry.”

great sacrificial fire.[252] It cannot be ignored that this verse contains the only instance of Indra's name, and the hymn has built suspense for that name over the preceding verses.

My suspicion is that the theme of this verse is time and death, for that has been the theme of this entire section of riddles: The speaker described a wagon train coming destroying the 'tails' or histories of the wandering folk (ṚV X.27.19). He presented himself as a terrestrial homologue of death/the Sun/the year (ṚV X.27.20). Despite the fame one can win on Earth with the *vajra*, but he reveals there is a form of fame which exists beyond death/the Sun/the year (ṚV X.27.21). Here the speaker seems to describe a scenario where the whole world knows fear despite doing the sacrifice for Indra. This may be a vision of the end of the time (or the end of the year), when the sacrifice is done to no effect, and that Indra, finally named, may not come. Has Indra reached the end of his lifespan (*ví u áyur ānaḍ* 'you have attained a lifespan' (ṚV X.27.7)?

ṚV X.27.23 *devā́nām mā́ne prathamā́ atiṣṭhan / kr̥ntátrād eṣām úparā úd āyan /*
*tráyas tapanti pr̥thivī́m anūpā́ / duvā́ bṛ́būkaṃ vahataḥ púrīṣam //*

The first of the gods stood at the measuring,
the next of them arose from the trenches,
Three water-based ones heat the Earth, two convey a babbler to fullness.

The hymn finally turns to re-enactment, and I think that re-enactment is being presented as a solution to the problem of time. Notice that the first diptych is set in the past, while the second is set in the present. The first gods (*deva*s) stood (*atiṣṭhan*) on the measuring (*māna-*), while subsequent ones arose from the *kr̥ntatra-* which is literally a 'cutting' but elsewhere indicates an abyss or pit. I think the sense is the first *deva*s stood at the measuring of the ritual ground leaving behind invisible indentations: the impressions of their footprints, which are only poetically visible.[253] The sacrificial anxiety developed in ṚV X.27.22 is resolved by vouching for the

[252] Jamison and Brereton 2014:1414.

[253] See Thompson 1995.

continued fidelity of the sacrifice since its inception. Later gods *úd āyan* 'arose'[254] in the paths cut by their predecessors, standing in the footprints of the first ones. A point of interest is that humans are not mentioned here. Instead, the wording is *eṣām úparā* 'the next of them', which implies a subsequent generation of *deva*s. As humans who perform the sacrifice stand in those invisible footprints too, the suggestion is that the humans doing the sacrifice are in fact these "later *deva*s" re-tracing the outline of the initial model.[255]

We learn in the second diptych that three water-based ones[256] heat the earth. This must refer to the three pressings of hot Soma. The two that convey the *bṛ́būka* must be the two horses that convey Indra in his chariot to the Soma pressing. What is a *bṛ́būka*? If this word has special significance in the verse, its meaning is too inaccessible to base a real argument on it.[257] If Jamison and Brereton are correct, and the term means 'babbler', then it is tempting to see the two steeds conveying the 'stammerer' or 'babbler' to fullness as the arrival of a human, babbling and inarticulate, becoming full of Soma and gaining the poetic prowess which Soma provides. At the same time, we have seen *purīṣa-* 'fullness' earlier in the hymn as a feature belonging to the Sun.[258] In that context, the temporal *śravas* of martial deeds done beneath the fullness of the Sun was contrasted with a *śravas* beyond this one, presumably in heaven. Fullness may be a metonym for the Sun, in which the two steeds convey the babbler, now full of Soma, to the Sun

[254] In the Vedic concept of the future, subsequent generations are conceived of as 'higher'. ṚV X.10.10a *á ghā tá gachān* ***úttarā*** *yugáni* 'those **higher** generations which will come'. Earlier in this hymn, seven heroes arose *saptá vīrā́so...úd āyann*. Perhaps these heroes are the first humans to re-enact the sacrifice of the gods?

[255] Recapitulating the assertion of the ŚB 1.1.1.4-6, seen in **Chapter 1**, that *ámānuṣa iva vā́ etád bhavati yád vratam upaíti* "When he approaches that oath, he becomes like a non-human" as well as the assertion found in ŚB 2.2.2.6, that there are two kinds of gods: the gods and the priests as human-gods.

[256] Sadovski 2002 takes *anūpa* from *anu* + *āp* in the zero grade and thematized. It may refer to a mixture containing water, and therefore I suspect it is the three Soma pressings.

[257] The nearest possibly related forms are adjective *barbara* 'stammering', adjective *bṛ́baduktha* which modifies Indra and proper noun *bṛ́bu*.

[258] Notice too that *purīṣa-* is the opposite of *ābhu-* 'the emptiness' that opened the hymn.

which is to say beyond time and death. This is a modification of Jamison and Brereton's (2014:1414) insight that "Indra, unnamed, may come himself to the sacrifice for epiphany, thus returning us to the beginning of the hymn and the direct involvement of Indra with sacrificers." I agree that this returns us to the beginning of the hymn, but the absence of preverb *ā* 'hither' suggests to me that the two steeds did not bring Indra here, to the moment of this verse, but they took Indra away. The babbler, by drinking Soma, has become Indra, and the horses take him to the fullness of the Sun, where he is beyond death, and back to the beginning of the hymn: not its first verse but its "first singing". The anxiety of ṚV X.27.22 is that it depicts the last sacrifice, so the resolution of that anxiety is to perform the first sacrifice. By re-performing the first sacrifice, the patron of the sacrifice restarts the year, avoiding the cataclysm of ṚV X.27.22, and reunites the clans, undoing the dispersal of his sovereignty which has occurred since the last sacrifice.

ṚV X.27.24 *sā́ te jīvā́tur utá tásya viddhi / mā́ smaitādṛ́g ápa gūhaḥ samaryé /*
*āvíḥ súvaḥ kṛṇuté gū́hate busáṃ / sá pādúr asya nirṇíjo ná mucyate //*

This is your Life (and your Death!) Understand that!
Never hide something like this at the meeting!
When the Sun makes itself visible it hides the Mist.
His foot is released like from a garment.

If *busa-* is indeed 'mist' the image may be that of the Sun emerging from the mists of the early morning to clarify the day. Perhaps the image of the foot peeking out of a lower garment is this moment when the Sun escapes from its terrestrial covering. This section of riddles has mentioned the Sun explicitly as the entity under which death and time are prevalent.[259] When the speaker tells us that *sā́ te jīvā́tur úta* "this is your means of life and...." the *úta* surely means life's inauspicious opposite: death.[260] The following imperative *viddhi* commands the hearer to

[259] ṚV X.27.20d *sū́raś ca marká úparo babhūvā́n* ṚV X.27.21b *aváḥ sū́ryasya bṛhatáḥ púrīṣāt*.

[260] The omission Death is surely the reason for the absence of mentioning Winter when the sacrifice of the cosmic man is homologized to the yea: ṚV X.90.6cd *vasantó asyāsīd ā́jyaṃ grīṣmá idhmáḥ śarád dhavíḥ* "Spring was its butter, Summer the kindling, Autumn the oblation, (and Winter the execution)."

understand missing member of the contrastive pair. Note that *jīvātu-* is feminine, while *tasya*, the object of *viddhi*, is either masculine like *mr̥tyu* or neuter perhaps referring to Indra's *satyam uktam*. I favor *tasya* referring to a gapped *mr̥tyu* and text deictic *etādŕ̥ś* 'this sort' referring to the whole of Indra's speech act.

Like the other hymns, this riddle may have a cosmological solution and a sociological solution. The sociological solution is that the Sun is a metaphor for the sovereign. The opposition between the Sun and the Mist makes more sense when we realize this is about the moment of Sun rise. The rising Sun and the Mist may represent the sacrificial patron and his rival. Through sacrifice the patron becoms visible (*āvíḥ kr̥ṇuté*) and ascends to heaven, becoming immortal. The rival, on the other hand is hidden (*gū́hate*). This distinction is important, for we saw in ṚV I.165 that when the men emulated Indra, they became Maruts and were characterized in visual terms. As shining and beautiful they appeared good to Indra. In the same way, the hidden rival is asserted to be poetically invisible.

If my analysis that the *nirṇij* 'garment' is a metaphor for the Earth covering the Sun before dawn, this may be a play on the opposition between immortality which is beyond the Sun and death which is below it. How does is the Sun released (*mucyate*) from the realm of time and death? Recall that the Sun becomes visible (*āvíḥ súvaḥ kr̥ṇuté*); If Kuiper 1983 is correct, and the Ṛgveda is collected primarily for a new year festival, then this may not just be any Sunrise but the first Sunrise of the new year. If so, it would follow the intercalary period where the nights are longest and the Sun hangs low. The first day of the new year is the end of this period, when the Sun begins to grow stronger and approach fullness. The unbroken continuity of the sacrifice restores the year and staves off the death of the Sun. This image may also serve as a model for the release of the individual from death. People grow inform and weak with old age, but in ṚV X.27.21d we learned that the elders cross without wavering (*tád avyathī́ jarimā́ṇas taranti*) to find fame (*śravas-*) which is beyond (*para-*) the fullness and height of the Sun (*sū́ryasya br̥hatáḥ púrīṣāt*).

The imperative in this verse to not conceal this revelation is a charter to re-perform it. It

is one of the stranger mimetic circles we have seen so far, because it is so embedded in enigma. The mimetic circle is opened when Indra locates himself at a time and place (the stylistic repetition of *átra* in ṚV X.27.9-10 as well as the assertion that *maṃsase* 'you will realize' the *satyam uktam*) and is closed with explanation that the ritual is a re-enactment (ṚV X.27.23b: *kṛntátrād eṣām úparā úd āyan*) through which we escape the destruction of time; the command to understand and re-perform this hymn in public (ṚV X.27.24b: *mā́ smaitādṛ́g ápa gūhaḥ samaryé*).

Indra is not impersonated to enact or do anything, it seems, as he was in our previous case studies. In those studies, performative verbs of roots like √*kṛ*, √*bhū,* and √*dhṛ* proliferated. Despite its length, √*kṛ* only appears once in this hymn (*āvíḥ súvaḥ kṛṇuté*) and √*bhū* appears only in *ábhūr* (ṚV X.27.7a) and *babhūvā́n* (ṚV X.27.20d). What is the purpose of impersonating Indra, if not to re-enact his past deeds in the present? In addition, the *ahaṃkāra* is weakly attested. The form *aham* appears only 4x in 24 verses. The expected deictic references to the present are relatively minimal, which is unexpected in such a hymn. What is going on?

If we examine the structure of this omnibus we see that the *ahaṃkāra* and deictic traces to the present are restricted to certain portions:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | ṚV X.27.1-6 | Indra *ātmastuti* on theme of generosity vs. frugality of *anindra*s. |
| 2. | ṚV X.27.7 | The speaker asserts Indra has become and attained a lifespan. |
| 3. | ṚV X.27.8 | First *apaśyam* request to interpret a vision about society. |
| 4. | ṚV X.27.9-10 | Indra asserts he will weave together proper society here (*átra*), and the listener will realize his true speech. |
| 5. | ṚV X.27.11-18 | Riddle about the sacrifice.<br>Savitar reveals fire sacrificers triumph over non-sacrificers. |
| 6. | ṚV X.27.19 | Second *apaśyam* riddle about time. |
| 7. | ṚV X.27.20-22 | Riddles about time and death. Indra is named in the final pāda. |
| 8. | ṚV X.27.23-24 | The sacrifice is a re-enactment of the first sacrifice<br>Doing some one becomes Indra and escapes death. |

Like ṚV IV.26, it seems the beginning of this hymn creates the identity of Indra, so that the remainder can benefit from that identity and can speak its riddles through Indra. Why is that important? In other case of Indra mimesis, re-enacting this hymn restores Indra to the present sacrifice. When he is present, he can ritually enact something. Here we have two mimeses of Indra. The first is a proper *ātmastuti*: ṚV X.27.1-6. This mimesis of Indra allows the speaker to perform a ritual action: powering up Indra (ṚV X.27.7). It is this empowered Indra whom he queries and this Indra who knows the enigmas that bind society, the sacrifice, and the cosmos. It is this Indra who knows how to travel beyond the Sun, beyond time, and beyond death.[261]

Is this a re-imagining of the god beyond his early depiction as an idealization of masculinity and sovereignty? As the riddles of ṚV X.27.11-18 have little in them that suggest Indra, perhaps they were once attributed to another figure like Varuṇa or perhaps they were part of a common pool of proto-*brahmodya*s. Regardless of their origin, the critic of *anindra*s in ṚV X.27.6a and the naming of Indra ṚV X.27.22d makes this whole hymn the property of Indra. The utility of Indra as a persona here is directly tied to his mimetic re-creation. The re-enactment of Indra, like the sacrifice, is the high-fidelity transmission of this speech act, to the present performance. Indra acts as a guarantor of the truth of this speech. This explains the absence of √*kṛ*; Indra is not attaining a lifespan to perform a ritual action in the present, the ritual action was his restoration. The persona of Indra is a bit like a paratext, for he presents the text in order to impose a particular interpretation to it, namely that these are more than curious riddles but authentic and engimatic truths about the life, death, time, and sacrifice.

Consider the much later *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* which discusses the metaphysics of the fire altar

[261] This is complicated of course, by the blending of numerous metaphors. The Sun is a symbol for clan alliance (see Proferes 2007:51), and like seasonal alliances it dies yearly and must be resurrected. It is easy to lose sight of what immortality means here. It is not that Sun cannot die, but that it dies every year and is reborn every year. As the measurer of days, the Sun, time, and death are often conflated (as we see in this hymn). ṚV X.72.8-9 tells us Aditi gave birth to Mārtaṇḍa, the 'dead egg' (ṚV X.72.8-9) for procreation and for death. Later texts tell us the other sons of Aditi cracked it open, releasing the Vivasvant: the Sun. Perhaps this is an explanation for the cyclical mortality of the Sun as well as the mortality of humans who are descended from Manu, a son of Vivasvant.

and its ability to transport the sacrificer to the heavenly world.[262] In it, Death tells a human boy a number of riddles, including this one: KaṭhU 2.21 *āsīno dūraṃ vrajati / śayāno yāti sarvataḥ / kas taṃ madāmadaṃ devaṃ / mad anyo jñātum arhati //* "Seated, he wanders far. Lying down he goes everywhere. Who, other than me, should recognize that god exhilarating constantly." I direct the reader to *kas...mad anyo jñātum arhati* "who besides me should know?' Death is the ideal revealer here because he has special knowledge of the sacrifice and what happens after death.[263] The point here, is that the persona of Death endows the text with a kind of authority and frame the riddles as sacred truths. The mimetic impersonation of ṚV X.27 makes this even more effective. When Indra is restored to the present moment, his speech on the sacrifice and avoiding death verifies itself because his very presence at the sacrifice demonstrates he has avoided death. The mortal who drinks Soma and becomes Indra proves that Indra is immortal by virtue of his presence here. The mimetic circle acts like a perpetual motion machine, for if Indra appears, he is living proof that his speech is true. If his speech is true, then the sacrifice works. If the sacrifice works, then Indra's speech is true.

### 5.2 *víśvo hí anyó arír ājagā́ma* (ṚV X.28)

For (while) each and every stranger has come, today only my father-in-law has not come.
He should eat grain and Soma should he drink. Well-fed, he should return home.
He is the bellowing sharp-horned bull.
He stands on the height (of heaven) and here, on the breadth of the Earth.

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[262] See Smith 2016.

[263] The riddle is supposedly on the secret relationship of *ātman* and *brahman*. The crux of the riddle is how can something which is seated or prone also go? The style of the language is similar to many earlier Vedic riddles. In this hymn, ṚV X.27.13c *ā́sīna ūrdhvā́m upási kṣiṇāti níaṅṅ uttānā́m ánu eti bhū́mim* "Seated upright, he burns in the lap. Facing down he goes outstretched along the Earth". As discussed previously, this is a riddle about Agni. Both riddles use *āsīna-* 'seated' while the Upaniṣad uses *śayāna-* 'prone' instead of *níañc-* 'facing down'. Still, how does he go far (*dūraṃ vrajati*)? This may reflect the metaphysics seen in Brāhmaṇa accounts of the *agnihotra*, which conceive of the Sun dispersing into the *agnihotra* fires of the all the clans and re-assembling the next day. See Bodewitz 1976. Perhaps the god is ceaselessly exhilarating constantly because he is sacrificial fire in so many places. Consider ṚV I.59.1ab *vayā́ íd agne agnáyas te anyé / tuvé víśve amṛ́tā mādayante /* "Only branches, Agni, are your other fires; all immortal they exhilarate themselves in you". That terrestrial fire can journey to heaven is a conceptual model for the journey of human sacrificers.

