CHARACTER-PORTRAYALS
IN THE
RAMAYANA
OF
VALMIKI
CHARACTER-PORTRAYALS
IN THE
RAMAYANA
OF
VALMIKI
A SYSTEMATIC REPRESENTATION

61792

ALOIS WURM

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Foreword

I am extremely happy to contribute this Foreword to the outstanding research work done by Dr. Alois Wurm on the characters of the Rāmāyana, for which he has been awarded the Degree of Ph.D. by the Karnataka University in 1975. Being a master of the latest methodology in classical scholarship as is evidenced by his Ph.D. Degree of the University of Innsbruck (Austria), he has brought a new outlook to bear on his critical review of the Genesis of the Rāmāyana as well as his systematic and intuitive exploration of character-depictions by Vālmīki. The former is to appear as a separate book.

Earlier attempts at understanding Vālmīki’s epic and the motivation of characters therein have been conditioned more or less by popular, religio-devotional and ethical perspectives or a hyper-critical and scientific approach of 19th century Western scholarship. Dr. Wurm for the first time succeeds in steering clear of the Scylla of the former and the Charybdis of the latter. He undertakes for the first time an exploration of the Rāmāyana from an integrated intuitive-scientific standpoint.

His lucid literary monograph—as Dr. Wurm has put it—purports to analyse the characters of the Rāmāyana systematically and unfold them intuitively in their evocative dimension (i.e. the light in which the poet Vālmīki intended to unfold them before the minds of the audience). The method the author employs is thus integratedly scientific and intuitive. It is scientific in as far as he bases his documentation on the text, an early homogeneous text, Vālmikian in spirit, and conforms his estimate as closely to it as possible. It is intuitive in as far as he attempts to read the intentions of the poet in and behind his poetic depiction and recover the
psycho-poetic impressions which Vālmīki wanted to instill in the minds of the audience about these characters.

In his intuitive estimate of Vālmīki’s poetical mission and the message of his character-portrayals, Dr. Wurm has defined the Rāmāyana as a story that expounds the loftiest ideals of life embodied in the portrayal of the life-experience of ideal characters and is woven into a human saga which unfolds the rich pulsation of the soul of life and its all-encompassing width and proclaims a gamut of messages conducing in an invaluable way to the elevation of those ideals:

“It pictures a universe of characters which, rifted by polar forces, the forces of light and darkness, of sublime ideals and diabolic anti-ideals, embodies the gladdening message of the victory of light over darkness and of ideals over anti-ideals, and, mirroring the wealth of emotions, sentiments and ordeals of life of the common man of all walks, sets a stage towards his living identification with the lofty ideals incarnated by the ideal characters, who, unattained in their perfection, as it were, are flesh and blood of his own in their humanity. In its deepest spiritual purport, the Rāmāyana is a hymn on the glory of altruism. Its highest ideal is the ideal of an unflinching and enthusiastic commitment to a supreme spirit of benevolence, which, forgoing every concern about personal welfare to the extent of a total self-sacrifice and transcending all bonds of natural attachment, seeks the deepest welfare of all beings; an ideal which has its resonance in the unspoken intuition that, what validifies the truth of man’s self-commitment as the highest aspiration of his heart, is an eternal bond of love with his fellow-beings, which endures beyond and against mere natural attachment.”
I wish Dr. Wurm's complementary work on the Genesis of the Rāmāyana would also be published soon; and that this intensive study will find a wide readership.

Karnatak University
Dharwar-3
20th June 1976

K. Krishnamoorthy
Observations on the Ovaries

The ovaries are two small, almond-shaped organs located on either side of the uterus. They are responsible for producing eggs and hormones.

Key Observations:
- Each ovary contains numerous follicles, each containing a developing egg cell.
- During ovulation, one follicle ruptures, releasing the egg cell into the Fallopian tube.
- After ovulation, the ruptured follicle becomes a corpus luteum, which produces progesterone and estrogen to maintain pregnancy.

Conclusion:
Understanding the function and structure of the ovaries is crucial for reproductive health and fertility.

References:
- Modern Gynecology: Case studies and practical approaches to women's health.
Preface

In 1972 I submitted to Karnataka University a thesis for Ph. D. in Sanskrit entitled Characterization in the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki. A Textual Study with a Critical Review of the Genesis of the Rāmāyaṇa. This dissertation, consisting of two parts—Pt. I: The Genesis of the Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa; Pt. II: Characterization in the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki—is now being edited in two separate books entitled: 1) The Genesis of the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki. A Critical Review. 2) Character-Portrayals in the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki. A Systematic Representation. Though self-contained works with regard to subject-matter and aim of investigation, they are interconnected in as far as the conclusions arrived at in the first work provide the clue for the determination of a homogeneous text that would serve as a basis for a study of characterization. For these conclusions as well as for a better comprehension of the methodical background and the hermeneutic perspectives involved in the interpretation and unfolding of V.'s character-portrayals, the reader is advised to consult the fore-going book. To get a first idea he may read the preface to the Ph. D. dissertation, part of which is reproduced here in an abbreviated form.

I owe thanks to many people for their generous help: to Prof. Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy, Head of the Dept. of Sanskrit, Karnataka University, for his scholarly guidance of my thesis; to Dr. A.S. Acharya, Deccan College, who in the first years of my stay in India patiently helped me in translating Rm. scenes and made me understand the Indian heart and mind expressed in the epic; to Prof. Gadgil, Wadia College, for giving me coaching in Sanskrit; to the librarians of De Nobili College (Fr. Schlegel S. J.), Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Deccan College and the Centre of Advanced Study in Sanskrit,
Poona University, for assistance; to my gurus and superiors (especially Prof. Dr. R.N. Dandekar and Prof. Dr. S.D. Joshi) and last but not least to my beloved wife Kamini as well as all my friends—for their help and moral encouragement. A word of thanks is due to my publisher, Mr. S. Balwant, for the personal interest he has evinced in the publication of my work and the speedy release of the same. The reader's indulgence is requested for whatever imperfections he may find in this book, the author's "twin-first".

I am deeply indebted to the authorities of Karnataka University for permitting me to publish my original thesis in revised form.

July 1976

Alois Wurm
Preface to Ph. D. Thesis
(abbreviated)

Ever since and even before I came to India in June 1967, I felt a keen fascination for the Rm. This was partly due to its poetico-psychological grandeur—what captured my mind most in the initial stage of my study was V.’s depiction of the human heart in vibration with nature—and partly (more subconsciously) due to the fact of its being an epic, and being a student of Greco-Roman literature, I had a special liking for Homer. The more I read of the Rm., the more my mind opened up to the exploration of the total psyche embedded in the epic, the poet’s portrayal of his characters. And when I decided, in 1969, to write a thesis, I had no other theme in mind than Characterization in the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki. I knew that numerous works had been written about the Rm.: about its genesis, about historico-geographical identifications, about its social background etc. I knew that popular and religious writers had expounded the ideals and characters of the Rm. with devotion and reverence. But the absence of any scientific (soil. intuitive-scientific) work on character-portrayals in the Rm. made me all the more keen on my project, prompted by these further reasons:

1. Characterization is one of the most important aspects, I would say is the very heart-beat, of any literary work that deals with human personalities. Any such literary study that forgets to explore the poet’s mind in portraying his characters remains merely a frame-work study. And so I felt that almost all the studies made on the Rm. are only frame-work studies, but have not penetrated to its heart.

2. The Rm. is a work that is unrivalled in its unfolding of the human heart, in its expounding of the loftiest
ideals and deepest aspirations of man, a work that has been the source of edification and inspiration to millions and millions of people for more than two millenia—like perhaps no other work in the world.

(3) The history of epic characterization, the history of the human heart as expressed in the epics, has yet to be written, both phenomenologically and genetically. A study of characterization in the Rm., where traditional rhapsodic and refined poetic art harmoniously meet for the first time, is perhaps the best starting-point to probe back step-by-step into the beginnings of epic characterization in India and explore its genesis.

To lay a foundation for our study of V.’s character-portrayals, we had to sort out an early homogeneous stage of the Rm. For had we taken as our basis the whole Rm. with its many and variegated interpolations, our study would be a distortion of V.’s mind, just as many of the later interpolations are a distortion of V.’s work. It would be a jumble of heterogeneous characterizations. We had at least to dispose of all such interpolations which are in clear contrast to and obscure the original unity or outlook of the Rm. So, it was necessary to review once more the question of the genesis of the Rm. We did not want to rely on authorities, for we felt that the last word had not been said by any of them, and to simply cling to one school of interpretation, howsoever authoritative, would have been hazardous. Furthermore, we felt that no scholar so far has really situated the nature of the Rm. as on the threshold from oral to written poetry. But the consequences of such a consideration are very far-reaching for the understanding of the genesis of the Rm., for the understanding of the nature of the epic and the author’s poetical mission and last but not least his art of characterization. Having acquired experience in the line of ancient epics, especially the Homeric epics, we thought we would be able to do this. The imprints of this perspective of ours are the land-mark everywhere in our thesis.
Aim and Method of Investigation

The aim of the book is to analyse the characters of the \textit{Rm.} systematically (1) and to unfold them intuitively in their evocative dimension, i.e. the light in which V. intended to unfold them before the minds of the audience radiating from the psycho-poetic impressions of his character-depictions (2).

As a consequence, our method is both intuitive and scientific. It is scientific in as far as we base our documentation on the text, a selected text, and conform our estimate to it as closely as possible. It is intuitive in as far as we attempt to read the intentions of the poet in and behind his poetic depiction and, by this, to recapture the over-all impressions which he wanted to leave on the minds of the audience about these characters, and in as far as we can do this only by identifying ourselves with the audience of his time. Yet these two methodical approaches are on the whole never separate, but harmoniously interwoven with each other. Though we have foreseen separate analytical and synthetic chapters in our scheme of investigation, these do not reflect

---

N.B.: Our aim is to unfold V.'s portrayals of characters within the poetico-psychological dimension intended by him. It is not the analysis of character-portrayals in a culturo-psychological or ethnico-psychological dimension, i.e., that psychological dimension mirrored in the poem of which the poet is not aware due to the fact that he is unconsciously moulded by the vision of life of his time and culture. Such an analysis would amount to an ethnico-historical analysis of character-portrayals, which would aim at unravelling the collective unconscious of a people mirrored in the characterization of literary figures, but not at unfolding the portrayals of literary figures themselves. Thus an analysis of the collective unconscious as it is mirrored in epic characterization is meaningful only if it takes pains to unravel its growth, to bring it into relief against the collective unconscious mirrored in literature other than epic and to compare it with its equivalent in the epic literature of other peoples.
two different methodical approaches, but the build-up of a constructive approach. It is true that the summary portraits of the characters are wholly intuitive in their outlook and that they recapture the over-all impression intended by the poet in the most genuine way, but they are themselves built on previous analytico-intuitive investigations.

In considering the evocative dimension of the poem, we restrict ourselves only to character-impressions, leaving aside the poet’s messages in conveying these impressions to a separate final chapter: “Vālmīki’s Poetical Mission and the Message of his Character-Portrayals.”

**Scheme of Investigation**

For Major\(^1\) Characters:

1. *A systematic analysis of character-portrayals*
   - *Translation* or contents of passages bearing on characterization
     (If required, an *interpretation of context* is added)
   - *Analysis of characterization*
   - In the case of character-depictions of a simple, general or repetitive nature, these categories are replaced by a *resume*\(^2\) or *appendix*.

2. *A synthetic view of the poet’s conception and portrait of the characters.*
For Minor Characters:

*A synthetic view of the poet's portrait of the characters.*

---

1. It may be noted that our division into major and minor characters has not been made from an over-all literary view-point of eminence, but on methodical grounds. Though a number of persons, such as figuring in episodes, may not be judged as very important from an over-all literary point of view, they nevertheless do receive ample characterization by the poet, and the poet, who is still a poet with the blood in him of a rhapsodist, addressing himself personally and spontaneously to the audience, does want to leave vivid impressions on the minds of the audience about these characters just as about anything else that would conduce to capturing their minds. And so, on methodical grounds, it is proper to take this perspective into account and mete out respective treatment to such figures according to the richness in which their personalities have been unfolded before the audience.

2. The category of *resumé* will be given a much wider scope in the cases of L., S. and R.—1) for the sheer extent of their characterization; 2) because many aspects of their characterization will be treated in the context of other characters and so merely need to be put into the right limelight; 3) the very nature of their personalities is far simpler than that of the other characters and hence does not need a detailed investigation. The presentation of R.'s character-analysis will be in toto a *resumé*-unfolding of his character-portrait to facilitate a clearer understanding of its evolutionary perspective.
A

Vanavasi Characters
GUHA

Guha is portrayed as a hospitable, sympathetic and devoted Niśāda king, who, on learning about R.’s misfortune, welcomes the trio with sympathy and sorrowful affection, eager to extend all hospitality to them—so much so that he requests them to consider his kingdom as Ayodhyā and him and his people as his servants, offering them choicy dishes, comfortable beds as well as fodder and water for the horses (all of which except for the latter R. thankfully declines as he is intent on living an ascetic life), and, on seeing L. keeping awake to protect his brother, offers him with anxious concern a soft bed specially prepared for him to lie down upon, begging at the same time to be allowed to guard R. in his stead—R., who is dearer to him than any body else, by whose favour he expects great merits in this world. When this offer is declined by L., who does not find sleep and happiness out of concern for R., whose pitiful plight he depicts to Guha in sorrowful words along with dismal musings over the destiny of the royal family, Guha shares L.’s duty together with his kinsmen. (II 44-45)

Guha manifests both his loyalty to R. as well as his benevolence and generosity when, on seeing Bh.’s vast retinue approaching, he expresses his apprehension about Bh., thinking that he might be out to kill R., and takes necessary precautions; yet at the same time, with a sense of provision and foresight that is characteristic of his concerned heart, takes along choicy dishes à la Niśāda to receive Bh. if only he proves himself well-disposed to R. And when Sumantra makes cheerful and appreciative reference to him, Guha welcomes Bh. with the warmest hospitality—while he casually inquires about his real intentions towards his elder brother. On Bh.’s asserting his sincerity and his intention to bring back R., Guha is over-joyed and, putting full confidence in him, pays a lofty tribute to him. True to his devoted nature,
he lavishes all hospitality on him and even accompanies him with his men, on his way to R. Nay, his affection and deep sympathy for R. as well as for L. and S. is of so tender a nature that, on seeing Bh. tormented by anxious thoughts about R., he tries to console him by relating to him in all details how L. declined his offer of a comfortable bed out of concern for his brother and gave expression to R.’s misfortune, falling into gloomy musings regarding the destiny of the royal family, and thereby plunges Bh. into still greater grief and so also Šatrughna and Ks., who share the latter’s grief with pitiful lamentations. As Bh. asks Guha to relate to him where R., S. and L. spent the night and what they ate, Guha sympathetically relates everything as to how R. declined all provisions and with what humility and selfless devotion to their path of asceticism he and S. spent the night, with L. taking care of them. (II 78-81)

RSIS

Extensive characterizations of ṛṣis as a whole are few and drawn on a common pattern: Surrounded with an aura of brāhmaṇic lustre and an atmosphere of ascetic austerity and yogic contemplation in the midst of enchanting forest scenery and the company of animals and birds, they dedicate themselves to tapas of the most varied types, meditation, recitation of the Vedas and sacrifices (III 1 & 5 passim).

As ascetics given to a self-restrained life bent on the welfare of all beings and devoted to the undivided pursuit of dharma, they require the patronage of a protector. So, looking up to R., whose presence fills them with awe and admiration and elicits their acknowledgement of him as king of the Ikṣvākus—renowned in fame, valour and dharma, as their
virtual ruler and protector in the forest, they appeal to his duty as a king to protect them (and save them from the cruel Rks. harassing them) (III 1.17-20 ; 5.7-21 ; 9 passim) since, being ascetics who have given up punishment, subdued anger and conquered their senses, they need to be constantly protected like embryos (III 1.20). Able though they are to kill the Rks. by the power of their penance, they do not wish to annihilate their tapas, to which they have devoted themselves for such a long time, which is full of obstacles and hard to accomplish. That’s why they, rather than uttering curses, allow themselves to be eaten up by the cruel Rks. (III 9.13-14). In an earlier passage (II 108) V. depicts the anxiety of the rṣis of Citrakūta caused by Khara’s eradication of the rṣis of Janasthāna and the Rks.’s recent attacks on and harassments also of them, and their decision to leave the place as well as their invitation to R. to come along with them. When R. has killed Khara and Dūṣaṇa, the rṣis are described as unitedly and triumphantly proclaiming to R. that it was for the sake of the destruction of the sinful Rks. that R. has been led to the Daṇḍaka forest by a stratagem of the sages and that from now on they can devote themselves happily and safely to their dharma in the Daṇḍaka forest (III 29. 29 ff.).

The individual sages are to a great extent, too, portrayed on a common pattern with more or less emphasis on personal character-facets. They are all sages of extraordinary yogic power, and some of them have secured all the heavenly regions and even Brahma-loka and would have already renounced their bodies—were it not for the sake of virtuous R., whose presence they have been longing for. Receiving R. with great hospitality, they express their gratification at his gracing presence and invite him to stay in their hermitages and accept the heavenly regions they have attained through their penance. To these sages belong Śarabhaṅga, Sutikṣṇa and Śabari. All of the rṣis are characterized by overflowing hospitality, gratification at R.’s presence and eagerness to bestow their blessings or favours obtained by their yogic
power on him in some form or other. Now a brief delineation of each of the major sages:

Bhāradvāja, whose character comes into the limelight mainly in the context of the narration of Bh.’s passage through the sage’s hermitage and R.’s good-will visit on his return to Ayodhyā (II 84-86, VI 112), is a lavishly hospitable and wonder-making, omniscient and future-predicting saint, who, by the power of yogic concentration, invokes Viśvakarmā, the rivers, the earth, the atmosphere, the Gods, Gandharvas, Apsarās, the Nandana forest etc. to entertain Bh.’s retinue in the most spectacular and lavish manner (II 84) and who, at R.’s request, causes the trees on the way to Ayodhyā to bring forth sweet fruits for the enjoyment of the Vns. (VI 112.16 ff., 115.19 f.). By the same yogic power he knows everything about R.’s destiny and foretells the happy end of R.’s exile, admonishing Bh. not to blame Kai. (II 86.24-28); while he demonstrates his foreknowledge to R. by relating the latter’s experiences in the forest and in Laṅkā (VI 112.9-14).

Bharadvāja’s lavish hospitality is met by an equally lavish devotion to R. and Bh. Ascertaining Bh.’s motivation in coming to his hermitage (II 84.9 ff.), he reveals both his ties of attachment to R.—which is referred to in these words by the poet:

\[
\text{tatheti ca pratijñāya bharadvājo mahātapāḥ} \\
\text{bharatam pratyuvācedam rāghavasnehabandhanāt} \\
\]

(II 84.9)—

as well as a deep concern for the spiritual disposition of Bh. (II 84.19-20). More than to Bh.’s protestations of his loyalty to R., Bharadvāja pays a lofty tribute to his selfless endeavour to restore his elder brother to the throne of Ayodhyā. Listening with deep sympathy to his report on the outcome of their talks, he exults at the noble loftiness of his devotion, saying:
naitacitram naravyāghra śīlavṛttavatāṁ vara /
yadāryaṁ tvayi tiṣṭhetu nimne vrāstanivodakam //
amṛtaḥ sa mahābāhuḥ pitā daśarathastava /
yasya tvamīḍṛśaḥ putro dharmātmā dharmanvatsalaḥ //

(II 105.16-17)

Śarabhaṅga, Sutīkṣṇa and Śabarī are portrayed in a uniform pattern.

S a r a b h aṅ g a is a meritorious sage, who has distinguished himself through his severe tapas, by which he has secured all the heavenly regions and Brahmaloka, so much so that Indra personally, surrounded with an aura of divine glory and a retinue of youthful Gods and Gandharvas, has come with his spectacular chariot to take him to that region. Distinguished in virtue though he is, in lustre like a God, he is so eager to have virtuous R. as his priyātīthi that, knowing about his presence close to his hermitage, he has postponed his going to Brahmaloka till after the arrival of R. He is highly gratified at his presence and offers him to accept the imperishable worlds conquered by him—which R. thankfully declines—and, feeling that with this all his desires have been fulfilled, he, after advising R.—on his inquiry for a hermitage to stay—to go to Sutīkṣṇa, enters fire and before the eyes of R. is transformed into a resplendent youth ascending to the world of Brahmā, who is greatly pleased with his appearance. (III 4)

S u t i kṣṇa, an ascetic of great merits, has acquired heaven by his tapas and been personally informed by Indra of his attainment of all the worlds; yet in expectation of R. he has not renounced his body and gone to heaven. Lavishing a warmth of hospitality and affection on R., he offers him to enjoy himself with S. and L. in the celestial regions conquered by him; and as R. thankfully declines and inquires for a hermitage to stay, Sutīkṣṇa invites him to stay in his own hermitage. Since R., eager to visit the āśramas of the Daṇḍaka forest, cannot comply with his request, he exhorts him to go
there—a haven of beautiful and enchanting forest-scenes, not without inviting him to come again to his hermitage. (III 6-7)

Sābari is an accomplished śramaṇī surrounded with an aura of ascetic glory. She has distinguished herself through lifelong tapas and devotion to her elders—ascetics of old of great yogic power, who, before going to their heavenly regions, had predicted to her that R. would come one day and instructed her that she should receive him with due hospitality after which she would attain the highest regions. Receiving R. with great respect, she introduces to him the aśrama still reminiscent of the aura of glory and great asceticism of her elders and with his permission enters fire and—resembling fire in her resplendence—ascends to heaven where the old rṣis dwell. (III 70)

Agastya is portrayed as a mighty and eminent sage and protector of the virtuous, surrounded with an aura of magnanimity, a sage—famed for his gastric energy by which he ate up the demon Vātāpi and the magic power of his will by which he forced the Vindhyā mountain to prostrate before him—who, by conquering Death, has rendered the Southern region a place yielding protection to the world and made his hermitage an abode of peace and holiness—shunned by the Rks., who have been peaceful ever since the time of his conquest of the Southern region, an abode where Gods, Gandharvas, siddhas and rṣis go for patronage to him; where no sage is found who tells lies, is deceitful, wicked or addicted to sensual pleasures; where Gods, Yakṣas and Nāgas dwell in abstinence with a desire to practise dharma, and the siddhas, casting off their bodies, ascend to heaven in new bodies on chariots as resplendent as the sun, etc. (III 10 latter part). Agastya’s reception of R. bespeaks a spirit of warm hospitality and reverence for the latter’s greatness of status and character, which induces him to bestow upon R. some priceless gifts: a bow of Viṣṇu, an arrow of Brahmā, two inexhaustible quivers and a golden sword. Expressing his
gratification at the privilege of the trio’s auspicious visit, he lavishes his special admiration on S., whose exemplary chastity and devotion to her husband exalt his heart. A connoisseur of minds, he answers R.’s inquiry for some hermitage with abundant water and forest where he would like to build himself a cottage with the proposal of Pañcavaṭī (the picturesque beauty of which he depicts to him in glowing colours), remarking thereby that by the power of his tapas he had discovered that R. first cherished a desire in his heart to stay with him, but then changed his mind (III 11-12).

A nasūya is Atri’s venerable sage-wife, who has distinguished herself through great devotion to her husband and extraordinary penance (10 000 years), by the power of which she has caused the Gaṅgā to flow into the hermitage when the world suffered from a ten years’ drought and had prolonged a night for ten days (II 109.7-12). Learning about S.’s love for R. in virtue of which she has left relations, fame and wealth, Anasūyā shows much affection and interest for her, instructs her about the supreme virtue of a wife’s devotion to her husband and exhorts her to adopt it. When S. respectfully answers that nothing of her teaching is unfamiliar to her and that she herself regards wisely devotion as the highest virtue (and this the more in the case of R., who is an embodiment of virtue and pays great respect to his mothers) and she will never forget the ideals and exemplars of wisely devotion installed into her heart by her mother-in-law on the eve of her coming to the forest and her mother at the time of her marriage, Anasūyā is greatly delighted and eager to grant her some boon. When S., declining, expresses her gratitude for all her kindness, she is still more pleased and presents her with an exquisite dress, a garland, precious ornaments and an ever-beautifying unguent. (II 109.21 ff.-110.19) A devout lady full of motherly affection and sympathy, her heart pulsates with curiosity to know how S. obtained R. in marriage, of which she requests her to give an account. And when S. has related the story of her life and
marriage, Anasūyā, for a moment assuming the role of R.'s mother-in-law, requests her would-be-daughter to beautify herself with the dresses and ornaments she had presented her—so as to delight her husband before attending upon him (II 110.22 ff.)

JATAYU

Jatāyu, the aged king of the vultures, a descendant of Vinātā, is prompted by his friendship with D. to offer himself to R. as a vāsasahāya and protector of Jānakī in his and L.'s absence (III 13). He is characterized as a self-sacrificing hero who, out of compassion for S. and his friendship with R., fights Rv. valiantly to the extent of sacrificing his life in order to save S.: Aroused from his sleep by the pleading voice of S., he first appeals to the moral conscience of Rv. to release S., exposing his sinfulness of touching another's wife, particularly the wife of a virtuous king like R. devoted so much to the welfare of others, while defending R.'s right to kill Khara's army. As he warns Rv. of the dire consequence which this ignoble act of his will bring upon him, he suddenly challenges him to fight, boasting that he will prevent him from taking way S. so long as he lives, even to the point of his life, for the sake of R. and D. Jatāyu fights valiantly with his beak, claws and wings notwithstanding the injuries inflicted by Rv. and succeeds in breaking Rv.'s bow and arrows, shattering his chariot and killing his charioteer and horses. And as Rv. suddenly sets out to fly away with S. in his lap, seeing as he does Jatāyu exhausted, the vulture king

1 We omit Svayamprabhā, as there are only week indications of a character-delineation.
obstructs his way and with words branding Rv.'s sinfulness which will entail the destruction of the entire Rk. race and his cowardice and arousing his bellicose ire, he vigorously attacks him, fighting at the risk of his life for R.—when Rv. with cruel hand cuts off Jaṭāyu's wings, feet and sides, leaving him near-to life-less on the ground. (III 48-49).

V. makes R. praise Jaṭāyu's greatness in his lament on the death of the vulture king with words of high esteem:

sīṭāharanajānaṁ duḥkhānam na me saumya tathāgatam || 25
yathā vināśo grāhasya matkṛte ca parantapa ||
rājā dasaraṁah śrīmāṁyathā mama mahāyaśāḥ ||
pūjanīyaṁcā māṁyāca tathāyaṁ patageśvarah || 26
saumitre hara kāśṭhāṁ nirmatihśyāṁī pāvakam /
grāhrājanī didhakṣāṁī matkṛte nidhānāṁ gatam || 27
nāṭhāṁ patagalokasya citāṁopayāmyaham /
imāṁ dhakṣyāṁī saumitre hataṁ raudreṇa rakṣasā ||
yā gatiryaṁśaśīlaṁ māḥitāṁśe ca yā gatiḥ /
aparāṁvarināṁ yā ca yā ca bhūmipradāyaṁ ||
mayā tvaṁ samanujñāto gaccha lokānanuttāmān /
grāhrāja mahāsattva saṁskṛtaśca mayā vraja || 30

III 64.25-30

KABANDHA

The character-depiction of Kabandha, the cursed Danu, comprises three layers reflecting three states of existence: his state of curse as a deformed Rk. monster, his state of mutilation caused by R. and L. and his state of regained glory after cremation.

In his first state, he is portrayed as a terrifying and cruel-looking hideous Rk. monster bereft of head and neck, with yojana-long arms and a huge mouth on his belly, a monster
gigantic like a mountain, with a roar resembling the rumbling of clouds, and feeding on wild animals. On catching hold of R. and L., dragging them with his huge arms, he sarcastically expresses his satisfaction at having obtained them as food and, hearing them lament their misfortune and Fate’s inexorable grip on them, he sneeringly thanks Fate for his luck. Yet, prevented from carrying out his evil design by R. and L., he is deprived of his arms and feet. (III 65-66) This side of Kabandha’s character is attributed to a curse by Indra, who, enraged by Kabandha’s provocation for pride over a boon of a long life granted to him by Brahmā, hurled his thunderbolt on him, which pressed his thighs and head in the body, and, as a relief, gave him arms as long as a *yojana*, fashioned a mouth with sharp teeth on his belly and assured him that, after R. and L. cut his arms, he would obtain heaven (III 67.7 ff.).

In his second state, we see Kabandha remember the words of Indra and express his joy at the fortunate outcome of the events, as he will now reach heaven again, and cheerfully relate the story of his curse (III 66.13-15 ; 67). Questioned whether he knows something about S.’s whereabouts and the Rk. who abducted her, he declares that, as he has not regained his divine power of knowledge, which he had lost after his curse, he is not able to do so but he will name somebody who knows after his cremation (III 67 latter part).

After he has been cremated, he emerges with a glorious form and from atop the *vimāna*, while ascending to heaven, gives directions to R. He is characterized as possessing that super-natural knowledge and insight into the future by which he ascertains that the only means for R. to regain S. is to make friends with somebody being in equal distress, and in this situation gives him the optimistic prediction that Su., with whom he should make friends, will do everything in his power to restore S. to him, and is able to give directions as to how to go to Kīśkindhā (III 68.7-22).
SAMPATI

The character of the vulture king Sampāti is two-sided. He first appears as a greedy vulture pleased to find the fasting Vns. a welcome food presented to him by Fate (IV 55.1-6). But when he hears from Aṅgada about the heroic death of Jaṭāyu, he is struck with grief and curiosity to know everything about his dear brother, of whom he has not heard ever since he had lost his wings while protecting him from the heat of the sun out of brotherly love (IV 55.16-57.7). He is characterized as possessing profound knowledge of old times, knowing the worlds of Varuṇa, the three steps of Viṣṇu, the fight between Devas and Asuras and the churning of the Ocean (IV 57.13), and gladly extends information about Rv. and the island of Laṅkā where S. is confined—the only means of help he can offer to R.—which information he has gathered as a personal witness of Rv.’s abduction of S. and by way of knowledge and supernatural power of vision with which he can see R. and S. straight from his position (IV 57.11-34).³

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³ S. 58 is a clear interpolation and, though it may be an early interpolation, it is not taken into consideration in virtue of its merely expletive function.
The Vanaras
VALI
A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER-PORTRAYAL OF VALI

IV 8.16-18
8.31-39

Sugriva intimates his affliction to Rama

Translation

Having been humiliated by my brother and deprived of my wife, I thus roam on the foremost Rṣyamūka mountain, tormented by fear and filled with deep grief.(16) And I dwell here with agitated mind, frightened and immersed in fear, having been humiliated and treated with enmity by my brother Vālī, O Rāghava.(17) You, who free the whole world from fear, be pleased to grant your favour also to me, who am helpless and oppressed by the fear of Vālī. (18)

A long time ago, I was forced to abdicate my kingship and banished by Vālī, the more powerful one, telling me harsh abuses.(31) And my wife, dearer to me even than life, was taken away by him, and those who were my friends were confined to prison.(32) And the evil-minded one attempted to kill me, O Rāghava, and Vns., repeatedly instigated by him, were slain by me.(33) But when I, in
this state of fear, saw you, O Rāghava, I did not approach you out of fear, for in a state of fear one fears all. (34) Only because H. and these chiefs are my helpers, I still retain my life although I am in calamity (35), for these dear monkeys guard me from all sides, they go with me wherever I have to go and stop whenever I stop. (36) This, O Rāghava, is my story in short. What is the need of telling you details? This my elder brother and enemy of mine, Vāli, is of well-known power. (37) After his death my grief would be dispelled. My happiness and my life are dependent on his death. (38) This, O R., is the unhappy end I, oppressed by grief, have reported to you. Whether grieved or not, a friend is always a friend’s refuge. (39)

Interpretation of context and analysis of characterization

Su., delighted by the promise of R. to grant him, in turn, any help he asks for, expresses his satisfaction at possessing the favour of the Gods and his utmost confidence in R.’s patronage to secure for him his kingdom. Reflecting on this, he feels the need to assure R. (by way of an allusion) also of his trustworthiness as a friend, humbly remarking, however, that he is not competent to speak of his own qualities. Seeing the ideal of the beauty and value of friendship realized in R.’s behaviour, he bursts forth into a eulogy of the firmness of love between friends, the spirit of sharing with one another, of taking refuge with and sacrificing for one another, as it is prevalent among good friends. Su’s speech is acknowledged by R. with a single word of approval. Then Su. breaks a sāla tree and prepares a seat for himself and R. while H. breaks off another one and invites L. to rest on it. Su. is delighted and with a few words lovingly entrusts his affliction to R.

Su. is delighted, his voice soft and his words agitated with
joy, yet his very speech betrays a tone of affliction and fear. This reflects very well human experience. If we are in great distress and we suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, are struck with the hope that our sorrow may be dispelled, we are supremely delighted, but the moment we recall to our mind our past situation, we fall back into musing and sadness. Su., therefore, does not characterize Vâlî under the impress of his new, momentary feelings of joy, in the light of which he sees R. as his saviour, but in the wake of a slight emotion of affliction and fear (śokabhayabhāva). The difference is telling, for if Su. spoke with confidence, we would expect him to pour his anger upon Vâlî. But he does not do so. He merely and quite objectively characterizes Vâlî’s action as a humiliation (v.16—vinikṛto bhṛātra; v.17—vālinā nikṛto bhṛātra) and hostile treatment (v.17—vālinā nikṛto bhṛātra kṛtavairāśca), which he understands in the sense of persecution. What is in the limelight of Su.’s account is not so much Vâlî’s deeds, but his own helpless plight caused by Vâlî’s aggression. The characterization of Vâlî as humiliating and persecuting his brother, though implicit, is thus objective.

R., in his answer, promises Su. to kill Vâlî this very day, assuring him of the unsfailing power of his arrows. At these encouraging words of R., Su. is filled with extreme delight, but at the same time he admits how his grief has been playing upon him and how incomparably dear R.’s friendship is to him and repeats his request to R. to free him from his affliction. While Su. utters these words, all the pain and grief of his calamity come into his mind again, and, giving full vent to the burden of his soul, he bursts into a stream of tears. Then, making an effort, he restrains his tears and now acquaints R. with his story in more elaborate words.

This short account is permeated with a similar reminiscent tone of affliction and fear, which, however, is set off more effectively, especially in vv. 35 and 38. In conformity with this
tone, Su. characterizes Vālī as humiliating him—he has forced him to abdicate his kingship and expelled him, he has told him harsh abuses and deprived him of his wife dearer to him than life as well as of his friends, who have been confined to prison,—and persecuting him. This last follows from v. 33, which says that Vālī attempted to kill Su. or instigated other Vns. to do so, from designations like ripurbhrātā (v. 37) and Su.'s assertion of the fear he has to endure, in vv. 34 ff.

IV 9-10

Sugrīva narrates to Rāma the full account of Vālī's enmity

Contents

"Vālī, my elder brother, was proclaimed king after his father's death by his ministers. During this reign I, at all times, offered him humble service. There was a demon called Māyāvī, the first-born son of Dundubhi, who, because of some strife for the sake of a woman, at the dead of night came to Kīśkindhā and, emitting a loud roar, challenged Vālī to fight. When Vālī heard that terrible roar, he could not bear it and, prompted by anger, he speedily rushed out to kill the demon, sweeping away his wives and me, who tried to restrain him. Then out of love I followed him. When Māyāvī saw his enemies, he fled head over heels. Māyāvī and I chased him—while the moon rose—till he entered a cave. Then Vālī, filled with anger and in an agitated mind, instructed me to stand at the entrance of the cave till he had killed the demon. I requested Vālī not to enter the cave, but Vālī made me
swear on both my feet and entered the cave. After I had waited for my brother in vain for a whole year, I considered him dead and began to mourn him. And when, after a long time, I saw a stream of blood issuing from the cave and heard the roar of demons and the scream of my brother fallen in battle, I closed the cave with a rock as big as a mountain and, downcast with grief, performed the water-rite and went to Kiškindhā: I tried to hide the truth, but, asked by the ministers, I told them, whereupon they consecrated me king. While I was ruling, one day Vālī returned, having killed his enemy. When he saw me installed as king, he, out of anger, imprisoned my ministers and spoke harsh words to me. Although I had the power to curb him, no such thought came to me out of respect for my brother. I spoke to him with proper respect, but he, in an angry mood, did not say any words of good-will. As he was filled with anger and rage, I tried to propitiate him—‘How glad I am you have come back successfully and killed the enemy. You alone are the protector of me, who was without protector. Receive once more all the kingly adornments. You alone are the king. I restore your kingdom, which was a pledge. With folded hands and bowed head I request you, don’t be angry with me. Seeing the country without king, the ministers installed me in the kingdom.’ Although I spoke with affection, Vālī reviled me and, summoning his subjects and ministers, he amidst his friends narrated to me with reproaching words his experience with Māyāvī—how he had been followed by me, his ruthless brother, how, when Māyāvī had entered the cave, he had instructed me of cruel sight that he would not return before he had killed his enemy and that I should remain at the entrance till then. Relying on me, he had searched for a whole year, and when at last he had caught sight of the demon, he had killed him along with his kinsmen. The demon, when falling, had poured forth his blood, which had filled the
whole cave. When he had come to the entrance, he had found it blocked and repeatedly called for me. But as no answer had come, he—filled with grief—had burst the rock with a knock of his feet and made his way home. Then his anger had been ignited by me—the wicked one, who had violated his brotherly friendship, coveting the kingdom. With such words he banished me, leaving me a single garment, and took away my wife. Out of fear of him and grieved by his abduction of my wife, I traversed the whole earth and entered the Rṣyamūka mountain. You have heard the whole account of how this enmity began. You, who free the whole world from fear, be pleased to grant your favour to me, who am afraid of Vālī, by destroying him.”

R. smilingly assured Su. that his unfailing arrows would bring Vālī to fall—“As long as I haven’t seen the robber of your wife, so long that sinful Vālī of wicked conduct will live. Like myself, I see you immersed in an ocean of sorrow. I shall save you. You will obtain your full desire.”

Interpretation of context

Su. relates the story of how the enmity between Vālī and him began after R., again requested by Su. to free him from his affliction and fear by killing Vālī, expresses his desire to hear the cause of the enmity so as to be able to determine the relative strength and weakness of Vālī and thus restore Su.’s happiness.

Analysis of characterization

Su. is described as extremely delighted at R.’s suggestion:
evamuktastu sugrīvaḥ kākutsthena mahātmanā /
praharṣamatulaṁ lebhe caturbhiḥ saha vānaraḥ //44
	tataḥ praḥṣṭavadanaḥ sugrīvo lakṣmanāgraje /
vairasya kāraṇaṁ tattvamākhyātumupacakrame //45

Thus, Su.'s narration does not betray the sorrowful tone that characterized the earlier accounts. It is obviously the poet's intention to make Su. now narrate the cause of his enmity with Vālī:

8.45—tataḥ praḥṣṭavadanaḥ sugrīvo lakṣmanāgraje /
vairasya kāraṇaṁ tattvamākhyātumupacakrame //45—
10.24—etatte sarvamākhyātaṁ vairāṇukathanaṁ mahat /
anāgasā mayā prāptaṁ vyasanam paśya rāghava //24.

This means, the theme prevailing in ss. 9-10 is rather that of an objective narration for the sake of elucidating the background. Thus the narrative is not marked by any striking emotional tone. Of course, it is natural that, as Su. approaches the end of his account and his own calamity comes into focus, he falls back into that very tone of affliction and fear so characteristic of him.

We see in these sargas how Vālī's anger is ignited at the slightest instigation and how in such a state of anger he turns down all propitiations even if they are made for his own good—

When Māyāvi challenges him with his roar in the middle of the night, he rushes out, prompted by anger, and thrusts aside his wives and his brother Su., who want to restrain him; when Māyāvi disappears in the cave, he is filled with anger, but instead of listening to Su.'s request not to enter, he makes him swear on his feet to keep watch at the entrance till he has killed the demon—

how in a state of anger fed by suspicion Vālī imprisons the ministers and abuses his brother without asking any explanation from him why he left his entrance and how it came that he was installed as king; how all reasonable explanations and well-meant propitiations by Su. do not quell his anger and
suspicion but only excite him more so that he reviles his brother and, blaming him for his disloyalty, banishes him, leaving him only a single garment and taking away his wife. Such an action, however, is not the outcome of anger and suspicion alone. It is cruel on the part of Vālī to banish his own brother and take away his wife only because he suspects him of having taken advantage of his absence to ascend the throne. And certainly it is not only the injustice done to Su. but also Vālī’s cruelty which is hinted at in verses like 10.21-22—

\begin{verbatim}
evamuktvā tu māṁ tatra vastreṇaikena vānaraḥ /
tadā nirvāsayaṁasa vālī vigatasūdhvasaḥ //21
tenāhamapaviddhaśca hṛtadāraśca rāghava /
tadbhayācca mahī kṛtṣṇā krānteyam savanārṇavā //22
\end{verbatim}

It is reflected also in the epithets which R. applies to Vālī in his answer to Su. : 10.28—

\begin{verbatim}
yāvattāṁ na hi paśyeyam tava bhāryāpahārinam /
tāvatsa jīvetpāpātmā vālī cāritradūṣakaḥ //28
\end{verbatim}

IV 11

Contents

In this sarga Su. describes to R. Vālī’s unequalled physical power, heroism and courage:

v.3—vālinaḥ pauruṣaṁ yattadyacca vīryaṁ dhṛtiṣca yā—
v.48—etadasyaśamāṁ vīryaṁ mayā rāma prakāśitam—

and illustrates his description with the account of Vālī’s victory over Dundubhi and the casting of his corpse—so as to induce R. to demonstrate his valour in his very presence.
"Vālī leaps from the Western to the Eastern, from the Southern to the Northern Ocean. He uproots mountain-peaks, hurls them into the air and catches them. He breaks down trees. The buffalo-demon Dundubhi, who was as big as the peak of Kailāsa and had the strength of a thousand elephants, once challenged the Ocean to fight, but the Ocean, admitting that he had no power to fight with him, sent him to Himavān. Dundubhi challenged Himavān by hurling huge rocks to the ground, but Himavān told Dundubhi it would not become him (Dundubhi) to torment him, who was the refuge of ascetics and illversed in the action of battle. He told Dundubhi, who was angry at his rejection of the challenge, to approach the Vn. Vālī, whose prowess was equal to that of Indra and whose residence was Kiśkindhā. ‘Well-versed in battle, he is powerful enough to engage in a duel with you like Namuci and Vāsava. He is unassailable and a hero in the action of battle.’ At these words, Dundubhi, assuming the form of a buffalo with sharp horns, went to Kiśkindhā’s gate and roared, shaking the ground, tearing down trees and rending the earth. Hearing the roar, Vālī rushed out angrily together with his wives and, with considerate but clear and firm words, asked Dundubhi why he was roaring at the gate, warning him that he should better protect his life. Then Dundubhi became enraged and, with the highly provocative words that Vālī should go to fight with him right then in the presence of his wives or else in the coming night, but not before having gratified his senses—for he would not like to be called the killer of an embryo, i.e., the killer of a person intoxicated, drunk, asleep or destitute,—he aroused Vālī’s anger. Vālī sent away Tārā and his other wives and with a smile addressed the demon—‘Don’t consider me intoxicated if you have no fear of fighting with me, but consider the hero’s drink in this battle my intoxication.’ Then challenged to fight, Vālī seized Dundubhi’s horns and whirled him round—and,
with blood streaming from his ears, the demon fell dead to the ground. Vālī raised the corpse with his arm and threw it, with one effort, a yojana away. While the corpse flew through the air, some drops of blood fell into Mataṅga’s ēśrama and Mataṅga uttered the curse on Vālī that whoever entered the hermitage would be killed. Out of fear of the curse Vālī does not enter the Rṣyamūkha mountain, and I with my companions roam about here with confidence. See here, O R., the bones of Dundubhi and see these seven sāla trees with their branches hanging down, from which Vālī is able to strip the leaves with one grasp. So I have illustrated to you Vālī’s heroism. How will you be able to kill him in battle? If he was able to pierce this sāla tree with one arrow, I would like to know how will you be able to kill Vālī?”—At the words of Su., R. lifted the corpse with his great toe and cast it ten yojanas away. At this, Su. said that Vālī had cast the corpse when it was still fresh and had its flesh. So it was not possible for him to know R.’s power.

*Analysis of characterization*

The main theme of the sarga is the description of Vālī’s unequalled physical power, heroism and courage, which is illustrated by the narrative of Vālī’s victory over Dundubhi and the casting of his corpse. Features like Vālī’s power to leap from the Western to the Eastern and the Southern to the Northern Ocean, to uproot mountain-peaks and the like, his casting the corpse of Dundubhi a yojana’s distance, his power to pierce seven sāla trees with one arrow, and the description of the unequalled strength of Dundubhi, with whom neither the Ocean nor Himavān dare to fight, whom Himavān directs to Vālī, characterizing the latter as possessing prowess equal to that of Indra (śakratulyaparākrama), well-versed in battle (yuddhaviśārada), inviolable (durdharṣāna), a hero in the
action of fighting (śūraḥ samarakarmaṇaḥ), present a picture of a super-human being (divyamānusā): i.e. a being with super-human features in respect to his physical power, heroism and courage. Although, apart from the appellations vānara, kapi, hari etc., Vālī is characterized throughout alike human beings (like H. and Su. he thinks and argues as cultured men do; he follows human customs and rites in his royal life-style, in the discharge of his kingship etc.; and he is cremated according to the śāstra rites, etc.), there are a few details in this sarga which purport to highlight his physical nature of a monkey: his leaping from the Western to the Eastern and Southern to the Northern Ocean, his uprooting of mountain-peaks and tearing down of trees (this also he does in a “super-monkey” way). Another character-facet of Vālī alluded to in the background is his flying into anger at the challenge of Dundubhi. He rushes out with all his wives though he does not allow himself to be swept away immediately by his ire to fight Dundubhi. With considerate, but clear and firm words he asks Dundubhi why he is making trouble and warns him to better protect his own life. But, at the succeeding provocation, he is swept away by his wrath. Unable to restrain himself, he immediately engages in battle with Dundubhi.

IV 15.1-5

Vali’s reaction to Sugriva’s challenge

IV 16.1-10

Vali’s reaction to Tara’s plea

Translation
Then indignant Vālī, while in the female apartments, heard that roar of the noble-souled Su., his brother.(1) But as he heard that roar, which made the whole world tremble, his wanton passion all at once vanished and great anger rushed upon him.(2) And that Vālī, appearing like the sunlight in the evening twilight while seized by anger, immediately lost his splendour like the sun in eclipse.(3) Vālī with his terrible teeth and, appearing like blazing fire owing to anger, looked like a lake resplendent with lotuses plucked up and covered with lotus fibres.(4) Hearing that unbearable sound, the monkey rushed out, as it were, tearing the earth with his foot-steps by his speed.(5)

As Tārā, shining like the lord of the stars, spoke thus, Vālī reproached her and said these words—(1) “For what reason, O lovely-faced lady, should I tolerate the arrogance of this roaring brother, who is specially my enemy now? (2) For heroes who are unassailed and never withdraw in battle—to tolerate an assault, O timid one, is worse than death.(3) I cannot tolerate the arrogance of that ‘ill-necked’ roaring Su., who wishes to fight in battle.(4) And you should not worry about Rāghava for my sake. How should he, who knows righteousness and gratitude, commit a sin? (5) Return with the ladies. How much further are you following me? You showed, O Tārā, your affection and devotion to me.(6) I will go and encounter Su., give up your fear, and I will subdue his pride and he will not be deprived of his life.(7) I conjure you with my life and victory—go back! I will return after having completely defeated that brother of mine in battle.”(8) Then that considerate lady Tārā, speaking pleasing words, embraced that Vālī of hers and, weeping, slowly made his circumambulation.(9) Then, having given her blessing for his safety accompanied by mantras, she, ardently longing for his victory, entered the female apartments, deprived of her senses owing to fear.(10)
Interpretation of context and analysis of characterization

In the first five lines of s. 15, the main theme of which is Tārā’s plea to her husband to reconcile himself with Su., V. depicts in graphic words and similes Vāli’s flaring anger at Su.’s roar of challenge, which makes him on the spot forget his lustful passion and rush out from the female apartments: a vivid portrayal of Vāli’s anger quite in conformity with the earlier description of this behaviour-facet of Vāli, which was so far given mostly in the words of Su. So we gather that V. makes Su., so to say, speak in his own words when he characterizes Vāli—a technique which, as we shall see, is quite in contrast to the technique by which the poet makes the Rks. characterize persons.

When Tārā sees her husband fly into such terrible anger, she, prompted by fear for his safety, embraces him lovingly and tries to persuade him to give up his torrent-like ange. “Your brother,” she reminds him, “who was defeated by you and who fled before you, challenges you again to fight. The pride, the determination and the arrogance of his roar show that he has somebody to assist him. Clever as he is, Su. won’t be with somebody whose valour he has not first tested.” Then she tells him about the news Aṅgada had brought home about R.’s alliance with Su., about R.’s reputation as the refuge of the virtuous and those in affliction, and about all the other merits of his as well as his unequalled power in battle. Thus, she entreats him to let Su. be installed as heir-apparent, to stop his fraternal enmity and show amity to Su., who is more powerful and after all his younger brother worthy of being treated with affection, as also to make friends with R.

Vāli, turning down Tārā’s plea, justifies his anger at the arrogant challenge of Su. with the argument that heroes rather
die than tolerate an assault (cf. also IV 14.15-17). Vālī thus is conscious of himself as a hero. We found this self-assertion already indicated in the narration of the Vn.'s fight with Dundubhi—at the first challenge by Dundubhi he warns him to better protect his own life and at the second provocation he admonishes him not to consider him drunk but drunk with the delight of fighting. Yet Vālī is a hot-blooded bellicose hero (yuuddhavīra), who gets all too easily enraged and, once in a state of anger, is not ready to listen to any wholesome advice, not even of his dearest wife, whose affection and devotion he appreciates, but whose propitiation he cruelly turns down. It is Vālī's own wrathful nature which is partly responsible for his own death. In fact, V. motivates the course of events leading to the death of Vālī—extrinsically by R.'s promise before the fire and intrinsically by the depiction of Vālī's unfortunate modes of behaviour: his humiliating and cruel harassment of his own brother and his unrestrained wrath and embitterment. Although the critical reader will not easily take the blame from the description of R.'s insidious attack on Vālī, we must admit that the poet did motivate his death, making his own behaviour responsible for it. The fact that the author did not describe R.'s act of killing Vālī in a more refined way, is due to the oral nature of the poem. See under Rāmā.

As V. highlights Vālī's unfortunate, though unjustified and unfair, modes of behaviour side by side with his good character-facets—his heroism and courage and his absolute trust that R., righteous as he is, will avoid any kind of sin (na ca kāryo viśādaste rāghavaṁ prati matkṛte dharmajñāšca pāpam kariṣyati), we may ask ourselves whether it was not the poet's intention to lend a tragic sentiment to the depiction of Vālī's behaviour. That this is true in the greater context, we see from Tārā's plea to her husband to reconcile himself with Su., from Vālī's acknowledgement of Tārā's affection in spite of the fact that he rejects her request, from her loving embrace and the blessing she gives him for his safety, from her heart-
rendering lamentation after her husband’s fall, and last but not least from Vāli’s touching address of reconciliation to Su. and his affectionate counsel to his son Aṅgada in his last breaths—some of these scenes being permeated with a strong tone of karuṇarasa. Yet this does not mean that there is a tragic tone throughout prevailing in the passage under consideration. For, though V. certainly intended to evoke a pathetic-tragic atmosphere in a number of sargas related to the circumstances of Vāli’s death, the oral nature of epic poetry demands that the bard-poet should convey such a sentiment to the scene he describes as is momentarily suitable to enthrall the audience. [In this respect, classical poetry and drama are different, for there the different rasas are harmoniously fused in such a way as to enrich and emphasize a dominant rasa.] Thus, the tone of sentiment is constantly to change along with the change of characterization. Applied to our case, this is nothing more than a reflection of human experience: When we describe the unfortunate death of some person caused through his own guilt, we first depict vividly his errors—to change into a more compassionate tone when we come to describe the pitiable circumstances of his death. Such an impression we get when we carefully read vv. 1-4 on the one and vv. 5-7 on the other hand. There is a shift of emphasis from Vāli’s unwholesome wrathfulness and bellicosity to the profession of his confidence in the righteousness of R. and his acknowledgement of Tārā’s affection for him despite his rejection of her request—to be succeeded again by a description of his wrath when he sallies out: a mosaic of characterization in a few verses. And with this transition of characterization there is also a transition of the shade of atmosphere prevailing. While Vāli’s words in vv. 2-4 are indignant, they are more consoling and affectionate in vv. 5-8, which lends a tragic tone to the latter.

In addition to its pathetic connotation, Vāli’s expression of trust in R. has an unspoken psychological implication: Vāli is a man of honour, so at least he thinks himself to be, though actually he is more a man of bellicose pride, and,
owing to his distorted concept of honour, he so overrates R.'s sense of righteousness that he would think, and think with all confidence and trust, that R., a man so committed to dharma, would never raise his hand against him, would never, to speak in his own words, commit a sin, projecting thus his distorted sense of honour on R., for whom to interfere in his enmity with Su. would be tantamount to a violation of dharma, an incurrence of sin.

IV 19.21-24

Translation

As she came close, she saw there her husband fallen on the ground: the slayer of mighty Dānavas never retreating in battle; the thrower of mighty mountains, like Indra of thunder-bolts; one whose roar resembled that of a flock of clouds pervaded by a mighty wind; who possessed the prowess of Indra—like a cloud that has ceased showering; a roarer formidable among roarers; a hero brought to fall by a hero—like a lion killed by a tiger for food, like a sanctuary worshipped by all people that has been destroyed with its flag and altar by Suparna for the sake of snakes.

Analysis of characterization

As the central theme is Tārā's lament—a theme which should move the audience to tears, the poet strikes all notes to depict Tārā's emotional reaction as well as the tragic and pathetic situation of the whole event. The enumeration of
epithets relating to Vālī’s valour and heroism are a simple means to express the fact, unbelievable for Tārā, that her husband, the incarnation of valour and heroism, lies on the ground, deprived of his life. Yet from amidst the psychological portrayal of Tārā’s dumbfounded grief there emerges an objective picture of Vālī’s unexcelled valour and heroism in battle—so graphically described otherwise, last but not least in his fatal fight with Su. (IV 12.15-23 ; 16.11-27).

IV 20.11-12

Translation

Su.’s wife has been taken away and he himself been banished by you, which is the reason why you have obtained the consequence of it, O lord of monkeys.(11) And I, unequalled in misfortune, have been reproached by you out of delusion, who have spoken beneficial words, O lord of the Vns., desirous of your welfare.(12)

Analysis of characterization

Tārā, in a paroxysm of grief, muses over her husband’s ill-treatment of Su. and his rejection of her beneficial advice as the reason for his misfortune.

IV 21.6-7
Translation

He, on whom thousands, millions and hundreds of millions of monkeys live—duly assigned their portions, has come to the end of his life. (6) Since he, who considered every object with righteousness and was intent on conciliation, generosity and forbearance, has gone to the land of those who have conquered dharma, you should not bewail him. (7)

Analysis of characterization

In these two lines, part of H.’s consolation of Tārā, H. acknowledges Vālī’s loyalty to his dharma as a king: his righteousness, spirit of conciliation, generosity and patience. As he has never transgressed his dharma, he will go to the world of those who have conquered dharma, and therefore Tārā should not bewail him.

IV 22

Vālī’s last advice to Sugrīva and Angada

Contents

As Vālī, lying on the ground and sighing deeply, saw Su., he spoke to him these words full of affection—“Don’t approach me with blame because of my sin—me who was over-powered by predestined delusion of the mind. Happiness was not apportioned to us simulta-
neously, for friendship as it is becoming for brothers turned out in the wrong way. Accept my kingdom, O Su., as I have to leave glory, life and kingdom in order to obtain great fame without blemish, and do me one favour: Take care of this my son Āṅgada lying on the ground with his face filled with tears, who is dearer to me than life. Be his guardian, helper and saviour and always follow the advice of Tārā, who is skilled in making decisions, interpreting portents, and carry out R.'s orders, for if you commit any wrong, he will kill you without any reason. Receive this divine garland, for with my death its charm will cease.” As Vālī had spoken to Su. with such brotherly love, Su. dismissed all joy and, filled with grief, accepted the garland. As Vālī saw his son Āṅgada standing, he addressed him with love and affection—“Choose proper time and place, be forbearing in favour and disfavour. Take happiness and grief at its time, be obedient to Su. Don’t make friends with his enemies. Do your duty neither too affectionately nor wanting in affection. Both are faults, discern the middle.”

Analysis of characterization

The context of this sarga has to be primarily viewed from the perspective of its oral character: its purpose to press on the tears of the audience. The atmosphere is already tragic and pathetic enough with Tārā’s heart-rending lamentations, and it becomes still more so when Vālī, prompted by the realization of his fault and urged by affection, conveys a last message to Su. and his dear son Āṅgada. Yet we have to understand the change in the characterization of Vālī not as an attempt of the poet to exalt Vālī in the end as an after all noble personality, but simply within the context of the pathetic situation the author is depicting before the minds of the audience. The change lies in a reversal from Vālī’s
terrible anger and embitterment to the realization and regret of his fault—

sugrīva doṣeṇa na māṁ gantumarhasi kilbiṣāt /
kṛṣyamāṇaṁ bhaviṣyeṇa buddhimohena māṁ balāt //
yugapadvihitaṁ tāta na manye sukhāmāvayoḥ /
sauhārdam bhrātryuktam hi tadidam jātamanvathā //

and from his humiliating and cruel harassment of his brother to his affection for him, an affection which is unmixed with any bitterness. Next to that, we see Vālī’s paternal love and affection for his son Aṅgada, whose moral welfare is his last concern. This benevolent gesture of Vālī in his death-breaths is not a deviation from any of his earlier character-manifestations, but it, too, receives its elevation here through the tragic-pathetic situation itself.
A SYNTHETIC VIEW OF THE POET'S CONCEPTION AND PORTRAIT OF VALI'S CHARACTER

Conception

The character-portrayal of Vālī is organically interwoven with the depiction of Su.'s request to R. to deliver him from his affliction and fear as a result of his humiliation by Vālī—and the account of its accomplishment. V.'s design was not so much to present a character-picture of how a brother humiliated his brother as to give an account of how R., himself a person in affliction, entreated by his newly acquired friend to rescue him from his misfortune, promised his help and finally accomplished it. From the point of view of the plot, Vālī's character was not V.'s primary concern. Though Vālī and Rv. may be considered analogical figures, Vālī is only an antetype. With Vālī's destruction an episode ends which was necessary for the process of the plot—while Rv.'s destruction sets the termination to R.'s separation from S. and his exile in the forest. Still, though there was no specific conception in V.'s mind of a character-portrait of Vālī, the very fact of his involvement with Su.'s destiny makes him a character in the plot. Due to V.'s disposition of a poet to probe into human nature and experience and due to his disposition of a rhapsodist to enthrall the audience with vivid descriptions of all kinds, of which character-description is an instance, most of the persons of the Rm., by their very fact of being organically involved in the plot, are amply
characterized no matter whether they are of major or minor importance. And elaborate characterizations may, in their detailed treatment, be as much units of themselves as e.g. nature-descriptions or battle-scenes. Characterization is thus an organic and dominant literary feature in the *Rm*.

And this explains the variety of literary media in which character-traits are exposed. While the later character-portrayals are mostly objective, we hear in the beginning about Vāli’s character-facets—his cruelty towards his brother, his unrestrained anger and embitterment as well as his physical valour and heroism—through a subjective medium, i.e. Su.’s narration. However, there is practically no difference in the representation of Vāli’s behaviour between the objective and subjective medium in this case.

The tone of sentiment depends both on the situation of the plot the author has in view and the disposition prompting him to stimulate the minds of the audience. As the tone of sentiment and characterization are often interrelated, the character-portrait of a literary figure is sometimes more a personal life-like portrait true to human experience and sometimes more a reflection of a conventional pattern. There is, however, no clear demarcation between the two—and so we should not draw a line while framing the portrait of a character. Yet this consideration presents us with an explanation if we are suddenly confronted with a reversal of characterization. Such a reversal if it highlights more the situation than the character, reflects mostly some conventional narrative pattern based on the intention of the poet to thrill the audience. There is a reversal of characterization from Vāli’s terrible anger and embitterment to his realization and regret of his fault in his last gasps and from his enmity and cruelty against his brother to a final feeling of affection for him. This reversal is not due to a design of the poet to exalt Vāli as an after-all noble personality, but is to be understood basically from the emotional aura the poet wants to evoke. To what degree is there an interrelation
between the tone of sentiment and the characterization of Vālī? Su., while he characterizes Vālī, betrays a tone of affliction and fear when he speaks of his brother's debasing treatment of him and his cruelty towards him—he is dispassionate when he characterizes Vālī's unrestrained anger—and he even evokes a tone of abhutavīraraśa in describing Vālī's unequalled power, heroism and courage to R. The poet himself first conjures such a tone when he describes Vālī's physical power and heroism and his terrible anger, but from the time he comes closer to the description of his fall, he strikes a more and more tragic and pathetic note—so much so that with the reversal of sentiment a reversal of characterization is connected.

**Portrait**

Vālī, by his designation and physical nature, is a monkey. But this physical nature of his is entirely set into the background and alluded to only rarely and then only in activities which are inseparable from his monkey-nature even though they are "super-monkey" activities: leaping from the Western to the Eastern and from the Southern to the Northern Ocean, uprooting mountain-peaks, hurling them into the air and catching them again, tearing down trees, fighting with stones and trees etc. While the monkey-nature of Vālī thus remains in the background, Vālī on the whole is characterized alike a human being or super-human being (divyamānuṣa). His unequalled physical power, heroism and courage in battle—qualities in which he even excells the demon Dundubhi with the power of a thousand elephants, with whom neither the Ocean nor Himāvan dare to fight, and in which he is likened to Indra (śakratulyaparākrama)—and
his self-consciousness of being a hero make him some kind of a Hercules. But he is a bellicose yuddhaviśa with all too-human sides:

He is possessed of unrestrained anger which is aroused in him at the slightest instigation (mostly in the form of a challenge)—when Māyāvi challenges him with his roar to fight; when Māyāvi disappears in the cave; when he sees that Su. left the entrance and blocked it; when Dundubhi challenges him with provocative words; when Su. challenges him the first and the second time. Once in a state of anger, Vālī turns down all pleas even if they are made in his own interest:—When Māyāvi provokes him to fight in the middle of the night, he rushes out, thrusting aside his wives and his brother Su., who want to restrain him. When Māyāvi disappears in the cave, Vālī is filled with anger, but instead of listening to the request of his brother not to enter, he makes him swear on his feet to keep watch at the entrance. When Su. challenges him to fight for the second time and Vālī, filled with wrath, rushes out, Tārā tries to persuade her husband to reconcile himself with Su., drawing his attention to Su.'s ominous pride and self-assurance and to the promise R. had given Su. to assist him against his brother. But Vālī does not listen to Tārā's advice though he appreciates her love and affection for him, justifying his indignation with the reason that heroes rather die than tolerate an assault on them. Once in a state of anger fed by suspicion, Vālī does not ask for any explanation—he imprisons in his wrath Su.'s ministers and abuses his brother without asking him why he left the entrance of the cave and how it came that he was consecrated king—nor do any reasonable explanations and well-meant propitiations quell his rage:—Though Su. explains to Vālī in a reasonable manner that it was not out of a bad intention he left the entrance of the cave and propitiates him with all his affection to accept the kingship, which he administered only as a pledge, Vālī only gets more embittered and finally banishes his brother and deprives him of his wife. Resulting
from his anger and embitterment is Vālī’s cruelty towards his brother. He reviles, humiliates him by taking away his wife and banishing him, leaving him only one piece of garment, and persecutes him, so that Su. lives in constant grief and dread of him—and all that because he suspects him of being unfaithful to his duty and having taken advantage of his absence in order to ascend the throne.

On the other hand, Vālī is characterized as heroic and brave throughout. He has all the social merits a king should have (these are alluded to only in H.’s consolation of Tārā, but they do appear to be more than functional)—righteousness, conciliation, generosity and forbearance, and because he has fulfilled his dharma as a king, he is predicted to go to the land of those who have conquered dharma. And he asserts his confidence in R.’s righteousness when Tārā draws his attention to the friendship between Su. and R.

With the narration coming close to Vālī’s fall, the duality of his character—his heroism in battle and conversance with dharma as a king, on the one hand, and his awesome wrath, embitterment and cruelty, for which he has to pay with his life, on the other hand—, though prevailing already earlier, begins to make him in some way or other a tragic figure. This emphasis on the duality of Vālī’s character is less a reflection of human nature than a conventional (oral) pattern based on the intention of the poet to move the audience to tears (karaṇarasa). The tragic and pathetic atmosphere is the inspiring force of the moment, and the author has to adjust his narrative, i.e. also his character-depiction, to its demands. This demand goes so far that V. makes Vālī address his enemy in a speech overflowing with love and affection, in which he comes to realize and regret the delusion of his mind and gives a last instruction to his small son Aṅgada, whose moral welfare is his final concern—a reversal from an angry, embittered and cruel Vālī to a Vālī realizing and regretting his fault and full of love and affection for his brother, whom he had hated so much.
1 References to Vālī’s enmity with Su. earlier than 8.16—

III 68.11 śṛṭyāṭāṁ rāmā vakṣyāṁ sugrīvo nāma vānaraḥ |
bhrāṭṛā nirastabh kruddhena vālinā śakrasāṁnā ||
68.16 sa ṛkṣarajasāḥ putraḥ pampāmaṭati śaṅkitaḥ |
bhāṣkarasāursaḥ putro vālinā kṛṭakilīśaḥ ||

IV 2.6 etau vanamidaṁ durgaiṁ vālipraśēhitaṁ dhruvaṁ |
chadmanā cītvasaṁnau pracaṁarantāvihāgatau ||
2.14-15 yasmādudvignacetiśvāṁ pradruṭto haripūṅgava |
tain krūradārśanaṁ krūraṁ neha paśyāmi vālinam ||
yasmāttava bhayaṁ saumya pūrvajāṭpāpakarmacāvah |
sa neha vāli duṣṭāṁna na te paśyāmyahāṁ bhayaṁ ||
2.19-22 dirghabhāḥ viṣākalśaḥ śaracāpāṣiḥdhiṁvaḥ |
kasya na syādbhayaṁ dṛṣṭyā etau surasopamau |
vālipraśēhitévetau śaṅkēṁhāṁ puruṣottamau |
rājāno bahumitraśaḥ viśvāso nātra hi kṣamah ||
arayaśca manuṣyeva viṇēyaśchaḥcācitāṁ |
viṣvastāṇāmaśviṣvastāścchidreṣu prakramati hi ||
kṛtyeṣu vāli medhāvī rājāno bahudārśanāḥ |
bhavanti parahantāraste jñeyāḥ prākṛtaṁaryāṁ ||
3.18 sugrīvo nāma dharmāṁ kāścidvānaraśūṭapah |
vīro vinikṛto bhrāṭṛā jagadbharamati duṣkhitaḥ ||
4.19 sa hi rājyāccha viḥhraṣṭaḥ kṛtvārāśca vālinā |
hṛtadāro vane trasto bhrāṭṛā vinikṛto bhrṣam ||


The central point of Venkatarama Iyer’s and Ramaswami Sastri’s theses is Vālī’s sexual concupiscence as the main motive for his abduction of his brother’s wife. This interpretation is based on:

(1) 9.4—māyāṁ nāma tejasāṁ pūrvajō dundubheḥ sutaḥ |
tenā tasya mahadvaiṁ striṁ kṛtvāṁ viśrutam purā ||

(2) 11.33-34—
athava dharayiṣyāmi krodhaṁadvayaṁ niśāṁmā|m |
grhyatāmudayaḥ svairāṁ kāṁabhogaṁ vānara ||
yo hi mattain premattain vā suptaṁ vā rahitaṁ bhrṣam |
hanyatiṣa bhrṣaḥ loke tvadviḥdaṁ madamoḥitaṁ ||
(with which words Dundubhi challenges Vālī to fight)

(3) R.’s reproach of Vālī’s illicit relationship with the wife of his
younger brother, in ss. 17-18.
To these passages may be added 15.2—

\[ \text{śruti} \, \text{tu} \, \text{tasya} \, \text{ninadrain} \, \text{sarvabhūtaprakampanam} \, / \]
\[ \text{madaścakapade naśṭab krodhāścāpatito mahān} \, / / - \]

and the references to the many wives of Vālī. However, it has to be taken into account that all references before s. 18, where R. justifies his killing of Vālī, are no more than allusions and, as compared with other character-traits of Vālī, completely set into the background, no emphasis being laid on them. Vālī’s sexual passion is nowhere causally linked with his expulsion and persecution of his brother except, one might say, for the fact that he deprived him of his wife. But V.’s abduction of Su.’s wife is always seen in the light of his cruelty and never in the light of his passion. Since ss. 17-18 are proved to be late interpolations, being an after-thought in the form of an attempt to justify R.’s action by stressing Vālī’s weaknesses, there is no indication whatsoever of a causal link between Vālī’s sexual concupiscence and his cruel treatment of Su. Hence it appears that this sexual passion of Vālī alluded to in the narrative is just as intrinsic a part of his nature as are his power of leaping, uprooting mountain-peaks, tearing down trees etc. Had the author intended to bring this character-side of Vālī in a striking connection with the fate of Su., he would have surely taken the opportunity to depict it in as graphic scenes as he did with regard to Su. losing himself in sexual pleasures. Iyer does not find any other plausible explanation for the incongruity of Vālī’s harshness with Su. than Vālī’s lust for Rumā. But, whereas Vālī’s lust for Rumā is nowhere mentioned or even hinted at and can only be inferred from a few allusions to Vālī’s passion, his unrestrained anger is depicted again and again together with his cruelty in an almost repetitive pattern and is brought in causal connection with his expulsion of Su. and abduction of the latter’s wife. Why read more than this from the context?

Raghavan’s main point is to show that Vālī is characterized as possessed of a complex of reprehensible character-traits—relentless vindictiveness, exaggerated prowess, sexual licentiousness—, which made him lose the sympathies of the people living in his neighbourhood and “brought him close to the main anti-hero of the epic and classified him among those to be removed by the operation of the mission on which the hero had appeared in Ikshvaku’s race”. Leaving aside controversial points like Vālī’s sex-weakness, which we have dealt with above, we can say that Raghavan’s interpretation appears correct at least in so far as Vālī’s reprehensible behaviour is used by V. as a motif that leads to Vālī’s death. But it is surely too far-fetched to conclude that the poet created an aura of ill-fame around
him so as to consider him an anti-hero like Rv. For this there is no foundation in the text. Unlike Rv, Vālī is not seen against the background of his social relations—these are alluded to only and in a decisively positive manner —, but in his own emotional set-up and in his personal relationship with Su. On the other hand, Raghavan admits the strong character of Vālī and searches for an explanation why Vālī accepts R.'s words so easily. He finds the reason in the impression of R.'s entrancing personality. Actually, this is only one of the many inconsistencies of ss. 17-18, which for other reasons too have to be taken as an interpolation.
Though Tārā is characterized exclusively in the context of the Vālī episode, i.e. in her plea to Vālī not to engage in fight with Su. and in her lamentation over her fallen husband, she emerges in these few scenes as an impressive character, as the loving and devoted wife of Vālī:

Her attempt at persuading her husband to renounce his terrible anger occasioned by the roar of Su. and to reconcile himself with his brother (IV 15) is prompted by fear for his safety, which reflects her genuine love for him. Knowing and asserting her respect for Vālī’s great valour, she nevertheless forbids him to give vent to his bellicose ire, having an intuition that fate is against him. She gathers this intuition from the determination with which Su. challenges Vālī, from which she concludes that Su., who is fearful by nature, enjoys the assistance of a hero whose valour has been testified, as also from news intimated by Aṅgada about an alliance of Su. with R., whose greatness of character (he is the refuge of the virtuous and those in affliction; he is the abode of all virtues; and he possesses unexcelled power in battle, resembling the fire at the destruction of the world) she realizes to be a decisive factor against Vālī. But it is not only fear for her husband’s safety which prompts her to persuade Vālī to make friends with Su. Though she does not have much respect for Su., she nevertheless expresses in her concluding words that it is befitting for Vālī to show love to him who is his younger brother and relative wherever he may be and is worthy of being treated with affection, and she also feels that her husband ought to make friends with R. Thus a feeling of concern for domestic happiness, reflecting her womanly wisdom, emerges side by side with her concern for the safety of her husband. And it is this gift of intuition and
womanly wisdom which Vālī in his last words to Su. advises him to attend to, himself having failed to realize it in time: IV 22.13-14—

susēvakuhitā ceyamarthasākṣmaviniścaye /
aupatīke ca vividhe sarvataḥ pariṇīṣhitā //13
yadeśā sādhvīti brūyākāryaṁ tanmuktasariśsayam /
na hi tārāmatan kiñcidanyathā parivartate //14

Though Vālī, blinded by his bellicose anger, is too obstinate to listen to the wholesome advice of even his dearest wife, he acknowledges her love and devotion for him and tries to console her by expressing his trust in R.'s righteousness and referring to his own heroism as also promising her that he will not kill Su. but only subdue his pride. And Tārā, realizing her inability to convince him, embraces him lovingly, circumloculates him and gives him her blessing. (IV 16 beginning)

All these scenes already foreshadow intermittently the tragic-pathetic tone of sentiment which reaches its climax in the poet's representation of the whole complex of Tārā's heart-rending laments (ss. 19, 20, 21, 23). V. exhausts all his power of poetic ingenuity and insight into the human experience of sorrow to bring out in words and scenes the pathos of Tārā's grief: her deep love for and devotion to her husband, the all-in-all of her life, and the tragic turn-out of events: Vālī's ill-treatment of Su. and rejection of her plea and the destructive force of Kāla in the form of R. as the causes of her misfortune. At times, the author makes Tārā even go to the extreme of spurning everything dear to her, even her son Aṅgada or her own life, for the sake of Vālī. H.'s attempt at consoling her by exposing to her the futility of grieving over the dead and advising her to see to the future of Aṅgada and install him on the throne is designed by the poet to add fuel to the fire: Giving full vent to her devotion to her husband, she emphatically declares that she does not care for a hundred sons like Aṅgada, that the kingdom of the Vns. now lies in the hands of Su. and it is not her duty to confer the kingdom on him, and that on her part she-
does not want anything more than to lie by the side of her husband.

Conspicuous in Tārā’s lamentations is the absence of any major rebuke of Su. or R. There are only a few stray allusions which indirectly convey Tārā’s indignation at Su.:

IV 19.9—rājyahetōḥ sa cedhṛātā bhrātrā raudreṇa pātitaḥ / rāmeṇa prasātirdūrānmārgaṇaśaitrāpātibhiḥ ||

IV 23.4—sugrīva eva vikrānto vīra sāhasika priya / ōṛśavānaramukhyāstvāṁ balinaṁ paryupāsate ||

But these are not at all in correspondence with what one should expect of her in such a situation. In fact, she realizes well that the fault was with Vālī and laments his rejection to listen to her advice:

IV 20.11-12—sugrīvasya tvayā bhāryā hṛtā sa ca vivāsitaḥ / yattatiasya tvayā vyuṣṭāḥ prāpteyaṁ plava-gāḍhipa //

niḥśreyasaparā mohāttvayā cāhāṁ vigarhitā / yaiśābbruvaṁ hitaṁ vākyaṁ vānarendra hitaiśīṁ //

IV 23.22—avasthāṁ paścamāṁ paśya pituḥ putra sudūruṇām / samprasaktasya vairasya gatoṁtaḥ pāpakarmanā //

IV 23.30—na me vacaḥ pathyamidaṁ tvayā kṛtaṁ na cāsmi / šaktā hi nivāraṇe tava / hatā saputrāsmi hatena samyuge saha tvayā / śrīrūjajaḥi māmīha //

And she refers to R. as having accomplished a great deed—acquitted as he has himself of his debt regarding his promise to Su., and exhorts the latter to be contented—as he will regain his wife and to enjoy the kingdom without anxiety now that his brother, who was his enemy, has been killed (IV 20.18-19).