I protect the one in every settlement who, possessing pressed Soma, fills my two cheeks.
Indra, they press by stone strong exhilarating Somas for you,
You drink them. They cook bulls for you, you eat them,
Gift-lord, when you are summoned by food.
Mark this, my (speech), singer: the rivers convey the flotsam upstream,
The fox sneaks up on opposing lion; the jackal rushed the boar from the briar.
How do I, a simpleton, mark this (speech) yours?
(which is) the thought of one so cunning and strong?
You who know explain to us at the proper time, Gift-lord, which half of your pole is at rest.
Thusly, because the (gods) grow me to be strong, higher than high heaven is my pole.
Many thousands I cut down at once, for the creator made me without rival.
Thusly, the gods have made me the bull, fierce and strong, at action-by-action (saying) "Indra!"
I slay Vṛtra with the breaker, exulting, I open the pen, with might, for the pious.
The gods came bearing axes. Chopping wood, with clans they approached.
Setting good wood down in the wombs, where they burn it as kindling.
The hare swallowed the oncoming razor, I split the stone with a lump of dirt from afar.
I will make even the high subject to the lowly, the swollen yearling will go at the bull.
Like so, the one of good feather is bound at the talon. Likewise, the lion caught at the foot.
Trapped is the thirsty buffalo, the monitor lizard digs this foot.
The monitor lizard digs this foot, those who grow fat by the composer's food.
They eat the oxen loosed at the border, crushing their own forces and their bodies.
These (gods) by labors, by true labor, became (present as which) bodies
(who) are impelling themselves through recitations (when) at the Soma (sacrifice).
Speaking like a man, compare our prizes, (and) as a hero,
you will grant yourself in heaven fame (and) name

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The following hymn takes up a similar riddling style, but far more concisely. Whereas the poet surfaces in ṚV X.27 to announce Indra has attained a lifespan and asks a riddling *apaśyam*-verse, the figure of the poet seems to exist in the shadows. Beyond serving this structural function, he mainly stays out of Indra's way. Here, the human interrupter acts more like the Greek *eirôn,* stressing his own human ignorance and feigning stupidity. Because these verses are beyond his mortal ken, their source must truly be Indra.

ṚV X.28.1 *víśvo hí anyó arír ājagā́ma / máméd áha śváśuro nā́jagāma /*
*jakṣīyā́d dhānā́ utá sómam papīyāt / súāśitaḥ púnar ástaṃ jagāyāt //*

For (while) each and every stranger has come,
today only my father-in-law has not come.
He should eat grain and Soma should he drink.
Well-fed, he should return home.

ṚV X.28.2 *sá róruvad vṛṣabhás tigmáśṛṅgo / várṣman tasthau várimann ā́ pṛthivyā́ḥ /*
*víśveṣu enaṃ vṛjáneṣu pāmi / yó me kukṣī́ sutásomaḥ pṛṇā́ti //*

He is the bellowing sharp-horned bull.[264]
He stands on the height (of heaven) and here, on the breadth of the Earth.
I protect the one in every settlement who, possessing pressed Soma,
fills my two cheeks.

These two verses set the scene as some sort of festival event. The speaker is expecting a particular guest and hoping to satisfy him. The guest in question is the last to arrive, playing on the typical anxiety that Indra is will not come to the sacrifice.[265] The speaker reveals this father-in-law to be the bull in the following verse and the mystery is over. The impersonation of Indra seems to begin in the following diptych, where the speaker presents himself as someone who could be a protector in any settlement, so long as his cheeks are full of Soma. The invocation of every settlement paired with the intensive participle *róruvad*, which often has frequentative value, is perhaps an explanation for his lateness to the event. It also serves as a reminder to the

[264] Again, either Soma or one who has drunk Soma. See treatment of ṚV X.48.10.

[265] The tradition assigns ṚV X.27 and ṚV X.28 to Vasukra Aindra. From the patronymic Aindra, we infer that Vasukra is the son of Indra. If Indra is the *śváśura,* 'father-in-law', of the speaker, then the speaker is understood to be Vasukra's wife. This, however, is only one possible understanding of the adjective *aindra*. It may simply indicate the poet is an Indra impersonator. Consider some of the other *vṛddhi* derived patronymics from the *anukramaṇī*s. There are numerous names derived from Agni, for example Ketu Āgneya (to whom ṚV X.156 is attributed). Is this a son of Agni named Ketu? Or does it mean 'fire beacon'? What about Cakṣus and Vibhrāj Saurya (to whom are assigned ṚV X.158 and ṚV X.170 respectively)? Are these two sons of the Sun? Or is it the eye of the Sun and its illumination? ṚV X.119, which I suggested is a kind of double-impersonation of Agni and Indra, is attributed to a Laba Aindra. The dialogue hymn ṚV X.86 is attributed to Indra, Indrāṇī, and Vṛṣākapi Aindra. If the adjective *aindra* denotes some kind of mimesis, this would agree with the analysis of Witzel 2005 which understands Vṛṣākapi acts like Indra's evil twin. While some of *vṛddhi* derivatives are patronymic, it is clear that some are simply adjectives derived from nouns. Consider this following from ŚāṅkhĀ 1.1.4: *aindraś ca ṛsabhaḥ prājāpatyaś cāja upālabhyau* "Indra-connected is the bull and Prajāpati-connected is the goat; these two are to be seized (for sacrifice)". Here the adjectives *aindra* and *prājāpatya* do not appear to be patronymic. Through these *vṛddhi* derivatives, the *anukramaṇī* texts use such adjectives to relate a number of kinds of adjectival relationships. Sometimes these relationships may be genealogical, but not always. What if *aindra* was used here to indicate that Vasukra is impersonating Indra? If so would this make the Vasukra Vāsiṣṭha (ṚV IX.97.28-30) an impersonation of Vasiṣṭha? If that is the case, we can no longer assume that Vasukra is the "biological" son of Indra and that the speaker of the first verse is Vasukra's wife. If that is the case the speaker may not be female at all, and the use of *śváśura* may simply be a metaphor of some kind. Indra is often portrayed as being "like a father", perhaps like a father-in-law would, Indra has become the father of the poet by ritual. My point is simply that we should extend the same poetic license to kinship terms that we do other nouns.

audience that Indra frequents other sacrifices. He will not return home afterwards but move on to the next pressing.

ṚV X.28.3 *ádriṇā te mandína indra tū́yān / sunvánti sómān píbasi tvám eṣām /*
*pácanti te vṛ́ṣabhā́ṁ átsi téṣām / pṛkṣéṇa yán maghavan hūyámānaḥ //*

Indra, they press by stone strong exhilarating Somas for you,
You drink them. They cook bulls for you, you eat them,
Gift-lord, when you are summoned by food.

Unlike ṚV X.27, the poet addresses Indra by name. This scene is a more compact version of the beginning of ṚV X.27. In ṚV X.27.1-6, Indra speaks his *ātmastuti* to assert himself into existence, and from there the verses shift to the riddling style. Here, the poet asserts that Indra is eating and drinking at the present sacrifice, resolving the anxiety set up in the opening verse. His identity and presence having been established, so he begins his riddle immediately:

ṚV X.28.4 *idáṃ sú me jaritar ā́ cikiddhi / pratīpáṃ śā́paṃ nadíyo vahanti /*
*lopāśáḥ siṃhám pratiáñcam atsāḥ / kroṣṭā́ varāháṃ nír atakta kákṣāt //*

Mark this, my (speech), singer: the rivers convey the flotsam upstream,
The fox sneaks up on opposing lion; the jackal rushed the boar from the briar.

ṚV X.28.4 uses *jaritar* ‘singer’ to inform us Indra is speaker just as ṚV X.27.1 did. This vocative was necessary in ṚV X.27.1 because it was the opening of the hymn, and it is necessary here because the previous verse addressed Indra in the vocative. Another similarity with ṚV X.27 is Indra’s imperative (*ā́ cikiddhi* ‘mark!’), which is reminiscent of ṚV X.27.10 *átréd u me maṃsase satyám uktáṃ* ‘consider here my spoken truth!’. In both cases, Indra tells the audience to understand what he is about to say, foreshadowing that it will be engimatic and require careful interpretation. In both cases, Indra draws the listener to the present moment with proximal deixis (*átra* ṚV X.27 and *idáṃ* in ṚV X.28).

Indra performs an ‘animal riddle’, offerings three examples of unexpected reversals of power in which something weaker overpowers something stronger and the presented action is the

reverse of the expected one. Detritus floats upstream (*pratīpa-* 'against the water').[266] A fox hides in plain sight (*pratiañca-* 'facing opposite') of a lion rather than behind it. A jackal rushes out from the briar (*kakṣa-*) towards the boar, yet thickets are the usual habitats of wild boar while jackals prefer open shrubland. Based on the pairs of animals, Indra seems to be promising he can reverse power arrangements, making the weaker animal triumph over the stronger. This shares elements with the portrayal of society which Indra makes in ṚV X.27.9-10. Instead of wild animal imagery, he uses pastoral imagery. He claims he can free the yoked and defeat the rival.

ṚV X.28.5 *kathā́ ta etád ahám ā́ ciketaṃ / gṛ́tsasya pā́kas taváso manīṣā́m /*
*tuváṃ no vidvā́m̐ ṛtuthā́ ví voco / yám árdhaṃ te maghavan kṣemiyā́ dhū́ḷ //*

How do I, a simpleton, mark this (speech) yours?
(which is) the thought of one so cunning and strong?
You who know explain to us at the proper time, gift-lord,
which half of your pole is at rest.

The persona shifts back to a human *eirôn* who pretends to not understand the riddle. The speaker belittles his own poetic insight and intelligence, tacitly denying these riddles are his own human invention. This verse also sets up a master-student dynamic, through which Indra instructs him and the audience.[267] This constitutes part of a mimetic circle, for this is the scene of the song's "first singing."

The poet asks Indra to explain to him in the right order (*ṛtuthā́*, 'sequentially', also refers to proper ritual order) which half of his chariot pole is at rest. The half at rest is that end of the pole which is attached to the car not the horses and presumably from which the driver controls the direction of the vehicle. Frequently, the sacrifice is likened to a chariot.[268] If this is the

[266] See Sadovski 2002. Like *anūpa*, from a preverb (*prati*) and the zero grade of *āp* 'water'.

[267] Text deictic *etád* resumes the previous verses *idám*, and thus contextually resumes its proximal deictic value.

[268] We can infer that the chariot of the sacrifice has seven reins by comparing ṚV II. 5.2ab *ā́ yásmin saptá raśmáyas / tatā́ yajñásya* netári / "(Agni) In whom the seven reins are stretched, the leader of the sacrifice" and ṚV VI.44.24a *ayáṃ dyāvāpṛthivī́ ví ṣkabhāyad / ayáṃ rátham ayunak saptáraśmim /* "This one (Indra) who props apart Heaven and Earth, this one here who yoked the seven-reined chariot".

operative metaphor here, then the fixed half of the chariot pole may represent the sacrifice as it is performed on Earth. The half which is in motion may refer to the destination of the sacrifice or what the result of the ritual will be. Sometimes the sacrificial pole is compared to a chariot pole.[269] The end of the pole which is at rest is planted in the Earth, while the other end points upward. That would indicate that subject of the animal riddles pertain the end of the chariot pole in motion: the results of the sacrifice. The end at rest, then, would not be the results but the cause of the sacrifice: its origins.

ṚV X.28.6 *evā́ hí mā́m tavásaṃ vardháyanti / diváś cin me bṛhatá úttarā dhū́ḥ /*
*purū́ sahásrā ní śiśāmi sākám / aśatrúṃ hí mā jánitā jajā́na //*

Thusly, because the (gods) grow me to be strong,
higher than high heaven is my pole.
Many thousands I cut down at once, for the creator made me without rival.

ṚV X.28.7 *evā́ hí mā́m tavásaṃ jajñúr ugráṃ / kárman-karman vṛ́ṣaṇam indra devā́ḥ /*
*vádhīṃ vṛtráṃ vájreṇa mandasānó / ápa vrajám mahinā́ dāśúṣe vam //*

Thusly, the gods have made me the bull, fierce and strong,
at action-by-action (saying) "Indra!"
I slay Vṛtra with the breaker, exulting, I open the pen, with might, for the pious.

In ṚV X.28.6, Indra resumes the metaphor his chariot pole, saying his is higher than heaven. Indra's pole seems to extend between Heaven and Earth, perhaps an allusion to the cosmogonic myth in which Indra props apart the two, creating space for beings to live.[270] This assertion, that

[269] As evidenced by X.105.9ab *ūrdhvā́ yát te tretínī bhū́d / yajñásya dhūrṣú sádman* / "When the triple-being (Agni) has become upright for you, sitting at the yoke-poles of the sacrifice". Here the sacrificial fire sits at the yoke-poles. If this does not mean near the sacrificial pole, then perhaps the yoke-poles are logs which the fire is consuming. It is difficult to resolve the image precisely, but the reference certainly participates in the chariot of the sacrifice metaphor.

[270] Kuiper (1983:13) "His identity with the pillar at the moment of creation, when he himself literally was the world axis, must accordingly have had a momentary character. This inference is confirmed by data about the Indra festival of much later times. From these we learn that it was then still customary to erect every year, during the New Year's festival, a pole in honor of Indra. Its most interesting feature is that during the few days that it stood erected and was worshipped, it was considered to be identical with god Indra and was sometimes denoted by his name. This gives a special significance to the fact that after some seven days the pole was pulled down, taken away, and thrown into a river, which would not have been possible unless the function of the god himself, whose name it bore, had for the time being come to an end. This, again,

his pole is higher than Heaven, also conforms to the braggadocio style of Indra's *ātmastuti*. By saying gods grow (*vardháyanti*) him, it is possible that the pole is also a symbol of male virility.[271]

ṚV X.28.7 repeats the opening of the previous verse Here, the gods make the speaker a fierce and strong bull. The speaker sits in a 'double scene' In which the *deva*s do ritual actions (*karman*-) invoking him by name in order to empower Indra to do his cosmogonic deeds. This suggests that the reason the priests do these same things is to mimetically re-enact this first sacrifice. This *karman-karman,* 'action by action', may be the answer the poet seeks when he asks Indra to explain *ṛtuthā́* 'in proper sequence'. When the gods invoke Indra action by action, he slays Vṛtra and he opens the pen (*vrajám*) of the cows of Dawn. None of these actions are marked as being in the past. The injunctives *vádhīṃ*, 'I slay' and *ápa...vam*, 'I open', collapse present and past time; they are the *karman*s which priests re-enact in the ritual present. While this verse itself may not be re-enactive, it is an explanation by Indra to the poet of the truth of re-enactment. Indra explains the fixed side of the pole: the priests worship Indra with ritual because when the gods did so.

ṚV X.28.8 *devā́sa āyan paraśū́ṁr abibhran / vánā vṛścánto abhí viḍbhír āyan /*
*ní sudrúvaṃ dádhato vakṣáṇāsu / yátrā kṛ́pīṭam ánu tád dahanti //*

The gods came bearing axes. Chopping wood, with clans they approached.
Setting good wood down in the wombs, where they burn it as kindling.

The mimetic relationship between the gods and the priests is even clearer in this verse. Here, they arrive bearing axes and chop wood to make the sacrificial fire. The truth that we are being

confirms the conclusion drawn from the Vedic evidence that Indra was a seasonal god, whose mythological act consisted in creating and renewing the world and inaugurating a new year."

[271] As we can see in ṚV VIII.33.18 *sáptī cid ghā madacyútā / mithunā́ vahato rátham / evéd dhū́r vṛ́ṣṇa úttarā //* "Only the team, the (wedded) couple moved to exhilaration, conveys the chariot. Even so, the pole of the bull is higher". This verse conveys that both members of the domestic pair are needed for the sacrifice, at the same time the husband is the dominant member of the pair. That the male pole is higher may also be a penis joke.

made to understand is that when human priests do these things, they do so as a re-enactment of the gods doing so. Ergo, priestly emulation re-produces the results of the primordial model. The sacrifice of the gods made Indra strong and without rival, thus its re-enactment has the same effect. This is Indra's explanation of the animal riddles of ṚV X.28.4. Verses X.28.9-10 pivot back to the riddling style of X.28.4:

ṚV X.28.9 *śaśáḥ kṣurám pratiáñcaṃ jagāra / ádriṃ logéna ví abhedaṃ ārā́t /*
*bṛ́hántaṃ cid ṛ́haté randhayāni / váyad vatsó vṛ́ṣabháṃ śū́śuvānaḥ //*

The hare swallowed the oncoming razor,
I split the stone with a lump of dirt from afar
I will make even the high subject to the lowly,
the swollen yearling will go at the bull.