Though Tārā knows that Su. had a right to the throne, it is nevertheless in utter contrast to her devotion to her husband, which she expressed in such a pathetic and touching manner,
that she is later alluded to as one of the beloved wives of Su. along with Rumā, without any attempt whatsoever being made by the poet to explain the breach of Tārā’s loyalty and to throw light on her character in the later course of the Rm. (The only instance of a characterization—when Tārā gives the suggestion to the desperate Vns. to enter the cave where they would have no occasion to fear anybody (IV 52.31-33)—is much too colourless to be a real piece of characterization). How then to interpret the sudden change in Tārā’s behaviour? Considering the oral nature of the Rm. and its large-scale improvised pattern of composition, we can say that V. designed to delineate Tārā’s personality only in the context of the Vālī episode and that this character-depiction was meant to be subservient to the depiction of pathos. When Tārā later emerges as if she had committed a breach of loyalty to her former husband, it is not at all because V. intended to characterize her as an unfaithful wife. It is only Aṅgada who, in his obstinacy and stubbornness of mind, includes this fact among the charges in his rebuke against Su. (see under Hanumān). Having no intention to delineate Tārā’s personality beyond the scenes of her lamentation, he simply treats her as a Vn. lady and endows her with those character-features which he allots to the civilization of the Vns. As he apparently did not design to allot the same lofty ideals of character to the Vns. as to the Dāśarathis (except H.), he did not care to depict Tārā with certain less ideal features, which he felt to be characteristic of the Vns.
SUGRIVA
A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER-PORTRAYAL OF SUGRIVA

III 68.11-22

Kabandha advises Rama to seek the alliance of Sugriva who will do everything to help him

Translation

Hear, O. R., I am going to narrate, of the Vn. called Su., who has been expelled by his brother—wrathful Vālī, the son of Indra.(11) On Ṛṣyamūka, the foremost of mountains—beautified by the circuit of the Pampā, the self-possessed hero dwells together with the four Vns.(12) Go quickly from here today, O Rāghava, and make him your friend, having united before the blazing fire so that there be no iniquity.(13) And do not disregard that Su., the king of the Vns., who is grateful and capable of assuming forms at will and desirous of an ally as well as heroic (14), for you two are able to accomplish that task of his which he desires to be done. Whether he has achieved his object or not, he will accomplish your task. (15) That son of Ṛkṣarajas, the actual son of the Sun, roams about the Pampā fearfully, having been treated with insult by Vālī.(16) Quickly deposit your weapon, O Rāghava, and make the forest-roving monkey dwelling on the Ṛṣyamūka your friend by way of a promise (17),
for that foremost of monkeys, on account of his intelligence, knows entirely all the places in the world of those who eat the flesh of men.(18) For nothing in the world is unknown to him, O Rāghava, as far as the sun possessed of a thousand eyes shines, O subduer of enemies.(19) Searching through rivers, large mountains, hill forts and valleys with the Vns., he will obtain your wife for you (20) and he will send gigantic Vns. into all directions to find that S. of yours moaning on account of her separation from you.(21) Whether that blameless lady, your dear wife, be on the topmost peak of Meru or even has entered the netherworld and dwells there, the foremost of monkeys will bestow her again to you after having killed the Rks.(22)

Analysis of characterization

This passage focuses on the character of Su. in a general, introductory (though subjective) way and so gives us a clue for unravelling the sort of personality V. had in mind when introducing Su. to the audience. For later we are confronted with a rather fluorescent picture of manifold character-facets—partly so due to the vividness of particular scenes the poet evokes before the audience—and this would make it difficult to judge what Su.’s character was like in the mind of V. from the point of view of his plot. As represented here, Su.’s character-features are throughout positive, his unreserved and boundless helpfulness and gratitude to R. being emphatically foretold—cf. vv. 14-15 & 20-22—so much so that it appears as if both initiative and accomplishment of regaining S. are the sole task of Su. whereas actually we don’t find him at all in the limelight of narration during the battle in Laṅkā. This overstressed picture of Su.’s solidarity which Kabandha presents to R. has surely psychological reasons: He must create confidence in R. (in line with this is the emphasis on
Su.'s geographical knowledge); yet Su. is not only introduced as a source of hope to R. but also as a character to the audience, and therefore his characterization is definitely meant to be objective. And this is in agreement with certain general statements interspersed in that part of the narrative where Su. is no more in the centre of characterization, e.g.:

When Aṅgada, in his despair at not finding any traces of S.'s whereabouts, expresses his fear of Su.'s sternness and severe punishment, thereby suspecting Su.'s sincerity in dealing with him, H. encourages Aṅgada and defends Su. with these words, in IV 53.19-21:

asmābhīstu gataṁ sārdhaṁ vinītavadupasthitam /
ānupūrṇvīttu sugrīvo rājye tvāṁ sthāpayiśyatī //19
dharmakāmāḥ pitṛvyaste prūtikāmo dṛḍhavrataḥ /
śucīḥ satyapratijñaśca na tvāṁ jātu jighāṁsati //20
priyakāmaśca to mājustadarthaṁ cāṣya jīvitam /
tasyāpatyaṁ ca nāstyaṁ yattasmādaṅgada gamyātāṁ //21

H., despondent at not being able to trace S. in Laṅkā, muses how R. at such a news would renounce his life and with R. L., Bh., Śatrughna, Ks., Sumitrā, Kai., and also Su. In this context he says, V 11.28:

kṛtaṁḥ satyasandhaśca sugrīvaḥ plavagādhipaḥ /
rāmaṁ tathāgataṁ dṛṣṭvā tatastyakṣyati jīvitam //28

After the battle, Su. receives not only the affectionate treatment of R. (VI 100.6; 110.13), but also of Bh.

IV 2

Sugrīva’s anxiety at the sight of Rama and Laksmana

Contents
At the sight of R. and L. Su, was frightened and dispirited, looking in restless anxiety in all directions and expressing his apprehension to his counsellors that the two were spies of Vālī in disguise. Sojourning to the summit of the hill, the counsellors sat down encircling Su., while the other Vns., in panic-stricken flight, created a horrible tumult. Then H. addressed Su.—"I do not see cruel and wicked Vālī anywhere here, out of fear of whom you run away with an anxious heart. Hence I don't see any reason why you should be afraid. You show indeed your monkeyish nature since through your lightmindedness you do not control yourself. Being endowed with intelligence and knowledge, you should do everything with internal thoughts, for a king fallen into delusion cannot rule a people." To this Su. answered—"Who is not afraid seeing those two heroes with mighty arms and large eyes—carrying bows and arrows and swords and resembling two sons of Gods? I suspect them to be Vālī's spies. We should not trust kings, for they have many friends, are treacherous, attack the vulnerable points of confident people, are skilled in stealing and killing. Hence find out, O H., who they are, go in the disguise of an ordinary man"...(abbrev.)

**Analysis of characterization**

Su. is characterized as reacting in an extremely frightened and dispirited manner to the presence of R. and L., whom he mistakes for spies of his brother Vālī as a result of his experience of being persecuted by him. In H.'s words, he is lightminded and of unstable mind, thereby revealing his true monkeyish nature:

\[
\text{aho śākhūmrgatvaṁ te vyaktameva plavaṅgama /} \\
\text{laghucittatayātmānaṁ na sthāpayasi yo matau //16}
\]

Though this verse is subjective (spoken by H.), it is V. him-
self who plays with this idea as he makes Su. display a series of far-fetched reasons—all the possible treacherous character-facets of kings,—in virtue of which he nourishes his suspicion that those two powerful persons carrying bows and swords are Vāli’s spies—a clear symptom of Su.’s over-suspiciousness and anxiety. I would be inclined to see at times a slight tone of a humorous sentiment (hāsyarasa), but this is no more than a purely subjective inference.

IV 5.8-7.23

Contents

At the words of H., Su. gave up his fear, assumed a human appearance and with a cheerful look addressed R., praising his qualities and expressing his appreciation for his readiness to make friends with him. He offered R. his hand and R. pressed it in delight, as a token of friendship, and embraced him. Then Su. and R. circumambulated the blazing fire (which was produced by H.) and made friends, gazing at each other without feeling satiated. After that, Su. expressed his concern for R.’s grief on account of his separation from S., of which he had been informed by H., trying to console him by giving his assurance that he will restore his wife to him whether she be in the lower world or in the sky and disclosing that it must be S. whom he had seen being carried away by a Rk.—crying “Rāma, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa”, and who, when seeing the five Vns. on the top of the hill, had thrown down her ornaments. When Su. showed the ornaments to R., the latter broke into heart-rending lamentation. Then he asked Su. about the place where he had seen
S. being carried away by the Rk., about his whereabouts and his person. Yet Su., with tears in his eyes, expressed his inability to give any details about Rv.'s abode etc., but tried to console R. by assuring him that he would do his best and restore S. to him after killing Rv. with his hosts in battle. He advised him not to lose himself in sorrow and to be steadfast. He himself was in great misery on account of his separation from his wife, but he did not grieve himself and lose his steadfastness although he was only an ordinary Vn. How much more then should R. be able to restrain his tears—he who is noble-minded, disciplined and possessed of courage! Contrasting the character of a person who, owing to his courage and intelligence, does not become disheartened whether in calamity, loss of wealth, fear, or when his life comes to an end, with the character of a man who is ignorant and consequently submerged in grief—like a heavily loaded boat by the current of the river—and constantly in distress, Su. advised R., entreating him lovingly, to resort to his manliness instead of giving way to grief, for those who surrender to grief are unhappy and forfeit their energy. At the end, Su. stressed that he spoke these words for R.'s benefit and out of friendship, not out of a desire to instruct him. R., consoled by the sweet words of Su., wiped his face and, embracing Su., said—"You have done, O Su., properly and befittingly, what a loving and well-wishing friend should do. I have been restored to myself by you. It is difficult to get such a friend, particularly in this time. Now you will have to put your effort into searching for S. and the cruel wicked Rk. Rv. Now tell me what I shall do for you. As in a fertile field during the rains, everything will turn out well for you. And these words I have spoken with pride. Let them be known to be true. I have never told any lie nor will I ever do so." Thereupon Su. was filled with great delight and reflected upon R.'s object, considering his duty in his heart.
Analysis of characterization

These three sargas, the principal themes of which are the alliance between Su. and R. (5), Su.'s disclosure to R. of his tidings about S. and the ornaments dropped by her on her aerial path, R.'s breaking into lamentation (6) and Su.'s consolation of R. (7), depict Su.'s character in a very positive light: his loving and joyful readiness to make friends with R., his concern for R.'s sorrow, his endeavour to console him by trying to assure him of his unlimited help and disclosing to him the information about S., and finally his attempt to comfort and soothe R.'s profound grief occasioned by the sight of his wife's ornaments by affectionately advising him not to lose himself in sorrow but to resort to his steadfastness and manliness. Externally, due to its length and didactic nature, this advice given by Su. to R. looks more like an admonition on steadfastness and courage in grief, qualities which R. appears to fall short of inspite of his noble-mindedness, discipline and courage, whilst even Su., but an ordinary Vn., is able to control himself. Yet the context in which Su. gives his counsel and his statement that his words are not meant as an instruction but are spoken out of friendship for R.'s welfare—

hitam vayasyābhāvena brūmi nopadiśāmi te |
 vayasyatāṁ pūjayanme na tvam śocitumarhasi //7.13—

and R.'s welcome of Su.'s advice as an act proper to a loving and benevolent friend—all this makes one think of a person who, in his good-naturedendeavour to help and console a dear friend, pours forth a lengthy sermon on the virtue of self-control, which he knows his “client” very well lives up to, but which he, owing to some emotional upset, has lost sight of and which should thus bring him back to reason; not without pointing out that even he himself, but an ordinary person, knows to restrain himself better. It makes one think of a good-hearted and sympathetic person who so identifies himself with the worries of his friend that he feels
prompted to assume the role of a sincere counsellor and give him a good dose of consolation so as to cure him from his sorrow. It is in this way that Su.'s admonition has to be understood, otherwise there would be the temptation to argue that V. designed to show the hypocritical nature of Su., who tries to correct the weakness of R. by pointing to his own steadfastness, while actually he is the last and least to be of controlled mind in a state of fear. Such an interpretation is surely wrong. One more thing we may learn from this last passage: V. did not intend to impart the same lofty moral standard of behaviour to the Vns. as he apparently did to the sons of D. Keeping this in mind, we should not be immediately inclined to see a contrast of characterization if in a particular situation the moral standard of the latter does not tally with that of the former. A difference of degrees of moral standards is naturally implied, but not necessarily for the sake of a contrast.

IV 7.22-23
IV 8.1-9

Sugariva's cheerful response to Rama's promise of help and his eulogy of the value of friendship

Translation

Then Su. was delighted together with the Vn. ministers when he heard the words of Rāghava specially asserted by him. Hearing the words of the magnanimous one, that chief of the monkey heroes reflected upon the task of that foremost of men, thereby considering his own duty in his heart.
The Vn. Su., exceedingly delighted at those words, spoke to R., the elder brother of L., these words—"Doubtlessly I am altogether in favour with the Gods since I have you as my friend endowed with the appropriate qualities. Indeed, with you as my helper, O faultless R., I should be able to obtain even the kingdom of the Gods, how much more then my own kingdom, O lord. Thus I am honourable to my relatives and friends as I have obtained a friend from the line of the Rāghavas in the presence of the fire. That I, too, am a friend worthy of you, you will come to know gradually, but I am not competent to speak myself of my own qualities. But the love of noble-souled, self-possessed men like you is immovable like the firmness of the self-controlled. Be it silver or gold or clothes or ornaments, good men consider them as the common properties of each other. Be he rich or poor, grieved or happy, faultless or with faults, a friend is the greatest resort. For the sake of a friend one renounces wealth, happiness or even one's body in view of such love.

Analysis of characterization

Su. responds to R.'s promise to offer him in turn whatever help he asks from him with an expression of grateful joy, a feeling of possessing the favour of the Gods and of supreme confidence in R.'s patronage in securing for him his kingdom. Reflecting on this, he feels the need to assure R. (by way of an allusion) also his trustworthiness as a friend, humbly remarking, however, that he is not competent to speak of his own qualities. Seeing the ideal of the beauty and value of friendship realized in R.'s behaviour, he bursts forth into a eulogy on the firmness of love between friends, the spirit of sharing with one another, the spirit of taking refuge with and sacrificing for one another, as it is prevalent among friends.
IV 8.15-18, 24-39

Sugriva intimates his affliction to Rama

See s.v. Vālī under IV 8.16-18 and 8.31-39.

Resumé

Though Su. is in the highest realms of joy at R.'s assurance of help, he, as he is about to lovingly entrust his affliction to R., by the very recalling of the humiliation and persecution he suffered at the hands of Vālī, falls back into a state of grief and fear, which prompts him to entreat R. to grant his favour to him, who is helpless and oppressed by the fear of Vālī. When R. spontaneously assures him that he will kill Vālī this very day, he resumes his cheerfulness—but only for a moment. The more the painful thought of his calamity comes back to his mind, the more he reverts into a state of grief and fear, which now reaches such an intensity that he gives full vent to the burden of his soul and feels prompted again to intimate to R. the story of his humiliation—now in greater length and with more pathos.

IV 9-10

Sugriva narrates to Rama the full account of Vālī's enmity
See s.v. Vālī IV 9-10.

IV 11
IV 12.5-11,24-27,38
IV 14.1-6

Sugrīva between doubt and confidence

Resumé

In the midst of all delight and hope at R.'s assurance, Su. suddenly falls into musing and doubt when calling to his mind the unequalled power and heroism of Vālī and so feels an urge to impress R. vividly with an account of Vālī's heroism so as to induce R. to demonstrate his power before his very eyes and free him from all doubts. So great is his impatience to guard himself against any eventuality that even when R. already stood the test given to him he demands another, more unmistakable proof of his power. (IV 11 passim)

When R. accomplishes his second test (his arrow traverses seven sāla trees, a mountain and the innermost region of the earth and enters his quiver again), Su. simply stands wonder-struck and with humble gratitude and exceeding joy and satisfaction expresses his full confidence in R., whose valour and heroism he praises as beyond those of even the Gods. (12.5-11)

Yet a little later, Su. feels downcast and ashamed at R.'s failure to come to his rescue and discharge his deadly arrow against Vālī and angrily accuses him of having put him to shame by not plainly telling him that he would not kill Vālī (12.24-27). After R.'s explanation and his act of tying a creeper round Su.'s neck so as to be able to distinguish him from Vālī, Su. is fully pacified (12.38). Yet, when they have
reached Kiśkindhā, he raises a frightening battle-roar amidst the Vns. and reminds R. again to fulfil his promise, a gesture which leaves the reader with an indelible impression of Su.'s covert timidity (14.1-6).

IV 15.6-23

Tara's plea to Vāli to reconcile himself with Sugriva

Contents

When Tārā saw her husband fly into such terrible anger, she, prompted by fear for his safety, embracing him lovingly, tried to persuade him to give up his torrent-like anger. "Your brother," she reminded him, "who was defeated by you and fled before you, challenges you again to fight. The pride, the determination and the arrogance of his roar show that he has got somebody to assist him. Clever as he is, Su. won't be with somebody whose valour he has not first tested." Then she told him about the news Āṅgada had brought home regarding R.'s alliance with Su., R.'s reputation as the refuge of the virtuous and those in affliction and all the other merits of his as well as his unequalled power in battle. Thus she entreated her husband to let Su. be installed in the heir-apparentship together with him, to stop his fraternal enmity and please Su., who is after all his younger brother, as also to make friends with R.

Analysis of characterization
Tārā characterizes Su. somehow as a shrewd and arrogant coward, who possesses the courage to challenge his brother only because he knows himself guarded by an assistant whose valour he has first tested. Now the question arises whether this definitely negative character-portait of Su. as drawn by Tārā is a merely functional expression of Tārā’s loving care for the safety of her husband or whether beyond this V., so to say, lets Tārā address the listeners in his own words. Is there any previous indication which goes to show Su.’s cowardice? As we read 14.1-6, the contents of which we have outlined above, and further 18-21, we feel that the vigour with which Su. raises his terrifying roar in the midst of his companions—appearing, as it were, like an inner call to self-encouragement, and Su.’s reminder to fulfil his promise do purport, at least implicitly, an innate disposition of timidity in Su., which he is able to conceal as he knows himself guarded. But it is illicit to interpret this timidity in the light of 15.9 ff. The passages 14.1-6 and 18-21 are not designed to convey any further ‘hidden’ implications. So we conclude that Tārā’s characterization of Su. is purely subjective in a functional sense, interpreting Su’s fearfulness (which is in part the result of his humiliation he suffered at the hands of Vālī) as cowardice.

IV 19.28  
IV 22.17-18  

Sugriva’s grief over the tragic course of events  

Translation
Seeing her crying like a female osprey and Āṅgada approaching, he fell into extreme despondency.

Having been thus addressed by Vāli prompted by brotherly affection, Su. dismissed his joy and became grieved again like the moon in the eclipse. Prompted by these words of Vāli, he, doing—with tranquil mind and vigilance—what was befitting, took with his permission that golden wreath.

**Interpretation of context**

The former verse is embedded in the depiction of Tārā’s grief when she, at the news of her husband’s fall, rushes out and sees him lying like dead on the ground. The latter verses form a transition between Vāli’s last speech to Su. and his last advice to his son Āṅgada.

**Analysis of characterization**

Both the verses are to be interpreted from the perspective of the tragic-pathetic sentiment prevailing in the scene. Thus the character-facets of Su. alluded to in these verses are primarily sketched in the light of the pathetic atmosphere which the poet tries to conjure before the minds of the audience. Yet, as they do not imply any reversal in Su.’s character-portrayal, we can safely assume that V. did intend to portray Su.’s sympathy with Tārā and his grief over the tragic course of events as well as his innate affection for his brother as natural reactions of his concerned heart.

Further allusions to Su.’s grief in the form of consolations extended by R. and L. etc. are found in s. 24 1, which is a description of Vāli’s funeral preparations—a theme which by itself lends ample opportunity to the poet to press on the tears of the audience by once more depicting Tārā, the Vns., Su.
and Aṅgada immersed in grief at their final parting from their beloved lord.

IV 27.37-46

Translation

"These rains are with abundant merits. Su. attains his happiness. His enemy has been defeated, he is with his wife and has been established in his great kingdom. While I have been deprived of my wife and the great kingdom. I am submerged like the swampy bank of a river. My grief is great and the rains are extremely difficult to pass through, and the great foe Rv. appears to be something beyond reach. And seeing this unfavourable occasion for advancing and observing how extremely difficult the roads are to pass, I have not said anything to Su., submissive though he is. Also, as he has been reunited with his wife after a long time, having experienced extreme hardships, I do not wish to speak to the Vn. in virtue of the gravity of my task, for Su. himself, after taking rest, knowing when the proper time has come, will no doubt think of his obligation. Therefore I am staying here, waiting for the proper time, O auspicious L., awaiting the favour of Su. and the rivers. For a hero is intent on favour and fair reward. A person who is ungrateful and does not return the favour kills the heart of the good." Having been thus addressed, L., lying prostrate and paying respect with his hands folded to those words of R., said to R. with his charming look, displaying his auspicious foresight—"Just as you have said, O lord of men, this lord of the monkeys will accomplish without
delay all that you desire. Forbear this downpour of rain in expectation of the autumn, fixed on the destruction of your enemy."

Interpretation of context and analysis of characterization

R. depicts to his brother L. in glowing colours the magnificence of the rainy season and thereby gives vent to his painful musings and longings for S.—aroused in him by the sight of the beautiful scenery. At last, his reflection goes towards Su., whose regained happiness he contrasts with his own unfulfilled desire, the fulfilment of which appears to him a long way from him owing to the unfavourable climatic conditions and his reluctance to disrupt Su., who has just recovered his wife and his kingdom, all too soon from his happiness. While he reflects on Su., he all of a sudden, as if a ray of hope were flashing up in his mind, suggests to himself to nourish his hope by trusting in Su.’s favourable disposition and sense of gratitude and reward, in which he is strengthened by his brother L.

R.’s characterization of Su. is throughout positive. His melancholy musings purport to express his feeling of the emotional contrast between Su.’s happiness and his forlorn state of heart and may not be understood as an implication of his suspicion at Su.’s loyalty. On the contrary, Su. is epithetized as obliging and intent on giving a fair reward and held out as a light of hope in R.’s prolonged night of anxiety.
When the sky was cleared from the rains, wise H. saw Su.—now that his task was accomplished and he had obtained all his desires, his dear wife Rumā and the much-coveted Tārā—endowed with abundant riches, yet little anxious for accumulating religious merits and wealth—his mind being directed towards the path of the un-virtuous—and addicted to pleasure, revelling and playing, as it were, like Indra with the hosts of the Apsarās; free of all anxiety, entrusting his duties entirely to the ministers without the least concern to supervise them. Seeing this, H. addressed him with sweet, well-wishing and wholesome words, which were aimed at conciliation, dharma, prosperity, conduct and endowed with love and affection:—“You have acquired your kingdom, fame and vast riches. You should now acquire friends. For, he who treats his friends well in time, enhances his kingdom, fame and glory. Being of virtuous conduct and walking on the blameless path, you should fulfil the desire of your friend. He who engages in actions for his friend after a long time has passed is not keen on his duty towards his friend even if he has accomplished great things. Hence let the search for S. be accomplished without delay. The time for accomplishing your friend’s work has already elapsed. And R., an obedient servant of yours, who knows the value of time, though being in a hurry, does not tell you that the time has elapsed. He is the source of your prosperous rule, a long friend of yours, boundless in lustre and matchless in merits. Do now fulfil the task he has done for you and send for the chief Vns. As long as there is no pressure, the time will not have passed over, but once the task.
has been urged upon, the time will have been transgressed. You fulfil the task of people who have not rendered you help; how much more then should you fulfil the task of a person who has rewarded you by restoring your kingdom. Not that R. would need your help, for he is able to subdue even the Gods and the Asuras with his arrows, but he wants you to fulfil your promise. As he has done his favour to you at the risk of his life, we should search for S. on the earth and in the sky. Are not the Gods, Gandharvas, Maruts, Yakṣas afraid of him? How much more will be the Rks.? Do what is agreeable to him with all your heart. There are crores of irresistible Vns. under your command, and nothing will be able to thwart their course in heaven and on earth. Now give us directions." Su. carried out H.'s excellent proposal and ordered Nila to mobilize all the Vn. armies with their leaders in all the directions within a fortnight and then to look after the army himself and approach, with the help of Aṅgada, the older monkeys to see to it that his order be ensured. Whoever failed to arrive within a fortnight, would be punished with death. With this command Su. entered the palace.

Analysis of characterization

In the first lines of the sarga, V. focuses on Su.'s total forgetfulness of his moral and kingly duties, which should be the acquirement of religious merits—whilst he indulges in luxury—

\[\text{samṛddhārthaṁ ca sugrīvaṁ mandadharmārthasaṅgrahām} \]
\[\text{atyarthamasatāṁ mārgamekāntagatamānasam} //2—\]

and pleasure—

\[\text{nivṛtakāryaṁ siddhārthaṁ pramadābhirataṁ sadā} \]
\[\text{prāptavantamabhipretānśarvāneva manorathāṁ} //3\]
svāṁ ca patnīmabhipretāṁ tārāṁ samīpsitāṁ /
viharantamahorātram kṛtārthāṁ vigatajvaram //4
kridantamiva deveśaṁ nandane’psarasāṁ ganaih —
to the extent of leaving the entire rule of the kingdom in the
hands of his ministers without caring to supervise them—
mantriṣu nyastakāryaṁ ca mantriṇāmanavekṣakam //5
utsannarājyaasandesanāṁ kāmaśattamavasthitaṁ —
and all this after he has regained his kingdom, his wife and all
his other desires. What the poet has obviously in mind is the
causal connection between Su.’s attainment of his satisfaction
on the one hand and his losing himself in the objects of his
satisfaction, his riches and sensual pleasures, on the other
hand. With H.’s speech, being both a moral admonition and a
reminder, Su.’s forgetfulness of his duty is focussed in the
direction of his forgetfulness of his promise of help to R. and
his ingatitude to R.’s spirit of friendship. Now the question
arises whether the poet intended to place this facet of Su.’s
disloyalty towards his friendship with R., which H. alludes
to, in the foreground or in the larger context of Su.’s total
obliviousness of his duty and his indulgence in the pleasures
of life. As we scrutinize H.’s speech, we find him not so
much blaming Su.’s lack of good-will than his negligence in
the sense of his losing sight of time, an idea expressed again
and again : vv. 13-15 & 18—

yastu kālavyatiteṣu mitrakāryeṣu vartate /
sa kṛtvā mahato’pyarthānā mitrārthena yuṣyate //13
kriyateṁ rāghavasyaitadvaiḍe氢yāḥ parimārgaṇam /
tadidaṁ vira kāryaṁ te kālaśitaṁmarindaṁ //14
na ca kālamatitaṁ te nivedayati kālavita /
tvaramāno’pi sanprājñastava rājanvasānugāḥ //15

In accordance with this interpretation is also v. 19, which
reads :

akarturapi kārṣṭaḥ ca bhavāṅkartaḥ harīśvara /
kiṁ punaḥ pratikartuste rājyaena ca dhanena ca //
IV 29.30-51

Translation

The time of activities for the kings has approached, O dear one. (30) This now is the first time of military expeditions for the kings, O prince, and I don’t see Su., or any such preparations. (31) Four months of rain, appearing as long as ten rainy seasons, have passed over me—afflicted with grief, unable to see S., O dear one. (32) King Su., O L., does not show compassion towards me, who am bereft of my beloved wife, overpowered by grief, deprived of my kingdom and exiled. (33) ‘He, being helpless, deprived of his kingdom and outraged by Rv., distressed, with his home far away, has with a keen desire come to me for protection’ (34)—for such-like suppositions, O dear one, I have been treated with contempt by the evil-minded king of the Vns., Su., O hero. (35) That evil-minded one, having fixed the time for the search of S., now that he has obtained his object, though he made the agreement, does not know of it. (36) Enter Kiśkindhā and tell Su., the chief of the Vns., that fool addicted to sexual pleasure with the authority of my words (37)—‘He who has promised hope to suppliants approaching him and to those who have shown their favour before and kills it, is the vilest of men on earth. (38) He who clings to a word spoken truthfully, be it good or evil, is a hero, a most eminent man. (39) Not even a carnivore will eat those ungrateful men, even if they are dead, who have not fulfilled the desires of their friends, whose desires are left unfulfilled.’ (40) Indeed, he wishes to see the flash-like appearance of my golden-reared bow drawn by me in battle. (41) He wants to hear once more the horrible twang of my bow-string produced by me filled with anger in battle—resembling the rattling
of the thunderbolt.(42) Really, he for one, should not be anxious, O heroic prince, about my prowess being of such kind and tested by himself, with you being my helper.(43) What for has this task been undertaken, O foremost of conquerors? With his object fulfilled, the lord of the monkeys does not know his agreement.(44) Yet, having promised the rainy season as the proper time, the lord of the monkeys, diverting himself for four months, does not know of it.(45) Entertaining himself with his ministers and the counsellors, Su. is addicted to drink and does not have any compassion on us afflicted with sorrow.(46) Go, my powerful son, and tell Su. what the object of my wrath is and say to him these words (47)—“The path has not shrunk on which Vālī, slain by me, has gone. Abide by the agreement, O Su., don’t go the path of Vālī.(48) Vālī alone has been killed by me in battle with an arrow, yet I will kill you also together with your relatives if you break your promise.” That only, O foremost of men, which is conducive to the appointed task—that say, O best of men; hurry up, the time has already been transgressed.(50) “Make true what has been promised to me, O lord of the Vns., considering eternal dharma, lest you see Vālī today, having died and gone to the abode of Yama through the arrows despatched by me.”(51)

Interpretation of context

The sight of the approaching autumn with its beautiful scenery and the thought of Su.’s addiction to pleasure and his fear that his beloved wife might have perished in the meantime make R. almost swoon with grief. The sight of the manifold manifestations of beauty and joy in nature and its creatures re-awakens in him intensively his pining longings for S., which he describes in a vivid manner to L., who has just returned from the forest. After much senti-
mental reveries on the autumnal beauty of nature, he returns in his thoughts to Su. For this commencing autumn season, where the charm of nature is at its highest, is the time when military expeditions usually take place and for which Su. has promised R. his help in searching for S., and yet R. does not notice any signal from him.

Analysis of characterization

R. refers to Su. first with words of disappointment at his lack of compassion for the disheartening situation in which he finds himself, assuming even that it is out of a feeling of deep contempt for the supplicatory motive of his taking refuge with him that Su. is disregarding his promise (vv.34-35). But there is only a narrow passage from disappointment to anger, and as he tells L. to go to Kiṣkindhā and communicate his words of admonition, he himself, in his very speech, flies more and more into anger, rebuking Su. as a puruṣādhaman who kills the hope of those who go to him for solicitation—having, on their part, granted help to him at a previous occasion; as one belonging to those ungrateful men, who, leaving the desires of their friends unfulfilled, are, out of contempt, not even touched by carnivores after their death; and even telling L. to threaten Su. with the power of the bow. Vv. 43-51 appear as though they were a fresh onset of R.'s moral attack on Su., again ranging over a gamut of emotions from a state of disappointment at Su.'s indifference and mercilessness—the result of his addiction to amusement and pleasure—to a violent state of wrath, in the midst of which he threatens, at times with a cynical tone, to kill Su. with all his relatives if he should violate his agreement. These last words of threat are characterized by a strange admixture of more calm and conciliatory words of admonition in juxtaposition with a more forceful and cynical manner of speech. Cf. v. 51—
kuruṣva satyaṁ mayi vānareśvara pratiśrutaṁ
dharmamavekṣya śāśvatam
mā vālinaṁ pretya gato yamakṣayāṁ tvamadya
pasyermama coiditaiḥ saraiḥ

Thus the entire scene has to be understood from the point of view of R.'s emotional upset. There is an essential difference between Su.'s characterization in the previous sarga and in this chapter. It is here the description of Su.'s disloyalty to R., be it conceived in terms of indifference, lack of compassion, dereliction of duty, or vile ingratitude—as against the description of Su.'s total obliviousness of his duty in the previous sarga—that is constantly in the foreground. This variation of characterization is only natural. Su.'s coronation has led to an all-oblivious engrossment in pleasures and consequently to a total neglect of his duty, which includes also a disloyalty to the friendship with R. As we have seen, it is this which H. alludes to, but even in this respect he criticizes not so much Su.'s lack of good-will than his negligence in the sense of his losing account of time. Now, in the eyes of R. immersed in agony (this is the inspiring scene which the bard-poet treats as a unit of its own and strives to bring to its climax), Su.'s behaviour is naturally a gross breach of the most intimate friendship and promise of help. But we could not see in it a reversal of characterization, for the two character-pictures are in no way contradictory to each other. The only difference is that in the first scene Su.'s behaviour is seen in a more all-inclusive, comprehensive, hence objective way, while in the second it is viewed from the more personal, hence more subjective angle of R.'s agony.

It is telling that L., in his flaming ire for his brother, abuses the Vn. king with still more vengeance-and-wrath-breathing words—in such outbursts of language that R., though having flown into anger for the same reason, has to restrain L. and instruct him to admonish Su. in a peaceful manner, without, however, any apparent effect. However, these introductory lines of s.30 highlight much more L.'s than Su.'s character.
Sugriva’s reaction to the news of Laksmana’s arrival and wrath

Translation

Then the foremost of monkeys entered Su.’s palace and reported L.’s wrath and arrival.(21) The lustful monkey-chief, given to amorous pleasure in company with Tārā, did not hear then the words of those monkey heroes.(22)

Having heard the words of L., Aṅgada, overcome with grief, went into the presence of his father and said—“This son of Sumitrā has arrived.”(34) Those Vns., seeing L. sounding, as it were, like a great flood, raised a roar as loud as the thunderbolt—resembling the roar of a lion—in his presence.(35) By this great noise the Vn. woke up, his eyes red, being perturbed due to inebriety, agitated and adorned with a wreath of flowers.(36) Then those two respectable and good-looking counsellors of the lord of the Vns., Plakṣa and Prabhāva, counsellors in artha and dharma, having heard the words of Aṅgada and come with him, announced that L. had arrived in order to blow hot and cold (37/38), propitiating Su. with words meant to conciliate, while sitting round him seated like Śakra, the lord of the Maruts (39)—“The two illustrious brothers R. and L., adhering to truth, have obtained your friendship, themselves being entitled to kingship, yet the bestowers of your kingdom.(40) One of those two, L., stands at the entrance with his bow in hand, frightened by whom the Vns., trembling, release loud roars.(41) This brother of
Rāghava, L., has come at the order of that R., as the charioteer of his words with determination as his chariot.(42) Bowing your head before him, together with your son and your relatives, abide by your agreement, be an adherer to your promise.”(43)

Having heard the words of Aṅgada together with his ministers, self-possessed Su., hearing of L. being enraged, left his seat and, ascertaining the seriousness of the situation, said these words to the ministers knowing to give counsel, himself skilled in giving counsel and well-versed in it (1-2)—“I have not said anything evil nor have I done anything evil; I wonder why L., the brother of Rāghava, is angry.(3) Has the younger brother of Rāghava been told by malignant enemies of mine always looking for vulnerable points some unreal faults of mine ? (4) In this case, all of you should meanwhile find out skilfully and tacitly the intention of his, in accordance with your intelligence and propriety.(5) I have, indeed, no fear of L. or of Rāghava. However, the thought that a friend should be enraged for no reason causes me consternation.(6) It is altogether easy to make a friend, yet difficult to keep a friend owing to the fickleness of the minds. Love breaks even on a trifle.(7) But for this reason I am afraid: What has been done in favour to me by noble-souled R., I have not been able to do in return.”(8) Thus addressed by Su., the foremost of monkeys, H. spoke in the midst of the Vn. ministers in terms of his own argument (9)—“It is not at all astonishing that you, O lord of the monkey flocks, do not remember the loving and auspicious act of favour (10); yet heroic Rāghava, throwing far away all fear, has killed Vālī possessed of prowess equal to that of Śakra—for the sake of your welfare.(11) It is altogether out of love that Rāghava is angry, no doubt about that, and that he despatches his brother L., the enhancer of prosperity.(12) You, being inebriated, do not know the time, you, the best of those knowing time.
Blossomed are the dark saptacchada trees, the auspicious autumn has commenced. (13) The skies with their resplendent planets and stars are freed of clouds and all the directions and rivers and lakes are clear. (14) But, you, O foremost of monkeys, do not know that the time for activity has come. You are inebriate, it is certainly for this reason that L. has come here. (15) You have to bear now harsh words of noble-souled Rāghava, who is afflicted and deprived of his wife, from another man (16), for, as you have committed an offence, I do not see anything else appropriate for you than to propitiate L. with folded hands. (17) A king has to be necessarily told by his appointed counsellors what is beneficial, hence I renounce all fear and say words which are determined. (18) For Rāghava enraged, when raising his bow, is able to put the world under his control together with the Gods, Asuras and Gandharvas. (19) Let him not be infuriated who should be propitiated once more, especially by one who is grateful, who recalls the favour granted to him earlier. (20) Bowing to him with your head—together with your son and your friends, abide, O king, by your agreement like the wife by the will of her husband. (21) O lord of the monkeys, it is not proper to neglect the order of R. and R.'s younger brother even in your mind, for your mind will know the manly power of him who has the power of the lord of the Suras in the company of Rāghava." (22)

Analysis of characterization

The first two texts describe in a lifelike manner how Su. is so much lost in amorous pleasures and so inebriate that only the blurring roars of the Vn. chiefs outside wake him up from his trance and make him at last listen to the news brought by Plakṣa and Prabhāva of L.'s arrival and his wrath on behalf of his brother—a news already reported
twice before, which, however, Su. failed to hear. Though Plakṣa and Prabhāva somehow indicate Su.’s negligence of the agreement made with R. as the reason of L.’s anger (v.43), Su. reacts in a way that suggests he is ignorant of the cause of R.’s anger and suspects a calumny by malignant enemies of his. He even regrets that his friendship with R. should break up for no reason at all. But then he ends up by saying that the thought of not having been able to requite the favours done to him by R. causes him fear. From this contradictory reaction of Su. one could be inclined to infer that V. designed to draw Su. somehow as a hypocrite, as someone who knows the faults he has committed, but, reluctant to admit them, pretends to be innocent and rather accuses his partner. This seems to be one of the interpretations possible. But I don’t think it does any justice to the context described so far. No doubt, s.29 stresses the personal breach of intimacy by Su., but, as we have noted, this is seen more from the subjective angle of R.’s emotional stress, which is depicted in a most vivid tone of pathos and constitutes a scene of its own. H.’s observation of Su.’s behaviour and his consequent admonition in s.28 as well as his speech here in 31.10-22, together with the context of 30.21-22, 34-43; 31.1-10, don’t make any kind of evil-mindedness or lack of good-will of Su. their target, but rather his engrossment in pleasures and total forgetfulness of his duties, which is, in turn, the cause of his obliviousness of carrying out his promise of help and of his ungratefulness towards R.’s service, particular stress being laid on his losing sight of time. Cf. above and 31.13-15. All these facts appear to exclude such an interpretation as stated above. But then how to explain the somewhat evasive reaction of Su.? In terms of simple human psychology: Su. has not done anything positively wrong. He has not nursed any evil intention against R. in the sense that he has intentionally stifled his resolution to help R. So he feels honestly upset and hurt at the thought that L. should be angry with him and that R. himself should have so little trust in his friendship. At the
same time he feels and also admits that he was somehow not efficient enough to return the favour done to him by R. It is very important to note that he says—śakyaṁ pratikartum na “it was not possible to return the favour”. Hence it is far more natural to conclude that V. intended to depict Su. as a basically good-hearted and honest Vn. king—yet of a nature addicted to pleasures and lethargic to such an extent that in spite of his good and firm intention to help R. he loses account of what he owes to him and of the urgency of his duty necessitated by R.’s emotional condition and, when admonished, is little struck with remorse at the thought of his negligence—how can he if his very nature is such? If this interpretation is correct, we may further conclude that V. thereby intended to draw a character-portrait which he considered to be “genuinely monkeyish”. Let us remember that V. in all probability did not purpose to attribute that lofty standard of moral behaviour to the Vns. which he gave to the Dāśarathiś. We may find a support for this latter assumption also in the fact that neither the author nor any of the characters give at all thought to the fact that Tārā, Vāli’s devoted wife, now functions as the beloved of Su. It is considered by the poet as something part and parcel of the civilization of the Vns.

IV 33 & 35.4-20
IV 37.3-19 & 39.10-14

Laksmana reproaches Sugrīva bitterly
Sugrīva conciliates Laksmana
Sugrīva comes to greet Rama, who embraces him
Rama encourages Sugrīva to search for Sita’s whereabouts
Resumé

L., finding Su. encircled by beautiful damsels while vigorously embracing Rumā, bursts into such anger that he starts reviling Su. in the midst of his wives far beyond the accusation made by R., exposing to him the unpardonable meanness of a person who does not return a friend’s favour and makes false promises in terms of the most atrocious sins man can commit:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{yastu rājā sthito’dharme mitrāṇāmupakāriṇām } & \\
\text{mithyā pratiṃnāṁ kurute ko nīśamśatarastataḥ } & //33.8-
\end{align*}
\]

“A man giving a false promise to a horse or cow, kills a hundred horses or a thousand cows, a man giving a false promise to a man kills himself and his people.”—

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{satamaśvāntre hanti sahasraṁ tu gavāntre } & \\
\text{ātmānāṁ svajanaṁ hanti purusāḥ puruṣāṁ } & //9
\end{align*}
\]

“A śloka by Brahmā, angry at man’s ingratitude, says that there is remission for a killer of a Brāhmaṇa, a drinker of wine, a thief and a breaker of vows, but not for an ungrateful person.”—

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{gīto’yaṁ brahmaṇā ślokaḥ sarvalokanamaskṛtaḥ } & \\
\text{dṛṣṭvā kṛṣṭaghaṁ kṛuddhena tam nibodha plavaṅgama } & //11
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{brahmaṅhe ca surāpe ca core bhagnavrate tathā } & \\
\text{nīṣkṛtirvihitā sadbhilīḥ kṛṣṭaghe nāsti nīṣkṛtiḥ } & //12
\end{align*}
\]

As Su. has obtained R.’s favour, but not returned it, he is anārya, kṛṣṭaghna and mithyāvādi (v.16) etc. L.’s bitter reproach leaves a powerful negative impression in the minds of the audience as to Su.’s ingratitude. This is what has given rise to a doṣanivāraṇa, an attempt to vindicate the basic goodness of Su., which stands out in the general range of context, but seems to be obscured much by L.’s accusation. The arguments speaking in favour of the lateness of this portion are given in my work The Genesis of the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki. At the same time, L.’s forceful reproach reflects his
own spontaneous ire arising at the thought of an injustice done to his brother—so typical of him. Just as R.’s accusation of Su., which is brought about by a feeling of disappointment and anger, L.’s reproach, nourished by a blazing ire, is meant to have its subjective perspective and to be functional within the frame of one particular scene. The poet has one particular scene with one particular sentiment in mind and he develops it, carried by an empathic inspiration of the moment, to its highest climax. Immediately afterwards, a new scene starts with a new sentiment, but more on the objective level and more in consonance with the general view of Su.’s character:

Su. conciliates L. with words expressing his gratitude to R. for having restored wealth, fame and his kingdom to him and his inefficiency in rewarding such a heroic deed. Yet he assures R. that through his own unequalled power he will regain S. and kill Rv.—and, though actually R. does not need any assistance for achieving his object, he (Su.) will gladly and humbly follow him as an assistant. At last, he asks R.’s forgiveness if he has committed any transgression with regard to trust or love—for what is there, he says, against which we do not sin? With this conciliatory speech of Su. L.’s anger is completely pacified. His answer is a total reversal of his earlier accusation. L., who now expresses his delight at and appreciates the great value of Su.’s help to R., praising him as worthy of being R.’s friend, as knowing dharma, grateful, heroic in battle and equal in strength and power to R., asks him presently to come with him to his elder brother in order to console him—as he is deeply lamenting the loss of his beloved one—and, confessing that it is for this reason that he has spoken such harsh words to him, requests his forgiveness.

Now everything goes on smoothly. Seated on a litter, Su. and L. proceed, accompanied by many hundreds of Vns.
armed with weapons, to R.’s āśrama. Su. falls at R.’s feet, but R. raises him up and embraces him with love and deep regard and encourages him to find out first the whereabouts of S., after which the needful would be done, entrusting the entire task to his guidance, for he is, as he says, his second friend, heroic, wise, knowing the particulars of time, bent on his welfare and, having service as his object, knows his object thoroughly. What a contrast between L.’s words of accusation, his later appreciative words of approval and R.’s affectionate speech of encouragement! And all this (at least originally) within a short range of scenes. This gives full and solid support to our observation made all along that any such character-portrayal of Su. which is pointed at depicting his evil-mindedness evolves from an emotionally stressed situation of another character; is therefore functional and restricted to the very scene drawn before the minds of the audience for its own sake—while it was the general design of V. to portray Su. as a good-natured, helpful character, though with defects typical of him as the Vn. king, who, once engrossed in pleasure, completely neglects his duties and even his friends so that he never carries out the good intentions he has in his heart.

Appendix

Once more we see Su.’s character in the fire of controversy, namely in the mouth of Aṅgada, who, in his despair at not being able to trace S. and in his fear of Su.’s sternness and severe punishment, suspects his sincerity in dealing with him as well as in his relationship with Vāli and abuses him notwithstanding H.’s advocacy of Su.’s righteousness. The
relevant passages are 52.20-33; 53.19-21 and 54. For details of contents see under Hanumān. It is quite evident that Aṅgada’s charges are meant to be subjective and not hidden allusions by the poet.

From then onwards Su. is almost completely out of focus from the point of view of characterization. But he gives the orders and he does it in an efficient way. We see him angrily conveying his suspicion to R. against Vibhīṣaṇa, who introduces himself as Rv.’s younger brother and, upset by Rv.’s stubborn refusal to return S., requests R. to grant him protection. Su. is not the only one of the Vns. to be suspicious, yet he is the most stubborn one and even pleads for killing Vibhīṣaṇa straight—while Aṅgada, Śarabha, Jāmbavān and Mainda do warn R., yet advise him to test him through skilled spies. It is H. who, by way of a reasonable argument, proves Vibhīṣaṇa’s innocence and then even Su. is convinced of the sincerity of Rv.’s brother and praises R. for his wonderful ideal of śaraṇagatarakṣaṇa. This whole episode, thus, plays with the fearful and suspicious nature of Su., which we have met with right from the beginning in the context of Su.’s misery, while here there is no such personal background.

In the old portion of the Yuddhakāṇḍa, which we consider here, there is little mention of Su.’s activities though occasionally he is mentioned as a valiant fighter.
A SYNTHETIC VIEW OF THE POET'S CONCEPTION AND PORTRAIT OF SUGRIVA'S CHARACTER

Conception

Our systematical analysis has revealed long explicit descriptions of Su.'s actions and reactions in connection with two main themes: his friendship with R., offering itself to him when he finds himself in a state of grave oppression; and his life of debaucheries and failure to fulfil his promise to R. after Väli's death. These two themes are not merely two necessary stepping-stones in the process of the story (as e.g. the theme around Väli), but appear to have an edifying function of their own. On this basis, we conclude that V. had a motivation in conceiving a character like Su. for his story, prescinding from the question as to what extent this conception may be due to an earlier model in the bardic tradition or to his own poetic imagination. Yet, though a certain pre-conception of Su.'s character lay at the basis of his presentation, V. made use of the bardic pattern of projecting spontaneous, vivid scenes before the audience, which often involve a person and so give ample opportunity for character depiction. This principle is generally at work in such passages which are strongly determined by personal feelings—like R.'s accusation against Su. by grief, disappointment and anger; L.'s reproach of Su. by wild anger; or L.'s later eulogy by a spirit of exuberance—and is responsible for a.
certain fluctuation between apparently incompatible character-
evaluations, especially in the context of the description of
Su.'s failure to fulfil his promise to R. What a contrast
between R.'s accusation and H.'s admonition, L.'s most
bitter reproach, his later words of praise and gratitude and
R.'s affectionate speech of encouragement. We have illus-
trated the interrelation between the tone of sentiment and
characterization already at the example of Vāli; so we do
not further expose it here. It is a most dominant feature
in the Rm. Actually, this spontaneous technique of
projecting a scene and leading it to its climax is the very base-
stone of the detailed structure of composition of the Rm. But
it is not everywhere applied fully. V. is not just a bard, he
is a poet, who gives insight into human nature and experience
and for this purpose preconceives and integrates this bardic
pattern, to a greater or lesser degree, into a unified whole.
This is what we feel has happened with Su.'s characterization
on the whole, yet we also see how in between again and again
the original principle of spontaneous improvisation is at
work.

Portrait

Su. is, by his appellation and physical nature, a monkey.
But more than in the case of Vāli, this physical nature of
his is pushed into the background, practically no allusions
being made to it at all except in the description of his roar
of challenge, his fight with Vāli and the battle with the Rk.
warriors, in particular with Kumbhakarna. On the whole,
Su. is characterized alike human beings, but no conscious
effort is made to put him on a super-human level like Vāli,
though we find a few allusions which might suggest super-
human faculties: Kabandha speaks of his power to assume
forms at will, his heroism, his unlimited knowledge ("On
account of his intelligence he knows entirely all the places in
the world of those who eat the flesh of men, for nothing is
unknown to him as far as the sun possessed of a thousand
eyes shines"—III 68.19) and calls him the veritable son of
the Sun (III 68.16). In both the narrations of his fight with
Vāli, Su. turns out to be as heroic and valiant as his brother
—in the first battle R. fails to distinguish Su. from Vāli since
both are alike in appearance, valour and speech—yet in the
end is overpowered by him. These allusions can be explained
from the liveliness of the respective scenes. In general, V.
did not intend to emphasize any super-natural dimension of Su.

Su.’s status is that of the king of the Vns., a title which
is constantly applied to him, with some variations, even when
he is not as yet in possession of the kingdom. In his heart
of hearts, Su. is a good-natured character. Before we see
him in action, Kabandha introduces him to R. and the
audience as a source of hope, as a person whose helpfulness
and gratefulness will be boundless; who, as it were, will
take upon himself the initiative and accomplishment of the
task of recovering S. as his sole task. Though we see Su.
fall short of this lofty ideal of helpfulness in various respects,
he manifests himself as amiable from the beginning: With
love and joy he declares himself ready to enter into alliance
with R., he is concerned about R.’s affliction and tries to
console him in various ways, even taking recourse to a sermon
on the virtues of steadfastness and manliness, which does not
become him at all because he is the last and least to be of a
controlled mind in a situation of fear; yet he does not do it
out of an urge to correct R.’s weakness but out of friendship,
knowing that his “client” abides well by this virtue of steadi-
fastness. However, he feels that R. is emotionally upset and
so he considers a reminder to him of his own firmness of mind, in which he would point out that even he, but an ordinary Vn., knows to restrain himself, an efficient means to bring him back to reason. Then he responds to R.'s promise of help with grateful joy, a feeling of possessing the privilege of the Gods and of utmost confidence in R.'s patronage and is happy in finding the ideal of the beauty and value of friendship realized in R.

Now, is this amiable side of Su.'s character an intrinsic part of his nature or merely a transitory state dependent on his optimistic hope of getting back his kingdom, which is dimmed when this optimistic view is dimmed and will altogether vanish as soon as his desires are fulfilled? The answer to this question has been positive to the first alternative, even in the context of Su.'s engrossment in pleasure and gross negligence of R.'s friendship. With his firm intention to help R., he promptly accepts the reminder of Hanumān and follows his proposal to mobilize the Vn. armies. He promptly issues orders to Nila to collect all the armies from all the directions within a fortnight and then to look after the army and approach the elders to see to it that R.'s order be carried out. Though Su. again loses all account of the urgency to put his promise into action, he feels hurt at the thought that R. should have no more trust in him. After L. has launched his bitter attack against Su., the latter gives a calm and conciliatory answer: He first expresses his gratitude for R.'s benevolent act and, though he knows himself inefficient in rewarding such a heroic deed and giving any substantial help to R., he expresses his joyful readiness to follow him as an assistant. And he also asks R.'s forgiveness if he has committed any transgression with regard to trust and love. L.'s response is a total reversal of his earlier accusation. Filled with delight, he now lauds the great value of Su.'s help and his worthiness of being R.'s friend: He is a man who knows dharma; he is benevolent, grateful and heroic,
his valour and prowess being equal only to that of R. himself. L. asks Su. to come with him to R. in order to console him as he must be deeply grieved over the loss of his beloved, and at that occasion requests his forgiveness, for it is for this reason, he confesses, that he has spoken harsh words to him. Su. spontaneously consents and, after proceeding to R.'s āśrama, falls at his feet. R. embraces him with love and deep regard and, speaking words of encouragement, entrusts the entire task to his guidance—as “he is his second friend, heroic, wise, knowing the particulars of time, bent on the welfare of his friend, a person whose aim is to serve, who knows his aim thoroughly.” Though after these events Su. is no longer in the centre of characterization, he is the one who gives the orders, and he does it in an efficient way. Even then there are references which speak of Su. in a favourable way. On the other hand, it is also true that Su.'s amiable behaviour is more outspoken on account of his optimistic expectation. With this we come to the second side of his character:

Su. is emotionally unstable, and there is a reason for his instability: Humiliated and persecuted by his brother Vālī, he lives in constant affliction and fear. Owing to this state of mind he loses his power of cool reasoning in judging a situation. At the sight of R. and L., he is so frightened and suspicious of them that he considers them to be the spies of Vālī, and no reasonable argument by H., who exposes Su.'s lightmindedness and instability of mind as something typical of his monkey nature, can convince him. Nay, he imagines all the possible treacheries of kings to nourish his own suspicion. Even when he is in the highest realm of joy at R.'s assurance of help, having a vision of hope that he will now regain his kingdom, he falls back again and again into a state of fear and depression at the mere thought of the humiliation and persecution he suffered at the hands of Vālī. And inspite of all the joy and hope he has expressed at R.'s repeated assurance of help, he suddenly falls into musing and doubt,
when remembering the unequalled power and heroism of Vālī. Not only does he induce R. to demonstrate his power before him after giving him an impressive account of Vālī's feat, and not only does R. stand the test given to him (he throws the corpse of Dundubhi a hundred yojanas away), but Su. even insists on another more convincing proof consisting in piercing seven sāla trees with one arrow as Vālī had done. It is only after R. has accomplished this task, too, and in a way excelling Vālī, that Su. regains his confidence in R., now being simply wonder-struck and filled with humble gratitude and exceeding joy. We have so far considered Su.'s emotional instability as a result of his humiliation inflicted by Vālī. But this rather obstinate way of inducing R. to a demonstration of his valour as the sudden thought of Vālī's heroism disturbs his peace and confidence, the vigour with which he raises his terrifying roar in the midst of his companions—appearing as if an inner call to self-encouragement (which Tārā interprets as a sign of Su.'s shrewd and arrogant cowardice, who possesses the courage to challenge his brother only because he knows himself protected) and the reminder he gives to R. to fulfil his promise (after he has been disappointed by R.'s failure to act)—all these features manifest that Su.'s feeling of fear with its different shades of expression is a latent trait of his inner nature. Thus there is good ground to assume that V., beyond establishing a causal connection between Su.'s state of humiliation and the instability of his mind, designed to portray Su. as somewhat insecure by nature. Not only H. hints at his monkeyish nature revealing itself in his lightmindedness and inconsistency of mind, but Su. indirectly admits it when he "preaches" to R. that even he, but an ordinary Vn., knows to control himself; how much more then R. ought to do, who is noble-minded, disciplined and courageous. He admits it in so far as in actual life he does not at all prove himself worthy of his statement. So his self-designation as an ordinary Vn. with regard to moral behaviour is very true. The function of this statement of course should not be misunderstood. Its
context has been discussed above. Much later, when Su. has long forgotten his calamity, we see him flying into anger and suspicion against Vibhiṣaṇa, who pleads for R.'s protection. Without making an effort to judge calmly the pros and cons of the situation, he straight away advises R. to kill him.

One of the controversial points of Su.'s character is his behaviour after his re-instalment as Vn. king. In a manner unexpected of him, Su. loses himself in sexual pleasures and inebriety and becomes completely negligent of his kingly duties. He leaves his entire duty in the hands of the ministers without even caring to supervise them. Unable to transpose himself into the pitiable situation of R. and totally losing sight of the urgency of R.'s task, as his sense of gratitude for what he owes to R. has become dim, he forgets to carry out his promise of help even at a time when a king should be mindful of taking up his military activities. When reminded of this by H., he spontaneously orders Niła to collect the Vn. armies with their leaders and then to look after the army himself and approach the elder monkeys to see to it that his order be observed. But it remains at this, and not taking any further initiative, Su. falls back into his life of debauchery. R. and L., in the context of their emotional condition, of course, take this negligent behaviour of Su. as a gross breach of their personal friendship. L. going so far as to designate Su.'s ingratitude and falseness of promise as a meanness worse than killing a Brāhmaṇa, drinking wine, committing theft or breaking a vow. Of course, these accusations are not designed to be real reflections of Su.'s character. We have seen the basic good-naturedness of Su. even in connection with this context. Rather, it is his very engrossment in pleasure and his total obliviousness of his kingly duties which is also the reason of his losing account of his sense of gratitude for all that he owes to R. and of compassion with him in his agonizing situation, so that he does not realize the urgency to help him. Thus he never makes any effort of his
own to put into practice whatever good intentions he has in his heart. Though he is hurt at the thought that R. should mistrust him, he is not too remorseful either when he reflects that he has not yet rewarded the favour done to him by R. This means, his negligence is so much inscribed in his blood that he is not aware of what nuisance has been caused by his behaviour. And it is this feature of his character which V. intended to draw as a genuinely monkeyish feature. As the poet, in all probability, did not intend to give that lofty standard of morality to the Vns., Su. appears to be the life-like representative of the Vns.²

1 S.24 Bomb, depicting Su.'s repentance, is found only in mss. D₅–₁₀ and has therefore been relegated to the appendix (App.I, No. 15).

2 Reference may be made to scholars like V. Raghavan ("Ramayana-Triveni—Sugrivapattabhishekam", VK 38,410-414) and V.S. Srinivasa Sastri (pp.210-222; Summ. pp. XVI-XVII), who have treated certain issues pertaining to Su.'s character.

Raghavan’s thesis leads to the conclusion that, although Su. was a very weak character, R., owing to the urgency of the situation and impressed by Kabandha’s lofty description of Su.’s character, entered into friendship with Su. and maintained this friendship not so much because he appreciated the loftiness of Su.’s character, but rather because he was prompted by his ideals of Sāranyagatāraksana and Sugrīva-sākhyā. That this is Raghavan’s interpretation of Su.’s involvement in the plot, becomes still clearer from his article on Vālī ("Ramayana-Triveni—Vālī", VK 38,303-307, p.305), in which he tries to show that, from the point of view of V.’s plan, Su. had to be the inevitable friend of R., as Vālī had to be classed with the forces like the Rks, to be removed from the scene: "...Kabandha’s account of Sugrīva produced such an impression on Rāma that Rāma spoke of Sugrīva as dharmatma and was impatient to meet him. The two entered into a pact of friendship before fire, and the high importance that Vālmīki attached to friendship receives, at this juncture, some special stress in Tulasī. This choice of Sugrīva smoothly and imperceptibly fits in with the two elements of the story, the fact that Sugrīva and party had seen Sītā being borne off by air and possessed the piece of garment and jewels thrown down by her, and the fact that Vālī was a friend of the enemy, Rāvana..."
While appreciating Raghavan’s effort to explain the different shades by which V. himself or various persons of his epic characterize Su, from the perspective of the poet’s conception of the plot of the epic, we have to criticize his tendency to reduce subjective character-portrayals, like e.g. the one by Kabandha, to mere “means-for-an-end-representations”. When Kabandha eulogizes Su’s virtues, this is not a mere device to effect more quickly R.’s resolution to an alliance with the Vn. king, which would then lose its value—so to say mere words vanishing into the air like soap-bubbles, but it is also, and very much so, an introduction of Su, to the audience. Had it been the poet’s intention to portray Su, only as a symptomatically weak person, he would have refrained from any laudatory references to Su, at places where he is not in the limelight of characterization nor seen in connection with R. Raghavan’s interpretation suggests that R. maintained his friendship with Su, solely on the basis of his principles of śaraṇagatārakṣaṇa and sākṣya. Yet it looks strange that R. should give free vent to his appreciation of Su, simply under the guidance of these ideals—without seeing a really amiable character in him. To explain this strong emphasis on the goodness of Su., it seems to be much more natural to hold that V. designed to draw in Su, a good-natured and amiable character with weak sides than to reduce all the positive character-portrayals to mere means-for-an-end-representations, Cf. also what we say s.v. Rāma about the function of śaraṇagatārakṣaṇa in the formation of R.’s friendship with Su, as compared to the same in his friendship with Vibhīṣanā.

One of the contentions of Srinivasa Sastri is that Su, was not responsible for the delay in the execution of R.’s work :—

“...Sugriva had given orders in good time for the search for Sita to be started, and had ordered Hanuman or Nila or perhaps both together to attend to the business. His only mistake was that he lived his riotous life a little too ostentatiously for the comfort of Rama.” (p. XVII)

“...Sugriva gives orders to his commander-in-chief to bring all the monkeys from every quarter of the kingdom, so that they all may assemble together, and says to Hanuman, ‘When the monkeys assemble here or while they are assembling, do everything yourself and do not wait for me to give the orders’...This is an instance of Sugriva-ajna, The order must be implicitly obeyed, Any departure from his order will be at once visited with extreme punishment, nothing less. ‘If anyone comes here after the fifteenth day, his life is forfeit,’ Having given the order for the mobilisation of his army, he goes back to his harem. He ought to have remembered that he was dealing with a very
human being. Rama loses his balance once more. He does not know what Sugriva has done within the margin of time allowed to him. He makes no inquiry. In his ignorance therefore his anger mounts up..." (pp. 94 f.)

Sastri’s starting-point of his interpretation is based on a misunderstanding. After giving his order to Nila to mobilize all the Vn. armies with their leaders from all the directions, Su. does not address H., as Sastri supposes, but continues his directions to Nila and, furthermore, does not imply any words suggesting that the person addressed should do everything himself and not wait for Su.’s orders. The Sanskrit context reads: vv. 28-321—

\[
\text{sa sandideśābhimataṁ nīlaiṁ nityakṛtodyaman} / \\
\text{dikṣu sarvasu sarvesāṁ saṁyānāṁupasaṅgraha} / 28 \\
\text{yathā senā samagrā me yūthapālāśca sarvaśāḥ} / \\
\text{saṁgacchātasyasaṅgrāṇa senāgrāṇi tathā kuru} / 29 \\
\text{ye tvantrapālāṁ plavagāḥ śīghraṅā vyavasaśīnaḥ} / \\
\text{saṁnayantu te saṁyāṁ tvaritāḥ śāsanāṁmama} / \\
\text{svayaṁ cānantarāṁ saṁyāṁ bhavānevānupasyati} / 30 \\
\text{tripaṅcarātrādūrdhvain yah prāpnaṁyāneha vānaraḥ} / \\
\text{tasya prāṇāntiko daṇḍo nātra kāryā vicārānā} / 31 \\
\text{harimśca vṛddhānupayātu sāṅgado bhavārnapāṁjāmādahāritya} \\
\text{niścitām} /
\]

Vv. 302 and 321 merely express Su.’s request that, after the armies have been mobilized, Nila should himself look after them (302) and with the help of Angada should approach the elder monkeys to see to it that his order is carried out (321). This does not mean at all that Su. has done his complete duty, which is then left only to Nila to be carried out. He has taken the initial step. But much remains to be done. At least, he has to take the final initiative of issuing the order to proceed. Yet it remains at the order given to Nila. Again he reverts to his life of debauchery and loses account of the urgency of R.’s task, so that H. has to admonish him again. From the way Su.’s negligence is highlighted in this context, it is evident that V. intended to portray Su. in a decisively more negative light than Sastri would think.
HANUMAN
A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER-PORTRAYAL OF HANUMAN

Prescinding from a few exceptions, H.'s character is not explicitly brought into the limelight till the account of his mission to Lāṅkā. Throughout the Kīṣkindhākāṇḍa his characterization remains largely implicit and restricted to his role of mediatorship in some form or other though it leaves a definite and strong impression of his personality on the audience. Yet we restrict ourselves to an inductive summary of H.'s character-facets as they prevail in the Kīṣkindhākāṇḍa—before we proceed to enter into a detailed analysis of his character-depiction in the account of his mission to Lāṅkā.

Valmiki's characterization of Hanuman in the Kīṣkindhākāṇḍa

We meet V. first in IV 2 as admonishing fear-stricken Su. not to allow himself to be obsessed by unreasonable fear and lightmindedness, by which he only reveals his fickle monkeyish nature, but to deliberate on everything as it is appropriate for a king. For details see under Sugrīva.

Inspite of Su.'s unreasonable rationalizations, with which he nourishes his suspicion, H. carries out Su.'s request to spy
out the two intruders, in the disguise of a mendicant, by
gestures and words, and he does it in a psychologically
efficient manner (IV 3), i.e. he addresses them eulogistically
as rājarṣis—resembling the Gods—who, in virtue of their
appearances are frightening the forest-dwellers, and abundantly
praises their all-illumining brightness and god-like valour
and heroism. Yet in between he puts some abrupt questions:
How is it that they have come to this place when they are
worthy of the kingship and resembling the immortals (v.92);
that their arms are not adorned with ornaments when they
are worthy of being adorned with all ornaments (v.122)? In
this way H. formally takes up some of Su.'s rationalizations
and tries to unravel the apparent paradox between their god-
like Kṣatriya outlook and their presence in this godforsaken
forest. Yet, H.'s inquiry is more formal than personal and
it is more a laying open of the strangeness of feeling of Su.
and the Vns. than a reflection of his personal feelings. He
himself is already convinced of their sincerity. This becomes
clear from the second part of his speech (vv.18 ff.) where he
introduces to the duo Su. and his plightful situation as well
as himself, the son of the Wind, as Su.'s ambassador, and
reveals his very purpose of coming in the disguise of a
mendicant—expressed in terms of Su.'s wish to make friends
with them. Thus, before H. has received any response from
them, he has revealed everything to such an extent as shows
that his intention was aimed from the beginning at opening
up a relationship with them rather than at spying them out
for the sake of clearing suspicion. Thus H. is depicted from
the beginning as an ideal saciva, well-versed in reconnoitring,
but so with a feature of amiability. Accordingly, R., delighted
at finding himself face to face with the saciva of Su., whom
he has been searching for, responds cheerfully and requests
L. to address H. with sweet words, thereby calling him
vākyajīna and snehayuktā (v.252).
H., on his part, overhearing some anxiety expressed by
R., immediately, as he sees a chance for Su.'s restoration of
the kingdom, takes up—in a way which besfits a clever saciva
(vākyaviśāradah v.3)—again his questions directed to R. about the why of their coming into the wilderness of the forest before he allows L. to present R.'s case (IV 4.1-4). After hearing the case from L. in detail, H. passes the judgement that they, possessed of such intelligence, control of anger and self-restraint, are worthy of being received by Su. and gives the assurance that Su., having undergone a similar destiny, will happily assist them in their search for S.; and he requests them to come along with him to Su. L. intimates to R. his confidence that H.'s cheerful and amiable response is a guarantee of his speaking the truth and an assurance of R. ultimately obtaining his object.

In this sarga another trait of H.'s character, thus, becomes apparent: Next to his attitude of care for his king Su., for which he displays a full gamut of skill, he shows a benevolent attitude also for the supplicant and manifests his amiability in doing so—thus being a saciva with a deep sense of concern. H.'s cleverness is not shrewdness but skill blended with amiability and concern—a feature which emerges again in his introduction of R. and L. to Su. (IV 5.1-7).

We meet H. next in IV 21—consoling Tārā, who is overwhelmed with grief over the death of her husband Vālī. This consolation possesses a stereotyped outlook, revolving around three points: All beings reap the fruit of their actions and hence should not be an object of mourning. Tārā should better see to the future of her son Aṅgada and install him. Her husband has been loyal to dharma. As a king, he has been righteous, conciliatory, generous and patient, and hence he is sure to go to the world of those who have conquered dharma. Enclosed in a complex of scenes permeated with a strong tragico-pathetic sentiment, H.'s consolation is subservient to the same sentiment and still adds fuel to the fire—so that Tārā, in her reply, gives full vent to her devotion to her husband, saying that she does not care for a hundred sons like Aṅgada, that the kingdom of the Vns. now lies in
the hands of Su. and that it is not her duty, but the duty of a father to confer the kingdom on Aṅgada. She, on her part, does not want anything else than to lie by the side of her deceased husband. Thus in this sarga H.’s consolation is functional, i.e. aimed at intensifying the pathos of the scene, and gives little place to a revelation of H.’s character.

H.’s moral admonition of Su. and reminder to him to carry out his promise of help given to R. (VI 28) reveals his psychological depth of counselling. Knowing that it is his exclusive addiction to pleasure and his utter lethargy as a result of the attainment of all his desires that make Su. dumb to the urgency of R.’s task and not a sheer lack of good-will, he focuses his admonitions on Su.’s neglect of his duty and his ungratefulness towards R.’s friendship, thereby instilling into his mind the sense and need to realize that a real friend must fulfill the desire of his friend in proper time, otherwise he is not keen on the object of his friend, and urging him to engage in his duty without any further delay of time. Su. promptly abides by H.’s proposal to mobilize the Vn. armies though it remains at this initial stage. For details see under Sugrīva. This moral admonition of Su. by H. is, thus, again a reflection of both his skill as well as his concern for Su. and benevolence for R., in short, of a wise and considerate counsellorship. Accordingly, he is given attributes like niṣcitārtho’rthatattvajñāḥ, kāladvāhaviśeṣavit (v. 6) and his words of admonition are designated as hitaṁ tathayāṁ ca pathyāṁ ca sāmadharmārthanitimatḥ praṇayapṛti-

When Su., upset at L.’s anger and hurt at the thought that R. should no longer trust in his friendship, asseverates his sincerity, H. again makes Su.’s addiction to pleasure and inebriety and his consequent loss of his senses of gratitude and time, the target of his moral admonition. At the same time, he makes it clear to Su. that R.’s anger is the result of his love and advises him to propitiate L. with all his means. For
details see under Sugrīva. H.'s admonition is uncompromising as, aiming at Su.'s welfare, it urges him to accomplish his duty in frank words, and H. himself expresses that in v.18: "A king has to be necessarily told by his appointed counsellors what is beneficial, hence I renounce all fear and say words which are determined." Yet it, at the same time, pays due respect to Su.'s psychological upheaval and so assumes the nature of a true counsel.

When Su. is about to despatch the Vn. army led by Aṅgada, which in the original text is the only search-party, he gives a special commission to H. (s.43), as he considers him as one whose course is irresistible on earth, in the atmosphere, in the sky, in the abode of the Gods and on the waters; as one who knows all the worlds together with the Asuras, Gandharvas, Nāgas, men and Gods, together with the oceans and mountains; as one whose velocity of course, energy and speed are equal to those of his father, the Wind-God; as one with whom no being on earth can match in energy; as one who is possessed of strength, intelligence, prowess, the gift to conform to place and time (deśakālānuvṛtti) and wisdom (naya). Impressed by Su.'s praise of H.'s qualities and his confidence in him, R. also feels confident that H. will accomplish the task of finding S., and joyfully hands his ring over to him as a token of recognition for S., expressing his confidence in him as a man possessing perserverance, truth and valour. Thereupon H., with folded hands, takes the ring, places it on his head and, saluting the feet of R., sets out on his way, leading the Vn. army—appearing, as it were, like the spotless moon adorned by the stars in the sky, with R. calling out behind him (H.) that, as he (R.) is at the mercy of his power, he should try his best to find S.

While the Vns. are searching through the deserted valleys and caves of the Vindhya mountains, oppressed by thirst and hunger and disappointed at not finding any signs of S., H.
takes much of the initiative to prudently encourage and
guide the Vns. : He leads them into the ṛkṣabila, giving them
hopes of finding water in it (IV 49.11 ff. and 50), and this is
ultimately rewarded by their meeting with Svayamprabhā,
wholavishes them with refreshments. Later, when Aṅgada,
in his despair—at the sight of the limitless ocean—of having
failed to trace any whereabouts of S., expresses his fear
of Su.'s sternness and severe punishment and thereby
accuses him of insincere dealings with him and proposes
to the Vns. to starve to death and the Vns. accord with
this proposal—while Tārā suggests to enter the cave where
they would have no occasion to be afraid of any
body, an idea which is as well approved by the Vns.—
(IV 52 20-33), H. finds it the most suitable occasion to fire
off a speech of rebuke and exhortation on Aṅgada and the
Vns. (IV 53). For the thought strikes him that Aṅgada,
through the moral support of the Vns., is bringing about the
downfall of Su.'s kingdom, and this thought impresses itself
upon him the more as he sees that Aṅgada is accompanied by
four divisions of the army; that he is endowed with intelli-
gence in all its eight essential qualities and with all the four-
teen character-qualities; that he is constantly invigorated in
lustre, power and prowess like the moon in brilliance; that
he equals Bṛhaspati in intelligence and his father in valour;
that he clings to the words of Tārā like Indra to the words of
Śukrācārya and that he is too exhausted to carry out the task
of his master. H.'s rebuke is pointed at thwarting Aṅgada's
hope that the cave would provide for the Vns. a safe shelter
from Su., and so he proclaims to him that the Vns., being
fickle-minded owing to their separation from wives and chil-
dren and due to their pain of hunger, will not carry out his
commands but will desert him, that Aṅgada himself will not
be able—whether by his policies of conciliation and generos-
sity or the like or by punishment—to draw Jāmbavān, Nila,
Suhotra and all the other monkeys from Su., since a weaker
force, though it may uphold a post against a stronger one,
can only defend itself and L. is sure to break the cave with his arrows like the stalk of a leaf and will kill him—deserted by all his friends. On the other hand, he assures Aṅgada that, if he humbly approaches Su. together with the Vns., the latter will establish him in the kingship, since he is the next heir, and thereby defends Su.’s righteousness and benevolence against Aṅgada’s accusation of his sternness and insincerity in dealing with him:

dharmakāmaḥ pittyāaste prītikāmo dṛḍhavrataḥ /
suchiḥ satyapratiñāśca na tvāṁ jātu jighāṁsati ///20
priyakāmaśca te mātusadarthaṁ cāsyā jīvitam /
tasyāpatyāṁ ca nāstyanyattasmadāṅgada gamyatām ///21

H.’s speech, both a rebuke and an exhortation, however, fails to have its complete effect on Aṅgada, who unleashes a series of charges on Su. and refutes H.’s vindication of Su.’s virtues by maintaining that the former has taken the wife of his elder brother, has purposely blocked the entrance of the cave etc., and reiterates the fear that he will meet with penalty of death at the hands of Su., for which reason he prefers to starve to death. And all the Vns. follow spontaneously Aṅgada’s speech of despair and it is only through the arrival of Sampāti that they are prevented from a disastrous death.

H.’s speech and its negative effect serve to characterize three points:

(1) H.’s unflinching firmness and loyalty to Su., his power to quickly size up the exigencies of the moment by taking recourse to an uncompromising, yet at the same time exhortatory and conciliatory admonition to bring Aṅgada and the Vns., who are beside themselves with grief, to reason, an admonition which is at the same time a tacit attempt to prevent the Vns. from being drawn away from Su.

(2) Aṅgada’s obliqueness and stubbornness of mind as a result of the mental agony and despair weighing heavily upon him.
The fickleness of the Vns., who, failing to form a decision of their own, follow blindly Angada's destructive speech instead of H.'s conciliatory exhortation.

IV 65–66

Hanuman responds to Jambavan's exhortations to him to leap over the ocean and his panegyric on his origin from the Wind-God by assuming a gigantic form and extolling his irresistible power and locomotion to assure the Vanaras of his successful mission.

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Jāmbavān, addressing the depressed Vn. army, said to H.—"O hero of the Vn. race, best of those versed in all the śāstras, why do you keep silent? You are equal to the Vn. king Su., to R. and L. in brightness and strength, equal to Garuḍa, the foremost of the birds, whom I have often seen lifting serpents from the ocean, with your arms as strong as his wings and superior to him in valour and velocity, unmatched in strength, intelligence and brightness. The foremost of Apsarās, Puñjikasthalā, known as Aṇjanā, the wife of the Vn. Kesarī and daughter of Kuṇjara, who on account of a curse was a Vānarī but was capable of assuming forms at her will, once was walking on the summit of a mountain—when the Wind-God gently wafted her garments and, seeing her charms exposed, became infatuated with love and embraced her. When Aṇjanā, being perplexed, asked who was wishing to violate
her chastity, the Wind-God answered—'Don't be afraid. By embracing you, I have only entered you in thought. You will bear a son endowed with heroism and intelligence.' Then, as a boy, on seeing the sun and considering it to be a fruit, you leaped up towards heaven a 300 yojanas high without being destroyed by its heat. But when Indra saw you flying in great speed through the sky, he, filled with anger, threw the thunderbolt on you and your left jaw was broken on the summit of a mountain. Hence your name Hanumān. Thereupon Vāyu grew angry and ceased to blow. Then the Gods in all the three worlds were agitated and propitiated Māruṭi. Then Brahmā gave him the boon that his son would not be destroyed by weapons, and Indra that he would die only at his will. Now, you, the son of Kesari, born from his wife, but sprung from the breast of the Wind-God, are equal to him in brightness and power of leaping. We have lost our spirits. You are now to us like another Garuḍa endowed with skill and prowess... You are of us the one endowed with all qualities, you are valiant, the best of leapers. The whole Vn. army is eager to see your heroism. Rise and leap over the ocean, your course is the best among all beings. All the monkeys are dejected, why then are you neglecting us? Stride like Viṣṇu with his three steps.' Thereupon H., to the delight of the Vn. army, assumed a gigantic form. While being praised by the Vns., he expanded vigorously, brandishing his tail and increasing his strength. Of unexcelled form and brightness, he expanded like a lion in a mountain cave and shone like a column of smokeless fire. Then, arising from amidst the Vns., H. spoke—'I am the son of mighty and unequalled, swift-moving Vāyu, who cleaves the mountain-tops and pervades the sky, and none is equal to me in leaping. I can demarcate, as it were, the expansive sky and go round Meru a thousand times, I can by the force of my arms cause the whole world to be inundated by the
ocean and by the force of my legs and thighs stir up the ocean with its crocodiles. I can go round Garuḍa in the sky a thousand times. I can approach the sun rising from the Eastern mountain before it has set and come back without touching the earth. By my terrific speed I can overstep all the stars in the sky; I stir up the ocean, and split the earth. I will make the mountains tremble when I jump, and I will seize the ocean and the flowers of creepers, shrubs, and lotuses will follow me through the sky. All beings will see me moving through the sky as I will shoot up and drop down. You will see me, monkeys, appear like Mahāmeru, moving towards heaven, devouring, as it were, the sky; I will scatter the clouds, make the mountains tremble and stir up the ocean. I possess the strength of Garuḍa and Māruta; prescinding from king Suparna and Māruta, I don’t see anybody who could match me in leaping... I will see S. and I will go thousands of yojanas and return with nectar from the hands of Indra or Brahma, or after having blown up Lanka.” Then Jambavān praised and thanked H. for his encouraging words and conveyed the blessings of the saints and gurus and the Vns.’ well-wishings on him for his mission. Then H., the foremost of monkeys, addressed the Vns.—“These firm and huge peaks of mount Mahendra, a hundred yojanas away, will bear the bruise of my leaping.” Then the son of the Wind-God ascended mount Mahendra—full of trees, creepers, flowers, fruits, birds and beasts. Hurt by his feet, the mountain roared like an elephant attacked by a lion. Waters gushed out, rocks fell, beasts were frightened, and trees trembled. Gandharva couples and Vidyādharas jumped up... Mean-while the Vn. chief, possessed of power of speed, went, in his thoughts, to Lanka.
Analysis of characterization

In utter contrast to all previous references to H.'s character-traits, the character-portrayal of H. enters with these two sargas a completely unprecedented dimension (prescinding from the passage in which Su. gives a special commission to H.—a feeble antecedent to this new dimension of H.): the dimension of his super-natural power of leaping, velocity and transformation and of his super-natural lustre, strength and valour. And this dimension is introduced not only in the form of a eulogy expressed by another (Jāmbavān), a eulogy impregnated with adbhutarasa, but with such presumptuous, bombastic words of self-assertion—so indulging itself in the realm of the fabulous—as we would not dare to expect of modest H. the way he has appeared to us so far. In fact, a sophisticated analyst would immediately add this feature of "inconsistency" to the arguments already advocated to consider part of the two sargas (H.'s birth-story etc.) an interpolation. I have shown in my book The Genesis of the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki that there is no sufficient reason for such a position. A little intuition into the nature of a poem which has its heritage still strongly in oral tradition will reveal that this unexpected dimension in H.'s characterization has its raison-d'etre in the bardic technique of composition, which bases itself on the pattern of spontaneous improvisation. We have referred to it already earlier to explain various features of Vāli's and Su.'s characterization. This pattern of spontaneous improvisation consists in projecting a vivid scene before the audience and leading it to its climax by exhausting all the resources of poetic description following the inspiration of the moment. Applied to our case: V. intends to project the scene of H.'s leap to Laṅkā, which will arouse the excitement of the audience. Naturally, he will give a lifely and attractive picture of H.'s power of locomotion and super-human strength even if he did not mention this feature of H. before, and he will do so by exhausting all
the resources of his imagination which come to his mind in bringing out the importance of the mission of H. V. will even go so far as to make H. boast of his fabulous power of locomotion and strength in order to encourage and arouse delight and wonderment among the Vns., which itself contributes to arousing delight and wonderment in the audience and thus brings the scene to its full climax.

VI

Hanuman's arduous exploits on crossing the ocean

The description of H.'s arduous exploits on crossing the ocean brings out, in a marvellous way, H.'s fabulous (through more earth-bound) power of locomotion and transformation and all the other traits hinted at in the last sargas of the Kīśkindhākāṇḍa—with all gamuts of imagination being sounded and his full ingenious skill being invested by the author in his poetic depiction and attempt to arouse feelings of wonderment in the audience. An impression of this can be gained only by reading, for no amount of analysis will suffice to give an idea of the ingenious skill with which H.'s traits are depicted in this sarga. In addition to the features already expounded in the two earlier sargas, there is, owing to the strong abhutarasa with which this canto is imbued, particular emphasis laid on details of H.'s physical splendour of appearance while leaping and of his power of transformation while overcoming various sea-monsters.
V 2-3, 5, 7-9

Hanuman in search of Sita in the city of Lanka

Resumé

In these sargas V.'s characterization of H. remains in the background but for the poet's design to portray H.'s unflagging effort in tracing S., for which he makes him display all his skill and energy—since the emphasis is laid more on H.'s wonderment and delight at the splendour of Lanka and the revelling life of its people, which, though it is also designed to be a reflection of H.'s feelings, serves as a theme of its own to thrill the audience.

Still, a few facets of H.'s character clearly emerge: In general: his unflagging effort in tracing S., in which he invests all his skill and energy. In particular:

A first feeling of despondency and doubt of his and R.'s mission at the sight of the soaring walls seemingly inaccessible even to the Gods and Asuras—and yet his quick resolution to deliberate on some means by which he could enter the gates unnoticed by the guarding Rks.; his feeling sad at the sight of the inconceivable wonderful beauty of Lanka—and yet his being cheered up at the thought of his eagerness to see S. (V 2). Cf. e.g. 2.52—

acintyāmadbhutākārāṁ dṛṣṭvā lāṅkāṁ mahākapīḥ |
āśīḍviśaṅgaḥ hṛṣṭaścā vaidehyāḥ darśanotsukāḥ //52

An emergence of a feeling of confidence, amidst the feelings of depression on seeing the splendour and seeming inaccessibility of the city of Lanka, at the thought of the prowess of the Vn. heroes and the herosim of R. and L. (V 3.12 ff.)

His expression of his delight at his presumed discovery
of S. in a manner symptomatic of a monkeyish temperament—
by striking his arms, kissing his tail, sporting, singing,
dashing about, climbing pillars and falling on the ground
(V 8.49-50). Cf. v.50—

\[
\text{aspho\-jay\-mā\-sa cucumba puccham nananda cikṛidā}
\]
\[
\text{jagau jagāma /}
\]
\[
\text{stambhānarohannipapāta bhūmau nidarśayansvāṁ}
\]
\[
\text{prakṛtīm kapinām //}
\]

His self-correction and renunciation of the apish rashness
of his estimate by reflecting on the impossibility that S.,
separated from R., would indulge in sleep, drink or any kind
of luxury or approach any other man (V 9.1 ff.).

The sudden emergence of moral scruples in his mind at
the thought of seeing another’s wife asleep—followed by the
self-comforting consciousness of the purity of his mind, which
is but unaffected by the sight of the beauties, and of the
necessity of the circumstances which so compelled him to
search for S. particularly among women (V 9.33 ff.).

V 10-27

Hanumān’s despondency at not finding Sītā; his reactions to
his discovery of Sītā and the approaches by Rāvana and
the Rāksāsis

1) Hanumān’s despondency at not finding Sītā

Not finding S. anywhere, H. falls into despondency,
musing that she might have been put to death by Rv. as she
did not want to renounce her chastity, or might have died
out of fear at the sight of the Rks. Reviewing the futility of his efforts and the long time spent, he feels reluctant to go back to Su., who would give him severe punishment; imagines how, when he has crossed to the other side, all the Vns. would gather and ask him about his achievements, imagines what aged Jāmbavān and Aṅgada would say; feels that it is best for him in these circumstances to undergo prāyopaveśa. But in the midst of such musings, immediately another thought arises in his mind: he must pluck up courage, for courage is the root of all glory, is the highest joy, is the spur to all achievements. And filled with courage, he resolves on making an effort and searches all the places where he has not yet searched. Though he leaves no corner unexplored, the futility of his efforts leaves him again in a state of despondency. (V 10)

Now H. plunges into a soliloquy of musings and imaginations of all kinds: First he muses on the various possibilities of how S. may have incurred death on the journey through the air or in Lankā, on how it would be a sin both to announce and not to announce to R. that S. has been killed, lost or has died. Then he imagines in his mind how R., on hearing the sad news, would die on the spot, and L., Bh., Śatrughna, Ks., Kai., Sumitrā would renounce their lives one after the other out of grief over the death of their relatives (L. on account of R. etc.), and then Su. out of grief over R. and on account of him Rumā, Tārā and on account of his mother Aṅgada; and how in the end all the Vns., overwhelmed with grief for their master, would put an end to their lives by breaking their heads with hands and fists, starving to death, entering fire etc. Such gloomy imaginations make H. hesitate to return to Kiṣkindhā—for as long as he does not return, R. and L. and the Vns. will be sustained with hope—and make him indulge in all kinds of ideas: to lead the life of a vanaprastha or to enter a funeral pyre or to undergo upaveśa and allow his body to be eaten by crows and wild beasts or to enter the water—a death
considered by the ḍīśas; yet at once the thought comes to his mind that it is a sin to commit suicide, that he must forbear his life. But, trying to bear in mind his manifold sorrows for a moment, he feels unable to see an end to his grief. A thought of vengeance flashes through his mind: to slay Rv. or to drag him over the ocean and offer him to R. like a sacrificial animal to Paśupati. Then his reflection returns again to the idea of searching through the whole of Laṅkā till he finds S. or to live the life of a mendicant—when the sight of the Aśoka grove, which he has not yet searched through, awakes in him an immediate resolution to search through it and gives him confidence in the success of his mission. And, requesting the blessings of Brahmā and of the Gods and ḍīśas and of all the beings, he enters the forest. (V 11)

From an over-all point of view, we may summarize H.’s reactions to his failure to find S. in this way: H. invests all his efforts in trying to find S., leaving no stone unturned, but the fact that he sees his efforts frustrated fills him again and again with despondency. Reviewing the futility of his efforts, he is led to all kinds of gloomy reflections and imaginations—one disrupted from the other—, showing the agony of his heart and the depth of his feelings for R. and S. as well as his kinsmen Su., Āṅgada and the Vns. Yet, in the midst of the most gloomy reflections, fresh hope springs up in him and he promptly takes up new resolutions on continuing his search and feels confident that his mission will be crowned with success. Of course, all these broodings, though designed to be a reflection of H.’s psyche, are gathered from the depth of man’s experience of frustration and aim at evoking in the audience an intimate empathy with these scenes, which are imbued with a pathetic sentiment.
2) *Hanumān’s reaction to the discovery of Sītā* (13, 15)

H., through his psychological insight and intelligence, quickly finds his ideas and expectations of S.’s appearance—as he has gathered them through instructions from R. and through his own sight of Rv. carrying a woman through the air, confirmed at the sight of the emaciated, sorrowful lady surrounded by Rākṣasīs in the Aśoka forest. He finds his reflection confirmed by discovering on her all the ornaments mentioned by R. except for those which she had thrown down on the mount of Rṣyamūka and for her yellow piece of cloth.

The discovery of S. diverts his attention first to the thought of the four emotions which had gripped R.’s mind on account of S. : pity, compassion, grief and passion, and to the thought of how S.’s and R.’s minds are ever fixed upon each other in love, without which it would not have been possible for R. to live even for a moment. The sight of S. thus makes H. rejoice and praise R. (V 13.47-52)

The rise of the moon allows H. to have a close-up view of the formidable-looking Rākṣasīs guarding S., who, plunged in grief and thoughts of her husband, looks dim but charming (expressed in beautiful comparisons), and the sight of whom fills him with tears of joy and thoughts of R. and L. (V 15).

3) *Hanumān’s reaction to Rāvana’s and the Rākṣasīs’ harassment of Sītā*

Though we may infer that V. intends to show us implicitly how H. vibrates in sympathy with all the sorrows of S.’s heart in the face of Rv. and the Rākṣasīs—since in s.28 H. finds himself urged to console S. and encourage her with hopes—, his witnessing of the events is conveyed by V. in the
style of a direct narration to the listener, with extremely few intercalated allusions to H. himself and with his feelings, remaining thus, in the background.

Hanuman's reflections on how to communicate with Sita

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When H. had said all that and looked at the goddess-like queen S., he fell into musings—"I have found the one for whom thousands and myriads of Vns. are searching in all directions, by, as a spy moving in secret, observing the strength of the enemy, the city of the Rks., the power of Rv. As she, who has never seen grief before, does not know the end to her grief and longs to see her husband, I will cheer her up, for, if I go without consoling her, I will be committing a sin, for, not finding a rescue, she will renounce her life. But how shall I do that when I see the Rākṣasīs all around? If I go to R. without talking to S., he will scorch me with his angry eyes. If I ask Su. to make preparations for war on account of R., his arrival will be in vain. However, I shall wait for a weak moment of the Rākṣasīs and then gently console sorrowful S. I am very small and a Vn. in particular and I will speak ordinary Sanskrit. If I speak Sanskrit like a dvija, S. will be frightened, taking me for Rv. Seeing my form and seeing me speaking, she, who is already frightened by the Rākṣasīs, will be still more frightened and, considering me to be Rv., will utter a cry, whereupon the Rākṣasīs will gather and try to seize and kill me. Seeing me in my own form jumping from branch to branch, the Rākṣasīs
will be frightened and call the Rks. deputed by Rv., who will come with their weapons to fight. Trying to disperse the Rk. army on all sides, I shall not be able to reach the other side of the ocean, or swift warriors will capture me while I am leaping. They may capture S. and me or even kill her. R. and Su.'s aim will be frustrated, for S. will stay in a land the access to which will have been lost, a land which is guarded by the Rks., encircled and hidden by the ocean. If I am killed or captured, nobody will be able to help R., nobody will be able to jump a hundred yojanas over the sea. I am able to kill thousands of Rks., but I shall not be able to reach the other side of the ocean. Furthermore, how engage in an undoubtful task in a doubtful manner? If I talk to S., I am committing a great fault. If I do not, she will renounce her life. Aims obtained are frustrated, owing to the factors of place and time, through a messenger overcome with fear. A mind intent on different worthless aims does not appear to advantage. How should I arrange things that the aim is not frustrated, that I do not create any confusion, that the crossing of the ocean is not in vain, that S. hears my words without fear?" Thus reflecting, thoughtful H. was immersed in thoughts (iti sañcintya hanumāṁśacakāra matimāṁmatim//40). As he saw that S.'s thoughts were fixed on R., he thought that, by uttering her husband's name, he would not frighten her. So he decided to relate from his position in the simśapā tree all about R., the foremost of the Ikṣvākus, with auspicious and pious words and in a sweet voice,

Analysis of characterization

H. is portrayed in this sarga as intent upon consoling and cheering up S.—plunged in grief, but, at the same time, as weighing carefully all the ways and means of how to best com-
municate with S. without entailing any risk of frightening her or incurring an indiscretion which would lead to a frustration of the entire task, in short as revealing par excellence his nature of a prudent and discreet counsellor (cf. v. 40—\textit{iti sañcintya hanumāṁścakāra matimāṇmatim})—a trait which we have already come across, though to a less conspicuous degree. H. finds the need of a most careful deliberation in the light of the obvious fact, that, after so much trouble which has been taken to trace S., one thoughtless move is enough to frustrate the achievements already made.

It would appear from some of the reflections that H. is over-anxious of negative consequences and to little self-confident of his valour, which he has boasted of so much earlier. Here we have again to take into account the oral pattern of spontaneous improvisation. What V. wants to express is the over-all prudence and discretion on the part of H. on the one hand and the discreet situation in which S. finds herself on the other hand. To do this, he will exhaust all his inspirations of the moment to make H. employ his full power of deliberation, and so it is but natural that, owing to these momentary inspirations of the poet, H.’s deliberations will be in contrast with some of his earlier brags, which had originated out of some other, equally instantaneous, poetic inspirations. But how is it that, notwithstanding his most subtle carefulness not to evoke any situation which may lead to the frustration of his aim, H. later engages in creating destruction and slaughter in the city of Laṅkā, by which he risks incurring all those dangers of a frustration which he was careful to avoid earlier? To this we have to answer that later the situation which V. wants to depict is completely different. S. knows that she will be saved. The situation is largely ascertained for H. In this consciousness of assuredness, H. is portrayed by V. as feeling exuberant and having a mind to test the strength of the Rks., thereby dealing Rv. and his Rks. a blow before leaving the place. Still, one could object and say: Contrary to his own earlier deliberations, H. takes upon himself the risk that Rv.
could make short shrift and kill S. Yet V. pays the cost of this lapse of H. in order to portray his exuberance and heroism, which at this turning-point is a far more inspiring theme.

V 29-32, 34-37

Hanuman's communication with Sita

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29 H. related with sweet and encomiastic words the story of R. and S., closing with the words that, from what he had heard from R. about her appearance, colour and beauty, the lady before him must be S. Hearing these words, Jānakī was highly wonder-struck and looked up to the ṣimśapā tree. There, casting glances aside, up and down, she suddenly beheld that inconceivably intelligent son of the Wind-God like the rising sun.

30 The sight of the sweet-speaking monkey concealed in the branches—humbly waiting, appeared to her like a dream and made her swoon. Regaining consciousness, she reflected—"I have seen a loathsome dream: a monkey forbidden by the śāstras. May all be well with R., L. and my father Janaka. Yet, it is not a dream since, pained with grief, I have no sleep. Tormented with love for R., I see and hear all in the way I think of him constantly. I think it may be a desire, still I reason with my mind. Why does he not address me, distinctly showing his form? I bow to Vācaspati, Indra, Svayambhū and Agni: Let what the Vn. has spoken to me be true!"

31 Then H., greeting S. humbly, addressed, with a sweet
voice, a series of guess-questions to her, like—"Who are you, lotus-eyed one, that, wearing a faded garment of silk, are standing holding a branch of the tree? Why do tears of sorrow flow from your eyes? Who of the Suras, Asuras, Nāgas, Gandharvas, Rks., Yakṣas, Kinnaras are you, who of the Rudras, Marutas, Vasunās are you, appearing to me like a Goddess? Are you Rohini, the best of stars, having fallen from heaven, abandoned by the Moon? Are you Arundhati, endowed with all qualities, having enraged your husband Vasiṣṭha through anger or ignorance? Who is your son, father, brother, husband? Are you bemoaning somebody who has gone from this to the next world? From the marks I observe, you are the queen of a king, a princess."—And he ended up by asking her to confirm his conclusion that she is S., abducted by Rv. from Janasthāna. This S. does, introducing herself and her life-story.

Hearing S.'s words, H. gave her a consoling answer by introducing himself as the messenger of R. conveying his inquiries about her well-being and L.'s greetings. When S. heard of R.'s and L.'s well-wishes, her whole body trembled with delight and she said—"The saying seems to be true that happiness comes to a man in this life even if he is a hundred years old." Delight sprang up in this meeting of each other and they began to talk to each other with mutual confidence—when, at H.'s going closer and closer to S., she began to suspect him more and more to be Rv. Lamenting with great distress what she had told H., she released the branch of the aśoka tree and sat on the earth. H. then greeted her, but she was greatly frightened and, not looking up to him, heaving a deep sigh, she said to him—"You are Rv., having assumed a magic form. It is not auspicious that you torture me again. You are Rv., whom I have seen in Janasthāna, disguised as a parivrājaka. If you are a messenger of R., I ask you to relate to me the excellences of my dear husband R.,
for the story of R. is dear to me. You are taking away my mind like the current the bank of a river. O what a delight of a dream that I, who have since long been kept in captivity, now see a Vn. despatched by R. If I saw R. and L. in a dream, I would not swoon even if my dream were unpleasant. But I don’t consider it to be a dream, for a dream would not cause so much elation in me. Perhaps it is infatuation of the mind, or the going of the wind, or a transformation due to madness, or a mirage, or insanity, or delusion. I can’t understand myself nor the Vn.” With such thoughts, she considered the Vn. to be Rv. and did not speak to him. Realizing S.’s anxiety, H. soothed her with words eulogizing R.’s greatness and love for S., on account of which he was despatched by him to send his and his friends’ good-wishes, and assuring her that he will soon come with the Vns. and destroy Rv., ending up by once more introducing himself and saying that he is not Rv. and that she should renounce her suspicion and place confidence in him.

34 Once more H. addressed S. with humble words in order to create confidence—“I am a Vn. and the messenger of wise R. See this ring stamped with R.’s name. Be consoled, for your grief will be alleviated.” Taking her husband’s ring and looking at it, she was delighted as if she had recovered her husband (expressed in beautiful words) and praised H.—“O best of the Vns., you are valiant, powerful and skilled, and your prowess is worth praising, as you have assailed alone this place of the Rks. and have turned by your leap the ocean infested with crocodiles—a hundred yojanas wide—into an impression of a cow’s foot. I do not consider you an ordinary Vn., since you are not afraid of Rv. You are worthy to be addressed by me. If you have been sent by R., he won’t send any one, especially for me, without testing him and being sure of his valour. How glad I am that virtuous R. and L. are well. But if Kākutstha is well, why does he
not burn the earth with his anger like the fire of destruction at the end of the world? I hope R. is not agitated, distressed; I hope he performs excellent deeds; I hope he is not overcome with fear, does not lose consciousness in accomplishing his deeds......[a series of similar questions inquiring whether, and expressing the hope that, everything is alright with R. concerning his emotional stability (whether undisturbed by agitation, fear and grief), his prowess and heroic enterprises, his relationship with his friends, his worship of the Gods, his continued love for her and eagerness to rescue her, his happiness of mind (whether undisturbed by grief on account of her), his attendance upon Ks. and Sumitrā— and similar questions expressing the hope that Bh., Su. and L. will do their best to come to her help and kill Rv.] None is so dear to R., neither mother nor father nor anybody else, as I am to him. As long as I hear news of him, I wish to live.” Hearing S.’s words, H., of terrible prowess, addressed her—“R. does not know that you are here, but, hearing my words, he will quickly come with his Vn. hosts and free the city of Laṅkā from the Rks. Even if Death or the Gods or Asuras stand in his way, he will slay them. Meanwhile R. is overwhelmed with grief on account of your absence, and like an elephant harassed by a lion he does not find happiness. I swear by the mountains, roots and fruits, by the Malaya, Vindhya, Meru and Mandara that you will see the lovely full-moon-like face of R. and himself seated on Praśravaṇa like Indra on the vault of heaven. His heart forlorn in you, R. does not enjoy meat or wine, but only subsists on fruits and roots and does not ward off from his body gad-flies, mosquitoes, insects and serpents. Always lost in thoughts and always absorbed in grief, he does not think of anything else than you. He does not get sleep and awakes with the sweet uttering ‘Sītā’. When he sees a fruit or a flower or something else that delights a lady, he addresses you saying ‘O dear one’,
always overwhelmed with grief and uttering your name. R. makes every effort for recovering you."

35 Hearing H.'s words, she said—"What you have said, is nectar mixed with poison—nectar, that he does not think of anybody else, poison, that he is absorbed in grief. Indelible fate pulls man with a rope, as it were, whether he is in greatest wealth or in bitter misery. See how L., R. and myself are deprived of their senses with grief. When will R. reach the end of his sorrow? When will my husband destroy Rv. and Laṅkā and see me? Let it be told to him: As long as the year is not completed, I shall live. This is the tenth month. Two months remain. Vibhīṣaṇa has urged Rv. with great effort to release me, but Rv. does not pay heed to it. It is sure that Death is on the look-out for Rv." Then S. relates how Vibhīṣaṇa's daughter, Nalā, once came to her and intimated to her that Avindhyā had warned Rv. of the extinction of entire Laṅkā, but without success. This leads her to expressions of her confidence in R.'s prowess, which she trusts will lead to her quick liberation. When S. was thus conversing, her face full of tears, H. answered—"At my words, R. will quickly come with the Vn. and Rkṣa hosts. Or: I will free you from the hands of Rv. just now: I will make you ascend my back and cross the ocean. For I have the power to even carry Laṅkā together with Rv. I will present you to R. like fire presents sacrificial offerings to Indra. You will see today R., together with L., endowed with energy like Viṣṇu at the slaughter of demons; R., who is so eager to see you, who is dwelling in the hermitage like Indra seated on the head of Śeṣa. Ascend my back, don't merely desire but strive after union with R. like Rohiṇī with the Moon. None of the inhabitants of Laṅkā will be able to follow my course as I return with you." When Maithili heard those wonderful words, her body was wonder-struck with joy and she said to H.—"How do you wish to carry me such
a long distance to R.? I think that is your monkeyish nature. How do you wish to take me to R. when you possess such a small body?" Hearing these words, H. thought he had suffered a new humiliation: "She does not know my strength and power, therefore let her see what form I take at will." With these thoughts, the foremost of monkeys showed S. his own form and then, jumping down from the tree, started to expand his body in order to create confidence in S. He stood before S., resembling mount Meru and Mandara, appearing like blazing fire. Resembling a mountain, with his face coppery red, with teeth and nails like the thunderbolt, the fierceful monkey said to S.—"I have the power to carry this city of Lanka with its hills, forests, palaces and gates and with its leaders. Let your mind conform to this. Make R. and L. free from grief." Seeing his monster-like appearance, S. said to the son of the Wind-God—"I know your strength and power, I know your gait to be like that of the Wind-God, and your brightness like that of the fire. How could any ordinary man come to this land? I know that you have the power to cross the limitless ocean and carry me. But it is necessary to determine (reflect on) the propriety of the accomplishment of this action. It is not proper for me to go with you. Your wind-like speed might cause me to lose my consciousness, and I might fall from your back into the ocean and be devoured by crocodiles and fishes. Seeing me carried off, the Rks., commanded by Rv., will pursue me, and, surrounded by them, who are armed, you, who are unarmed, will be in danger. Then you will not be able to protect me. While you are fighting with the cruel Rks., I might fall from your back, overcome by fear. Then the Rks. may defeat you, or while you are fighting, I may fall, be captured and carried away by the sinful Rks. or even be killed. Or threatened by the Rks., I may even die, and all your efforts will be futile. Though you may be able to kill all
the Rks., you will destroy R.'s fame. Or the Rks. may seize me and conceal me in a place which neither the monkeys nor R. will come to know, and all your efforts will be in vain. But there is reason in R.'s coming with you. The life of Rāghava and his brothers and of your master depend on me. Deprived of their hope, R. and L., overwhelmed by grief and pain, will together with all the Rkṣas and Vns. renounce their lives for my sake. Respecting my devotion to my husband, I would not like to touch even with my foot any one else's body than R.'s. That I came into contact with Rv.'s body through force, for that—what will I do if I am helpless, unprotected and under the control of another. It is but right for R. to kill Rv. and the Rks. and free me. I have heard of and seen the valour of that great devastator in battle. Neither Gods nor Gandharvas nor serpents nor Rks. are equal to him in battle... Make my husband come quickly with L. and the leaders of the army. Make me, who has been for a long time afflicted with grief for R., happy."

36 The foremost of monkeys, hearing those words of S., was delighted and said—'What you have said, is befitting and in conformance with feminine nature and the modesty of virtuous women. Being a woman, it is not possible for you to cross the ocean—a hundred yojanas wide, on my back. And what you mentioned as the second reason, is that it is not becoming for you to touch another's body than R.'s. These words of yours are worthy of R.'s wife. Who but you could speak such words! Kākutstha will hear of everything that you have said to me. I have told you all this for many reasons born of a desire of doing service to R., with love springing forth from my mind. As Laṅkā is difficult to enter and the great ocean difficult to cross and I possess power, I have said all this to you. It is out of my desire to see you
re-united with your husband today, out of love and devotion for my master and not for any other reason that I have said this to you. If you are unable to go with me, give me a token of recognition for R." Thus addressed by H., S. related, in virtue of a token of recognition—in direct words addressed to R.—, an intimate story about a crow (Indra’s son) who had plucked her breast with his beak and as a punishment was smitten by R. with the Brähmantra, but who through R.’s mercy was released of it and, in place of it, deprived of his right eye; then continuing with the words—"O lord, you uttered the Brähmantra on a mere crow for my sake; why then do you spare him who has taken me away from you? Show your strength and mercy for me. I have heard from you that compassion is the highest virtue. I know you to be possessed of great heroism, energy, power and resembling in depth the immovable ocean of boundaries unreachable... Neither Nāgas nor Gandharvas nor Suras nor Maruts are able to defy R.’s speed in battle. If that hero has some anxiety for me, why does he not destroy the Rks. with sharp arrows; why does L. not, at the command of my husband, save me? If those two foremost of men resemble in brightness Vāyu and Indra and are difficult to be overpowered even by the Gods, why then do they neglect me? If they neglect me inspite of their power, I have, no doubt, done something evil." Then she requests him to give her loving regard to L., whose attachment to R. she praises in a beautiful eulogy. Then she continues saying—"Tell R. again and again ‘I tell you, I will sustain my life only for a month. Save me from the confinement of Rv. like Kauśikī was saved from the nether-world.’" Then S. loosened a jewel from her garment and gave it to H. with the words "Let it be given to Rāghava." Taking the armlet, H. fixed it on his finger, for his arm could not pass through. Then, going
round her and bowing to her, he stood by her side. He was filled with great delight and, going with his heart to R., he prepared to start off for his return-journey.

37 S. then said to H.—“This token of recognition is well-known to R. Seeing it, he will remember the three and my mother and king D. If you are commissioned by R. to undertake this task, reflect on what is the best means to achieve it.” Promising this, H., of terrific prowess, greeted her with bowed head and and was about to go when S. with a voice stammering on account of tears said to H.—“Give my regards to R. and L., Su. with his counsellors and all the aged Vns. See to it that R. rescues me while I am still alive. Hearing my words filled with determination, R.’s prowess will be stimulated. Hearing words entrusted with my message, he will enjoin the sacred ordinance of his prowess.” H., in his answer, again assured her of R.’s coming with the Vns. and freeing her after destroying the Rks., extolling R.’s unexcelled heroism in battle. Yet then, looking at him as he was about to set out, she asked him to kindly grant her these words filled with love for her husband—“If you think you should take some rest in some hidden place, you may go tomorrow. In your presence I feel released from my sorrows for the moment. But when you are gone, there is doubt in my heart about your coming back, a doubt as strong as the fear for my life. Grief caused by your absence will torment me again. I have doubt about how the Vns. and the Rkṣas will cross the ocean. In the three worlds only Garuḍa, you and Māruta have the power to leap over the ocean. What solution do you see for accomplishing this difficult task? Surely you alone are able to accomplish this task with glorious success, but if R. should come with all the forces and conquer Rv. together with Laṅkā, it would be conferring glory on me. Now see to it that R. engages his valour in a manner worthy of him.” Hearing S.’s
reasonable and purposeful words, H. answered—"Be assured that the master of the Vn. and Rkṣa armies, the foremost of monkeys, Su., who is endowed with virtue and resolved on fulfilling your desire, will quickly come, surrounded with thousands of crores of Vns. The monkeys, possessed of valour and flying as fast as the thought of the mind, abide by his command. Their course is irresistible above, below and in oblique direction. Following the way of the wind, they have repeatedly gone round the earth with its oceans and mountains. There are Vns. superior to me and equal to me. There is none inferior to me in Su.'s presence. I have been able to arrive here, how much more then will they be able! Not the most distinguished, but only ordinary beings are despatched as messengers. Enough of your grief! With one leap the Vn. chiefs will come to Laṅkā. The two lions among men, R. and L., will come to you on my back, appearing like the risen Moon and Sun, and will destroy Laṅkā. Having killed Rv. together with his hosts, R. will recover you and return to his city. Take courage. Soon you will see R. blazing like fire. Soon you will be united with him like Rohinī with the Moon. Soon you will reach the end of your of your grief...

[continued assurances in the same style]³

Analysis of characterization

We have given a comprehensive account of this complex of sargas as it will be the basis for both H.'s and S.'s character-analysis.

³ H. reveals his skill in persuading S. of the authenticity of his presentation. He does so by asking S. a series of guess-questions (to which he does not expect an immediate answer) as are designed to intimate to S. that he
has understood both her sorrowful situation as well as her high status. Though his first questions are, intendedly, as yet somewhat remote from the truth, reckoning S. among the divine, he applies a kind of arundhati method to come nearer and nearer to the truth and finally so close that he merely needs to ask her to confirm his conclusion that she is S. abducted by Rv. from Janasthāna. Thus, intending to demonstrate to S. his psychological intuition by way of a chain of questions seemingly imposing themselves upon him, he immediately and spontaneously succeeds in persuading S. of the authenticity of his presentation which she first doubted.

32 H.’s first persuasions and his subsequent introduction of himself as a messenger of R. inquiring about her well-being are, though delighting her exceedingly, yet too frail as to exclude a sudden suspicion on the part of S.—the suspicion that it may be the cunning trick of Rv. V., however, does not intend so much to show some weakness in H.’s skill of persuasion than to portray S.’s extreme suspicion as a result of so much grief and deception caused by Rv. H. finally succeeds in persuading S. of his sincerity by eulogizing, in answer to her request to relate to her as a proof of his sincerity the excellences of R., with beautiful words R.’s greatness and love for S. and his concern for her welfare, as a proof of which he stands before her, and by assuring her of R.’s coming with the Vns. and rescuing her. As a confirmation of all this, he finally gives S. R.’s ring. But he succeeds not merely because he has unmistakable evidence to show, but to no less a degree because his lofty evaluation of and deep insight into the greatness and nobility of R.’s character manifests his sincerity, for only a person possessing these values is able to give such a lofty appreciation. H. is thus portrayed as possessing the power to intuit and evaluate psychologically the greatness
of R.’s character in virtue of and by the measure of his own greatness of character and present it in a way that convinces S. of his sincerity, as a confirmation (not substitutet !) of which he gives her R.’s ring.

S.’s appreciation of H.’s great valour, power and skill, so marvellously exhibited in his facile leap over the ocean, and his fearlessness of Rv. is an indirect eulogy of H.’s heroic nature and mind.

As S. asks H. a series of questions inquiring whether, and expressing the hope that, everything is alright with R. concerning his emotional stability (whether undisturbed by agitation, grief and fear), his prowess, heroism and enterprises, his continued love for her and eagerness to rescue her, his happiness of mind (whether undisturbed by grief on account of her) etc., thus intimating by her way of asking her fear that something has gone wrong with R. since he has not come to her rescue for such a long time, H. applies all his psychological skill to console and cheer up S. He draws her attention to the fact that R. is completely unaware of where she is, assures her and swears that, hearing his words, he will immediately come with the Vns. and destroy the Rks. And with beautiful words he draws a picture before her mind how her husband, plunged in grief and lost in thoughts about her, is totally disinterested in life and does not think of anything else than her and how he makes all efforts to recover her,

H. ’s speech of consolation has a double effect: It is nectar mixed with poison. His words about R.’s devotion to her delight her while his words about R.’s absorption in grief sadden her. Seeing S. torn between lamentations and expressions of her confidence in R. ’s prowess as leading to her quick recovery, while her appearance is all-over marked with grief, H., while re-assuring S. of R. ’s
and the Vns.' arrival, suddenly hits upon the idea that the best and shortest way to put an end to the pitiful and endless plight of S. and R. would be to offer to take her on his back and carry her to R. Thus, in view of the best interests of S. and R., he persuades her to follow his proposal, picturing before her mind a quick reunion with R. and stressing that no Rk. will be able to follow his course.

What has V. in mind when he makes S. first doubt H.'s capacity to carry her such a long distance for his possessing too small a body and label his proposal as symptomatic of his monkeyish nature; and then——after H., a little humiliated at S.'s ignorance, proves with boastful words, so as to create confidence in S., his strength and power of transformation by expanding his body——appearing as bright as blazing fire and resembling mount Meru, and brags of his power to carry the whole of Lanka...with him——makes her reject H.'s proposal despite her assuredness of his power to carry her across the ocean, by enumerating a gamut of fears of entailing too great risks which may frustrate all the efforts made and lead to the ruin of R.'s, L.'s and all the Vns.' lives; and makes her at the end indicate that, respecting her devotion to her husband, she would not like to touch another's body than R.'s and wind up her rejection by expressing her confidence in R.'s prowess? Much, to answer this question, depends on how to interpret the poet's intended presentation of S.'s psychology expressed in her reaction to H.'s proposal. And again this interpretation depends on where to see the clue for S.'s basic hesitation. Is it more her fears described by her—or is it more her moral scruples which do not allow her to touch anybody else's body, or is it both in the same way? H., in his answer, expresses his delight at her words, which are becoming of her feminine nature and the modesty of virtuous women, and though he briefly
refers to S.'s first reason, he emphasizes greatly her second point and lauds her highly for it—

ētāte devī sadṛṣaṁ patnyāṣasya māhātmanah /
kaḥ hyanyā tvāṁte devī brāyādvacanamīdrṣaṁ //5
śrōṣyate caiva kākūṣṭhaḥ sarvāṁ niravāṣeṣataḥ /
ceśṭitāṁ yatvayā devī bhāṣitaṁ mama cāgrataḥ //6

Then he gives his reasons for why he has made such a proposal: his benevolent concern and love for R., his wish to see S. reunited with R., the difficulty of entering Lanka and crossing the ocean, which would be alleviated by making the whole task short, and his feeling confident in accomplishing it. Thus, viewed from the angle of H.'s emphasis on S.'s virtue of chastity, the most natural conclusion is to assume that V., by making S. first ridicule H.'s smallness of body and monkeyish nature and later enumerate so many fears of possible risks while making her mention her moral scruples about touching somebody else's body, so to say, only by way of an appendix, designs to show that S. hesitates to accept H.'s proposal primarily because of her moral scruples, but does not want to show this so directly and hence gives a series of rationalizations as a substitute for them. Thus V. delves once more into the depth of human experience and connects this human experience with the loftiness of moral virtues. If this interpretation is correct, it naturally follows that allusions by S. which directly or indirectly go to show some weakness in valour on the part of H. (and have as their consequence his attempt to demonstrate his valour) are not meant to be hidden barbs at H.'s over-estimation of himself. If there is any hidden play, in these allusions and in H.'s demonstration, by the poet with H.'s monkeyish ways of acting, it is a play with H.'s over-zeal in his anxiety to put an end to the plight of S. and R., which makes him forget about the refined moral feelings of S. as the faithful wife of R.
Realizing the moral scruples of S., H., however, does not at all show any misgivings, nay he feels highly elated at her virtue of chastity, and, professing the altruistic motives of his proposal, asks her for a taken of recognition to convey to R.

As H. is about to start off, but is prevented by S. ’s grief-choked plea to give her regards to R., L. and all the Vns. and to see to it that R. will come to her rescue while she is still alive, H. again consoles her by assuring her of her husband’s coming with the Vns. and stressing his unexcelled power in battle. But S. does not as yet seem to be comforted. For she asks H. to grant her a few last words, and these words, described by the author as filled with love for her husband and as reasonable and purposeful, reveal her fear and grief in apprehension of the absence of H. and her doubt about his return; about how the Vns. and R. would cross the ocean, as only Garuḍa, he and the Wind-God have the power to leap over the ocean. In answer to these apprehensions, H. gives S. a strong dose of solace by extolling the wonderful prowess, power, velocity and irresistibility of locomotion of the Vns. under the command of Su., who are all equal and in many cases superior to himself, he being only an ordinary messenger. We would absolutely miss the mark if we were to compare this passage to IV 66.7 and maintain that V. depicted H. as contradicting himself: While he first boasts that none is equal to him in his power of leaping, he now claims that none is inferior to him. The point is that S. is in great doubts. Naturally, V. will make H. exhaust all his rhetoric skill required for the particular situation of the moment to remove her doubts in such an important matter. That’s all.
Hanuman's motive for causing destruction in Lanka

Translation

Being honoured by her with appreciative words as he was about to go, that [Vn. left that place and reflected — "This task requires little that is left to be done, since this dark-eyed lady has been discovered. Leaving the first three means of overcoming one's enemy out of consideration, it is the fourth which is to be considered here. Neither is conciliation with the Rks. conducive to a good result, nor does bribery work or accumulated wealth, nor can people proud of power be subdued to dissension. But prowess, this is what appeals to me. Except through prowess, no assurance of this task can be had here, for, if the foremost Rks. are killed in battle, they somehow or other will become enfeebled here today. He who, being deputed to a work which ought to be carried out, accomplishes many things on his own part in consistency with earlier tasks has a right to do what should be done, for there isn't but one efficient reason for even a very small task, for he who knows his task in manifold ways is competent to fulfil the task. For only in this case, if I, on my part, resolutely go to the abode of the lord of monkeys, knowing the peculiar nature of the enemy and of ourselves in battle, my master's order will be fulfilled. How would I wish that the ten-faced-one would bring his own strong army and myself together in battle! This excellent forest of this wicked Rv. resembling Nandana, pleasing to the eyes and filled with various trees and creepers—this I will destroy like fire destroys a dry forest. After this forest
has been destroyed, that Rv. will burn into anger. Then the lord of the Rks. will bring his great army with its horses, great chariots and elephants. Then there will be a great battle with tridents, iron-spears and weapons. Then I, after meeting with those Rks. of impetuous valour in battle with unobstructed valour and destroying that army sent out by Rv., will happily go to the abode of the lord of the monkeys.

**Analysis of characterization**

Two alternatives of interpreting H.’s motivation in causing destruction offer themselves to the reader:

1) H., possessed of insight into statesmanship and war-affairs, feels the necessity that beyond his immediate duty, which is to trace S., he ought to take some further steps towards the achievement of R.’s task, for which there is now little that remains to be done, on his own account, without being so commanded by Su. His reflections revolve around the reasons which urge him to consider a destruction of the Asoka grove and a battle with the Rks. a necessary requirement: The Rks. can, in any way, be overcome only by prowess. No assurance of the task can be had except through prowess. If the foremost of the Rks. are killed already now, the Rk. army will be weakened. It is of advantage to know the peculiar habits of the enemy in battle.

2) H. feels exuberant after having successfully traced S., delivered R.’s message and assured her of the Vns.’ coming, and in his exuberant spirits he feels an urge to test the valour of the Rks., to deal them a blow and make a substantial preparation for R.’s attack on his own account. Not that V. intends to show that, in the end, R.’s task is in fact substantially alleviated—for it isn’t—
but to foreshadow H.'s ardour for fight and pugnacity, which is so well depicted in the subsequent scenes and which the reader or listener feels his very words are breathing forth. All the reflections are self-justifications, in the guise of a necessity super-imposing itself, for an urge of pugnacity in H., who, as a wise and responsible emissary, though with a self-dependent character, does not want to do any work that is not in consistency with the actual order of his master. Though, logically speaking, H. surpasses Su.'s order since the action which he is going to undertake entails risks which could lead to the death of S.—which he himself was so keen to avoid at an earlier stage, I doubt whether V. in this passage designs to throw into relief this lapse on the part of H. as a theme. Surely he will mark it out as a theme somewhat later when he relates how H., in his rage for revenge, burns all the houses of Laṅkā. Then it possesses a much more fitting context, and the poet explicitly hints at the rashness which makes H. forget the risk of bringing S. into imminent danger. But now, at this turning-point of events when H. feels assured that the situation is largely ascertained for R., the inspiring theme of the moment is for the poet to portray H.'s exuberant spirits and heroism, much more than to allude in a concealed manner to his lack of foresight.

Of the two interpretations, the second appears to be more justified in view of the whole context, as it is this very ardour for fight and pugnacity of H. which is one of the central features in all the subsequent scenes and in as far as this passage is the very prelude to these scenes and particularly the last lines of this prelude breathe a tone of determination to destroy and fight.
Lanka-dahana episode

Resumé

Impregnated with an intense sentiment of *adbhutavīrarasa* and a sentiment of delight in the enemy’s destruction, these *sargas* overflow with descriptions of H.’s formidable supernatural, nay, Herculean,

*power and rage of demolition*——

*ardour for fight and revenge, and pugnacity*——

*might, valour, heroism and skill in fighting the most valiant warriors of Rv.; invulnerability from weapons in virtue of a boon from Brahmā*:

Even Rv., while instructing his five army-chiefs and Indrajit before their sallying-out, admits and warns them of, and draws their attention to, this super-natural dimension of valour, strength, intelligence etc. of H., who is possibly a creation of Indra to do mischief to him. Cf. 44.6-12——