ṚV X.28.10 *suparṇá itthā́ nakhám ā́ siṣāya / ávaruddhaḥ paripádaṃ ná siṃháḥ /*
*niruddhás cin mahiṣás tarṣiyā́vān / godhā́ tásmā ayáthaṃ karṣad etát //*

Like so, the one of good feather is bound at the talon.
Likewise, the lion caught at the foot.
Trapped is the thirsty buffalo, the monitor lizard digs this foot.

In ṚV X.28.9, each component of the riddle seems to present the same relationship: something smaller will overcome something larger.[272] These animals may have some symbolic content accessible only to the audience, but the eagle, lion, and buffalo are unambiguous cross-cultural symbols of power and sovereignty. The use of *itthā́,* 'in this way', is interesting, for it seems to unite the riddle examples as manifestation of one principle. In ṚV X.28.10 the imagery is of a larger animal immobilized by a snare or fetter. The lizard who digs at the *ayatha-,* 'foot', surely represents the operations of the poet-priest who undermines his patron's rival through his subtle arts of sacred sabotage.[273]

[272] Michael Witzel (p.c.) suggested to me that the image of the hare and the razor from ṚV X.28.9a may covertly refer to the waxing phases of the Moon. If so, the metaphor would participate both in the imagery of something smaller overcoming something larger as well as a theme of renewal and regeneration through sacrifice.

[273] We have seen the metaphor of seizing the foot numerous times in these hymns. While Thompson 1995 argues that *pada* as 'footprint' refers to the invisible traces which mark the presence of the gods both physically and linguistically (thus *pada*s are also their secret names).

ṚV X.28.11 *tébhyo godhā́ ayáthaṃ karṣad etád / yé brahmáṇaḥ pratipī́yanti ánnaiḥ /*
*simá ukṣṇó avasr̥ṣṭā́ṁ adanti / svayám bálāni tanúvaḥ śr̥ṇānā́ḥ //*

The monitor lizard digs this foot,
those who grow fat by the composer's food.
They eat the oxen loosed at the border,
crushing their own forces and their bodies.

Included in the list of the weak who disrupt the power of the strong, is an imprecation against those who would trespass against priests. Those who eat the oxen of the priests, that is seize their property, crush the strengths of their own body. Here, acc. pl. *tanúvaḥ* means the physical bodies of antagonists, but there is good reason to believe it also means political bodies. For Proferes 2007, the body of Indra was a cognative metaphor for the body politic brought into existence by the alliance of independent clans, each a smaller body politic, through the ceremony of the sacrifice. Indra asserts that improper seizure of hieratic property will devastate the physical bodies of those who cheat priests, but also devastate their social collectives. This assertion is more than a mere imprecation, for it is the solution to all the animal riddles: it is the sacrifice which enables the patron to overcome his stronger rival.

ṚV X.28.12 *eté śámībhiḥ suśámī abhūvan / yé hinviré tanúvaḥ sóma ukthaíḥ /*
*nr̥vád vádann úpa no māhi vā́jān / diví śrávo dadhiṣe nā́ma vīráḥ //*

These (gods) by labors, by true labor, became (present)
(as which) bodies (who) are impelling themselves
through recitations (when) at the Soma (sacrifice).
Speaking like a man, compare our prizes, (and)
as a hero, you will grant yourself in heaven fame (and) name.[274]

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In this case, however, I think there is a physical metaphor operative. Simply put, the foot is the firm foundation necessary both in abstract, as in maintaining rule, and quite concretely in operating a chariot, a loom, or in the poetic competition.

[274] Rather than take *vīráḥ* as the name, I take it as the subject of *dadhiṣe* and *śravas-* and *nāman-* as the two neuter acc. objects of the verb. This follows the pattern seen in ṚV X.49.2*a: mā́ṃ dhur índaraṃ nā́ma* '(they) granted me the name Indra'. Notice that here the *nāma* and *indaraṃ* are accusative. I would expect *vīram* if that was the name. Instead, he does this for himself being a *vīra*.

Despite these riddles, which seem to promise that sacrifice has offensive capabilities, the hymn closes on a positive note. In contrast to the bodies deprived of strength (ṚV X.28.11) are transformed through sacrifice. In the first diptych, the speaker declares that through ritual labor these bodies became. What are these bodies? What did they become?

It is likely the sense of *abhūvan* is similar to that seen in ṚV X.27.7, where the speaker tells Indra *abhūr* 'you became (present)', with the sense of becoming present here at the sacrifice. So, I do not think the sense of nom. pl. f. *tanúvaḥ*, 'bodies', is reflexive here either, as reflexivity is already accomplished by the middle voice of *hinviré*. As *hinviré* is marked by accent as being in a dependent clause. Since they are characterized with text-deictic *eté*, the unnamed subjects have already been mentioned in this hymn. In ṚV X.28.6-8, Indra revealed to the confused poet that the *deva*s undertook ritual sacrifice to make him strong. I think *eté* resumes these *deva*s. These gods have become present through ritual work and, as bodies, impel themselves (*hinviré*) through poetic performance at the Soma sacrifice. What does this mean? Recall that the hymn opened at a Soma sacrifice (ṚV X.28.3b *sunvánti sómān píbasi tvám eṣām*), which tells us that the gods who became present through ritual labor are the bodies impelling themselves at the Soma sacrifice. This strongly suggests to me, that Indra is asserting that the priests are the embodiment of the gods, which agrees with the idea that the priests are mimetically re-enacting the first sacrifice.

In the final diptych of the hymn the speaker commands his listener, who is now properly educated by Indra, to measure or compare (*úpa... māhi*) the prizes while speaking in a manly fashion (*nṛvát*). By doing so, the listener being a hero, will establish for himself fame and name in heaven (*divi*).[275] A brief note on this *śravas* which is *divi*, 'in heaven,' this is surely the *śravas* which was not beneath the Sun in ṚV X. 27.21c, and must be interpreted to mean immortalized.

[275] I think the pair, fame and name, is a case of Watkin's non-litotic qualifier. See Watkins 1995:44-46. This formula takes the form of [argument + synonymous argument]. The Paradebeispiel is "safe and sound" which is to say [safe + synonym of safe] = [safe] but emphatically expressed. For fame is to be celebrated in song, to have one's identity immortalized in poetry. Name is the marker of that identity. As such the pair [fame + name] = [fame + famous name] = [fame] but emphatically expressed.

This reverses the directionality of the first diptych, where the gods become terrestrial, to depict a man becoming divine.

I think the suggestion is that the addressed audience member is not yet immortal until he speaks *nr̥vát*, 'like a man'. This sets up the expectation of his response signals the end of the impersonation of Indra. The word *nr̥vát* could also mean 'possessing (the root) √*nr̥*'. The hymn that follows this one is Ṛ̥V X.29; it contains words derived from the root √*nr̥* 9x, and its first verse concludes with *nr̥̄ṇā́m náriyo nŕ̥tamaḥ kṣapā́vān* 'among men, the manly one is the manliest protector of the earth'. The *Bṛhaddevatā* attributes Ṛ̥V X.29 to Vasukra Aindra, the same *r̥ṣi*, seer, as Ṛ̥V X.27-28, which suggests the tradition which followed the completion of the Ṛ̥gveda conceived of Ṛ̥V X.27-29 as constituting one Vasukra cycle. Perhaps they did constitute one performative litany, and Ṛ̥V X.29 is the response to the challenge which Indra issues, for in speaking *nr̥vát* the poet proves Indra's teachings have been successful.

In summary, Ṛ̥V X.28, like Ṛ̥V X.27, restricts most of its *adhiyajña* level references to the few places where Indra's identity is being established. The directive that the speaker pay attention (Ṛ̥V X.28.4a *idáṃ sú me jaritar ā́ cikiddhi*) is one such place, although there is no dearth of 1st person sg. verbs: *pāmi, śiśāmi, vádhīṃ, vam,* and *randhayāni*. The Vasukra Aindra hymns are not as heavily characterized with the *ahaṃkāra* structure or deictic traces of the present as previous cases of mimesis, but they do employ them to some extent to make Indra present. Both hymns also set up the circumstances of their transmission and their re-performance as well as lecture to the audience at length about the origin and power of the sacrifice. While Ṛ̥V X.27-28 do not establish as clear a mimetic circle as some of the other case studies, they do seem to articulate their own theory of the metaphysics of ritual re-enactment.

## CHAPTER 6

## PEEKING INTO THE CAVE

The predictions I made in **Chapter 2** were borne out to varying degrees in my case studies. Nearly all the case studies contained evidence of a mimetic circle. Through these mimetic circles, the hymns depicted their impersonation as a re-performance of a primordial speech act of Indra. In so doing, I have established that the impersonation of Indra is indeed a form of mimesis. The question remains, why are these strange mimetic hymns in the Ṛgveda at all? The answer may be that they are not strange at all. The mimetic grammar developed by this dissertation serves as a rubric for evaluating the mimetic dimensions of the Vedas in a more holistic manner. To do that, we must consider the mimetic impersonation of speaking characters other than Indra in the Ṛgveda. In this chapter, I will explore some of the challenges and possible solutions to studying the mimetic impersonation of a human figure. Can this be considered a similar phenomenon to becoming Indra? To what extent is performing a human self like performing a divine self? Recall that my theorization of the *adhiyajña* level did not treat the present performance as more historical than the mythological narrative. Both spheres, human and divine, are textual constructs. As such, I argue that a categorical distinction between a human and divine 'textualized self' cannot be assumed. Instead, my approach will be to explore the degree to which the Ṛgveda and the later Vedas have a shared notion of embodied textuality, through which a 'textualized self', human or divine, could be transmitted through hearing, memorizing, and re-performing text.

It has generally been understood that the theology of the Ṛgvedic period and that of the later Vedas was rather different.[276] Recall in **Chapter 2**, that Karen Thomson claims that "the

[276] By theology, I rely upon the working definition provided by Clooney (2010:9) "Theology, as I use the word in this book, indicates a mode of inquiry that engages a wide range of issues with full intellectual force, but ordinarily does so within the constraints of a commitment to a religious community, respect for its scriptures, traditions, and practices, and willingness to affirm the truths and values of that tradition." I think this aptly describes at least part of the intellectual project of the Vedic texts. Affirming the truth of the oral tradition and its value to society is pervasive in the Vedic texts, and its metaphysical, cosmological, and soteriological inquiries all presuppose the truth of mantra and value of its performance as well as the oral tradition which

authors of the Brāhmaṇas had not understood [the poems of the Ṛgveda].” I do not contest that the rituals were formally different, but the existence of heteropraxy does not abnegate the possibility of shared theological or metaphysical commitments. The texts locate themselves in a milieu of intense hieratic competition; *prima facie*, this agonistic setting seems a better explanation for the innovation and diversity in the ritual system than the assumption that the authors of the Brāhmaṇas were ignorant of the Saṃhitās. Although the focus of this dissertation is the doubling of the speaker, the re-enactment of a mythological narrative effectively places a verbal mask on all ritual participants. The re-enactment of mythological narrative maps on to the present performance, doubling the audience, the offerings, and the implements. That much is already expressed in the Ṛgveda:

ṚV X.130.3 *kắsīt pramắ pratimắ kíṃ nidắnam / ắjyaṃ kím āsīt paridhíḥ ká āsīt /*
*chándaḥ kím āsīt práügaṃ kím ukthám / yád devắ devám áyajanta víśve //*

What was the original? What (was) the copy? What was the tether?
What was the butter? What was the enclosure?
What was the meter? What was the yoke-pole?[277] what was the poem?
When all the gods sacrificed the god.

Like the *bandhu*s, ‘links’, which connect latent homologues in the Brāhmaṇas, the *nidāna*-, ‘tether’, connects the *pratimā*-, ‘copy’ with its *pramā*- ‘model’. Conceptually like a link or a tether, the Vedic poets employ metaphors of weaving and thread to depict the crafting of new poetic material from within a tradition of oral poetics. If *bandhu*s and *nidāna*s function like a *tantu*, ‘thread’, then the bond is really a poetic connection. As we have seen in our studies of mimetic impersonation, poetic speech activates the connection between past and present. It is this principle which unites the ontological transformation through the performance of self-

transmits them. This much is explicitly true of the Brāhmaṇas, but implicitly true of Saṃhitās as well, as their collection and redaction was guided by an ideology which was constituted by theological commitments as well as social and aesthetic ones.

[277] A hapax legomenon in Ṛgveda, presumably from *pra-yuga ‘yoke-pole’. Undoubtedly a kind of opening invitation.

assertion with the linguistic nature of the Brāhmaṇical *bandhu,* which traces an invisible relationship between two things frequently justified on the basis of poetic imagery, word play, folk etymology, or even scansion.[278]

A recent dissertation by Stephanie Majcher calls attention to the Ṛgvedic Āranyakas as texts concerned with a "composite self", one constituted by divine faculties entering a permeable body: *cakṣus*, 'sight', *śrotra*, 'hearing', *manas*, 'mind', *vāc*, 'speech', and *prāṇa* 'breath'. This composite self, assembled by voice and breath, resembles Plato's mimesis, in which the assumes the *phonē*, 'sound' and *skēma*, 'form' of the emulated character. Seeing, hearing, and mind are private internal states, which, I argued, becomedeictic traces of the performance at the moment they are made public to the audience. This may be properly theorized as another way of making the invisible visible in performance. Just as the cosmological narrative, an *adhidaiva* level, is made present in at the *adhiyajña* level through a variety of strategies, so too are internal states, an *adhyātma* level, made present at the *adhiyajña* level via speaker reporting.

Majcher pays special attention to the influence orality and memory have on Vedic textuality, arguing that "[t]he oral transmission of texts situates them in the domains of speaking and hearing, and thus memorization... [ ] includes not only words but their sonic textures."[279] The notion of a composite self, then, is nothing other than how the oral tradition theorizes the ontology of the individual as an entity who embodies texts and transmits texts to new bodies. At first blush, it would appear that the close connection of personhood and text may arise from the material realities of orality itself, and that poetic impersonation may merely be one of its

[278] Witzel 1979: "Two entities are identified by the Vedic priest, if they have one trait in common. The sun is the eye of Mitra in so far as both are round, bright with light, watch people and the world during day time, are not active at night, etc. It is their roundness (viz. brightness, etc.) which put the sun and the human eye into the same category, the noematic category roundness, (viz. brightness etc.). Magical identifications in the Veda are, in fact, established by discovering a noematic category into which both entities to be identified fit. This is the labour of the Vedic magician: he has to discover the secret, hidden bandhu, (not a mystical one, as Oldenberg (1919) and Gonda (1960) say), the nexus unifying two concepts, two noematic aggregates."

[279] Majcher 2016:95

exponents. I now draw your attention to a passage from the Śāṅkhaya Āraṇyaka (ŚāṅkhĀ) which Majcher treats in her dissertation and which is highly germane to this dissertation:

ŚāṅkhĀ 1.1.2 *atho indrasyaiṣa ātmā yan mahāvrataṃ tasmād enat parasmai na śaṃsen ned indrasyātmānaṃ parasmin dadhānīty*

> Likewise, this is the body of Indra which is the Mahāvrata.
> From that, one should neither announce this to another, nor (should one say) "I place the body of Indra in another".

The text informs us of two actions which should be avoided. One is reciting the Mahāvrata for another and the other one is declaring "Let me place the body of Indra in another". The first option indicates that performing sacred litany can constitute the body of Indra in someone, while the second options suggests transformation through assertion is just as active as it is in the older mantras, such as the *yajus* which asserts "You I give with the arms of the Aśvins and the hands of Pūṣan." The precise sense of the 1st sg. subjunctive is likely hortative, as evidenced by a father-son ritual of transmission found later in the text.[280] In this ritual, all the compositional elements of the self are placed by the father into the son. The first component is voice: *vācaṃ me tvayi dadhānīti pitā / vācaṃ te mayi dadha iti putraḥ* / The father (says) "Let me place my voice in you"; the son (says) "I place your voice in me." The use of *dadhāni* as ritual declaration seems to operate in the same way that it did when installing the body of Indra, as though this were a component of the self no different than voice, breath, or mind. In other words, the later texts seem to share the notion of the Ṛgveda that impersonation is more than drama, because the original components of personhood of Indra are faithfully transferred into body after body. An exciting aspect of this project is how it expands the scope for thinking about textuality and persona beyond the immediate context of the performance and into the phenomenology of text itself. While this makes Majcher's findings of interest to philologists of other oral traditions, another benefit of this approach is it expands what we can say about Vedic religion outside of the

[280] ŚāṅkhĀ 4.15 = KauṣU 2.15

narrows bounds of the performance of the Soma sacrifice, to which I have limited myself in this work.[281]

### 6.1 The Mimetic Impersonation of a Seer

Until now, I have avoided analyzing the mortal persona in detail, and restricted myself to Indra alone. Attempting to understand the mimetic impersonation of a human seer begins with a study of how that seer is imitated. Consider for a moment the following verse:

ṚV VII.96.3 *bhadrám íd bhadrā́ kr̥ṇavat sárasvatī / ákavārī cetati vājínīvatī /*
*gr̥ṇānā́ jamadagnivát / stuvānā́ ca* ***vasiṣṭhavát*** //

A good will the good one make: Sarasvatī appears unselfish (and) rich in mares, being serenaded (by us) like Jamadagni, being praised (by us) **like Vasiṣṭha.**

ṚV VII.96, like most hymns of maṇḍala VII, is attributed by later paratexts to Vasiṣṭha. This verse, however, indicates the poet sings to Sarasvatī by *imitating* Vasiṣṭha (*vasiṣṭhavát* 'like Vasiṣṭha') as a model singer. It is this memory of an imitible model which is of interest to me. Here, the singer is emulating Vasiṣṭhas as his role model explicitl. What about when the adverb *vasiṣṭhavát* is not present? Is the speaker no longer emulating Vasiṣṭha? This is a major problem, as I see it, with approaching mimesis holistically in the Ṛgveda. How does one detect implicit mimesis?