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na hyahaṁ tāṁ kapiṁ manye karmāṇaḥ pratitarkayan /
sarvathā tanmahadbhūtaṁ mahābalaparigrāham /
bhavedindreṇa vā śrṣṭamasmadarthanaṁ tapobalāt ||6
sanāgayakṣagandharvā devāsūramaharṣayaḥ /
yuṣmābhiḥ sahitaiḥ sarvairmayā saha vinirjitāḥ ||7
tairavaśyam vidhātavyam vyalikaṁ kiṁcideva nāḥ /
tadeva nātra sandehāḥ prasahya parighryatām ||8
nāvamanyo bhavadbhīṣca hariḥ krūraparākramah /
dṛṣṭā hi harayaṁ sīghraṃ mayaḥ vipulavikramah ||9
```
vāli ca sahasugrīvo jāmbavāṁśca mahābalaḥ /
nīlaḥ senāpatiścaiva ye cānye dvividādayaḥ //10
naiva teṣāṁ gatirbhūmaḥ na tejo na parākramaḥ /
na matirna balotsāho na rūpaparikalpanam //11
mahaśattvamidaṁ jñeyamān kapirūpaṁ vyavasthitam |
prayatnam mahādāsthāya kriyatūmasya nigrahaḥ //12

Prahasta inquires on behalf of Rv. whether H. is perhaps Kubera, Yama, Varuṇa or a messenger of Indra in disguise...

After he has killed Rv.'s five aces army-chiefs, Virūpākṣa, Yūpākṣa, Durdharā, Praghasa, Bhāsakarṇa, and defeated Akṣa, H. is described as kṛtaksanāḥ kālaiva prajakṣaye
(V 44.39 ; 45.39)—

proclamations to the Rks. and Rv. :

First, there is his boastful and awe-imposing proclamation to the Rks.—in the midst of his rage of demolishing the caityaprāśāda and killing hundreds of Rks.—of their imminent destruction at his own hands (V 41.5-9), of Su.'s arrival with countless Vns. like him and R.'s merciless destruction of Laṅkā, Rv. and the Rks. (V 41.14-18). Then there is his boastful prelude to his self-introduction in the court of Rv., during which he conceitedly proclaims that, a Vn. by race, he has come here only out of a desire to see Rv., but finding it difficult to see him, has destroyed the Aśoka garden in order to have a glimpse of him, whereupon Rks. came to fight with him and he naturally had to kill them in self-defence. Since, owing to a boon granted to him by Brahmā, neither Gods nor Asuras can bind him with weapons, he has allowed himself to be captured just to see Rv. And finally there is his self-styled proclamation of a message entrusted to him by Su. describing the developments leading to his advent and appealing to Rv.'s sense of dharma and tapas of old, which had endowed Rv. with such unequalled power, in his own best interest not to molest another's wife, not to indulge in
unrighteous and evil works unworthy of an intelligent person like him, but to return S. lest she will be the deadly noose for the imminent destruction of him and all his Rks. together with the city of Laṅkā at the hands of R. and L., whose irresistible and unchallenged prowess and might unmatched by the Gods, Asuras, men, Rks., Gandharvas, Yakṣas, serpents, he paints in glowing colours (V 49)—

and power of outwitting the enemy

first by ostensively showing himself defeated by the Brāhmāstra discharged by Indrajit and allowing himself to be captured, so as to get a chance to ruffle Rv. with a boastful oration (V 46 ff.) ; then by patiently bearing the malicious pleasure the Rks. feel in setting his tail on fire and parading him on their backs through streets and mansions—so as to get a chance to see the inaccessible places of Laṅkā ; and then finally—as he finds the fire cooling instead of burning his tail, which he attributes to S.’s compassion for him, R.’s power and his father’s friendship with Agni—by making up his mind to teach the Rks. a lesson, lopping off his bonds and killing all the Rks. near him with an iron-bar from the gate and then leaping from palace to palace and setting the whole of Laṅkā on fire (V 51-52).

All these descriptions are enriched with fanciful, detailed accounts of H.’s formidable bodily appearances and movements accompanying his super-monkey activities, often creating a sentiment of Herculean humour, and of the terror that fills nature, creatures and Gods and Asuras alike. No amount of analysis will convey an idea of the poetic skill with which V. has thrown into relief this Herculean dimension of H. So we refrain from a detailed analysis and refer the reader to the original text.
V 53

Hanuman’s bitter self-accusations betraying his anxiety that due to losing control of his rage in burning down Lanka he may have caused Sita’s death

Resumé

These self-accusations of H. betray the characteristic pessimistic and agonized tone of his brooding—marked here, in addition, with a distinct and very sharp tone of self-reproach, in which he goes so far as to say:

\[ \text{maya khalu tadevedaṁ roṣadosatprādarśitam /} \\
\text{prathitam trīṣu lokeṣu kapītvamanavasthitam //11,} \]

characteristically followed upon by a ray of hope emerging from amidst the most gloomy reflections: “As fire has not burnt my tail owing to the favour of R. and S., it will not touch virtuous S.”

The question arises whether V., in this passage, had any further idea in mind than to portray H.’s disposition of falling into pessimistic musings as he did already at several earlier occasions. Perhaps a retroreflective allusion to H.’s lack of foresight due to his over-zeal in his rage of demolition while burning Lāṅkā, an over-zeal which infatuates him so much that he loses control of it and forgets to see to the protection of S.—the very aim for which he has come? It appears so, since we found H.’s over-zeal alluded to already in earlier passages and since the reason which makes H. accuse himself is objective enough to evoke self-reproach. In any case, it is not H.’s lack of foresight as such which is t’rown into relief here, but his over-zeal which infatuates it.
Appendix

S. 55 brings out features similar to those of s.1, the only difference being the brevity of the description of the flight and the fact that there is less stress on exploits than on details and similes of H.'s fabulous power of locomotion and that these details and similes are somewhat different from those described in s.1.

In the atmosphere of his successful mission and the Vns.' exuberant spirits, H. encourages the Vns. in their "mischiefous" act of drinking honey from the Madhuvana (V 60.1).

H.'s report to R. about S. (with no word about his heroic exploits and the great difficulties in his search), her mental agony and her feelings for R. (s.63) together with his faithful reproduction of S.'s message to R. and his own speech of consolation to S. (ss. 65-66) highlights both his psychological skill and delicacy in communicating intimate news as well as his deeply benevolent love and sympathy for R. and S.

In the old parts of the Yuddhakāṇḍa H. is not in the limelight of characterization, except for the fact that he is depicted at times as one of the most valiant and heroic fighters against the Rks.—he kills Dhūmrākṣa, Akampana etc., and fights valiantly against the greatest Rk. heroes like Kumbhakarna and Indrajit—; and as an exhortator of the Vns. in desperate situations—yet even he himself is desperate at Indra's beheading of magic S. and, though he kills in his terrible revenge many Rks., he tells the Vns. to return since the object for whom they are fighting is no more—; or as a wise counsellor possessing psychological insight: E.g., when Vibhīṣaṇa introduces himself to Su. and requests for R.'s patronage and Su. and some of the monkey leaders are suspicious of him and urge R. to test his sincerity, it is H. who
tells the Vns. that a scrutinization of Vibhīṣaṇa is impossible, unreasonable and offensive, and that Vibhīṣaṇa's resolute words and cheerful appearance not betraying any sign of wickedness are a proof of his sincerity and integrity, for the expression of a face, though it may be veiled, cannot be altogether concealed since it by force reveals the innermost feelings of man, and that Rv.'s brother has come here after due consideration of R.'s heroic deeds. In this H. manifests himself as the prototype of a psychological counsellor, who, by his very first observation of a person, assesses correctly his character. (VI 11.22-59)

In s.101 H. delivers the happy message of R.'s victory to S., and he does it in a psychologically delicate manner, which renders S. speechless for joy. H.'s inquiry why she does not say anything in reply to his words makes S. break forth in words stammering with delight and say that the happy news of R.'s victory has robbed her of her power of speech and that she does not find anything on earth (gold and all the riches of the three worlds) that would be a worthy reward for him. Greatly delighted at these words, the latter acknowledges S.'s high praise, saying that listening to such noble words of hers which express her ever loyal devotion to the welfare of her husband, is worth more than gold and jewels and even more desirable than the kingdom of the Gods. And not out of a feeling of elation, but in humility, as the poet himself stresses, i.e., merely out of his over-anxiety to do S. a favour, he asks her to allow him to kill the Rākṣasīs, who have caused her so much trouble. Her rejection of H.'s proposal, in which she refers to the Rākṣasīs' subjugation to Rv.'s command and to the duty of all noble men of character to have compassion even with sinners, for there is nobody who does not commit faults, and to abstain from retaliation and hīṃsā even against villains and persecutors of mankind, does not disappoint but delight him, and he praises her for her great moral nobility (VI 101).
From now on, there is as good as no reference to H.'s character (H.'s account of events to Bh. is rather a stereo-typed resumé of the contents of the Rm.), but at the description of R.'s distribution of presents the poet alludes directly to H.'s noble character: R. offers S. a jewelled necklace. He recognizes her desire of offering it to H. and so tells her to give it to anybody she likes. Then the poet says: That dark-eyed lady gave that necklace to H., in whom ever manliness, valour and intelligence exist. It is the poet's last elucidation to the audience of the noble character-traits of H. in a resumé-like manner. (VI 116.68-72)
A SYNTHETIC VIEW OF THE POET'S CONCEPTION AND PORTRAIT OF HANUMAN'S CHARACTER

Conception

Our systematic analysis has clearly shown that V., in portraying H.'s character, had two conceptions of him in mind: a more general and a more functional conception. In the author's more general conception, H. is an ideal minister characterized by his skill in reconnoitring and his discretion in tackling affairs, his psychological depth of counselling and his responsibility in his role of a messenger, all his actions being motivated by loyalty to and concern for his master as well as R. and S. and endowed with a gamut of ideal character-traits. Though V. often employs the pattern of spontaneous improvisation in explicating this side of H.'s character in different situations, its uniform outlook clearly reveals the author's distinct conception of H. as an ideal minister. Quite different and totally abrupt and unexpected in the course of the narrative, is the imaginative depiction of H.'s fabulous super-human power of locomotion, super-natural lustre, strength and valour, his Herculean power and rage of demolition, his ardour for fight and pugnacity, might valour, heroism and skill in fighting the most valiant warriors, and of his boastful and bombastic self-assertions etc. Any sahrdaya able to transpose himself into the situation of a bard will immediately say that this depiction of H. is functional, i.e. occurs only in such situations where the poet has an oppor-
tunity to project before the audience scenes of awe imbued with a sentiment of heroic wonderment, so as to thrill the audience. In projecting such scenes, the poet, in order to bring them to their climax, exhausts all the resources of his poetic imagination following the inspirations of the moment. As he makes H. the hero of such scenes (be it on his own or on the basis of a certain tradition), he will invest him with character-traits fully appropriate to the highly imaginative and fabulous timbre which pervades these scenes. Thus we can say that the depiction of H.'s super-human dimension is based on the bardic pattern of spontaneity. Yet the consistency which emerges in all such similar scenes, nevertheless, shows that V. had formed some definite conception of H.'s super-natural dimension in his mind. Of course, the pattern of spontaneous improvisation is at work at all steps with regard to detailed explicitations of H.'s character-traits, and it is at large so in those scenes which describe H.'s pessimistic reflections or his communication with S., since these scenes are designed to have their own appeal.

**Portrait**

Since H.'s character-facets are uniform in their outlook and can be broadly reduced to distinct patterns of conception in the poet's mind, it will suffice to give a short delineation of these character-traits in correspondence with these two patterns, while treating some of the other salient features of H.'s personality which do not fall within these two patterns and are largely based on the bardic technique of spontaneous improvisation—separately.

H. is an ideal minister in a three-fold respect, as a recon-
noiteur, counsellor and messenger. Being endowed with a
gamut of ideal character-traits, to which the poet alludes
again and again in scattered remarks, H. manifests himself
foremost as possessed of great skill in reconnoitring and
prudence and discretion in tackling affairs, of great psycholo-
gical insight and skill in counselling and intimating messages
(cf. his tactfulness in communicating his messages to S. and
R.), of a keen sense of responsibility in carrying out his
mediatorship, all his actions being motivated by loyalty and
benevolence for his master and a deep concern for his master's
protégés, R. and S. It is these character-traits which prevail
in the Kīśkindhākāṇḍa, of which we have given an intro-
ductive summary. Over and above, it is H.'s great psycho-
logical depth of counselling, ranging along a scale from mild
exhortations to uncompromising moral admonitions and
stern rebukes, in accordance with the exigency of the situation,
but always paying due respect to the psychological disposition
of the client. E.g., knowing that it is Su.'s exclusive addic-
tion to pleasure and his utter lethargy—as a result of the
attainment of all his desires—that make him dumb to the
urgency of R.'s task and not a sheer lack of goodwill, H.
gives Su. a moral admonition in the style of a reminder
drawing his attention to his neglect of duty and his
 ingratitude towards the friendship pledged with R., thereby
instilling into his mind the sense to realize that a real friend
must fulfil the aim of his friend in proper time, otherwise he
does not prove himself keen on his aim, and urges him to
engage in his duty without any further delay of time. Later
on, when Su., upset at L.'s anger, asseverates his sincerity,
H. makes Su.'s addiction to pleasure and inebriety and his
consequent loss of his senses of gratitude and time again the
target of an uncompromising moral admonition, at the same
time making it clear to him that R.'s anger is a result of his
love, and exhorts him to propitiate L. with all his means.
In both cases, H.'s admonition is uncompromising: it bluntly
exposes Su.'s weak sides and urges him to make good his
failure in unmistakable terms. Yet, it also pays due respect to Su.’s inner emotional upheaval, thus assuming the true nature of a counsel. It is imbued with love for his master Su. as well as with concern for R. Not always is H.’s counsel effective (as in IV 2 and IV 53), but then it is not designed to show his failure but rather the stubbornness, fickleness and indiscretion of the party that does not listen to him.

H.’s psychological insight and skill in communicating messages reveals itself especially in his dialogue with S. though it is occasionally coloured with an admixed timbre of his over-zeal, purposely brought in by the poet to enliven these scenes. We shall come back to this later. Yet, there are a number of scenes which clearly intend to show H.’s psychological skill of counselling and intimating messages without the admixture of side-traits of his character. The characteristic difference from earlier scenes of this kind is that H.’s psychological, understanding way of intimating his messages is first ineffective, by which the author ostensibly wants to show S.’s extreme hesitation and suspicion as a result of so much torture and deception at the hands of Rv., rather than H.’s failure to persuade S. V. makes H., so to say, reveal more and more of his psychological skill till he comes to a point where S. can’t but be convinced. Though he easily persuades S. from the start of the genuineness of his presentation by asking her a series of guess-questions which intimate to her that he has understood both her sorrowful situation as well as her high status, this first persuasion loses its hold soon and turns S. apprehensive of some cunning trick by Rv., but his lofty evaluation of, and deep insight into, the sublimity of R.’s character and virtues awakens in her the understanding that only a person possessing such virtues himself is able to rise to such an appreciation and convinces her fully of H.’s sincerity. Still more difficult than to persuade S. it is for H. to console and cheer her up, as doubts and painful thoughts disrupt her mental peace. Though he applies his psychological skill from the very first time he sees
her tormented by some depressing thoughts that something may have gone wrong with R.—as he is not coming to her rescue—to remove her doubts by assuring her and swearing that R. will come with the Vns. as soon as he has heard his news, and though his speech of consolation appears to have its effect, S. is torn between expressions of grief and confidence in R.’s prowess. After rejecting H.’s over-zealous proposal to carry her to R. on his back, an idea which arises in him only on account of this mood of hers, and expressing her trust in R.’s advent with the Vns., which she requests H. to urge upon R., she falls back into apprehensive and grief-forlorn thoughts again and again: Her very tale of recognition, which she entrusts to H. and which she requests him to communicate to her husband, ends in such thoughts, and while H. is already about to set out, he is prevented by her reiterated plea to give her regards to R., L., Su. and all the Vns. and to see to it that R. will come to her rescue. H. again consoles her by assuring her of R.’s coming with the Vns. and stressing his unexcelled power in battle. But S. does not, as yet, seem to be consoled, for she asks him to grant her a few last words, which reflect her fear and grief in apprehension of the absence of H. and her doubt about how the Vns. will manage to cross the ocean. In this pitiful situation of S. V. makes H. employ the strongest dosage of solace he has at his disposal: He extolls the wonderful prowess and power of locomotion of the Vns. and humbles himself as a mere “messenger”, for which role they choose only ordinary Vns.

H.’s delicacy in responding to S.’s rejection of his proposal—as he realizes her refined moral feelings—by praising her noble chastity as worthy of R.’s wife and promising to tell everything to R.; his delicacy in communicating to S. the most tender sentiments of R.’s love and agonized pinings for his wife and in describing to her the greatness and virtue of R.’s character; his delicacy in communicating to R. S.’s agony and her feelings for him and in faithfully reporting to
him her message; his delicacy in intimating to her the joyful news of R.’s victory—all this is yet another feature of H. falling within the frame of V.’s general conception of his character, a feature which, though closely connected with and largely part of H. psychological depth of counselling, is intended by the author to stand out as distinct in the portrait of H. Not without purpose does V. draw this beautiful, short scene at the end of the Yuddhakāṇḍa: R. offers to S. a jewelled necklace. Recognizing her desire of offering it to H., he tells her to give it to anybody she likes. So she gives it to H., and the poet utilizes the occasion to elucidate once more the noble character-facets of H. in a resumé-like manner.

We have said in the beginning that H. manifests himself as possessing great skill, prudence and discretion in tackling affairs. Our inductive summary of H.’s characterization in the Kiśkindhākāṇḍa supplies ample examples of this. Surely, in V.’s general conception H. figured as such.—At the same time, it is true that in depicting H.’s Herculean dimension V. sacrifices this prudent outlook of H. so as to more boldly bring into relief his ardour for fight, pugnacity and rage of demolition.—A most conspicuous example we find in s.28 of the Sundarakāṇḍa. H. is portrayed here as weighing carefully all the ways and means of how to best communicate with S. without entailing any risk of frightening her or incurring an indiscretion which would lead to a frustration of the entire task.

 Totally abrupt and unexpected in the course of the narrative and embedded in an atmosphere of awe and a world of fabulous imagination and imbued with a sentiment of heroic wonderment, is V.’s depiction of H.’s super-natural dimension. It is true that already earlier Su., while giving a special commission to H., alludes to him as irresistible in his velocity of course, energy and speed, as one with whom no being on earth can match himself in energy, who is possessed of
strength, intelligence and prowess, the ability to conform to place and time and wisdom; and it is true that this appreciation of H. on the part of Su. awakes confidence in him in R., who gives him his signet-ring as a mark of recognition for S. and expresses his confidence in him as a person possessing perseverance, truth and valour—but all these words appear blood-and-life-less compared with the bombastic extravagance of Jāmbavān’s exhortation, H.’s self-assertion, the description of H.’s flight to Laṅkā or the Laṅkā-dahana episode, and are at the most a feeble introduction anticipating this new dimension of H. In lieu of a first characterization of this super-natural dimension of H. it must be said that no amount of analysis but only reading will give an adequate idea of the ingenious skill and the gamuts of the poet’s imagination which are at work to give a full-blooded representation of H.’s super-natural personality. What we can present, is at the most a dry skeleton of life-less character-facets. Another characteristic mark is the author’s constant play with imaginative details of H.’s formidable bodily appearances and movements accompanying his super-monkey activities, often creating a sentiment of Herculean humour. In brief, the character-traits standing out in these complexes of scenes mentioned above are: H.’s fabulous, unexcelled super-natural power of locomotion and transformation as well as his super-natural lustre, strength and valour (all inherited from his father, the Wind-God); his boastful and bombastic self-assertion of this fabulous power of locomotion, brightness, strength and valour of his; his formidable, Herculean ardour for fight and revenge, and pugnacity; his formidable, Herculean might, valour, heroism and skill in fighting and defeating the most valiant Rk. warriors, his invulnerability from weapons in virtue of a boon granted to him by Brahmā; his boastful, awe-imposing proclamations to the Rks.; his Herculean power of outwitting the enemy. As already mentioned, in the depiction of this super-natural dimension of H., his physical nature of a Vnl., of a “Herculean super-monkey” with the power of transformation,
is very much in the limelight, while the poet plays with imaginative details of his bodily appearance so as to create a sentiment of *Herculean* humour—a feature totally ignored in V.'s general conception of H.

Other salient features of H.'s character, apparently not falling immediately within the frame of either the general conception or the "*Herculean*" conception of him, since they appear only in the particular contexts of H.'s search for S. and his communication with her and rather betray a general pattern of human experience (which the poet projects before the minds of the audience in vivid scenes fraught with emotion) than something peculiar to H., are:

—his repeatedly falling into despondency on seeing the overwhelming splendour of Lāṅkā, and his giving way, out of frustration at the futility of his efforts to trace S., to the most gloomy and pessimistic musings and imaginations—one disrupted from the other—showing the agony of his heart and the depth of his feelings for R. and S. and for his kinsmen Su., Aṅgada and the Vs.; yet in the midst of these most gloomy reflections, his gathering of fresh hopes and making prompt resolutions to continue his efforts—all this being a reflection of the depth of man's experience of frustration;

—his rash outburst of delight at the presumed discovery of S. in a manner typical of a monkeyish temperament, yet his subsequent correction and renunciation of the apish rashness of his estimate;

—his sudden submission to moral scruples at the thought of seeing another's wife asleep followed by the self-comforting consciousness of the purity of his mind as being unaffected by the sight of the beauties;

—his over-zealous proposal to S. to ascend his back and allow herself to be carried to R., prompted by his anxiety
to put an end to the terrible plight of S. and R., an anxiety that makes him forget for a moment the refined moral feelings of S. as the faithful wife of R.;

—his feeling humiliated at S.’s ignorance of his supernatural power and his consequent urge to impress S. with his super-natural strength and power of transformation, prompted by his anxiety to create confidence in her—perhaps a play by the poet with H.’s over-anxious monkeyish nature;

—his over-zeal and lack of foresight manifested in his rage of demolition while burning down Lanka, a rage that infatuates him so much that he loses control over it and forgets to see to the protection of S.;

—his bitter self-reproach and submission to agonized and pessimistic musings in his anxiety that he may have caused S.’s death;

—his over-zealous request to S. to allow him the favour of killing the Rakṣasīs, who have caused her so much trouble etc.

It appears at times that some of these weak, even “monkeyish” traits of H.’s character take away something of the ideal character of H. But we should not forget that V., even when portraying an ideal personality (even such an ideal personality par excellence like R.) will delve deeply into human psychology, for it is the intention of the rhapsodist-poet, beyond his projection of lofty super-human ideals, to make the audience find their own human experience of grief, sadness, joy, wonder, hilarity mirrored in the characters of the epic.

We could best circumscribe H.’s character in a nutshell in these words: H. is an ideal flesh-and-blood character, primally an ideal counsellor, with, at times, the super-natural
dimension of a Herculean super-monkey.\textsuperscript{3}

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1 See our book *The Genesis of the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki*. The following portions are late interpolations: 39, 40. 8ff., 41, 42, 44-46.

2 Though s.14 may be an early interpolation and does not break the homogeneity of the narrative, the lamentation it portrays is not of much depth, but betrays a conventional pattern. Cf. *ibid*.

3 Reference may be made to scholars like C. Bulcke ("The Characterization of Hanumān", *JOI* 9, 393-402: "B. The Four Stages of Hanumān's Characterization", pp. 396 ff.) and V.S. Srinivasa Sastri (pp. 247-305; Summ. pp. XX-XXII), who have discussed certain important issues pertaining to H.'s characterization. To facilitate a criticism of the views of these scholars, we first quote the relevant texts and then comment upon them.

C. Bulcke

"(1) The original Rama-ballads. The majority of critics who admit a historical foundation for the events related in the Rāmāyaṇa, consider the monkeys and bears of the epic as totemistic aboriginal races of Central India. A.V. Russell states that, even in modern times, monkeys and bears are among the thirteen most frequently occurring totems of the Central Provinces. In Chota Nagpur too the Oraons have Tigga and Halemān, the Mundas have Gari; all of them mean some species of monkey. It has been pointed out long ago by Pargiter that Hanumān is most probably a sanscritized form of the Dravidian word An-manti, which means male monkey.

Hanumān was therefore in all probability an aboriginal of Central India, whose totem was that of the monkey. He was the Courageous and Shrewd Counsellor of Sugrīva and the companion in the latter's misfortune. The two qualities stressed most of all in the oldest documents we possess are precisely his courage and his shrewdness...

(2) The Authentic Rāmāyaṇa. Several generations of balladists had sung the story of Rāma, considerably embellishing and enlarging it, before Vālmīki gathered these gāthās and moulded them into the Rāmāyaṇa. By that time the original totemistic meaning of the aboriginal names was lost: although they remained endowed with intelligence and the power of speech, the monkeys of the epic are often described as real monkeys. This introduces a preter-natural
element into the Rāma-story; the Adbhuta rasa has come to stay and will be responsible for many other changes. How many of these elements were present in the original epic of Vālmīki is difficult to determine, but a careful reading of the vulgate Rāmāyaṇa does suggest that although the divine origin of the monkeys was not referred to by Vālmīki, he or the early balladists must have considered Hanumān as some species of monkey and also given him the epithet of Vāyuputra. As regards the origin of this epithet the following hypothesis, proposed by Dr. Lüders, appears to be the most probable. At the time of the composition of the Rāmāyaṇa, the word Vāyuputra was used in the sense of Vidyādhara or Conjurer. The Mahābhārata too uses Vātika (Cf. III, 243, 3) in a similar case. The Sumagga Jātaka (No. 436) relates the story of a vidyādharā and calls him Vayussa Putta, without in any way suggesting that he is Hanumān or even a monkey. The wonderful feats of Hanumān (half-man and half-monkey), embellished by generations of bards, must have been responsible for his being given the title of Vāyuputra i.e. vidyādharā, conjurer, juggler. We come therefore to the conclusion that in the authentic Rāmāyaṇa Hanumān remained the courageous and shrewd counsellor of Sugrīva but in addition was accosted as Kapikuṇjara and Vāyuputra.

(3) The Vulgate Rāmāyaṇa. The itinerant singers of the Rāmāyaṇa have been responsible for many interpolations in the epic... As regards Hanumān, the chief addition in the Vulgate is the story of his birth and youthful adventures. Basing themselves on the title of Vāyuputra, the bards made Hanumān into the real son of Vāyu and an apsara called Puṇjikasthālā who had been cursed to become a monkey and was known by the name of Aṇjanā.

Generally speaking the most striking character of later interpolations is a gradual increase of the preter-natural element. In the original Rāmāyaṇa e.g. Hanumān’s jump was described as a most astonishing feat, but later on we find as a matter of course that all monkeys are kāmarūpī and ākāśagāmī. Hanumān’s characterization makes no exception to this rule. His jumping at the sun immediately after his birth, burning down Laṅkā single-handed, flying to the Himālayas and bringing a whole mountain to Laṅkā all these feats show that next to nothing has become impossible for him,...........

Criticisms: Bulcke’s starting-point for assuming a gradual development in the conception of H. with an increase of preter-natural elements: from an original aboriginal of Central India with the totem of the monkey, the courageous and shrewd counsellor of Su., via an actual monkey (kapikuṇjara) and conjurer (vidyādharā) in the authentic Rm. of V., to the son of Vāyu and Aṇjanā—the accomplisher of most wondrous exploits etc. in the Vulgate, is the presupposition
that the *Rm.* reflects the later stage of a tale about actual historical happenings, in which R. made an actual covenant with aboriginals whose totem was the monkey. To this we have to say: Whether or not there is a historical basis in R.'s alliance with the Vns., it is very doubtful whether even the first bard to sing the R. story conceived these Vns. in terms of totemistic aboriginals. As we have no confirmation for this remote possibility and no indication whatsoever in the *Rm.* suggestive in this line, it is much more natural to assume that the very first bard conceived H. and the Vns. in a way not so essentially different from the way a poet like V. did: Some more or less vague knowledge about totemistic aboriginal monkey-clans served the bard as a starting-point for his conception of the Vns. But as soon as he set out to portray them, he, prompted by vivid imagination as a substitute for the lack of factual knowledge about them, depicted them already with the shroud of a fanciful, mythical world. They, so to say, served him as models, but the moment he started portraying them, he immediately converted them into mythico-literary figures. This, we think, was not only the case with figures and features of the *Rm.*, but with all such figures and features in ancient literary works which are of a nature suggesting a historical foundation. As E.O. James (Myth and Ritual in Ancient Near East, London, 1958) says — "In the ancient world as in primitive states of culture at all times, history as the term is understood today had little or no significance because intellectually the human mind was not aware of being in a historical process." Cf. our appendix article "A Note on the Historicity of the Rāmāyaṇa" in our book The Genesis of the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki.

Srinivasa Sastri

"(1) The curse laid on him by the rishis in early childhood, viz., that he shall not remember his strength till at the right moment he is reminded of it,
The curse evidently had other implications. Hanuman's loss or failure of memory was not in respect of his strength only but of necessary particulars at time of need.
This AMNESIA was a source of weakness in him,
Instances of Hanuman's amnesia:
Forgot Matanga's asrama being a sanctuary,
Forgot that Sugriva had done his duty and that he himself (Hanuman) was at fault,
Forgot Rama's promise to Sugriva to bestow Vali's kingdom on him, and suggested Angada's accession to the throne to Tara,
Among Hanuman’s Failures, two were conspicuous:
(1) Failed to get Tara to countenance Angada’s coronation.
(2) Failed to turn Angada away from his resolve not to return to Kishkindha but remain behind in the vicinity of Swayamprabha’s cave.
Failed in his attempt to persuade Sita to ride on his back and return to Rama.
Failed to get Sita to sanction his wreaking vengeance on the Rakshasa women."

Criticism:
(1) Sastri bases his argumentation on a story of the Uttarakânda which describes the consequences of a curse inflicted by the râsis on H. : H. began to molest the râsis out of pride in his boons whereupon they cursed him to the effect that he would forget for a long time his real prowess. When there was a fight between Su. and Vâli, H. was on Su.’s side, for because of the curse he forgot his real prowess and remained inactive like a tied-up elephant. This the author applies to other apparent instances in the earlier part of the narrative. We know that the Uttarakânda is interpolated and hence this procedure of interpreting certain seemingly inexplicable factors as amnesia is irrelevant. As a matter of fact, No. 1 of the instances mentioned by Sastri is found in a late interpolation. No. 2 is based on a misinterpretation. See s.v. Sugrîva. And the fact that H., while trying to console Târâ, encourages her to forget her husband’s death and to see to Aâgada’s future and install him on the throne, while it is the obvious expectation of everybody that Su. will ascend the throne, may not be taken as an instance of amnesia but rather as a means to divert Târâ’s attention from her beloved son Aâgada, to whom the whole future is still open, though, however, it unintentionally adds fuel to the fire as Târâ, in her reply, will give expression to her full devotion to her husband, saying that she does not care for a hundred sons like Aâgada etc.

(2) Ad (1) see above.
Ad (2) By this the poet does not stress so much H.’s failure than Aâgada’s stubbornness and obliqueness of mind as well as the Vns,’ fickleness.
For an interpretation of H.'s other two "failures" see under V 35/36 and VI 101. On the whole, Sastri makes the mistake of being too hypercritical in the observation of the exterior efficiency of H.'s actions, while he neglects the psychological coherence between H.'s actions and the others' responses, or the inner depth of H.'s psyche, which the poet attempts to unfold.
THE VANARA HOSTS

The Vn. hosts¹ as such are not characterized in a conspicuous manner. Strictly under the command of their army-leaders, they do not possess any individuality of their own. Their character-traits are thus traits characteristic of a host (often more of a monkey-herd, "harigana") and not the traits of individual personalities, and are therefore scarce and of a common, often monkeyish, nature:

1) They feel panic-stricken and run amuck in face of alleged danger (a) and feel disinhibited in face of difficulties (b), e.g. at the sight of the ocean (IV 63.7 ff.)

2) They manifest their fickleness of mind in their easy succumbour to Āṅgada’s and Tārā’s ill advice of either undergoing prayopaveṣa or remaining in the cave, in their obstinacy to listen to H.’s well-meant exhortation and falling in with Āṅgada’s rejection of H.’s advice and rebuke of Su. (see s.v. Hanumān).

3) They give vent to their exuberance of joy at H.’s successful mission by roaring and making impetuous gesticulations (V 55 end) and indulging wildly in the enjoyment of drinking honey, an enjoyment accompanied by extravagant gesticulations of delirium and a mischievous pleasure in devastating the Madhuvana, and resorting to a kind of violence when being interfered with (V 59-62 passim).

4) They appear awe-inspiring, powerful and impetuous when in battle-array or on the march (a)—e.g. IV 30.23-27: VI 4: a most impressive account which is enhanced by the depiction of the Vns.’ exuberant gesticulations and indulgence in the enjoyments of drinking honey and eating fruits and various sportive activities: uprooting trees, tearing down creepers,
climbing rocks, bathing in ponds and lakes etc.: VI 31.19 ff. and 33 ff.—, or while helping Nala to build the bridge (VI 15.14 ff.) (b).

5) They appear impetuous, valiant and heroic while fighting against the Rk. warriors, but easily lose courage in face of irresistible Rks. like Akampana, Kumbhakarna, Indrajit, Rv. etc., which results in their running amuck, fleeing or taking shelter. But once exhorted, they take courage again, particularly in the presence of R., L., H., Aṅgada, Su. etc., yet often lose courage again. At the defeat of a Rk. by R., L., or any of the others, they give vent to their exuberance of joy by roaring and sometimes wild gesticulations. This is a constantly recurring pattern in the battle scenes of the Yuddhakāṇḍa, with one or the other elements missing depending on the gravity of the situation.

6) They enjoy eating fruits and flowers on their way to Ayodhyā.

A few instances to illustrate some of the more general traits:

ad 1a) Su. is frightened and dispirited and intimates his suspicion to the counsellors that the two intruders (R. and L.) are spies of Vālī in disguise. At that, the counsellors sojourn to the summit of the hill and encircle Su., while the retinue of the Vns. in their panic-stricken flight create a big commotion (IV 2.9 ff.).—At the sight of R., the retinue of Vālī’s Vns. run away in sheer fright like animals from a herd, whose herd-leader has been killed—so that Tārā asks them why they are running away, leaving their king behind, before whom they always used to march, and assures them that R. has killed Vālī from a long distance. And still they are so much frightened by R.’s Death-like appearance and the impact of his thunder-bolt-like arrows that they urge Tārā to
hurriedly return to her son and protect him, to let the heroes protect the city and install Aṅgada on the throne lest Su.'s Vns. will take possession of the city of Vālī...(IV 19.5 ff.).
When the Vns. see L. ablaze with rage at their pulling down huge trees and rocks in self-defence, they run into a hundred directions (IV 30.18-20).

ad 5) We have already mentioned that this pattern is constantly recurring in the battle-scenes with more or less variations, with one or the other elements missing depending on the gravity of the situation. In the first clash with the Rks. (VI 32), in some of the combats like against Dhūmrākṣa (VI 41-42), Prahasta (VI 45-46), the feature of the Vn. hosts losing courage is altogether absent. In some combats, as against Akampana (VI 43-44), the mere presence of one of the heroes restores their courage. In the combats against Rv. (VI 87 ff. passim), Kumbhakarna (VI 54-55) and Indrajit (VI 67-68 passim) the stress is more on the Vns.’ succumb to fear than on their valour and impetuosity. In the combat against Kumbhakarṇa we have a classical example of how the Vns. repeatedly lose courage and run away in fear and only, after being rebuked and encouraged by Aṅgada again and again or feeling assured of the presence of one of their leaders, resume their valiant and heroic fighting. In the battle against Indrajit the Vn. hosts’ reaction is similar though they emerge as more brave and heroic.

In the delineation of these character-traits of the Vn. hosts the poet consistently dwells on their physical appearance, movements and gesticulations—often as designed to be characteristic of monkeys. Even in battle-scenes, the Vn. hosts are described as fighting in a manner reminiscent of
monkeys: They attack the Rks. with teeth and nails, hurl trees and stones against them etc. In fact, R. orders the Vns. not to assume any human form: VI 28.32—

na caiva mānusāṁ rūpaṁ kāryaṁ hariḥbirāhave
esa bhavatu naḥ sañjñā yuddheśmīnvaṁare bale

On the whole, thus, they emerge as less human-(than monkey-) like than individual heroes like Vālī, Su., H. or Aṅgada. It is only at the coronation of R. that the Vn. hosts as a whole are spoken of as assuming human forms (VI 116.29).

While the Vn. hosts as such are characterized in a common way, the Vn. chiefs (yūthapas) emerge at times as possessing some individual status of their own, though at large they are also characterized on a common pattern. Their common traits are brightness of appearance (e.g. IV 32.6), efficiency in directing the Vn. armies, valour and heroism in fighting against the Rk. warriors (Yuddhakāṇḍa, passim). Even though some of the senāpatis appear occasionally as excelling in their valour and heroism, e.g. Nīla, there is no clear distinction between them in their capacities (except perhaps in the power of leaping, cf. IV 64.3 ff.)

However, some of the Vn. chiefs, in addition to their heroic dimension, appear endowed with more individual traits. Jāmbavān, the chief of the Rkṣas, is a wise, aged counsellor, who guides the discussion among the Vn. chiefs about the means of how to cross the ocean and, laudingly drawing their attention to the unexcelled power of H.'s locomotion, encourages and requests him to leap over to Laṅkā. Nala, the son of Viśvakarmā, is commissioned by the Ocean to build the bridge over the sea, Suṣeṇa is the medical doctor of the Vns., etc.

Aṅgada, for some time the commander-in-chief of the whole army, is the most individual character of the Vns. prescinding from Vālī, Su. and H. This is mainly due to his
association with Vālī and Su. In valour and heroism as displayed in the battle-scenes, he is next only to H. His character-portrait is, however, very fluorescent. Though he appears in many places as an efficient commander, exhortator and counsellor of the Vns. and is recognized by H. as endowed with intelligence in all its eight essential qualities and with the fourteen virtues, he appears yet as moody, oblique-minded, suspicious and stubborn in situations of despair (see s.v. Hanumān). Thus, on the whole, he is perhaps closer to Vālī than to H.

1 Since the Rkṣas appear almost always as merged with the Vns. and are not characterized in a specific manner, though they are referred to separately, we speak here only of the Vns, more generally, the Rkṣas being understood as a subdivision of them.
c

The Raksasas
A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER-PORTRAVAL OF MĀRİCA

A resume of references to Mārīca in the Balakanda

(18.4 ff.; 19.18; 23.8-10; 29.9 ff.)

In 18.4 ff. and 19.18 Mārīca is mentioned as one of the two Rks. who (instigated by Rv. 19.18) spoil Viśvāmitra’s sacrifice, and for whose destruction Viśvāmitra requests D. for R.’s assistance (18.8 ff.).

In 23.8-10 Viśvāmitra, in his account of Tāṭakā, mentions how Mārīca, her son, became a Rk. on account of a curse by Agastya while Tāṭakā and her son were harassing the sage.

S.29.9 ff. gives a short account of how Mārīca and Subāhu, assuming illusory forms,—like clouds rushing on in the rainy season and covering the sky—come rushing on and rain thick blood over the sacrificial altar; how R., discharging a Mānavāstra on Mārīca’s chest, casts him a hundred yojanas afar into the midst of the sea where he keeps rolling deprived of his consciousness; and how he kills the other Rk.
Marica as a conscientious and well-wishing sage dissuades Ravana from his evil plan

Translation

Having gone to that other side of the ocean—the lord of rivers, he saw a hermitage in the interior of a solitary, holy, lovely forest. (33.36) There he saw the abstemious Rk. called Mārīca wearing a black deer-skin, matted locks and bark-garments. (33.37)

As noble-souled Mārīca heard his account of R., his face became shrivelled and he was greatly frightened. (34.21) Knowing R.’s prowess in the great forest, he, with frightened and sorrowful heart, told Ṛv., with folded hands, the truth: words beneficial for him as well as for himself. (34.22)

Having heard those words of the lord of Rks., learned Mārīca, skilled in speech, answered the lord of Rks. (35.1)—“It is easy to find persons, O king, who always speak pleasing words, but a person who speaks or listens to something that is unpleasant and wholesome, is difficult to meet with. (2) Not having spies and being fickle, you certainly don’t know R.—possessed of great heroism and endowed with great merits, resembling Indra and Varuṇa. (3) I wish that it will be well, O dear one, with the world of all the Rks. I wish that enraged R. will not deprive the world of the Rks. (4) I wish that the daughter of Janaka has not been born for the end of your life and
that there will be no great calamity on account of S. (5) I wish that the city of Laṅkā will not perish with you and the Rks., having you as its lord, who is addicted to sensual pleasures and unfettered.(6) For an evil-minded king like you, addicted to sensual pleasures, ill-behaved and under the spell of sin, kills himself and his own kindred and the kingdom.(7) The enhancer of the joy of Ks. has not been forsaken by his father, nor is he in any way transgressing his limits, nor is he greedy or ill-behaved or disgracing the Kṣatriyas (8), nor is he devoid of dharma and merits or harsh: nay, he is intent on the welfare of all beings.(9) Seeing his father deceived by Kai., the noble-one set out to the forest, saying 'I will make my father truthful to his words.'(10) Out of a desire to render service to Kai. and his father D., he abandoned kingdom and enjoyments and entered the Daṇḍaka forest.(11) R. is not harsh, O dear one, or ignorant or unrestrained, falsehood is unheard of him, and you should not speak such.(12) R. is dharma embodied, virtuous, of true valour, the king of the whole world like Vāsava of the Gods.(13) How do you wish to take away from him by force Vaidehī, who is protected by her own brightness, like, as if you would, the lustre from the sun ? (14) Don’t enter R. taking the form of fire blazing with brightness—R., whose arrows are flames, who is unassailable, whose bow and arrows are fuel in the battle.(15) Don’t approach, O dear one, R. taking the form of Death, whose bow is a blazing mouth designed to devour, whose arrows are flames, who is impetuous, carrying bow and arrows, heroic and the destroyer of enemy hosts, at the cost of your kingdom, happiness and your dear life.(16-17) For immeasurable is that power of his to whom that daughter of Janaka belongs; you are not able to abduct her, whose refuge is R.’s bow in the forest.(18) An ever-devoted wife dearer to him than even his life, graceful S. is like the flame of blazing fire. (19) What is the use of making this vain effort, O lord of
the Rks.? If you are slain by him in the battle-field, your life is forfeited, and life and happiness and kingdom are very difficult to obtain.(20) So consult with all the righteous ministers headed by Vibhīṣaṇa and when you have formed your decision, considered the relative strength and weakness of merits and demerits and truly considered your own strength and that of Rāghava and ascertained your benefits, do what is proper.(21-22) But I don’t think it is proper for you to meet with the son of the Kosala king in battle, for listen further to these excellent, proper and wholesome words, O lord of the nightrovers.”(23)

**Analysis of characterization**

Māricca emerges, in his endeavour to dissuade Rv. from his intention to capture S. and do this by using him as an instrument, as a conscientious and benevolent counsellor. Righteous himself through his living the life of an ascetic, he rightly assesses R.’s incomparable heroism and greatness of character against Rv.’s evil intention, which is prompted by his addiction to debaucheries, viciousness and fickleness of character, as inevitably leading to the destruction of Rv. and that of the entire Rk. world. Basing himself on this assessment, he does everything to inculcate it upon Rv. by exposing and warning him of the dire consequences (eradication of the whole world of the Rks. at the hands of R.) that lurk behind his heedless proposal and by disillusioning him of the erroneous presumption he cherishes that R. has come to the forest as a result of an expulsion by his father or has violated dharma or possesses any of the vices enumerated by him, whilst he lavishly portrays R.’s righteousness (he is dharma incarnate) and virtues as well as S.’s untouchable halo of character as also R.’s firebrand-and-death-like heroism and valour in battle, against all of which Rv. will
be sheer unable to accomplish his task and will conjure upon himself but the destruction of his life, happiness and kingdom.

Mārīca emerges, thus, as a conscientious and well-wishing sage. The question arises whether this conscientiousness of Mārīca is genuine conscientiousness or whether it is the result of a fear for his life and then a diplomatic trick to escape the wiles of Rv. For it is Mārīca who is first and foremost affected by Rv.'s decision, and his reaction to this proposal of Rv. is one of fear while his words are labelled as beneficial both for Rv. and himself. Furthermore, in the following sargas (36-37) Mārīca dwells on the motive of fear caused by previous meetings with R., and the very fact that Rv. selects Mārīca to assist him in carrying out his evil plan and expects him to undertake the heinous trick of assuming the shape of a deer, as well as the content of these two sargas prove that Mārīca was not always that virtuous saint he appears now and that a relapse into his old life is not unexpected of the Rk. turned to a saintly life. In fact, he finally succumbs to Rv.'s threats. In order to arrive at a fair solution of this problem, we have to make clear-cut distinctions:

1) Ss. 36-37 are interpolations and hence do not manifest the original intention of V. in portraying Mārīca's character.

2) Even then these two sargas need not be understood as manifesting Mārīca’s fear as the primary motive of his action, but rather as showing an attempt to strengthen his efforts of dissuading Rv. from a heedless act which will bring but misfortune upon the Rk. king.

3) The fact that Mārīca has not always been a virtuous saint and finally will succumb to his Rk. wiles again in the face of Rv.'s threats, does not exclude the poet's intention to depict Mārīca as having been a genuinely and saintly person for some time. In fact, his succumbour to the threats of Rv. in the full apprehension that he will be
killed by R., a succumbour not without a renewed attempt of dissuasion, in which he boldly condemns the maliciousness of those counsellors who advised him to rush to his own ruin and repeats his prediction that Rv. will meet his destruction together with all the Rks., may be interpreted as the resignation to the threats of a tyrant whose wilfulness is incurable even by the most well-meant counsel. In fact, we see Māricā declare that he will be satisfied to die at the hands of R., yet he is grieved at the thought of Rv. being destroyed with his whole army. (III 39.17 ff.)

4) As for the reason of Māricā’s reaction of fear, it may be deduced from the context following that it is not the result of a mere personal fear for his life, but the apprehension of dire consequences entailed by Rv.’s proposal—an aspect on which the poet dwells at length.

5) Such an interpretation is also much more natural than the assumption that Māricā’s profound admonition, rising to such a high estimation of human virtues, should be a mere diplomatic trick.

III 36-37

Māricā describes his encounters with Rama as a further attempt to dissuade Ravana from his decision to abduct Sita.

Contents

Māricā first relates how he, induced by his heroism and his strength equal to that of a thousand elephants, roamed through the Dāndaka forest, creating terror among the
people with his parigraha weapons and feeding on the flesh of rṣis, and how he one day met with R. while entering the hermitage of Viśvāmitra, but ignored him on account of his childish appearance and rushed towards the sacrificial altar, whereupon he was hurled, unconscious, into the sea a hundred yojanas away by R.'s arrow, who however, spared his life. With the account of this unpleasant experience he connects a renewed warning of the dreadful disaster which is doomed to befall Rv. together with all the Rks. if he should engage in battle with R. against his well-meant advice, a disaster which Mārīca exposes to him in grim visions, admonishing him to be contented with his thousands of wives and not to deprive R. of his wife if he wants to enjoy respect, wealth, kingdom and life for long.

Immediately hereafter, Mārīca relates another encounter of his with R.: While roaming through the Daṇḍaka forest in the form of a deer with sharp horns, blazing tongue and large teeth, and harassing rṣis and eating their flesh and blood, he came upon R. and S. living an abstemious life, and, having his former enmity in remembrance, immediately rushed upon R. R. discharged three arrows, which came flying with the velocity of Suparna and the Wind, but having previously experienced R.'s prowess, he cunningly stepped aside while the two Rks. accompanying him were killed. Since that time he has been living as an ascetic: Obsessed by fear, he sees R.—clad in bark, carrying his bow in his hand like Death the noose, in every tree, sees the whole forest pervaded with ten-thousands of R.s, sees R. in dreams and startles at names beginning with r like ratna and ratha. After this account of his encounter with R. and his consequent obsession with the fear of R., Mārīca ends up with the words—"I know his power; it is not proper for you to engage in battle with him. Fight with R. in battle or show forbearance; O Rk., if you want to see me, you
should not speak to me about R. If you don't attend to these words spoken by me, who am seeking the welfare of a friend, you will lose your life in battle today together with your relatives, slain by R. with swift and straight arrows.'

Analysis of characterization

We have already raised the question whether Mārīca's fear of R. is not designed by the author of these two sargas to reflect Mārīca's primary motive for his endeavour to dissuade Rv. In reply to his question we have to say: Definitely this is not intended in s. 36, which with its long-drawn warnings is exactly in line with the previous one, the only distinction being that Mārīca illustrates his warnings with an incidence from his own experience. However, in s. 37 the personal aspect of Mārīca's fear is so much more in the foreground that one might get the impression as though Mārīca wants to dissuade Rv. in order to escape from his own imminent destiny, that the proposal of Rv. conjures up in him the dreadful memory of his tryst with R. and arouses in him anew that mania of fear by which he has been haunted ever since those days of his encounter with R. V. 19—

raṇe rāmeṇa yudhyasva kṣamāṁ vā kuru rākṣasa /
na te rāmakathā kāryā yadi māṁ dṛṣṭumicchasi //

also seems to indicate this line of interpretation. Nevertheless it is most doubtful whether this was actually in the mind of the author who interpolated this sarga, for he makes Mārīca close with the same (though short) warning which constitutes the substance of Mārīca's previous exposition and makes him asseverate his well-meant intention in the same way. We come perhaps nearer to the truth if we assume the following explanation: The author of ss. 36-37 intended to extend Mārīca's original speech of dissuasion (s.35) by introducing two illustrations from Mārīca's personal encoun-
ter with R., which has made a lasting impression upon him, so as to highlight his claim of the invincible power and heroism of R., each of the two illustrations being rounded up by a reiterated warning of the grim disaster impending over Rv. should he not listen to his well-meant advice. In order to highlight R.’s power, the author contrasts it with Mārīcā’s mania of fear—the result of a lasting impression of his encounter with him, prompted also by his intention to give the listener a glimpse into a weak side of Mārīcā’s character. But on the whole, he does not diminish V.’s conception of Mārīcā as a conscientious and well-wishing counsellor.

III 39
III 40.1-3

Marica resigns to the wishes of Ravana after a last attempt to dissuade him

Translation

Having been told harsh words by the king, the night-rover Mārīcā spoke harsh words to the lord of the Rks. (1) —“Which sinner has advised this destruction of yours together with that of your sons, your kingdom and your ministers, O night-rover? (2) Which sinner does not rejoice with you being happy? Who has advised you this gate to death by way of a remedy? (3) Surely, O night-rover, your enemies, lacking heroism, wish you to perish obstructed by one who is more powerful. (4) Which mean person speaking ill-disposed words, who wishes you to perish by your own deeds, O night-rover, has given you
advice? (5) Why, O Rv., are your ministers, deserving to be slain, not killed, who do not restrain you altogether when you mounted the wrong path? (6) For a king who is addicted to pleasure and has resorted to a bad path ought to be restrained altogether by virtuous ministers, but you, who ought to be restrained, are not being restrained. (7) By the kindness of the king, ministers obtain justice, wealth, pleasure and fame, O night rover, best of conquerors. (8) But if it is the contrary, all that becomes futile, O Rv.; on account of the demerits of the king all the other people obtain misfortune. (9) In fact, dharma and victory, O best of conquerors, are the king’s foundation; that’s why a king has to be protected in all conditions. (10) The kingdom cannot be protected by one who is stern, O night-rover, or by one who is harsh or by one who is insolent, O Rk. (11) Ministers who are of stern advice are quickly ruined, together with him, in perils like chariots with slow charioteers. (12) Many good people in the world, who practise true dharma, are, through the fault of others, ruined together with their attendants. (13) Subjects protected by a harsh and stern king, O Rv., do not flourish like sheep protected by a jackal. (14) Certainly, O Rv., all the Rks. will perish, whose cruel, evil-minded and uncontrolled king you are. (15) This is a ghastly bolt from the blue you have met with. What is there fortunate in it that you will perish together with your army? (16) Soon after killing me, this R. will slay you also. I have accomplished my object if I die slain by this enemy. (17) Consider me to be killed at the very sight of R. and know yourself to be killed with all your relatives as soon as you have taken away S. (18) If you take away S. from the hermitage, assisted by me, neither will you exist nor I, neither Laṅkā nor the Rks. (19) Though being restrained by me, who am desirous of your welfare, you will not bear these words, O night-rover, for men who are as good as dead, men whose life is doomed, do not accept the good spoken by their friends.” (20)
Having spoken such harsh words, Mārīca then, distressed out of fear of the lord of night-rovers, said to Rv.—"Let us go. (1) As soon as I am seen again by that wearer of bow and arrow and sword, my life is destroyed by his arrow aimed at my destruction (2), but what can I do for you evil-minded one? So I go, dear one; farewell to you, O night-rover." (3)

_analysis of characterization_

In reply to Rv.'s scornful repuke of Mārīca's words of dissuasion, which he vilifies as disrespectful and unbefitting—as he has not asked his advice but only his help, and to Rv.'s stern command to him to act according to his instruction, failing which he (Mārīca) will be put to death, Mārīca acts courageously by countering Rv. with another, final attempt to dissuade him: He makes it clear to Rv. that those counsellors who have advised him to abduct S. have done so with a devilish desire to see his ruin, that, owing to his lack of merits and his sternness and cruelty, ministers give ill-meant advice and do not restrain him from his wrong path, and all the people are doomed to misfortune because of his cruelty and viciousness. He winds up his account with the prediction that his instant death at the hands of R.—which at least will give him a feeling of satisfaction—will be followed by Rv.'s destruction and that of all the Rks. But knowing Rv.'s obliqueness of mind too well, he feels the futility of his talk and resignedly succumbs to the will of Rv. in fear of his threats, but also in full apprehension of his death at the hands of R.

A succumbour in face of threats? A resignation in face of the futility of a well-meant advice? A willing acceptance of his apprehended destiny? Which of these three attitudes offering themselves as possible explanations to the listener of this last speech of Mārīca holds good for Mārīca? This
question we have to answer in view of the whole context. V. conceives Mārīca in spite of his elevated saintly role as a Rk. He refers to his former cruelty and harassing of sages (III 41.4-5, which is a non-interpolated reference) and makes him act with full Rk. māyā again after his succumbour to the threats of Rv. (see s.40 and ff. passim)—so much so that Mārīca even feels an urge to eat those deer which approach him during his magic show, 40.26. So it is this feature which distinguishes Mārīca as a Rk. that the poet must have had in his mind when portaying Mārīca's reaction to Rv.'s threats. Though, prompted by a high conscientiousness and concern for the welfare of Rv., he makes all efforts to dissuade Rv. from his intention and even courageously counters Rv.'s threats with a renewed attempt to dissuade him, he—so V. wants to say—is not a hero but a Rk. in flesh and blood, and so he succumbs. But V. also clearly shows that his succumbour is not a succumbour of cowardice but of resignation and a succumbour which leads him straight into the mouth of death.
A SYNTHETIC VIEW OF THE POET'S CONCEPTION AND PORTRAIT OF MARICA'S CHARACTER

Marica's character-portrayal is represented in two layers: an original Valmikian layer and an interpolated layer.

In the original layer, Marica is predominantly characterized as a conscientious and benevolent sage-Rk., who, assessing R.'s unexcelled heroism and greatness of character against Rv.'s viciousness as inevitably leading to the destruction of Rv. and all the Rks., does everything to dissuade Rv. from his intention in the best interest of his master—while his own earlier cruel Rk. career, consisting in the harassment of sages in the Daṇḍaka forest, is merely implied by the fact that Rv. expects him to undertake the vicious trick of assuming the shape of a deer and tempting S., is alluded to occasionally as e.g. in L.'s premonition to S., but otherwise not insisted upon. Marica tries to dissuade Rv. first by exposing and warning him of the dire consequences lurking behind his heedless proposal, by disillusioning him of the erroneous assumption that R. has come to the forest as a result of an expulsion by his father or has committed some kind of transgression or the like, while lavishly portraying R.'s righteousness and virtues and Death-like heroism in battle, against which Rv. will be sheer unable to accomplish his task and will conjure upon himself the destruction of his life, happiness and kingdom. When Rv. scornfully rebukes his dissuasion and sternly commands him to follow his instructions, failing which he will be put to death, he has enough
courage to boldly counter Rv.'s threats with a new attempt to dissuade him, in which he makes it clear to him that those counsellors who advised him to abduct S. have done so with a devilish desire to see his destruction, that owing to his lack of merits and his sternness and cruelty ministers give him ill-meant advice and do not restrain him from following a wrong path and all the people are doomed because of his cruelty and viciousness, ending up with the prediction that his instant death at the hands of R. will be followed by Rv.'s own destruction and that of all the Rks. Yet the realization of the futility of his well-meant advice to Rv. compels Mārīca to succumb to Rv.'s threats and—unlike a saint of a heroic calibre—become a true Rk. again—yet succumb not like a coward, but as a person who has resigned in the full apprehension of his own death.

The author of the interpolated layer has amplified Mārīca's role of dissuasion by making him give two illustrations of his former personal encounter with R., one of which has left such an indelible impression upon him that he has hence been obsessed by a mania of fear of R.,—so as to make him highlight his claim of the invincible power and heroism of R., which is then followed by a renewed warning of the fatal consequences for Rv. The author has, thus, extended the portrait of Mārīca's character by giving us a glimpse of his former cruel Rk. activities and presenting him as possessed of a mind constantly haunted by fear—without, however, lowering in any way V.'s conception of him as a conscientious and benevolent counsellor.

Various references in the Bālakāṇḍa portray Mārīca, on a line parallel to the interpolated layer in the Aranyakāṇḍa, as a Rk. harassing sages.
1 These two verses seem to be interpolated since a large number of mss. leave them out. Their function is precisely to express more emphatically the spirit conveyed by the last words of Mārīcā's speech (s.39).
VIBHISANA
1

A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER-PORTRAYAL OF VIBHISANA

V 50

Vibhisana dissuades Ravana from killing Hanuman, an envoy

Translation

Having heard those words of the noble-souled Vn., Rv., infatuated with anger, ordered his execution. (1) Vibhīṣaṇa did not approve of the execution order by evil-minded Rv. of one who has communicated a message. (2) Finding that king of the Rks. angry and that plan of his to be imminent, he, intent on doing his duty, reflected on what was to be done. (3) Having determined his aim and having paid respect to the foremost of slayers of enemies in a manner that is conciliatory, he, skilled in speech, then spoke the exceedingly salutary words (4)—“O king, an execution of this monkey is against dharma, is reproved by the custom of the people and unbecoming of you, O hero. (5) Doubtlessly he is a haughty enemy, and an immeasurable offence has been committed by him. But the virtuous do not consider the execution of a messenger. Various ways of punishment of a messenger have been witnessed (6), like disfiguration on the limbs, beating with a whip, shaving the head, as well as branding—these are
the punishments they consider for a messenger, but execution of a messenger has not even been heard of by us. (7) And how can one like you, whose mind is controlled by dharma and artha, whose aim is determined by the conviction of what is higher and lower, come under the subjection of anger, for the virtuous restrain their anger? (8) Neither in the exposition of dharma nor in social custom nor even in the understanding of the meaning of the śāstras is there anybody equal to you, O hero, for you are the best of all the Gods and Asuras. (9) I don’t see any merit in the execution of this monkey; let punishment be caused to fall upon those by whom this monkey has been sent. (10) This messenger, be he virtuous or not, who is directed by others, who speaks in the interest of others and is dependent on others, does not deserve execution. (11) And also, if this one is killed, I don’t see any other sky-ranger who would be able to come here again to the yonder side of the ocean. (12) Therefore, let no effort be made to kill him, O conqueror of enemy-forts, your honour should direct his effort against the Gods together with Indra. (13) If this one is killed, I don’t see any other messenger who would be able to incite to battle, O lover of battles, those two ill-behaved human princes, who are obstructed by a long way. (14) You, who are invincible even by the Gods and Asuras, possessed of prowess, energy and intelligence, O gratifier of the demons, should not destroy the future prospects of a battle. (15) You have warriors who are bent on your welfare, heroic, concentrated, born in meritorious families, intelligent, the best of soldiers, endowed with intelligence and well-behaved, foremost among crores. (16) Let meanwhile some of your commander-in-chiefs, together with that one part of the army, approach and seize those two foolish princes so as to demonstrate your power to the enemies. (17)
Analysis of characterization

Vibhīṣaṇa shows himself, in this first exposition of him by V., as a righteous and conscientious counsellor, whose conscience is aroused when he sees that his brother Rv. has lost control of himself in his anger and rashly decides to kill H. against all laws of dharma and social custom and against the better insight that the real guilt does not lie with the envoy, however provocative he may be, but with those who have commissioned him, and who thus dissuades Rv. from his intention by appealing to his good sense of justice, which he acknowledges, and by instigating him not to allow the chances of a battle with the culprits, R. and L., to be lost—which they would with H.’s execution—by which Rv. can demonstrate his power to the enemy. But in doing so, he manifests himself also as a full-blooded Rk. thinking in the spirit of, and being faithful to, his kindred, a Rk. who shares Rv.’s impressions of H.’s actions and speech as immeasurably provocative; who acknowledges Rv.’s cognizance of dharma, his knowledge of what is good and evil and his invincibility from Gods and Asuras; and who—far from intuiting that H.’s cause is in the right while that of Rv. is in the wrong¹—he himself advocates some punishment for H. in agreement with the customs; and who delights in and advocates the idea of a revenge on the real culprits, R. and L., by which Rv. can demonstrate his power to the enemy.

VI 9

Vibhisana advises Ravana to return Sita
Translation

Then Nikumbha, Rabhasa, the powerful Sūryaśatru, Suptaghna, Yajñakopa, Mahāpārśva, Mahodara, Agniketu, Durdharṣa, the Rk. Raśmiketu, the resplendent, powerful son of Rv., Indrajit, then Prahasta, Virūpākṣa, the powerful Vajradaṁśtra, Dhūmrākṣa, Atikāya, and the Rk. Durmukha—all these Rks., taking hold of iron clubs, spears, darts, śaktis, pikes, battle axes, bows and arrows and large sharpened swords, sprang up, exceedingly angry, and spoke to Rv. blazing, as it were, with brightness (1-5)—“Today we shall slay Su. and L., and mean H., who has assaulted (outraged) Laṅkā.” (6) Having restrained all those who have seized their weapons, Vibhīṣaṇa spoke with folded hands these words after having told them to sit down again (7)—“An aim that cannot be obtained by even the three means of success employed against the enemy, O dear one, for that the wise consider heroic valour and time as appropriate. (8) Heroic feats are accomplished (successful) when carried out according to the law, after a careful examination, against those who are wanton or assailed and repulsed by fate. (9) But how do you wish to attack him who is vigilant, who is desirous of victory, is established in power, has conquered wrath and is unassailable? (10) Who would believe the arduous deed accomplished by H. when leaping over the dreadful ocean shining like Nandana! (11) One should in no way underestimate the unlimited powers and heroic feats and strength of the enemies, O nightrovers. (12) And what harm has been done formerly to the Rk. king by R. possessed of fame, whose wife he has abducted from Janasthāna? (13) If Khara, who overstepped his limits, has been killed by R. in battle—it is a matter of course that creatures should protect their lives according to their strength. (14) This is the reason why we are in great fear of Vaidehi. She that has been taken away should be set free, there is no
reason in an act that is the object of a quarrel. (15) It is not proper for us to engage in hostility with that heroic one adhering to dharma; let Maithili be given to him. (16) Let Maithili be given to him as long as he does not cleave with his arrows the city together with its elephants, horses and thronged with many jewels. (17) Let S. be handed over as long his horrible, great and unassailable army does not attack our Lanka. (18) For the city of Lanka will perish and so all the heroic Rks. if R.'s beloved wife is not given herself. (19) I propitiate you out of brotherly love, carry out my well-meaning and wholesome words; I am telling you, let Maithili be given to him. (20) Soon the prince will discharge his unsailing, tight-fastened arrows—furnished with new points and feathered parts resembling the rays of the sun in autumn, in order to slay you—let Maithili be handed over to the son of D. (21) Renounce anger, which destroys happiness and dharma and resort to dharma, which increases joy and fame. Be pleased, let us live with our sons and relatives, let Maithili be handed over to the son of D. (22)

Analysis of characterization

With H.'s feat of destroying Lanka—allegedly unassailable and with the onmarch of the Vn. army, Rv. feels humiliated and, summoning his counsellors, asks them about their advice of what they think is proper for him to do in such a situation. While all the counsellors urge him to engage in battle with R., appealing to his heroic feats of old, and impetuously express their eagerness to kill R. and the Vns., Vibhishana, reading the signs of the time in the turn of fate against Rv., has won the insight that both Khara and Rv. have been in the wrong in their actions against R. and that a fight against heroic and virtuous R. and his Vn. army and a refusal to return S. will be suicidal for Rv. and all
Laṅkā. It is on this background that he, in the interest of all Laṅkā and out of brotherly love, tries to pacify Rv.'s blind anger, which he sees has taken command of him, and to restrain him from entering the dire consequences of it.

We see thus Vibhīśaṇa again as a righteous, faithful and well-wishing counsellor, yet in contrast to his earlier characterisation, his loyalty to Rv. is not a blind loyalty to his kindred, but a loyalty coupled with a deep responsibility and desire for their welfare. While such a picture was definitely in the mind of the poet in portraying Vibhīśaṇa's character, we also see that Vibhīśaṇa's well-meaning speech serves as a contrast to—and adds fuel to the fire of—Rv.'s blind anger and passion, which cause him to rebuke Vibhīśaṇa as a treacherous kinsman and give a slap to Vibhīśaṇa's most intimate, sincere and benevolent concern for his brother—forcing him into a situation that leaves no option for him other than to quit, and which, as they destroy Rv.'s very capacity to listen to any wholesome advice, in fact, turn to ridicule his very idea of summoning a council, foreshadow his inevitable doom. In this sense Vibhīśaṇa's character-portrayal is an immediate prelude to the character-portrayal of Rv. himself.

VI 10.12-21

Vibhīśaṇa's anguish and farewell-speech to Ravana

Resumé

Vibhīśaṇa gives vent to his bitter anguish, in a most pathetic and beautiful fare-well speech, at Rv.'s way of requiting his well-wishing words spoken in affectionate
concern for his brother’s welfare and his fraternal love, a love that wanted to prevent him from his now inevitable doom, with such undeserved harshness and wounding insult. Cf. the beautiful verses 17-18:

na naśyantamupkeṣyeyam pradiptaṁ śaraṇam yathā //17
diptapāvakaśaṅkāśaiḥ sītaiḥ kāṇcanahūsanaiḥ /
na tvāmtechaṁyahanām draṣṭum rāmena nihataṁ śaraṁ //18

We read this tone of anguish admixed with sadness also in Vibhīṣaṇa’s self-introduction to Su. (VI 11.10-15), in his reference to his brother’s obstinacy to listen to his well-meant advice to return S. and the bitter calumny thrown upon him. (vv.12-14).

VI 11.53 ff.

Hanuman’s intuition of Vibhīṣaṇa’s integrity

See s.v. Hanumān

VI 13

Contents

Vibhīṣaṇa, pleased at R.’s assurance of his protection to him, descended from the sky to the earth with his four counsellors and, falling on his feet before R., said—“I am a younger brother of Rv., and, having been humiliated
by him, have come to take refuge with you, the protector (refuge) of all beings. I have renounced Laṅkā and all friends and wealth; my kingdom, life and joy are yours. I will assist you with all my might in the slaughter of Rks. and the assault of Laṅkā, and I will enter the army. Thereupon, R. embraced him, sent L. for water and anointed him as king of Laṅkā amidst the delight of the Vns. At H.’s and Su.’s inquiry of how to cross the ocean, Vibhīṣaṇa gave the advice that R. should propitiate the Ocean for help, a suggestion which was well appreciated by R., who then also asked L. and Su. about their opinion, whereupon Su. and L. praised Vibhīṣaṇa’s advice with the argument that without the building of a bridge over the ocean Laṅkā would be unassailable even for Gods and Asuras and urged him to immediately carry it out.

**Analysis of characterization**

Vibhīṣaṇa’s quest for the patronage of R. is a necessary consequence of the bitter humiliation he has suffered from the hands of his brother as well as of Rv.’s submission to anger and passion and his forfeiture of dharma, sure signs of the latter’s irrevocable doom. In such a situation Vibhīṣaṇa’s conscience demands that he should follow the side of dharma, which is with R. and has completely deserted Rv. In this respect he differs from Mārica, who succumbs to Rv.’s will against his better insight. Mārica gives in, not without heroism, but Vibhīṣaṇa is of a heroic ethical loftiness since he follows the call of dharma to the last. It would be wrong to expect V. to draw a tragic Vibhīṣaṇa, who, despite his failure to convince Rv. of his wrong, would cling faithfully to him right to the end out of brotherly love. This does not fit in with the religious spirit of the Rm. In the eyes of V., Vibhīṣaṇa has made the best decision he could, a fact confirmed by the frequent appellations the author gives to
Vibhīṣaṇa precisely in this context: v.2 dharmātmā... vibhīṣaṇaḥ / v.3 vākyan ... dharmayuktam ca yuktam ca / v.13 dharmaṁṣāḥ, and by the very fact that R. accepts him with great affection, which we could not expect of him if he were to consider him not as one seeking protection, but a traitor of his race. (The same problem of interpretation recurs in the context of Indrajit’s charges of treachery. We shall see that Indrajit’s speech is a reflection of Indrajit’s character and not a hidden barb by the poet at Vibhīṣaṇa’s treachery).

Taking into account this background, which is rather implied than explicitly expressed in the preceding sargas, we may ask ourselves what are the character-facets of Vibhīṣaṇa brought out in this sarga. First and foremost it is Vibhīṣaṇa’s humble zeal to offer R. everything of his, his whole self (beautifully expressed in v.5):

parityaktā mayā laṅkā mitrāni ca dhanāni ca /
bhavadgataṁ me rājyam ca jīvitam ca sukhāni ca),

as well as his promise to give him all the assistance in the combat of the Rks. and the assault of Laṅkā—as a token of gratitude for R.’s acceptance of his request for asylum--; and then his dexterity in giving counsel in a situation where, owing to his being a Rk., he is the competent person to give advice or to help out—a facet to which there are scattered references in the prelude to, and in, the battle-scenes themselves, to wit:

He sends Anala, Śarabha, Sampāti and Praghasa to reconnoitre the positions of the Rk. army and to communicate their findings to R. (VI 28.6 ff).

He gives R. an impressive account of the awe-inspiring heroism of Kumbhakarṇa and advises him to announce to the Vns. that he is only a machine set up by the Rks.—so as to encourage them (VI 49).

He reveals grief-stricken R. the secret of Indrajit’s illusory trick of killing a magic effigy of S.—Indrajit, in order to prevent the Vns. from interfering with his sacrifice at
Nikumbhila, intended to confuse the Vns. by producing this illusion—and urges him to send L. to interrupt Indrajit’s sacrifice and fight with him, for he knows that Indrajit’s death is certain according to a prediction of Brahma saying—“That enemy who should strike at you while you are attempting to kill him without your completing the sacrifice, he will be the cause of your death” (ss.71-72).

He then (after L. with Vibisana, H., Jambavan and thousands of Vns. have arrived at Nikumbhila) exhorts L. to cause panic among the Rk. army—so as to induce Indrajit to interrupt his sacrifice (73.2 ff.), and while a bitter fight is going on between Indrajit and H., tells him to take up his fight against the former (vv. 32-34, 74.1-6).

He exhorts the Vns., while L. and Indrajit combat each other, to kill the followers of Indrajit, at a moment promising to be most decisive (VI 77.6-14):

\[
tatah sañcodayano vai harinrakṣoranaṇapriyān / uvāca vacanaṁ kāle kālaṁo rakṣasāṁ varaṁ \ | /6
\]

Finally, R., thankfully declining Vibisana’s invitation to stay with him for one day in Lanka, praises the honour he has received through his counsel, efforts and friendship (VI 109.16—compare also VI 100.9—), and Bh., at the reception, lauds him with the words: \textit{diśtyā tvayā sahāyena kṛtaṁ karma suduskaram} // (VI 115.36²).

\[
\text{VI 77.13-14²}
\]

Translation

It is improper to kill the son of my brother. I would wish that, renouncing my compassion, I could kill the son of my brother, but, though I am desirous of killing him,
tears obstruct my eyes; only this powerful L. will soothe them.

Analysis of characterization

These verses, which occur in the context of Vibhīṣaṇa’s exhortation of the Vns. to kill the followers of Indrajit, are designed to reflect the tender heart of Vibhīṣaṇa: his grief and affection at the sight of his doomed nephew in conflict with his own intention, a conflict which restrains him from directly laying hands on his own relative (he does so later when attacked by him), though he does everything to ensure the final success and thus fulfils his promise.

VI 74.10-27

Vibhisana rejects Indrajit’s rebuke of him as a traitor

Translation

Having been thus addressed, the lustrous, intelligent son of Rv. spoke harsh words when he saw Vibhīṣaṇa there (10): “You have been born and bred here, you are my father’s brother in person, how do you as a paternal uncle bear malice to me, a son, O Rk.? (11) You have no feeling of kinsmanship, no feeling of friendship and caste, O evil-minded one, no sense of correct evaluation, no feeling of blood-brotherhood, no dharma, you violator of dharma. (12) You are vile, O evil-minded one, and deserve to be blamed by the righteous, you who have forsaken your
own people and have resorted to the service of strangers. (13) You, on account of your feeble intelligence, do not know this great difference—where is living together with one’s own people and where taking refuge to mean strangers? (14) Even if another people is possessed of merits and one’s own people is devoid of merits, the people of one’s own even if devoid of merits is superior, while he who is a stranger is stranger only. (15) Of what a nature is this hard-heartedness of yours that you can abuse your own people, O younger brother of Rv.?" (16) Having been thus addressed by the son of his brother, Vibhīṣaṇa answered—"Why, O Rk., do you disparage my character as if you did not know it? (17) Wicked son of the Rk. king, stop your abusing language out of respect. Even though I have been born in the race of the cruel Rks., I possess this first virtue of man, that non-Rk. character (18): Neither do I delight in cruelty nor in unrighteousness; how can you say a brother is abandoned by a crooked brother? (19) Taking away others’ belongings, seducing another’s wife and destruction of one’s friends—these three vices lead to destruction. (20) The terrible slaughter of mahārsis and war with all the Gods, pride, anger, hostility, adversity—these vices, destroying the life and supremacy of my brother, have covered up his merits like clouds cover up the mountains. (22) Because of these vices, my brother, your father, has been forsaken by me. No more is this city of Lāṅkā, no more are you and your father. (23) You are haughty, young and ill-mannered, O Rk.; you are bound by the fetters of Kāla. Tell me, what do you wish? (24) Today your misfortune has come. What will you say here? You are not able to enter to the fig tree, O meanest Rk. (25) Having attacked the two Kākutsthas, you will not be able to live. Fight with the king of men, L. Having been slain, you will perform your duty to the Gods in the abode of Yama. (26) Show your energy exercised, apply to use all your weapons and
arrows, for, having gone within the range of L.'s arrows, you, with your army, will not go away alive today.(27)

Analysis of characterization

The interpretation of part 1 (rebuke) depends on the interpretation of part 2 (rejection) since, if the poet is found to agree with Vibhīṣaṇa's justification, it is clear that Indrajit's rebuke is a reflection on his own character—while, if the poet seems to suggest some form or other of rigidity in Vibhīṣaṇa's reaction, Indrajit's rebuke is also a hidden suggestion of Vibhīṣaṇa's hard-heartedness. What is the criterion by which we can correctly intuit V.'s intention? It is dharma. Though the law of dharma is a fairly relative principle in the V. Rm.—as B. Khan has shown—it is, as we have already remarked earlier, against the spirit of the Rm. to assume that love of one's kinsman should go as far as to serve him, despite the better insight that he indulge in the grossest adharma against one who is an embodiment of dharma and hence is forsaken by Fate—which would be tantamount to conjuring the fate of one who is doomed and the retribution awaiting him upon oneself, and this being the case with Vibhīṣaṇa, what alternative is left for him than to choose the path of dharma and follow it to the last? Besides, we have seen that this interpretation is almost cogently evident in an earlier context and it would be strange if the author should suddenly allude to some weakness in Vibhīṣaṇa's character at a place so far from the critical point. On the other hand, it is natural that Indrajit should accuse Vibhīṣaṇa as a traitor at this very moment when he sees him face to face in battle. From the point of view of Indrajit, his accusation of Vibhīṣaṇa as a traitor is natural. From the point of view of V., it is out of place, the more so as Vibhīṣaṇa does show his brotherly love in as far as he does not lay hands on his nephew personally. So Vibhīṣaṇa's justification, even though it may assume some
degree of harshness (in return for the harsh calumny of Indrajit), cannot be interpreted as hard-heartedness in any way, but has to be understood as a reflection of his firm adherence to dharma, and from this it follows that Indrajit's rebuke is a reflection of his narrow-minded kinship mentality.

Let us now, on this background, sketch the facets of Vibhīṣaṇa's character as they are depicted in the second passage: There is first and foremost his self-assertive vindication of his unflinching commitment to dharma, which is the impress of his character that distinguishes him from all the other Rks. and which has impelled him to repudiate the vices committed by Rv., which are to bring about his doom, and to take the consequences of it: to flee doomed Rv.'s evil grip and take the side of dharma, i.e. to take refuge with R.

Towards the end Vibhīṣaṇa also reveals an inclination to give vent to his pent-up vindicative feelings in return for all the insults inflicted upon him by Indrajit, an inclination expressing itself in the way he abuses Indrajit's pride and in the slightly sarcastic, provocative tone he rebukes him. This last trait is, however, more functional than personal. It serves to evoke Indrajit's irascibility, which itself is an effective prelude to the sentiment of awe of the subsequent battle scenes.

Appendix

Vibhīṣaṇa's reluctance³ to carry out R.'s request to him to perform the obsequial rites for Rv. owing to the evil nature of his brother reflects his conscientious adherence to dharma, which, as it forbade him to assist a person engrossed in adharma, consequently forbids him to do the honour of performing the last rites, which would be some sort of admit-
tance of his identification with him and a breach of his loyalty to R.

Cf. VI 99.33-34—

bhṛatrāṇaḥ hi me śatrureṣa sarvāhite rataḥ /
rañyo nārhaṃ pūjāṁ pūjyo’pi gurugauravāt ///33
nṛṣaṁsa iti mām rāma vakṣyanti manujā bhuvī /
śrutvā tasya guñānsarve vakṣyanti suktē punah ///34

It is only after an assurance on the part of R., who is delighted at these words, that all enmities end with death, that there is no question of loyalties any more that Vibhīṣaṇa carries out R.'s request unhesitatingly.

Vibhīṣaṇa's hospitality manifests itself in various ways in the concluding sargas of the Yuddhakāṇḍa.4

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1 If one compares Vibhīṣaṇa's characterization in the context of the Lāṅka-dahanap ēisode and a reference in the Sundarākāṇḍa (V 35.9 ff.)

vibhīṣaṇena ca bhṛatrā mama niryātanaṁ prati /
anunītāḥ prayatnena na ca tatkurute matim //9
jyeṣṭhā kanyānvālā nāma vibhīṣaṇasūtā kape /
tayā mamaitadākhyātaṁ mātrā prahitaya svayam //11
avindhyo nāma medhāvi vidvān rākasasapuñghavaḥ /
dhīritmaṃśilaṁvāntvādho rāgbaśaya susammataḥ //12
rāmāṅkasayamanuprāptāṁ rākṣasāṁ pratyaçodayat /
na ca tasyāpi duṣṭātmā śṛṇoti vacanaṁ hitam //13——

and analyzes them comparatively, we find that there is a logical contradiction. In the latter, Vibhīṣaṇa pleads for the return of S., in the former, he shares Rv.'s feeling of the provocativeness of H.'s actions, by which he indirectly concedes Rv.'s abduction of S. as being lawful. This logical contradiction, however, does not hold good if one takes into consideration the different purports arising from the different momentary inspirations in each case. In the former, the author's intention is to show that Vibhīṣaṇa, considering Rv.'s abduction of another's wife as unlawful, entreats him to return her. In the latter, the central point is the unlawful execution of an emissionary, which Vibhīṣaṇa advocates against. At the same time it is the author's intention to show——and this idea has to be brought out effectively by the poet at some place and it could not be done any where else more appropriately than at the first real introduction
of his personality—that Vibhīṣaṇa, though he distinguishes himself from the other Rks, in his strict adherence to dharma, is not a stranger to his kind, that he loves his brother Rv. and acknowledges his cognizance of dharma and social customs and that he also thinks in the spirit of the Rks, and thus shares the feelings of the provocativeness of H.'s destructive actions and scornful speech. Besides, Vibhīṣaṇa's realization of Rv.'s unlawful abduction of S. is in itself not in a necessary causal relation with the realization that H.'s devastation of the Aśoka grove and his slaughter of Rk. warriors and R.'s direction to him to do so have their justification—until a point comes where fate itself reveals the truth that dharma has left Rv. and is at the side of R. But all the same we have to admit that there is a disharmony between the two representations. Since the Rm., however, has its inheritance in oral narrative poetry, there is no reason to feel strange about it. Most probably V.'s conception of Vibhīṣaṇa as centred around the discussion between him and Rv., which is the poet's more general conception of him, has been anticipated and stated in an abrupt way in the earlier reference for its own reasons, and so has not been harmonized with his conception of Vibhīṣaṇa's character in its genetic aspect, an aspect which is of a particular interest only in this particular scene.

2 pp. 132-218.

3 Vibhīṣaṇa's lamentation is not found in the North-Western recension and has therefore to be considered as an interpolation.

4 A fairly coherent synthetic picture of the portrait of Vibhīṣaṇa, as the poet has it in mind, easily emerges by a successive reading of the analytical chapters of interpretation itself, and since a separate exposition would come in the main to a repetition of those chapters, we prescind in this case from a synthetic presentation.
RAVANA
A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER-PORTRAYAL OF RAVANA

III 30

SURPANAKHA APPEARS BEFORE RAVANA (RAVANA INTRODUCED TO THE AUDIENCE)

Translation

Then Śūrpanakhā, seeing 14,000 Rks. of terrific prowess slain by single-handed R. and seeing Dūṣāṇa, Khara and Triśirās slain in battle, again raised a loud roar like a cloud, as it were.(1-2) Seeing the deed of R., a deed so extremely arduous for others, she, greatly agitated, went to Laṅkā protected by Rv.(3) She saw Rv. on top of the palace—Rv. possessed of blazing resplendence, surrounded by his ministers like Indra by the Maruts (4); seated on an excellent golden throne resembling the sun, shining, as it were, like a large fire on a blazing sacrificial altar (5); him who is unconquerable in battle by Gods, Gandharvas, creatures and the noble-souled rṣis, heroic, resembling Death with opened mouth (6); him who is marked with wounds caused by the thunderbolt of Indra in the battle between the Devas and Asuras, his chest marked with scars torn open by the pointed tusks of Airāvati (7); him who has twenty arms, ten necks, is beautifully dressed, of a broad chest, heroic, marked with