[281] A recent article by Diwakar Acharya compares the Pāśupata vow and the Vedic *gosava* rite. In the former the Pāśupata imitate the behavior of a madman, and in the later patron imitates the unruly behavior of a bull. Those undertaking the *gosava* or *govrata* are imitating the behavior of a bull as a way of emulating or worshipping Indra, often referred to as a bull. Acharya (2013:125) concludes "the Pāśupata cult emerges from the remnants of a cult of Indra, and the figure of the Lord they have adopted is calqued upon Indra." If Acharya is correct, then his analysis complements Majcher's thinking on composite personhood and textuality, and suggests that mimetic impersonation is not only happening at sacrificial performance, but in embodied practices and the enactive speech of religious vows. This makes Vedic mimesis a direct contributor to mimesis in early Śaiva practice. The use of the term *arudra-* 'non-Rudra' in the Śivadharmaśāstra certainly makes one re-think the term *anindra-*. ŚDŚ 1.22 *nārudraḥ samsmared rudraṃ nārudro rudram arcayet / nārudraḥ kīrtayed rudraṃ nārudro rudram āpnuyāt /* "A non-Rudra may not remember Rudra, a non-Rudra cannot honor Rudra, a non-Rudra cannot celebrate Rudra, a non-Rudra cannot obtain Rudra."

To approach hymns where the emulation is not so conveniently marked, I want to first investigate ṚV V.40. This hymn has received a great deal of scholarly attention because it contains the enigmatic myth of Svarbhānu piercing the Sun with darkness. Both Jamison 1991 and Houben 2010 offer compelling if competing analyses of the mythological and ritual background of these verses. The poem comprises 9 verses, but the first 4 verses are often overlooked[282] because the narrative involving the figure of Svarbhānu begins only on verse 5. This first part of the hymn looks metrically more archaic than the second part, but Olderberg concludes in his Noten that "...ein Zauber (für Sonnnenfinsternis resp. Entbindung) jedesmal durch ein vierversiges (Uṣṇi-Tṛca mit Triṣṭubh-Schlußvers) Somalied eingeleitet, das von Anfang an dazugehört zu haben scheint."[283]

It seems there are four possibilities. Either A) all of the text was composed at one time, B) the first four verses represent an older stratum to which more material was directly added at a later time. Alternately, both halves could have begun their textual lives independently and their chronological relationship to each other is undetermined. In this scenario, both thes halves were assembled into a whole by a later redactor who juxtaposed them either C) intentionally or D) at random. Possibilities A, B, and C mean that at some point someone, composer or re-composer, understood the text to be meaningful as whole, while possibility D, random juxtaposition, means trying to understand one half of the poem in terms of the other half is a fruitless endeavor.

In order to evaluate the likelihood of random juxtaposition, we must decide exactly what we mean by 'random'. Do we mean truly random? Or do we merely mean the placement was guided by principles other than the interpretation of poetic contents. For example, the formal ordering mechanisms of the Ṛgveda could provide a rubric for adding new material irrespective

[282] The first four verses are completely omitted in Lanman 1884's presentation.

[283] Oldenberg 1909:335

of meaning. As the placement of ṚV V.40 does not conform to the ordering mechanisms of the Ṛgveda, its placement is likely not mechanistic at all but due to interpretation of its content.[284] Further, the fact that it defies the convention order, means it was inserted because some redactor of the text felt it belonged there despite the fact that inserting it would disrupt that order. This must be due to the interpretation of its content.

The V$^{th}$ maṇḍala is associated with the legendary seer Atri. This association is not only found in later texts: the adverb *atrivát* 'like Atri' appears 7x in the maṇḍala.[285] While ṚV V.40 does not contain the adverb *atrivát* itself, it is a text which has been positioned within the V$^{th}$ maṇḍala.[286] As that placement seems to be due to its contents, it may have been understood by the redactors as being tacitly *atrivát*. The redaction of the maṇḍala, then, represents an understanding that the poems within it belong together. The structure of Ṛgveda indicates that

[284] Hymns in the family books (maṇḍalas II-VIII) are arranged in order of addressed deity; deities with more hymns addressed to them coming first. Within these collections, the longer hymns precede the shorter ones. Within this organizational structure ṚV V.40 stands out. The hymn which precedes its, ṚV V.39, is five verses long while the hymn that follows it is twenty verses. ṚV V.49 is the first and longest hymn dedicated to the *viśve devās* 'the all-gods' in maṇḍala V, and thus its position is determined by these formal features. ṚV V.40 is the last hymn in maṇḍala V dedicated to Indra. So, if ṚV V.40 were originally four verses and the expanded to 9 at random this disrupts the mechanical structure of the Ṛgveda as ṚV V.39 is only five verses. If material were being added at random, what determines how much? If the redactor had simply added another 12 verses, for example, then the poem would have been long enough to be the new first hymn in the *viśve devās* sequence. A final possibility is that ṚV V.40.5-9 is an independent sūkta added after ṚV V.40.1-4 and erroneously re-analyzed as a single poem. This too is unlikely because, if associated with Indra, then the redactor would be placing a 5-verse hymn after a four verse. All three scenarios for the random addition of material to this location in the V$^{th}$ maṇḍala break its organizational pattern, which would presumably be the guiding principle for how to insert material at random. Instead, I take the very fact that it does disrupt the pattern as evidence that it was not random, that a possibly motivation for defying the organization of the text is that the redactor considered ṚV V.40.1-4 and ṚV V.40.5-9 to constitute a meaningful whole. If that reasoning is plausible, then it is a moot point whether the hymn was composed whole or re-composed as a whole.

[285] There is one attestation of *atrivát* outside of the V$^{th}$ maṇḍala. I would argue that ṚV 1.45.3 is imitative of the other attestations of *atrivát* and collects a number of other adverbs representing performance as well: *priyamedhavád atriváj / jā́tavedo virūpavát / aṅgirasván mahivrata / práskaṇvasya śrudhī hávam //* "Like (you did) Priyamedha, like Atri, O Jātavedas, like Virūpa, like the Aṅgirases, O you whose vow is great, hear Praskaṇva's call!" (ṚV 1.43.3) The poet desires Jātavedas hear his *háva* 'call' just as the god heard the call of other bygone bards.

[286] This kind of strategic placement is a form of Patton's juxtaposition discussed in **Chapter 2**.

the commonalities between a hymn which praises Agni and a hymn which praises Indra, so long as both are tacitly *atrivát*, outrank the commonalities between an Agni hymn which is *atrivát* and another Agni hymn which is *vasiṣṭhavát.* Whatever the exact logic of redaction, the outcome is that the formal boundary of the maṇḍala imposes itself on its contents. When some corpus of poetic material was sorted into discrete maṇḍalas, that sorting was accomplished through some heuristic process which determined that the VII$^{th}$ maṇḍala was the proper place for a hymn which was understood to be *vasiṣṭhavát* and that the V$^{th}$ maṇḍala the proper place for a hymn which was understood to be *atrivát.*[287] The heuristic process which inserted ṚV V.40 into the V$^{th}$ maṇḍala is effectivelyan etiological argument about that hymn. Specifically, That the hymns of the V$^{th}$ maṇḍala *belong* together now because they *belonged* together at some time prior. It follows, then, that if an adverb *atrivát* surfaces exclusively in the V$^{th}$ maṇḍala, the V$^{th}$ maṇḍala was understood to be the only maṇḍala which is *atrivát*, a quality which imposes itself on hymns which are not marked by the adverb but admitted to the maṇḍala. My hypothesis is that ṚV V.40 despite not containing the adverb *atrivát*, is *atrivát* by virtue of being included in the V$^{th}$ maṇḍala.

An investigation of ṚV V.40.1-4 shows many of the markers of an *adhiyajña* level of discourse.[288] It opens with imperatives *ā́ yāhi* 'drive here' and *piba* 'drink', which locate the action in the present. It closes with the subjunctives *yāsad arvā́ṅ* 'facing us, he will drive' and

[287] Like *vasiṣṭhavát* (ṚV VII.96.3), *bharavājavát* (ṚV VI.65.6) and *kaṇvavát* (ṚV VIII.6.11, ṚV VIII.52.8) each appear exclusively in the maṇḍala associated with the seer.

[288] ṚV V.40.1-4: ***ā́ yāhi*** *ádribhiḥ sutáṃ / sómaṃ somapate* ***piba*** */ vṛ́ṣann indra vṛ́ṣabhir vṛtrahantama // vṛ́ṣā grā́vā vṛ́ṣā mádo / vṛ́ṣā sómo* ***ayáṃ*** *sutáḥ / vṛ́ṣann indra vṛ́ṣabhir vṛtrahantama// vṛ́ṣā tvā vṛ́ṣaṇaṃ* ***huve*** */ vájriñ citrā́bhir ūtíbhiḥ / vṛ́ṣann indra vṛ́ṣabhir vṛtrahantama // ṛjīṣī́ vajrī vṛṣabhás turāṣā́ṭ / chuṣmī́ rā́jā vṛtrahā́ somapā́vā / yuktvā́ háribhyām úpa* ***yāsad arvā́ṅ*** */ mā́dhyaṃdine sávane* ***matsad*** *índraḥ //* "Drive here! Drink Soma pressed by stones, O Soma-lord! Indra! Bull with bulls! Best smasher of obstacles! A bull is the stone, a bull the exultation, a bull this pressed Soma. Indra! Bull by bulls! Best smasher of obstacles! As the bull, I call you, the bull, O possessor of the club with bright aids! Indra! Bull with bulls! Best smasher of obstacles! Possessor of the (Soma) dregs, possessor of the club, the bull prevailing over the mighty, the growling king, the breaker of Vṛtra, the Soma-drinker, having yoked up two golden (steeds, he) will drive hither: Indra will exult at the midday pressing."

*matsad* 'he will be exhilarated', thereby confirming these directives will be obeyed. The speaker is unknown but speaks in the first person (*huve* 'I call') and uses a proximal deictic pronoun (*sómo ayáṃ sutáḥ* 'this here pressed Soma'). The only thing we know about this speaker is that he is a bull (*vṛ́ṣā tvā vṛ́ṣaṇaṃ huve* 'I, a bull, call you bull'). The final word of the fourth verse, *índraḥ*, identifies the listening bull whome the speaker calls, but who is the speaking bull?

Let us examine ṚV V.40.5-9 to what the remainder of the hymn can tell us:

ṚV V.40.5 *yát tvā sūrya súvarbhānus / támasā́vidhyad āsuráḥ /*
*ákṣetravid yáthā mugdhó / bhúvanāni adīdhayuḥ //*

O Sun, when Svarbhānu, son of the Asura, pierced you with darkness,
all beings stared like a baffled (stranger) who doesn't know the field.

I find it easy toimagine the poet tilting his head upward, raising his arms, and addressing the Sun, but the Sun is not the poem's only audience. The *bhúvanāni* 'beings' who stared baffled may not be the present audience, but they may serve as a negative example. A model that the audience should not emulate. For these beings are characterized by their inability to see what is truly happening around them. In the following verse, we will learn that Atri, unlike these confused beings, has the ability to see. How?

ṚV V.40.6 *súvarbhāṇor ádha yád indra māyā́ / avó divó vártamānā avā́han /*
*gūḷháṃ sū́ryaṃ támasā́pavratena / turī́yeṇa bráhmaṇāvindad átriḥ //*

Indra, you struck down Svarbhānu's manipulations,
which were turning under heaven,
Atri found the the Sun hidden by oath-breaking darkness
through the fourth composition.

Atri finds (*avindat*) the otherwise invisible Sun (*gūḷháṃ* 'hidden') through his composition (*bráhmaṇā*). Against the negative example of the helpless blind beings, Atri is a positive example, for he can see the Sun because of his poetic powers. Sāyaṇa suggests that *turī́ya* 'fourth' refers to the fourth verse of this very hymn: *pūrvamantrāpekṣyā asya turīyatvam ekaikaṃ māyāṃśam ekaikena mantreṇa apanodya caturthena mantreṇa nilīnam tamo 'py anudad ity arthaḥ* "*Turīya*: one of the prior mantras. By each mantra (he) has pushed away a

fraction of the *māyā*s,[289] and with the fourth mantra he repelled the ambient darkness. That's the meaning." Sāyaṇa's interpretation agrees with the depiction of how Atri uses *bráhman*s elsewhere in the V$^{th}$ maṇḍala.[290] The augmented verbs of ṚV V.40.5-6 make this a chronologically unambiguous account of the past,[291] constrasting with the imperatives which locate ṚV V.40.1-4 in the present. I take this as evidence which supports a reading of ṚV V.40.5-6 as a narrative which presents ṚV V.40.1-4 as a speech act which Atri performed in the past. This narrative supplies why he uttered these *bráhman*s and what their result was. In so doing we might consider this a juxtaposition of the *adhiyajña* present and mythological narrative about the past of the same type as we saw in the mimesis of Indra. In those cases, the juxtaposition was often contained within a single verse, with one diptych referring to myth and one to ritual. This appears to be the same logic of juxtaposition on a larger scale.

The following verse shifts the perspective to that of the invisible Sun itself, who addresses Atri in the vocative (*atre*) and employs proximal deictic pronouns and present tense directives:

ṚV V.40.7 *mā́ mā́m imáṃ táva sántam atra / irasyā́ drugdhó bhiyásā ní gārīt /*
*tuvám mitró asi satyárādhās / taú meḥā́vataṃ váruṇaś ca rā́jā //*

Atri! Since I am yours, don't let him, deceived by wrath and fear,
swallow me down. You are the ally whose gift is true.
Let these two, (you) and King Varuṇa, help me here."

Proximal deictic pronoun *imáṃ,* 'this one', and adverb *ihá*, 'here' refer to space near the speaker. The directives *mā́ ní gārīt* 'don't let (him) swallow' and *avataṃ,* "let these two help", draw the audience back into the present *adhiyajña* level. The impersonation of the Sun creates a response to the first speaker (ṚV V.40.1-4) and casts the text as a dialogue. The impersonation of the Sun

[289] Surely 'illusions' for Sāyaṇa. Glossed by Geldner (1951) as 'Zaubereien' and by Brereton and Jamison (2015:2:706) as 'magic spells'. See Gonda 1959 for a discussion of the term.

[290] *bráhmāṇi átrer áva táṃ sṛjantu* 'let the compositions of Atri release him!' (ṚV V.2.6c)

[291] *avidhyad, adīdhayuḥ, avā́han,* and *avindat.*

makes narrative past of ṚV V.40.5-6 materialize in the present when the Sun as the present speaker and in so doing unifies all instances of the present time in the poem as occuring in this scene.[292] The rest of the hymn then imposes the understand of ṚV V.40.1-4 as the opening speech act of Atri in response to hidding of the Sun.

When I discussed ṚV V.40.8 in **Chapter 2**, I presented the verse out of context as an example of a case where a mythological event and a ritual event are juxtaposed in order to correlate the two. Let us now restore the context; I present it here with the following and final verse of the hymn:

ṚV V.40.8 *grā́vṇo brahmā́ yuyujānáḥ saparyán / kīríṇā devā́n námasopaśíkṣan /*
*átriḥ sū́ryasya diví cákṣur ā́dhāt / súvarbhānor ápa māyā́ aghukṣat //*

The composer yoking the stones, honoring the gods by mere reverence, striving;
Atri installed the eye of the Sun in heaven and banished the crafts of Svarbhānu

ṚV V.40.9 *yáṃ vaí sū́ryaṃ súvarbhānus / támasā́vidhyad āsuráḥ /*
*átrayas tám ánv avindan / nahí anyé áśaknuvan //*

Which Sun Svarbhānu, the son of Asura, pierced with darkness
That one the Atris found for no one else was able.