the royal insignia (8); who is shining like a glistening lapis lazuli, adorned with ear-rings of shining gold, having well-built arms, white teeth, a large mouth, resembling, as it were, a mountain (9); whose body has been wounded by the hurlings of Viṣṇu's disk thrown at him hundreds of times in the battle against the Gods, as well as by all the weapons of the Gods (10); who is a mover of immovable oceans, a quick actor, a hurler of mountain-peaks and a destroyer of the Gods (11); an extirpator of religious laws, a seducer of others’ wives. One who is possessed of all divine astras, one who constantly causes obstacles to sacrifices (12); one who, after entering the city of Bhogavatī and defeating Vāsuki, took away Taksaka’s beloved wife, having subjugated her (13); who, after going to mount Kailāsa and defeating Kubera, took away his chariot Puṣpaka travelling at one’s will (14); who, possessed of heroic power, impelled by anger, destroys the gardens of the Gods, the divine Caitraratha forest, the Nalinī and the Nandana forests (15); who, with his arms resembling a mountain-peak, prevents the illustrious Sun and Moon, the subduers of enemies, from rising (16); who, having practised penance for 10,000 years in the forest, possessed of courage, once offered his heads to Svayambhu (17); who is free from the fear of death in battle at the hands of Gods, Gandharvas, Piśācas, birds, serpents, except from death at the hands of man (18); who, possessed of power, destroys holy Soma—excellent with merits—by the BrahmAstra at sacrifices, the seats of oblations (19): Him that Rākṣasī saw—her brother, cruel and powerful Rv., the destroyer of accomplished sacrifices, the killer of Brāhmaṇas, a Rks. of evil character, cruel, pitiless, bent on the detriment of the people, the source of fear for all beings for all the words.(20-21) To that illustrious one, the lord of the Rks., son of the Paulastya race, clad in celestial clothes and ornaments, adorned with a celestial garland, to that possessor of bright and large eyes—noble Śūrpaṇakhā, mutilated,
stupefied with infatuation on account of fear, after appearing before him, fiercely spoke these harsh words. (22)

**Analysis of characterization**

In this *sarga* the poet directly introduces in a nutshell the whole character of Rv. He does so by depicting a mosaic of character-facets all of which merge into one dominant character-picture, which can be best described as *ghora*. This terrifying nature of Rv. comprises two aspects, the aspect of awe-inspiring super-natural heroism (a) and that of harassing cruelty (b), of which the latter aspect, though being brought out distinctly from the first, is often associated with the former (c) and the former is often depicted as implying a haughty abuse of power (d) leading to the terror of all the worlds so that he is called *sarvabhūtānām sarvalokābhayāvaham* v.20. We may then classify the various character-facets, without, however, forgetting their unitary foundation in Rv.’s *ghora* nature and the fact that the various aspects are brought out not successively, but more or less in one bunch:

a) Rv.’s awe-inspiring brightness of appearance and royal splendour:
Rv.’s terrifying physical appearance (ten necks, twenty arms¹, etc.);

a) and d) Rv.’s unexcelled super-natural heroism, valour and power:
his invincibility from Gods and supernatural beings;
his carrying the scars of his valiant fights against all the Gods;
his extraordinary super-natural capacities: moving immovable oceans, hurling mountain-peaks, possessing all divine astras;
his world-shocking, terrifying feats of the past (the defeat of Vāsuki and abduction of Takṣaka’s wife,
the defeat of Kubera and abduction of his chariot Puṣpaka, his austere 10,000 years’ penance and offer of his heads to Brahmā—as a result of which he received the boon of being unconquerable by Gods and super-natural beings except man) and of the present (the destruction of the gardens of the Gods, the prevention of Sun and Moon from their rise, the destruction of Soma);

b) Rv.’s cruelty and ill-treatment of the people;

b) and c) Rv.’s violation of the sanctity of dharma and his harassment of the righteous:
his extirpation of religious laws;
his obstruction and destruction of sacrifices;
his violation of others’ wives;
his killing of Brāhmaṇas.

III 31

Surpanakha upbraids Ravana of being oblivious of the impending calamity

Translation

Then distressed Śūrpanakhā angrily spoke these words to Rv., the lokarāvana, in the midst of his ministers (1): “Being intoxicated (negligent), wantonly addicted to sensual pleasures and unruly, you do not know, as you ought to know, the terrible danger that has arisen.(2) The people (subjects) do not think highly of a king addicted to sensual pleasures, licentious and greedy, just as they do not do of the fire of a burning-ground (3): a king
that does not himself perform his duties at the proper
time perishes along with his kingdom and with those
duties. (4) People shun a king who has no competent
spies, who is hardly to be seen and not self-dependent,
from afar like elephants the mud of a river. (5) Those
kings who, not being self-dependent, do not protect their
country (dominion)—they do not shine forth with their
wealth like mountains concealed in the ocean. (6) How
will you, without proper spies and being fickle, by quarrelling
with the self-possessed Gods, Gandharvas and
Dānavas, be king? (7) Those kings whose spies, treasure
and statesmanship, O best of conquerors, are not in their
own power are like ordinary people. (8) It is for the fact
that kings see all their distant aims by means of a spy
that kings are called far-sighted. (9) I consider you to be
devoid of competent spies and surrounded by vulgar
ministers (counsellors) since you do not know that your
own people, Janasthāna, has been destroyed (10); that
14,000 Rks. of terrific prowess have been killed by single-
handed R. as well as Khara together with Dūśaṇa (11);
that protection from fear has been granted, the Daṇḍaka
forest has been turned into an abode of peace and
Janasthāna has been outraged by R.—acting with indefatigable zeal (12); that you are greedy and intoxicated
and dependent on others, O Rv., as you do not know
that terror has arisen in your own dominion. (13) All the
beings stop following a king who is stern, little generous,
intoxicated, haughty or deceitful, in calamity. (14) Even
the king’s own people kill a king in calamity if he is a
man possessed of extreme haughtiness, unapproachable
and self-conceited. (15) If he does not perform his duties
and is not afraid, in times of danger, he will be quickly
deprived of his kingdom and will be poor like straw. (16)
One may make use of dry wood, clods and dust, but one
cannot make use of kings who have fallen from their
throne. (17) Like a cloth that has been used or like
garlands that have been squeezed, so he who has been deprived of his kingdom, though powerful, is useless. (18) A king, however, who is vigilant, who knows everything, whose senses are controlled, who is grateful and virtuous, he remains a king for a long time. (19) A king who, though he sleeps with his physical eyes, is awake with the eye of statesmanship, whose anger and favour are clearly distinguished, is honoured by the people. (20) But you, Rv., are evil-minded and deprived of these qualities since you do not know about this terrible slaughter of Rks. through spies. (21) He who despises others, who is addicted to sensual pleasures, who does not know the true nature of the apportionment of place and time, whose mind is unfit for the determination of merits and demerits, will, not after a long time, fall into misery, with his kingdom gone to ruins.” (22) Examining in his mind the faults thus exposed by her, that lord of the night-rovers, Rv., possessed of wealth, pride and power, reflected for a long time. (23)

Analysis of characterization

Śūrpaṇahā upbraids Rv. of being oblivious of his kingly duties to such an extent as not to know the great terror caused by R.’s destruction of 14,000 Rks. including Khara and Dūṣāna, and in this context blames his intoxication, addiction to sensual pleasures, unruliness, greed, dependence on others, unconcern about the protection of the country and the reconnaissance of enemies through spies, his fickleness, quarrels with the Gods, Gandharvas etc., his haughtiness and self-conceit, his failure to know the proper apportionment of place and time, to determine merits and demerits etc., as responsible for his obliviousness, expounding thereby that kings possessing these vices are not respected by their people, that, far from manifesting their kingliness, they are
like ordinary people and, being useless, are quickly dethroned or even killed by their own people in times of calamity—while kings who are vigilant, who know everything, whose senses are controlled, who are grateful and virtuous, remain kings for a long time.

It is evident that Śiṣṭapaṇkhā’s accusation is not prompted by her moral convictions—her character is anything else than moral—but tactical, i.e. has the purpose to arouse Rv.’s anger and incite him more quickly to action, ultimately to satisfy her vengefulness. Her point is not to expose Rv.’s vices as vices, but as the root cause for his obliviousness, which in its turn, according to her, has led to such a great catastrophe. By delving into the depth of Rv.’s moral weaknesses and bringing them into a causal connection with the disaster caused by R., on the one hand, and designating them as the characteristic traits of kings who are doomed in their role of kings, on the other hand, she naturally effects the most spontaneous reactions in Rv. Nevertheless, though Śiṣṭapaṇkhā’s charges are tactical, most of these very charges do seem to be characteristic traits of Rv.’s character: For some of them correspond with the general character-picture presented by the poet in the previous sarga. And these and some others are, by their very nature, more or less directly conducive to the obliviousness with which Śiṣṭapaṇkhā upbraids the king and are thus to be understood as realistic reflections of Rv.’s character. So we can say that through Śiṣṭapaṇkhā’s words upbraiding Rv.’s weaknesses—a mere tactical trick to induce the Rk. king to a spontaneous reaction—the poet himself gives a further elucidation of Rv.’s actual personality, perhaps with some shift of stress in viewing the causal connection between Rv.’s vices and his obliviousness of kingly duties. Namely: Though these vices are all causes for his obliviousness, the ultimate root for this obliviousness of his lies in his haughtiness and self-conceit, which provide him with the opportunities of a sensuous, self-complacent kingly life leading to the neglect of all the precautionary measures of circum-
spection a king is supposed to take. It is precisely this haughtiness which, among other things, sounds so ridiculous in Śūrpaṇakha’s mouth, and it is one of the characteristic features the poet himself ascribes to him in an epithetic manner in the concluding verse of this sarga: kṣaṇadācaraśvarah / dhanena darpeṇa balena cānvito... v.23. As all the three epithets betray somehow the same idea in a mutually supplementary way, they seem to be something more than mere embellishing epithets in the very context in which they occur.

III 32-34

At the instance of Ravana Surpanakha supplies him with information about Rama, Lakshmana and Sita and gives him counsel, prompted by which he goes to call on Marica

Resumé

In ss. 32-33 the poet highlights Rv.’s irritability as a reaction to Śūrpaṇakhā’s upbraiding aimed at arousing his anger and inciting him to act, as well as his succumbour to lust in response to Śūrpaṇakhā’s alluring description of S.’s charming beauty and her inducement of him to abduct her—both aimed at arousing his passion. In the first instance, he instantaneously inquires about the heroic nature of R. without taking reference to any aspect of the charges raised by Śūrpaṇakhā (s.32 beginning). In the second, he weighs the pros and cons of the plan proposed by Śūrpaṇakhā and also acquaints his ministers with it, but without making much fuss decides in favour of it (s.33 beginning).
In the description of Rv.'s journey (s. 33.7 ff.), the poet refers to his awe-inspiring splendour of appearance and physical strength.

In the exposition of his plan to Mārīca, Rv. manifests the following character-facets:

1) his presumptuous attitude of disparaging R. as a prince possessed of all sorts of vices, who was banished by his angry father (despite any such information from Śūrpaṇakhā) and who indulged in the cruel act of slaughtering Khara's army—an attitude which reflects Rv.'s irascibility as well as his self-righteous, subjective way of viewing things;

2) his evaluation of Mārīca as the shrewd magician he was of old, failing to recognize his inner conversion to a saintly life;

3) his dependence on others to carry out his vile intentions.

III 35-37

Mārīca dissuades Ravana from his evil plan

For contents see s.v. Mārīca.

Resumé

Though Mārīca tries his best to bring Rv. to reason and does so with responsibility and concern for his welfare, he does not shun from bluntly exposing Rv.'s vices so as to impress upon him the dire consequences his intention entails.
Thus, ṛaṅga’s subjective characterization corresponds with how the poet himself would portray ṹ. The character-traits alluded to by ṛaṅga are:

Ṛv.’s presumptuous attitude of disparaging Ṛ.’s character while failing to realize his own vices—an attitude which reflects his self-righteous, subjective way of viewing things;

his self-conceited haughtiness and, rooted in it, his unconcern about the protection of the country, his fickleness, addiction to sensual pleasures, unruliness and viciousness—a haughtiness which blinds him to the idea of Ṛ.’s superiority over him (s.35, with slight traces of one or the other element in ss.36-37).

III 38

Ṛvaṇa repudiates Marica’s counsel and threatens to punish him with death if he disobeys

Translation

But ṛv., though addressed with these proper and befitting words by ṛaṅga, did not take the medicine, desirous, as it were, of death.(1) The king of the Ṛks., driven by Kāla, said harsh, unbefitting words to ṛaṅga—speaking wholesome and beneficial words (2)—“These words which you are saying to me, O ṛaṅga, are absolutely futile like seed sown on a barren spot.(3) But your words cannot prevent me from fighting with evil-natured foolish Ṛ., who, above all, is a human being, who, having abandoned his relatives, kingdom, mother and father,
listening to the vulgar words of a woman, all of a sudden left for the forest. (4-5) At all events, I must take away S.—dearer to him than life, from that slayer of Khara, in your presence. (6) Thus my decision is fixed and remains fixed in my heart and no Gods, even together with Indra, or Asuras can thwart it. (7) If asked about merits or demerits, you should tell, accordingly, the ominous dangers or the means of success for the assurance of this task. (8) But when asked, a wise counsellor should speak with raised and folded hands, like one who wishes the welfare of his king. (9) And a king should be told words which are favourable, full of sweetness, auspicious, beneficial and endowed with politeness. (10) But beneficial words which are spoken with destructiveness, which are devoid of respect, O Mārīca, a king deserving respect does not welcome. (11) All-powerful kings assume the five forms of Agni, Indra, Soma, Yama, and Varuṇa, namely heat, valour, gentleness, punishment, kindness. (12) Therefore, kings have to be respected and honoured under all circumstances, but you, disregarding dharma, have taken recourse only to delusion. (13) Out of wickedness you speak such harsh words to me who have come here (approaching you). I am not asking you about merits and demerits and what is becoming of me, O Rk., but now you have to render me assistance in this task (14) ... [Rv. outlines the plan] Having so performed this task, go where you wish, O Rk.; I shall give you half of my kingdom, O virtuous Mārīca. (18) Follow, O dear one, the auspicious way to this task for the sake of your prosperity. Having obtained S. without fight and deceived (escaped) R., I shall return with you to Laṅkā after accomplishing my aim. (19) At all events, you will do this work even through my force, for one who opposes a king never lives in happiness (20); if he encounters him, his life is in danger. Now, if you quarrel with me, your death is certain. Consider this properly in your mind; do what is wholesome in this case." (21)
Analysis of characterization

The central character-facet which the author elucidates through Rv.'s own words is Rv.'s meanness to scorn and rebuke the well-meant, beneficial advice of a conscientious counsellor, an attitude which reflects his stubbornness and irascibility at the instance of any objection raised against his self-willed resolution, an attitude which is, thus, rooted in his presumptuous and self-conceited attitude of disparaging the opponent's (R.'s) point of view, making him blind to any objective assessment of R.'s personality and of things as they stand, despite all the elucidation of R.'s personality and heroism by Mārīcā. It also reflects Rv.'s presumption of his status as a king in that he is more concerned about flattering etiquettes than about hearing the truth, in that he demands that his counsellors should approach him with reverence under all circumstances and tell him the merits and demerits of an engagement only when they are asked and then with all humility and propriety, never daring to utter any shattering words devoid of respect. And last but not least it reflects the tyrannic dictatorship of a king who turns a request into a command, with threats of penalty of death in case his client fails to obey mixed with blandishing promises in case he obeys.

III 39-40.1-3

Marīcā resigns to Rv.'s wishes after a last attempt of persuasion

Résumé
See s.v. Mārīca.
Mārīca, and through Mārīca V., rebukes Rv.'s obliqueness of mind in listening to the destructive advice of ill-disposed counsellors instead of accepting the good spoken by a friend and, by this, his stubbornness of mind. As in contrast to this, V. shows in 40.4-6 Rv.'s morbid delight (satisfaction) when he finds his wilful desire fulfilled.

III 44-45.27
Ravana approaches Sita

Contents

Rv. assumed the appearance of a parivrājaka and approached S.—bereft of R. and L., like darkness approaches twilight—bereft of sun and moon. At the sight of this cruel sinner, trees did not tremble, the wind did not blow and the Godāvarī ceased its course. As Rv., an inauspicious sinner in an auspicious guise, drew near to S. like Saturn to Citrā and like a well hidden by grass stood watchig her charming beauty as she was sitting in her hut and weeping, he was pierced by the arrows of Cupid and, citing the Veda, praised her with humble words spoken in seclusion [direct speech in the original]. He first pays a long and detailed tribute to her exquisite physical charms, saying that he has not seen a Goddess or Gandharvī or Yakṣī or Kinnarī or woman of such beauty and confesses that her beauty, youth and lonely stay in the forest have stirred up his mind, thereby intimating that it is not proper for her to stay in this forest which is the abode of fierce Rks., who can assume different
forms at will, but that she should stay in beautiful palaces and prosperous city-parks. Paying tribute to her exquisite appearance and excellent husband that she must have, he asks her which of the Rudras, Maruts, Vasus she is, since she appears to him like a Goddess. But as this is not the abode of Gandharvas, Gods, Kinnaras but of Rks. and of monkeys, lions, elephants, tigers, bears etc., he wonders how she has come here alone and lives without being afraid and finally asks her who she is, whose wife she is, from where and why she has come to the Daṇḍaka forest. After receiving such compliments from Rv., S., who, from his external appearance, took him to be a Brāhmaṇa, honoured him with all hospitality due to a Brāhmaṇa and offered a meal to him. While being offered meal, Rv., seeing charming S., fixed his mind on taking her away. Meanwhile, S., waiting and looking out for R. and L., saw only the green forest but not R. and L.

Then S., asked by Rv., introduced herself after considering in her mind that, since he is a Brāhmaṇa and her guest, he may curse her if she does not answer him......... As soon as she ended her speech with the question addressed to Rv. who he is, to which clan he belongs and why he is travelling alone through the Daṇḍaka forest, Rv. revealed his identity, saying—"I am Rv., the lord of the Rks., before whom all the worlds with the Gods, Asuras, birds etc. are struck with fear. Seeing you of golden hue and dressed in silken garment, I do not find any pleasure in my wives; become my principal queen of the many excellent ladies I have taken away. I possess the great city of Laṅkā encircled by the ocean and resting upon hill-tops. There you will rove with me in the forests and you will no more desire to stay in this forest. Five thousand female servants adorned with all ornaments will wait upon you if you become my wife, O S."
Analysis of characterization

In s.44 V. portrays a Rv. who is instantaneously smitten by the arrows of Cupid at the sight of the charming beauty of S. In fact, the upsurge of his erotic passion, which is mixed with an overtone of adoration, is so strong that it betrays itself unmistakably in his compliments to S. in what is supposed to be a salutatory speech, inspite of his dissimulation as a parivrājaka. While the author reveals this to the attentive listener, it remains concealed to S., who is illusioned by Rv.'s disguise though she can't help feeling a little strange about the erotic compliments he pays to her.

This upsurge of passion in Rv. comes to its full breakthrough as soon as S., after introducing herself, invites him to stay and asks him about his personals, and it reveals itself not only as a purely sensual passion kindled by the physical charms of S., but also as a passion of adoration for her infatuating him with the ambition to woo for her and win her love. This infatuation, however, far from any altruistic feeling of love, is nothing more than a greed of possession, an infatuation that is self-conflictingly tyrannic: i.e., though Rv. tries to win and buy her love with all blandishments, he, so the poet means to say, does not tolerate her freedom to reject him. Further, Rv.'s intention, by its very nature, implies a passion that bids defiance to dharma and wifely fidelity, that is insolent and cruel.

III 45.32-43

For translation see s.v. Sītā.
Resumé

This abominable degradation of Rv. in the mouth of S., a natural result of her indignation at his exorbitantly mean and insolent intrusion upon her, is meant to be the poet’s mirror of Rv.’s character itself, i.e., it is the poet, who, through the words of S., disparages Rv. in his own words. The picture of Rv. as it emerges in these lines is the picture of a person who has the exorbitant presumption, insolence and meanness of aspiring for the wife of a man whose greatness of personality is a world above the abominable lowness of character of his own.

III 46

Ravana reiterates his proposal by bragging about his awe-inspiring omnipotence, heroism and royal wealth

Translation

Furious about S. speaking such harsh words, Rv., knitting his eye-brows on his forehead, replied (1)—“I am the step-brother of Kubera, O excellent lady, I am, prosperity to you, the valiant (powerful) ten-necked Rv., for fear of whom all creatures, Gods, Gandharvas, Piśācas, birds and serpents at all times run away as if in the fear of death (2-3), by whom—prompted by anger—my step-brother Kubera, who for some other reason had been involved in a duel with me, was overpowered and defeated in battle. (4) Having abandoned his flourishing residence,
Kubera, oppressed by fear of me, dwells on the excellent mountain Kailāsā.(5) To him belongs that excellent vimāna going at will, called Puṣpaka, captured by my power, on which I go through the sky.(6) Merely on seeing my face enraged, O Maithilī, the Gods with Indra at their lead run away in panic.(7) Where I stay, there the wind blows in fear, there the hot-rayed sun becomes cool-rayed out of fear.(8) Where the leaves of the trees stand motionless and the waters of the rivers stand calm (still), there I stay and rove about.(9) On the other side of the ocean is my excellent city called Lāṅkā, filled with fierce Rks., resembling the Amarāvati of Indra (10); a beautiful city, encircled by a white wall, brilliant, with golden private chambers, with gates made of lapis lazuli (11), thronged with elephants, horses, chariots, resounding with the sounds of tūryas, beautified with gardens full of fruits and trees of all desires.(12) Dwelling there with me, O princess S., you won’t remember the human ladies, O high-minded lady (13); enjoying human and divine pleasures, O excellent lady, you will not remember R., an ordinary man, whose life is fading away (14), who, being the eldest son but weak, has been banished into the forest by king D. after making his favourite son rule.(15) What will you do, O large-eyed one, with that senseless poor ascetic R. expelled from the kingdom? (16) You ought not to reject the lord of all Rks., who has come here personally out of love, pierced by the arrows of Cupid.(17) For having rejected me, O timid one, you will fall into agony like Urvasī having kicked Purūravas with her foot.”(18)—Having been thus addressed, Vaidehī, enraged and with eyes reddened, spoke these harsh words to the lord of the Rks. in secrecy (19)—“How do you, calling God Kubera—honoured by all beings—your brother, wish to create misfortune? (20) Certainly all the Rks., O Rv., will perish, whose cruel, evil-minded, uncontrolled king you are. (21) It is possible to live after carrying away Śacī, wife of Indra, but it is not possible to
live after carrying away me, the wife of R. (22) One may
live long after raping Śaci of incomparable beauty from
the hands of Indra, but there is no escape for you, O Rk.,
after raping one like me even if you have drunk amṛta.(23)

Analysis of characterization

This sarga is a master-piece of psychology because in it
Rv.’s whole character imprints itself. Though Rv. has been
most bluntly told by S. what she thinks of him and has been
degraded in the most humiliating way, he still carries on to
win her love, overcome as he is with a strong feeling of passion
and adoration for her. But he has no better means than
to brag about his all-powerfulness and heroism, before which
the Gods, Gandharvas, Piśācas etc. run away in fear etc.,
about the glamour and magnificence of his city Laṅkā, which,
according to his poor estimation, would make S. forget
human ladies and R.—an ordinary human being, no better
means than to disparage R. as a poor ascetic banished on
account of his weakness by his father, who gave preference to
his favourite son, useless for S., or to haughtily appeal to her
conscience that she ought not to reject the lord of the Rks.,
who has personally come to her out of love, lest she will repent
like Uvaśī after kicking Purūravas. Rv. thus not only
exposes his ridiculous way of courtship which, though it does
not spring merely from lust but also from feelings of
adoration, is nothing but greed to possess her and is based
on an exorbitant presumption, self-conceit, insolence and an
utter perversity—manifesting itself in the sacrilegious idea he
has of a devoted wife’s conjugal fidelity, and thus (this is
implied) bids defiance to all laws of dharma, proving itself
to be self-conflicting as well as tyrannic. In fact, the poet
himself puts Rv. to ridicule when he makes him say—

    sarvarāksasah kartārah kāmāt svayamihāgatam
    na manmathāsāri viṣṭam pratyākhyātum tvamarhasi
While Rv. means to say: I have humbled myself to come to you, driven by love, and you ought to accept this unique offer of my love, otherwise you will repent—the poet means: You have come here, driven by lustful passion and greed to possess her, to impose yourself upon her, and if she is not willing, she will see the consequences. So he lays bare the very depth of his presumptuous, self-conceited, infamous and tyrannic nature.

III 47-52

Ravana abducts Sita

Resumé

As S. scorns Rv. again, his patience is at his end, and, angrily upbraiding her for her ignorance of his world-famous heroism and prowess, he, while exorbitantly boasting of his power to raise the earth with his arms, to drink the ocean and to kill Death, and then assuming his own ghoric² form, standing before S. in his terrifying splendour of appearance and furiously staring at her with his red eyes, once more proposes to her, with presumptuous words about his fame in all the three worlds and his worthiness of being her husband, hoping that she would yield to him at least now that she sees him standing with all his awe-inspiring resplendence before her. In order to persuade her, he also strikes a tone of blandishment, assuring her that he will never do her any harm, and appeals to her good sense to give up her human attachment and grant it to him, thereby expressing his inability to understand for what merits she should be attached to a man with a short span of life, who at the words of a woman has come to the
forest, leaving behind kingdom and relatives. But this very thought makes him feel S.’s firmness and his incapability of winning her love, and so, forgetting all about the finer side of his attachment, he takes recourse to the only means a passion-stricken, love-sick tyrant has got, whose courtship has remained unsuccessful: forceful abduction. In this, his whole character exposes itself: his self-conflicting passion adorant and tyrannic at the same time, his exorbitant presumption and self-conceit, his perversity of mind manifesting itself in the sacrilegious idea he has of a devoted wife’s conjugal fidelity, his disrespect of dharma, and his infamous tyranny roused by the futility of his courtship, which, trampling down all the repulses and feelings of the adored one, has no other means to counter-react than to take refuge in force and cruelty. (47)

In depicting Rv.’s forceful abduction of S., the poet highlights Rv.’s ghoric physical appearance, cruelty and ruthlessness—striking terror among all the creatures and awakening their pity for S. (47.15 ff., 50).

For the context of Jaṭāyu’s appeal to Rv.’s conscience (s. 48) and his second challenge to him (s. 49.19-27) see s.v. Jaṭāyu. In this, Jaṭāyu exposes Rv.’s sin of touching another’s wife, the wife, moreover, of a virtuous king like R. —a sin so grave that it is sure to entail his destruction (and that of all the Rks.), a sin that is a scandal to the people following the king in all matters and the way of behaviour of a coward thief. In the description of the fighting episode as such (s.49) the poet exhibits Rv.’s irascibility as well as his relentless and ruthless hard-heartedness.

While Rv. flies through the air, S. bitterly censures the shameless, thiefly cowardice, sinfulness and infamy of his act of abduction of another’s wife, as well as his vicious disregard of dharma, the destructive consequences of which she predicts and depicts to him in provocatively sarcastic and
abasing words, with, however, no effect on Rv. (s. 51)

S. 52, which describes Rv.'s arrival with S. in Lāṅkā, his directions to the Rākṣasīs to treat S. gently and his order to some of the Rks. to go as his spies to Janasthāna, elucidates the following modes of his behaviour: his adorant passion for S., which induces him to order the Rākṣasīs to treat her with all gentleness, on the one hand; his vengeful idea of persecuting R., for killing Khara and his army, up to his death before which he shall not find sleep, the accomplishment of which will give him the blissful feeling of a poor man securing a large amount of wealth; as also his delight in the successful capture of S. and the commencement of hostilities with R., on the other hand.

III 53-54

These sargas are similar in structure and character to V 18-20, which are a repetitive variant of the former, except for greater modifications in S.'s reply to Rv. As the latter sargas are more comprehensive and richer in the psychological characterization of Rv., we shall restrict ourselves to them alone, referring in an appendix to one or the other trait portrayed in the former but absent in the latter.

V 3-9

Resumé
Almost the whole of this section contributes in some way or other to depict the glamour and splendour of Rv.’s wealth, luxury and revelry, in particular his amorous debaucheries, the latter mostly in s.8, which also describes the splendour of his royal attire and the brightness of his physical appearance. The poet draws all gamuts of poetical imagination, an impression of which can be gained only by reading.

V 16

Hanuman sees Ravana approaching

Resumé

In this sarga the poet depicts the following character-facets of Rv.: his amorous passion roused at the first thought of S. on rising from bed; his inebriate appearance as a result of lust, pride and drunkenness: his royal splendour in the midst of a retinue of inebriate-looking queens following him out of attachment—symbolizing his revelry of life and amorous debaucheries; the incomprehensible strength and manliness and dazzling splendour of his physical appearance.
V 18-20

Translation

That Rv. induced that concealed distressed and cheerless ascetic lady with sweet words accompanied by facial expressions revealing his internal feelings (1)—“Seeing me, you, possessing thighs like the trunk of an elephant, want to make yourself out of fear invisible as it were, hiding your breast and belly.(2) I love you, O large-eyed one, respect me (think highly of me), O dear one, O you endowed with all bodily excellences, you who captivate the minds of the entire world.(3) Here there are no men, no Rks. assuming forms at will: let your fear be removed, which has arisen on account of me.(4) It is no doubt, O timid one, the Rks.’ own dharma par excellence to cohabit with others’ wives or to carry them away by violence.(5) And thus it be—I shall not touch you, Maithili, being unwilling, even if my carnal lust in my body should act according to its desire (at will).(6) O queen, don’t have any fear, have confidence in me, O dear, and truly offer yourself; don’t be absorbed in grief.(7) Wearing a single braid of hair, sleeping on the ground, meditating, wearing dirty clothes, fasting out of place—these things are not proper for you.(8) Enjoy variegated garlands, sandal-perfumes and agallocha, and various dresses and celestial ornaments and highly costly drinks, carriages and beds, and singing, dancing and musical instruments, by obtaining me, O Maithili.(9-10) You are a jewel of a woman, don’t be like this; decorate your body, for how should you, when you obtain me, be unworthy, O well-shaped one? (11) This charming youth of yours which you have been endowed with is passing away. What has passed away does not return, like a rapid stream of waters.(12)
I think that the sculptor Viśvakarmā has ceased after forming you, for there is none equal to you in beauty, O lovely one. (13) Which man, be it even the Grand sire incarnate, could ignore you after meeting you, Vaidehī—resplendent with beauty and youth? (14) Whatever limb I see of yours, O you possessed of a face resembling the moon, on that my eye is fixed upon, O large-hipped one. (15) Be my wife, O Maithili, give up this infatuation; be my foremost queen among the many excellent wives. (16) Whatever jewels I have carried away from the worlds by force, all these, O timid one, are yours, as well as this kingdom and my self. (17) Having conquered the whole of the earth crowned with manifold cities, I shall bestow it to Janaka for your sake, O lady. (18) I do not see any body else here in the world who could be equal in strength to me; see my extraordinarily great and irresistible heroism in battle. (19) Gods and Asuras, often and often defeated by me in battle, with their flags crushed, are unable to stand against my hostile activities. (20) Desire me, let excellent decor be made for you and shining ornaments attached to your body; let me see your perfect beauty adorned with decoration. (21) Endowed with decor and polite conduct, enjoy pleasures, O lovely one, to your heart’s content; drink, timid one, and be merry and distribute, according to your wish, the earth and riches. (22) Amuse yourself with me without fear and give boldly orders to me; let also your friends, as you are amusing yourself, amuse themselves under my auspices. (23) See my wealth, splendour and fame, O my good lady; what will you do with R., my dear, clad in rags? (24) R. has lost victory and glory and is a forest-roving ascetic sleeping on the bare sacrificial ground; I doubt whether he lives (or not). (25) Also, R. will not get a chance to see you, O Vaidehī, you who are concealed like the moon-light with dark clouds before it looking like cranes. (26) And also, Rāghava will not be able to acquire
you from my hands as Hiranyaakaśipu acquired Kirti, who was in the hands of Indra. (27) O lady with lovely teeth and eyes, you take away my mind, O timid one, like Suparna does a snake. (28) Seeing you dressed in a faded silk-garment, lean and undecorated, I do not find any pleasure in my own wives. (29) Command, O Jñanaksi, over all the wives I have — dwelling in the female apartments, endowed with all excellences. (30) For those wives of mine with dark long hair, the most excellent in the three worlds, will attend upon you like Apsara on Lakshmi. (31) Whatever jewels and riches Kubera has, O you with lovely eye-brows, enjoy them and the worlds, O lovely-hipped one, and me, to your heart's delight. (32) R., O queen, is no match to me with regard to penance, power, valour, wealth, brightness or fame. (33) Drink, amuse yourself, be merry, enjoy pleasures, I shall bestow on you a store of wealth and the earth; amuse yourself with me, O lady, to your heart's delight, and let your friends, when you meet them, amuse themselves with you. (34) You, whose body is adorned with a golden, stainless necklace of pearls, sport with me, O timid one, through forests, along the sea-shore carpeted with masses of flowering trees and filled with bees. (35)

Hearing those words of that savage (fierce) Rk., S., afflicted and distressed, said in return gently these piteous words. (1) Beautiful ascetic S., afflicted with grief, weeping and trembling, only thinking of her husband—a wife loyally devoted to her husband — said in return with a pure smile, putting a blade of grass between them — "Turn away your mind from me and divert it to your own people. (2-3) You are unworthy to desire for me like a sinner for fulfilment (perfection). I must not do a deed which is reprehensible for a faithful wife, who has obtained and been born in a noble family." (4) Having thus spoken to that Rv., glorious Vaidehi, turning towards the Rk., resumed her speech (5) — "I am not a worthy wife
if I am the paramour of you. Have right regard for<em> dharma</em> and righteously follow the <em>vrata</em> of a virtuous man. (6) The wives of others should be protected like your own, O night-rover. Making yourself the standard of comparison, find pleasure in your own wives. (7) A man who is not content with his wife, who is fickle, whose senses are stirred up, who is wicked—such a man a paramour leads to ignomy. (8) Here there are no virtuous people, or, as one whose mind has been guided wrongly, you do not follow the words of a virtuous man, the wholesome advice spoken by the wise. (9) Prosperous kingdoms and cities which are in the possession of a king who is ignorant, who is bent on an evil course, perish. (10) Thus this city of Lāṅkā, filled with heaps of jewels, which is in your possession, will soon perish through your own fault alone. (11) Creatures rejoice, O Rv., at the destruction of a short-sighted sinner ruined by his own deeds. (12) Thus the people who have been humiliated will with great joy say to you sinner: ‘Fortunate that you have met with this destruction, you savage.’ (13) I can neither be enticed by supreme power nor by wealth. I am solely belonging to R. as light solely belongs to the sun. (14) Having made the revered arm of that lord of the world my pillow, how shall I use the arm of somebody else as a pillow? (15) I am the lawful wife belonging only to that king, as knowledge belongs to a learned Brāhmaṇa, who has accomplished his stage of a <em>brahmacāri</em>. (16) Well, Rv., unite me, who am distressed, with R., like a stately elephant in a forest with a female elephant. (17) It is proper for you to make this foremost of man, R., your friend if you wish to obtain royal stability and do not wish your ghastly destruction. (18) May be the thunderbolt of Indra discharged, may be death spare a man like you for a long time, but not so that angry king R. (19) You will hear the twanging sound of R.’s bow sounding like the rattling of the thunderbolt discharged by Indra. (20) ... My husband,
the subduer of enemies, will carry me away from you like Viṣṇu carried away resplendent Lakṣmī from the Asuras with his three steps. (24) After Janasthāna has been turned into a deserted place and the Rk. army been destroyed, you weakling have committed this wicked deed, O Rk. (25) Entering the empty hermitage of those two brothers—foremost of men—who have gone roving in the forest, you have taken me away, you meanest person. (26) For you are not able to withstand the sight of R. and L., like a dog cannot withstand the sight of tigers after getting their smell. (27) ... Whether you have gone to the mount of Kubera or rather his abode or whether you have gone to the hall of king Varuṇa, you will doubtlessly not escape from R., like a tree struck by fate from the fire of lightning.” (30)

Having heard these harsh words of S., the lord of the Rks. then spoke in return these offensive words to lovely-looking S. (1)—“The more conciliatory a man is, the more he has to yield to women; the more he speaks sweetly, the more he is rebuffed. The love which has sprung up in me for you restrains my anger, like a good charioteer his running horses having reached the road. (2-3) Perverse is the love of humans: There is born, they say, compassion and affection for the person on whom it is fixed. (4) For this reason I shall not kill you, O lovely one, though you deserve to be killed, deserve to be despised, being devoted to a feigned ascetic. For all the harsh words you speak to me you deserve ruthless death, O Maithilli.” (6) Having thus spoken to Vaidehi, Rv., the lord of the Rks., filled with raging anger, gave this answer to S. (7)—“Two months is the limit I have given to you—which I shall keep waiting for, after that you have to enter my bed, O excellent lady. (8) But if after these two months you do not wish me to be your husband, your cooks will procure you for my breakfast.” (9) Seeing that
Jānakī terrified by the lord of Rks., those large-eyed Deva and Gandharva maidens were sad. Some comforted S.—terrified by that Rk.—with lip gestures, others with their eyes and faces.(11) Comforted by them, S. spoke to Rv., the lord of the Rks., these words beneficial to herself and assuming lofty tones due to her pride in her virtuous conduct (12)—“Certainly you have no people; since, being so unrighteous, they do not avert you from this wicked deed (13), for who but you in the three worlds would even in his mind desire me—being the wife of a virtuous man like Śacī of Indra.(14) O meanest Rk., whither will you go to be released from that evil (sin) which you have spoken (uttered) to the wife of R.—possessed of infinite lustre ? (15) Like a proud elephant and a hare associated in the forest, so are R., an elephant, as it were, and you, O mean one, a hare.(16) As such, are you not ashamed of insulting the lord of the Ikṣvākus ? Surely you shall not attain the aim of that eye of yours.(17) How is it, you mean one, that these fierce, ugly, dark-red eyes of yours stare at me and have not fallen on the ground ? (18) I am the wife of virtuous R. and daughter-in-law of D. ; how is it, you sinful one, that your tongue does not tear while speaking to me ? (19) But since I do not have R.’s commission and because I am practising tapas, I do not reduce you to ashes, you who deserve to be burnt to ashes by the fire of my brightness (or : I do not reduce you to ashes by the fire of my power to burn you to ashes).(20) You are not able to take me away from that wise R. ; the ordinance for your death has been fixed, there is no doubt about that.(21) How is it that you have committed the crime of seducing a wife, a hero, a brother of Kubera and possessed of strength, by alluring R. away ?”(22) Having heard S.’s words, Rv., rolling his fierce eyes, looked at Jānakī.(23) ... [description of his awe-imposing ghoric and wrathful appearance]. Staring at S. with eyes reddened with anger, Rv. said to S., hissing
as it were, like a snake (28)—"You who are attached to one who is possessed of evil conduct and has renounced his aim—I shall destroy you today like the sun the morning twilight by its rays."(29) Having thus spoken to Maithili, king Rv., the satruravana, then commanded all the frightful (ghoric)-looking Rākṣasīs.(30) ... [a description of the Rākṣasīs according to their variegated hideous monstrosities] "That S., the daughter of Janaka, quickly becomes subjected to me, to that you see quickly, all of you Rākṣasīs, and unitedly.(34) Bring S. round by fair and unfair means, by conciliation, bribery and the like and by sowing dissensions as well as by raising the stick."(35) Having thus directed them again and again, the lord of the Rks. thundered at Jānaki, his mind being filled with passion and anger.(36) Then the Rākṣasī Dhānyamālinī quickly approached and, embracing Daśagrīva, said these words (37)—"Sport with me, O great king; what will you do with that woman? The body of a man lusting for a woman who is unwilling is tormented; splendid delight comes to one lusting for a woman who is willing."(38) Thus addressed by the Rākṣasī, the mighty one was carried away by her and entered the palace resembling the hue of the blazing sun (or: entered the shining palace resembling the hue of the sun).(39) Then those daughters of the Gods and Gandharvas and Nāgas enclosed Daśagrīva and entered that best of houses.(40) That Rv., after reviling (threatening) pious and firm Maithili trembling (with fear), left S., infatuated with passion, and entered his shining abode.(41)

Analysis of characterization

For the sake of clarity we shall analyse Rv.’s and S.’s speeches separately though, with regard to characterization,
both breathe a similar spirit and both reflect the intention of
the poet himself.

Rv., in his courtship of S., exposes the entire psychic
structure of his amorous passion. The poet has exemplified
this already at a number of earlier occasions. He has depicted
all the different facets of Rv.'s passion either explicitly or im-
PLICITLY with different emphases, but perhaps nowhere else has
he illustrated each one of these facets with such vividness. The
listener already knows that at the basis of Rv.'s amour is his
sexual passion. So the poet, already before describing Rv.'s
actual meeting with S., very vividly depicts this weakness of
his (s.16) and then, while describing Rv.'s attempt to seduce
S., does not fail to make him confess even to S. that her
physical beauty stimulates him sexually. But the poet did not
leave it at a mere sensual passion of Rv., which would make
short shrift with S. He wanted his character to really fall in
love with S. with all the manifestations characteristic of love,
and since the most symptomatic feature of these manifesta-
tions is that of the lover's adoration for his beloved, he
wanted to depict Rv.'s passion not as a mere lust but also as
an infatuation. Why? He has not given us a direct clue to
this, but most probably he has chosen to do so to highlight
the effect of S.'s awe-inspiring personality. S., who is an
embodiment of all excellences, physical excellences as well as
moral virtues, should naturally arouse feelings of adoration
for her even in a brutal savage like Rv. So far so good. But
how far does the poet want Rv. to go in his adoration of S. and
of what nature does he want this adoration to be? When we
look into Rv.'s very method of courtship, we immediately
feel that he lacks all altruistic feelings of love, that, already
having her in his power, he merely pursues his ambition to
win her love, to win a response from her, that he is intent on
ultimately taking possession of her by whatever means
possible, fair or foul, without giving her any alternative,
without tolerating her freedom to reject his proposal. In
short, his adoration for S. is coupled with a greed to possess her and with tyranny. As this tyrannization of the idol of his veneration comes into conflict with his very adoration of her person, as it creates a psychological conflict with his own self, we can circumscribe Rv.'s passion perhaps best as a self-conflicting adorant infatuation. An adoration which is exclusively rooted in a greed to possess and which has recourse to tyranny as a last but irrevocable means, is naturally fuelled with an ambition to win a response from the adored one and so demands desperate efforts of persuasion. It is these efforts of persuasion and this ambition to win a response from S. which the poet makes the central features of Rv.'s courtship, and by doing so, he not only exposes and ridicules the kind of love which determines Rv., but he exposes and ridicules the very nature of Rv.'s character, for his desperate attempts to persuade S., attempts which lack all the fundamentals of virtue and dharma, cannot but reveal the perversity of his mind.

Let us now give concrete illustrations of each of the facets of Rv.'s psychology of love, which we have outlined schematically:

—Rv.'s sexual passion: cf. 16 passim; 18.3,5-6,14-15—

—Rv.'s adorant infatuation: cf. 18.3-7 & ff., 13-16 & ff., 28-29 & ff.—

—Rv.'s adorant infatuation which is of a nature that prompts him to pursue his ambition to win S.'s love, but reveals itself as a mere greed to possess her:
  implicit throughout the passages indicated, very implicit in:
  18.24-27—

—his desperate attempts to seduce her by having recourse to the following means:
  trying to soothe her fears and instill into her a feeling of confidence in him;
18.2; 18.4-7; blandishing her with the presumptuous promise of endowing her with all the splendour he has, i.e. by putting all the riches and luxuries, comforts of life at her disposal:
cf. 18.8-12, 17-18, 21-23, 32-35
and making her queen over all his wives:
cf. 18.16, 30-31;
bragging about his unexcelled power and heroism, which even the Gods are unable to withstand:
cf. 18.19-20;
disparaging R. as a miserable forest-rover useless for S., a world away from his own awe-inspiring wealth, glory and power; as a man who will never succeed in regaining S. from his (Rv.'s) all-powerful hands:
cf. 18.24-27, 33; —
—his recourse to tyrannic threats, on failing to win her love, which is thus in conflict with the very sentiment of adoration he cherishes for S., with the very encouragement he has given her not to be afraid of him:
implicitly foreshadowed throughout in the description of Rv.'s act of abduction and his earlier threats, explicitly foreshadowed in 18.26 ff., explicitly expressed in 20.2-9, partim 5-9; 20.23-36 4 —
—his exorbitant presumption, self-conceit, insolence and perversity of mind, revealing itself through a passion that defies all regards of dharma and virtue and respect for a devoted wife's loyalty to her husband—and this despite so many blunt upbraidals by S. herself—and showing thus the absurdity of his passion:
expressed throughout with different nuances, the absurdity of Rv.'s passion as a whole being very explicitly highlighted in 18.5-7, 24-28; 20.2 ff.

Appendix: Rv.'s courtship of S. as described in III 53-54
is basically the same as depicted in this complex. All the facets of Rv.'s love are expressed though presented in a different order and clothed in a different poetical language and imagination. The only major difference is that in the former the element of adoration is brought out more vividly and its absurdity more exposed to ridicule than in the latter, as e.g. when Rv. says in III 53.16-18—

\begin{quote}
yadidaṁ rājyatāntaram me tvayi sarvaṁ pratiśṭhitam /
jīvitaṁ ca viśālakṣi tvam me prāṇairgarīyasi ///16
bahūnāṁ strīsahrasrānāṁ mama yo’sau parigrahaḥ /
tāśāṁ tvamśvarī śīte mama bhāryā bhava priye ///17
sādhu kim te’nayā buddhyā rocayasa vaco mama /
bhajasva mābihitaptasya prasādaṁ kartumarhasi ///18—
\end{quote}

or III 53.33-34—

\begin{quote}
etau pādau mayaḥ snigdhau śirobhīḥ paripūḍitau /
prasādaṁ kuru me kṣipram vaśyo dāsο’hamasmi te ///33
nemāḥ śunyā vaçaḥ śuṣyamāṇena bhāṣītāḥ /
na cāpi rāvaṇaḥ kāncinmūrdhnā strīṁ praṇameta ha ///34—
\end{quote}
as well as Rv.'s perversity of mind when he says in III 53.27 :

\begin{quote}
duṣktam yatpurū karma vanavāsena tadgatam /
yaśca te suktro dharmastasyeha phalamāpnuhi ///27
\end{quote}

There is also more stress on the glamour and splendour of Rv.'s wealth, which he displays to S. in a presumptuous manner with a view to enticing her.

S.'s characterization of Rv., within the frame of her rebuke of him, comprises the following elements :

(1) Rv.'s abominable sinfulness and fickleness of mind, consisting in the lustful desire for and abduction of another's wife, and perversity of mind in disparaging a devoted wife's fidelity to her husband, a crime which is inevitably to bring destruction upon him as well as on the whole of the Rk. race, much to the relief of those who had been humiliated by him ;

(2) the abominable inferiority of Rv.'s power and prowess
to those of R. and L., who are to bring about his destruction;

(3) the shameless cowardice of robbing S. in the absence of R. and L.

Appendix: S.'s reaction in III 54, as compared with here, is mainly in the line of point 2 as well as point 1, with the addition that she abuses Rv.'s exorbitant presumption and baseness of aspiring for her, who is inviolable to him like a sacrificial altar to a cāndāla, i.e., a world above the abominable lowness of Rv.'s character.

V 47

Hanuman is impressed by Ravana's grandeur

Resumé

The author depicts, with rich poetic imagery, the following character-features of Rv.: the splendour of his royal attire, the awe-inspiring, dazzling brightness of his appearance and awe-inspiring aura of his physical strength, valour and auspicious marks, in paradoxical antinomy with the viciousness (adharma) of his activities casting a spell of terror among the beings.
Resumé

Rv.’s reaction to H.’s provocatively-styled appeal to him to return S. reflects the same spirit which pervades the scenes of his reactions to the successive reports of H.’s rage of devastation: his destruction of the Aśokavana as well as his slaying of the most valiant Rk. troops and warriors, cf. 40.22-23; 40.36; 42.18-19; 44.1-4; 46.1-12. Taken as a whole, these reactions of Rv. are characterized by an inborn irascibility that is aroused once it is occasioned by events that appear as a provocative curtailment of his power, an irascibility which becomes the more intensified in its relentless the more alarming H.’s destruction becomes—to such a degree indeed that even the realization of H.’s heroism (he suspects him to be a spy of Indra or the like) does not prevent him from sacrificing the best of his warriors in order to subdue H., that at best it makes him warn some of the warriors to be on their guard in their fight (cf. 44.1-14; 46.1-12). In fact, Rv.’s very encouragement of Indrajit, with which he connects a subtle warning to be cautious (46.1-12), betrays the very relentlessness of his wrath once it has been kindled. Similarly, it is this irascibility of Rv. which drives him to take H.’s admonition, which by itself is already designed to be provocative, as a further provocation and to give an outlet to his anger in taking the most cruel revenge possible. It is important to note that, since the over-all impression of these scenes is centred around H.’s Herculean rage of devastation on the one hand and Rv.’s irascibility on the other hand, the poet in this complex of scenes does not so much highlight the cause behind Rv.’s irascibility, namely the obliqueness of his character, but plays with it
only in the background. For were he to put this aspect as well right in the foreground, the element of irascibility would lose much of its effect. It would then be a mere consequence of the perversity of his character, but not so much an already innate facet of his Rk. nature, be it or not as an outcome of that perversity. No doubt, the perversity of Rv.’s character plays an over-all role in the characterization of Rv. and his irascibility and adharma are constantly associated with it, but in this complex of scenes the feature of irascibility has its own forceful reality for reasons of creating an atmosphere of awe in the audience. That this interpretation is correct, is shown by the fact that the poet intends to effect a tension between H.’s rage of devastation and Rv.’s reaction. He not only portrays H. as a Herculean hero, but in doing so, also as a provocator. Vibhīṣaṇa himself finds H. occasionally provocative. Finally, the Rk. king listens to Vibhīṣaṇa’s advice not because he is convinced of the adharma of executing an envoy, but because he visualizes a sadistic compensation as an outlet for his anger to take the place of an execution (51.1-5). He unmistakably betrays this sadistic urge when he responds to Vibhīṣaṇa’s speech with the words:

\[\text{samyaguktaṁ hi bhavatā dūtavadyā vigarhitā,}\]

but with the same breath continues saying:

\[\text{avaśya tu vadḥādayah kriyatāmasya nigrahah} //2\]
\[\text{kapināṁ kila lāṅgulamistiṁ bhavati bhūṣaṇam /} \]
\[\text{tadasya dīpyatāṁ śighram tena dagdhena gacchatu} //3\]

V 50

Vibhisana dissuades Ravana from killing Hanuman an envoy
For translation and analysis of characterization see s.v. Vibhiṣaṇa.

Resumé

Vibhiṣaṇa, though he criticizes Rv.’s anger which has driven him to a rash decision against all laws of dharma and social custom, acknowledges Rv.’s basic cognizance of dharma and social custom, his knowledge of what is good and evil etc. Of course, such an acknowledgement is primarily meant to effect a sense of conscientiousness in Rv., is meant to be a diplomatic means of conciliation, but it also reflects somehow Vibhiṣaṇa’s conviction because he loves his brother and wants to prevent him from misfortune. The question whether the poet himself, through the words of Vibhiṣaṇa, intends to light up a positive side in Rv.’s character, apart from the given context, is difficult to decide. If the author does speak through Vibhiṣaṇa, I would say he wants to convey something like this: There is some basic greatness of personality in Rv., a greatness which has endowed him with such awe-inspiring power and glory, but has brought him under the influence of presumption and adharma.

VI 10.1-10

Ravana condemns Vibhisana as a treacherous kinsman

Translation
When Vibhīṣaṇa had spoken these well-controlled, beneficial words, Rv., driven by Kāla, spoke these harsh words to him (1)—"One may live together with an angry enemy or a snake, but not with one who talks like a friend but serves the enemy. (2) I know the disposition (nature) of kinsmen in all the worlds, O Rk.; these kinsmen always rejoice at the calamities of kinsmen. (3) For kinsmen look down upon one who is the most eminent, who is efficient, learned and virtuous, O Rk., and despise a hero. (4) Kinsmen are always delighted at each other's misfortunes, endeavour to kill each other, have their hearts concealed, are frightful and causing fear. (5) I have heard of ślokas recited by elephants when they saw men holding a noose in their hands somewhere in a lotus grove; listen to me relating them (6) 'Neither fire nor other weapons nor nooses cause fear in us, but false kinsmen possessed of self-interests cause fear in us. (7) They will tell the means of how to capture us, no doubt about that, and so the fear of kinsmen is known to us as more injurious than all fear.' (8) There is wealth (prosperity) in cows, there is self-restraint in a Brāhmaṇa, there is fickleness in women, and there is fear from a kinsman in a kinsman. (9) It is therefore not desirable for you, O dear one, that I am respected by the world, that I am born for sovereignty and standing on the heads of enemies. (10) If somebody else were to speak such words like this, O night-rover, he would not exist at this very moment, but shame to you, defiler of the race.' (11)

Analysis of characterization

This speech of condemnation is not only a master-piece of poetry, it is a master-piece of psychology, in which the poet makes Rv. manifest the entire gamut of his perverse psyche:
an exorbitant obstinacy to listen to any wholesome advice that goes against his own wilfulness, which thus gives a slap to his very idea of summoning a council; a perversity, wrath and a wounding harshness that make him go as far as to accuse his own brother, who has spoken out of a loving concern for his welfare, of being a treacherous kinsman envious of his greatness; an obstinacy and a perversity that are rooted in an exorbitant delusion of self-conceit.

VI 31.51-61

Rama directs Angada to communicate his ultimatum to Ravana

Contents of ultimatum

You senseless fool, you who have lost your splendour and sovereignty and are desiring death; the sin (evil) you have committed to the rṣis, Gods, Gandharvas, Apsarās, Nāgas, Yakṣas, and kings—you haughty fellow have committed out of delusion. Now your pride resulting from the granting of a boon by Svayambhu has gone, for I, depressed on account of your abduction of my wife, am carrying out your death-penalty, stationed at the gate of Laṅkā. Now display the power by which you, with magic deceit, deceived me and abducted S. If you do not submit and return S., I am going to deprive this world of the Rks., and Vibhīṣaṇa, the best of the Rks., who has come over to me, is going to be the ruler of Laṅkā. You, that are vicious, sinful, uncontrolled and assisted by fools, will be unable to enjoy the kingdom even for a moment. Or,
take courage and fight, resort to your prowess. Then you will be subdued by my anger and find your expiation. Even if you enter the three worlds in the form of a bird, you will not escape my eye and will not return alive. I am speaking for your welfare. Perform your funeral rites. Have a good look at Laṅkā, for your life rests in my hands.

Analysis of characterization

Though the ultimatum is styled provocatively and breathes the anger and conviction of R., it gives an idea of how the poet intended to explain the polarity between Rv.'s glory of old and his evil nature about to destroy him: The acquisition of Brahmā's boon has filled him with delusion and pride, and in the infatuation of his presumption he has become subject to all kinds of evil deeds in defiance of all laws of dharma and of all respect for virtues, and though he is prosperous in his glory and is puffed up with it, this sinful, evil nature of his—reaching its climax in the brazen sin of of carrying away R.'s devoted wife—meets with his inevitable humiliation and destruction in the form of R.

A resume of Ravana's reactions in the course of the battle scenes

VI 31.71-72 ff. When Rv. hears R.'s provocative ultimatum from Anāgada, he gets so enraged that he straight away orders Anāgada to be executed. He, however, fails since Anāgada, while allowing himself to be seized by four ministers, jumps
up with them—striking at him—to the top of the palace, the impact of which hurls them down before Rv.'s very eyes, and then crushes the tower of the palace. Rv. cannot but get terribly enraged and dispirited, apprehending his own destruction (31.79).

VI 32. The news of the Vns.' siege of Laṅkā (1-2) fills him with anger, and as he ascends the top of his palace and sees the earth covered on all sides with Vns. (2-4), he deeply muses on the ways and means of how to defeat them. But as he is looking at the Vn. hosts drawing near in millions, crushing palaces and gates and shouting victory to R. (detailed description of the onmarch vv. 5-24), each batch protected by ace army-chiefs, Rv. is filled with rage and orders the immediate issue of all the Rk. armies (25).

The deaths of warriors like Dhūmrākṣa, Akampana, Prahasta etc. fill Rv. in each case with anger and sorrow, but, instead of making him thoughtful, they drive him to more and more desperate actions, drive him to send out the most efficient senāpatis one after the other, or as in Prahasta's case, to encourage them by representing the Vns. as fearful, fickle-minded and unruly (45.8 ff).

When almost all of the ace-chiefs are killed, Rv., utterly dispirited, has recourse to a desperate device: He wakes up Kumbhakarṇa from his sleep and entreats him beseeingly:

VI 50.13-17—

 eşa dāṣaratī rāmaḥ sugrīvasahito bali /
samudrāṁ sabalāstitvā mūlam naḥ parikṛntati ///13
hanta paśasva laṅkāyā vanānyupavanāṇī ca /
setunā sukhamāgamya vānarairārṇavaṁ kriam ///14
ye rākṣasā mukhyatamā hatāste vānarairuddhi /
vānarāṇāṁ kṣayaṁ yuddhe na paśyāmi kadācana ///15
sarvakṣapitakosāṁ ca sa tvamabhyāvapadya mām /
trāyasvemāṁ purīṁ laṅkāṁ bālavṛddhāvāśeṣitāṁ //16
bhrāturarthe mahābāho kuru karma suduṣṇkaram |
mayaivaṁ noktapūrvo hi kaścidbhrātaḥ parantapa |
tvayāyasti mama ca snehaḥ parā sambhāvanā ca me //17
(cf. the entire context of s. 50)

But when Kumbhayakaṇa too, after a heroic battle, is slain by R., Rv. swoons with grief and gives expression to a most heart-rendering lamentation at the unprecedented death of his brother (s. 56), and, in a frenzy of despair reaching a point where he almost thinks of renouncing his life, for the first time feels the impact of a deep remorse for his rejection of Vibhīṣaṇa’s advice.

But Rv. does not relent. (We do not know whether, and if so, how many senāpatiś Rv. sends out, in the original epic, before Indrajit is slain.6) He has utmost confidence in Indrajit and so requests him promptly to slay R. and L.—“ordinary men in comparison to him”, the conqueror of irresistible Indra (67.2-3). But when also this hero, the very likeness of himself in prowess, is killed, he loses his conscious-
ness at this unbelievable news and, regaining his spirits after a long time, gives vent to his grief in a most heart-rendering lamentation. Yet this grief kindles a fire-like rage in him— to an extent that his bodily form, ghoric as it is by nature, becomes possessed by the fire of wrath, the impersonated form of angry Rudra himself, as it were, and—a living image of grief and blazing rage—appears like Death about to devour all things movable and immovable—painted in most vivid images by the poet (80.4-21). This terrible grief and wrath of his find an outlet in that he presumptuously assures the Rks., who are too frightened to approach him, that, owing to the boon given to him by Brāhmaṇ for his austere penance for a thousand years, he is indestructible by Gods and Asuras in battle; that the armour given to him by Brahma cannot be pierced even by the power of the thunderbolt; that, with the bow and arrow given to him by Brahma in the war
between the Devas and Asuras, he shall destroy R. and L. this very day; and in that he gives expression to his irrevocable resolve to kill S. straight away. Nay, he rushes towards S. with upraised sword and would have killed her—were it not for the counsellor Supārśva, who, at the pitiable sight of S.'s distress, does his best to dissuade Rv. from the heinous crime of killing a woman. (80.22-57).

At the news of R.'s slaughter of countless Rks. sent out by Rv., the Rākṣasīs break forth in bitter lamentations and expressions of despair, deploiring the tragic course of events—starting from Śūrpaṇakhā's inducement of Rv.—and criticizing his haughtiness that has infatuated his mind on account of the boon (of protection from Devas, Dānavas and Rks,) granted to him by Brahmā; a haughtiness which, having made him unmindful of asking protection from man as well, has filled him with relentless obstinacy against reading the signs of death—a death predicted by the wise and old who have heard of Mahādeva's promise to the Gods that for their welfare a woman is to be born for the destruction of the Rks., which woman is Jānakī (s.82). On hearing these lamentations, Rv. becomes terribly enraged and, to find an outlet for his rage, he tells Mahodara, Mahāpārśva and Virūpākṣa to summon the warriors and get ready for fight and, when this has been done, assures them presumptuously that this very day he is going to take revenge for the death of Khara, Kumbhakarna, Prahasta and Indrajit; that this very day he is going to annihilate the Vns. (expressed through various effective images) and offer their flesh to the birds of prey: “Bring my chariot and bow and let those Rks. who have not yet entered the battle follow me!” (83.1-20)

While Rv., surrounded by hosts of Rks., sets out on his chariot to the battle-field, to the terror of the Vns., who flee in panic, all sorts of ominous portents appear, but blind to his impending doom, he proceeds without considering all these evil signs (21-37). Then Rv. causes havoc among the Vns.,
as does Su. among the Rks., who finally kills Virūpākṣa (83.38ff—84). At this, Rv. is filled with anger and sorrow and exhorts Mahodara to sally out (85.2-5). When both Mahodara and Mahāpārśva are slain (ss. 85-86), Rv.‘s patience is at its end, and with the words that this very day he shall remove his agony by cutting down the tree which is R. with all its flowers and branches, he rushes towards R. (87.1-5).

Thus, as a whole, Rv.‘s reactions may be summarized in this way: The anger and grief aroused in him at the death of one Rk. warrior after the other drive him to more and more desperate actions. He feels deeply grieved and almost despairs of his life at the death of his brother Kumbhakarṇa and of his son Indrajit. He hears the voice of repentance in his heart in an intense moment of grief, he hears the lamentations of the Rākṣasīs and their prediction of his death, he sees ominous portents at his march-out, but he does not relent and runs straight into his own disaster. Over and above, it is an exorbitant irascibility which governs all his actions during the battle-scenes. To be sure, at the bottom of this irascibility of Rv. is his over-assertion of himself as a result of the boon given to him by Brahmā, which has made him relentlessly obstinate against reading the signs of fate. But when when when we look into the nature of his reactions, we discover a spontaneous irritability as the first characteristic feature of his response. Definitely, the poet intended to portray Rv.‘s irascibility also as a forceful element of its own, as being part and parcel of his very nature—though he did causally link it up with his haughtiness and perversity in many scenes, sometimes more, sometimes less explicitly—, and this so particularly in the battle-scenes, which are dominated by sentiments of heroic wonderment (adbhutavirarasa) and furor (raudrarasa) and are designed to thrill the audience to the core of their heart. The very force of Rv.‘s irascibility is seen from the fact that at certain times his rage is so severe that he finds an outlet to it only either
by an outrageous attempt to take an immediate cruel act of revenge, as when he resolves to kill Aṅgada reporting R.'s ultimatum or when he proceeds to kill S., or by a presumptuous appeal to his invincibility guaranteed by the boon given to him by Brahmā, or by a presumptuous prediction of his wholesale destruction of R., L. and the Vns.—all of which sounds like a delusive inner voice of Fate.

A resume of Ravana's yuddhavīra

We are here barely outlining the facets characterizing Rv.'s chivalrous heroism. Of the magnificence of its display no amount of analysis but reading alone can give an adequate impression:

There is, over and above, Rv.'s formidable super-natural heroism, martial lustre, valour and skill; his inexhaustible astra-bala, his relentless pugnacity and power of resistance—a heroism which, reaching its climax in the final duel with R., a duel that has no equal among beings, a duel that thrills Gods and men alike, would well-nigh have withstood that of R.—were it not for Fate acting against him (expressed in various ways).

There is secondly Rv.'s unquenchable bellicose fury roused whenever he sees his attacks ineffectacious and whenever he is smitten by an astra of his enemy—a fury in which he goes as far as to insult in the meanest way his own charioteer, who, seeing Rv. exhausted and weak, has driven him away from the battle-field in order save him.
Resume of concluding estimative remarks about Ravana's character

The vilāpa of Rv.'s consorts (s. 98), containing laments at the tragic fate of Rv., imply some kind of assessment of Rv.'s personality—indeed independent of their karunātmik character—which the poet through these lamentations conveys to the listener, to wit: Rv., a heroic personality (the very dearness of the Rk. women to him is an indirect expression of this), unconquerable by Gods and Asuras, has been killed by R., a human being, because in his haughtiness he committed a nefarious deed and, though urged by all well-wishers to return S., blinded by the delusion of his haughtiness, did not pay heed to them, so turning the wrath of fate upon him.

A similar assessment can be gathered from the Mandodari-vilāpa (s. 99), though here the sentiment of karuna is by far the most dominant element in this sorga: An invincible hero, whose wrathful face not even Indra could stand, who struck terror among Gods and Gandharvas, who conquered the three worlds, has been killed by an ordinary man, R. (Mandodari suspects that R. was not an ordinary human being, but Indra in disguise), and has concurred the destruction of many Rks. as a consequence of the nefarious crime of desiring and abducting S., an embodiment of virtues, (in neglect for his own wife Mandodari) and as a consequence of being filled with relentless wrath and not listening to the well-wishing words of Mandodari and Vibhīṣaṇa.

Similar sound R.'s words (which may be taken for the words of the poet himself) spoken to Vibhīṣaṇa as a reply to his refusal to bury his brother (s. 99):
adharmanṛtasaṁyuktah kāmamēṣa niśācarah |
tejasvī balavānśūraḥ saṅgrāmesu ca nityaśaḥ ||37
śatakramukhyairdeivāh śrūyate na parājītaḥ |
mahāmā balasampanno rāvano lokarāvaṇaḥ ||38
maraṇāntāni vairāṇī nirvṛtttaṁ naḥ prayojanam ||
A SYNTHETIC VIEW OF THE POET'S CONCEPTION AND PORTRAIT OF RAVANA'S CHARACTER

Conception

It is quite evident from our analysis that V. had one uniform conception of Rv.'s character in mind. Though the pattern of spontaneous improvisation is constantly at work, endowing this conception with a variegated mosaic of scenic details, and at times brings out some particular trait or traits more effectively than in other places, particularly in scenes with a strong sentiment, all the scenes which deal with Rv.'s character breathe the spirit of the whole personality of Rv. In other words, the aura of the whole  horic personality of Rv. is in some way or other present in all these scenes. This is all we can say about V.'s conception of Rv. as such, leaving it to fancy to say whether he inherited this uniform conception of Rv. or built it up himself.

There is a great conformity between objective and subjective descriptions of Rv.'s character in the sense that the latter basically agree with what the poet intends to convey, prescinding from the descriptions in the mouth of some toadying Rks., which we have not dealt with at all. A large part of the objective descriptions are not descriptions by the poet himself, but self-revelations of Rv., i.e. speeches which reveal the very heart of Rv., and which, thus, are as objective as the former. Of course, self-revelation does not mean "what a
character says about himself”, but “what he manifests of himself”. A character may say something about himself, which is in utter contradiction to what he actually does and what he actually is. This is so very characteristic of Rv. He says so many nice things about himself, but his very actions prove the opposite. It means, what he says of himself does not express what he does and is, but the opposite of what he does and is. This, of course, does not apply exclusively to all the aspects of his character, but to a good many of them, mainly (though by far not exclusively) to the aspect of his cruelty and tyranny. They, so to say, possess an ambivalence in themselves—Rv. says one thing, but the poet, through the very words of Rv., conveys something else.

**Portrait**

Though Rv.’s character is represented by the poet in a variegated mosaic of scenic details, a synthetic portrait of it is easily framed precisely because of the poet’s uniform conception of Rv., the more easily so as we see that most of the elements are already virtually, though not dynamically, present in the first introduction of Rv.’s personality to the audience and that the ghoric spirit of his personality pervades right through and unifies these elements. And since we find that this ghoric spirit continues to hover in some way or other over all the scenes dealing with Rv. right to the end of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, we can consider it as the essence of the personality he emanates, as the starting-point for our unfolding of his character.

Rv. thus is a ghoric personality with the polarity of a two-fold dimension—heroic on the one hand, tyrannic on the
other—the dimension of his awe-inspiring splendour of appearance, his unexcelled heroism, which surpasses that of the Gods and Asuras, and his royal glory, on the one hand, and the dimension of his harassing cruelty, exorbitant presumption, vicious disregard of dharma and virtues and perversity of mind, on the other hand, of which the first dimension finds its final annihilation through the second. Of course, from the very start we find the two dimensions intertwined. The former is already polluted by the latter, is in part already an expression of the latter, and it lives on in the second in the continued manifestations of Rv.'s awe-inspiring physical appearance and royal glory amidst all the evil actions and more genuinely so in his final battle with R. But that allows us, and the poet has given definite indications of this, to unfold the “historic” personality of Rv.:

Rv., by nature a Rk. endowed with super-natural power, splendour of physical appearance, valour and heroism, has, by an extraordinary austere penance of 10,000 years, obtained from Brahmā a boon of invincibility from Gods, Asuras and other super-natural beings. This extraordinary boon has brought him under the delusion of an exorbitant presumption and self-conceit, which not only has made him unmindful of making a request also for invincibility from man, but has led him to an abuse of his power to an extent that he has created terror among Gods, Asuras and other super-natural beings, many of whom he has humiliated or defeated in an abominable manner. Besides that, it has led him to a tyranny of ṛṣis and virtuous people (destruction of Brāhmaṇas, abduction of others’ wives et al.), to a violation of all regards of dharma and virtues, and so to a perversion of his whole mentality, and has made him indulge in a voluptuous and sensual revelry of life to the neglect of all circumspection and kingly duties. Being irascible by nature at any kind of intrusion into his realm of power, without any concern what-
soever to investigate where the guilt lies, and being subjected by the influence of sexual passion, he easily submits to Śūrpanakhā's enticing inducement to abduct S. (cunning as he is, he chooses to take the assistance of Mārīca, a Rk. known through his skill of magic power, and, failing to assess his inner conversion to a saintly life, approaches him in the expectation that he would render him assistance without any hesitation). In his presumption, irascibility and his self-righteous subjective and perverse way of viewing things, he disparages R. as a miserable prince engulfed in all the vices who has been expelled by his father and committed the cruel act of slaying Khara's army. When Mārīca as a well-wishing and conscientious counsellor attempts to inculcate upon Rv. the dire consequences of his evil intention and for this has to disillusion him of the erroneous assumption of R.'s weakness and moral debility and has to expose, as a contrast, his own (Rv.'s) vices, namely his self-conceited pride, fickleness, unrighteousness, addiction to sensual pleasures etc., so as to make him see his inferiority in all respects to R. (which would necessarily entail his own destruction), Rv. meanly and scornfully rebukes Mārīca's well-meant advice. By this, he already reveals the whole gamut of the evilness of his character as it has invariably imprinted itself in his nature: For the very stubbornness and irascibility he manifests at the instance of the slightest objection raised against his self-willed resolution reflect not only a deep-rooted presumptuous attitude of degrading the opponent going hand-in-hand with a self-glorious perversity of viewing things wilfully and a still deeper intolerant, presumptuous self-appeal, but reflect already that total submission to tyranny and relentlessness—being the ultimate outflow of his perverse mentality—which is bound to lead him to his own destruction. It is this which makes Mārīca despair of his endeavour and submit to the wilfulness of Rv. and causes Vibhiṣaṇa to desert him. Tyranny, relentlessness and irascibility now take complete command over Rv. Though the personality of S. arouses in
him an adoration for her that transcends his sexual passion, though he feels an ambition to court for her love—this adoration in Rv., by the very method of its courtship, is a self-revelation of its absurdity, as nothing but a greed to possessess her, a greed that viciously tramples down all regards of dharma and virtues and the ideal of a devoted wife’s fidelity to her husband; is a self-revelation thus of the exorbitant presumption, self-conceit and infamy (in the words of S.) and total perversity of his character; and is, with the spirit of tyranny lurking behind the adored person and breaking forth with ruthless cruelty (abduction, threats of killing her and harassments by the Rākṣasās) as this courtship is rebuffed, a contradictio in se, an adoration which is in conflict with itself as it forbids him, on the one hand, to make short shrift with the adored person and, on the other hand, does not find the desired outlet; is thus in the grip of tyranny. And the poet very effectively depicts Rv.’s abduction of S. as the climax of his heinous crimes, as the crime which entails his inevitable destruction. S. abominably degrades Rv.’s baseness of character and severely upbraids his shameless cowardice, infamous defiance of dharma and virtues etc. There being a vicious circle between his adoration for S. and his tyranny of her, since despite all her rebuffs his infatuation makes him pursue his ambition again and again, and, being unsuccessful, drives him to take to tyrannic threats again and again, Rv. becomes more and more relentless. Being by nature irritable, Rv.’s irascibility, on the background of this increased relenlessness—it was already aroused tremendously at the instance of H.’s rage of devastation and destruction—will now develop into a most forceful reality when he sees himself challenged by R. himself. Here the most gently styled and most affectionately expressed advice of Vibhīṣaṇa, given at the request of Rv. himself, causes him to condemn his own brother in the meanest way as a treacherous kinsman envious of his sovereignty. An exorbitant presumption is now coupled with a more relentless wrath. From now
onwards it is wrath which (so to say, as the spontaneous expression of a more deeply rooted perversity) commands all the actions of Rv. and which, with the death of one warrior after the other, leads him to more and more desperate sacrifices of heroes. An intense feeling of grief at the death of the greatest and dearest heroes of his, a feeling of remorse at a traumatic moment of despair do not make him relent. Nay, it is grief itself over the dearest of all, Indrajit, which but kindles his rage—making him appear a living image of grief and rage incarnate—, which drives him to find an outlet for it by an outrageous attempt to enforce an immediate cruel act of revenge. It is the grief of the Rk. women which occasions his anger to drive him to the last, to take the revenge into his own sole power—commanded by the delusive voice of his trust in the boon of invincibility. And Rv. does show all his formidable heroism, valour and power in a way that thrills Gods and Asuras, but, awe-inspiring as it is, it is a struggle of bellicose fury against a fate that he has conjured up against himself.

1 We do not discuss here at all the controversy about the contradictory description of Rv. as sometimes ten-headed and sometimes (in most places) one-headed—of which the former is probably a popularization of the epithet dasāgrīva in its hyperbolic meaning—as we believe that V. himself is responsible for this popularization, that, not being concerned to present a uniform description of details as regards Rv.'s physical appearance, he has made use of it in such passages where the ghoric nature of Rv. was to be thrown into bold relief. This element of popularization could not be due to interpolation since any attempt to separate the various scenes would result in a total dissolution of context.

2 The term is coined to connote briefly the essential nature of Rv.'s personality.

3 This peculiar blend of psychic strata in Rv.'s passion has not received its proper attention from popular scholars. If so, it has led them to wrong evaluations by over-emphasizing either the element of adoration—as in the case of M.V. Iyengar, pp. 167-170—or the element of
brutish lust—as in the case of K.S. Ramāswami Sastri ("Valmiki’s Portrait-Gallery—XX", KK 21,131-135) or M.K. Venkatarama Iyer ("Rāvana", KK 28,75-80,106-111). For the latter Rv.’s courtship for S. is nothing but a connoisseur’s application of his shrewd insight into the psychology of women and his exploitation of it for nefarious ends, the shrewd routine, so to say, of his accomplished courtship—rooted in a mere sexual passion—consisting in coaxing, cajoling, deft flattery etc. The author altogether overlooks the deep psychic feelings of adoration which are going on in Rv. and which determine the intensity as well as the desperate perseverance of his courtship—feelings which cannot be explained by a mere routine that is itself based on pure sexual lust, but must be rooted in something deeper. Rv. does use connoissant means, no doubt, but they do not constitute the all-in-all of his courtship. Furthermore, they altogether fail, lacking as they do all insight into the heart of a devoted wife, and by their desperate re-employment lose completely their character of connoissance. But the author arrives at this interpretation because of a passage in the Uttarakāṇḍa, according to which Rv., due to some curse, changed his ways and started conquering the hearts of ladies instead of ravishing them straight. You see the influence of an uncritical method!

4 In 20.23-36 V. associates this aspect of Rv.’s tyrannic love with his ghoric nature as such: his blazing anger, ghoric physical appearance and splendour and tyrannic cruelty, which he depicts in ghoric pictures, while in 20.2-9 he makes him repent the affection and compassion expressed towards one who actually deserves to be killed for her rejection of his proposal—an indirect barb by the poet at the perversity of his love.

5 Very powerfully depicted in 20,14,19-21.

6 See our book The Genesis of the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki.
RAKSASA SENAPATIS

V. has characterized almost all the Rk. senāpatis on a uniform pattern and somehow in the likeness of Rv. They are, so to say, lesser or greater images of Rv.'s personality. The more closely they are related to Rv., the more they resemble him in greatness and the more also they are endowed with individuality. To these top-figures belong Khara, Akṣa, Prahasta, Kumbhakarna and Indrajit. Before we sketch the characters of these top-figures, we mention in what domains their likeness of Rv. finds its expression in them: It is first and foremost an awe-inspiring skill, power, valour and heroism in battle, associated with a ghoric splendour of physical appearance, strength and a relentless bellicose wrath and embitterment that characterize these senāpatis. In fact, many of them appear solely in the context of war, i.e., they do not constitute so much personalities in themselves, but are chessmen in the waging of war. Yet those characters which appear also outside the context of the battle show many other of the characteristic traits of Rv.: They are full of presumption, cruel up to the core, cunning and viciously trample down all regards of dharma and virtue, possessed as they are of fickle and perverse minds.

Khara is a very authentic image of Rv. in his various states of mind. He shares with him an exorbitant presumption; a tyrannic cruelty towards sages and an attitude of defiance towards dharma and virtues; an extreme irascibility, which is aroused at the sight of disfigured Śūrpaṇakhā and transformed into blazing wrath—mixed with an exorbitant presumption—when Śūrpaṇakhā, in her vengeful despair, belittles and abases him over against R. in order to drive him to immediate action; a relentless bellicosity based on
an exorbitant haughtiness—which makes him blind to the most ominous portents and prompts him to ridicule them and to boast before the Rks. that he, who has never been defeated in battle, who in his anger could kill even Indra, will now kill with ease those two ordinary men R. and L.—a self-presumption which prompts him to ridicule R.’s provocative reprimands and to belittle him as a foolish despicable Kṣatriya who is obsessed by idle self-glorification on account of slaying 14,000 Rks. and thereby to boast exorbitantly about his own invincible strength, which will crush R. and revenge the 14,000 Rks.—; a ghoric resplendence of physical appearance and strength, a formidable display of valour, heroism, power, skill, bellicose fury and valiant resistance in fighting against R. We can say that Khara’s individuality consists precisely in his likeness to Rv., in his being through and through a bellicose demonic hero possessed by an extreme degree of relentlessness and presumption. (III 18-29 passim)

Aksa is the youthful reincarnation of Rv. in his resplendent brightness of appearance, strength and royal majesty, as well as in his formidable heroism, valour, skill and bellicose anger displayed in his duel against H., which is so formidable that the whole universe is frightened and that even H., gazing with wonder and amazement at Aksa, has to kill him, though reluctantly, in view of his ever-increasing prowess. (V 45)

Prahastra, the foremost and most intimate of Rv.’s counsellors as well as commander-in-chief of the army, resembles Rv. both in heart and character and has a strong attachment to the Rk. king. Possessed of presumption and a derogatory attitude towards the Vns., he enhances Rv.’s pride by appealing to his invincibility from Gods, Dānavas and other super-natural beings—if these are unable to assail him, how much less the Vns.—and by boastfully assuring him that he himself will free the world from R. (VI 8.1-5). When
asked and encouraged by Rv.—finding himself in a critical situation—to sally out, he—while now pretending to have dissuaded Rv. at the council of war—expresses his readiness to sacrifice even his life, sons, wives and wealth in love and gratitude for him. And assuring him boastfully that on this day the birds will feed on the flesh of the Vns., he courageously sallies into battle. Endowed with an awe-inspiring physical appearance, he proves his formidable prowess and skill as a heroic fighter in the likeness of Rv., but is finally overpowered and killed by Nila. (VI 45-46)

Kumbhakarna is a titanic, Herculean Rk. monster with character-features in the likeness of Rv. Unequalled in his gigantic monstrosity of appearance, the terror of Gods, Dānavas, Yakṣas, Gandharvas etc.—who mistake him for Kāla himself—the vanquisher of Yama and Indra, he has been born as a titanic hero and has exercised his formidable, Herculean Rk. nature right from his birth: He devoured thousands of creatures in his hunger—so that the beings of the universe, greatly alarmed, approached Indra; and when Indra struck Kumbhakarna with the thunderbolt, the latter in his rage revenged himself by tearing Airāvata’s tusk and striking Indra on the chest, at which Indra, along with the Gods, Dānavas, brahmās and all the creatures of the universe went to Brahmā and complained to him about Kumbhakarna’s wickedness, saying that, if he continued to devour creatures like this, the earth would soon be bereft of its beings. Then Brahmā cursed him to the effect that he would lie asleep like a dead person, but at the request of Rv. relaxed the curse by granting him one day after every six months on which he would be allowed to roam over the world and consume beings like raging fire.

The moment he is aroused from his sleep by the Rks., Kumbhakarṇa devours one Vn. after the other, so that Vibhīṣaṇa advises R. to re-encourage the Vns. by announcing that Kumbhakarṇa is not a living being but a machine set
up by the Rks. (VI 49).

As a Herculean Rk. monster, Kumbhakarna possesses the assertive mentality of Rv. with the distinction that his frivolity surpasses all limits. When Rv. entreats him to help him out of the crisis in which he finds himself due to the fact that most of the Rk. heroes have been killed, Kumbhakarna encourages him to renounce all anxiety as long as he is there and comforts him by assuring him of the utter destruction of R. and the Vns., thereby bragging in the most frivolous and insolent manner that surpasses even the frivolity of Rv., as e.g. that with his invincible prowess he would encounter even Indra, Yama, Agni, Vāyu, Kubera and Varuṇa, that with his mere arms he would slay Indra etc. (VI 51 latter part)

Kumbhakarna’s sally into the midst of the Vns. is the sally of a roaring, titanic, man-eating monster, is like that of Garuda into the midst of snakes, like that of fire burning dry woods in summer. It is only through Aṅgada’s constant exhortation of the Vns. that they, after losing courage again and again and fleeing Kumbhakarna with panic, continue their valiant fight against him. Even some of the most heroic Vn. senāpatis, like Dvividha, H., Nīla, fail in their attempt to overpower him and receive blows making them swoon. With thousands of Vns. over his body, he casts them into his mouth and, as they are coming out through his ears and nostrils, tears them to pieces. He carries Su., who after fighting valiantly against him is deprived of his senses as Kumbhakarna strikes him with a mountain peak, away in his hands and parades him through Laṅkā, to the delight of the Rks., but is in the end himself outwitted by Su., who, after tearing his ears with his nails and biting off his nose, forces Kumbhakarna to drop him. In his bellicose fury, he is unable to distinguish Vns. and Rks. and so consumes both. Kumbhakarna’s furious and embittered combat with R. bears semblance in its awe-inspiring heroism, valour and relentlessness to that of Rv. with R., but more than it is the case in the duel between Rv. and R., Kumbhakarna’s titanic dimen-
sion is highlighted by the poet. In fact, Kumbhakarna is more a Herculean titan than the accomplished fighter that is Rv. By the force of its weight, Kumbhakarna’s mountain-like head crushes houses, temple gate-ways and the city gate, while his Himalaya-like body reaches the bottom of the ocean, crushing crocodiles, serpents and a multitude of fishes. (VI 54-55).