By juxtaposing Atri and the *brahmán* priest yoking the Soma stones and striving for the gods, ṚV V.40.8 presents the *brahmán* as the homologue of Atri setting the eye of the Sun in the the sky. Because the text presents ṚV V.40.1-4 as Atri's speech act which restored the Sun in the past, the priest who re-performs this hymn is impersonating Atri and is the *brahmán* of this verse, who re-enacts Atri's deed. In other words, I would argue that ṚV V.40.8 sets up the

[292] This is the only place in the Ṛgveda when the performer impersonates Sūrya. Just as the impersonation of Indra depending on his anticipated arrival and sudden presence, it is interesting here that the Sun only speaks when not visible, suggesting the mimesis relies on the same need to create presence. This theory would account for the rarity of Agni mimesis as otherwise Agni is already physically present once kindled. The exception proves the rule, for when Agni is impersonated in ṚV X.51-52 the setting is the primordial past before Agni has chosen to come dwell on Earth; perhaps these hymns were performed before the fire was kindled so that he might chose at the end to come to Earth and then arrive at the hearth.

similar mimetic circle to the one seen in ṚV X.49.11.[293] This is evidence of the emulation of Atri in a hymn which lacks an overt adverb *atrivát*, which supports my hypothesis that even a hymn without the adverb is implicitly *atrivát* by virtue of its location in the V$^{th}$ maṇḍala.

ṚV V.40.9 adds new information: a plurality of Atris. That plurality has been understood to mean the clan of the Ātreyas to whom the V$^{th}$ maṇḍala is attributed. It is not, however, the only possibile reading, especially since producing a patronymic by vṛddhi-derivative is clearly an available option.[294] Given that the poem imposes the presence of Atri, the voice of Atri, and the ritual actions of Atri on the stylized first person speaker of V.40.1-4, this plurality of Atris may be how the tradition conceives ofthe chronological succession of re-performers of this poem. This succession of performers are reminsicent of Nagy's *immediate* models, as distinct from the *ultimate* model.[295] Yet each iteration bears the name of the original for each performer becomes the ultimate model in sucession: Atri. With each re-performance of this poem, a subsequent performer becomes Atri.

In his study of genealogical lists in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Steven Lindquist emphasizes the degree to which geneological lists are inclusive but also exclusive.[296] If my analysis is probative, then each of these "Atris" hide their own mundane identities behind that verbal mask and asserts themselves to be Atris: *nahí anyé áśaknuvan* 'for no others were able'. Perhaps this succession of performers is a bit like a lineage or a geneological list, but the list has only one item on it: Atri. In that way, the poem acts more like a mimetic charter for a priestly office than a geneological list. In some ways, this re-enactment seems governed by the same

[293] See **Chapter 4**.

[294] For example, *bhā́radvāja* (ṚV VI.51.12).

[295] See **Chapter 1**.

[296] Lindquist (2011:30): "The inclusion in the text of a genealogical list is also an act of exclusion: when a tradition asserts the authority of one lineage, it does so by positioning it over others. For example, a dynastic list establishes a succession of kings, but also establishes who are 'non-kings' and, in doing so, can suggest dynamic processes by which such claims are made and contested."

logic as the re-enactment of Indra, but we never saw a plurality of Indras. Why is that? For human figures, I suspect, mimetic and geneological re-creation operate in conceptual tandem. Just as social institutions, like the sacrifice, are enshrined in the natural order, so too could a performative body be enshrined in a geneological order. In fact, work on the relationship between mimetic performance and systems of lineage has already been done by Thennilapuram P. Mahadevan, who was the first to note the importance of these adjectives of emulation in *-vat* and use them as evidence of mimesis. Mahadevan 2011 suggests that a community of singers imitating a 'first singer' would be the metaphorical 'family' upon which later geneologies would be based.[297] The father-son transmission rite, by which the father places his *vāc* in the son, portrays this particular notion of lineage as a blend of biology and poetry, supports Mahadevan's argument.[298] Perhaps this is why the speaker of ṚV X.28.1 conceives of Indra as a *śváśura-* 'father-in-law' rather than as a *pitar-* 'father', for Indra, who will act like a guru to the poet later in the poem, is a poetic father but not a biological one.

### 6.2 Maṇḍala as Persona

I have argued that adjectives like *atrivát* and *vasiṣṭhavát* are probative ways of thinking about how performers emulate imagined poetic prototypes. In the V[th] maṇḍala, the term *atrivát,* 'like Atri', appears 7x times. In the previous section, I demonstrated that the performer of ṚV V.40 does in fact emulate Atri despite the absent of an overt *atrivát*, arguing that placement in the V[th] maṇḍala endows the hymn with an implicit *atrivát*. If so, there should be cases where the redactors of the maṇḍala received the hymn as being sung by Atri and placed it into his maṇḍala, despite the fact that the hymn in isolation bears no traces of an Atri persona whatsoever. This

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[297] Mahadevan (2011:58): "Each Family collection is thus an archive, growing in size in time, new compositions archived... [] ... by the singers of the "family," a growing circle, recognizing themselves as bound by the *–vat* constructions after the First Singers."

[298] ŚāṅkhĀ 4.15 = KauṣU 2.15

invites us to think about the ways persona is imposed on poems by sources external to the poem. **Chapter 5** provides us with a useful model for how the persona of Indra is imposed upon riddle verses which themselves bear no recognizable traces of Indra impersonation. Other verses make the identity of Indra known and project that identity onto the riddle verses. By arguing that *atrivát* is relevant to understanding hymns which do not include the term, I am, in effect, arguing that those who organized the structure of the Ṛgveda imposed that interpretation on its contents. This is similar to Lindquist's notion of inclusive and exclusive lists. Hymns from maṇḍala V are *atrivát*, and hymns from maṇḍala VII are not. Hymns from maṇḍala VII are *vasiṣṭhavát*; hymns from maṇḍala V are not.

I think even a superficial analysis indicates that the family books are heavily re-organized by the redactors. Maṇḍalas II-VII follow a mechanically organized scheme arranged in order of most frequently addressed deity to least frequently addressed, and each deity-collection is sub-organized from longest to shortest hymn. This is not the pattern seen in in maṇḍala I, which seems to reflect certain ritual litanies performed at that time.[299] The family books are in the order of shortest to longest,[300] while maṇḍalas I and X are larger than any family book and of equal size. This system of organization is instituted in identical ways across the family books, making the notion that the redactors received intact collections from distinct bardic families highly unlikely. The actual historical relationship between the poems of the family books has been completely obscured by this process of strategic attribution which sorted archaic poetic material into different maṇḍalas due to their association with different legendary seers. This sorting erased the old relationship between poems and imposed a new one.

[299] As evidence by Jamison and Brereton (2014:90) "As Insler (2002) has shown, the sequence of gods in I.2–3 represents the sequence of gods who receive cups of soma during the soma-pressing day. The rite reflected in the hymns was neither a version of the soma ritual represented in the Family Books of the Ṛgveda nor that of the classical ritual, although it comes fairly close to the latter. Rather, these two hymns represent a transitional period in the development of the soma rite as it moved toward its classical form."

[300] Ṛ̣V VIII is one hymn shorter than Ṛ̣V VII in the Śākalya recension.

The evidence that these divisions are a creation of the redactors themselves is subtle but detectable. One of these traces is Vasiṣṭha's own name which, as the superlative to *vasu-*, 'good', means 'the best'. While it's not at all unreasonable that a word meaning 'the best' should become the name of a figure,[301] it is strange that the adjective *vasiṣṭha-* 'best' would vanish from the language entirely. The cognate form *vahišta-* is the normal superlative to *vohu-*, 'good', in Avestan. Indeed, *vasiṣṭha* does exist in the Ṛgveda as an adjective, but it is very uncommon. Imagine a timeline, then, where at some *terminus ante quem*, an Indo-Iranian stage, the word *vasiṣṭha-* was only an adjective meaning 'the best' and at some *terminus post quem*, after the redaction of the Ṛgveda, Vasiṣṭha was only the name of a legendary seer and never an adjective. Let us consider the curious case of the first attestation of *vasiṣṭha-* in maṇḍala VII:

ṚV VII.1.8 *ā́ yás te agna idhaté ánīkaṃ / **vásiṣṭha** śúkra dī́divaḥ pávāka /*
*utó na ebhí staváthair ihá syāḥ //*

Agni, the one who kindles your face (is) here
—O **best**, blazing, shining, pure one!—
and (so) you should be here (too)
with these praise songs of ours.

If *vasiṣṭha-* can still be used as superlative to *vasu-* 'good' in maṇḍala VII to modify Agni, then why do the *other* family books never use the word *vasiṣṭha-*? Apart from ṚV II.9.1, *vasiṣṭha-* never appears in the family books. It does appear 6x in the X$^{th}$ maṇḍala and once in the I$^{st}$. The distribution suggests to me that the redactors of the text marked hymns which contained the word *vasiṣṭha-* and included them in a Vasiṣṭha-maṇḍala while simultaneously excluding them from the other family maṇḍalas.[302]

Many attestations of *vasiṣṭha-* in the VII$^{th}$ maṇḍala are ambiguous as whether it is a proper noun Vasiṣṭha or simply a substantivized adjective *vasiṣṭha-* the 'best one' (which could

[301] A similar logic may guide the rhetorical construction of Praskaṇva who seems to be transparently 'foremost Kaṇva'.
[302] What that indicates for the internal chronology of the Ṛgveda is complex, and I will not speculate on precise details here. The simultaneity of admission and omission, at least, suggests to me that while the poetic contents of maṇḍalas III-VIII are diachronically variable, the process of sorting them into discrete family maṇḍalas occurred in one phase.

indicate the winner of the poetry contest). As I argued for the Atris, there is no hymn-internal reason to think that all plural forms of *vasiṣṭha-* refer to a clan or family of Vāsiṣṭhas rather than a diachronic succession of 'best ones' (who win the annual poetry contest). Because the attestations of *vasiṣṭha-* are concentrated in this maṇḍala, hymns which refer to the legendary seer are juxtaposed with more ambiguous cases, casting their semantic shadow on verses which would not have been interpreted as the proper noun in isolation. Consider the famous hymn ṚV VII.33, which provides an origin story for Vasiṣṭha.

ṚV VII.33.11 *utā́si maitrāvaruṇó vasiṣṭha / urváśyā brahman mánasó 'dhi jātáḥ /*
*drapsáṃ skannám bráhmaṇā daíviyena / víśve devā́ḥ púṣkare tvādadanta //*

You are the son of Mitra and Varna, O Vasiṣṭha,
(you are) born, O composer, from the desire of Urvaśī.
(As a) drop fallen by heavenly composition in a lotus,
the all-gods took you.

The patronymic *maitrāvaruṇa* resurfaces in the *śrauta* ritual, where the *maitrāvaruṇa* is the title of one of the priests who assists the *hotar*; I suspect this priestly office originated as the practice of impersonating Vasiṣṭha is ritual performance.[303] The miraculous birth of the seer Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇa infiltrates the semantics of the other attestations of the word *vasiṣṭha-* and personifies them. Consider how Vasiṣṭha's singular origin influences the use of *vasiṣṭha-* in the plural.

ṚV VII.12.3 *tuváṃ váruṇa utá mitró agne / tuvā́ṃ vardhanti matíbhir vásiṣṭhāḥ /*
*tuvé vásu suṣaṇanā́ni santu / yūyám pāta suastíbhiḥ sádā naḥ //*

You are Varna, and you are Mitra, O Agni. You do the Vasisthas grow.
In you there is good, let there be good winnings!
Protect us always with good fortune"

[303] I do not see this hypothesis of the origin of the *maitrāvaruṇa* priest as incompatible with the observations of Minkowski 1991. Minkowski argues the *maitrāvaruṇa* is the terrestrial representative of Mitra and Varuṇa. If anything, I think Minkowski's position supports my hypothesis that the *maitrāvaruṇa* developed from the mimetic impersonation of Vasiṣṭha, as ṚV VII.33.11 imagines Vasiṣṭha to be the scion and envoy of Mitra and Varuṇa. Further the initial appearance of Vasiṣṭha is in the form of a drop, perhaps of Soma, accompanied by sacred speech. As we have seen with Indra, Soma and speech seem to be important components in effecting mimetic impersonation.

Notice that *vásiṣṭhāḥ* sits just across the diptych boundary from *tuvé vásu*. That suggests to me the 'good thing' within Agni is related to the fact that he is being grown by the ones who are the 'most good'. If the character of Vasiṣṭha were not looming large, then his verse would most likely have been analyzed as a case of *figura etymologica* like "with eager feeding, food doth choke the feeder".[304] Let us reconsider *vasiṣṭha-* as an epithet of Agni in ṚV VII.1.8. When the notion of a clan of Vasiṣṭhas is imposed upon the poem, an adjective that qualified Agni as 'the best fire' now qualifies him as the 'Vasiṣṭha-clan fire', an interpretation which is in no way evidenced at the level of the poem, as this is the only time the term *vásiṣṭha* appears in ṚV VII.1. This interpretation can only be imposed at the maṇḍala level.

The way forward, I think, is to use my 'grammar of the mimesis' to closely study the family books not only at the level of the *sūkta*, as I did with the impersonation of Indra, but also at the maṇḍala level, to examine how the whole of the text has been arranged to create the persona which the performer impersonates. As an example of such a project, consider the fact that maṇḍala III contains only a single poem in which the seer Viśvāmitra appears in the singular. In the the 62 hymns of the maṇḍala, it appears 2x in the plural with no real information about these *viśvāmitra*s:

| | |
|---|---|
| ṚV III. 1.21ab | *jánmañ janman níhito jātávedā / viśvā́mitrebhir idhyate ájasraḥ /* |
| | Birth after birth, Jātavedas is deposited,<br>by the Viśvāmitras the immortal is kindled. |
| ṚV III.18.4cd | *revád agne viśvā́mitreṣu śáṃ yór / marmṛjmā́ te tanúvam bhū́ri kṛ́tvaḥ /* |
| | Agni (make) wealth, weal, and longevity among the Viśvāmitras,<br>(for) we clean your body (again and again) many times. |

None of these attestations tells us anything about the term *viśvāmitra* except that they are figures who kindle fire and pour oblations. That could refer to a member of a biological family, it may

[304] From William Shakespeare's *Richard II* (II:i:37).

refer to a member of a social pact,[305] or it may refer to a priestly office. The remaining 4x the term appears in the maṇḍala are all in hymn ṚV III.53, which is long narrative about the figure Viśvāmitra. If this hymn were absent from the maṇḍala, no one would conceive of Viśvāmitra as an individual figure, in the same way no one conceives of the word *deva* or *marut* as referring to an individual figure. The famous dialogue hymn, ṚV III.33, features a poet speaking with two rivers. Although the speaker never identifies himself, this poem is considered a Viśvāmitra hymn par excellence. I would argue that ṚV III.53 is the vehicle for the extension of the persona of Viśvāmitra to ṚV III.33 as well as its pervasion throughout the rest of the maṇḍala.[306]

### 6.3 The Seven Threads of the Sacrifice

Through the above thought experiments, I hope that I have conveyed that it would be probative to read the internal structure of the Ṛgveda as strategically arranged for performance rather than as a passive recapitulation of the history of its collection. After all, the project of the Ṛgveda never drifts too far from the public performance of the Soma sacrifice. It therefore follows that the formal structure of the Ṛgveda would be just as deeply committed to that public performance of the Soma sacrifice as its poetic contents, even if the Soma sacrifice of its redactors is not identical to the Soma sacrifice of its contributors. If thinking about the maṇḍalas in this way is probative, then the next step is an in-depth study which may demonstrate

[305] Compare the French *allemand* 'German' which is derived from *alemanni* which was not the name of a people, but of a tribal alliance. Possible etymologies for the term are 'all man' in which case it would parallel *vaiśvānara* as the fire of tribal alliance, or 'foreign men' (from an *al- base like Latin *alius* 'other' and Vedic *ari-* 'stranger') which would parallel the adjective *ārya* which denotes cultural interiority. Remember the *ari-* or *arya-* is a stranger, guest, and host because he is within Vedic society but not from the speaker's *viś* 'clan'. The adjective *ārya* therefore means being a part of the inter-*viś* network of reciprocal hospitality which culminates in seasonal alliances. Notice that the god Aryaman presides over marriage arranging, as men of one *viś* must take brides from another. All this to say that the term *viśvāmitra* looks much more like a *vaiśvānara* or *alemanni* type noun than a personal name.

[306] A closer investigation of *viśvāmitra*, including decompositional forms *viśva....mitra*, is required. Such a study should also investigate onomastic *vāmadeva*, which appears but once in the IV$^{th}$ maṇḍala (ṚV IV.16.18) and *gṛtsamada-* which appears exclusively in the II$^{nd}$ maṇḍala (ṚV II.4.9, ṚV II.19.8, ṚV II.39.8, ṚV II.41.18), it is always a plural and never in the singular.

conclusively that books II-VIII are not 'biological family' books created by historically real bardic clans, but textual bodies constructed by the redactors of the Ṛgveda so that seven priests can embody seven prototype poet-sacrificers. Like Indra, a human performer would mimetically become one of these seven seers in performance. Why would the redactors of the Ṛgveda structure the text around these seven seers?

Let us first try to understand how the Soma sacrifice was conceptualized by the redactors, for that notion of the Soma sacrifice influenced the redactors interpretation of the poetic material, so that when it was received it was arranged to serve a contemporaneous Soma sacrifice.[307] As the X$^{th}$ maṇḍala is the linguistically youngest material, that may be a good place to examine how the redactors of the text conceived of the sacrifice. In the final maṇḍala, the *yajña* is described twice thusly:

| | |
|---|---|
| ṚV X.52.4cd | *agnír vidvā́n yajñáṃ naḥ kalpayāti / páñcayāmaṃ trivṛ́taṃ saptátantum //* |
| | Agni, knowing the sacrifice, will arrange for us<br>(one that has) five courses, three turns, and seven threads. |
| ṚV X.124.1ab | *imáṃ no agna úpa yajñám éhi / páñcayāmaṃ trivṛ́taṃ saptátantum /* |
| | Agni! Come near this sacrifice (which has) five courses,<br>three turns, and seven threads. |

What exactly is this sacrifice which has five courses (*yāma*-), three turns (*vṛta*-), and seven threads (*tantu*-)? As this depiction is located in the youngest maṇḍala of the Ṛgveda, it is probably as close to the *yajña* of the redactors of the text as we are going to get.

Sāyaṇa makes numerous suggestions but cannot come to a real resolution: He writes on ṚV X.52.4: *kīdṛśaṃ yajñam | pañcayāmaṃ pañcavidhagamanaṃ | pānkto hi yajñah | trivṛtaṃ savanatrayabhedena triprakāram | saptatantuṃ saptabhiś chandomayaiḥ stutibhir vistṛnam |*

[307] Consider that the Sāmaveda is not organized at random either, but appears to be a re-arrangement of the Ṛgvedic materials for a contemporaneous Soma sacrifice as well. It would be inconsistent with the history of Vedic texts to assume that the Ṛgveda is *not* in some way redacted specifically for contemporaneous ritual practice.

"What kind of sacrifice (does he arrange)? 'Five-coursed' (means) 'having five ways to do it' for the sacrifice is fivefold. 'Three-turned' (means) 'consisting of three kinds' due to the three divisions of the Savana. 'Seven-threaded' (means being) furnished with seven praises consisting of meters.," yet on ṚV X.124.1 he writes*: kīdṛśaṃ | pañcayāmaṃ yajamānapañcamair ṛtvigbhir niyamitaṃ | yadvā | dhānākarambhādhibhiḥ pañcabhiḥ havirbhiḥ pañcabhiḥ prayāgair vā prāptaṃ | trivṛtaṃ pākayajñahaviryajñasomayajñabhedena savanatrayātmanā vā triguṇaṃ saptatantuṃ sapta tantavastanitāraḥ karmaṇaṃ vistārayitāro hotrādyāḥ sapta vaṣatkartāro yasya | yadvā | agniṣṭomo 'tyagniṣṭoma ukthyaḥ ṣodaśī vājapeyo 'tirātro 'ptoryāma iti saptadhā vistīryamānaṃ* | "What kind? 'Five-coursed' (means) limited to the priests who have the patron of the sacrifice as the fifth...or maybe, with five types of offerings, grains, groats, etc....or maybe attained by five pilgrimages. 'Three-turned' (means) 'having three qualities' either by the division of Pāka, Havis, and Soma sacrifices or by the triple nature of the Savana. 'Seven-threaded' (means) the seven threads stretch the (sacrificial) action, specifying the Hotar etc., the seven who say "*vaṣat*!", or maybe the Agniṣṭoma, the Atyagniṣṭoma, the Ukthya, the Ṣodaśī, the Vājapeya, the Atirātra, and the Aptoryāma sacrifices are the set of seven specified."

For my own part, I am tempted to read the five courses (*yāma*-) representing five days, delimiting the length of time to complete the Ṛgvedic Soma sacrifice.[308] I agree with Jamison and Brereton (2014:158) who take the three turns (*vṛta*-) as referring to the three pressings of

[308] I base this hypothesis on three pieces of evidence. 1) The *agniṣṭoma* presses Soma on the fifth day (Caland and Henry 1906:125). 2) If a word like *yāma* 'course' refers to a spatial distance, like the course of a race-track, it is easily disposed towards referring to 'temporal distance'. Cf. the English expression 'over the course of a day'. 3) Following Hillebrandt's insight, Kuiper (1983) suggests that the Ṛgveda is essentially a songbook created for the New Year festival. If Kuiper is correct, then a span of five days could refer to the intercalary period after previous year ends and the new one begins. Recall the riddle about the year ṚV I.164.48 portrayed the wheel as having 360 pegs. This suggests a conceptualization of the year as having 360 days rather than the 365 of a typical solar year.

Soma. Geldner, however, directs the reader to ṚV II.18.1,[309] and suggests this use of number refer to types of sacrificial offerings:[310]

ṚV II.18.1 *prātáṁ rátho · návo yoji sásniṡ / cáturyugas trikaśáḥ saptáraśmiḥ /*
*dáśāritro manuṣíyaḥ suvarṣāḥ / sá iṣṭíbhir matíbhī ráṃhiyo bhūt //*

At daybreak, a new winning chariot is yoked,
having four yokes, three whips, seven reins,
and ten oars. Belonging to Manu, Sun-winning,
it becomes quick by our wishes and thoughts.

I think comparing *saptaraśmi*- 'seven reins' and *saptatantu*- 'seven threads' may be probative, for not only do both these adjectives qualify the sacrifice as having seven of something, but because the physical similarities between reins and threads suggest they may be metaphorical representations of similar things.

The *agniṣṭoma* which Sāyaṇa knew took 16 priests to perform, but the Ṛgveda explicitly refers to a team of priests numbering seven.[311] The term *saptahotar* 'seven *hotar*s' is understood to mean seven priests beginning with the *hotar,* appearing 2x in compound and 7x decompositionally.[312] Given that one of the prevalent metaphors in the Ṛgveda is that the sacrifice is like a chariot, it is reasonable to infer that the chariot of ṚV II.18.1 is such a metaphor, and that it participates in a type of compositional metaphor seen throughout Vedic

[309] Geldner (1951:353): "Zu den Zahlen s. 2,18,1b. Wie dort drücken die typischen Zahlen die große Mannigfaltigkeit der Opferarten aus. Man kann natürlich die Zahlen auf verschiedene Weise im alten und späteren Ritual unterbringen. Nach Sāy[ana] sind 5 die vier Opferpriester und der Opfernde, oder fünf Opferspenden oder die fünf Prayāja's, 3 die drei Savanas."

[310] Geldner (1951:214): "Ob das Bild des Webens festgehalten wird? Sāy[ana] bezieht die drei Savanas, 7 auf die Metren. Man könnte auch an die 7 Grundformen des Opfers denken, falls überkaupt die Zahlenhäufung einen bestimmten Sinn hat und nicht nur allgemein die große Mannigfaltigkeit zum Ausdruck bringen soll."

[311] Typically, with the term saptahotar, but with other terms too. For example, when Agni is described as *saptámānuṣaḥ* 'belonging to seven men' (ṚV VIII. 39.8). Recall the riddle of the *sapta vīra* 'seven heroes' (ṚV X.27.15).

[312] *saptahotar*: ṚV III.29.14, ṚV X.64.5; *sapta hotārah*: ṚV VIII.60.16, ṚV IX.10.7, ṚV IX.114.3; *sapta hotṝn*: ṚV X.35.10, ṚV X.61.1; *sapta hotṛbhih*: ṚV III.10.4, ṚV X.63.7.

poetics. In a compositional metaphor two things are equated and their respective parts are also equated.[313] For example:

ṚV X.90.6 *yát púruṣeṇa havíṣā / devā́ yajñám átanvata /*
*vasantó asyāsīd ājyaṃ / grīṣmá idhmáḥ śarád dhavíḥ //*

When the gods extended the sacrifice with man as as the oblation,
the spring was its butter, the summer (its) kindling,
(and) the autumn (its) oblation.[314]

In this metaphor, the sacrifice of the cosmic man is equated with the year, and the various sacrificial actions each equated with the seasons. I believe the metaphor operative in ṚV II.18.1 is the same type. The sacrifice is equated with a chariot and its seven reins are equated with the *saptahotar*. Support for this analysis is found in another hymn concerning a new chariot:

ṚV X.135.3 *yáṃ kumāra návaṃ rátham / acakrám mánasā́kṛṇoḥ /*
*ékeṣaṃ viśvátaḥ prā́ñcam / ápaśyann ádhi tiṣṭhasi //*

Boy! Which new wheel-less chariot which you have made with mind
having one pole (yet) facing towards all directions.
Without seeing, you are standing atop it.

This is from the father-son dialogue used as an example in **Chapter 2**. Clearly, this is no mundane chariot. There is a general agreement that this chariot is a metaphor for the sacrificial performance.[315] The mind chariot is wheel-less, that is immobile, for the same reason that the boy cannot see it: he lacks the poetic vision necessary to see the real, yet invisible, reality of the sacrifice. The tension the hymn introduces here is resolved in the following verse:

ṚV X.135.4 *yáṃ kumāra prā́vartayo / rátham víprebhiyas pári /*
*táṃ sā́mānu prā́vartata / sám itó nā́ví áhitam //*

Boy! Which chariot you rolled forth from the inspired (poets)

[313] Probably a phenomenon which should be considered a form of Indo-Iranian "ritual *Listenwissenschaft*." See Sadovski 2012.

[314] Winter is omitted because it is inauspicious. It represents the death of the year and, in this compositional metaphor, the execution of the *puruṣa.*

[315] See Jamison 2014, Forte and Smith 2014, and D'Intino 2016.

After that one did the melody roll forth,
From this time, it is assembled on the boat.

Now the language of the sacrifice figures into this chariot metaphor directly, for it is rolled forth from the *vipra*s 'inspired ones' and a *sāman* 'melody' follows it. While we are not told the *vipra*s number seven, the poetic conceit here seems to making an otherwise defective wheel-less chariot roll. This is not the exact same metaphor, but it makes the referent of *saptaraśmi* 'seven reins' as the seven priests conceivable. In the same way, *saptatantu-* 'having seven threads' is simple the equivalent referrent for a metaphor in which the sacrifice is conceived of in terms of weaving, and the seven threads are metonymic references to the priests as seven weavers.

ṚV I.1645cd *vatsé baṣkáye ádhi saptá tántūn / ví tatnire kaváya ótavā́ u //*

In the mature calf, (seven) poets have stretched out
seven threads to weave (them).

Because *saptá* is indeclinable, it can apply equally well to the threads and to the poets. In other words, seven poets have stretched out seven thread of sacrificial poetry. I will argue that stretching (*vi tatnire*) the threads (*tántūn*) is how the text conceives of accessing the inherited sacrificial poetry sourced in the oral tradition. This analysis is corroborated in one of the creation hymns of the Ṛgveda which presents the poet-priests as fathers:

ṚV X.130.1 *yó yajñó viśvátas tántubhis tatá / ékaśataṃ devakarmébhir ā́yataḥ /*
*imé vayanti pitáro yá āyayúḥ / prá vayā́pa vayéti āsate taté //*

The sacrifice which is stretched in all directions by threads
(which) is extended to 101 by the acts of god
These ones weave it, fathers who have come here,
They sit at the stretched (sacrifice) saying "weave to, weave fro".

The link between fatherhood and weaving is resumed in this pair of verses typically understood to be the anxiety of a son who fears outdoing his own father at the poetic competition.

ṚV VI.9.2 *nā́háṃ tántuṃ ná ví jānāmi ótuṃ / ná yáṃ váyanti samaré 'tamānāḥ /*
*kásya svit putrá ihá váktuvāni / paró vadāti ávareṇa pitrā́ //*

I neither know the thread nor how to weave,
Nor what those wandering weave at the meeting.
Whose son here will utter what must be said

Above through the father below?

ṚV VI.9.3 *sá ít tántuṃ sá ví jānāti ótuṃ / sá váktuvāni ṛtuthā́ vadāti /*
*yá īṃ cíketad amṛ́tasya gopā́ / aváś cáran paró anyéna páśyan //*

He knows the thread, he knows how to weave it
He will utter what must be said in proper order.
Who recognizes him as the cowboy of the immortal
Wandering below, seeing beyond the other.

Notice the use of *svid*, which Thompsondemonstrated to be a stylistic marker of the Ṛgvedic *brahmodya* or sacrificial riddle.[316] Indeed, if *vaktuva-* means 'to be said' then it is a synonym of the *udya,* 'to be said', which is the second member of the compound *brahmodya*. Often these riddles appear as verse pairs. The first verse asks a myersious question, while the second reveals the answers, which may be just as mysterious. To better understand ṚV VI.9.2, then, we should juxtapose it with ṚV VI.9.3. Notice the second verse resumes the verb of the first, but changes its inflection from 1st person *aháṃ.... jānāmi* to 3rd person *sá... jānāti*. I would speculate that these two verse capture the enigma of the human performer becoming the divine priestly prototype. In this case, that prototype is Agni Vaiśvānara.

ṚV VI. 9.4 *ayáṃ hótā prathamáḥ páśyatemám / idáṃ jyótir amṛ́tam mártiyeṣu /*
*ayáṃ sá jajñe dhruvá ā níṣatto / ámartiyas tanúvā várdhamānaḥ //*

This is the first *hotar*, so look at this one! This immortal light within mortals.
This one has been born seated firmly, immortal and growing through the body.

The speaker refers to this one (*ayám*) as the first *hotar*. Because he is the first *hotar*, the audience is commanded to *páśyata imám* 'look at this one' much as Indra commanded his audience to *paśyatā mā* 'look at me!' in ṚV IV.26.1. This use of proximal deixis could refer to a nearby sacrificial fire, but it could also refer to the speaker himself as we have seen done sometimes with proximal deixis. Agni could be growing through the speaker's body, seated firmly within the speaker. On the other hand, the body (*tanū*) may be the body politic and it refers to the

[316] Thompson 1997a:30-31.

audience assembled here. The assertion that this light (*idáṃ jyótir*) is the immortal within mortals supports an internalized Agni, but loc. pl. *mártiyeṣu* could also mean simply among mortals, perhaps the mortal audience assembled at the sacrifice. The mystery of the son above who speaks through the father below may be this image of a poet next to his poetic father, Agni, the fire blazing beside him or within him.[317] In my appraisal it is both. For if the speaker is performing next to the fire, then heat and radiance of the fire is penetrating his body, heating him up. In that moment, there is no distinction between an external and an internal Agni. Agni is often referred to as a *hotar*, but he is also often referred to as a father.[318] I think the answer to question *kásya svit putrá ihá váktuvāni* 'whose son will (say) here what must be said' has been revealed to be Agni, and that Agni is the poets father. The depiction of Agni here and elsewhere as a father makes no clear distinction between 'biological' lineage and 'poetic' lineage, which

[317] If the first *svid* characterizes the sequence as a riddling verse, then the final *ṣvid* would presumably close the sequence. ṚV VI. 9.6: *ví me kárṇā patayato ví cákṣur / vī́dáṃ jyótir hṛ́daya āhitaṃ yát / ví me mánaś carati dūráādhīḥ / kíṃ **svid** vakṣyā́mi kím u nū́ maniṣye //* "My ears fly widely; my eyes widely. This light which in placed in my heart: widely. My mind wanders widely, my attention distant. What will I say? What will I think?" This verse characterizes that light as installed in the heard (*hṛ́daya ā́hitaṃ*) which supports the analysis of ṚV VI.9.4 as an internal light, and Agni growing through the speaker's body. It seems this revelation about Agni (ṚV VI. 9.3-5) is situated between the two *svid*-verses (ṚV VI. 9.2 and ṚV VI. 9.6) and I suspect the poem turns on the mimetic impersonation of Agni Vaiśvānara. It is Agni who asserts his ears, eyes, and mind fly apart. Proferes (2007:75) "On the political level, tension lay between the distribution of sovereignty among the various clans and the consolidation of sovereignty in the figure of a single leader upon whom authority over the clans was periodically and under specific circumstances bestowed. The close association of the Vedic households and communities with their respective fires permitted the manipulation of fire in various ways to become a symbol of this cyclical process of dispersion and integration. Just as the head of every household was connected to the fire in his hearth to the point of being identified with it, so the Vedic king would have been identified closely with his own fire, which was simultaneously the central organizing principle of those submitting to his authority." Proferes (2007:76) "The fact that sovereignty moved between two poles of centralization in a tribal leader and diffusion among the various clan leaders explains why fire could be such a potent political symbol for the Vedic ritualists; the fission and fusion of fire mimicked the political economy of clan-based society." This hymn to Agni Vaiśvānara participates in this language of fusion and fission, and it is surprising that Proferes does not treat it in his monograph. A more thorough study from the perspective as an instance of Proferes Vedic ideal of sovereignty and as an instance of Agni-mimesis may prove probative.