Indrajit is the very heart-beat and youthful reincarnation of Rv., more than any of the other Rks. His very name is symbolic for the unexcelled formidable power and skill in arms, heroism, valour and irresistibility he is endowed with, thanks to a stock of astras secured by him through a boon by Brahmā, on account of which he is the cause of terror among the Gods, Asuras, Gandharvas, many of whom, among them Indra, he has conquered in a humiliating manner. Though he is not able to kill the Herculean super-monkey H., who moves beyond the range of his arrows, he binds him with a Brahmāstra and brings him before Rv., not of course realizing that in doing this he is outwitted by H. (V 46). But the most formidable aspect of his power consists in his ill-famed magic power, by virtue of which he, after duly performing his fire-sacrifice for victory at Nikumbhilā, is able to fight the enemy while remaining invisible himself. After performing such a sacrifice, Indrajit, at the request of Rv., sallies out, bragging that on this day he will slay R. and L. and bereave the world of all the Vns., to the delight of his father. And in fact, as he covers up all the directions with his arrows while he himself remains concealed behind a screen of smoke, with no sound of his bow-string and the chariot audible, he causes terror among the Vns., many of whom are killed by his arrows; and even R. and L., while being wounded by Indrajit’s arrows, are unable to slay him. (VI 67)

An embodiment of magic power, Indrajit is at the same time an embodiment of cunning and sadistic cruelty. Con-
juring an illusory image of S. seated on his chariot—with the intention to stupefy the Vns., he drives out to the battlefield and, before the very eyes of H. and the Vns., announces sarcastically, in answer to H.’s condemnation of him as the most wretched murderer of women, that he will slay S.: for whatever is painful to an enemy ought to be done—

na hantavyāḥ striyaśceti yadbraviṣṭi plavaṅgama /
pīḍākaramamitrānām yatsyātkartavyameva tat //27—,

and beheads that magic effigy of S. with his sword, triumphantly calling upon H. to see the wife of R. slain by his wrathful hand. (VI 68)

Indrajit’s magic power is a symbol of his all-powerfulness, which stands and falls with it. Yet this magic power of Indrajit is not an intrinsic possession of his. It has to be constantly renewed by the meticulous completion of a sacrifice for victory at Nikumbhilā, failing which he, should he be attacked, loses the power of the Brahmaśiras and his invincibility and is doomed to die. Knowing this, Vibhīṣaṇa exhorts L. to cause panic among the Rks. so as to induce Indrajit to interrupt his sacrifice at Nikumbhilā, and with this Indrajit is doomed. But though Indrajit sees himself frustrated in the accomplishment of his sacrifice, his relentless wrath rooted in an exorbitant pride in his omnipotence and a derogatory attitude to belittle and abuse the enemy (an attitude to which belongs also his wrathful and contemptuous denunciation of Vibhīṣaṇa as a traitor—which reflects his narrow kinship-mentality and perversity of mind) makes him, just as it is the case with Rv., blind to the signs of his own destruction and entangles him in an embittered battle against fate, a battle, to be sure, that displays all the majesty of the formidable prowess, heroism, power and skill that is his, a majesty that is second only to that of Rv. in his duel against R., but that, awe-inspiring though it is, is a struggle of bellicose fury against fate. (VI 71-78 passim)
There are a few Rk. warriors who, at times, show traits different from the pattern we have described. But they are not in the limelight of characterization. There is e.g. Supārśva, who, moved by the pitiable sight of S.’s anxiety as Rv. approaches her with upraised hand to kill her, dissuades Rv. from committing the crime of killing a woman. However, Supārśva has more the function of a deus ex machina than a character in himself. In fact, he is a world away from a personality like Vibhiṣaṇa, for he does not persuade Rv. to return S., but exhorts him to fight against R., holding out to him the prospect that, after killing R., S. will be his. (VI 80.50-56)

RAKSASIS

The Rākṣasīs are referred to and characterized at entirely different levels in accordance with the different scenes and contexts. There are

a) the forest-roving, hideous Rākṣasī monster Śūrpaṇakhā, who is enamoured of R.;

b) the Rākṣasī beauties of Rv.’s harem;

c) the terrible, hideous-looking Rākṣasī guards, one of whom is compassionate Trijaṭā;

d) the despairing Rk. women of Laṅkā;

e) the devoted queen-wife of Rv., Mandodari.

ad a) Sūrpaṇakhā, the sister of Rv., embodies the
ghoric monstrosity of appearance, absurd perversity of amorous courtship and relentless revengefulness as they may be said to be characteristic of the Rks. In her amorous passion she resembles somehow Rv., but she distinguishes herself from him by the fact of her hideous ugliness and the utter primitiveness and unsophisticated nature of her courtship, which the poet exposes to the ridicule of R. and L. and, through them, of the audience. The absurdity and ridiculous frivolity of her passion is marvellously sketched by the poet and made the centre of a whole character-study: Śūrpaṇakhā’s love is love at the first sight, and the love of a “witch” who is ugliness, coarseness and vice incarnate for a “prince” who is an embodiment of beauty, refinement and virtuousness. Asked by R. about her person, she turns her introduction into a spontaneous love-proposal, which she, in her extraordinary presumption, stupidity, cultural primitiveness and barbarous disregard of dharma and wifely devotion, and cruelty, supports by bragging about her wonderful power, by disparaging S. as ugly, vile, dreadful and pot-bellied (which in the mind of the poet are the attributes of Śūrpaṇakhā herself and with which he describes her at other places) and by announcing to R. that she will immediately eat her up together with his brother—so that he (R.) can roam about freely with her through the Daṇḍaka forest. Realizing her primitiveness, R. and L. pull her legs. R. says that he is married, and to be a co-wife would be surely unpleasant for a woman like her—while, if she courted for his younger brother, who is unmarried, handsome, youthful, ignorant of conjugal felicity and desirous of taking a wife, she would not be a co-wife. Unable to grasp the joke, she tries it out with L.—which shows the exorbitant frivolity of her idea of love as well as her stupidity. But L. fools her in his own manner,
“arguing” that, since he is the servant of R., she would be a maid-servant, and therefore it would be preferable for her to be the younger wife of R., for he would surely discard that “ugly, vile, dreadful, pot-bellied, old wife” of his after obtaining her, the paragon of beauty. Unable to grasp L.’s chaff of her either, she upbraids R. of not showing her the appropriate affection by discarding that “ugly, vile, dreadful, pot-bellied, old wife” of his and announces that she will devour S. before his very eyes so that she can sport with him as his only wife to her heart’s content. In her barbarous disregard of dharma and in her ruthless Rākṣāsurik wrath and cruelty, she puts her words into practice and rushes towards S. But R. prevents her and directs L., with the admonition never again to tease cruel, ill-famed ladies, to disfigure her. L. chops off her ears and nose, whereupon she raises a terrible yell and runs to her brother, falling prostrate before him on the ground. (III 16-17) With grief, wrath and vengefulness aroused in her, Śūrpaṇakhā becomes relentless in her pursuit of revenge, leaving no stone unturned till her vindictiveness is satisfied. First she urges Khara by arousing his pity for her deformed appearance and his anger at him who has disfigured her. (III 18) When Khara’s fourteen-Rk-strong army is killed, she bursts into a hysterical lamentation in his presence, pathetically expressing her anxiety at the disaster struck by R.—in order to arouse Khara’s pity—and exerts pressure on him by giving threats of committing suicide if he will not sally out immediately to slay R. and by despisingly expressing her apprehension to his very face that, after all, he is a weakling, unable to fight R.—all this to arouse his bellicose fury and induce him to immediate action. (III 20) When Khara, with 14,000 Rks., is slain by R., she runs straight to Rv., upbraids him of being oblivious of his
kingly duties and the great terror caused by R.'s destruction of 14,000 Rks. including Khara and Dūṣāṇa, and blames him for all the vices he has while eliciting R.'s heroism—so as to effect in him a most spontaneous reaction of anger, on the basis of which she can instill into him a passion for S., which will of itself force him to action and satisfy her revengefulness. (III 31-32)

ad b) The damsels of Ravana's harem (many of which are not Rākṣasīs but Devagandharvakaṇyā-s, Nāgakanyā-s etc.) are uniformly characterized as endowed with radiant beauty, charm and royal splendour, and as love-sick for their lord Rv., a paragon of gorgeous beauty, lordliness and majestic glory. Though this amorous passion of Rv.'s concubines is intimately linked with, and expressed in, sexual revelry, they do manifest a deep psychic attachment to Rv., as the poet indicates at several places, which is confirmed by their heart-rending lamentations and gesticulations of grief over the dead body of their lord. (V 7-9 passim ; 16 ; VI 98) That V., however, had no precise conception in his mind when portraying the wives of Rv., is shown by the fact that in V 10 he makes H. present them as: virūparūpā viṅktā vivarcaso mahānanā dirghavirūpadarśanāḥ...rākṣarasarājayoṣito //4 V.'s characterization of Rv.'s wives is thus based almost exclusively on the pattern of spontaneous improvisation which allows him to delineate them in altogether different ways with the variance of context.

ad c) The Rākṣasi guards of S. are characterized as possessing extremely hideous, terrifying, monstrous appearances of the most varied types, as extremely fond of wine, meat and blood, and cruel to the core of their hearts (cf. V 15 ; V 20.31-33). According
to the directions given by Rv., they pester S. with persuasions and brags about Rv.'s unexcelled power or with blandishments or abuses and tyrannize her with threats to tear her to pieces and eat her up (V 21-22). But one of them, Trijaṭā, is different. Having had a dreadful dream about Rv.'s and other Rks.' ominous destruction, she has realized the greatness of S.'s devotion to her husband and so admonishes the Rākṣasīs to renounce their tyrannic attitude, to comfort her and entreat her, so that they may be delivered from fear at the time of the destruction of Laṅkā (V 25). After this we no more hear about these Rākṣasī guards except at two places, which, however, do not throw much light on their character.

ad d) The Rākṣasīs in their despair at the death of their relatives are not so much characterized as typical Rk. women, but as women in general, agonized to the despair of their lives at the death of their dear ones — caused by the insane wrathfulness of their king.

ad e) Māndodāri, the queen-wife of Rv., is a devoted wife of her husband. Sensual though she is, she distinguishes herself from the others by her critical attitude towards her husband's abduction of S., in which she is prompted by her concern for the welfare of her husband. Her persuasion of Rv. to return S. does not so much breathe the spirit of jealousy alone, though see feels offended by Rv.'s passion for S. to the neglect of herself, who is "far superior to S. in rank, beauty and kindness"—v.16

na kulena na rūpeṇa na dākṣinyena maithili /  
mayādhikā vā tulyā vā tvāṁ tu mohāṇna budhyaye //,  
but the spirit of an anxious concern for Rv. as her
husband. However, she is flesh and blood of Rv., for, though in her piteous lamentation at the death of her husband she deplors his sinful act of abducting S., an embodiment of virtue, and his relentless wrath, which did not allow him to listen to her well-wishing words, as the cause of his and the Rks.’ destruction, she is convinced of the greatness of her husband and says:

kāmakrodhasamutthena vyasanena prasaṅginā /
tvayā kṛtamedam sarvamanātham rakṣasāṁ kulam //22
na hi tvam śocitavyo me prakhyaṭabalapauruṣaḥ /
strīsvabhāvātta me buddhiḥ kāranye parivartate //23
sukṛtaṁ duṣkṛtāṁ ca tvam gṛhitvā svāṁ gatiṁ gataḥ /
ātmānanamūscāmi tvadviyogena duḥkhhitām //24

Mandodarī is thus a devoted and passionate wife of Rv., anxiously concerned for his welfare, yet flesh and blood of his Rākṣāsurīk mentality. (VI 99)

THE RAKSASA HOSTS

The Rk. hosts as such are not characterized in a conspicuous manner, even as compared to the Vn. hosts. Their character-traits are mainly behaviour-reactions common to a fighting host and, to a lesser extent, traits which are characteristic of the Rks. as a whole:

(a) a formidable display of impetuosity, astrabala, valour and heroism and an exuberance of martial spirits—expressed in roaring and wild gesticulations, on the one hand, and a losing courage in face of irresistible heroes of the enemy side (less conspicuous than in the case of the Vn. hosts) or running helter-skelter for fright and
grief at the death of some of their heroes, on the other hand;

(b) a ghoric or hideous appearance, an exorbitant presumption, relentless embitterment and bellicose fury.

As opponents of the Vn. army the Rks., though being superior in their skill in arms, are inferior to the former as a whole.

Outside the battle scenes, Rk. hosts appear as a band of forest-roving, hideous-looking, flesh-eating monsters terrifying the lives of sages and good people.
Courtly Characters
KAIKEYI
A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER-PORTRAYAL OF KAIKEYI

II 7-9

Manthara persuades Kaikeyi to secure Bharata’s installation and Rama’s banishment

Contents

Mantharā, Kai.’s maid-servant from her father’s house, who since her birth had stayed together with her, ascended the palace and saw all Ayodhyā filled with a spirit of festivity. Overwhelmed with joy, as she was intent on gaining wealth, she asked a nurse why R.’s mother was distributing wealth to the people and why that excessive joy of the people. At the cheerful reply of the nurse that the king was going to invest R. with the heir-apparentship, evil-looking Mantharā, burning with rage, descended from the top of the palace and, entering Kai.’s room, said—“Stand up, you foolish one, why are you lying? Calamity is befalling you. You brag about your good fortune when the appearance of it is ominous. Your good fortune is passing away like the stream of a river in the hot season.” When Kai. heard these harsh words from wrathful, evil-minded Mantharā, she fell into great anxiety and said to Mantharā—“Aren’t you happy? Why do I see you with
sorrowful face and so exceedingly grieved?" Then 
Mantharā became angry and, assuming an air of deeper 
sorrow, since she desired her favour, answered in a manner 
in which she thought to arouse her anxiety—"A great mis-
fortune has happened that will bring about your destruction.
King D. will install R. in the heir-apparentship. I am 
immersed in fear, grief and sorrow, burning, as it were, 
with fire; I have come here for your welfare. If grief over-
comes you, grief also overcomes me. If there is prosperity 
to you, there is also prosperity to me. You are born in a 
royal family, you are the queen of the king: how is it that 
you do not know the cruelty of a king's customs? Your 
husband is righteous with words, but deceitful; gentle with 
words, but ruthless. In your presence he cheats you with 
vain conciliation, but in his heart of hearts he will favour 
Ks. That wicked one, who has sent away Bh. to your rela-
tives, knows to establish R. in the kingdom without any 
obstacle. As a mother desirous for others' welfare, you 
have been carrying in your lap—like a snake—an enemy 
who is only by name a husband; for in the way a snake or 
an enemy acts when left alone, so you have been treated 
by king D. Sinful and deceitful in his conciliatory words, 
his going to install R., and you with your relatives are 
doomed. Attend to your safety in time, save your son and 
also me." At these words of Mantharā, Kai. was exces-
sively joyful, gave her an ornament and said cheerfully—
"You are telling me the most gladsome news. What shall 
I give you to thank you for this gladsome news? R. and 
Bh. are equal to me. Therefore I am rejoicing that the king 
will install R. in the kingship. There is nothing more de-
lightful to me than your auspicious words. I shall give you 
an excellent boon, choose one." At this Mantharā, beside 
herself with rage and grief, threw away the ornament and 
reprimanded Kai.—"How is it that you rejoice in the midst 
of an ocean of grief. With R.'s installation in the heir-
apparentship, Ks. will revel in the highest joy, and you will 
attend upon her as a maid-servant. All the excellent consorts
of R. will rejoice, but your daughters-in-law will be dejected at the loss of Bh. Seeing Mantharā speaking thus, queen Kai, with great delight praised R.'s virtues—"R. knows dharma, is grateful, truthful and pure. Being the eldest son of D., he deserves the heir-apparentship and like his father he will protect his brothers and ministers. Bh. also will obtain the ancestral kingship a hundred years after R. You will be in prosperity at this festive occasion. Why are you then grieved? For R. obeys me more than even his mother Ks." When Mantharā heard these words of Kai, she was filled with grief and, sighing long and heavily, said to Kai—"It is out of stupidity that you don't know in what an ocean of grief, sorrow and misfortune you have engulfed yourself. After R., R.'s son will be king, Bh. will be excluded from the dynasty of kings, for not all the princes are installed in the kingship, but either the eldest or the most qualified. I have come for your sake, but you don't listen to me. Why do you wish to present me with gifts on the occasion of the prosperity of your co-wife? Surely R., after securing the kingdom, will send you either to another country or to another world. You ordered Bh. to be brought to his maternal uncle when he was a boy. Now it is on account of closeness of relation that attachment arises even in inanimate objects. There is great brotherly attachment between R. and L. Therefore, R. will not do any evil to L., but he will do so to Bh. Therefore, let Bh. leave Rājagṛha and go to the forest. But it will be better concerning your relatives if Bh. obtains the kingdom from his father lawfully. How will your son, reduced to poverty, live under the sovereignty of prosperous R., his enemy? How will your co-wife not repay her enmity—which arose when you, on account of your pride, insulted her in your position as the fortunate wife of D.? Therefore, devise a means of securing the kingdom for your son and find a reason for demanding R.'s banishment." At these words, Kai was ablaze with anger, and, taking a long and deep sigh, she said to Mantharā—"Today I shall banish R. to the forest and make
Bh. be consecrated in the heir-apparentship. Tell me the means by which Bh. will obtain the kingdom and R. will be excluded from it.” Then evil-looking Mantharā, with a view to stifling R.’s object, assented, at which Kai., raising herself a little from her bed, insistently repeated her request for her advice. Then Mantharā reminded her how she had once saved D.’s life [story] and had received two boons, which she had declined, saying that she would ask for them when she wished, and how the king had agreed to this proposal. Then she said—“Ask your husband for these two boons: Bh.’s coronation and R.’s banishment for fourteen years. Enter the house of wrath, lie down on the open ground with dirty clothes, don’t look at him and don’t speak to him. You are the beloved wife of your husband, for your sake he will even renounce his life. He is unable to provoke your anger and to look at you being angry. He is unable to neglect your words. Be careful not to take any jewels as appeasement, but insist on the two boons bestowed upon you by D. in the war between the Devas and the Asuras, and, if R. himself offers you a boon and raises you from the ground, make first D. give his word and then ask for your boon. When R. has gone to the forest, he will be a-rāma and Bh. will be king, with his enemies destroyed. By the time Bh. returns from the forest, your son will have struck strong roots and will have been accepted as the king. This is the proper time, so prevent the king from crowning R.”’ Thus instigated by Mantharā to accept the meaningless as meaningful, Kai. cheerfully praised the hunch-back’s exceeding intelligence and concern for her welfare, saying that she had never realized the evil design of the king and how crooked and evil those close to her were, and then sounded a eulogy of her physical charms (a eulogy of insipid platitudes) and promised her to adorn her hump with ornaments of gold and her face with a golden tilaka and lovely ornaments and to bestow upon her elegant dresses... When Mantharā heard these praises from Kai., she urged her to quickly attend to her design, as it would be useless
to build a bridge when the water has already flown out. Then she went with Mantharā to the chamber of wrath and, throwing away all her precious ornaments, sat down on the ground and said to Mantharā—"Either you will report me dead to the king or Bh. will obtain the earth."

**Analysis of characterization**

We witness in these **sargas** the transformation of a loving and high-souled queen-mother, whose affection is equally distributed between her own son Bh. and R. and the other princes and who responds to Mantharā's repeated attempts to arouse her suspicion and hatred against D. and R.—by trying to make her believe that R.'s installation in the heir-apparentship is the result of a well-planned, evil intrigue against Bh. and herself—first with exclamations of joy and asseverations of her love for R. and her regard for his virtues, into the most embittered, hard-hearted, jealous and vindictive petty-patroness of her son, a Kai. who, relentlessly determined to get Bh. enthroned and R. banished for fourteen years according to Mantharā's advice, is unwilling to stop short before a complete attainment of these two boons except by renouncing her own life. How has this transformation taken place? Externally, it would seem, by the evil agency of Mantharā's cunning and mendacious persuasions alone. But if we visualize the scene more deeply, we see clearly that it was V.'s intention to show how Mantharā succeeded in evoking a latent weakness of Kai. buried in the depths of her heart, namely, a deep-rooted ambition. For as long as she is sure that one day Bh. would get the kingship after R., she is immune to any persuasions whatsoever. But the moment Mantharā can convince her it is not so, a long-cherished hope latent in the back of her mind breaks down in Kai., a hope which has been the sole support of her humane and friendly attitude towards her relations and her optimistic, cheerful outlook on life. With this hope breaking down, all her apparent humaneness, affection and cheerfulness change into embitter-
ment, jealousy, hard-heartedness and relentless vindictiveness against those whom she imagines to be agents of a foul intrigue against her. This abrupt change of her outlook has its root in a deep-going ambition, the success or failure of which determines the whole of her psyche and of her morality, for, if her nature were permeated with a genuine sense of righteousness and virtue, such an abrupt change, brought about by the disillusion of one of her long-cherished hopes, would be impossible. And I think that V. meant this disillusion of a latent ambition to be the causal nexus to Kai.’s transformation. We see a grain of her innate ambition also in Manthara’s allusion to an old enmity of hers with Ks., which had arisen when she, in her pride of being the favourite wife of D., insulted Ks.¹ This interpretation of Kai.’s transformation as due to an innate ambition besides the external agency of Manthara, is significant because we have to assess against it certain statements made and explanations given by R. (mainly II 19) which show Kai. in a much more favourable light by putting the blame on fate. Are these explanations identical with the purport of V., or do they rather reflect R.’s firm adherence to satya-dharma as well as his respect for the motherhood of Kai.? In the context of the analysis of R.’s characterization the answer will be an emphatic yes to the second alternative. In fact, he himself realizes that Kai. has cheated her husband: II 21.8—

kaikeyyā vañcito rājā mayi cāranyamāśrite |
bhākyā ca parityakto na nūnāṃ vartaviṣyati ||

But R.’s respect for Kai.’s motherhood and his commitment to satya-dharma do not detract anything from the depravity of Kai.’s person, which is proved by the very presentation of her character itself, let alone the many curses which the poet through various characters inflicts upon her. V. agrees with R.’s spirit of forbearance and his respect for Kai. as his mother in as far as they motivate R. in his personal determination to fulfil his filial duty by obeying the word of his father and making true the promise given to Kai., but not in as far as they prompt him to acquit her of her guilt.
As king D. entered Kai.'s apartment to tell her the gladsome news and saw his youthful wife, who was more precious to him than his own life, lying on the ground, he was tormented with grief and, filled with love, began to stroke her with his hands. Being over-powered with passion, he said to her—"I don't know why you are angry. Has anybody insulted or abused you that you are torturing me by lying on the dust? I have very proficient doctors, tell me, what ails you? Whom do you want me to do a favour, or who has offended you? Which person that ought not to be killed should be killed, or which man that ought to be killed should be set free? Which poor man should be made rich or which rich man should be made poor? I and all my obedient servants are yours. I shall not deny you any desire even at the sacrifice of my life. Tell me what you wish." At these words of D., Kai. gained confidence and, desirous to speak out her ill-desire, began to torment her husband still more forcefully:—"I have not been insulted or abused by anybody. I wish that you fulfil some desire of mine. If you wish to do it, take an oath. Then I will tell you what I desire." Then D., infatuated with love, became submissive to his wife and said smilingly—"You don't know that there is nobody dearer to me than you excepting R. Even if it is to take out my heart, say without fear what you intend. I shall fulfil your desire; I swear by your virtue." At this, Kai. rejoiced and uttered that terrible desire of hers—"Let this your vow be heard by the 33 Gods with Indra at their head, by the sun and the moon, the sky, the planets, by day and night, the directions, the world, the earth with the Gandharvas and the Rks., by the night-roving creatures in the houses and the-
grhadevas and all other creatures, let the Gods hear that the glorious king, truthful to his promise, knowing dharma, well-concentrated, is giving me this boon.” Having thus extolled the king, she then spoke to her benefactor—infatuated with passion—these hostile words—“I am announcing boons which you had given me at that time; listen to my words: Let Bh. be consecrated instead of R. and let R. this very day go to the forest as an ascetic wearing deer-skin and matted locks for fourteen years.” When D. heard these hard-hearted words, he was agitated and bewildered like a deer seeing a tigress and, sitting down on the naked earth, fell to the ground with a deep sigh, unconscious, his senses agonized with grief. Regaining his consciousness after a long time, he addressed Kai., burning with anger—“You vile and wicked lady, destroyer of this race, what evil has been done to you by R. or by me? R. considers you always like his own mother, why then are you bent upon his misfortune? In my ignorance I brought you to my place like a poisonous snake for my own destruction. When all the world praises R.’s virtues, for what offence shall I abandon my dear son? I can renounce Ks., Sumitrā or even my life, but not my dear son. Great is my joy when I see him, but when I do not see him, I lose my consciousness. The world may live without sun or moon or water, but my life cannot abide in this body without R. Give up your evil resolve. I touch your feet and head.” Subdued by his inordinate wife, the helpless king, filled with grief, fell on the ground, touching the outstretched feet of Kai. While the king was lying on the ground, undeserving of such a treatment, Kai., in the guise of misfortune, now that she had obtained her desire, fearlessly pestered her husband again—“You are boasting of being truthful and firm to your vows; how is it then that you wish to withhold my boon?” Then D. answered, trembling with anger—“When I have died after R. has gone to the forest, you will attain your satisfaction and be happy. When I say it is the truth that R. went to the forest to fulfil the desire of Kai., it will be considered untrue. I shall
be ill-famed and fall into disgrace with the people." While he was lamenting, immersed in grief, his senses roving about, the night fell, and though it was lit by the orb of the moon, it did not light him up in his grief. With his eyes fixed to the sky, he prayed that the night may not pass, for he did not wish to see cruel Kai. Then again he beseeched Kai. with folded hands to have mercy upon him, but wicked Kai. did not pay heed to the pitiable laments of virtuous D. Then the king, seeing Kai. speak so harshly, at the thought of R.'s exile, again fell to the ground, unconscious. When sinful Kai. saw her husband lying on the ground—agonized with grief, she said to him—"Why do you lie on the ground, after giving me a promise, as if you had committed a sin? People knowing dharma say that truth is the highest virtue. I exhort you to follow dharma by adhering to truth. You know how Saibya attained to the highest gati by offering his body to a bird, how king Alaka unhesitatingly plucked his eye and gave it to a Brāhmaṇa skilled in the Vedas, at his request. The lord of the rivers has truth as his governing law; by adhering to truth in due accordance, he does not transgress his boundary. If you do not carry out your agreement, I will renounce my life in front of you." Thus, unable to shake off his fetters cast around him by fearless Kai., the king with agitated heart and pale face addressed Kai., hardly able to summon his courage—"Here I renounce your hand which I took before the fire and your son Bh. together with you." Kai., of sinful conduct, beside herself with rage, said to the king—"What sickening words are you uttering? Send for R. immediately, and when you have consecrated Bh. and sent R. to the forest and thus freed me from any rival, you will have done your duty." Thus driven (impelled) by Kai. like a horse by a sharp whip, the king repeated again and again—"I am bound by the fetters of dharma. My consciousness is gone. I only wish to see my dear virtuous son, R." Then Kai. herself said to Sumantra—"Go and fetch R.", and the virtuous king, his eyes reddened with grief, looked
towards the charioteer and spoke (gave his consent). Sumantra, however, hearing D. lamenting and seeing him distressed, stepped a little aside, and, since the king was unable to speak out of distress, Kai. herself gave the reply—

"Sumantra, I want to see handsome R. Fetch him quickly."

Thinking that he has been ordered to fetch R. by Kai.—anxious to see his consecration, Sumantra, with pleased heart, left the palace.

Analysis of characterization

In her imagination that she is the victim of a foul intrigue, an imagination brought about by the disillusion of a long-cherished, latent hope of hers to see her son Bh. enthroned after a hundred years’ reign of R. and in her consequent effort to secure her lost ambition, Kai. employs every mode of cunning: By arousing the pity of her husband, whom she knows to be infatuated with love for her and unaware of her intentions, she psychologically induces him to promise her to fulfil whatever desire of hers and makes him confirm his promise with an oath, and thereby fetters him with his own words to the two boons which he had once conferred upon her and which she had declined at that time in order to ask for them when she so desired. And she displays thereby such inexorable feelings of embitterment, vindictiveness and hard-heartedness that she remains as hard as stone to D.’s pitiable lamentations for his son R. and his entreaties to reverse her cruel intention, and, as if she were delighted to see his heart broken with grief, makes a mock of his reputation of being satyasandha, dṛḍhavarta and dharmañja and, threatening him with suicide, pesters him with her repeated instigations to abide by his promise to carry out her stern resolve. And when D. at last succumbs, helplessly moaning that he is bound by the fetters of dharma, that his senses are failing him, and he expresses his wish to see once more his dear son, Kai. herself directs Sumantra to fetch R., and, when the charioteer first hesitates, seeing the sad condi-
tion of D., and D. is unable to utter any word out of grief, she repeats her order in such a way as to forestall any possible suspicion on the part of Sumantra.

Resume of further expositions of Kaikeyi's character

Almost all the following expositions of, or references to, Kai.'s character serve to display further the perspectives of her cunning and crookedness on the one hand, and of her embitterment, vindictiveness and inexorable hard-heartedness on the other hand—expressed in her ruthless and relentless attempt to secure her ambition.

In II 16 we see how Kai. with shameless cunning makes use of R.'s restless state of mind at D.'s sorrow-stricken appearance, his anxiety to know what has happened to his father and whether he or Kai. has offended him and his impatience to do whatever his dear father desires, even at the sacrifice of his life—and she knows very well that R. would never swerve an inch from his promise—, to tell him that the king at the time of war between the Devas and Asuras had given her two boons and that at that time she had asked him for Bh.'s consecration and R.'s banishment—a blunt lie which covers up her own crookedness and pretends to expose D.'s twilight policy—and that, if he wishes to make his father truthful to his promise, he should abide by his order—which Kai. explicitates. When R., with a response of heroic equanimity and love for his father D., cheerfully and loyally accepts these words, but fails to understand why his father does not welcome him like before, why he has not told him his intention himself, and why he keeps his eyes pressed on the ground and sheds tears when it is the inmost desire of his (R.'s) heart to do whatever favour to him
—his father, benefactor and king, when he would offer S., the kingdom and even his life to Bh. on his own account and how much more so if he is asked so by his loving father and thereby can help to maintain his promise and fulfil a desire of Kai. — Kai., instead of acknowledging the heroism of these words of R., urges him to delay no longer and immediately send messengers to Bh., for, until he has reached the forest, his father, who is unable to talk to him out of shame, will not take bath and eat. What a blunt lie! She does as if D. were desirous to see R. go to the forest as soon as possible, but out of shame and a bad conscience did not dare to reveal his intention—while it is actually she herself, who, in her desire to see her ambition accomplished, is too impatient to wait any longer for the installation of her son on the throne and in this impatience of her ambition does not shun from employing the most crooked and ruthless means.

For s.19 see under Lakṣmanā.

S. 32 gives us a glimpse of Kai.'s sternness towards any measure that would contribute to the comfort of R. and lead to the inconvenience of Bh., and a glimpse of her impatience to see R. exiled, in which see reveals an indiscretion which is diametrically opposed to the discretion with which R. treats her: When king D. in his agony orders Sumantra to send along with R. the four armies, mistresses of the house, merchants, wrestlers etc. as well as all the citizens and all the amenities of city life, Kai. lodges a strong protest, saying that Bh. will not accept a kingdom that has been emptied to the dregs, and at D.'s ironical question—vahantam khi tudasi māṁ niyujya dhuri māhte—she gets so wild that she demands D. ought to banish R. like Sagara his son Asamañja—an impertinent demand and an impertinent comparison, as an old high state official, Siddhārtha, giving expression to the indignance of the people, protests on hearing Kai.'s command. When R. declares to his father that he is going to the forest as an ascetic
renouncing all luxury and living on forest fruits and so all these amenities are of no use for him, that, instead, he is leaving everything to Bh. and asks for a bark-garment, a hoe and two baskets, Kai, with a spontaneous gesture of "cooperation", brings him personally the bark-garment.

Kai.'s heinousness, hard-heartedness and cruelty are brought to the fore very forcefully in a number of curses which the poet, in the mouth of various characters, invokes upon her, e.g. 37.6-9; 43.5-6; 60.3-6. Ks.'s lamentation over her dead husband in 60.3ff., in addition, highlights Kai.'s greed very profusely.

In s. 66 V. shows us to what extent Kai.'s ambition has transformed her moral and psychological attitude towards her own son. In her eager expectation to see Bh. on the throne, she not only experiences no grief for her dead husband, but even projects her own heinous ambition on her own son Bh. and expects him to receive joyfully her intimation of the news of D.'s death. When Bh., however, contrary to her expectation, oozes away in grief and addresses various questions and requests to his mother regarding D. and R., thereby expressing his loving devotion to them, and, at Kai.'s implicit hint that R. has left the place together with L. and S., inquires with grave concern and anxiety about their whereabouts—Kai. still, inspite of all these gestures of benevolent love and concern by Bh., goes on projecting her own heinous feelings on her son, still imagining that ultimately her announcement of R.'s and S.'s going to the forest, and particularly so if he knows this has been done at her own instigation and for the sake of her own son, would immensely delight Bh. In fact, her unconcealed triumphantly triumphant final disclosure of this after her earlier as yet more concealed, though no less hopeful, intimations marks the highlight of her psychological projection, in her mistaken belief that the soul-baring revelation of her petty-ambition would, in virtue of its alluring prospect for her son, dispel ultimately all his agonized reactions. All this shows how ambition has
transformed her psychologically and morally to such an extent that she has lost sight of Bh.'s moral sense of righteousness and benevolence and projects her own ambitious feelings on Bh., even though Bh.'s manifestations of grief for D. and of devotion to R. are quite contrary to her own imagination of how her son should react. Though she has revealed herself as most cunning in her dealings with D., apprehending all his psychological reactions, her unholy ambition has completely shut her eyes to the psychological disposition of her own son. V. has drawn thus a good example of how ambition can make one cunning towards others, but blind towards oneself.

Ss. 67-68, describing Bh.'s reproach of his mother for her heinous wickedness and his rejection of the throne as well as his lamentation at the misfortune caused by Kai., throw into bold relief the far-reaching effect as well as the exorbitant extent of Kai.'s heinousness and cruelty. The main idea is this: Treated with all the affection due to his own mother by R. and due to her own sister by Ks., Kai. in her boundless greed (ambition) has required this affection with such heinousness and cruelty as to expel R., the embodiment of virtue and dharma, the darling of the people, to the forest, and has thereby brought immeasurable grief upon D., Ks., Bh., nay, the entire clan, the entire kingdom. In her unholy ambition for her son, she has caused the death of her husband and concurred heartrending grief and disgrace on her son, whose righteousness and goodness, whose attachment to D. and R. she has failed to realize and whose reputation she has spoiled. She has deprived a mother of her son, the dearest friend a mother can have in her life—

angapratyāṅgajaḥ putro hṛdayāccāpi jāyate /
tasmāt priyataro mātuḥ priyatvānna tu bāndhavāḥ //14—

which is a crime abominable in its cruelty, a crime for which she deserves but the darkest place in hell as a punishment.

With this, V.'s exposition of Kai.'s character is as good as complete. We do not know whether the poet intended to infuse-
certain stray allusions to Kai. with any further light illumining her behaviour after her ambition was stifled, namely, whether he meant her to have undergone some inner conversion or so. The question is difficult to answer, but most probably V. did not intend to throw any further light on Kai.'s character, otherwise he would have had ample opportunity to do so, but he simply refrained from it considering that her role was over, that in the way her personality was situated she had to accept her failure whether she liked it or not. Whether the author meant to indicate some radical conversion on Kai.'s part—since he includes her among the other queens to fetch R. and since they are spoken of as setting out on their mission with delighted hearts—cf. 77.6: kaikeyi ca sumitrā ca kausalyā ca yaśasvinī rāmānayanaśraddhā yāyuryānena bhāsvatā ||—, as consoling S. and as filled with tears of affection at the sight of R.'s grief—cf. 96.13 ff.: 

\[
evanārāṁ śatapanyāsta jagmūrāśvāsya tāṁ tādā |
dādṛṣācāśrame rāmāṁ svargāccyutamivāmaram ||13
sarvabhogaiḥ pariṣṭhaktaṁ rāmāṁ samprekuṣṭya mātaraḥ |
ārta mumucuraśrūni sasvaram śokakarṣitāḥ ||14—
\]

and when taking his leave—cf. 104.25:

\[
tāṁ mātaro bāspagṛhitakaṇṭhyo duḥkhenā nāmantrayitum
\]

\[
hi śekūḥ |
\]

\[
sa tveva mātrīpbhivādyā sarvā rudankuṭūṁ svāṁ praviveśa
\]

\[
rāmaḥ ||—
\]

and since he includes her among those to greet R. at his return to Ayodhya——, cannot be proved since V. never speaks of Kai. separately, except in one passage describing Bh.'s introduction of his mothers to Bharadvaja (86.16-28). At this occasion Kai. is referred to as follows:

\[
vv. 16-17:
\]

\[
asamṛddhena kāmena sarvalokasya garhitaḥ |
kaikeyi tasya jāgrāha caraṇau savyapratapā ||16
\]

\[
tāṁ pradakṣināmāgamya bhagavantaṁ mahāmunim |
adūrādbharaṭasyaiva ṭasthau dinanāstädā ||17
\]

\[
vv. 24-25:
\]
yasyāḥ kṛte naravyāghrau jīvanāśamito gatau / 
rājā putravihīnośca svargaṁ daśaratho gatoḥ //24 
aśvanyakāmāṁ kaikēyīmaraṁ aryāṁraṁryūpipyām / 
mamaitāṁ māttarum viddhi nṛśamsāṁ pāpaniścayāṁ / 
yatomūlaṁ hi paśyāmi vyasanaṁ mahadātmanoḥ //25

vv. 27-28 :

bharadvājo mahārṣīteṁ bruvanteṁ bharataṁ tadā / 
pratyuvāca mahābuddhirīdaṁ vacanamarthavat //27 
na doṣeṇāvagantavyā kaikēyaḥ bharata tvayā / 
rāmaprāvajanoṁ hyetatsukhodarkaṁ bhaviṣyatī //28

Is there any indication of a radical conversion in any of the three passages? The answer must be an emphatical no. The words of v.17 cannot be said to imply anything more than that Kai. feels depressed or ashamed, which she has all reason to be. Bh.'s reproach almost excludes the possibility of an inner conversion, for then we should expect him to mention at least her conversion also, just as we would expect him to be much gentler in his rebuke of his mother while disputing with R., cf. 98.46-47. And Bharadvāja's request to Bh. not to find fault with his mother is spoken in connection with the happy end which the sage visualizes through his magic power: "Let the past be past, the future will be happy." Does this imply a conversion on the part of Kai. so purporting by the poet V.? It seems out of the way to draw such a conclusion. It is rather to be inferred from the absence of any further expositions of Kai.'s character after Bh.'s reproach of her that V. ceased characterizing Kai. from the moment her ambition had no further scope for development and she had no further role to play in the story; that those few allusions to Kai. where she is mentioned as one among the queens to accompany Bh. on his mission to bring back R. are not meant to illumine any particular character-facet of hers; and that the allusions to her in the context of Bh.'s introduction of the queens to Bharadvāja serve rather to highlight Bh.'s resentment and Bharadvāja's consequent attempt to pacify him by prophesizing the happy end of R.'s exile than to imply a hidden allusion to Kai.'s conversion.
A SYNTHETIC VIEW OF THE POET'S CONCEPTION AND PORTRAIT OF KAIKEYI'S CHARACTER

Conception

Though owing much to the pattern of spontaneous improvisation, V.'s conception of Kai.'s character is uniform up to the point where Bh. disillusioned her ambitious hopes. It is our contention that with this Kai.'s characterization as such has reached its end—though an abrupt end. If we were to be asked how it is that V., after such a vivid exposition of Kai.'s character, does not intend to bring her portrait to its completion when this would be of such an interest to the reader even though her main role in the story has ended, we would have to answer: Precisely because her role has finished, her character-portrayal, too, has finished. This is a consequence of the partly bardic nature of the poem. The bard is constantly engaged in projecting fresh and vivid scenes with a variety of sentiments before the audience so as to awaken in them feelings of thrill in various dimensions. Now "Kaikeyi's story" has come to an end, a new "story", which has already commenced, is making its appearance.
As we meet Kai, in her first response to the repeated, cunning persuasions of Mantharā destined to make her imagine to be the victim of an intrigue by D., she appears to be the ideal of a loving queen-mother, for the great enthusiasm with which she welcomes Mantharā’s news of R.’s consecration, to the utter embarrassment and bewilderment of the hunch-back, and for all the loving affection and benevolence she manifests and asseverates for R., who is as dear to her as her son Bh. So it comes like a bolt from the blue when that same loving, humane and cheerful Kai, all of a sudden succumbs to the sinister agency of evil-minded Mantharā, who succeeds in disillusioning a latent hope of hers, the hope for Bh. to be enthroned one day after a hundred years’ reign of R. A deep-rooted, but vehement ambition has been awakened in her, and as she sees her ambition threatened and imagines herself the victim of a foul trick by D. and his consorts, she turns into the most embittered, jealous, hard-hearted and vengeful petty-patroness for Bh., determined, in her impatience to see her ambition fulfilled, not to shun from employing the most oblique, shameless and indiscreet cunning and meanest deceit and from pester her victim D. with the most cruel and ruthless pressures in order to drive him to succumb to her wiles, delighted, as it were, in inflicting grief on her imagined enemies. Though she is treated with all the respect due to his own mother by R., who, ever intent on resorting to what is dharma and truth and on fulfilling the desires of his father and his mothers, accepts these words with heroic equanimity and love and in his heroic regard for dharma and truth and his noble respect for Kai, as a mother makes fate responsible for all the turn of events and consequently also for her cruel ambition, her heinousness, wickedness and hard-heartedness are painted with loud colours by the poet. In fact, the way in which she responds to the heroism of R.’s words and gestures is so indiscreet as to give an out-
right slap to R.‘s nobility. Not only does she, instead of acknowledging his noble, heroic words, urge him to delay no longer, not only does she act as if D. were desirous to see R. expelled as soon as possible, but out of shame and a bad conscience did not dare to reveal his intention—which is a blunt lie,—and in all that openly exposes her impatience to see R. expelled, but she even maliciously protests against any measure that would contribute to the comfort of R. and lead to the inconvenience of Bh. and by way of an outspokenly impertinent and indiscreet comparison in the very presence of R. demands that he ought to be banished by his father D. like Asamañja by his father Sagara. More than that, Kai.’s heinousness, hard-heartedness and cruelty, rooted in her violent greed, are brought to the fore most forcefully in a number of curses which the poet, in the mouth of various characters, inflicts upon her. V. also exposes how Kai.’s ambition has transformed her moral and psychic attitude towards her own son to such an extent that she fails to realize his lofty ideals of righteousness and benevolence and, expecting him to welcome her cruel decision, projects her own ambitious feelings on him, against all his heartfelt expressions of grief for D. and devotion to R. Though she has revealed herself as most cunning in her dealings with D., apprehending all his psychological reactions, her unholy ambition has completely shut her eyes to the psychological disposition of her own son. V. has thus drawn in her an example of how ambition can make one cunning towards others, but blind towards oneself. The poet closes her chapter by giving us a final glimpse of the extent and effect of her sin (pāpa) in Bh.’s bitter lamentation. In her boundless greed, she has “rewarded” the most affectionate treatment which she has received from R. and Ks. with such heinousness and cruelty as to cause immeasurable grief and calamity to D., Ks., Bh., nay the entire family, the entire nation, as to cause the death of her husband and spoil the reputation of her sons and to deprive a mother of her only son, the dearest she can have in her life.
The fact that in 60.6, 71.13 and 72.8 Mantharā is referred to as the cause of the misfortune that has overshadowed the house of Ayodhyā does not contradict this. Mantharā is the external agent, yet her agency would not have influenced Kai, had she not aroused in her a latent but intense ambition for power. In fact, in the context of all the references, Kai, gets her severe share of rebuke also.

**MANTHARA**

Mantharā, the hunch-backed maid-servant of Kai., is a wretched witch, an embodiment, as it were, of evil look and evil mind. Driven by an ambitious desire for status\(^1\), which she would obtain with Kai. becoming the main queen, she is so upset at the prospect of R.’s consecration as heir-apparent that she is determined to arouse Kai.’s ambition and make her believe that she is the object of a foul intrigue by D. and his consorts and so to instigate her to take revenge on her imagined enemies and force her husband to establish her own son Bh. on the throne while expelling R. to the forest. And she is relentless in her effort and, crooked and cunning as she is, she knows, though she does not succeed in her first attempts, to tickle Kai.’s vulnerable point of ambition and to infuse her poison into it. And having succeeded in persuading her, she gives her all the advice necessary to ensure a hundred percent success for her.

\(^{1}\) I think it is not correct to interpret her motive as born of a desire for Kai.’s welfare, though in II 7.15 she is referred to as *sā viṣāppatarā bhūtvā kubjā tasyā hitaiśinī* and Kai. praises her with similar words in II 9.29: *tvameva tu mamārtheṣu nityayuktā hitaiśinī j nāhaṁ samav-buddhyeyāṁ kubje rājñāsecikirṣitam*. Though *hitaiśin* in a normal context has the meaning “desiring the welfare of somebody”, I feel that in II 7.15 V. intends to play with this word by imbuing it with the ironical meaning “seeking benefit from her”. For, if her motive
were an altruistic desire for Kai.'s welfare, prompted by a mistaken suspicion of D. and his consorts, it would not be explainable why Mantharā should still persist in arousing the suspicion of her mistress when she expresses her happiness at R.'s installation and her affection for him. Moreover, the poet does give hidden barbs at Mantharā's greed when he depicts her as being over and over adorned with precious ornaments, royal garments and a girdle making her look like a female monkey tied with a rope, and describes the humiliating treatment she suffers from the hands of Śatruughna. Cf. s.72. And I think the poet smiles ironically through the words of Mantharā when she says—II 7.17-18:

\[
\text{sāsmyagādhe bhaye magnā duḥkhaśokasamanvitā} \\
\text{dahyamānānaleneva tvaddhitārthamihāgatā} \quad ||17 \\
\text{tava duḥkhena kaikeyi mama duḥkhain mahadbhavet} \\
\text{tvadyṛddhau mama vṛddhiśca bhavedatra na saṁśayāḥ} \quad ||18
\]

and of Kaikeyi—II 9 28-30:

\[
\text{kubje tvāṁ nābhijānāmi śreṣṭhāṁ śreṣṭhābhidhāyinīm} \\
\text{prthivyāmasti kubjāmūttamā buddhiścayey} \quad ||28 \\
\text{tvameva tu mamārtheṣu nityayuktā hitaśīṁī} \\
\text{nāhaṁ samavabuddhyeyam kubje rājñāśicikṣitām} \quad ||29 \\
\text{santi duḥsainśhitāḥ kubjā vakhāḥ paramapāpikāḥ} \\
\text{tvam padhyamiva vātena sannatā priyadarśanā} \quad ||30—
\]

which is followed by a eulogy consisting of insipid platitudes.
KAUSALYA
A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER-PORTRAYAL OF KAUSALYA

II 4.32-41

KAUSALYA'S JOYFUL RESPONSE TO THE NEWS OF RAMA'S CONSECRATION

Résumé

When R. enters Ks.'s apartment, he finds her along with L., Sumitrā and S. praying to Laksmī and meditating on Lord Viṣṇu, and as he intimates to her the joyful message of his consecration, mother Ks., though she has received the news already earlier, now gives expression to her joy at the fulfilment of a long-cherished desire of hers, with the attainment of which she deems all her opponents defeated, expression to her joy that, as her supplications to Lord Viṣṇu have been fruitful, her son is going to attain to the glory of the Ikṣvāku kingdom. What the poet intends to convey in these lines, is not the egoistic petty-ambition of a queen-mother working to secure a "protégé-privilege" for her son—for Ks.'s son is the eldest prince and it is his birth-right to follow in the foot-steps of his father D.—, but the joy of a loving queen-mother—proud of the great privilege of her first-born son to be consecrated—bursting out as her long-cherished expectation of the grand hour of her son's consecration in the heir-apparentship has come true, all her fears of possible intrigues on the part of opponents, as they are customary in royal houses, fears which have subconsciously
arisen in her mind disquieting her expectant heart, are vanished and all her fervent prayers for the welfare of her son fulfilled.

II 17-18. 21

Kausalya’s agony at Rama’s intimation of his banishment and her vain efforts to dissuade him from going away

Contents

(17-18).........................................................................................................................

When R. entered the apartment of his mother Ks., he saw her with devoted heart making an oblation to fire and reciting mantras. In fact, the whole night she had been standing in silent meditation and at day-break she was worshipping Viṣṇu, praying for the welfare of her son. At R.’s sight, Ks., filled with affection for her son, said to him—“As your father, truthful to his word, is going to consecrate you in the heir-apparentship, you have attained to the life and fame of the old virtuous rājarṣis and the dharma of the dynasty.” At this, R. answered to her with humility and respect—“O queen, you certainly don’t know that great calamity has come over me and this will conduce to the grief of you, S. and L...” At this, Ks., unaccustomed to grief, lost her spirits and fell to the ground like a plantain-tree, and, after R. raised her from the ground and brushed off the dust from her body with his hands, sorrow-stricken Ks. said to her son in the presence of L.—“If you had never been born, the only grief I would suffer would be the grief of being a childless woman. Not finding any happiness in the manliness of my husband, I sus-
tained my life through my hope for it in my son. But now, though being the eldest, I will hear many heart-piercing insults from my younger co-wives, and what is more painful for a woman than this? Even in your presence I was insulted, how much more will I be when you have gone away; surely I am going to die. Seventeen years since your birth, I have passed in expectation of an end to my grief. With fasts, meditation and many hardships I have reared you up in agony and great difficulty and all that to no purpose. Certainly my heart is like steel that it does not break like a river-bank when touched by floods in the rainy season. Certainly there is no place for me in the abode of Yama, as death does not desire me. Certainly death does not come before time. But this is my grief that all my vows, gifts, restraints, austerities which I have undertaken for the sake of off-spring have become useless like seed sown on barren soil. If one could obtain death when one is oppressed by heavy grief by one’s own will, I, being separated from you like a cow from her calf, would have joined already the assembly of the dead.” As L. heard these heart-rending lamentations of Ks., he was distressed and tried to console her with words appropriate to the occasion. When Ks., overpowered by grief, heard these comforting words of L., she said to R.—“You have heard what your brother L. has said; if you approve of it, do what is to be done next. You should not leave me alone—overwhelmed with grief, listening to the unjust words of my co-wife. If you are anxious to practice dharma, serve me by staying at home and thus practice dharma which is unexcelled. The great sage Kāśyapa obtained heaven by serving his mother at home. I am as deserving of respect as is the king, and I do not allow you to go to the forest. With you separated from me, I do not want life or happiness; it would be better for me to eat grass with you. If you go to the forest and leave me alone in grief, I shall seek death by fasting, for I shall not be able to live, then you will go to hell like the Ocean, the lord of rivers, for committing an unlawful act.” As Ks.
was thus lamenting, virtuous R. spoke to her words endowed with righteousness—"I have no power to violate the words of my father. I entreat you with bowed head, I am anxious to go to the forest. Rśi Kaṇḍu, in obedience to his father's words, killed a cow, knowing it to be dharma. And in our dynasty of old, Sagara at the command of his father performed a great slaughter as his sons dug the earth. And Rāma, the son of Jamadagni, killed his mother Reṇukā with an axe at the words of his father. It is not I alone who follows the word of his father. I shall follow this path gone by the ancestors. This is the duty I have to fulfil on earth; there isn't just any other way. Nobody is forsaken following the order of his father." After speaking these words to his mother, R. turned to L. .................. After these affectionate words to L., he turned again to Ks., with bowed head and folded hands—"Allow me, mother, to go to the forest; I entreat you by my life; give me your farewell blessings. Having fulfilled my promise, I shall come back to the town again..." After entreating thus his mother and instructing his younger brother, he made a circumambulation round his mother in his heart.

(21) Seeing virtuous R. so insistent on observing the words of his father, Ks. spoke to him words choked with tears—"How should my son, born by me to D., who has never seen grief, who is kind to all beings, live on grain when his servants enjoy cooked food? Who will believe it, who will not be filled with fear on hearing that meritorious R., the beloved son of the king, is sent into exile? Like fire burns grass at the end of the rainy season, so the fire of sorrow will consume me forsaken by you. As a cow follows a calf wherever it goes, I shall follow you wherever you go." To this R. answered—"The king has been deceived by Kai., and when I have gone to the forest and he has been abandoned also by you, he will surely die. It is cruel on the part of a wife to forsake her husband; you should put this idea out of your mind. As long as my father, the lord
the earth, lives, you should be obedient to him, for that is the eternal dharma.” When virtuous R. saw his mother approve of his words, he said again to her—“It is my duty as well as yours to accomplish the words of my father, for he is king, husband, preceptor, the foremost lord and master of all. And after spending these fourteen years in the forest, I shall abide by your words. Hearing these words, Ks., overwhelmed with grief, said to her dearly beloved son, her face filled with tears—“I shall not be able to live in the midst of my co-wives. If you have decided to go out of regard for your father, take me to the forest like a wild female deer.” As she was thus crying, R., himself weeping, answered—“As long as a woman lives, her husband is her God and master. The king is your and my master. And noble-souled Bh. also, who is kind to all beings, will attend upon you, for he is ever bent on dharma. See unfailingly to it that after my departure the king does not out of grief for his son fall into affliction. A wife who does not serve her husband will, even though she is engaged in religious vows and fasts, attain to the place of sin. A wife should obey her husband, always intent on his welfare. This is the law of old seen in the world, heard in the Vedas and layed down in the śāstras. Honour for my sake the Brāhmaṇas—strict in the observance of religious vows—, spend thus the time in expectation of my arrival. You will obtain the highest desire after my return if D., the first of those possessed of righteousness, keeps alive.” When R. had spoken these words, Ks., overwhelmed with grief for her son, said—“Go my son, abide by your object, may prosperity be with you always.” Ks. spoke these auspicious words as she saw her son resolved with all his heart on going into exile and she was anxious to give him her fare-well blessing.

Interpretation of context and analysis of characterization
At the outset, we have to say that V.'s characterization of Ks. is not a complete exposition of her character, but rather the pathetic portrayal of her as a loving mother crushed by the pangs of her agony at the separation from her son. It is from the view-point of a pathetic experience that we have to interpret all her reactions of grief as they follow upon the traumatic news of R.'s banishment. It is a traumatic shock indeed, and the poet has highlighted this point very well: Absorbed as she is in meditation and prayer to Viṣṇu for the welfare of her dearly beloved son and filled with the supreme joy and pride of a loving queen-mother looking forward to the proud hour of her son's coronation and losing herself in happy visions of his future fame and glory, visions to which she gives delightful expression as R. enters her chamber — it is in such moments of the highest Elysian feelings that she encounters the most excruciating, unprecedented torments of agony of her life. Her reaction is naturally an enervating feeling of grief and agony, the paroxysmal force of which deprives her of her consciousness and strikes her on the ground. When she is raised from the ground and regains her consciousness, she gives vent to such gloomy and pessimistic feelings as to give the impression that certain unpleasant experiences of her past life, experiences of being neglected by her husband in favour of the other queens, experiences which she suppressed through the counter-balance of her love and hope for her son, are now aroused again in her mind and become so vigorous that she feels as though all her life was but a life of never-ending pain and gloom, with her hope for her son alone sustaining her to carry on; and, since this last ray of hope has now been extinguished, she feels it would have been better for her never to have borne a son, for then she would have only to suffer the pain of being a childless woman, but not the pain of a queen humiliated and insulted by her younger co-wives. This traumatic news of her son's banishment awakens in her the most gloomy imaginations, imaginations which she has entertained in certain moments of unhappy occurrences, but which she now projects on the whole of her life. Everything is black and dark for her, all her life
useless, all her religious vows and austerities in vain, and no relief from this burden of grief, no mercy even on the part of death. When L. hears these heart-rending lamentations of Ks. and, considering in his mind the unwarranted injustice behind the order of D., in his flaming love for R., consoles her by promising that he will see to it that justice is done and all obstacles to R.'s coronation are removed at any cost, Ks. approves of these words, and like L., like any other human being in such a situation except a dharmavīra, a hero of righteousness and forbearance like R., she feels that grave injustice has been done to her son and that it is necessary to revolt against a dharma which is the product of the injustice and cruelty of her ambitious co-wife. And it is understandable that in this mental agony of hers, in her feeling that her son is the victim of injustice, she, out of a deep love for him, has recourse to a little bit of cunning, namely to an attempt to bind him by instructing him that it is as equally high a duty of a son to serve his mother as is obedience to his father and by expressing her formal disapproval of his going to the forest and declaring that, if he fails to listen to her order, she will seek death by fasting, as a consequence of which he will go to hell for committing adharma. Persistent though this attempt appears, it is not the shrewd cunning that is determined to win the argument, in fact she could not hope so, for in her heart of hearts she would know that it is the supreme dharma of a son to follow the order of his father, but a cunning that flows spontaneously out of her agony and love for her son and is inspired by L.'s consolation. Ks. takes R.'s reminder that the highest duty of a son is to follow the words of his father with a silent gesture of approval, for in her further expressions of grief she does not make any further appeal to R. to refrain from going into exile. Meanwhile, a heavy debate is going on between R. and L. R., in his heroic adherence to dharma and forbearance towards any injustice done to him, declares obedience to the word of his father as the unalterable dharma, over-looking, in his high-minded respect for Kai. as his mother, all the meanness of her character and attributing it to fate, while L., in his human
mentality, considering the injustice behind what R. considers to be his dharma, cannot but feel like revolting against a dharma that is the product of injustice and cruelty and a fate that turns the most virtuous into the most miserable while it makes the most evil persons prosper. Whether L. likes it or not, R. rejects his brother’s persuasion by insistently reaffirming his tenet that to fulfil the order of his father is the path of truth. But Ks., though she realizes and appreciates R.’s high-minded intention, does not find consolation, for the painful thought of R.’s ascetic life in the forest, so in contrast with the luxurious life he has been hitherto accustomed to, and the excruciating thought of his separation from her make it almost impossible for her to admit this to happen. And so she entreats R. to allow her at least to follow him like a cow follows her calf. Though R.’s admonition to put this idea out of her mind, as it is cruel on the part of a wife to forsake her husband, and to abide by the eternal dharma of a wife to attend upon her husband meets with her approval and R., realizing her approval, adds the remark that it is her as well as his duty to obey the word of his father—for he is king, husband, perceptor and the lord and master of all—and that after his fourteen years of exile he will come back and abide by her words, she abruptly falls back into her lamentation as she imagines her isolation from her son and her exposure to the insults of her co-wives—before she finally yields to R.’s repeated exhortation to abide by her eternal duty as a wife to attend to the welfare of her husband.

To sum up: All the variegated reactions on the part of Ks. in response to the traumatic news of R.’s banishment are but the natural reactions of the mental agony of a queen-mother who, like a bolt from the blue, is deprived of all her hopes she has cherished a life long for her son, feeling as though all her life has been a life of suffering and as though, with her last ray of hope extinguished, everything has broken down, and who, inspite of all encouragement, can find consolation only with great difficulty, helplessly looking towards the
impending hour of her separation from her son and his life of unprecedented, undeserved hardships.

Resume of Kausalya’s fare-well wishes

Ks.’s prayerful fare-well stotra on behalf of R. (s. 22), which is a combination of prayers requesting the blessings of the Gods and other super-natural beings, of apotropeical entreaties to the creatures of the forest and of general auspicious wishes for success, prosperity and a happy return, rounds off and sums up a mother’s life-long self-sacrificing love for her son, a love which, having come under the strain of agony and having failed to dissuade R. from his heroic commitment to dharma, now pours out once more in a last bid to implore the Gods and creatures for his protection and for all blessings on him for his fateful journey, the very thought of which has brought so much agony to her.

Ks.’s counsel to S. not to disregard her husband in his calamity as her farewell gift is not at all an expression of distrust, but the concern of a mother for the marital welfare of her son and daughter-in-law, a marital welfare that, owing to the nature of a life amidst extraordinary hardships, may be exposed to trials and difficulties. And at S.’s beautiful asseverations of her faithfulness and devotion to her husband, Ks. sheds tears of grief and joy, joy at having such a virtuous daughter-in-law and being assured of the happiness of the couple’s marital life even under austere circumstances, grief at the visualization of their separation. (34.19-28)
Resume of passages describing Kausalya’s agonies after Rama’s departure

From the way V. has portrayed Ks.’s mental agony, we can easily foresee how it will break forth again as the dreaded moment of the departure of her dear son comes actually true, and how it will assume notes of great despair:

In II 35.32 the poet describes pathetically how R. sees his mother running after the chariot and crying with despair-ridden voice “O Rāma, Rāma, O Sītā and Laksmana”.

When D., overwhelmed with grief at the loss of R. vanishing from his sight, is at his request seated on the bed of Ks. to find solace, feeling as if his vision has left him with R.’s departure (II 37), Ks. also gives vent to pitiful lamentations and gloomy visions, imagining how Kai. would roam about harassing her like a snake set free and recalling to her mind the cruelty with which her co-wife has deprived R., L. and S. of their glory and exposed them to unbearable privations and hardships; and, as if to chase away for a moment all oppressing thoughts of grief and despair, she conjures up in her mind happy visions of that glorious day when Ayodhya will see the triumphant return of the trio—only to fall back into smarting pangs of conscience as she remembers that in her youth she once cut off the udders of cows, thus preventing the calves from drinking their mother’s milk—as a result of which she deems herself deprived of her only son by Kai. (II 38).

When Sumantra conveys R.’s messages and solacing exhortations in a very touching manner and gives a pathetic account of L.’s words of protest against D., of S.’s silent tears at his parting and of the gloomy, melancholic atmosphere pervading all beings and of the agonized lamentations of the citizens of Ayodhya, D., in a frenzy of grief and remorse, accuses himself bitter-
ly of having conjured this great calamity by infatuatedly following the dictate of sinful Kai. without consulting his counsellors and friends, implores Sumantra to take him to R., as without him he cannot live even for a moment, and, invoking with grief-choked voice R., L. and S. "who do not know that he feels as though he were dying with grief, an orphan left by them", he sinks down on the bed of Ks., deprived of his spirits (II 52-53). As Ks. hears the pitiable, heart-rending lamentations of her husband, she trembles with grief and despair, as if possessed by an evil spirit, and implores Sumantra to take her to R., S. and L., or she would go to the abode of Yama. When Sumantra, to console her, converts his note of pathos and pessimism into a note of cheer and optimism and presents her a charming account of how happy the three actually feel amidst their ascetic austerities, she, notwithstanding, remains uncomforted, as the agonizing thought of her separation from R., L. and S. and their austere life of isolation in the forest—so vividly impressed upon her by Sumantra's pathetic description a moment ago—still rings in her ears. And she turns in anger and grief towards her husband and bitterly accuses him of the wrong done by him to R., conjuring up gloomy visions of their life amidst hardships and terrors in the forest, of the disgust R. would feel after coming back to Ayodhya and taking over the treasure of kingdom enjoyed by others and gives vent to her feelings of despair at her total isolation as a wife, lamenting that she has lost all refuges a woman has in her life, her husband, her son and her relatives, through her husband, who has completely ruined her with her son, ruined the kingdom with all its ministers and citizens. (II 54-55) Ks.'s harsh reproach causes D., who, in his depression of mind and grief at the thought of the misery he has concurred on R., has given himself to bitter self-accusations and who thus gravely takes to heart her charges, to lose himself in thoughts as to the cause of his "perversion". And as he discovers in his memory an awesome deed in his youth as the cause of the calamity he has concurred on R., he requests his wife for mercy and forgiveness, his wife who is "devoted to dharma and compassionate to all, even to
enemies". Ks. is deeply touched by these pitiable, self-accusing words of her husband and, feeling deeply sorry for her harshness, she tearfully supplicates his forgiveness, thereby expressing her high regard for his righteousness and truthfulness and confessing that all this happened under the unbending influence of sorrow that has been swelling more and more in her heart the last fifteen nights ever since the day when R. went into exile, a period appearing, as it were, like fifteen years (II 56) — — a sublime example of how a loving wife who in a moment of grief and despair has hurt her husband with her harsh accusations, remorsefully acknowledges her transgression and turns again with love and affection towards her dear despite the almost unbending power of grief swelling in her heart.

As Ks. pitifully laments over her dead husband, she bursts out with contemptuous accusations against Kai. See 60.3 ff. Her grief, which has been swelling in her heart into greater and greater intensity ever since the time of the departure of her beloved son, now breaks out with new force, explodes with sparks of embitterment and wrath at the sight of that wretched co-wife of hers who has brought this ocean of grief over her and the whole house.

As the poet describes Bh.'s meeting with Ks., he makes her address Bh. with words that appear to show traces of resentment, if not of blame, directly as well as indirectly, against Bh.

Cf. II 69.6-11:

*bharataṁ pratyuvācedaṁ kausalyā bhṛṣaduḍkhitā /
idad te rājyakāmasya rājyaṁ prāptamakaṇṭakam /
samprāptaṁ bata kaikeyyā śīghraṁ krūreṇa karmanā ||6
prasthāpya cīravasanaṁ putraṁ me vanavāsinam /
kaieyī kamaṁ guṇaṁ tatra paśyati krūrādāsini ||7
kṣipraṁ māmapi kaikeyī prasthāpayitumarhati /
hiranyanātho yatrāste suto me sumahāyasāh ||8
athavā svayamevahāṁ sumitrānucarā sukham /
agnihotram puraskṛtya prasthāsyē yatra rāghavaḥ ||9*
kāmaṁ vā savyamevādyā tatra māṁ netumahasi
yatrasau puruṣavyāghrastapyate me tapah suttah ||10
idāṁ hi tava vistarñami dharñadhāṇyanāsanācitaṁ /
hastyāsvarathasampūrṇaṁ rājaṁ niryātitam tayā ||11

Especially her insistence that Kai. should expel her to the forest or she would go herself along with Sumitrā—with the agnihotra placed in front of them—or Bh. himself should take her there are, next to an expression of a desire to escape from her woeful life in Ayodhyā and find solace and refuge with her beloved R., an unspoken indication that, being persona non grata, she wants to pave the way for others. It is difficult to say whether the poet means her to speak out of her conviction or only to test Bh. We can neither say that Ks.'s remorseful answer in vv. 31-32 proves the first alternative, nor that v. 2 proves the second—

mama duḥkhamidaṁ putra bhūyaḥ samupajāyate /
śapathaiḥ śapamāno hi prānānuparanatsi me ||31
diśtyā na calito dharmādātmā te sahalaksmaṇaḥ /
vatsa satyapratijño me satāṁ lokānāvāpsyasi ||32
āgataṁ krārakāryāyaḥ kaikeyāḥ bharataḥ sutah /
tamaham draṣṭumicchāmi bharataṁ dirghadārśinam ||2

The two alternatives of interpretation are possible. To decide which is the correct one would mean to read the mind of the poet in composing this passage. What is certain is that V. makes Ks. speak under the influence of her emotional state of mind, that is, her deeply engrained mental agony. In such a situation it is natural that she should project her resentment against Kai., whether now consciously or not, i.e. with full conviction or not, also on Bh. even though she has had a good opinion of him earlier, since he is the one for the sake of whom R. has been unjustly deprived of his kingdom and so cruelly humiliated, for the sake of whom misfortune has befallen the whole house of Ayodhyā.

Ks.'s agony is too deeply engrained in her heart as not to find an outlet in all possible ways and project itself even on those who are only indirectly connected with the misfortune that
has befallen her. The poet has made this agony of hers the central theme of her personality—so much so that he makes her lament even on the journey to R. at any occasion that conjures up in her mind pathetic imaginations about R.’s, L.’s and S.’s life amidst hardships and austerities, and particularly so at the sorrowful meeting with the trio themselves. (mainly s.96)¹

¹ Since the character-portrayal of Ks. is the character-portrayal of her mental agony unfolded at various occasions, a fairly coherent picture of her character as the poet had it in mind easily emerges from a successive reading of the analytical interpretations themselves, and so we prescind from a synthetic presentation.
DASARATHA
A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER-PORTRAYAL OF DASARATHA

I 6.1 ff.

Dasaratha's character introduced

Resumé

As the poet launches the Rm. while conjuring up before the minds of the audience the enchanting splendour and majesty of the city of Ayodhya, he draws an excellent atmosphere to focus on the theme of his story. Within this background of the splendour and glory of Ayodhya, he introduces the first character D., so to say, as the starting-point of the story of the Rm. He does it by first extolling the sublime virtues and personality of the king and then focussing on the ideal qualities of the citizens of Ayodhya impinging upon them by his radiating greatness of character. For the latter see s.v. Associated Characters.

We can summarize the ideal qualities of D.'s character by saying that he embodies all the ideals of an ideal Kṣatriya: A heroic, powerful atiratha of the Ikṣvākus and vanquisher of enemies, possessing riches comparable to those of Indra and Vaiśravaṇa, yet bent on sacrifice and dharma, and the peer of a maharṣi in self-restraint, he wisely protects and rules his kingdom to the satisfaction of all, being loved by
townsmen and countrymen, over whom the greatness of his personality radiates in a way that it permeates the hearts and minds of all citizens and transforms them into an ideal people.

II 1.29–4

Dasaratha's paternal affection and concern for Rama

Resumé

D. has great paternal affection for his son R., which is exceedingly enhanced at the thought of the immense popularity R. enjoys with the people who adore him as an ideal personality with no equal in the world. It is in the context of this paternal affection and adoring elation that D., himself having grown old and weary, looks forward to the prospect of R.'s consecration and for that purpose summons distinguished citizens and chiefs from different provinces to put forward the wish of his heart. So great is his affection for R. that, when the citizens and chiefs enthusiastically express their unanimous acclamation, he wants to know the motive of their joy (II 2.16-17). This is a psychological device of the poet to highlight D.'s desire—prompted by his fatherly affection—to hear from their own lips an encomium on the ideal personality-traits of his beloved son. Indeed, the poet expresses this idea very well in the words—tesāṁ manahpriyam ajānanniva jījñāsuh “as if not knowing the desire of their hearts and desirous to know it”, meaning that D. knows the motivations of their hearts very well, but wishes his heart to be lulled by the soothing words of their praise, as also in
D.'s joyful response to their eulogy (II 3.1-2).

D. reveals his deep affection and loving concern for his son not only in the cheerful, affectionate manner in which he intimates his decision to R. and, though knowing his sublime virtues, gives his paternal counsel to him on how to perfect his moral qualities (II 3.26-28), but also in the haste he displays in having his dear son consecrated as heir-apparent immediately and without any further deliberation—as on consideration with the counsellors he finds that the moon is to enter Puṣya the very next day—before any possible obstacle may thwart his plan. While intimating to R. his decision to install him immediately as the crown of his desires for a life of fulfilment, he mentions his terrible dreams that are haunting him suggesting death or change of mind—revealing themselves as the eruption of a deeply engrained subconscious anxiety that his own excessive fancy and fondness he has always been nurturing towards his younger wife might somehow or other lead to the frustration of his plan, which would be a stroke unbearable to his heart so affectionately beating for R.; an anxiety, which, though unfounded, yet with all such thoughts in the background, induces him to go even as far as to consider his son Bh. a possible danger—II 4.25:

vīproṣītaśca bharato yāvadeva purāditah /
tāvadevābhisekaste prāptakālo mato mama ///25,

though at the same time he expresses his confidence in his righteousness—but

kim tu cittāṁ manusyaśāmanityamiti me matiḥ /
satāṁ ca dharmanityānāṁ kṛtaśobhi ca rāghava ///27

The poet thus reveals not only D.'s special affection for R., at the cost of which he would even suspect his son Bh., but also shows how a bad conscience has nestled in his heart on account of his preferential treatment of Kai., a treatment that has filled him with the apprehension of possibly having to yield to the fruits of his own infatuation, to the very detriment of his beloved son, at a moment when he may be
physically (death) or psychologically (change of mind) unable to resist.

Annotation

Some scholars consider that D.'s haste evokes a much deeper psychological disposition of D.—which at the same time happens to be the very bija of the Rm. itself—, a psychological disposition which the poet intends to convey solely by the device of unspoken self-revelation and one or the other suggestive statements in the mouth of some character here and there in the Rm. Basing themselves on v. 25; on the (seemingly) otherwise inexplicable haste of D.; on the (seemingly) otherwise inexplicable fact of his sending away Bh. and Śatrughna; on the fact that Mantharā succeeds in persuading Kai., up to then a loving and high-souled queen-mother to R., only when she is told that Bh. would not obtain the kingdom even after a hundred years of reign of R.; on the curse of the andhamuni, which should have its effective consequences; and on R.'s statement in the context of the Bharata-Rāma-saṁvāda that D. had promised the kingdom to Kai.'s son at her marriage as a bride's prize to Kekaya, they draw up the following picture as being the poet's unspoken exposition of the subconscious background of D.'s psyche, as well as of the very bija of the Rm.: D. did not get a son. So he married a third queen, which was not a marriage of love, but a marriage with a pre-planned design. Naturally he had to be prepared for any stipulation Kai.'s father would make. D. willingly accepted. But later when he sees R. growing up with all the qualities of an ideal Kṣatriya loving, and loved by, all the people, in perfection excelling all his other sons, and sees that even Kai. is full of affection for R., he, for these reasons, and being extremely fond of his R., is resolved
on installing R. as long as Kai. would consider it her own heart-felt wish to have R. installed and would not make any claim of her right. For this reason he tacitly sends Bh. and Śatrughna to Rājaṅgha and, without any prior knowledge of the queens, especially Kai., summons distinguished citizens and chiefs from other provinces to advocate his desire and ask them for their opinion. When they unanimously approve of D.’s choice, he is strengthened in his own determination. But the apprehension of the possibility of his death or of Kai.’s insistence on the promise given to her father by now has resurfaced so strongly in him that he persists in the immediate coronation of R. lest any obstacle may thwart his plan, even before Bh. may have time to reach Ayodhyā. The whole conflict of the Rm. takes its origin in this imposed twilight-policy of D.; it, so to say, launches the whole story. And the fact that Kai. yields to the persuasion of Mantharā, who is purposely brought in by the poet to instigate the otherwise impossible change in Kai., has its sole explanation in the fact that Mantharā opens her eyes to the fact that her husband is playing a foul trick upon her by for all time depriving her of the right granted to her by him earlier. Such a portrait as presented finds its confirmation in the wide-spread parallelism of the theme of a king’s hankering for a son in Indian epic and classical literature.

**Criticism:** We fully grant that such a portrait in itself would be throughout logical and reasonable. We cannot however, to be best of our conscience, advocate it for the following reasons:

1) R.’s statement is absolutely isolated and made at an occasion long after the initial conflict which has set the story moving. On the other hand, it is natural that R. should make a tentative deduction in this
direction from D.'s behaviour and use it in virtue of a persuasive argument—joined with the already expounded argument of the two boons granted to Kai. at the Deva-Asura-yuddha. We simply cannot understand how the poet should base such important issues as the understanding of the characters of D. and Kai. and the whole understanding of the origin of the story on a veiled, unspoken self-revelation of the subconscious of D., and on a single, subjective statement in the mouth of R. in the context of a persuasive argumentation—when he, had he intended to do so, would have had ample opportunity to expand on this aspect, particularly so through the mouth of Kai., yet, on the other hand, takes all pains to conjure an altogether different picture before the minds of the audience, to whom he addresses himself personally and spontaneously as a rhapsodist. What is more objective? To take as revealing the intention of the poet what he, at large, exposes before the audience and re-adjust some singular subjective statements, which might suggest something else, in the light of the context in which they occur, or to trust in a single subjective statement to the extent of re-adjusting the general picture created in the wake of the impressions left with the listener? It should also not be forgotten that purely persuasive statements find their place side by side, or mixed up, with other, more objective, persuasive statements throughout the Rm. This is part of the very nature of persuasion.

2) Taken as such, D.'s "indecent haste" can be interpreted as the eruption, with the vision of dreams suggesting death and change of mind, of a deeply engrained subconscious anxiety that his own excessive fancy and fondness he has been cherishing for Kai. may somehow bear fruit in the frustration of his plan—so dear to him. And on this background, we
may understand how he is carried away by his anxiety to even consider Bh. a potential danger, though he would be inclined to show his confidence in him. It is enough to trace D.'s apprehension psychologically to his preferential treatment of Kai., on account of which he fears he may yield to the fruits or fetters of his own infatuation at a moment when he may be physically (death) or psychologically (change of mind) unable to resist, and not to a still more remote, previous promise of giving the kingdom to Bh. haunting his mind.

(3) Though we grant that the scene of Bh.'s and Śatrughna's departure sets the stage for the development of the conflict, we must say that there is nothing in it that would suggest any concealed pre-arrangement by D. First of all, it is not on his own initiative that they go, but on the invitation of Yudhājit or, more precisely, of Kekaya himself, both of whom are very happy at their coming to Rājagṛha. Secondly, the poet expresses quite definitely the idea that D. takes fancy also on Bh. and Śatrughna in saying that he kept them in his loving memory and considered them dear like R. and L.—II 1.7-9:

\[
\begin{align*}
tatāpi nivasantau ātu tarpyamāṇau ca kāmataḥ & \\
bhūtarau smaratāṁ vírau viṣddham āśaratham &
\end{align*}
\]

\[nṛpatam 7\]

\[
\begin{align*}
rājāpi ātu mahātejāḥ sasmāra proṣitaḥ sutaḥ & \\
ubhau bharataśatruḥ naḥ mahendravaruṇo-
\end{align*}
\]

\[pamau 8\]

\[
\begin{align*}
sarvā eva tu tasyaṣṭāṣcatvārah puRUṣaśabhuḥ & \\
svaśārādvinirvṛttāṣcatvāra iva bāhavhaḥ 9-
\end{align*}
\]

a saying he would have prescinded from had he had any intention to play with D.'s concealed design.

(4) The fact that Mantharā succeeds in persuading Kai., up to then such a loving and affectionate queen-
mother to R., need not be based on Kai.'s realization that her husband is playing a foul trick by depriving her of her rights—for why then does she not use this argument either against D. or against R., nay, why does she even take recourse to the blunt lie that at the time when D. granted her the boon she asked him for Bh.'s coronation and R.'s banishment—, but can be as well and much better explained on the basis of the disillusion of a long-cherished hope latent in the back of her mind, a hope which, having its foundation in the preferential treatment meted out to her by her husband, has grown to an unspoken matter-of-course expectation, the disillusion of which would appear like a foul trick. On the other hand, it is very difficult to explain Kai.'s transformation through the more external agency of Mantharā and the complete absence of a latent ambition in her. And what about a statement like II 64.9—

\[
ātmakāmā sadā caṇḍī krodhanā prājñamānini
\]
\[
arogā cāpi kaikeyī mārā me kimuvāca ha \]

which Bh. makes, so to say, out of his subconscious acquaintance with the personality of Kai.?

(5) We admit that the presentation of D.'s psychology is suggestive and may give rise to different speculations. And so it did with later poets. But that is a general characteristic of the development of the R. story, taking its origin from the Rm. of V. So many features, either beyond or only marginally in the intention of V., became very important, even main issues in classical literature.

Finally, we want to say that the whole issue is a question of right intuition into the mind of the poet. This is the final criterion, and if our estimates are different, we are bound to go in for different interpretations. Sometime...
times this is not so important, but in this case, it is. On
the attitude we take towards this question depend the
evaluation of the character-portrayals of D. and Kai.,
even of R., but more than that, our whole understanding
of the crisis of the story itself.

II 10-12
II 16

Contents

See s.v. Kaikeyi under II 10-12 and II 16.

Analysis of characterization

As with regard to Kai., so also with regard to D., these
three sargas are a marvellous piece of psychological charac-
terization. Not only do we see the king of Ayodhyā fall
from the heights of joyful expectation to the depths of
mental agony, but we also witness the polarity of his heart.
For, on the one hand, he manifests an extreme fondness and
blind passion for Kai.—to such an extent that, when he sees
her lying on the ground given to grief and sulks, he, under
the influence of blind pity and love, not only strokes and
careses her sympathetically and tries to find out what is
wrong with her, but offers to grant her any favour even to
the extreme of killing an innocent person or setting free a
criminal or similar things if she should wish so, and irremedi-
ably falls into the clutches of her cunning as she requests him
to confirm his promise by an oath, thus binding him with his
own words. Yet, on the other hand, when D. hears Kai.'s
brutish demand, he awakes from his slumber of infatuation. His heart being broken with grief and agony at the unbearable, unprecedented thought that his beloved son, his second self, is to be banished because of the cruel, selfish instincts nursed by his young wife and that he himself has given his promise under the clutches of her cunning wiles, he sways between outbursts of anger and bitter accusations against Kai.’s inexorable vileness and hard-heartedness and agonized laments and entreaties to her to reverse her cruel intention, repeatedly losing his consciousness due to the overwhelming pressure of his grief, while Kai. not only remains as hard as stone to his lamentations and supplications, but, as if delighted to see his heart broken with grief, makes a mock of his reputation of being satyasandha, dṛṣṭavṛata and dharma, pester him with her repeated warnings to abide by his promise to carry out her stern resolve. Under such circumstances, D. has no other option than to succumb, not out of his infatuation for Kai., as some modern authors wrongly interpret, but out of frustration over the inexorable stubbornness and cruelty of his young wife, who by her cunning has tied him with the indissoluble fetters of his own promise, fetters which he cannot shake off without grossly breaching the sanctity of dharma. True as it is that he has allowed himself to be captured by the cunning wiles of Kai. under the influence of his blind passion for her, he is forced to conform to Kai.’s design once he has given his solemn promise to fulfil any wish of hers—unless she herself reverses her intention. This being not the case, D. is helpless like a horse driven by a sharp whip, as the poet himself says. The pathetic manner in which V. depicts D.’s despair-ridden agony leaves no doubt that this is the only correct interpretation of D.’s motivation for his surrender to Kai.’s resolve. If later certain characters in the story mention in their criticism of D. his addiction to kāma among the causes for the expulsion of R., we have to bear in mind that this either reflects the purely subjective opinion of the character,