[318] ṚV X.7.3 *agním manye pitáram agním āpím agním bhrā́taraṃ sádam ít sákhāyam* "Agni do I consider as father, Agni as friend, Agni as brother, always (as) a partner."

supports the idea that both divine and human 'textualized selves' can be transmitted orally and emerge in mimetic performance.[319] My purpose in analyzing these enigmatic verses is not to solve them to satisfaction here, but simply to do due diligence to this metaphor of weaving as poetic performance and stretching thread as drawing on the poetic lineage. Indeed, the word lineage is an apt term, for it is derived from Latin *līnea* 'thread'. In ṚV X.130.1, the priests are weavers and fathers. In ṚV VI.9, the human poet lacks knowledge of how to weave and turns to the one who knows the thread for knowledge: Agni, who is depicted as both a priest and a father. Notice how well these metaphors of threads and reins align with the term *nidāna* 'tether', discussed at the beginning of the chapter, which is depicted as connecting the present ritual implements with their primordial homologues.

Let us return to the representation of seven priests as seven weavers (by metaphor) or as seven threads (by metonym). Conceiving of the team of seven priests as the reins of the chariot of sacrifice or as the weavers of the sacrifice is still a depiction of the performance. That depiction located at the *adhiyajña*-level, but we do not know why this representation is significant or what significant event requires the cooperation of seven priests to re-enact. One of the most frequently invoked scenes in the Ṛgveda is when Indra opens the Vala cave at the dawn of time accompaied by the Aṅgiras singers.[320]

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[319] This agrees with both to Majcher 2016 as well as Witzel (2000:479): "This "line of progeny" (*prajātantu*) has to be kept intact by a never-ending succession of children, grandchildren and further descendants. It constitutes the Vedic *social contract* that transgresses many generations. Ultimately, it goes back, through Manu and Vivasvant, to the gods themselves, to the Ādityas and Aditi as well as to their parents and the further distant primordial gods. The same kind of immaterial 'string' (*tantu*) is visible in the supernatural connection established with gods in ritual and symbolized by the agnitantu (or as a pole/tree). Agni thus reestablishes the connection with the gods on a spiritual level. Finally, by the later Brāhmaṇa period, the connection with one's more or less direct spiritual ancestors, the Ṛṣis, is expressed by still another cord, the *yajñopavīta* of the Twice-born. In sum, the image of the 'cord' (*tantu*) is pervasive in Vedic thought: it connects the generations (*prajātantu*); it connects —visibly— the humans with the gods in ritual (*agnitantu*), and it connects humanity's spiritual ancestors, the Ṛṣis, with their present day representatives, the Veda students and Twice-born, by a physical cord, the *yajñopavīta*."

[320] The narrative of opening the Vala cave has been treated extensively by Witzel 2005 from a comparative mythology framework, arguing that it is a New Year drama based on its seasonal and liminal features, both of which, I believe, are required to establish a ritual set during an intercalary period.

Jarrod Whitaker (2016) argues that "in the Ṛgveda, the use of the phrase "thrice seven" (*tríḥ saptá*) appears in telling contexts relating to the discovery of ritual knowledge by the seven Āṅgirasa seers, or the gods in general." For Whitaker, the Vala myth "is a charter myth about the genesis of the institution of sacrifice and the power of deeply analogical and patterned knowledge, particularly in its spoken form." In his line of thinking the reference to *trisaptā́ḥ* in the opening hymn of the Atharvaveda, "equally calls to mind the primordial activity of the priestly Aṅgirases, their discovery of the thrice seven names of the cow mother and her footprints, and perhaps also the secret steps involved in kindling the ritual Fire." If Whitaker is correct, then this represents an attempt on the part of the redactors of the Atharvaveda to claim a more primordial sacrificial ancestry than the ritual as performed by the other three Vedas, by claiming a lineage sourced in the seven Aṅgirases. As the Atharvaveda is excluded from the *śrauta* system,[321] it seems likely that the Atharvaveda is the product of hieratic communities excluded from the Kuru reforms which first organized the Soma sacrifice around three classes of priests each exclusively specialized in the memorization and performance of *ṛc*, *sāman*, and *yajus*.[322] That notion, of descent from seven Aṅgirases may be an archaism on the part of the Atharvaveda.

It is my hypothesis that *saptahotar* in the Ṛgveda refers to the ritual participants who mimetically impersonate the Aṅgirases and accompany Indra to the Vala cave. Further, that the redactors of the Ṛgveda equated the seven seers with the seven Aṅgirases, and along those lines organized a body of inherited poetic material into seven corpora so that the seven priests could mimetically impersonate the seven seers in performance. I find the term 'corpora' apt, for in my hypothesis the inner maṇḍalas, typically referred to as 'family books', really are seven entextualized bodies memorized so that seven priests could each become one of the seven seers.

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[321] Lopez (2010:1): "The Atharvaveda, the fourth Veda, is distinguished from the *trayī vidyā* 'the threefold wisdom' — Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda — mainly in content, because it does not treat the subject of *śrauta* or sacred sacrifice as its main topic."

[322] See Witzel 1995, 1997a, and 1997b for a discussion of the textual history of this period.

To advance this hypothesis, I will now examine how the Aṅgirases are emulated in performance. The adverb *aṅgirasvát* 'like the Aṅgirases' appears 9x in the Ṛgveda and is morphologically parallel to adverbs *atrivát* and *vasisthavát,* which I have argued may indicate mimetic re-enactment. Let us examine one of its iterations:

ṚV III.31.19 *tám **aṅgirasván** námasā saparyán / návyaṃ kṛṇomi sányase purājā́m / drúho ví yāhi bahulā́ ádevīḥ / súvaś ca no maghavan sātáye dhāḥ //*

Honoring him with reverence like Aṅgirases,
I make new that which was born of old, for the one (who is) older (still)
Drive across deceptions, which are thick and godless
And you place us to win the Sun, Gift-lord.

This hymn has fascinating elements which we have seen earlier. For example, *námasā saparyán* appear in ṚV V.40.8 to describe the actions of the *bráhman* priest. In that same verse, we are told that *átriḥ sū́ryasya diví cákṣur ā́dhāt* "Atri placed the eye of the Sun in the sky", whereas here we are told Indra places (aorist indicative *dhāḥ*) the speaker and his allies (represented by 1st plural oblique enclitic pronoun *naḥ* 'us') to win (*sāti*) the Sun (*svar*). While the Vala cave is not mentioned, winning the Dawn and the objective of the mission to Vala. The nature of the poet's assertion then, is that he will re-enact that event born of old for Indra, making it new again at the present performance. If the priests become the Aṅgirases at Vala cave, then Indra will re-enact his part in that myth by destroying deceptions and placing us to win the Sun.[323]

This sets up part of a mimetic circle depicting this song as a re-enactment of its imagined first singing. The absence of the augment on *dhāḥ* 'you put', suggesting the kind of performative aorist which has enactive value at the *adhiyajña*-level, asseting the Indra will help us win of the Sun at the present sacrifice. This piece of a mimetic circle is evidence that during ṚV III.31.19 the priests are emulating the Aṅgirases, but a complete mimetic circle, as I have defined, would

[323] Deception (*druh-)* is the Indo-Iranian arch-nemesis and antithesis of the poet's poetic true. Often characterized as constricting or obstructing, the notion is certainly at the core of Vala cave and Vṛtra as the constricting or obstructing of wealth and habitable space. I suspect it also contributes to the depiction of Svarbhānu's *māyā*s as obstructing the Sun.

present a narrative in which Indra and the Aṅgirases look forward and anticipate the future re-performance of the song which they are inaugurating.

Although it lacks the adverb *aṅgirasvát*, the following verse may have that crucial component of the mimetic circle:

ṚV IV.2.15 *ádhā mātúr uṣásaḥ saptá víprā / **jā́yemahi** prathamā́ vedháso nṝ́n /*
*divás putrā́ **áṅgiraso bhavema** / ádriṃ **rujema** dhanínaṃ śucántaḥ //*

So that we may then be **born** from Mother Dawn
As the seven inspired ones, as the first ritual adepts to men.
May we **become** the **Aṅgirases**, the sons of Heaven.
May we blazing **break** the rock which holds the prize.

The wishes contained in the three 1st pl. optatives *jā́yemahi*, *bhavema*, and *rujema* are reminiscent of verbs we have seen elsewhere in our case studies. The root √*bhū*, 'become', is ubiquitous in our study of Vedic mimesis. The root √*jan*, 'be born', has appeared but less frequently.[324] We saw √*ruj*, 'break', only once (ṚV X.49.6), but other verbs of breaking do appear.[325]

The accent on *jā́yemahi* suggests the first diptych a dependent clause. Which means that they wish to become the Aṅgirases *(áṅgiraso bhavema*) and to break the prize rock (*ádriṃ rujema dhanínaṃ*) **so that** they can be born, or reborn, among men (*nṝ́n*) as the seven seers. These *nṝ́n* are no doubt the same as the men Yama refers to in his dialogue with Yamī;[326] these men are the human audience located at the *adhiyajña*-level. This verse articulates a beautiful mimetic circle, because they cannot be reborn from Uṣas, 'dawn', in the present, if she is still trapped in the Vala cave. The wish, then, is to transform into the seven Aṅgirases at their "first

[324] Yet it appears nonetheless in *ahaṃkāra* formations: *mā jánitā jajā́na* (ṚV X.28.6) and *mā́ṃ tavásaṃ jajñúr* (ṚV X.28.7).

[325] Recall my argument concerning in ṚV X.27.7 *ábhūr u aúkṣīr ví u ā́yur ānaḍ / dárṣan nú pū́rvo áparo nú darṣat /* "You became, you increased, you reached (your) span. The one before breaks (the prize), the one after breaks (the prize)." I theorized that *darṣat* 'break' implied 'breaking a prize' which meant to seize and possibly re-distributing that prize.

[326] See **Chapter 2.**

performance", break open the Vala cave, and release the Dawn in order to secure their future re-transformations in future re-performances. The wish is not merely to re-enact an imagined model but to exist at the beginning and create the model for future emulation. The verse fuses the past and present moment in a mimetic circle as well as establishes the timeless authority of the team of priests.

This theory, that the Soma sacrifice of the Ṛgveda involved a team of seven priests mimetically transforming into the seven seers,[327] finally accounts for the rarity of Indra impersonation as well as its general restriction to the X$^{th}$ maṇḍala. If the Soma sacrifice involved seven priests imitating the seven Aṅgirases, it is logical that Indra would only be mimetically impersonated at specific moments. The Ṛgveda patron of the sacrifice, as a *maghavan-*, *sūri-*, or *yajamāna-*, functions as Indra's terrestrial proxy.[328] Since he is not a professional poet or priest, his role in the ritual would be much more limited. The impersonator of Indra is likely not the patron of the sacrifice himself, but a priest acting as the patron's temporary substitute so that Indra can speak. If this impersonator were one of the *saptahotar*, he would be replacing the verbal mask of one of the seven seers with that of Indra. This seems problematic, as it would make the sacrifice incomplete. Perhaps the poet who speaks as Indra is an eighth priest who acts as the substitute for the patron of the sacrifice when the ritual calls for him to speak and is otherwise inactive. One possible candidate is the *brahman* who is relatively inactive in the *śrauta* ritual. Although the position is later associated with the Atharvaveda, the office of *brahman* in the ritual system likely predates the inclusion of Atharvavedins in the *śrauta* sacrifice. Could this be our inactive priest? Another attractive candidate for the job is the *purohita*. The patron of the

[327] Of course, not every use of the number seven refer to these seven priests. The number seven seems to have been use elsewhere as a totalizing strategy. Recall earlier, we discussed how the totality of world was conceived of as comprising seven regions or divided by seven rivers. We can imagine that a team of seven priests is one of the ways the sacrifice was conceived of as complete. This notion of completion was achieved by making the sacrific a mirror depiction of the cosmos.

[328] See Kuiper 1983:214.

sacrifice's permanent advisor in matters of ritual, the *purohita* selects the 16 temporary priests (*ṛtvij-*) to undertake the sacrifice but does not necessarily participate himself. While the term surfaces in the Ṛgveda, it is not clear precisely what his role was in Ṛgvedic religion. Evidence that the proto-*purohita* may have served as a ritual proxy for his patron can be found in the figure of Bṛhaspati. In the later material, Bṛhaspati becomes a distinct figure, but Schmidt 1968 demonstrated that *bṛhaspati-* began as an epithet of Indra exclusive to his Vala cave episode. Jamison and Brereton (2014:633) note that in ṚV IV.50.1 the seers place (*dadhire*) Bṛhaspati in front (*puras*), a decompositional form of *purohita.*

# EPILOGUE

Although my investigation began as an analysis of just the poems in which the speaker impersonates Indra, the god has proven himself unable to be restricted, obstructed, or contained by me. This dissertation has become a reflection on the logic of the sacrifice, the nature of the text, and the notion of the self. My objective was to analyze the mechanics of this impersonation, but in so doing Indra frequently presented me with his own analysis.

In **Chapter 1**, I considered what it means to perform a disguise in a ritual context, wearing a mask composed of song. From there, I segued into the previous work done on Vedic impersonation. Thompson 1997b identified a formal pattern of self-assertion, which he called the *ahaṃkāra*, through which a Vedic performer donned this verbal mask. Thompson's groundwork is exceptionally important, but does not answer the crucial question of why a poet would impersonate. To answer this question, I consider mimesis in the form articulated by Greg Nagy. Mimesis is a re-enactment, through which the participants "relive through ritual" the time and place of the "first singing". For the impersonation to be mimetic, therefore, there should be some evidence that the poem conceives of itself as both a model to be emulated and as the successful emulation of its model.

What kind of evidence could indicate that the poem is a re-enactment? To answer this question, I attempted to understand how Vedic poetry refers to its own performance context. In **Chapter 2**, I begin by making the case for polysemy, or double meaning, in the Ṛgveda. The semantic richness of the Ṛgveda allows poets to superimpose the original performance (the imagined model) on to the present performance (the imagined copy). While an historical performance was unavailable to me, it is possible to distinguish the text's representation of the performance event from narratives set in the past and to examine the ways that narrative level of reference to past and present interact. Understanding the present performance as a rhetoric construct, then, required that I theorize the rhetorical strategies through which Vedic poems refer to their own imagined present. I argue that the present performance should bear deictic traces of

spatial and temporal proximity to the speaker, who can only speak to his audience in the present. My 'grammar of mimesis' is built around a number of rhetorical strategies which re-enact the past in the present performance, a locus of reference I call the *'adhiyajña* level'. This narrative level is marked by the use of performative verbs, for illocutionary force acts on a present audience. It is also marked by temporally unspecified verbs, like the augmentless injunctive. These injunctives ambiguate the time of narrative action, effectively merging past and present. Proximal deictic pronouns also mark the *adhiyajña* level, characterizing nouns as located in the immediate spatial environs of the speaker. When the poet reports on his current private mental states, such as perceptions, memories, and experiences, he performs those private states publicly. The public presentation of the otherwise invisible life of the poet expresses to the audience what the performer is "reliv[ing] through ritual", and that moment of expression is located in the present. Finally, poetic self-reference is the Paradebeispiel of the *adhiyajña* level of discourse.