or suggests one of the ultimate reasons for the fact that things could take such a tragic turn. If D. himself, in moments of despair and depression, accuses his own infatuation for Kai. as responsible for R.’s banishment, this reflects the psychology of D.’s agony, and not an objective situation in the mind of the poet.¹

After this, D. is left a broken man, who, with his senses failing him for grief and agony, is unable to communicate to his own charioteer his desire to have a last look at his beloved son (II 12.20); is unable to look at or speak to R., who has been summoned by Sumantra at the words of Kai., except to mutter “O Rāma” (II 16.3); is unable even to react against Kai.’s meanest falsifications of D.’s intentions by anything more than a sigh of grief (II 16.43):

\[ dhikkaṣṭamitā niḥśvasya rājā śokapariputah / mūrchito nyapattasminparyānke hemabhūṣite ]

or to respond to R.’s anxious question why his father does not welcome him like before, why he has not told him his intention himself and keeps his eyes pressed on the ground shedding tears when it is the most intimate desire of his (R.’s) heart to fulfil whatever his father wishes. Through all this, the poet wants to convey how D.’s spirit has been broken by the pangs of agony and repentance at the pitiable turn of events and not by shame at his inability to reject Kai.’s wish on account of infatuation.

**Resume of various accusations against Dasaratha**

It is natural that the poet should make those characters who are most closely associated with R., like his mother Ks., his brothers L. and Bh., or the people of Ayodhyā as a
whole, flare up in wild accusations against D. when he on whom all the people look up as their greatest, most virtuous and most beloved hero, he who only a short while ago has been acclaimed as the heir-apparent to the throne under the festive jubilation of all the people of Ayodhyā, is told to undergo the most undeserved hardships owing to the mean wishes of D.'s youngest wife and this with the acknowledge-
ment of the king, whose passion for the latter is well-known. For they do not, or not directly, know the background of all the happenings, or are, even if acquainted with them, not readily willing to accept them. On this background, these accusations have to be interpreted as subjective opinions and do reflect the truth about D., as V. intends to bring it out, only indirectly and partially. The following are the most important accusations:

s. 17 passim by Ks.
s. 18.1-15 by L.
s. 20 by L.
s. 30.10-11 by the people of Ayodhyā
s. 43.4 and villagers
s. 98.49ff. by Bh.

In s.17 Ks., amidst her unbearable grief and agony, presents a most gloomy picture of her life—a life, as it were, of never-ending pain and misery due to her husband’s total neglect of her and her co-wives’ abuses of her, with only her hope in her son sustaining her to carry on. It is evident, as we have already seen earlier (see under Kausalyā), that this depiction of Ks.’s laments is designed to be a piece of emotional, psychological characterization. In her overwhelming grief she projects certain moments of unhappy experiences, of her husband’s neglect of her in favour of Kai. and similar events, back over the whole of her life, maintaining as if everything has been black and dark for her.

S. 18.1-15 portrays L.’s enflamed anger at the atrocious
injustice committed by D., who has lost all sense of judgement as a result of his uxoriousness to and infatuation for Kai., and his promise to Ks. that he will see to it that justice is done and all obstacles to R.’s coronation are removed at any cost. It is evident that, in the mind of the poet, this passage serves purely to characterize L. and not in any way D., except perhaps for the fact that it is meant to show how D.’s passion has in the long run furthered the unhappy developments. But even that is rather questionable in this context.

S.20, which represents L.’s attack on R.’s attitude of forbearance towards a dharma that is the product of injustice and cruelty and a fate that turns the most virtuous into the most miserable while it makes the evil prosper—an attack in which he goes as far as to accuse D. together with Kai. of foul play against R.—cf. II 20.8:

\[
papayoste\ katham\ numa\ tayoḥ\ sanska\ na\ vidyate\ |
\text{santhi}\ dharmopadhaḥ\ śalaksna\ dharmātmankin\ na\ |\text{budhyase} \ |/8
\]

II 20.18:

\[
ahaṁ\ tadasāṁ\ chetsyāmi\ pitustasyāśca\ yā\ tava\ |
abhiṣekavighātena\ putrarājyāya\ vartate\ |\—
\]

and promises to root out all the opponents in order to secure R.’s coronation, is meant to be as subjective a piece of psychological characterization of L. as 18.1-15; and more than the former, it excludes any hidden allusion by the poet to a character-facet of D.

Vv. 30.10-11:

\[
adya\ ninaṁ\ dasaratḥaḥ\ sattvamāvīśya\ bhāṣate\ |
na\ hi\ rājā\ priyaṁ\ putram\ vivāsayitumahati\ |/10
\text{nirguṇasyāpi}\ putrasya\ katham\ syādvipravāsanam\ |

dkim\ punaryasya\ lokasya\ vṛttena\ kevalam\ |/11
\text{and 43.4:}\ śṛṇvanvāco\ manuṣyāṇāṁ\ grāmasanvāsminām\ |
\text{rājanāṁ\ dhigdaśarathāṁ\ kāmasya\ vaśamāgatam} \ |/4
\]
reflect the indignation of the citizens of Ayodhyā and the villagers at the banishment of R. While the former find it incomprehensible how a son, and moreover such an ideal son like R., can be banished by a father and so conclude that D. must be possessed by an evil spirit², the latter hold D.’s well-known passion for Kai. responsible for R.’s expulsion along with Kai.’s heinous wickedness. As such, these two passages may be interpreted purely as manifestations of the people's indignation at the cruelty and injustice to which their darling R. has been exposed, without, however, being meant to be objective allusions to D.’s guilt. Perhaps, it is the poet’s hidden intention in 43.4 to say that D.’s passion for Kai. has borne a share in the unhappy turn of events, though even that cannot be proved from the reference.

That the above interpretation as to the poet’s intention behind accusations in the mouth of certain characters against D.’s infatuation for Kai. is true, is most clearly borne out by the way Bh. reproaches D.’s infatuation in II 98.50 ff.—

ko hi dharmārthayorhīnadhīmāṁ karma kilbiśam /
striyāh priyacikīrṣuḥ sankūryāddharmajña dharmavit ||50
antakāle hi bhūtāni muhyantīti purāśrutīḥ /
rājañāvāṁ kurvata loke pratyakṣā sā śrutīḥ kṛtaḥ ||51—
and R., in his answer, refutes it as untrue, saying that his father at the time of marrying his mother promised the king Kekaya that he would bestow the kingdom upon the son born of that marriage and also that he promised her two boons when she saved him in the war between the Gods and Asuras (II 99.13-14). Though much of R.’s argumentation results from his idealistic regard for his elders, tending to tune down all blame on their part, which is so evident in the case of Kai., and though even the reference of D.’s promise to Kekaya, which we do not find anywhere spoken by the poet or even by Kai., is meant to be a pious fabrication by R., we can rely on this passage cum grano salis as reflecting the intention of the poet himself since it is in consonance with the
tenor prevalent in objective expositions of D.'s character, where the guilt is clearly associated with Kai. and not with D., though D., against his own intention, by his foolish passion for her has hastened its outcome. Again, it is possible that the poet wants to evoke in the description of Bh.'s reproach of D.'s infatuation—besides his intention to characterize the latter's indignation and revolt for justice—some causal associations between D.'s passion-ridden conduct and the influence it had, against his own will, on the developments leading to R.'s banishment.

Resume of scenes depicting Dasaratha's agony at the departure of his beloved son

Since all these scenes, whether short or long, are permeated with a tone of a pathetico-tragic sentiment, they are, more or less, uniform in their description of the gravity of D.'s grief, as well as in the exhibition of psychological insight and the display of poetic embellishment giving expression to it. As a real picture of the poet's illustration of D.'s mental agony can be framed only by reading, we restrict ourselves to giving the different aspects of D.'s pangs of sorrow.

Ss. 31-32. When R., L. and S. pay their fare-well visit to D., who has assembled with all his wives, the king, as he sees his son approaching, rises from his seat and runs towards him, but, overwhelmed with grief, falls on the ground, unconscious. As he regains his consciousness and R. requests him to permit him, L. and S. to go to the forest, the thought that he has been responsible for the atrocious expulsion of R. through his boons weighs so heavily upon him that he feels as though, by his infatuated love for Kai., he has ruined
R.'s life. It is this feeling of resignation and remorse that prompts him to tell R. to enthrone himself in Ayodhyā and imprison him—words which are not meant to say what they say, but simply express his total resignation in this hopeless situation—mixed with feelings of remorse for having himself, though against his better intention, borne his share in the misfortune of his son. On the other hand, he realizes and appreciates the heroism of R.'s resolve in observing his words and also acknowledges the enhancement of spiritual glory resulting from his austere forest-life in that, as R. reaffirms his determination to go to the forest, he allows him to go his way, a way safe and unimperilled, for the sake of happiness and prosperity, but, with the same breath, beseeches him to stay at least one more night. This reflects deeply human experience. For, a father who loses his son and knows that he has to undergo innumerable hardships though he actually deserves the choicest comforts and luxuries, cannot but be broken with grief, first on account of the sheer unbearable agony of separation from his beloved son, and secondly on account of the apprehension of his hardships—no matter how great the reward of spiritual glory would be resulting from his austere ascetic life in fulfilment of his father's words and no matter how great the joy his son would be asserting to find in pursuing such a life. How well this point is brought out by the poet, is shown by the fact that R., to comfort his father, gives expression to the exuberant joy he finds in fulfilling his father's words, i.e. making them true, and in living an ascetic life in the forest, and that, having no other desire than this, he does not wish for the kingdom or happiness or even for Maithili at the cost of making him untruthful (s.31 end) Nevertheless, D., in his disconsolateness, orders Sumantra to send with R. the four armies, mistresses of the house, merchants, wrestlers etc. as well as all the citizens and all the amenities of city life, so that R. may not feel the hardships of forest-life (s.32 beginning). As expected of him, R. re-affirms his determination to live the life of a pure and unstained ascetic. Surely a father cannot but be happy
at such a heroic determination of his son, but, however heroic and genuine this determination may be, he cannot envisage it in his human affection and concern for him—his son, who is the pride of his life and who now is expected to undergo the most unprecedented miseries of his life. We have given here an interpretation of D.’s psychological state of mind as it is beyond the poet’s explicit exposition, for we cannot help feeling overpowered by this impression while reading these texts, and we surmise that the audience of V.’s time must have experienced the same feelings, for any human person who has a heart and knows what it means to part from one’s dear ones will identify himself with D. as he is depicted in his grief by the poet.

In the same sarga (32) we see how D., in a blend of feelings of grief and sarcastic revenge, snaps back at Kai. when she protests against his direction to Sumantra to send the people of Ayodhyā with R. together with all the amenities of city life, by asking her why she rebukes him when, after all, he is carrying the burden that she has put on him, in other words, asking her by what right she, beyond the inhuman burden she has already laid upon him, dares to pester him for more—which is none of her business and of which she has not made any explicit mention in the declaration of her boons. Similarly, when Siddhārtha runs her down contemptuously for her impertinent comparison of R. with Asamāñja, D. with mixed feelings, feelings of grief and resignation on the one hand and feelings of sarcastic vengefulness on the other hand, replies to her that he himself will accompany R. to the forest, leaving behind the kingdom, pleasures and wealth for her and Bh.’s enjoyment.

Ss. 34.1-11;14-15; 35.24-38 describe the disconsolateness of D.’s grief in face of the gruesome reality of R.’s departure: Listening to his son’s touching farewell speech, in which he requests his father to look after aged Ks. and comfort her, since she has never experienced any calamity in her life
before, whenever she is immersed in grief on account of him, D., himself no less disconsolate than Ks., is so overwhelmed with grief that for a while his senses fail him and he is unable even to look at or speak to R. And when he comes to himself, he accuses himself of all kinds of sinful acts he must have committed in his youth, which must be the cause of this misery, and broods on the inexorable agony of mind Kai. has concurred on him and all the people. The burden of these tormenting thoughts again robs him of his senses, and when he recovers, he gives straight orders to Sumantra to fetch the chariot in order to expedite once and for all the agonizing reality, the thought of which is no longer bearable to him. (II 34.1-11) And as Sumantra arrives, he makes a desperate bid to procure at least some precious garments and ornaments for S. (14-15). While Sumantra drives on, followed by the moaning people of Ayodhya, D., together with his wife Ks., runs after the chariot in a frenzy of sorrow and cries out to the charioteer to stop, while R., unable to bear the pitiful sight of his father and mother, urges Sumantra to drive faster, telling him to explain to the king if he should ask him that he could not hear him on account of the tumult—till D., persuaded by the counsellors, immersed in grief and with a last look after his son, returns to the palace. (II 35, latter part)

S.37 depicts the darkness of sorrow and agony which has overcast D.’s mind as R., like a part of his own heart, has vanished out of his sight, as the dreadful hour of parting has irrevocably and abruptly come to its conclusion—with a father looking after the chariot vanishing with his son into the distance. It is a moment so unbelievable and yet so true that D. is totally overpowered by grief, that, when he sees Kai. to his left, he forbids her to touch him and announces his repudiation of her as a wife and relative and of Bh.’s obsequial gifts if he were to find delight in the obtaining of the kingdom, that, as his thoughts revolve around his son gone
into the wilderness—his son who by now must have left the boundaries of Ayodhyā—while the imprints of the horses are still visible, he is tantalized with agony and remorse and lost in thoughts of the undeserved austere hardships his son, once the pride of his life, would be exposed to, deprived of his rightful deserst of royal comfort and glory. It is the pain of separation and the visualization of R.'s hardships which, as they flash through his heart, overcast him with the darkness of despair. With his senses failing him in this emotional night of darkness, he begs to be brought into Ks.'s apartment, where, sitting on her bed to find solace, he gives vent to his grief for R. with sorrow-stricken exclamations and gesticulations, feeling as though his vision has left him with his losing sight of his son.

In 51.20 ff., Sumantra finds D. forlorn in grief for R. And as he conveys to him R.'s message, the king succumbs, his senses failing him for the sheer severity of his sorrow and it is only through the encouraging words of Ks., who spurs him to freely speak out his heart to the charioteer since the cause of his fear, Kai., is not here, that D. now feels an urge to empty his heart and asks Sumantra a gamut of detailed questions concerning the trio’s way of life, their emotional states of mind and messages.(II 52.1-9). But as Sumantra, himself disconsolate with grief, adds a very touching note to R.’s affectionate greetings, consoling messages and exhortations, which he conveys to the king, and, moreover, gives a pathetic account of L.’s words of accusation against D., of S.’s silent tears at his departure, of the gloomy, melancholic atmosphere permeating all beings and the agonized lamentations of the citizens of Ayodhyā, he only adds fuel to the fire (which will finally give the death-blow to D.)—so that D., in a paroxysm of despair and remorse, accuses himself bitterly of having conjured up this great calamity by infatuatedly following the dictate of sinful Kai. without consulting his counsellors and friends, and, imploring Sumantra to bring him to R., since without him he cannot live even for a
moment, and invoking with grief-choked voice R., L. and S.—
“who do not know that he feels like dying with grief, an
orphan left by them”, sinks on Ks.’s bed, unconscious.
(II 52.10-53.26) When Sumantra, in order to console grief-
stricken Ks. imploring him to take her to R., converts his
tone of pathos into a tone of cheer and presents her a
charming account of how happy the three actually feel in
their ascetic life, she, notwithstanding, remains uncomforted,
as the agonizing thought of her separation from R., L. and
S. and of their austere life of isolation in the forest—so
vividly impressed upon her only a moment ago by Sumantra’s
pathetic account—still rings in her ear. And she turns
in anger and grief towards her husband and bitterly
accuses him of the wrong done by him to R., conjuring up
gloomy visions of their life amidst hardships and terrors in
the forest, of the disgust R. would feel when coming back to
Ayodhyā and taking over the treasure of the kingdom enjoyed
by others and gives vent to her feelings of despair at her
total isolation as a wife, saying that she has lost all refuges
a woman has in her life, her husband, her son and her
relatives, through him (D.), who has completely ruined her
together with her son, ruined the kingdom with all its
ministers and citizens. (II 54-55) Ks.’s harsh reproach causes
D., who in his depression of mind agonized at the thought of
the misery he has concurred on R., has given himself to bitter
self-accusations and who thus takes gravely to heart her
accusation, to lose himself in thoughts as to the cause of
his “perversion”. And as he discovers in his memory an
awe-some deed in his youth as the cause of the calamity he
has brought over R., he requests his wife for mercy and
forgiveness. Ks. is deeply touched by these pitiable, self-
accusing words of her husband and, feeling deeply sorry for
her harshness, she tearfully supplicates his forgiveness, thereby
expressing her high regard for his righteousness and truthfull-
ness and confessing that all this happened under the unbend-
ing influence of sorrow that has been swelling in her heart
more and more for the last fifteen nights ever since R. went into exile. (II 56) But the remembrance of this awe-some deed in his youth (cf. andhamunivadha), which he deems to be the cause for the calamity he has concurred on R., together with the agony of his grief, haunts D. lost in his self-accusations and grips his mind subconsciously to such an extent that, though he has been brought under the spell of sleep by the gravity of his grief, it arouses and oppresses him like a nightmare in the midst of the night, to find relief from which he empties his heart to Ks. by expressing his remorse at having frustrated R.’s life—for which he suffers this agony—and requesting her to listen to the tragic story how he, through his inattention, mistakenly killed the only son of a blind hermit-couple, who then entered fire out of grief over their dead son; a story which he relates with deep empathy, showing how in his sorrow he has personally identified himself with the parents of the hermit boy and made their agony his agony, how the curse pronounced on him by the blind sage before entering the fire—that he would die out of grief over his son—has become efficacious in him. And accordingly we see D. experience the loss of his consciousness as the sign of approaching death and give, a last time, expression to his innermost pinings for R.; see him imagine the happiness and fortune of those privileged to witness the glorious day of R.’s return; and see him with his last thoughts on R. breathe his last. [This scene, in so far as it describes D.’s experience of the loss of his consciousness as the sign of approaching death is a variant—with even detailed assonances—of the earlier scene where D. experiences the loss of his consciousness as a sign of the feeling that part of his self has died with R.’s departure. The latter scene has the function of a climactic anticipation of the former. The loss of sight of his son brings D. to the edge of death. The experience of the extinction of his senses is the experience of a psychological death. Sumantra’s report gives him the last blow. The experience of the extinction of his senses now
is an experience of approaching death.]

Thus the poet himself, with masterly psychological ingenuity, presents (implicitly) in the description of D.'s self-accusation the convergence of the subjective as well as the objective side of D.'s psychology of grief: He describes how, on the one hand, a mistake committed by D. in his youth, a mistake that has brought agony and death—on account of grief for their son—to the blind hermit couple, has led to D.'s agony and death on account of grief for his son; and how, on the other hand, a deeply rooted self-accusing voice of repentance in D.'s heart, a deeply engrained tendency to accuse himself for the banishment of R. (for which, objectively, he is not immediately responsible), first appearing to be a psychological reflection of the gravity of sorrow and despair weighing down upon him, manifests itself more and more as the recalling voice of karma demanding requital for his past inauspicious deed; and how, with D.'s psychological realization of it, the enactment of the efficiency of karma reaches its final conclusion. D., thus, is involved with the fate of R. as well as of his own, which is remotely the fruit of a rash and negligent act committed by him in the distant past. A through and through noble character otherwise, endowed with the greatest virtues (often referred to as such even in the passages describing his lamentations) and beloved and respected by all the people, he has by this one deed, in addition to some other human weaknesses (passion for his younger wife etc.), conjured upon himself an eve of life so full of sorrow and agony as seem to be undeserved for a man of so eminent nobility and goodness. Surely, in drawing the personality of D., V. intended to portray a character with whom the audience could feel pity and sympathy, with whom particularly the old people, so easily pressed down by the plights of grief and sorrow on the late eve of their life, could identify themselves.
A SYNTHETIC VIEW OF THE POET’S CONCEPTION AND PORTRAIT OF DASARATHA’S CHARACTER

Conception

As we read through the scenes highlighting D.’s character, we cannot but get the impression that the poet’s characterization of him is organically interwoven with the description of the dramatic events around the theme of R.’s banishment. And yet, at the same time, D., amidst the description of these events, emerges as one of the most dramatic characters of the Rm., a character with whom the audience could identify themselves in their own sorrows and agonies. It is clear that (unlike in the case of Vālī) V. did not leave the character of D. purely to the mercy of the pattern of spontaneous improvisation, i.e. to the intrinsic momentum of its being involved with the story, but had a clear and distinct conception of it in his mind, which is also attested by the fact that it presents itself in a rather uniform pattern and has for its own scenes occupying a series of sargas. But since D. is not an all-round personality as others, but mainly presented as a character evoking karuṇa, he retains his identity very outspokenly, even though, or precisely because, he is left immersed in the current of the “drama” and hardly possesses any independent characterization (except in his introduction to the audience). We said that V. had a clear and distinct conception of D.’s character in his mind. It is, however, nonetheless true that
with regard to details of presentation the poet has abundant recourse to the pattern of spontaneity, for much of D.'s character-portrayal falls within scenes of lamentations and, more than any other type of descriptions, scenes of lamentations are the most stereotyped, i.e. contain in themselves a store-house of psychological patterns which, designed to excite the emotions of the audience, can be applied to many situations. But that does not mean that they are nothing more than conventional patterns (in some cases they are). It is precisely the art of the bard-poet, and especially a bard-poet like V., to enliven stereotyped patterns, which he is expected to have constantly in store, with his deep insights into human nature and life as they would best pertain to the psychological situation of the character at a particular instance, in short, to create a personal, life-like portrait true to human experience with the means of stereotyped psychological patterns. And we have to say that V. has done this in a masterly way in the presentation of D.'s psychology of agony. He has succeeded precisely because of his clear conception of D.'s character as well as because of his deep intuitive and personal insight with which he has impregnated his application of the pattern of spontaneous improvisation.

Portrait

D.'s personality flashes up first in the midst of an atmosphere of enchanting splendour and majesty, with which the poet captivates the minds of the audience as he launches the story of the Rm. Surrounded with such an aura of majesty, D. is briefly, but vividly, introduced as an ideal king embodying all the ideals of a true Ksatriya. A heroic and
powerful *atiratha* of the Ikṣvākus and vanquisher of enemies, possessing immense royal riches, yet bent on sacrifice and *dharma*, and the peer of a *mahārṣi* in self-restraint, wisely protecting and ruling his kingdom to the satisfaction of all and being loved by townsmen and countrymen, he is a radiant personality, whose greatness of character permeates the hearts and minds of all the citizens of Ayodhyā and transforms them into an ideal people.

This is the first and only introduction of D.'s personality. From now on, he is portrayed as a character involved in the current of dramatic events—starting from his deliberations on the consecration of his son and leading up to and ending with his death. A D. endowed with paternal affection and concern for his son ends up in a D. broken with grief and agony for his son.

D.'s heart beats with fatherly love for his son and it is elated with fatherly pride nourished by the thought of the immense popularity R. enjoys with the people, who adore him as their ideal personality with no equal in the world. This paternal affection enhanced with elation fills him with the concern and resolution to transform his love into action by conferring that right and honour on his son which would be conducing to his greatest glory, that is, by consecrating him as heir-apparent. And with paternal concern for the welfare of his son in his heart, he anxiously persists in his immediate consecration as his anxiety, deeply engrained in him, that his own infatuation for Kai. may willy-nilly lead to the frustration of his plan—so dear to his heart—unless he puts it immediately into action, violently erupts with his vision of inauspicious dreams suggesting death or change of mind.

Such a paternal and loving D., lulling himself in the lofty heights of joyful hope, is thrown into the gruesome depths of the darkest mental agony by Kai.'s unprecedented, eye-opening declaration of her cruel, selfish desire to have his
dear son, who has been part of his own self, banished and Bh. installed. He now realizes himself shaken from the slumber of infatuation that had so filled him with blind passion for Kai. (to the extent that he offered to grant her any favour conceivable, even if it were to kill an innocent person or to release a criminal in order that she may give up her sulks) as to bring him irremediably under the clutches of her cunning and trap him with the fetters of his own promise. While his heart is beating with grief and agony and struggling between angry rebukes against her vileness and beseeching entreaties to reverse her cruel design, Kai, not only remains as hard as stone, but, as if delighted in seeing his heart broken with grief, makes a sarcastic mock of his reputation of being truthful and pesters him with her repeated warnings to abide by his promise. And so, the pitiable king is forced to succumb in his frustration over the inexorable stubbornness and cruelty of his young wife, who has tied him with the indissoluble fetters of his own solemn promise, fetters which he cannot shake off without grossly breaching the sanctity of dharma.

D. is left a broken man and the poet’s further characterization of him is the characterization of the psychology of the grief-and-re remorse-stricken agony of a father helplessly awaiting the impending hour of his separation from his son and thinking of the austere hardships his dear, the pride of his life, is going to be exposed to, bereft of his rightful deserts of royal comfort and glory. And the poet unfolds the inner struggle of D.’s heart with masterly psychological insight in all its eruptive as well as tender manifestations. With the hour of parting drawing closer and closer, D.’s disconsolate ness increases, manifesting itself, on the one hand, in his being more and more weighed down by feelings of total dejection and remorse, feelings which increasingly announce themselves as voices of a bitter self-accusation, and, on the other hand, in a desperate attempt to alleviate R.’s hardships or in violent emotional eruptions. And yet, R. has done
everything to console his father, has tried to remove all shadows of grief and self-accusation from his mind by expressing the exuberant joy he finds in fulfilling the words of his father and living an ascetic life in the forest. And father D. very well appreciates the heroism of R.'s determination and also acknowledges the enhancement of spiritual glory which would result from his ascetic forest life, but, however heroic and genuine the determination of his son may be, however promising the reward of spiritual glory may be, D. is an aged father who cannot envisage the agony of separation from his beloved son and such inhuman hardships in his human affection and concern for him, who has ever been the pride of his life.

As D. sees the chariot vanishing into the distance, as the gruesome hour of parting has irrevocably and abruptly drawn to its close, as the unbelievable has become a reality, his heart is convulsed by the wildest torments of agony and despair till it is crushed down by their severity and his mind overcast with the darkness of grief and agony. And as he feels that his senses are failing him, he begs to be brought into Ks.'s bed-room to find consolation, where with a last outcry of pain, in which he gives expression to his feeling that with R. part of his self has died, he sinks down on her bed, unconscious. Finally, grief-forlorn D. receives his death-blow when Sumantra, himself disconsolate with grief, conveys with touching words R.'s consoling messages and exhortations and renders a pathetic account of L.'s words of accusation against his father, of S.'s silent tears at his departure, of the gloomy, melancholic atmosphere permeating all the beings and the agonized lamentations of the citizens of Ayodhya on his return.¹

¹ When in s. 47 R. all of a sudden, in a manner so totally unexpected of him, falls into altogether pessimistic musings, drawing a gloomy picture of the destructive agency of Kai., and thereby also criticizes:
D. as having expelled him on account of his infatuation for a woman, this is obviously designed to show how even R. has his gloomy moments and not meant to throw any side-light on D.'s character. In fact, the picture of R. emerging in this surga is an exceptional picture of its kind.

2 Compare the lamentation of the ladies of Ayodhya in II 36.6:

\[\text{aho niścetano rājā ji'valokasya samprīyam / dharmyaṁ satyavrataṁ rāmaṁ vanavāse pravatsyati} ||6\]

3 As a completion of the portrait of D.'s character read the end of the systematic analysis.
ASSOCIATED CHARACTERS

Viśvāmitra is portrayed as a powerful and eminent brahmaṛṣi of awe-inspiring lustre, a sage who has attained his status through the practice of extraordinary tapas; who is endowed with highest fame and virtues and possessed of the most powerful astras; but who yet is harassed by two Rks., who constantly spoil his sacrifice, and who, unable to prevent them from doing so, turns to D., requesting him for the assistance of youthful R., whose unexcelled prowess he knows, and assures him, would destroy the Rks. As awe-inspiring as are his power and appearance, so is his anger when D., impelled by fear, hesitates to comply with his request despite the sage’s assurance of R.’s power and victory. (I 17.22-20 passim)

As Viśvāmitra sets out with R. and L. on his way to his sacrifice, we see him assume the role of an affectionate guru of R.—a guru who not only caters to youthfut R.’s needs and curiosity, but also cares for the prospect of his future. He invests him with the mantras Balā and Atibalā, teaches him to perform the daily ceremonies and, above all, satisfies R.’s curiosity by instructing him with sacred lore and stories about the hermitages and sacred places which they pass through or by explaining other curious experiences they meet on the way. He directs R. to kill monstrous Tāṭakā, and when the later hesitates for scruples of conscience, he gives him an exhortation on the necessity of her execution. Viśvāmitra acknowledges this deed of R. by presenting him with excellent astras and instructing him in their use. But more than that, he shows his acknowledgement for R’s heroic victory over the Rks. Mārīca and Subāhu, though it manifests itself in a silent, concealed manner—this character-facet of Viśvāmitra emerges from the narrative itself without any explicit reference to it by the poet, yet is implicitly purported by
him—in as much as he, in a fatherly-like concern for the happy prospect of R.’s future, directs him to the court of Janaka to try his luck in breaking the bow, directs him, in his foresight, to a happy union with the most excellent jewel of a wife, S. And not only that, he even requests Janaka for the daughters of Janaka’s younger brother for Bh. and Śatrughna. (I 21-30 passim. 71)

V as i s t h a, the king’s loyal purohita and alert counsellor, distinguished by his ever-devoted services to D. as also to Bh. as a priest and counsellor and his wise and alert counsel in matters of religion and politics, emerges as an important figure when crucial issues are at stake, particularly so on two occasions: When D., because of his reluctance to allow his son to accompany Viśvāmitra, arouses the anger of the latter, Vasiṣṭha intervenes and successfully persuades D. to be faithful to his promise by assuring him of R.’s unexcelled prowess and the guardianship of Viśvāmitra, who is renowned for his supreme astra-bala (I 20). When the Brāhmaṇa chiefs are at a loss as to whom to install in the line of the Ikṣvākus to counter-mine the dangers of a kingless state and ask Vasiṣṭha for advice, he spontaneously decides on Bh. and, making arrangements to fetch him from Rājagaha, directs the envoys to convey to him his desire to see him, but, in order not to precipitate Bh.’s grief, cautions them not to mention anything about R.’s exile or D.’s death (II 61-62) So then he requests Bh., in the name of the citizens, to accept the kingship, but is badly put down by him since Bh. feels that he is demanding from him a sinful task. (II 75-76)

S u m a n t r a, the king’s ever-loyal charioteer and counsellor, distinguishes himself by his intimate attachment and devotion to R. Not only does his love and devotion express itself in his affectionate service to him and in his deep sympathy with his relatives and the citizens
of Ayodhyā in their grief at his banishment, but, moreover, he has a heart to understand the deep psychic feelings of R. and a heart to appreciate his lofty virtues and idealistic regard for dharma and truthfulness. So, when he is torn between the pressure of the people urging him to go slow, as they want to have a last look of their beloved R., and the pressure of R. urging him to drive faster, he willingly obliges the latter’s request since he understands the great pain R. experiences while parting from his relatives and his inability to bear their pitiable sight (II 35.18-38 passim). So also he looks hesitantly at R. when Bh. orders him to spread kuśa grass to undergo a fast (II 103.12-15). But all the same he deeply feels the agony that R.’s separation has concurred on himself, and it violently erupts in him when R. bids him to go back to Ayodhyā and, while gratefully acknowledging his devotion to him as he sees him weeping from far, requests him to be a source of comfort to D. and to convey his greetings, solaces and exhortations to D., Ks., Bh. etc., which he explicates. Now all the grief pent up in his heart bursts out as he feels that his attachment to R. is too strong and the idea of separation from him too painful as that he could carry out his words—for how should he return to Ayodhyā and listen to the hundred-fold exclamations of despair of the citizens seeing him arriving with empty chariot; how should he be able to face Ks. and tell her the blunt truth, or if not, how could he tell her a lie? In his inability due to grief to visualize the thought of leaving his master and returning to Ayodhyā alone, he entreats R. again and again to allow him to find his happiness in following him and serving him with loyal devotion. Only with difficulty, R. persuades him to drive back his chariot by motivating him to do him the favour of seeing to it that Kai. will obtain her desire. (II 46.6-54) Yet Sumantra’s grief has not been assuaged. As he drives towards Ayodhyā—a deserted city of silent mourners—; as he listens to the agonized exclamations and lamentations of
the citizens—seeing him return alone; as he hears the whispers of the ladies on entering the palace of D. as to how he will be able to assuage the grief of Ks.; as he finds king D. forlorn in grief and, after conveying to him R.’s message, sees how he swoons, overwhelmed with grief, and, only after being encouraged by Ks.—herself disconsolate, requests him for news about R., S. and L.—Sumantra’s depression has been driven to a very high pitch. And so he simply cannot help adding a very touching note to R.’s affectionate greetings, solacing messages and exhortations, which conveys to him, and cannot help presenting a pathetic account of how L. gave vent to bitter accusations; how S., being choked with tears, was unable to speak to him as she looked after his vanishing chariot; how trees and flowers, animals and birds, rivers and ponds on his way here looked depressed and deserted with grief; how the people of Ayodhya gave way to dire lamentations when they saw him return. Thus, his messages, instead of being consolations, have, against his own intention, added fuel to the fire burning in D. and Ks. But he simply could not help it. Yet he quickly finds to himself and realizes his duty to console when he sees Ks. submerged in grief and tries to comfort her by changing his tone of pathos into a tone of cheer and giving her an account of how happy the three feel in their forest life, without, however, any immediate success, as his earlier, gloomy representation still rings in her ears. (II 51-56 passim)

Last but not least we may mention that the people of Ayodhya as such are explicitly characterized several times, especially in the context of the description of the ideal city of Ayodhya and the description of their reaction to D.’s announcement of his desire to install his son as heir-apparent, and to the news of R.’s banishment. Taking together the various contexts, a uniform picture of the people of Ayodhya emerges. As the poet introduces the ideal city of Ayodhya, he also introduces her-
citizens—idealized through the king’s spirit radiating on them. In this atmosphere, they are an ideal people in all respects: a people living in happiness and prosperity, of unfailing efficiency, a people endowed with lofty virtues, religiosity, devotion to righteousness and truth and steeped in an unblemished moral life, all sections of society living up to the expectation of their distinctive qualities. (I 5-6) Though this ideal picture is presented only at the beginning, so to say, to set the epic moving, the reactions of the citizens, first to D.’s announcement and later to the news of R.’s banishment, as described by the poet, testify to their loftiness of character: Not only do they welcome D.’s announcement of his desire to consecrate R. with a spirit of ecstatic joy, giving vent to it with festive celebrations as an expression of their deep attachment to R. and their regard for the heroic greatness of his personality and his overflowing love and concern for all of them (II 2; 5 & others); not only do they one and all plunge into heart-rending grief when they hear of his banishment and give expression to their bitter indignation by bitterly criticizing D. and accusing Kai.; but, feeling that with R., the heart of their life, all life and happiness has forsaken them, that dharma and virtue will abandon the country and adharma and crime will prevail over it, they, young and old, men and women, as far as their physical strength permits it to them, run after R.’s chariot, entreating Sumantra to drive it slowly, many of them (especially Brāhmaṇas) determined, against all the persuasions of R., to abandon the amenities of city-life and to share R.’s hardships even at the cost of their lives, in their love for R. and their desire to move his will to come back. (II 30; 35-36; 40 & others) Frustrated in their intention, they, after an upsurge of wild lament and despair, give way to a spirit of melancholy and mourning, becoming utterly disinterested in life, and express, whenever their memory of R. is aroused, their grief by heart-rending lamentations (II 42; 51 & others).

True to their devoted spirit, they—a whole re'inue of them
(counsellors, soldiers, artisans and citizens and countrymen from all walks of life)—follow Bh. to the forest, like him eagerly determined to restore R. to his honour and glory, and sharing the expectations that R. will oblige Bh.’s supplications (II 76 end—77). But a people endowed with a high moral conscience, they cannot but feel convinced of, and advocate against Bh.’s plea to them to intervene on his behalf, the supreme moral value of R.’s unflinching resolve on making his father truthful to his words, though they do greatly admire Bh.’s devotion to his brother and feel sad about R.’s decision not to return to Ayodhyā (II 103.19-21; 98.70-71). And when Bh. sets out to Nandigrāma, not only priests and counsellors, but the whole retinue of citizens follow him, without being asked to do so, devoted like him to the cause of R. (II 107.9-11) When finally H.’s news of R.’s glorious victory sets an end to all the gloomy spirit of sadness and melancholy, which has nested in their hearts ever since their parting from their beloved prince, all Ayodhyā goes gay with joy and jubilation in preparing an exuberant welcome to him, displaying all their resources of glamour and festivity (VI 115 passim).¹

¹ Though Sumitrā and Śatrughna are often mentioned, the poet has not revealed his intention of presenting an explicit description of their characters, prescinding from a few instances, as when he dedicates one short sarga to the description of Sumitrā’s consolation of Ks., or makes mention of Śatrughna’s angry humiliation of Mantharā in s.72. But such stray character-allusions do not suffice to consider these figures even as minor characters.
The Heroic Four
A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER-PORTRAYAL OF BHARATA

Besides scarce references in the context of the brief general characterization of the four princes in I 17 and the description of Bh.'s departure to Rājagṛha (II 1.1 ff.), several allusions are made to Bh.'s character before he personally appears on the scene. They are either negative, being expressions of apprehension on the part of some characters like D., Ks., L., who project their ideas about the evil nature of Kai. on Bh., which, thus, reveals their own emotional upsurges without throwing any sidelights on the latter's character, or positive, i.e. instances of a refutation of such apprehensions or an affirmation of Bh.'s righteousness on the part of R. on other occasions. On the whole, these references are part and parcel of the psychological exposition of these characters, and though R. sketches a very favourable picture of Bh. in all his allusions and praises his ideal virtues (cf. e.g. II 40.5-10), which, however, do not as yet foreshadow Bh.'s heroic response to come, they leave much scope for the audience to guess as to how he will actually respond to Kai.'s design when called from Rājagṛha. For this reason, and also because the whole character of Bh. unfolds itself before us personally and right-up a-new from the moment he appears on the scene, we take this as the starting-point of our analysis.
BHARATA'S INAUSPICIOUS APPREHENSIONS AT THE TIME OF BEING SUMMONED TO AYODHYA

Resumé

The very night the envoys enter the city of Rājagṛha, Bh. is described as having had, just at the break of dawn, most inauspicious dreams, which caused him great anxiety, distress and apprehension—so much so that all the sweet words of his friends gathered around him, all attempts by way of stories, playlets, jests and other entertainments to cheer him up and allay his anxiety fail. When asked by one of his friends why he does not cheer up, he relates the dreams: gruesome visions picturing D. as plunging from the summit of a mountain into a dirty pool filled with cowdung, as floating in the dirty water and drinking oil in the hollow of his joined palms with a laugh and, after eating rice mixed with sesamum, diving into the oil again and again, his body all smeared with it; others picturing the whole universe in chaos and D. as seated on a sable seat of iron, clad in a sable garb, while black and yellow women laugh at him, and as hurriedly driving on an ass-cart towards the South, wearing a red garland. All these are inauspicious visions associated with death and the netherworld, and so Bh. gives expression to his apprehensions that either he or R. or D. or L. will die, surely so D., whom he has seen driving on a cart yoked to asses. Hence his heart is filled with an irresistible anxiety and fear. When the envoys present Vasiṣṭha's message requesting him to come immediately to Ayodhya where he is urgently needed, Bh.'s first question is not the reason of the summons, but a concerned inquiry as to the welfare of all his relatives in
Ayodhya : king D., R., L., Ks., Sumitra and Kai. Interesting in this context is the contrasting application of epithets to Ks. and Sumitra on the one hand, which are all laudative—

āryā ca dharmaniratā dharmajñā dharmadarśinī /
aroğā cāpi kausalyā mātā rāmasya dhūmataḥ //7
kaccitsumitra dharmajñā jananī lakṣmāṇasya yā /
śatrughnasya ca vīrasya sāroğā cāpi madhyamā //8 —,

and to Kai, on the other hand, which are distinctly negative—

ātmakāmā sadā caṇḍī krodhanā prājñāmāṇīnī /
aroğā cāpi kalkeyī mātā me kimuvāca ha //9 —

and which imply the poet’s implicit allusion not only to Bh.’s subconscious acquaintance with the self-conceited, impetuous behaviour of his mother as something intrinsic of her very nature (and this tallies very well with our interpretation of her inner transformation on the basis of a latent selfish ambition of hers), but possibly also, as they are placed at this crucial moment of Bh.’s anxieties and in clear opposition to the laudative remarks about the other queens, to a subconscious inauspicious apprehension about her, an apprehension that, given her selfish, impetuous and arrogant nature, she may have caused some mischief. But as the envoys answer that they are all well, Bh. takes it to be the truth and, taking leave of his maternal grandfather, who presents him with innumerable precious gifts (detailed description), makes arrangements for setting out on the journey. After a long journey across hills, forests and rivers (detailed description), Bh. sees Ayodhya spread out before his eyes, but, bereft of its usual glory, it appears to him a deserted, cheerless, silent city of mourners, all around imbued with inauspicious signs—a sight which accompanies him everywhere as he enters the city gate and the royal palace and which thus fills him with anxiety and depression, as he apprehends these inauspicious signs to be those very omens which from hear-say he knows to be signs of old indicating the death of kings.

Summing up the psychological reactions of Bh. as depicted by the poet in these sargas and explicating the impressions
on the audience implicit in them, we can say that Bh.’s encounter with the gruesome dream visions about his father D. and the inauspicious omens hovering over the city of Ayodhya—suggesting to him that calamity, that death has befallen his relatives, if not D. himself, reveals a personality who, as his heart beats with deep concern and anxiety while these gloomy apprehensions flash through his mind, is in the most intimate manner existentially and emotionally involved with the well-being of his relatives and identifies himself with their destiny, as well as a personality who gives us through this already an insight into the warmth of his attachment and the love and concern he cherishes for all of them, especially his father, king D. This attachment of Bh. to his relatives reveals itself also in the concerned manner in which he inquires of the envoys about the welfare of his relatives in Ayodhya, before and instead of asking them any question about the reason of his being summoned, and the way he, in this inquiry, besides expressing his concern for them, also expresses his appreciation and regard for them; while h shows some reservation against his mother Kai., obviously because he knows her self-conceited nature and perhaps has some subconscious, inauspicious apprehension at a moment where his mind is crossed by anxieties, as to whether she may not have created some mischief. Thus, though the listener may not have known how Bh. will actually respond to Kai.’s design earlier, he now is impressed by the selfless spirit of Bh. and may well apprehend that Bh. will violently renounce it. The stage for Bh.’s dialogue with Kai. is prepared, and we know that there will be opposition and denunciation.
Bharata's reaction to Kaikeyi's intimation of Dasaratha's death and the disclosure of her evil design

Contents (with occasional interpretatory notes)

Since Bh. did not see his father in his residence, he went to see his mother Kai. When Kai, saw her son entering, she joyfully jumped up from her golden seat and, smelling his head, embraced him affectionately and asked him about the duration of the journey, the welfare of his maternal grandfather and uncle and his stay in Rajagṛha. Bh. gave a brief reply to her questions and explained that he had been urged to come by the envoys conveying the message of his father, but then immediately expressed the desire to know why her bed-stand was empty, why the Ikṣvāku family was not in good spirits and why he did not see D., who so often used to come to her place and for the sake of whom he had come here, and whether perhaps he was in Ks.'s palace. Then Kai. [expecting], as she was infatuated with ambition, [that her announcement would cause joy to her son] intimated to Bh., who was ignorant of his father's death, which she knew so well, the gruesome, unpleasant news as though it were a gladsome news—"Your father has attained the goal which is the goal of all beings." When Bh. heard this, he fell down all at once on the ground, crushed by the weight of grief a the death of his father and, with his senses confused and agitated, lamented that what had once been the shining bed of his father was now, abandoned by him, bereft of its glory. When Kai. saw him lying prostrate on the ground—overwhelmed with grief, she raised him
from the ground, saying, "Arise, arise, why are you lying on the ground, a renowned prince! Honourable people like you do not wail." After weeping for a long time, Bh. answered her with expressions of grief—"I have come here in the happy expectation that D. would install R. Instead it has all turned out otherwise, and my heart is broken with grief that I do not see my father D.—ever bent on the welfare of his dear ones. Mother, of what disease did he die? Fortunate are R. and all who honoured my father while I was absent. If he were alive and had known that I had arrived, he would certainly smell my head. Where is that hand of his with which he used to brush the dust off me when I fell? Please announce me to R., who is my brother, father and friend, and whose humble servant I am. To him who knows dharma the eldest brother is a father, so I clasp his feet; he is my refuge now. Tell me, what did my honourable father say when dying? I wish to hear his last message." Thus asked, Kai. answered accordingly—"The king went to the other world, wailing 'O Rāma, O Śītā, O Lakṣmaṇa'. These are the last words your father spoke, smarting under the grip of death: 'Fortunate are they who will see R., S. and L. come back to Ayodhyā.' " But Bh., at the implicit hint of Kai. in her enunciation of D.'s last words that R. and S. have left the place, was filled with new distress at this second unpleasant news and anxiously asked his mother—'Where has my righteous brother gone with S. and L.?' At this question, Kai. [inspite of all these gestures of Bh. expressing his benevolent concern for D. and S.] lulling herself in the expectation that her announcement of R.'s exile would cause joy, straight-away said—"He has gone, wearing bark-garments, with L. and S. to the Daṇḍaka forest." Hearing this, Bh. was filled with fear and apprehension about the conduct of R. and anxiously asked—'Has R. taken away a Brāhmaṇa's wealth? Has he ill-treated an innocent person rich or poor? Is he—
taking a fancy to another's wife? Tell me, why has he been banished to the Danḍaka forest?" Then his fickle-minded mother [triumphantly] set out to disclose her real deed in her typical womanish mentality [according to which she, against all her son's gestures of benevolent concern, expected him to joyfully welcome this announcement at least now that she has revealed this as the work of her own personal plot for the sake of her own son]—"R. has neither taken away a Brāhmaṇa's wealth nor ill-treated an innocent, rich or poor person nor does he even look at another's wife. But, having heard of R.'s consecration, I personally requested your father for the kingdom and the banishment of R. Your father acted in due accordance and R. was banished with L. and S. And D., separated from his dear son, died out of grief. Now take up the kingship; it is for your sake that this has been done by me. Therefore, get yourself quickly enthroned as king by the chiefs of the state."

Hearing this terrible news, Bh., tormented with grief, said these words—"What shall I do with the kingdom bereft of my father and my father-like brother? By having caused the king's death and having sent R. to exile, you have concurred grief above grief on me, and like the night of death you have come for the destruction of the race, and because of you Ks. and Sumitrā live overwhelmed with grief for their son. Does not noble-souled R. treat you with affection like his own mother and far-sighted Ks. treat you like her own sister? But how is it that you have banished her own son and do not even feel pity? What reason do you have for sending a virtuous, self-possessed hero like R. into great misfortune? Through your greed you do not know my attitude to R. By what power can I protect the kingdom when R. and L. are out of sight, can I, an untrained steer, carry such a heavy burden? But even if I attained the strength by
yogic exercise and the power of the mind, I shall not allow you—avaricious for your son—to obtain your wish. I shall bring back my brother, the darling of the people, from the forest.” Bruising her with a host of abusing words, Bh. roared, as it were, like a lion in a mountain-cave.

Having thus reviled her, Bh. again was filled with great wrath and said to his mother—“Leave the kingdom, you vile, wicked woman. You, forsaken by dharma, don’t weep over me when I am dead. What harm has the king or virtuous R. done to you that you caused the former’s death and the latter’s banishment? By your destruction of this race, you committed the sin of one killing an embryo. Go to hell, Kai., and let your husband not see you since you have committed such a great sin by your horrible deed. By abandoning the darling of the world, you have brought fear and disgrace upon me. Don’t speak to me, you vile, covetous woman, an enemy of mine in the form of a mother, slayer of your husband. Ks., Sumitrā and my other mothers have been filled with great grief, having you, the destroyer of their clan. You are not the daughter of the righteous king Aśvapati, you are a Rākṣasī born for the destruction of the race of my father since you have banished R.—ever-devoted to dharma and truth and have caused my father’s death. Since you are the principal queen, I, for your sin, have been deprived of my father and brothers and am disliked by the whole world. What place in hell shall you obtain for depriving Ks. of her son? Don’t you know, you cruel one, that eldest, father-like R., the refuge of his friends, is Ks.’s own son? A son is born from every limb large and small of his mother and there, too, from her heart. Therefore, he is dearer to his mother than all other relations. Once upon a time ... [story of Surabhi’s lamentation over her labouring sons yoked to the plough and her assertion of the dearness of a son in a mother’s
life] Now if Surabhi, who has a thousand sons, bewails her two sons, how much more will Ks. bewail her only bereft son? You have bereft a virtuous lady of her only son; therefore you will for ever suffer grief after your death. I shall make complete atonement for my brother and father and shall enhance my reputation. After bringing back the glorious son of Ks., I myself will enter the forest.” Thus speaking, Bh., breathing with anger and sorrow like a snake and throwing away all ornaments, fell on the ground like the banner of Śakra at the end of the festival.

Analysis of Characterization

As Bh. meets his mother Kai., we see how his anxious concern about the welfare of his father, which has been criss-crossing his mind ever since his encounter with the gruesome dream-visions and inauspicious omens on the journey, makes him cut short Kai.’s welcome ceremonies, i.e. inquiries about his journey and matters in Rājagṛha, in as much as he, after an extremely abrupt reply to each of her questions, instantaneously asks her about the whereabouts of D., who used to be such a familiar sight in his mother’s residence whenever he came to see her, but whom today he neither finds in his own residence nor even here. When Kai., with concealed feelings of exuberance, in her mistaken belief that her announcement would cause joy to her son, intimates to him the gruesome news with laconic brevity, Bh. is knocked down by the power of grief, his senses confused and agitated at this unbearable news. True, he has been terribly anxious and concerned about his father, but in his heart of hearts there was always a flickering of hope that his anxiety was unfounded. Nay, he weened himself in the joyful expectation—and this is how he interpreted his being summoned to Rājagṛha—that he would witness the jubilant occasion of the conse-
eration of his dearly beloved brother R. Instead, everything has come otherwise, his joyful hope has been reversed into heart-rending grief and agony for his beloved father, who once used to affectionately caress him and take motherly care of him, but now has gone to the next world without ever seeing him again. Disconsolate, he requests his mother to announce him to his brother R., his sole refuge, his father in D.'s stead now and to communicate to him his father's last message. When Kai., using this opportunity to lay open her plot one step further, as she still lulls herself in her mistaken hope that ultimately her announcement would arouse joy in him, relates first his last wailings and and then his last words: "Fortunate are they who will see R., S. and L. come back to Ayodhya", thereby implicitly indicating that R. and L. have left the palace, Bh. is at once struck with new feelings of apprehension as to where R., L. and S. have gone, and as to what has happened to them; and when Kai., with concealed feelings of exuberance, straight-away answers that they have gone as ascetics to the Daṇḍaka forest, he can't but feel taken aback because—unbelievable though it may appear—such treatment could have been meted out to R. only if he had committed a serious crime; and so he asks her whether R. has taken away a Brāhmaṇa's wealth or ill-treated some innocent persons, rich or poor, or has taken a fancy to another's wife. (One may feel tempted to interpret that Bh. already has his suspicions as to Kai.'s mischievous hand in these happenings and that he addresses such questions to his mother to expose to her, without revealing himself, the immense atrocity and cruelty of her plot. But this interpretation is annulled by the emotional way in which Bh. reacts to her following self-disclosure). Finally, with now unconcealed and triumphant feelings, Kai. discloses her real deed in her mistaken belief that the soul-baring revelation of her petty ambition for the sake of her own son would dispel all his previous agonized reactions. But Bh. is struck with immeasurable grief and wrath at the same time.
His heart, already pressed down with grief, now, with this new traumatic blow, bursts out in wild agony at the visualization of the boundless misfortune brought over him, R., L., Ks. and Sumitṛā, over the whole clan of the Ikṣvākus, over the whole kingdom of Ayod yā. And as he indulges in heart-rending lamentation, his agony is more and more transformed into anger, embitterment and hatred, at the thought of the exorbitant heinousness and cruelty with which she, in her boundless greed, has requited the affectionate treatment she received from R. and Ks. by bereaving the latter of her son R., an embodiment of virtue and dharma, and expelling him to the forest and at the thought of her base misjudgement of his virtuous character and attachment to R., through which she has plunged him into boundless misery. Prescinding from the question as to whether he might be able to bear the burden of the kingdom on his shoulders by yogic power, he bids defiance to her shameless task by disdainfully announcing up to her face his inflexible determination to thwart her heinous ambition and to personally fetch and enthrone R. By now Bh.'s ire has come to a full eruption and it reaches a violent point as again the thought of Kai.'s heinous atrocity with which she has treated D. and R. flashes through his mind. Reviling her left and right, nay almost cursing her, he exposes to her the exorbitant sinfulness of her action, on account of which she has caused the death of D., has concurred heart-rending grief and disgrace upon him, brought destruction over the whole race of the Ikṣvākus and plunged Ks. and Sumitṛā into an ocean of grief, nay, has deprived a mother of her only son, the dearest friend she can have in her life, which is thus a crime immeasurable in its sinfulness and cruelty, a crime for which she deserves the darkest place in hell as retribution. But he is determined—and with this determination he leaves his mother—to atone for the crime committed by her to R. by making good the disgrace which she has concurred upon him by himself bringing R. back to glory and then entering the forest as an
Summing up, we can say that Bh. thus shows himself to be a man of high benevolence with a deep love for and an intimate attachment to his father, brothers and mothers, full of anxiety and concern about their welfare, as well as a man with a fervent commitment to justice. Confronted with the trauma of Kai.'s brazen-faced disclosure of her heinous and cruel plot of banishing R. for the sake of installing him on the throne, he not only violently renounces her cruel design, but disdainfully defies it, not shunning from reviling her left and right, nay, almost cursing her, for her exorbitant heinousness and cruelty, boundless greed and vulgar misjudgement; not only gives vent to his bleeding heart full of agony for the unbearable grief in which he and all his dear ones have been plunged, but takes up his resolve to atone for the wrong done to R. by bringing him back to glory and himself leading the life of an ascetic.

II 69

Bharata calls on Kausalya to console her and convince her of his innocence

Resumé

As the poet describes Bh.'s meeting with Ks., he makes her address Bh. with words showing traces of resentment, if not of blame, against him. In particular, her insistence that Kai. should expell her to the forest, or she would go herself along with Sumitrā—with the agnihotra placed in front of them—, or Bh. himself should take her there, is an unspoken
indication that, being *persona non grata*, she wants to pave the way for others. See under *Kausalyā*. We have interpreted this as a psychological projection of her resentment against Kai. on Bh., as he is the person for the sake of whom R. has been unjustly deprived of his kingdom and cruelly humiliated, for the sake of whom misfortune has befallen the entire house of Ayodhyā.

Bh., aware of Ks.'s resentful mood, takes deeply to heart her implicit accusation, greatly disheartened that even his mother Ks., knowing his immense and firm devotion to R., should accuse him—unknowing and innocent with regard to Kai.'s evil plot, and, to prove his innocence, invokes the worst maledictions which his imagination conjures on the person who consents to R.'s banishment, i.e. on himself if he has desired so. Any one listening to these curses must have been convinced of Bh.'s innocence, to be sure, but at the same time he couldn't but feel terrified at the vigour and exorbitance of these curses. And so the question arises whether the poet, by using this device of maledictions, beyond its purpose of making Bh. prove his innocence, did not intend to delve further into Bh.'s psyche and, if so, what was it that he wanted to convey? Bh.'s eruptive, irascible nature lashing out subconsciously against the injustice committed by Kai. or his emotional break-down at the hurting thought of a mother suspecting his sincerity? I think that both these aspects have been intended by the poet, perhaps with a primary stress on the second in the sense that it is Bh.'s emotional break-down at the distressing thought of Ks.'s accusation which makes his heart violently erupt and also drives him subconsciously into a greater and greater fury against that mischievous mother of his, Kai. But then the poet has depicted this emotional upsurge of Bh. not with many words, but merely by means of a self-revealing device, i.e. by making Bh. launch a host of curses and reveal his emotions in the exorbitantly vigorous impression they leave on the listener. But he does so—and this makes our interpretation altogether plausible—by describing not only the emotional effect of Bh.'s maledic-
tory speech on Ks. herself, who asserts how much his curses rend her heart and reaffirms her faith in Bh.'s righteousness and truthfulness, but its vigorous emotional after-effect on himself before and after Ks.'s words:

vv. 29-30—

vihīnāṁ patiputrābhyaṁ kausalyāṁ pārthivātmajah
evamāśvāsayanneva duḥkhārto nipapāta ha //29
tathā tu śapathaiḥ kaśṭaiḥ śapamānamicetanam/
bharataṁ śokasantaptraṁ kausalyāṁ vākyamabrvit //30

vv. 33-34—
evaṁ vilapamānasya duḥkhārtaṁ asya mahātmmanah/
mohacca śokasanrodhbabhūva lulitam manah //33
lālapyaṁmānasya vicetanasya praṇaśtabuddheḥ
patitasya bhumau /
muhurmuhurnihśvasataśca dirghāṁ sa tasya śokena
jagāma rātriḥ //34

II 70-71 passim

Bharata's disconsolateness during the performance of the funeral rites

Resumé

It is obvious that the poet will depict Bh.'s grief for his deceased father with much pathos and furnish it with deeply touching scenes, obvious, first because of the tragico-pathetic atmosphere of the situation, and more so because of the intimate attachment and devotion Bh. had always cherished for his beloved father, which has now been violently disrupted by the evil agency of his own mother in his own name. As-
the poet depicts Bh.'s heart-rending grief, he leaves the
listener with an unforgettable impression of Bh.'s ever-loyal
devotion to this father, though, unlike at other lamentations,
he restricts his pathetic depiction to a few short scenes. Its
effect lies in the poet's device to stress the disconsolate
ness of Bh.'s grief by making him again and again fall into
lamentation, even as late as the thirteenth day after the king's
cremation, and each time having Vasiṣṭha console and exhort
him to put an end to his sorrow and carry on his further
duties.

II 72

At the sight of Manthara Bharata becomes furious

Resumé

Bh. and Śatrughna are conversing, while suddenly
Mantharā, clad in royal garments and decorated with count-
less precious ornaments, anointed with sandal-paste and
adorned with variegated girdles, looking like a female monkey
tied with a rope, appears on the threshold. At once Bh.
takes hold of her, and saying, "Here is that sinful, wretched
woman on account of whom R. has been expelled and my
father has died, do with her according to what you think",
hands her over to his brother Śatrughna, who addresses her
companions saying that, as she has caused immense grief to
his brothers and father, she should obtain the fruit of her
action, and then, to the terror of the inmates, pulls and drags
her till all her ornaments are scattered on the ground. Then,
filled with rage, he takes hold of Kai. and reviles her with
abusing words, while Kai., being frightened, takes refuge with her son Bh. Bh. tells Śatrughna to show mercy, not because she is his mother, for he would feel like killing her for her heinous deed, but out of respect for his righteous brother, who would despise him as the murderer of his mother, and also because R., if Mantharā were killed, would never speak to him or Śatrughna again.

V. shows Bh. in this sarga as of an embittered, vindictive temperament, as inflamed by a righteous anger at the heinous injustice committed by Mantharā and his own mother Kai., to a degree that he would feel like committing matricide were it not for his respect for R.’s spirit of forbearance.

II 73. 75-76

Bharata abjures the citizens’ and Vasistha’s request to be their ruler and insists on his decision to fetch and enthrone Rama

Resumé

As Bh. is repeatedly requested to get himself crowned, first by the citizens (the royal agents rājakartārah) (s. 73), then, in all solemnity, in the midst of all the prominent citizens of Ayodhyā from all sections of society gathered in the illustrious royal court, by the priest and counsellor Vasīṣṭha (ss.75-76), he rejects their offer with determination, declaring that such a request is improper since only R., the eldest prince, deserves to be king, and he, committed to righteousness, will never follow an unrighteous path or approve of the sin committed by his mother Kai., instead immediately make arrangements for going to the forest and
bringing back R. to Ayodhyā; while he will undergo vanavāśa in R.'s stead (and that, if he is not able to persuade him, he will share his pravāśa like L.). While the first declaration closes with the request for artisans to prepare the way to the forest, the second ends with the direct commission to Sumantra to announce his journey and summon the forces. From the first to the second declaration there is not only an increase in the vigour of Bh.'s determination, with which he envisages his plan to fetch R., but also an increase in his impatience towards the citizens' very expectation that he should accept an illegal proposal. In fact, this impatience manifests itself already when he, the night before his departure, is all of a sudden aroused from his sleep by the noise of kettle-drums and conch-shells accompanying the hymns of the bards singing his deeds. Already tormented with grief, this noise of musical instruments cleaves his heart still more, and, after impatiently commanding the noise to be stopped and announcing "I am not the king", he empties his agitated heart to Śatrughna, saying that Kai. has brought boundless misery over the world, leaving him an orphan and the kingdom a shipwreck; and the poet describes him as giving himself to heart-rending lamentation (75.1-7). But still more gravely than this, Bh. takes to heart the second request by the citizens to accept the kingship of Ayodhyā. The poet dedicates two full verses to describe the deep impatience and agony with which Bh. reacts to such a proposal that expects him to commit an unrighteous act. And the very declaration by Bh. breathes the spirit of wounded honour of a person who considers himself fervently committed to the course of righteousness, but finds himself insistently encountered by expectations that demand from him to pursue a sinful path.
Bharata on his journey to Rama

Resumé

While he is the guest of Guha, Bh., as the night falls, is tormented by anxious thoughts about R. And though Guha tries to console him by speaking about the good nature of L. and relating to him in all details how L. declined his offer of a comfortable bed as well as to stand guard in his stead, out of concern for his brother, and how he gave pitiful expression to R.’s misfortune, falling thereby into gloomy musings regarding the destiny of the royal house (II 80), Bh. not only remains disconsolate, but is plunged into still greater sorrow, to an extent that Śatrughna, Ks. and the other queens give vent to loud lamentations. As he has consoled Ks.—herself disconsolate, Bh., recovering from his grief, asks Guha to relate to him how R. and S. spent the night, what food they took etc. When Guha sympathetically relates everything about how R. declined all provisions and with what humility and austerity, and in what spirit of self-less devotion, R. and S. spent the night on a bed of kuśa grass on the root of an inguḍī tree, with L. taking care of them (II 81), Bh. examines the bed and, showing it with grieved heart to his mothers, gives vent to sorrowful musings at this unbelievable, vision-like sight of such undeserved a fate of hardships for one who used to sleep on a bed with an aura of royal comfort and luxuries, used to be surrounded with an aura of royal glory and, born as the son of a universal monarch, used to be the enhancer of the happiness of the world, the darling of the people, and expresses his high admiration for S., who is blessed in sharing the destiny of R.—while he and his people have been left destitute, as it were; and as his thoughts revolve around these imaginations and around the tempest-clouds hovering over the kingless state of Ayodhya, he is
prompted with a renewed resolve to himself undergo, with cheerful spirit, the austerities of forest-life for fourteen years together with Śatruighna and make R. with L. rule over Ayodhyā; and if he should not comply with his requests, he vows to follow for ever his path (82). We see thus a Bh. filled with such intimate brotherly attachment to and selfless love for R. and L. and bearing so deep a sympathetic concern for them that not only he feels one with their (presumed) sorrows and makes them his own, desiring to know everything about their good-natured, self-less devotion to their austere hardships of forest life, but is filled, as these and other anxieties flash through his mind, with a renewed determination to free R., L. and S. from their undeserved hardships endured for his sake and joyfully undergo a life of austere asceticism himself in the company of Śatruighna in order to atone for them.

As Bharadvāja too, like Guha, reveals in his welcome speech some apprehension as to Bh.'s motivation in coming to the forest, Bh. cannot help manifesting his wounded honour at such an attitude and so reacts by expressing, though courteously, his indignation as such an attitude of his and, vehemently rejecting all such apprehensions, insistently declares that he had nothing to do with his mother's plot and that it is his intention to bring back R. to Ayodhyā. (II 84.9-18)

As Bh. introduces his mothers to Bharadvāja at the latter's request, he, while making sympathetic remarks about Ks. and Sumitrā, denounces his own mother in the very presence of the sage, thus manifesting how deeply his embitterment against the heinous injustice committed by his mother has engrafted itself in his heart that the very thought of it reawakens his righteous anger and urges him to respectlessly lash forth in abuses against her, even in the very presence of others. (II 86.19-25)
As we see Bh. eagerly and indefatigably pursuing his course to trace out R.’s hut in the forest; as we hear him giving expression to his impatience to see R. together with S. and L. and touch his feet and bow to him and witness his coronation—until which time he will not have peace (na me śāntirbhaviṣyati); as we share his feelings of grief and sorrow at his catching sight of R. living his austere life of hardships, a sight so unbelievable and unbearable to him, who used to see his brother surrounded with an aura of royal glory and comfort, a sight that fills him at once with regret and shame that his brother is suffering all this because of him; and as we witness how he is running to touch R.’s feet, but falls on the ground before reaching him, blinded with tears, how he exclaims ārya but his voice is choked with tears and, unable to speak to him, silently stares at him (92-93 passim), we encounter a Bh. that reveals a most intimate fraternal affection and selfless love for R., a deep sympathetic concern for the welfare of his brother, with whose (presumed) sorrows he identifies himself even to the point of denouncing his own life, innocent though he is.

Last but not least, we should not forget to take notice (not only in this context but in general) of the deep intimacy of Bh.’s friendship with Śatrughna, who to him is like a second self, with whom, wherever and whenever they are together, he shares his joys and sorrows, to whom he empties his heart whenever it has something to say to him and whatever it has to say.

II 97-99
II 103.12-104

Rama adamantly declines Bharata’s persuasion to accept the throne
Translation

Having comforted that brother of his—affectionately devoted to his elder brother—together with his brother L., R. began to question him. (1) "What is it, this I would wish to hear related by you, that made you come to this region, wearing bark-garments, matted hair and deer-skin? (2) What is the reason that you have left the kingdom and entered this region, wearing black deer-skin and matted hair—all this please tell me." (3) Having been thus spoken to by the noble-souled Kākutsāha, the son of Kai., restraining himself with great effort, said with folded hands these words (4)—"Our powerful father has, abandoning you, honourable sir, after committing an exorbitantly wicked deed, gone to heaven, tormented with grief for his son. (5) Directed by a woman—my mother Kai., O hero, he has committed this awful sin which deprived him of his own fame. (6) Not having obtained the fruit of the kingdom, my mother, a widow afflicted with sorrow, will fall into horrible perdition. (7) Thus, do me—your servant, the favour of getting yourself consecrated today in the kingdom like Indra. (8) All these subjects and all the widowed mothers have come to you. You ought to show your favour. (9) This is appropriate of the hereditary order and it is rightfully fixed for you, O honourable sir: obtain the kingship according to dharma, fulfil the wishes of your friends. (10) Let the whole earth cease to be a widow, with you as her lord, like the autumnal night with its spotless moon. (11) I entreat you with bowed head, together with these ministers, show your favour to your brother, disciple and servant. (12) You ought not to override this whole ancestral, honoured assembly of ministers continuing from generation to generation, O foremost of men." (13) Having spoken thus, the powerful son of Kai., Bh., his eyes filled with tears, again grasped R.'s feet with bowed head. (14) Then R. embraced that
brother of his, Bh.—sighing again and again like a furious elephant, and spoke to him these words (15)—
"How can a man like you of high descent, possessed of good qualities, illustrious, devoted to a good conduct, commit a sin for the sake of kingdom? (16) I do not see even a minute fault in you, O destroyer of enemies, nor should you blame your mother, prompted by your childishness. (17) As much respect as is due to a father knowing dharma and respected by the people, as much respect is also due to a mother possessed of dharma, O eminent one. (18) When I have been told by these virtuous father and mother of mine 'Go to the forest, Rāghava,' how can I act otherwise? (19) You should obtain the kingdom in Ayodhyā—highly regarded by the people, and I should stay in the Daṇḍaka forest, clad in bark-garments. (20) Thus the great illustrious king D. has made the apportionment in the presence of the people and, having put it into force, has gone to heaven. (21) And this virtuous king, your father, lord of the world, is the authority; you ought to enjoy the kingship given by father according to the assignment. (22) But I shall, dwelling in the Daṇḍaka forest for fourteen years, O dear one, enjoy the portion assigned to me by noble-souled father. (23) What my noble-souled father, respected by the world of men, resembling Indra, said to me, that I will consider exceedingly beneficial to me, more than even the eternal sovereignty of the whole world." (24)

Then, as those eminent men, surrounded by hosts of friends, were lamenting, the night passed over them in their grief. (1) When the day had dawned auspiciously, those brothers, surrounded by friends, after performing oblations and mantras in the Mandākini, approached R. (2) Sitting silent around him, none of them said anything, but then Bh., in the midst of his friends, spoke these words to R. (3)—"My mother has been pacified and
this kingdom has been given to me, but I give it now to you, enjoy the kingdom—free from thorns.(4) Like a dam torn by a large current of water at the onset of the rainy season, this great fissured kingdom is difficult to be controlled by anyone other than you.(5) As an ass cannot imitate the gait of a horse, a bird that of Garuḍa, so I cannot imitate your course, O king.(6) A good life is lived by that ever-honoured man on whom others depend for subsistence, but a bad life, O R., by him who depends on others for subsistence.(7) He is like a tree planted by a man and grown up into a big tree with its branches spread out, which is difficult to be climbed by a man of short stature.(8) When it flowers, yet does not show fruits, he for the sake of whom it has been brought into existence will not enjoy the pleasure of it.(9) This is the simile, O mighty one; you ought to consider the end if you, our eminent lord, do not rule us—your servants.(10) Let hosts of attendants, O king, and the foremost of men from everywhere see you, the subduer of enemies, established in the kingdom, shining forth like the sun.(11) Let, O Kākutstha, furious elephants roar, following you, let the ladies of the female apartments rejoice with full heart.”(12) Manifold citizens gave their acknowledgments to him, hearing the words of Bh. soliciting R. (13) Beholding that glorious one lamenting with grief, self-possessed R., endowed with self-control, comforted Bh.(14)—“There is no such non-independent man who is acting according to his own will; death (fate) drags him hither and thither.(15) All accumulations of riches end in their loss, all heights of prosperity end in their fall, unions end in disunion, life ends in death.(16) As ripe fruits have no fear except of falling, so a man born has no fear except from death.(17) As a house with solid pillars perishes when it has become worn out, so men perish when they have come under the grip of old age and death.(18) Days and nights pass over all beings, they fast
waste away lives, like the rays of the sun the water in the hot season.(19) Bewail yourself; why do you bewail others, you whose life goes on decreasing whether you stand or go.(20) Death walks with you, death sits down with you, and, having travelled a long way with you, death returns with you.(21) Wrinkles appear on the body and white hair on the head; what is there that man, worn out due to old age, should consider himself like a lord? (22) Men rejoice when the sun has risen, they rejoice when it has gone down, but they are not aware of their own decay of life.(23) Each new beginning of a season they see coming near they rejoice, but with the revolution of seasons there is a decay of life to living beings.(24) As log and log may come together in the ocean and, after coming together, will dissociate after some time, so wives and sons and relatives and riches, after coming together, dissociate, for certain is their separation.(26) There is no living being that continues to live according to his own will; therefore there isn't that power in him of one feeling sorrow for one that is dead.(27) As it is the case when somebody standing on the road calls after a travelling caravan—'I, too, will follow behind you' (28), so the ancestral path trod by the predecessors is certain. How should he who is going that path feel sorrow for one for whom there is no way of deviation? (29) Since there is no return to a falling age as is to a current of water, the self should be directed towards happiness, for beings are regarded to be destined for happiness.(30) That virtuous father of ours, the lord of the earth, has gone to heaven, cleared from sins through all the auspicious sacrifices where ṛaṣṭiṇās are obtained.(31) By duly maintaining his servants and protecting his subjects and distributing wealth according to dharma, our father has gone to heaven.(32) Having offered manifold sacrifices and obtained abundant pleasures and attained the highest age, the lord of the earth
has gone to heaven. (33) Having renounced that worn-off human body, our father has obtained heavenly prosperity by sporting in the Brahma-loka. (34) But for him no wise man of a nature like you, like anyone who is learned and intelligent, should mourn. (35) For, these manifold manifestations of grief and lamentations and mournings should be subdued in all circumstances by him who is resolute and wise. (36) So, be steadfast, don’t lament and go and dwell in the city. Thus you have been directed by self-possessed father, O best of speakers. (37) Where I have been directed by that meritorious one, there only I shall accomplish the order of venerable father. (38) I shall not abandon the rightful order of his, O subduer of enemies, and also you should always regard it, for he is our kinsman, he is our father.” (39) When R. had ceased after speaking such meaningful words, righteous Bh. said these wonderful, equitable words (40)—“Who is there of a nature like you in this world, O subduer of enemies? Neither can grief afflict you nor joy make you exult. (41) You are agreeable to the aged and you ask them when you are in doubt; you are the same whether dead or alive, whether there is anything or nothing. (42) By what should one who is in possession of such insight be afflicted? He when obtaining such calamity ought not to worry himself. (43) You are of a divine-like nature, noble-souled, faithful to truth, all-knowing, all-seeing and possessed of insight (intelligence), O Rāghava. (44) Not the most unbearable grief ought to overcome you, who are endowed with merits and well-versed in the origin and end of beings. The sinful act which has been committed by my mean mother on my account while I was away from home, has not been desired by me; may you show mercy to me. (45-46) I am bound by the fetters of dharma, that’s why I do not kill, by rigorous penalty, this villainous mother of mine deserving penalty. (47) How could I, born from D., possessing the karma
of a pure descent, knowing *dharma*, commit an unlawful, disgusting act? (48) He is our dutiful preceptor, an aged king, deceased, and a father. So I should not blame father, a godhead, in the assembly. (49) But which man conversant with *dharma* would, O virtuous one, commit such a sinful act—devoid of *dharma* and *artha*, being desirous of doing a favour to a wife? (50) There is an old saying that at the time of their end beings become infatuated. That saying has been made evident to the world by the king’s action. (51) Let yourself take back (make good) the transgression committed by father through anger, infatuation and recklessness with a good object in view. (52) For, a son who makes right the transgression of a father is considered an *a-patya* in the world; if not he is considered the opposite. (53) Let yourself be that *a-patya*, let not that evil deed committed by father, condemned by those who are self-possessed, spread in the world. (54) Kai. and me and father and our relatives and friends, all town- and country-men, all these you ought to protect. (55) Where is the forest and where is Kṣatriya life, where are matted hair and where is protecting the country! You should not perform such contradictory work. (56) If you wish to practise *dharma* born of physical strain, take upon yourself physical strain by protecting the four *varṇas* according to *dharma*. (57) Of the four āśramas that of the householder is the best āśrama—say, O virtuous one, those knowing *dharma*; how can you abandon it? (58) In learning, status, birth I am an infant to you; so how will I protect the earth when I am here? (59) I am devoid of intelligence and qualities, young and devoid of status, and without you I am not able to discharge things. (60) Rule, O you knowing *dharma*, this entire unagitated ancestral kingdom—free from thorns according to your own *dharma*, together with your relatives. (61) Let here only all the subjects together and the *rtviks* together with Vasiṣṭha versed in *mantras* consecrate you, accom-
panied by *mantras.*(62) Consecrated by us, go to protect Ayodhyā like Indra, accompanied by the Maruts, protected the worlds after conquering them by his strength.*(63) Removing your three debts, destroying completely your enemies and gratifying your friends with their wishes, rule over me here only.*(64) Let today, O noble one, your friends rejoice at your consecration, let today your enemies run away in fright in the ten directions.*(65) Free today respectable father from sin by wiping off the blame from me and my mother, O eminent one.*(66) I solicitate you with bowed head, show compassion on me and your kinsmen like Maheśvara on all beings.*(67) But if you ignore it and go from here to the forest, I shall also go with you.”*(68) Though king R. was propitiated with bowed head by Bh.—filled with distress, that virtuous one did not resolve on going, firmly resolved on that word of his father.*(69) Seeing that wonderful firmness in Rāghava, the people were at the same time delighted and grieved. They were grieved because he would not go to Ayodhyā, they were delighted, seeing his firm resolve on fulfilling his promise.*(70) Then the ṛtvikṣ, the towns men and herdsmen as well as the mothers, depriving of their senses and filled with tears, praised Bh. speaking such words and, turning to R., solicitated him altogether.*(71)

As Bh. was speaking thus again, the illustrious, highly respected elder brother of L., then, answered in the midst of his relatives (1)—“Becoming of you are these words which you thus spoke as son born to Kai. from the best of kings, D.*(2) In former times, our father, when taking your mother in marriage from her brother, promised to your maternal grandfather the kingdom as an excellent bride’s prize.*(3) And at the time of war between the Gods and Asuras, the king, lord of the earth, pleased at her service, joyfully gave your mother a boon.*(4) Then that glorious mother of yours, best of women, after making
him promise, requested the foremost of men for two
boons (5): for your kingship, O best of men, as well as my
banishment, and the king, thus directed, gave that boon
to her.{6} It is by that father of mine that I, for my part,
have been directed, O eminent man, to stay in the forest for
fourteen years, as a result of the grant of a boon.(7) So
I have come to this uninhabited forest, accompanied by
these two, O king, L. and S., without any opposition,
being firmly resolved on making my father truthful to his
words.{8} Yourself also should as well make the king, our
father, truthful to his words by quickly getting consecra-
ted.{9} Release, O Bh., for my sake the king, our lord,
from his debt; save the king, you who know dharma, and
gratify your mother.{10} For, we hear of an ancient saying,
O dear one, sung by famous Gaya while making offerings
in Gayā to the ancestors (11): Because a son saves his
father from the hell called put, therefore he is called putra,
or also because a son protects his fathers (pitrn pāti).{12}
People endeavour to obtain many meritorious sons—well-
versed in the Vedas because at least one of those gathered
may go to Gayā.{13} Thus all the rājarṣis are known to
have acted, O prince; therefore, O best of men, save father
from hell, O lord.{14} Go to Ayodhyā, Bh., and gratify
your subjects, together with Śatruhnā, O hero, and togeth-
er with all the Brāhmaṇas.{15} I, on my part, shall enter
the Dāndaka forest without delay, accompanied by these
two, Vaidehi and L.{16} You yourself, O Bh., be king of
men; I, on my part, will be king of the animals of the
forest. Go cheerfully today to your excellent city; I, on
my part, will cheerfully enter the Dāndakās.{17} Let the
umbrella, dispelling the rays of the sun, spread cool shade
over your head; I, on my part, will happily resort to the
excellent shade of these forest-trees.{18} Wise Śatruhnā
is your companion, renowned L. is my best friend. Let
us four best of sons, O Bh., make the king truthful, let us
not get distressed.”{19}
Thus addressed by R., highly illustrious Bh., extremely dispirited, said to the charioteer—standing next to him(12)