I reconsider Thompson's *ahaṃkāra* by analyzing self-assertion as a subtype of narrative assertion which is marked by speaker deixis. Traces of the *adhiyajña* level, however, do not alone constitute evidence of a mimetic performance. Mimesis occurs when the narratives about the past are made present, are re-enacted at the *adhiyajña* level. Therefore, my challenge was to find evidence in each case studies that this was indeed happening. I applied this 'grammar of mimesis' to six hymns in which Indra is impersonated, finding evidence of several mimetic circles. I defined the mimetic circle as a subtype of poetic self-reference in which the song depicts the singing of the itself as an institution set up in the past which is to be re-enacted in the future. My predictions regarding the deictic traces of the *adhiyajña* level were observed, but different hymns favored different stratagies. Some markers of the present appeared that I had not considered initially, for example *prá* with missing copula, which indicates '(appeared) at the front', and in some cases seemed to imply '(appeare) as an imitible model'.

Another finding was the centrality of Soma to all the cases of Indra mimesis. In **Chapter 3**, we saw how Indra is impersonated in ṚV IV.26 to make use of his memory and reveal the origin of Soma. In this hymn, mimetic impersonation seemed to be a strategy to both reveal and

guarantee the truth of this etiology. An interesting feature of this hymn is a division between the part of the poem which constructs the identity of Indra and the narrative about the origin of Soma. The Soma etiology gives no overt indication that it is being spoken by Indra; instead it seems to benefit from following previous set of verses, where Indra's identity is formally asserted. This suggests the identity of the speaker is sufficiently important to the narrative that the poet must perform it before revealing this mythological narrative. In other words, the audience must know that this account is sourced from a reliable authority who witnessed the flight of the Soma bird. Who better than Soma's first drinker? Indra, as the "first drinker" and the "first singer", straddles both past and present, serving as a conduit for re-enactment.

In **Chapter 4,** we saw that Soma seems to be directly connected with becoming Indra; this is explicit in ṚV X.48-49, while in ṚV I.165, Soma is not mentioned, but the Maruts exhiliarated (*amandat*) Indra with praise, and Indra reciprocates by giving them a portion of sacrificial *iṣ* 'drink'. The poet closes by saying that through this *iṣ*, they call upon the Maruts to return and to uphold the deal made by Indra, which seems to imply the necessity of Soma in re-enacting this scene. The case studies of **Chapter 4** were replete with presents and aorists which seems to be performative. I found that the temporal indeterminacy of injunctives, especially aorist injunctives, made them ideal verb forms for the ritual re-enactment of Indra's legendary deeds in the present. The verb root of choice was √*kṛ* in all three hymns of **Chapter 4**. In these cases, the mimesis of Indra appeared to serve a ritual function in which the performer became Indra and assume his power so that he could re-enact a primordial and re-create their result on the public gathered at the social occasion of performance. I argued this Indra functions as something of a "fixer". He presents himself as an agent of change who promotes the sacrificial patron in ṚV X.48-49 and resolves disputes in ṚV I.165 in both cases by restoring the proper social hierarchy. The re-enacted myths appeared to be used as a cognitive metaphor for re-mapping social relationships. When Indra asserts he makes X mythological figure dominant over Y, he is mapping that dominator-dominated relationship on to the patron of the sacrifice and his rival.

The case studies in **Chapter 5** proved to be quite different; deictic traces of the present performance were far less common. Both hymns had verses which conformed to the predictions of **Chapter 2**, but the majority of the verses were not marked by deictic traces. Like ṚV IV.26 in **Chapter 3**, the text of the poem is divided between sections which assert Indra's identity and content, which bears no trace of an Indra persona, yet benefits from the audience's awareness of his identity as speaker. In the case of ṚV IV.26, Indra is impersonated so that his private memories of the theft of Soma can be made public. In ṚV X.27-28, Indra is impersonated so that his knowledge of the secrets of the sacrifice and immortality can be made public. The difference is that, in **Chapter 3,** Indra acts as an eye witness who provides testimony which is reliable because it is bilocal. Indra was there in the past and is here now. In **Chapter 5**, however, Indra acts more like an expert witness. He is not merely providing a testimony of what he saw, but is presented as an intelligent, wise, and capacious. ṚV X.27 is a fascinating hymn because it deals with the notion of time, death, and immortality. Indra is conceived of as a figure not merely endowed with great physical prowess but with great mental prowess: the secret knowledge of death, time, the end of days, and the restoration of the cosmos. It is perhaps the clearest example of a Ṛgvedic *kālavāda* or 'doctrine of time'. In this long hymn, however, Indra lecture has a double meaning. He explains the convergence and dissolution of society as regulated by the sacrifice. The sacrifice, by renewing the year undoes the withering of alliances and dispersion of the clans which occures throughout the year by restoring the social hierarchy which puts the patron of the sacrifice, conceived of as the Sun, firmly on top. In ṚV X.28, Indra instructs the performer, who breaks the impersonation of Indra to feign ignorance of Indra's riddle. He does so, I argue, to distance these riddles from himself, denying their mortal source and presenting them as sacred truths from a divine figure. In ṚV X.28, Indra directly reveals the re-enactive nature of the sacrifice, and by explaining that the gods undertook the sacrifice to empower him, and they became present as bodies (*abhūvan... tanúvaḥ)* who are performing the sacrifice. I take this as referring to the performing priests as embodiments of the gods as their performative models.

In the final verse of ṚV X.28, Indra, having educated the listener on the nature of sacrifice, commands the performer to say something *nṛvat* 'manly'. The following hymn, in fact, has an abundance forms derived from the root √*nṛ* 'man'. In fact, all cases of Indra mimesis are components of cycles which span three hymns.[329] Both hymns maintain a theme of Indra traveling to many sacrifices. ṚV IV.26 is followed by a hymn in which Soma speaks (ṚV IV.27), and then the poet praises both Indra and Soma (ṚV IV.28). The Indra Vaikuṇṭha cycle opens with two hymns where Indra speaks (ṚV X.48-49), but the final verse tells us that Indra sang these songs about his deeds to men and gods and they sang those deeds back to him. I argued that this is part of how the text sets up its mimetic circle, but the Vaikuṇṭha cycle contains one more hymn. In ṚV X.50, a human poet sings to Indra. The scene of an altercation between Indra and the Maruts (ṚV I.165) is resumed in ṚV I.170-I71.[330] It seems that all these cases of Indra mimesis have three acts. They are part of cycles in which Indra's poetic performance inspires a song addressed to Indra from a human poet. This call and response may be an important aspect of the way these hymns conceive of modeling, emulation, and successful re-performance. Since I was narrowly focused on hymns in which Indra is the speaker, I did not analyze these hymns where human figures sing, but it is certainly a logical next step.

Instead, I tried to get a sense of the role of mimetic impersonation throughout the Ṛgveda. In **Chapter 6,** I examined how one might study the impersonation of a human seer using the 'grammar of mimesis' I develop for Indra. I examined the impersonation of Indra and found mimetic circles which indicated the impersonation was mimetic. In principle, I could do the same investigation in reverse. Finding mimetic circles in hymns, suggests they may be cases of impersonation. In order to argue that impersonating a human and impersonating a god are similar phenomena, I attempted to make the case that later Vedic texts treat the two as parallel instances of a 'textualized self' which can be transmitted through speech. My initial foray into

[329] If they do indeed constitute one litany, Indra may be show up late to the beginning of ṚV X.28 because the length of ṚV X.27 has kept him at that sacrifice too long.

[330] With hymns in praise of the Maruts and Indra located between.

the mimesis of Atri corroborated the results of my study of Indra mimesis. Further, I speculated that the arrangement of the Ṛgveda may be built around mimetically impersonating the seven seers; each of the seven "family books" is a distinct 'textualized self' which a priest embodies in performance. I argued that the seven priests of the Ṛgvedic Soma sacrifice mimetically emulate the seven Aṅgirases who accompanied Indra to open the mythical Vala cave and restart the New Year. Perhaps this accounts for why the mimesis of Indra is so rare. If the norm was the mimesis of the legendary seers, then the patron of the sacrifice, as *maghavan*, would have been the homologue of Indra. Perhaps some of the later poets utilized the anxiety of waiting for Indra's presence to make Indra appear and speak. These hymns would be performed by someone acting as the embodiment of Indra. Normally, the patron of the sacrifice would be the terrestrial embodiment of Indra, but, as the patron is not a hieratic professional himself, he might have been substituted with a proxy. I speculate that this proxy would have had a special connection to the patron (perhaps a kind of proto-*purohita*).

I think the essential premise of my study can be adapted to many ritual performance traditions. The first place to test the application of my theory is the Avesta, to see if there is an "*adiyasna*" level of discourse which directs the audience to the present performance through deixis and if the text consturcts some sort of mimetic circle. While the poetic language of the two traditions are cognate, it is likely my 'grammar of mimesis' would have to be carefully re-calibrated for Avestan. For example, Y43.5.a *spəṇtəm aṯ ϑβā mazdā məṇghī ahurā* "I realized you, Ahura Mazda, to be the life-giving one." is strikingly similar in form to Ṛ̊V VII.88.2b *agnér ánīkaṃ váruṇasya maṃsi* 'I just realized Agni's face (is) Varuṇa's" and may be a reported perception of the same type. Y43.8a *aojī zarathuštrō paouruuīm* 'First, I declare myself to be Zarathustra' may be a performative self-assertion in the same spirit as Thompson's *ahaṃkāra*. The absence of the augment on 1st sg. middle *aogī* and *məṇghī* may indicate that these aorists are temporally ambiguious, but that would be reading the Gāθās through the lens of the Ṛgveda rather than through its own grammar. It is the mandatory use of the augment to mark a preterite in later Sanskrit which makes the Vedic augmentless forms so noticible. The augment, however,

does not survive into later Iranian. Indeed, the augment is not as prevalant in Avestan as it is in Vedic, and it maythe case that *aojī* and *māṇghī* were simply preterites and not at all temporally ambiguous to the audience.

My final thought in closing is that there is a great deal of evidence that mimetic impersonation and, indeed, a transformation of the self is at the very heart of the Ṛgvedic Soma sacrifice. Why is this important? Approaching Vedic ritual and theology with greater nuance does not merely illuminate the history of Vedic thought, but it bears directly on the history of ritual and theology in South Asia. The mimesis of Indra is directly relevant to the religious imagination of the Classical period, and Vedic mimesis is directly relevant to the history of the idea of an immortal self that travels from body to body. Consider how many times we saw the noun *śravas* 'fame' in our case studies.[331]

ṚV IV.26.5d *utá* ***śrávo*** *vivide śyenó átra*

ṚV I.165.12b *ánediyaḥ* ***śráva*** *éṣo dádhānāḥ*

In these two examples, the noun *śravas* was used as part the hymn's mimetic circle. In ṚV IV.26.5d, the Soma-bearing eagle finds *śravas* here, his arrival bringing his re-enacted journey to a completion. In ṚV I.165.12b, Indra now sees the Maruts not as rivals but as partners who receive their share of fame by emulating him.

ṚV X.27.21c ***śráva*** *íd enā́ paró anyád asti*

ṚV X.28.12d *diví* ***śrávo*** *dadhiṣe nā́ma vīráḥ*

In ṚV X.27, terrestrial fame is inferior to the immortal fame found in heaven. In ṚV X.28, fame and name in heaven are the rewards earned by the hero who responds to Indra's song with a manly song of his own.

[331] ṚV X.48-49 lack the noun, although they make use of transitive verb forms built to *pra* + √*śru* which clearly have the sense of to make famous, not simply 'heard', c.f. ṚV X.48.8d ***prā́****hám mahé vṛtrahátye* ***áśuśravi*** and ṚV X.49.8b ***prā́śrāvayaṃ*** *śávasā turváśaṃ yádum*.

As discussed earlier, the notion of fame as immortality seems to go back to Proto-Indo-European, as evidence by a cognate poetic formula for 'fame inexhaustible' (Greek *kléos áphthiton* and Vedic *śravas akṣita*. In the ancient preliterate world, things which lasted beyond living memory were phenomenologically immortal. This includes crafted objects such as ships, honey, gold, and song. Consider that ships last generations when well maintained.[332] Bees craft honey with an impressive shelf life; unspoiled honey is still sometimes found in newly unearth Egyptian tombs. Gold does not oxidize; as it never tarnishes, the metal appears impervious to time. Songs are re-performed from generation to generation, and, although the songs change from performance to performance, they are often conceived of as remaining the same. This makes the poem a new body for the dead hero, who becomes immortal so long as his song is sung.

This dissertation adds greater nuance to our understanding of immortality in song. For the Vedas articulates a notion of a 'textualized self', a self which is not merely immortal because it survives in oral memory, but immortal because that self re-emerges in performance. Indra and the seven seers are immortal because they have selves which are preserved in song, placed within bodies, and restored to life in performance. In the father-son ritual[333] the father places the 'textualized self' piece by piece into his son; he asserts *dadhāni* 'let me place', and the son echoes *dadhe* 'I place (in me)'. This same verbal root √*dhā* 'place' was used to place the body of Indra in someone (*indrasyātmānaṃ parasmin dadhāni*),[334] and this same verbal root twice took *śravas* as its accusative object.[335] Clearly, √*dhā* does not enact a physical kind of placing here,

[332] Rood 2008 is an insightful treatment of the Homeric similes where a hero becoming immortal in song is likened to the crafting or transient natural materials into permanent items. For example, carrying the corpse of Patroclus is likened to mules carrying timber down a mountain to build a ship. The body of Patroclus, like wood, is the raw material, but by being made into a legend he will last forever, like a ship.

[333] ŚāṅkhĀ 4.15 = KauṣU 2.15

[334] ŚāṅkhĀ 1.1.2

[335] Ṛ̣V I.165.12b (*dádhānāḥ*) and Ṛ̣V X.28.12d (*dadhiṣe*).

but placing as a cognitive metaphor for transmission.

The oral tradition, of course, is really transmitted by practice, by acts of repetition and memorization. So, what does this performative use of √*dhā* accomplish? It suggests to me that the Vedic self is composed of atomic entities. The self can be decomposed, but its constituent atomic elements cannot. Vāc is either placed within the son or it is not. The *ātman* of Indra is either placed within someone or it is not. These components, these discrete 'textualized selves', are transmitted from body to body, which seems to anticipate the metempsychosis of later South Asian religious traditions which conceive of an immortal self which survives death and is trasmitted to a new body. Is the 'textualized self' the descendant of Indo-European immortal fame? Is it the ancestor of rebirth? These tantalizing possibilities require a great deal more research.

For now, let us consider one final verse. It occurs in a Black Yajurvedic prose narrative. In it, Indra, in disguise, is preparing to sacrifice two troublesome Asuric priests. In the Kaṭha version, the two priests confront the rival priest, asking him about his hieratic lineage. In the Maitrāyaṇi version, Manu is the one who asks him about his priestly pedigree.[336] It is all too fitting that a dissertation concerning priests impersonating Indra should end with Indra impersonating a priest:

KaṭhS 30.1 *kiṃ brāhmaṇasya pitaraṃ kim u pr̥cchasi mātaram /*
*śrutaṃ ced asmin vedyaṁ̐ sa pitā sa pitāmahaḥ //*

"You (ask) about a priest's father? And you ask about (his) mother?
If what is to be known is heard within him, he is the father, he is the grandfather"

This fascinating verse weaves together many threads of the 'textualized self' encountered in this dissertation. Consider how radically this verse departs from the modern notion of biological

[336] This narrative is found in Maitrāyaṇi Saṃhitā 4.8. Of course, the verse may predate both narratives into which it is placed, but, in my opinion, its placement in Maitrāyaṇi Saṃhitā may represent the more archaic of the two, as Indra responds with singular *pr̥cchasi* not dual *pr̥cchathaḥ*, suggesting a response to Manu not the two Asuric priests.

lineage. Indra asserts that performance of the inherited text is proof enough of lineage. He goes further, asserting that when the sacred knowledge is heard within someone, that someone *is* the father, *is* the grandfather. In other words, during the performance the performer become the ancestor: the copy becomes the model. What was *śravas* then is *śruta* now. We close our reflecting on a verse in which Indra impersonates a human priest, but recall that this verse is part of the Black Yajurveda, which is itself transmitted from body to body. Thus, the verse, in the hands of its memorizer, is an assertion of the Yajurvedin's own lineage and authority placed in the mouth of Indra. The priest impersonates Indra impersonating a priest in a circle of eternal mimesis.

## ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| BD | *Bṛhaddevatā* |
| KaṭhS | *Kaṭha Saṃhitā* |
| KaṭhU | *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* |
| KauṣU | *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* |
| MaitS | *Maitrāyaṇi Saṃhitā* |
| R | *Codex Regius* |
| ṚV | the Ṛgveda |
| ŚB | *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* |
| ŚāṅkhĀ | *Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka* |
| ŚāṅkhGS | *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra* |
| ŚDŚ | *Śivadharmaśāstra* |
| Y | the Zoroastrian Yasna |

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