“Spread, O charioteer, kuśa grass here on this piece of ground of mine. I shall beset the noble one by undergoing a hunger-strike till he is gracious to me.(13)
Abstaining from food, not looking about like a Brāhmaṇa robbed of his wealth, I shall lie before his cottage as long as he does not return.”(14) Beholding Sumantra staring at R., that dispirited one himself brought excellent kuśa grass and spread it on the ground.(15) Then illustrious R., the best of rājarṣis, said to him—“What harm am I doing, O Bh., my dear, that you beset me by undergoing a hunger-strike? (16) A Brāhmaṇa may besiege men by lying on one side, but it is not a custom to undergo a hunger-strike for men of the Kṣatriya class.(17) Stand up, O tiger among men, and give up that cruel vow; go quickly from here to the most excellent of cities, Ayodhyā, O Rāghava.”(18) But Bh., having sat down, said, looking in all directions, to the city- and country-folk—“Why do you not instruct noble R.?”(19) Those townsmen and country-people said to that noble-souled one—“We know Kākutsthā; what Rāghava says is right.(20) Since this illustrious one, on his part, abides by the word of his father, so we cannot properly make him turn back.”(21)
Hearing their words, R. spoke these words—“So, regard the words of your friends possessed of righteous vision.(22) Having heard both these sides, judge properly, O Rāghava. Stand up, O mighty one, and touch me as well as the water.”(23) Thus, having got up and touched the water, Bh. said these words—“Let the members of the council, counsellors as well as the hosts of attendants, listen to me (24) : I did not request my father for the kingdom, nor did I persuade my mother. I know my noble brother Rāghava as being exceedingly conversant with dharma.(25) If, however, by all means the word of father has to be accomplished and the exile in the forest has to be under-
taken, I only will stay for fourteen years in the forest.”(26) Virtuous R., astonished by those genuine words of that brother of his, said, looking towards the city- and country-folk (27)—“Neither I nor Bh. can annul what has been sold, deposited or purchased for me by my father during his life-time.(28) I ought not to commit any detestable fraud in regard to staying in the forest. What has been enjoined and said by Kai. and my father, has been done in a righteous manner.(29) I know Bh. is forbearing and paying respect to his elders; all prosperity to the noble-souled one adhering to truth.(30) With this virtuous brother I shall, after returning from the forest, be foremost lord of the earth.(31) I have carried out the order which the king has been asked for by Kai.; release by the same order that father of ours, lord of the earth, from his being false to the promise.”(32)

Filled with wonder and delight at the encounter of those two excellent brothers, hosts of invisible mahārṣis, siddhas, rājarṣis and Gandharvas came together and praised the two brothers, but as they were looking forward to the execution of Daśagriva, they entreated Bh. to follow the word of R. out of regard for his father so as to free R. from his debt to his father. Thus saying, they went to their respective abodes. And R., elated by their words, joyfully paid obeisance to them. Once more, Bh. appealed to R.’s duty as a Kṣatriya to comply with his and his mother’s request, in view of his inability to protect such a big kingdom and conciliate the subjects if they are agitated, speaking in the name of relatives, warriors and friends, who wait as eagerly for him as cultivators for the rainy season. Saying this, Bh. fell on R.’s feet and solicitated him again and again. R., taking him on his lap, said affectionately—“You possess wisdom—both natural and from training in propriety; so carry out your stately duties with the help of ministers, friends and wise counsellors,
The moon may be deprived of its effulgence, the Himalaya may abandon its snow and the ocean may transgress its boundaries, but I shall not transgress the promise to my father. Do not worry about what mother had done for you, either out of love or greed, but treat her like a mother." As illustrious R. spoke these words, Bh. requested him to put his feet on his sandals, saying that these will guard the welfare of the whole world. Then R. put on his sandals and, taking them off again, gave them to his brother; Bh. received them reverently and placed them on the head of an elephant, circumambulating R. Then R. took leave in due order of the people, the elders, the counsellors and his younger brothers. His mothers, their throats choked with tears on account of grief, were unable to bid farewell to him, and R., after greeting them respectfully, entered his cottage, weeping.

Analysis of characterization

The Bharata-Rama-sāṁvāda, as this whole complex of scenes may be called, is one of the highlights of the V. Rm. It is no less a dialectics of two views of life, a confrontation of two mentalities, and thus a portrait of two characters, than it is a dialectics of two argumentations. Seen from this point of view, an analysis of the dialectics of Bh. and R.'s argumentation will be at the same time an analysis of the poet's representation of two characters, who, encountering each other though they may be, culminate in an apex of ideal brotherhood.

1) A structural analysis of the argumentation

Sāṁvāda 1

R. asks Bh. for the motive of his visit
Bh. answers with soliciting words:
D. has died out of grief for his son.
He has committed an awful sin at the instigation of Kai. Therefore, he, all the subjects and his widowed mothers request him to accept the throne.
This is both in accordance with dharma (law of succession) as well as the wish of the whole earth, represented by the ancestral assembly of ministers, who have come with him from Ayodhyā.
Bh. solicitates R. again and again

R. embraces him and replies:
Such a proposal is sinful and unworthy of Bh.—of exemplary character.
As much respect is due to a righteous mother as is due to a righteous father.
Both father and mother (Kai.) have directed him to go to the forest, so it is his filial duty to carry out their words.
It is, according to the will of father, Bh.’s assignment to obtain the kingship and R.’s assignment to stay in the forest for fourteen years. And these words of D. are authoritative and beneficial.

Samvāda 2

The brothers spend the night wailing with grief and at dawn perform the morning duties.

Bh. breaks the silence and again solicitates R. It is true that the kingdom has been given to him, but he now hands it over to him. He himself is too weak to take up the burden of kingdom, whereas R. is the ideal person.
R. conducts himself like a

R., not answering directly, comforts Bh. Man has no power over his will, there is no stability to things in this world, everything is under the grip of death.
Hence, all worldly considerations of attachment have no value, all worldly sorrows
tree planted by the people, who expect its fruit in vain. Such a tree is not at all gratifying the people. Therefore let the people take delight in witnessing R.'s coronation.

and mourning for others are useless since there is no deviation from the destiny of the course of beings; rather, beings should engage themselves in happiness, for they are destined for happiness.

Therefore, Bh. should not mourn his dead father, who has obtained celestial bliss, cleared from sin after duly performing his duties on earth. This is unworthy of a wise man. So also he should [abandon all worldly considerations regarding the kingdom and] adhere to the only consideration of value: the assignment made by father, which must be regarded as rightful by both.

Saṁvāda 3

Bh. renews his argumentation:

He admires the wonderful equanimity of R., but stresses that all the more he should not be overcome by grief—manifested in his renunciation of the kingdom. His

R. once more insists on the irrevocable duty of fulfilling the word of father:

D. promised to Kai.’s father, at the time of marriage, the kingdom to her future son as a bride’s prize [this statement, as it is nowhere else found in the Rm., is a purely
mother Kai. has committed an atrocious deed for his sake, and he would have killed her for it, were he not bound by the fetters of dharma and respect of the family.

In the same way, his father D. has committed a sinful act, complying with the request of Kai. in his infatuation.

This transgression committed by father through anger, infatuation and recklessness, ought to be made good, his blemish ought to be removed by R. if he wants to prove himself a worthy son, whose duty it is to make right what has been done wrong by father, is to free a father from his blemish by acting contrary to it. Also, such an evil deed should be prevented from causing a bad example in the kingdom. After all, it is not at all his dharma to live the life of an ascetic, but to protect the people; in fact the dutiful āśrama of a householder is the foremost of all āśramas.

Besides, he himself is a child compared to R. in every subjective statement by R. to reinforce his argumentation] At the time of the war between the Gods and Asuras D. granted Kai. a boon in gratitude for her service. She then requested D. on his promise for two boons: Bh.'s enthronement and his own banishment. And the king granted that boon to her. Thus being directed by his father to stay in the forest for 14 years, it is his irrevocable duty to be firmly resolved on making father truthful to his word by living an ascetic life, as much as it is Bh.'s irrevocable duty to make his father truthful to his word by accepting the kingship.

In this way, he should commit himself to the sacred duty of a son to free his father from his debt and save him from hell by fulfilling the promise he has made, for a son is called putra because he saves his father from hell. He should dedicate himself together with Satrughna to his assignment of protecting the kingdom, while he (R.) will dedicate himself together with
respect, and it would be impossible for him to cope with the discharge of kingly duties, therefore R. should, in accordance with his own dharma, get himself crowned at this very spot and then go to protect Ayodhyā.
In this way, he would free himself from his three debts, destroy his enemies and gratify the people.
He should free therefore father from his sin and wipe off the blemish from him, Bh., and Kai.
If R. turns aside his requests, he will go with him to the forest.

Bh. solicitates R., but R. does not swerve from his firm resolution on fulfilling his promise to his father, which fills the people with delight and grief at the same time. They praise Bh. and solicitate again R.

Saṁvāda 4

Bh., extremely dispirited, — R. asks him what harm he has done to him that he is exerting this cruel pressure on him and tells him that it is not a Kṣatriya custom to undergo a hunger-
Bh. then appeals to the public to prevail upon R. to go back to Ayodhya, but they decline because they consider the latter’s stand to abide by the words of his father as right. — R., hearing the words, appeals to Bh. to regard the verdict of the public and give a proper judgment to both sides.

Bh. then declares before the public that in no way he ever requested father or mother for the kingdom, and if the word of father has to be followed by all means, he shall do so instead of R. — R. acknowledges Bh.’s forbearance and attachment to him, but insists that, whatever he has been ordered by father at the request of Kai., has been done rightly so and is irrevocable and must not be twisted in any way. Bh. may be assured that after his return he will comply with his request.

Saññāda 5

Heavenly pīthis and saints praise both, but, in view of the killing of Daśagrīva, persuade Bh. to follow R.’s word out of brotherly regard.

Once more, Bh. appeals to R.’s duty as a Kṣatriya to comply with his request, in view of his inability to protect such a big kingdom, and conciliate the subjects when they are agitated, in the name of relatives and friends, who eagerly await his coronation. He falls on his feet and solicitates him.

R. takes him on his lap and, assuring him of his competence in protecting the kingdom, once more asserts his firm resolve on fulfilling his promise to father and tells him not to worry about what mother did, either out of love or greed for him.
again and again.

Then R., at the request of Bh., takes off his sandals, which Bh., reverently places on the elephant, and, circumabulating R., Bh. takes leave of him.

Resumé of the main points of the argumentation

(1) R.’s banishment and the proposal of his own (Bh.’s) coronation are the result of a sinful act committed by D., by complying, in his infatuation, with the heinous desire of Kai.; therefore, the word of father, the fulfilment of which R. considers to be his irrevocable dharma, is based on grave injustice and has to be categorically rejected.

On the other hand, it is R.’s lawful duty (dharma) to become king and protect the people, while it is utterly against his dharma to live the life of an ascetic in the forest.

The sinful act committed by D. needs to be made right by him, father needs to be saved from hell by him—this is his sacred duty as a son—by his undoing it, by his acting contrary to it. In this way, the

What has been ordered by D. at the request of Kai., is the result of the king’s sanction of a boon granted to her at the time of the war between the Gods and Asuras in gratitude for her service—which boon she has requested for. As much respect is due to a righteous mother as is due to a righteous father. Whatever has been ordered by Kai. and D., is therefore absolutely right and irrevocable.

Thus, being directed by his father to stay in the forest for fourteen years, it is his irrevocable duty to be firmly resolved on making father truthful to his word by dedicating himself to the assignment of forest-life, just as it is Bh.’s irrevocable duty to make father truthful to his word by dedicating himself to the assignment of protecting the kingdom.
blame incurred on him (Bh.) and his mother need to be wiped off. Whatever goes against this, whatever other considerations there are, is against dharma, is sinful. It is therefore his sacred duty as a son to free D. from sin, to save father from hell, by making him truthful, i.e. fulfilling the promise D. has given to Kai., and so also to gratify his mother Kai.

(2) Though he may acknowledge that the kingdom has been rightfully assigned to him, he now hands it over to him. For he himself is a weakling, a child to R. in every respect, and greatly dejected on account of those unfortunate events (unspoken)—so that it is sheer impossible for him to carry the burden of the kingdom, while R. is the ideal person for it.

It is in the expectation of R. being king that all the subjects, ministers and widowed mothers have come here to request him to accept the kingship. As a tree planted by the people who expect its fruit, it is his duty to gratify them.

(a) All such considerations which go to show his dejection (on account of those happenings and for his deceased father) and which involve him in morbid considerations of injustice being inflicted on him (R.) by Kai. and D., and any consequent attempt to at one for it, are considerations of worldly attachment, which are of no value and relevance, having their resonance in their failure to realize that man has no power over his will, that things in this world are unstable and under the grip of death and there is no deviation to their course; and they are, thus, bypassing that only consideration of value: to act in accordance with dharma, to
fulfil the assignment given by father on his own and on Bh.'s part.
(b) R. gives Bh. his assurance of his competence in protecting the kingdom.

(3) Though he has great admiration for R.'s wonderful equanimity, it looks to him as if his stern resolve on renouncing the kingdom betrayed itself as an expression of concealed sorrow.

(4) Bh. in near-to despair applies psychological pressures

(a) If R. turns aside his—no response.
    request, he will go with him to the forest.

(b) He will undergo a—R. invalidates his measure hunger-strike before R. by reproaching him for exerting cruel pressure, as he has not done any harm to him, and branding it as unlawful for a Kṣatriya.

(c) He appeals to the—R. appeals to him to acknowledge the verdict of the people.

(d) He declares that, if the word of father has to be followed by all means, he shall do R. acknowledges his forbearance and attachment to him, but re-affirms that the word of father is irrevocable
so instead of R. and must not be twisted in any way.

(2) *A psychological interpretation of the samvāda and explicitation of the character-portrait implied in it*

More than anything else, Bh. and R.'s argumentation are a matter of different psychological dispositions. As we read through the arguments proposed by Bh. and L., we are struck by R.'s serenity of argumentation on the one hand and Bh.'s emotional tone and unbalanced manipulation of argumentation, going even to the point of exerting psychological pressure, on the other hand. All this reflects an emotional turmoil on the part of Bh. On the other hand, R.'s serene, balanced, self-possessed and absolutely firm argumentation reflects a serene, balanced, self-possessed and absolutely firm psyche. Though it may sometimes look stern, it is not meant so either, for it tries to cure Bh. from his frantic disposition in regard to his consideration of the injustice inflicted upon his brother in his name; tries to console him and acknowledges his love. But R.'s argumentation is firm in the measure he is firm in his commitments.

For R., in his sublime heroic equanimity to the inevitable course of earthly things, which are unstable and under the grip of death, to all considerations of worldly attachment, which only produce sorrow and grief and egotistic claims for justice in defiance of dharma, and in his sublime heroic commitment to dharma as the only supreme value, even to the point of forbearing any unrighteous act inflicted upon him, the order of his father, howsoever heroic demands it may make of him—even if it were to ask his life for no fault of his—, has been made on absolutely just and rightful grounds, for it is the result of his father's own sanction of the rightful claim of a boon by his wife Kai. promised to her earlier. Such an order of his father, irrespective of whatever (irrele-
vant) egotistic claims for justice are raised, is irrevocable, and a firm resolution on its fulfilment, on his as well as on Bh.'s part, is their irrevocable duty under all circumstances. Seen in this perspective, R.'s assertion of his firm determination is therefore not a manifestation of his stubbornness, but of his loving fraternal concern to uncompromisingly inculcate this lesson upon his brother. In fact, more than a lesson inculcated upon a brother, who by-passes the boundaries of dharma, it is an attempt to cure his brother's frantic belief that grave injustice has been inflicted upon his brother through him by Kai. and D. and his consequent attempt to atone for it—but unjustified and irrelevant considerations. It is an acknowledgement of Bh.'s sympathetic concern for his welfare as an expression of his overflowing brotherly affection for and self-less devotion to him, but an uncompromising rejection of its frantic emotional manifestations, even if he thereby has to fill his heart with dejection and sad disappointment, in view of a more supreme realization of the good of both of them, of a deeper concern for Bh.'s well-being, a deeper love for him, which has its resonance not in any temporal emotional attachment, but is firmly grounded in ever-enduring dharma. R.'s assertion of his firm resolution on fulfilling the word of his father is an expression of a sublime, perfect equanimity to the subjecting influence of worldly considerations of attachment and egotistic demands for justice in defiance of dharma; is, thus, an expression of an unflinching commitment to satya-dharma testified by his lofty tribute to the word of his father and his aspiration to make him true to his promise and fulfil all his debts—an expression of the most selfless filial love a son can give witness to in a spirit of total self-sacrifice and forbearance towards any injustice done to him, a most sublime expression of the ideal of putradharma. It is, further, an expression of a love that realizes the best of his brother, though it needs to reject his plea overflowing with brotherly affection and
sympathetic concern for him, and needs to sadden his heart. To the question whether the poet does not intend to show how R.'s spirit of equanimity and forbearance blinds his eyes to the reality of the grave injustice involved, and whether this does not reflect an unhealthy aspect of his personality, we have to answer: Though the poet wants to show how R.'s heroic equanimity veils his realistic sense of acknowledging the heinous injustice done to him, he does not mean this lack of acknowledgement to be identified with a blind adherence to dharma. Rather, he agrees with R. in the assertion that against all worldly considerations dharma is the only consideration of value to be upheld. (Cf. our extensive discussion about the poet’s identity with regard to R.’s argumentation in the context of the Laksmaṇa-Rāma-saṁvāda). This is the very character-gist of R., and in this consists the distinction of his nature, the heroism of his character. R. is the embodiment of a perfect character and, unlike other ideal characters portrayed in the Rm., he is the only one whose personality reaches near-to absolute (human) perfection; he is the apex of the characters of the Rm.

Compared with R., Bh. finds himself in a completely different psychological condition when he forwards his argumentation. Still suffering from the effects of the traumatic shock of the death of his beloved father and his mother's brazen-faced intimation of her heinous design in his name and from the many emotional upsurges of grief, remorse and anger ever haunting his mind while musing over the destiny of R., his heart, which is beating with intimate brotherly love, is dejected with grief and agitated with righteous anger on account of those unfortunate happenings, having but the one anxious desire to atone for the sin committed by Kai. and D. and lead back R. to honour and happiness. But R. is so forbearing, so forgiving, so self-sacrificing that he allows the most cruel atrocity to be inflicted on him without even muttering a word of revolt, nay, considering as his irrevocable dharma what is actually the product of grave injustice
and cruel heinousness. And this weighs down the more on Bh., since R., sacrificing his everything, allows himself to be bereaved of all happiness and honour, for no fault of his but the injustice committed in his (Bh.'s) name. With this thought as his inmost concern, he inculcates upon R. the injustice of D.'s action as well as the unlawfulness of his order. As R. insists on the righteousness of D.'s order and his as well as Bh.'s irrevocable duty to follow his assignment, Bh. feels as if blockaded by an insurmountable barricade; but, feeling all the more the urge of his concern for his brother's downtrod honour and happiness, he has recourse to all kinds of emotion-ridden persuasions to instill in R. the absurdity of his resolution: He does as if he acknowledges R.'s argument of the king's assignment of the kingdom to him, but expresses his desire to hand the kingdom over to him; he asserts his inability to rule the kingdom and shows the absurdity of R. wasting his talents and frustrating the people's hopes; he interprets R.'s equanimity—in his resolve on renouncing the kingdom—as a covering-up of his hidden sorrows; he re-affirms the injustice done by D. and affirms R.'s duty to save father from hell by acting contrary to his decision and to remove the stain from him and his mother; he reminds him again of his dharma as a Kṣatriya and exposes again his own incapability of ruling the kingdom; he solicitates him with supplications again and again etc. And as all attempts fail, because R. adamantly re-affirms his stand by his irrevocable duty to follow the word of his father and invalidates Bh.'s claims of injustice as unjustified and irrelevant, Bh., in a bid of despair, takes recourse to more and more desperate psychological pressures following one upon the other, only to meet with the same insurmountable barricade of R.'s firmness, even failing to get the consent of the people, who, while they admire his brotherly devotion, admit their inability to ignore the righteousness of R.'s argumentation. And, as though there was still any hope that R. would reverse his determination, he engages in one more and last bid of
solicitation, as the dire prospect of having to rule the kingdom in separation from R., the hope of the people, impresses itself vehemently in his mind, then falling exhausted at his brother’s feet; whereupon R. takes him affectionately on his lap and, assuring him of his talents in tackling the affairs of the kingdom, re-asserts his firm resolve. If we are to ask what that deep psychological urge is that makes Bh. carry on his argumentation, shifting, twisting, manipulating, re-affirming it, against the almost superimposing acuteness of R.’s arguments, we cannot just think of any answer other than the answer which we have already indicated: By nature irascible and possessed of an acute sense for equity and justice, Bh., whose heart has been beating with intimate brotherly affection and selfless love for R., at the traumatic shocks of D.’s death and Kai.’s atrocious self-disclosure, has suffered an emotional break-down, which, having driven him to furious outlashes against the injustice committed by his mother Kai. and having engrained itself deeply in his heart, has left behind in him a vigorous determination, a splinter of righteous anger, to put an end to such injustice as has deprived his dear brother R. of his happiness and honour in his name. It is his sincere and most intimate concern to inculcate this upon R.; but when he is confronted with the insurmountable barricade of the firm resolve of his brother insisting adamantly on abiding unflinchingly by the word of his father; he, far from realizing its rightful use, is emotionally driven by this barricade, which but re-enforces his concern for R.’s down-trod happiness and honour, to a gamut of frenzied attempts at instilling in R. the absurdity of his resolution, which involve him in an emotion-ridden, unbalanced manipulation of arguments. And yet this is not at all a reflection of Bh.’s lack of good-will, but rather of his tremendous self-sacrificing fraternal love, in which he loses himself so completely, for the welfare of his brother, that he not only wants to make good the wrong done to him for his sake, not only wants to lead back R. to his deserved honour
and happiness, but wants to free him from the fetters of that self-less spirit of forbearance and forgiveness which makes him (R.) a victim self-sacrificed to the cruelty of other. What Bh. lacks, is not in any way love, but that serene sense for *satyadharma*, that ideal of *putradharma*, which is in a perfect equanimity towards valueless considerations of worldly attachment and human claims for justice—that characterizes R. Instead, he is of an irascible nature, and, once erupted in flaming righteous ire against the injustice committed by Kai. and D., his determination to put things right dominates his mind to the extent of obscuring that serene sense for *dharma* which should be the guiding-line of man in all critical situations. But it is far less, if at all, Bh.’s falling short of the ethical loftiness of R. which the poet wants to highlight, rather it is the extent of his self-sacrificing love for his brother R., which, though by-passing the boundaries of *dharma*, goes to the last to enforce the restauration of R.’s honour and happiness, which R., in his utterly forgiving spirit, for no fault of his, to no good of his, wants to sacrifice. It is not unduly that Bharadvāja, listening with sympathy to Bh.’s report on the outcome of his talks with R., exults at the noble loftiness of Bh.’s devotion to his brother, saying: (s. 105)—

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\begin{align*}
n\text{n}a\text{i}t\text{a}c\text{c}i\text{t}r\text{a}m & \text{ n}a\text{r}a\text{v}y\text{ā}g\text{h}r\text{a} \; \text{ś}i\text{l}a\text{r}t\text{t}\text{a}t\text{a}t\text{ā}m \; \text{v}a\text{r}a \\
yad\text{ā}r\text{a}y\text{a}m & \; \text{t}v\text{a}y\text{i} \; \text{t}i\text{s}t\text{h}\text{e}t\text{t}u \; \text{n}i\text{m}n\text{e} \; \text{v}r\text{ś}t\text{a}m\text{i}v\text{o}d\text{a}k\text{a}m \; / / 16 \\
am\text{ṛ}t\text{a}h & \; \text{s}a \; \text{m}a\text{hābā}h\text{u}h \; \text{p}i\text{t}ā \; \text{d}a\text{ś}\text{a}r\text{a}t\text{h}a\text{s}t\text{a}vā \\
y\text{a}s\text{y}a & \; \text{t}v\text{a}m\text{i}d\text{ṛ}\text{s}a\text{ḥ} \; \text{p}u\text{t}r\text{o} \; \text{d}h\text{h}r\text{mā}t\text{m}ā \; \text{d}h\text{h}r\text{m}a\text{v}a\text{t}\text{s}a\text{l}a\text{ḥ} \; / / 17—
\end{align*}
\]

and that the counsellors acknowledge his determination to go to Nandigrāma with the words: (s. 107)—

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\begin{align*}
s\text{a}d\text{ṛ}\text{s}a\text{ḥ} & \; \text{ś}l\text{ā}g\text{h}\text{a}n\text{i}v\text{a}m \; \text{c}a \; \text{y}a\text{d}u\text{k}t\text{a}m \; \text{b}h\text{h}r\text{a}t\text{a} \; \text{t}v\text{a}y\text{ā} \\
v\text{a}c\text{a}n\text{a}m & \; \text{b}h\text{h}r\text{ā}t\text{r}v\text{ā}t\text{s}a\text{l}y\text{ā}\text{d}n\text{u}r\text{ū}p\text{a}m \; \text{t}\text{a}v\text{a}i\text{v}a \; \text{t}a\text{t} \; / / 5 \\
n\text{i}t\text{y}a\text{ṃ} & \; \text{t}e \; \text{b}a\text{n}d\text{h}h\text{l}u\text{l}u\text{b}d\text{h}a\text{s}y\text{a} \; \text{t}i\text{s}t\text{h}a\text{t}o \; \text{b}h\text{h}r\text{ā}t\text{s}a\text{u}h\text{ṛ}d\text{e} \\
\text{ā}r\text{y}a\text{m}\text{ā}̄\text{r}g\text{a}m & \; \text{p}r\text{a}p\text{a}n\text{n}\text{a}s\text{ya} \; \text{n}ā\text{n}u\text{m}a\text{n}y\text{e}t\text{a} \; \text{k}a\text{ḥ} \; \text{p}u\text{m}ā\text{n} \; / / 6
\end{align*}
\]
Bharata after returning to Ayodhya retires to Nandigrama, enthroning his sandals and ruling in their name

Resumé

Though Bh. is filled with satisfaction that R. at least yielded to his wish to have his sandals rule over the kingdom of Ayodhyā (implicit in 105 passim), he falls back into sad musings at the sight of the desolate, dispirited, lifeless city of Ayodhyā (II 105.23-24; 106). As soon as Bh. arrives at Ayodhyā, he, though still dejected at the prospect of carrying out the kingship without R., is filled with eager determination to immediately set out to Nandigrāma, ready to bear the grief in view of the hope that R. would return one day. The ministers express their admiration at this wonderful gesture of brotherly love. And so he sets out to Nandigrāma with a new, cheerful spirit, a spirit nurtured by the hope of R.’s return. And reverently enthroning the sandals, he rules the kingdom with single-minded dedication as his elder brother’s trust to him, himself living an ascetic life as an expression of his sympathetic grief for the misfortune of his brother, but sustained by a spirit of hope for the day when he would be able to hand over the kingdom to him and serve him like a disciple his guru. (II 107)

VI 113.26—116 passim

Bharata’s hopes are fulfilled
As we meet Bh. again at the end of the Rm., with H. approaching him to intimate to him the good news of R.’s advent and exploits, we still see him reverentially dedicated to the protection of the kingdom in front of the sandals of R., in utter austerity and poverty, devoid of all mirth and amusement, like another Dharma, as it were, incarnate—as a mark of his sympathetic grief for the misfortunes of his separated brother. H.’s message of the good news of R.’s advent, his victory over Rv. and recovery of S., fills him with exuberant joy and gratitude to H. (113.26-43), with eagerness to learn everything from him about what has happened since their departure (114), with a spirit of jubilant exultation that prompts him to get the road from Nandigrāma to Ayodhyā transformed into a road resounding with elephants and the procession of jubilant citizens—going to welcome R. back to Ayodhyā, he himself clad in ascetic dresses, reverentially carrying R.’s sandals on his head and holding a white umbrella and a royal crown in his hands. So eager is Bh.’s longing for R.’s return that, on not seeing R. immediately, he doubts for moment whether H.’s message was not a deceitful Vn. trick. But this doubt is immediately allayed as H. points to the unmistakable signs of the jubilant advent of the Vns.; and as the vimāna approaches and the hosts of citizens, with jubilant shouts, welcome R., Bh., witnessing the happiest moment of his life, bursts out in joy and happiness and expressions of heartfelt affection: There follows a heartfelt affectionate welcome to his dear brother R., to L., S., Su., the Vn. chiefs and all the Vns.; an encomium of praise to Vibhīṣaṇa for his friendship offered to R.; an affectionate ceremony of handing-over the kingdom entrusted to him—expressed in the symbolism of his reverentially fixing the sandals on R.’s feet accompanied by an expression of joy at seeing his hope of meeting his brother again fulfilled and at having, by the grace of R., been able to increase the prosperity of the country ten-fold—an unspoken token of the deepest brotherly love that draws tears of admiration from
the Vns. and Vibhīṣaṇa and makes R. take him on his lap for joy—(115); a reverential expression of gratitude to R. for the honour conferred to his mother and him, and an affectionate admonition to accept the kingdom from his hands, in which he symbolically repeats some of his earlier arguments, now of indubitable value (116.1-11).
A SYNTHETIC VIEW OF THE POET’S CONCEPTION AND PORTRAIT OF BHARATA’S CHARACTER

Conception

The conception of Bh.’s character is conspicuous by its uniformity, so much so that the Bh. we leave behind at the end of the Ayodhyākāṇḍa and the Bh. we meet again at the end of the epic itself, is the very same Bh. throbbing with brotherly love for R. In fact, this is the excelling feature of his character, and so it is but natural that it offers a strongly unifying theme for the presentation of his character. This does not exclude the poet’s use of the pattern of spontaneous improvisation, which, however, is always permeated with that centripetal fraternal spirit of Bh.’s love in some form or other.

Another characteristic in V.’s representation of Bh.’s character is the pattern of unspoken self-revelation. It is true that much of Bh.’s character is unfolded by the poet himself or by other characters or even through his own intimation, yet the unfathomable depth of his personality is brought out not by words and arguments, but by the unspoken self-revelation which Bh. displays in the presentation of his words and arguments to the audience, in the unspoken impression he leaves behind with the audience. It is not the first time that we meet with this pattern. In fact, we have referred to it in the context of several characters, and even where we haven’t it is
often used with unobtrusive delicacy. But perhaps nowhere it is employed with such efficiency and delicacy, at the same time, as in the Bharata-Rāma-saṁvāda. In terms of structure, it is a dialectics of two argumentations, but these two argumentations reveal two unspoken character-portraits, the depth of which is expressed not so much by words, but by the spirit, the heart behind the words. To grasp this spirit in its entirety would mean to identify ourselves with the ideals and aspirations of the audience of the Rm. age themselves. It seems that today we can do that only retrospectively, not any more existentially. But though much water has flown down from the Himālaya since those times, many of those ideals and aspirations are still the same, though perhaps modified in certain aspects, as e.g. R.’s determination to fulfil the word of his father to the point of forbearing the gravest injustice inflicted upon him would certainly no more have that approval and appeal today which it had in that age. Yet in essence, many of these ideals are the same, and so especially the brotherly love displayed by Bh. And thus we are able to re-live that impression which V. must have left on the audience of the Rm. age.

**Portrait**

Bh., son of D. and Kai., is an ideal brother. Śatrughna is his most intimate personal friend, his second self, with whom he is always together wherever he goes, with whom he shares all his joys and sorrows, and to whom he empties his heart whenever it has something to say to him and whatever it has to say. But to no less a degree Bh.’s heart throbs with intimate brotherly affection and self-less love for R. and a deep sympathetic concern for his welfare. Yet this love and concern of Bh.’s is not merely a brotherly love—though the cir-
cumstances will elicit it as the landmark of his character—but a love and concern for all, especially his relatives, his father, his mothers, and so on. The anxiety arising from his encounter with the gruesome dream-visions about his father’s death and the inauspicious omens looming over the city of Ayodhya, the concerned manner in which he inquires from the envoys about the welfare of his relatives and, cutting short his mother’s welcome ceremonies, instantaneously asks her about the whereabouts of his father, the absence of whom makes him restive, shows how Bh., far away from his dear ones, existentially and emotionally identifies himself with the destiny and well-being of his relatives, especially his father; shows the warmth of his attachment, love and concern for them. But Bh. is critical of his mother. He knows her self-conceited, impetuous way of behaviour, and somehow has some subconscious feeling that she is a potential danger to create mischief in the family. But this is only a subconscious, unspoken feeling, and he would never dream of that gruesome heinousness which she will brazenly reveal to him in the name of her love for him. In fact, though by now he has become more and more anxious and concerned about the welfare of his father, he is still hoping that his anxiety is wrong. Nay, he is lulling himself in the joyful expectation that he has been summoned to witness the joyful occasion of his brother’s coronation.

But now he is struck with a series of traumatic shocks coming, as it were, like a series of bolts from the blue, too gruesome not to pierce and stir up his heart—so intimately throbbing with love and so fervently committed to justice. Kai.’s intimation of the death of his father not only throws him down from the heights of hopes and expectations to the depths of grief and agony, but immerses him in disconsolateness as his mind conjures up pathetic memories of the intimacy of his father’s caresses when he was a boy. As Kai., at his request to convey to him father’s last words, alludes to the absence of R., L. and S., and, at his further anxious inquiry,
reveals with concealed exuberance that they have gone as ascetics to the forest, Bh. is taken aback, because—unbelievable though it may appear—such treatment could have been meted out to R. only if he had committed a serious crime. But this thought has not yet fully criss-crossed his mind when Kai. now shakes him a-new, and most dramatically, with the brazen-faced triumphant disclosure of her ghastly act. Already heavily pressed down with grief, his heart now bleeds out with agony and wrath at the visualization of the unbearable grief in which he and all his dear ones, nay the entire kingdom, have been plunged through her boundless heinousness and cruelty. And as he imagines again and again the immeasurable sinfulness and cruelty of her action, by which she, in her boundless greed, has requited R.’s and Ks.’s affectionate treatment of her as a mother and a sister by bereaving Ks. of her only son, an embodiment of virtue and dharma and the dearest friend a mother can have, on account of which she has caused the death of D. and brought unending misery; as he imagines her base misjudgement of his virtuous conduct and affectionate attachment to R., by which she has concurred heart-rending grief and disgrace on him, his agony has transformed itself into blazing ire, embitterment and hatred against his own mother, to an extent that he not only violently renounces her cruel ambition, but, disdainfully defying it, reviles her left and right, almost curses her for all her boundless heinousness, greed and vulgar misjudgement. A symptom of an emotional break-down though it may appear, it is a revelation of his intimate affection and self-less love for his father, brother and his dear ones as well as of his fervent commitment to justice, his righteous anger against the injustice done to his brother by his mother. And prompted by this spirit of brotherly love and justice, he firmly resolves on atoning for it by bringing back R. to glory and himself leading an ascetic life.

But Bh.’s emotional temperament is in upsurge, and the agony and ire resulting from the shock of D.’s death and Kai.’s self-disclosure have engrained themselves deeply in his heart—
so much so that, when Ks. takes a slightly apprehensive attitude as to the purity of his intention, he bitterly takes it to heart and in his determination to prove his innocence, prompted by a feeling of wounded honour, invokes the most maledictory curses on the person who has consented to R.'s banishment, i.e. on himself in case he has desired so, thereby indirectly revealing how his emotional break-down has subconsciously driven him to an upsurge of fury against Kai.; that he is throbbing with feelings of vengeance at Mantharā appearing on the threshold, whom he hands over to his brother Śatrughna to chastise her, and at Kai. as she takes refuge with him, saying that he would not shun from even killing Mantharā or his own mother, were it not out of respect for R.'s spirit of forbearance. Even the well-disposed expectation of the citizens—that he would accept the kingship—drives him, the more it intrudes itself upon him, to agitation outbursts of agony and wounded honour at finding himself insistently encountered by gestures from the citizens that expect from him to pursue (what he thinks to be) a sinful path when he considers himself so fervently committed to the course of righteousness.

As we see Bh. on his way to R., his heart and mind are solely engrossed in thoughts about the well-being of R.—so much so that any occasion which evokes in him an association with R.'s life of austerities becomes a mark-stone of sorrowful concern and heartfelt pity for his misfortune, of remorse and shame that this has been caused on account of him, and of a renewed resolve to free R., L. and S. from these undeserved hardships suffered for his sake and atone for them by undergoing a life of asceticism himself—all this thus revealing a Bh. who is filled with intimate brotherly affection and selfless concern for the welfare of R., with whose sorrows he identifies himself even to the point of denouncing his own life, innocent though he is.

Bh.'s self-abdicating brotherly love for R. reaches its climax in his indefatigable attempt to persuade him to return to
Ayodhya and accept the kingship, which he has been deprived of through the grave injustice and heinous cruelty of queen Kai. As his heart, which is filled with intimate fraternal love and fervent commitment to justice, is still dejected with grief and agitated with righteous anger at those unfortunate happenings and has been left with but one anxious desire, to atone for that cruel action of Kai. and D. and lead back R. to honour and happiness, it is his most intimate concern to inculcate with vigorous persistence upon R. to what grave injustice and heinous cruelty he has fallen victim, for R. is so forbearant, so forgiving, so self-sacrificing that he allows the most atrocious injustice to incur on him without even muttering a word of revolt, allows himself to be deprived of all happiness and honour for no fault of his but for the mischief wrought in his brother’s name. But when R. unflinchingly insists on the rightfulness of D.’s order and his as well as Bh.’s irrevocable duty to follow father’s words, Bh. feels blockaded by R.’s firm resolve as though by an insurmountable barricade. But as this psychological barricade reinforces in him all the more his concern for his brother’s down-trod honour and happiness, he is emotionally driven to a gamut of emotion-ridden, unbalanced, nay, even frantic attempts—reaching the extreme—to instill in him the absurdity of his resolution, till he falls exhausted on R.’s feet, who affectionately takes him on his lap and, assuring him of his competence in protecting the kingdom, reasserts his firm decision. A psychological break-down though it may appear, it is revelation of his tremendous self-sacrificing brotherly love, in which he loses himself so completely, for the well-being of his brother, that he not only wants to make good the wrong done to him for his sake, not only wants to lead back R. to his deserved honour and happiness, but wants to free him from the fetters of that selfless spirit of forbearance and forgiveness which makes him a self-sacrificed victim to the cruelty of others. What Bh. lacks, is not in any way love, but that serene sense for satyadharma, that ideal of putradharma, which is in perfect equanimity towards valueless considerations of worldly attachment and human claims for justice—that characterizes R. Instead, he is of an irascible nature and, once
erupted in flaming righteous ire against the atrocity committed by Kai. and D., his determination to put things right dominates his mind to the extent of obscuring that serene sense of dharma which should be the guiding-line of man in all critical situations. But it is far less, if at all, Bh.'s falling short of the ethical loftiness of R. which the poet wants to highlight, rather it is the extent of his self-sacrificing love for his brother R., which, though by-passing the boundaries of dharma, goes to the last to enforce the restauration of R.'s honour and happiness, which R., in his utterly forgiving spirit, for no fault of his, to no good of his, wants to sacrifice.

As Bh. sets out to Nandigrāma in utter austerity and poverty as a mark of his emotional distress and pity for his brother, but spiritually sustained by a spirit of hope for the day of R.'s glorious return, and rules the kingdom, paying reverential obeisance to the sandals of R.; as he, prompted by a spirit of exultation, leads a jubilant procession to welcome R., himself wearing ascetic dresses and reverentially carrying R.'s sandals on his head, and so eagerly yearns for R.'s coming that, as he does not see R. immediately, he for a moment doubts the sincerity of H.'s message; as he extends his heartfelt, affectionate welcome to him and his dear ones; as he affectionately fixes the sandals on R.'s feet and intimates to him his joy at the fulfilment of his hope of seeing him again and at having, by the blessing of R., been able to increase the prosperity of the country ten-fold; as he reverentially expresses his gratitude to him for the honour conferred on him and his mother and affectionately admonishes him to accept the kingdom from his hands—-it is all a panegyric of brotherly love (bhrātrvātsalya, bhrātrśauhṛda), of which Bh. is the very embodiment; a brotherly love that is unspokenly and spokenly intimated by the poet himself and acknowledged with exultant words by Bharadvāja and his councillors and with tears of admiration by the Vns. and Vibhiśaṇa—

\[
\text{tathā bruvaṇaṁ bharataṁ dṛṣṭvā taṁ bhrātrvatsalam} \\
mumucurvānārā bāṣpaṁ rākṣasaśca vibhiśaṇaḥ ∥,
\]
and is evoked and praised by L. with pathetic images, images which come to his mind as he describes to R. the spell of the winter season (III 15, latter part); images which fill R. with sadness and homesickness on envisaging the boundless love of Bh. for him:

\[
\text{nīṣcitāpi hi me buddhirvanavāse dṛṇhavrataḥ} \\
\text{bharatasnehasantaptā bāliśikriyate punah} \quad //36—,
\]
a homesickness which, with his victory accomplished, grows so passionate that he even declines Vibhīṣaṇa's offering of a luxurious bath, saying (s.109):

\[
\text{sa tu tāmyatī dharmātmā mama hetoḥ sukhocitaḥ} \\
\text{sukumāro mahābhāhuḥ kumāraḥ satyaśravah} \quad //5 \\
\text{tāṁ vinā kaikeyiputraṁ bharatam dharmacāriṇam} \\
\text{na me snānaṁ bahumatam vastrāṇyābharanāṁ ca} \quad //6
\]
as also his invitation to stay for one more day, for:

\[
\text{tāṁ tu me bhrātaram draṣṭum bharataṁ tvarat e manah} \quad //17 \\
\text{māṁ nivartayituṁ yo' suo citrakūṭamūpagataṁ} \\
\text{śirasā yācato yasya vacanam na kṛtaṁ maya} \quad //18
\]

1 M. K. Venkatarama Iyer in his article "Bharata", KK 27,209-214; 233-238, pp. 210-213 has given a lot of space to the discussion of Bh.'s unreserved reproach of Kai. and drawn his own conclusions from it. We quote:

"....................It may be granted that there is a tendency for most people to use words indiscriminately under a grave provocation. Such lapses may be excused in ordinary people. But Bharata is not of this sort. He comes of a noble family. Decency and restraint are the hallmarks of true nobility. What else is the effect of culture if it is not restraint especially in the use of language? ...... One's mother, merely because she is the mother, has to be honoured and worshipped. Instead Bharata pours curses on her head. After all, what was her offence? She had interceded with her husband to get the throne for her son. Such intercessions are not unknown in history. Even political murders have taken place as part of court-intrigue. Kaikeyī had done nothing of that kind. On a previous occasion her husband had granted her two boons. He had given her the liberty to put any content into them and ask for their fulfilment at a future time. In the exercise of
this privilege she had demanded the throne for her son and the exile of Rāma that there might be no trouble for the former. What was wrong in all this? Daśaratha could not go back on the promise he had made. No honourable man can repudiate his plighted word. Whatever the consequence and however unpleasant it may be, it had to be carried out in a spirit of resignation. All that Bharata could have said was that the situation was most unfortunate. Or he could have mildly protested at the turn of events which she brought about. She could not even be accused of error of judgement. She knew her mind and, as a mother, insisted on the promise being fulfilled. Bharata’s rage therefore is without any justification ....

If there is little justification for the language that Bharata used under provocation, there is even less for the way in which he speaks of his mother to the messengers and later to Sage Bharadvāja ... Let us remember that Bharata had not then heard of any of the events that had taken place in Ayodhya. Let us also remember that he had been separated from his mother for twelve long years. On seeing the messengers from Ayodhya what would one naturally expect him to say about his mother? Would we not expect him to make kind inquiries about her and exhibit a desire to see her? Is it not rather unnatural to use offensive language against one’s own mother, especially when one has not seen her for a fairly long time? And again, look at the way he introduces her to Sage Bharadvāja ... Look at the number of adjectives! Is there any need for them, now that she has repented? Though she did not openly put it, still there was clear proof that she has realized her folly and felt sorry for what she had done. She had joined the party which was proceeding to Chitrakoot to bring back Rāma to Ayodhya. The poet also tells us that she made common cause with Kausalyā and Sumitrā and journeyed in the same carriage with them. What clearer proof do we require to know that a change of heart had come upon her? When one has repented, there must be an end of the matter. All bitterness must be clean forgotten. But from the manner in which Bharata refers to her, he gives the impression of one who is nourishing a grievance. It looks as if he has a rooted prejudice and an implacable hatred against his mother. Even if she had not repented, he should have interceded on her behalf, put in a kind word in her favour and tried to present her in as acceptable manner as possible. This is all the more necessary when we are introducing a sinner to a sage whose benediction we all seek. Bharata’s ill-treatment of his mother, we fear, is inexcusable and bound to remain a blot in his
otherwise immaculate character. Rāma is aware of this and hence solemnly advises him at the end of the meeting at Chitrakoot to use his mother with consideration. ‘Treat your mother properly. Don’t be angry towards her. Sītā and I lay this oath on you.’ (II.CXII. 31) He gave also a practical lesson to reinforce this precept. When he took leave of the queens, Rāma took special care to offer his obeisance to Kaikeyī. The plural (Sarvāḥ) in II.CXII.31 is intended to convey this idea. Bharata also appears to be aware of this defect in his nature. He tells Rāma that he refrained from killing his mother and Mantharā because of the fear that he would go down in his estimation. But for this wholesome fear, Bharata would possibly have committed more cruel deeds.”

**Critical comments:** Iyer’s unpardoning attitude towards Bharata’s ill-treatment of his mother is based on the mistake of playing too high the formal aspect of Bh.’s disrespect towards his mother, while ignoring, without admitting it, the psychological shock which Kai.’s brazen-faced disclosure of her heinous act has on Bh., who is so full of brotherly love that he would give his everything to R. and so fervent in his commitment to justice that it would be his last thought to do any wrong to anybody, but who, instead, hears the unbelievable news that she has inflicted upon his brother the most cruel injustice, and that for his sake and in his name, and envisages the misery over misery that has been concurred on his relatives. It is true that the poet also designs to depict this emotional upsurge in Bh. as a weakness of his character, which makes him fall short of the loftiness of R.’s serene dedication to dharma, but he allows this weakness of his to be drowned in the waves of his nobility of brotherly love. Iyer’s playing down of Kai.’s heinousness looks as if he were R. himself. But though V. fully agrees with R.’s firm resolve on adhering to dharma and his reasons for doing so, he does not agree with the way he, in his spirit of forbearance and filial respect, wipes off the sinfulness of her act and attributes it to fate; i.e. he agrees with R.’s spirit of forbearance and his respect for Kai, as a mother in so far as it motivates his personal determination to fulfil his filial duty by obeying the word of his father and actualizing the boon promised to Kai., but not in the sense of an objective acquitted of Kai.’s guilt. Not at all so. Iyer then goes on saying that, if there is little justification for the language that Bh. uses under provocation, there is even less for the way in which he speaks of his mother to the messengers and Bharadvāja. Here Iyer again makes the mistake of not reckoning the psychological upsurges going on in Bharata, which are more forcefully thrown into relief by the poet than Bharata’s disrespect towards his mother, which too is purported, but not for its own merit. It is highly doubtful whether the poet meant Kai. to have under-
gone a change of heart. Rather, as she had played her role and had no other option than to accept Bh.'s decision, the poet prescinds from any further characterization of her. And the reference that Kai. joins Ks. and Sumitrā on Bh.'s journey to R., for Iyer an unmistakable proof of her change of heart, has no special bearing.
LAKSMANA
A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER-PORTRAYAL OF LAKSMANA

Prelude

The vistas of L.'s character are beautifully opened up as the poet, while introducing for the first time the four sons of D., describes the intimate attachment and affection budding forth between L. and R. from their very childhood days. The poet says:

"From childhood L., the enhancer of beauty, was always greatly attached to his elder brother R., the delight of the world, doing all service to that R. of his by his own body. L., endowed with beauty, was another life of his outside himself, and without him that best of man does not obtain sleep, without him he does not eat savoury food offered to him. Whenever Rāghava, mounted on horse, goes for hunting, he follows behind his back, protecting him with his bow."

This is a prelude to the whole perspective of L. as an intimately loving and loyal brother and guardian of R.—to be unfolded in the course of the epic. In fact, a later interpolator has pushed back this perspective into the boyhood days of the princes in his insertion of the Viśvāmitra-yātrā, where L. gives silent witness to his brotherly attachment and affection for R. by accompanying him on his journey with Viśvāmitra.

Another silent testimony is expressed by the poet himself
when he makes R. intimate the happy news of his installation to Ks., who with Sumitrā, S. and L. is engrossed in prayers for his welfare, and then express this sentiment to his brother: II 4.43-44—

lakṣmaṇemāṁ mayā sārdhaṁ praśādhi tvam vasundharaṁ |
dvitiyāṁ me'ntarātmānaṁ tvāmiyāṁ śīrūpasthitā ||43
saunitra bhuṅkṣya bhogāṃstvamiśṭānāryaphalāni ca ||
jīvitaṁ ca hi rājyaṁ ca tvadarthamabhikāmaye ||44

II 16.56
II 18.1-5;32-37
II 19-20

Lakṣmaṇa in flaming ire for his brother

Translation

(II 16.56) Behind him followed L., the enhancer of the joy of Sumitrā, exceedingly enraged, his eyes filled with tears.

(II 18.1-5) As that mother of R. was thus lamenting, L., being distressed, said these words fit for the occasion (1)—“It does not please me either, O honoured lady, that Rāghava should go into the forest, leaving the glory of the kingdom, under the influence of the words of a woman. (2) What will the king, who is perverse, old and overpowered by the senses, not say, being impelled and filled with passion? (3) I do not see any fault of his nor such blame by which Rāghava should be expelled from the kingdom to stay in the forest. (4) Nor do I see any man in the
world who even behind his back, be it even an enemy or one who has been cast out, would name any vice of his. (5) Who, regarding dharma, can abandon a son almost equal to the Gods, straight-forward, self-controlled, dear even to the enemies, without reason? (6) Which son remembering the custom of the kings would take to heart such words of a king who has reverted into childishness? (7) As long as no one knows this end and aim, bring the government under your charge together with me. (8) Who is able to overpower you—concealed by me, with my bow at your side and standing there like Death? (9) I shall bereave this whole city of Ayodhyā, O foremost of men, of all human beings with my sharp arrows if it should stand in offence. (10) Whoever there is a partisan of Bh. or wishes his benefit, all these I will slay, for a man who is gentle is defeated. (11) Engaged with both you and me in unexcelled hostility, who has the power to confer the majesty of the kingdom to Bh.? (12) I am truly devoted with all my heart to my brother, O queen, and I promise you, by truth and the bow that has been given to me and is dear to me (13): If R. enters blazing fire or the forest, know me, O queen, to have entered there before. (14) By my heroism, I dispel your grief as the risen sun dispels darkness. Let the queen see, and also Rāghava see, my heroism.” (15)

(18.32-37) Having thus spoken to that mother of his, he spoke again to L.—“I know, O L., your unsurpassed love for me without your being aware of the inner meaning of truth and peace. (32) For dharma is the highest in the world, in dharma truth is firmly rooted, on dharma rests this excellent word of father. (33) One who adheres to dharma and stands firm by it, O hero, must not, when he hears the word of his father or mother or a Brāhmaṇa, frustrate it. (34) So I cannot transgress the order of my father, for it is on the word of my father that I have been directed by Kai., O hero. (35) Abandon this ignoble idea
resorting to kṣatradharma and resort to (satya-) dharma; let not your thought for me be subjected to rudeness (cruelty).”(36) Having thus spoken to that brother of his out of affection (goodheartedness), the elder brother of L. again spoke to Ks., with folded hands and bowed head.(37)

(19) Then that self-possessed R., approaching that good- hearted beloved brother of his, Saumitri, who was distressed on account of anguish and exceedingly indignant, sighing like a lordly snake, as it were, with his eyes gleaming with rage, spoke to him these words, restraining his natural disposition with firmness (1-2).—“Let, O Saumitri, that zeal of making preparations for the sake of my consecration be a zeal of making preparations for the sake of its abolition.(3) See to it that that mother of ours, whose mind is set on fire with regard to my consecration, be not filled with apprehension. (4) I cannot even for a moment overlook the sorrow produced in her mind as a result of her apprehension, O Saumitri.(5) I do not remember here ever to have done even a minute offence, wilfully or unwilfully, to my mothers or to father.(6) Let my father, of true prowess, ever truthful and loyal to his promise, who is frightened by the fear of the next world, be freed from fear.(7) For if this activity is not withdrawn, there will be mental agony to him because he does not obtain truthfulness, and his agony will pain me.(8) That’s why, O L., I, immediately after curbing the execution of my consecration, wish to go from here to the forest again.(9) Having obtained her object after my going to exile today, the princess will then consecrate her son Bh. free of agitation.(10) When I have gone to the forest, wearing bark-garments and deer-skin and a mass of matted hair, Kai. will obtain happiness of mind.(11) I shall also not annoy that well-concentrated mental power by which this intention of hers has been evoked. I shall go into exile, let there be no delay.(12) But fate only, O
Saumitri, has to be considered responsible for my banishment and return of my kingdom conferred on me. (13) For how could Kai have an intention to inflict pain on me if there did not exist that daiva (unseen destiny) inspired by Fate? (14) For you know, my good sir, that neither did I make any difference between my mothers before nor did she make any special distinction between me and her son. (16) How can that princess, endowed with good nature and possessed of such qualities, talk, like a vulgar woman, such abuse to me in the presence of my brother? (17) That daiva is unthinkable and cannot be warded off from beings is evident, for calamity has befallen me and her. (18) Which man, O Saumitri, can fight with daiva, of which there seems to be no comprehension except by its effect? (19) If somebody is subjected to grief and sorrow, fear and anger, gain and loss, birth and death, are things of such nature not the work of daiva? (20) Even though my consecration has been obstructed, I have no anguish; therefore, do also you follow me in being free from anguish: Let the activities for my consecration be quickly withdrawn. (21) Let not, O L., my younger mother be too much distrusted for this obstruction of my kingship, for in speaking unfavourably she has been subjected by daiva; you know daiva and its corresponding power. (22)

(2) But L., having listened for some time with downcast head while R. was speaking thus, revolved in his mind between grief and joy. (1) But then, knitting a frown between his eye-brows, that best of man sighed like a big snake in a cave, filled with rage. (2) His face then, marked by that knitting of his eye-brows, was hard to look at, resembling the face of an angry lion. (3) Vibrating his fingertips like an elephant his trunk, and moving his neck alternately to the left and right, up and down (4), and looking with straight eyes, he spoke to his brother in shanting direction—“It is unnatural if somebody has such great fear out of consideration for a violation of dharma and not out of great fear of the
people; how can a man, free of agitation like you, speak such things? (5-6) Since daïva is powerless, why then do you, a powerful Kṣatriya, praise wretched, mightless daïva? (7) How is it that you have no fear of those two sinners? They are opportunists feigning righteousness; don’t you, being possessed of righteousness, realize this? (8) That the consecration of another than you has been designed, is odious to the people. That dharma by which, O king, this power of discernment (judgment) of yours has come into conflict, such a dharma is odious to me, for the consideration of which you lose consciousness of mind. (9) Even if your course of action is due to daïva, and their intention also, it nevertheless does not please me that you should consider it. (10) He who is timid and devoid of heroism resorts to daïva; those who are esteemed as heroic do not care for their daïva. (11) He who is able to overcome daïva by his manliness, such a man, if he is deprived of his prosperity by fate, does not become disheartened. (12) But today they will see the power of daïva and of man, today the distinction between daïva and manliness will be clear. (13) Today people will see daïva destroyed by the power of my manliness, since today your installation into the kingdom appears to be thwarted on account of daïva. (14) Today I shall drive away daïva by my manliness after assaulting it like an uncontrol- lable furious elephant, exerted by the vigour of rut. (15) Neither all the kings of the world nor all the three worlds can obstruct your consecration, R.; how much less your father. (16) Those by whom your exile in the forest has been secretly designed shall likewise stay for fourteen years in the forest. (17) I shall pierce that hope of your father and of that lady, who aspires the kingship of her son, by obstructing your consecration. (18) To a person who opposes my strength there will not be daivabala to that extent to which my fierce (formidable) pauruṣa will conduce to his pain. (19) Later, at the end of a thousand years, your sons will then, in your succession, carry out the kingship when you have gone to stay in the forest. (20) Accor-
ding to the custom of former rājarṣis, vanavāsa is performed after consigning the subjects to one’s sons to look after them like sons.(21) If you do not wish the kingdom on you, O virtuous R., because of fear of agitation in the kingdom due to our father, who is perplexed (22), I promise you, O hero, let me not attain the world of heroes. I shall protect the kingdom like the shore the ocean.(23) Get yourself consecrated with auspicious rites, be engaged there; I alone will, by my strength, be able to subdue the kings.(24) These arms are not meant for beauty, my bow is not meant for ornamentation, my sword is not meant for tying, my arrows are not meant to be motionless.(25) This whole collection of four weapons is meant for the subjugation of enemies, and I am not very much fond of him who is considered my enemy.(26) With my sword stretched forward—with its sharp edge and moving with the brilliance of lightning, I care neither for an enemy nor for the “wielder of the thunderbolt”.(27) The earth will be impenetrable and impassable on account of elephants, horses and men’s arms, thighs and heads pulverized by the onslaught of my sword.(28) ...[further pugnacious assertions in this style]. Today these two arms, worthy of the most excellent sandal-paste, of putting on armlets, of distributing wealth and protecting friends, will perform their duty, O R., in subduing the obstructers of your consecration.(34) Tell me which enemy of yours shall be severed by me today from his life, fame and friends; order me that this earth shall be under your power; I am your servant.”(35) Having wiped off his tears and consoled him again and again, the enhancer of the glory of th Rāghava dynasty, honoured L. and said—“Know me to be firmly resolved on the word of father, for this, my good sir, is she path of truth.”(36)
See s. v. Kausalyā.

Analysis of characterization

1) Structural analysis of the argumentation (in the light of a philosophical understanding)

—L. reacts to R.’s heroic response to Kai.’s intimation of D.’s (imposed-upon) consent to her boon with anger and grief.

Saṁvāda 1

—L., hearing Ks.’s heart-rending lamentation resulting from the traumatic shock of R.’s announcement of his banishment, feels an urge to console Ks., thereby giving an outlet to his impatience at the unwarranted injustice behind the order of D.:

D.’s decision to banish his own son, who is an embodiment of virtue and beloved by the whole world, is, as the product of perverse infatuation, utterly unwarranted, unjust (against dharma) and atrocious on the part of a father.

He appeals to R. to take charge of the kingdom by He acknowledges the boundless love of L. for him, but characterizes it as somewhat shallow since it does not possess the depth of truth and peace. (This is not a judgement about the shallowness of L.’s love as such, but an attempt to steer it in the right direction by making him aware of its shortcomings)
force under the auspices of him, who will shield him like Death and, unassailable by anybody, will root out whoever should try to obstruct him.

By the loyal devotion and love he cherishes for his brother, he is prompted to promise Ks. that he will do everything, will engage his whole prowess to restore justice to her son and dispel her sorrows, and if he (R.) should enter fire or the forest, he will do so before him.

There is nothing higher in the world than dharma, truth itself is rooted in dharma. Obedience to the word of father is dharma par excellence.

It is on the word of his father that he has been directed by Kai. to go to the forest. It is therefore his irreversible dharma to follow this order. On the other hand, L. should, in his over-concern for him, not allow himself to be subjugated by the vanity of kṣatradharma, which aspires for justice with a concern for one's own welfare at the cost of inflicting cruelty on others, but resort to satyadharma, which aspires for righteousness for the sake of truth and goodness and peace, with equanimity about one's own welfare.

Śaṁvāda

L., while listening to R.'s argumentation, for a while oscillates between grief and joy, but at the end cannot help revealing his extreme anger, impatience and mental conflict—going on in his heart—in external bodily manifestations:

After once more entreating Ks. to allow him to go to the forest, R. turns again to L., who is beside himself with anger and anguish, moved by his good-hearted affection for him, but restraining his natural disposition:
A behaviour that is based on a meticulous fear not to violate dharma and not on fear of the people is unnatural. A behaviour that resorts to daiva as an irresistible power is a sign of timidity and lack of heroism, for daiva is absolutely powerless and needs to be suppressed by manliness (for it is man who creates his daiva and therefore also has power to control, overcome and destroy it by creating a new daiva).

By resorting to daiva to explain Kai’s intention, R. sanctions the heinous sinfulness of D. and Kai., who but feign righteousness, but are sinful opportunists; by this he has lost all power of discernment, and if he calls that dharma, a dharma that is the product of heinous injustice in the name of daiva that turns the most virtuous into the most miserable while it makes the most evil ones prosper, such a dharma is odious to him. Even if R.’s course of action and D.’s and Kai.’s intention were due to daiva, it is L.’s duty to cancel the preparations for his consecration, so that mother Kai should not be subjected to grief on account of apprehension and father D. may be freed from mental agony—arising from the non-realization of his promise—thoughts which would pain his heart to the core.

It is for this reason only that he is so keen on immediately leaving for the forest that Kai may be able to install Bh. and obtain happiness of mind.

It is not expedient to him to reprove that power which evoked this intention in her mind.

For it is daiva that has induced Kai’s mind with the evil intention to banish him and install her own son, otherwise it is unthinkable how Kai., who has ever been treated by him like his own mother and has ever treated him like his own son, a queen endowed with good nature and good qualities, should all of a sudden conduct herself like a vulgar woman using abusing language to him in the presence of his brother. [In his good faith, so the poet wants to say, he forgets the sinful, ambitious nature of
such a daiva has to be overcome with manliness by one who wants to heroically stand up to life and not allow himself to be wretchedly crushed by the wheels of daiva.

It is manliness (pauruṣa) that controls daiva and not daiva that controls manliness.

Coming more and more under the impulse of a flaming ire and anguish for his brother, L. now indulges in bombastic, bragging assertions that he will give witness to the destruction of daiva by his pauruṣa, vowing death to those who attempt to obstruct R.’s installation, vengeance on those who have aspired his exile and firm protection to R. under the unassailable shield of his guardianship as his humble servant. (In between he advises R. to take up vanavāsa life after entrusting the kingdom to the care of his sons as it is the custom of the former rājarṣis).

Kai., as the prime cause for her cruel design]
There is no better proof than the fact that calamity has befallen both him and her that the activity of daiva is incomprehensible, of unknown mysterious origin, manifesting itself but in states of grief and sorrow, fear and anger, gain and loss, birth and death, and therefore is uncontrollable and irresistible.

Therefore he has no reason to be filled with grief in accepting his destiny, and so also L. should not be filled with anguish for him, but should see to the cancellation of the preparations for his consecration and contribute to the satisfaction of Kai., who has been subjected by the incomprehensible power of daiva.

R., after wiping off with brotherly affection L.’s tears and consoling him, re-
affirms his firm resolve on following the words of his father, for this is the path of truth.

2) An ethico-psychological evaluation of the saṁvāda and explicitation of the character-portrait drawn by the poet

An ethical evaluation of the saṁvāda seems to be inevitably linked up with the interpretation of the author’s stand in regard to the debate of R. and L. from an ethical point of view. For only then can we clearly evaluate the merits of the arguments and explain the psychological dispositions behind the different outlooks. But an interpretation of the poet’s identity (as in all other such cases in the Rm.) can be acquired only by an insight into his mind, which, in turn, is possible only by an intuition into the impression, ethical impression in this case, produced on the audience. But the problem is not so difficult as it appears. For, as R. is the ideal character in the epic, the author will almost totally agree with him except for a few minor aspects of his character. So the inquiry into the identity of the poet with regard to R. and L.’s views can be re-formulated as an inquiry into how far V. prefers to agree with L. instead of with R.—from an ethical point of view. The answer is: R., blinded by his unflinching commitment to satyadharma and the loftiness of his filial respect for Kai., tends to sanction Kai.’s heinous deed as the effect of an incomprehensible and irresistible daiva, rather than to attribute it to her sinful ambition. But even then it is nothing but a gesture of nobility if R. gives such an interpretation, for—so the poet wants to say—as a loyal son it is in any case his invariable duty to fulfil Kai.’s direction since it has the rightful sanction of his father and it is not his concern to peep into her motivation even though that direction puts him into great misfortune. But
if his mother Kai. does make demands of him which are, though lawful, of such a grossly injurious nature and evoke such terrible repugnance in L., he does not distrust her; does not think bad of her; but, as it is worthy of a respectful son of good faith, who always thinks the best of his parents, he considers that this must have its own reason; considers that, as it reveals such a staggering transformation in Kai., whom he has always treated like his own mother and who has always treated him like her own son, it is nothing but daiva, of incomprehensible, mysterious efficacy, that has induced her mind with this injurious intention. Thus, by resorting to daiva to explain Kai.’s intention, R. only manifests his noble respect for Kai. as a mother. And V. agrees with R.’s recourse to the efficacy of daiva to explain Kai.’s transformation and to defend his determination to follow her direction sanctioned by father’s words in as much as his attitudes bears witness to the nobility of his filial regard for Kai. as a mother and enhances his spirit of forbearance; motivates him in his unflinching resolve to fulfil his sonly duty and so motivates him to make true the boon promised by D. to Kai., to fulfil father’s debt and the desire of of his mother Kai. V. does, however, not agree with R.’s attitude in as far as it tends to absolve Kai. of all her guilt. The poet does reserve the judgement of Kai.’s character to himself and he reveals it by directly exposing her character to the audience or allowing certain other characters to speak in his own intention.

Considered from a psychological point of view, the Laksmaṇa-Rāma-saṁvāda is a reflection first and foremost of two different concerns, of R.’s concern to fulfil the word of his father, which for him is dharma par excellence, and L.’s concern for R. as a victim of heinous ambition and perverse infatuation. While R.’s concern shows itself as of a serene, self-possessed nature, as of complete equanimity about his own welfare and as devoted solely to a dharma that aspires for righteousness for the sake of truth and goodness, L.’s concern
is highly emotional, for he sees his brother accept an order that plunges him into the greatest misery and dishonour and is the product of grave injustice, shameless deceit and perverse infatuation, as his irrevocable dhārma and the result of an incomprehensible fate. While R.’s concern thus mirrors the very depth of his character, L.’s concern reflects the psychology of his selfless brotherly affection and love as well as a mentality of his own in viewing dhārma, a mentality perhaps more engrained in him than that of Bh., which is but a spontaneous emotional outflow of his heart throbbing with love for R., but has not that rigid character of an ideology as in the case of L.

R. is, to the core of his heart, committed to satyadhārma, that is, to a dhārma that aspires for righteousness for the sake of truth, goodness and peace (sama), with no concern about one’s own welfare, in a spirit of utmost selflessness and forbearance towards whatever injustice done to one. Obedience to the word of one’s father is for him the testimony par excellence of satyadhārma. Now that he has been given an instruction by Kai. to go to the forest, an instruction that has been rightfully sanctioned by his father, it is his lawful duty and filial concern to give prompt witness to his obedience to the word of his father—the par-excellence-expression of dhārma—by fulfilling his father’s promise to Kai. and so freeing him from all mental agony arising from the non-realization of his promise, as well as to express his filial respect for Kai. as a mother by fulfilling her desire and conduce to her happiness by freeing her from all fear arising from any possible apprehension. An expression of R.’s unflinching commitment to dhārma, symbolized by his lofty homage to the word of his father, as well as an expression of his great magnanimity, symbolized by his filial respect for Kai. as a mother—-it is, in other words, an expression of the most sublime and selfless filial love a son can give witness to in a spirit of total self-sacrifice and forbearance towards any injustice done to him; a most sublime
expression, thus, of the ideal of putradharma. In this sublime, serene, selfless devotion to the word of father—as the par-excellence-expression of dharma—R., in his selfless spirit of forbearance, not only bears all the misfortune concurred on him and all the heinous cruelty done to him, not only abjures all considerations of kṣatradharma as considerations rooted in a dharma of vanity which aspires for justice with a selfish concern at the cost of inflicting cruelty on others, but, reluctant to think anything bad of Kai. as a mother, though painfully aware and forcefully made aware so by L. of the stunningly cruel design of her as well as of the stunning transformation she has undergone in relation to her treatment of him as a son, attributes, what actually is the result of Kai.'s heinous ambition and shameless cunning, to the incomprehensible and irresistible efficacy of daiva—a consideration which, in turn, enhances his spirit of forbearance and so consolidates him and further motivates him in his personal decision to fulfil his sonly duty. Last but not least, when R. exposes all these views to L., who is throbbing with rage, he does it not merely in self-defence, but much more as an expression of his loving concern that realizes the best of his brother though it needs to reject his plea—overflowing with brotherly affection and sympathetic anxiety for him, a concern that wants to direct L.'s boundless love in the right direction by making him aware of its shortcomings. The poet gives ample evidence to show how R. acknowledges his deep love with great affection, how he tries again and again to console him sympathetically, how he even wipes off his tears; and at one place the poet purports to say of R. that, as he turned to L. to console him, he was so moved by his good-heartedness that he had to restrain his natural disposition with firmness.

L.'s grief-ridden, fury-and-vengeance-breathing appeal to R. to revolt against the unwarranted, unjust and atrocious decision by D. to banish him—to which he diverts his full argumentation—and to take charge of the kingdom by force under his auspices, vowing, with bragging assertions, destruction to
those who should attempt to obstruct R.'s installation and assuring him firm protection under the unassailable shield of his power—-is a revelation of the psychology of his over-flowing brotherly affection and selfless love for R., a love that, losing itself completely in the heart of his brother, is filled with concern about the atrocious injustice inflicted upon his brother, whose blind spirit of forbearance ties him with the fetters of a dharma that, depriving him of his power of right judgement, makes him the victim of the heinous cruelty of others. And it is a revelation of a deeply engrained mentality of kṣatradharma, of an ideology of a dharma which aspires not for righteousness for the sake of truth, goodness and peace, but aspires for equity and justice under all circumstances, at all costs, even that of inflicting injury on others. Yet this mentality is very much the emotional outflow of his sympathetic brotherly concern for R., whom he sees plunged into misery for no fault of his; the traumatic eruption of an emotional tenderheartedness blended with an inborn natural irascibility and ire for righteousness. His attachment to R. is of so tender a nature that he cannot bear the thought of such humiliating injustice inflicted upon his brother, that he cannot but feel impelled to engage his whole self (and promise this to Ks., with whose heart-rending grief he identifies himself) to save R. from the clutches of Kai.'s heinous ambition and D.'s perverse infatuation, to which he, in his blind forbearance, has fallen a victim. And when R. insists on the unchallengable sublimity of satyadharma and the word of father as its par-excellence-expression and denounces the vanity of kṣatradharma and, challenged by L.'s eye-opening reminder of Kai.'s humiliating treatment of him, resorts to daiva to explain her injurious design and moral transformation, he cannot but revolt against such blind forbearance that robs R. of his power of discernment and strings him with the fetters of a dharma which makes him the victim of heinous injustice in the name of a daiva that turns the most virtuous into the most miserable, while it makes the most evil ones prosper; he cannot but inculcate upon him the demoralizing effect of a doctrine that fails to help man
stand up to life with courage and manliness and pays homage to the incomprehensible and irresistible efficacy of *daiva*; and cannot but express his urge to demonstrate to him personally the utter invalidity of *daiva* before *pauruṣa*. It is this flaming brotherly concern—urging him to dispel all the fanciful imaginations of *dharma* and *daiva* that invariably hold in check R.’s mind and rob him of his realistic evaluation of the heinous injustice inflicted upon him—and this flaming righteous ire—urging him to restore justice and honour to his brother—that drive him to furious proclamations of destruction to those who should attempt to obstruct R.’s installation and vengeance to those who have aspired his exile—while he promises firm protection to R. as his unassailable protector and humble servant. And the poet ends by alluding to R. as wiping off his brother’s tears and consoling him while re-affirming his firm resolve on fulfilling the word of his father since this is the path of truth—a silent depiction of the emotional tenderness of L.’s brotherly attachment, a tenderness of heart which has erupted with grief and agony as sudden and traumatic as a bolt from the blue, has surged up into a violent storm of fury and vengeance add ebbed away into a depression of sorrow and distress.

*Lakṣmana a loyal brother and guardian of Rama*

II 28

*Lakṣmana’s desire to share Rama’s destiny and serve and guard him as a loyal brother*
When L. too requested R. to allow him to go with him to the forest, R. said to him—“Who will sustain Ks. and Sumitṛā? The king, who showered the earth with pleasures, has been subdued by the fetters of pleasure. And so Kai., as soon as she has obtained the kingdom, will treat her co-wives with disrespect, and they will be filled with sorrow.” To this L. answered—“No doubt Bh. will treat Ks. and Sumitṛā with honour, and Ks., who possesses thousands of villages, will be able to maintain thousands like me. I shall go before you, showing you the way, with bow and arrows, pick-axe and basket in my hands. I shall always bring you fruits, roots and other ascetic eatables. You will sport with Vaidehī on mountain ridges; I shall do everything for you whether you are awake or asleep.” R. then, with delighted heart, asked him to take leave of his friends, to bring him his foremost weapons, distribute his wealth to the Brāhmaṇas, ascetics, etc. and fetch Suyajña, the son of Vasiśṭha [detailed description].

Analysis of characterization

Though L.’s fraternal love and concern has impelled him to express his revolt against R.’s blind forbearance which makes him the victim of cruel injustice and heinous ambition and though this consideration has deeply engrafted itself into his heart and will erupt again in critical situations— — Sumantra conveys to the king L.’s bitter accusation against him (II 52.18-22), and when Indrajit beheads magic S., L., in utter despair on seeing his brother losing heart, violently denounces the validity of dharma (see below)— —, it is this same maternal love and concern which, as he realizes R.’s unflinching firmness and witnesses the sublime devotion and loyalty of S., prompts him with the impatient desire, even
to the point of trivializing the question of a possible harassment of Ks. and Sumitā by Kai., to follow R., leaving behind father, mother and everything dear to him, and share his destiny, to engage his whole self in alleviating his hardships and contribute to his happiness by serving and guarding him with unflagging devotion.

II 35.4-8

Sumitra's parting advice to Laksmana — a symbol of Laksmana's character

Translation

His mother, desirous of his welfare, said to powerful L., her son, as he was taking her leave, after smelling his head, filled with tears (4)— "Though attached to your friends, you are sent forth to stay in the forest. Don't show any inattention, O son, to your brother as he goes to exile. (3) Whether he be in adversity or prosperity, he is your refuge, O faultless one. This is the dharma of the virtuous in this world that one should be obedient to one's elder brother. (6) For this is the eternal law of the family: generosity, dedication, sparing no effort in sacrifices and battles. (7) Regard R. like D., Jñakī like me, the forest like Ayodhyā; go, my dear, in peace. (8)

Analysis of characterization

Though being the exhortation of a loving mother to her
departing son, this passage is no less a symbol of L.’s sublime fraternal devotion to his elder brother R., to which he will give witness throughout his stay together with him in the forest: He will serve and guard R. with unswerving devotion, in accordance with the dharma of the virtuous and the age-old practice of the family. He will consider him his refuge in adversity and prosperity. He will be to him like a son unto a father and to S. like a son unto a mother.

Great moments in which Laksmana bears witness to his loyal fraternal devotion and guardianship

Resumé

We see implicit and silent testimonies of L.’s fraternal devotion all over the Rm.:

in the way the poet describes his dedicated services in the forest— —a beautiful testimony of which is e.g. III 14.6-7—
evamuktastu rāmeṇa laksmanaḥ samyatāṇjaliḥ/
sūtasamakṣaṁ kākutsthamidaṁ vacanamabravit ///6
paravānasmi kākutstha tvayī varṣāṣataṁ sthite /
svayam tu rucire deśe kriyatāmiti māṁ vada ///7—
and R.’s acknowledgement, 14.24-27—
sa taṁ dṛṣṭvā kṛtam saumyamāśramam saha sītayā /
rāghavaḥ parasāśāhyāṁ harṣamāhārayatparam ///24
susanīḥṛṣṭaḥ parisvajya bāhubhyāṁ laksmaṇaṁ tadā /
atisnigdham ca gāḍhaṁ ca vacanam cedamabravit ///25
pritoḥsmi te mahat karma tvayā kṛtamiḍaṁ prabho /
pradeyo yannimittan te parisvaṅgo mayā kṛtaḥ ///26
bhāvajñena kṛtajñena dharmajñena ca laksmana /
tvayā putreṇa dharmātimā na saṃvṛttah pitā mama ///27— —;
in the way R. entrusts all his intimations to L., sharing his joys and sorrows with him, pouring out his heart to him wherever and wherever it has something to say, and in the way L. entrusts his intimations to R.;

in the way R. entrusts L. with acting as his counsellor to Su. and the amiable way in which L. introduces R.'s concern to him etc. etc.

We shall mark here only some great mile-stones in L.'s brotherly devotion:

As the three spend the night with Guha, we see L., after affectionately fetching water and food for his brother and washing his feet, devotedly keeping guard over R. When Guha, seeing L. keeping awake to protect his brother, offers him with anxious concern a soft bed to lie down upon specially prepared for him and begs him to allow him to guard R. in his stead, L. declines this offer, asking how he can find sleep and happiness when his brother is lying on the bare ground with S., when such a peerless son of D., who has been obtained after great penances and hardships, in sleeping on the grass in happy union with S.; and as he muses on the pitiful plight of R. and envisages the immeasurable pain King D. must feel for his dear son, a pain that is bound to give him the death-blow, he falls into most melancholic musings on the dismal fate that impends over the royal family in their agony at their beloved R. and on their own ill-fortune of having to stay in a desolate forest—while the citizens will at least be fortunate enough to participate in the king's obsequial rites and will live happily in the city full of life and luxuries. (II 44.24-27; 45 passim)

It is a testimony of L.'s affectionate fraternal dedication to his elder brother R. as well as of his tender-hearted concern for him—so tender-hearted indeed that it cannot but evoke in him feelings of sadness and dismal apprehension as his eyes
rest on R. and S. sleeping on the ground in utter humility and austerity in a spirit of selfless, devoted commitment to their destiny and his mind envisages the pangs of agony piercing D., Ks. and Sumitrā’s hearts filled with grief for their son.

It is not unduly that the poet makes Guha, to comfort Bh., speak to him about L.’s good-natured heart and relate to him all the details about L.’s decline of his offers, his sorrowful musings over the misfortune of his brother and his affectionate services to R. (II 80-81).

As R. spends with L. and S. the first night in the absence of the comforting company of Sumantra, the thought of whose ardent devotion to him—pouring itself out in heartrending supplications to his master to allow him to find his happiness in following him and serving him—and of his having had to decline them has left an unspoken sore in his heart, even he, the very embodiment of steadfastness, for once is overcome with deep depression and self-pity as his mind goes out to his father and in this state of deep depression visualizes the evil and destructive agency of Kai., who, having entrapped D., a victim of infatuation to her charms, in the clutches of her shameless cunning, may now give D. the death-blow and may, in her bitter hatred, harass, nay even kill, poor Ks., the thought of whose never-ending sufferings for his sake fills R. with boundless grief and remorse of having abandoned his mother, urging him to request L. to go to Ayodhyā and protect her against the evil doings of Kai. As L. hears these pitiful lamentations, so unusual in the mouth of his brother, he, both to comfort R. and to put out of his mind once and for all any such unbearable thought that would subject him to separation from him, professes that like S. he cannot live even for a moment without him, like fish thrown out of water, that without him he does not wish to see his father or Śatrughna or Sumitrā or even heaven; professes his total self-surrender and love for R., the all-in-all of his life. (II 47)
When R. at the tumultuous noise coming from the approaching army of Bh. requests L. to ascertain its cause and L. hastily climbs a tree and surveys the vast army and convention of chariots, horses and elephants coming from the North and recognizes the kovidāra banner [of Bh., L. is at once beset by the darkest apprehensions about Bh., thinking that he has come to kill them in order to have a free hand over the whole of his kingdom, and filled with flaming wrath vows destruction to him, who, the cause of all misfortune that has overcome R., rightfully deserves to be killed as he was the first to inflict harm on them; and freed of whom R. may at last rule the world in peace and Kai. shall obtain the fruits of her action. Nay, he will kill, he says, Kai. herself and all her attendants and, slaughtering the entire host of enemies, he will transform the forest of Citrakūṭa into a blood-stained battle-field filled with corpses. When then R. reproaches L. for his rash, unjust apprehension, holding out to his mind the pure, selfless intention of Bh. and puts him down saying that, if he spoke those words out of a desire for the kingdom, he would tell Bh. to give it to him and Bh. would gladly agree, L., so the poet says, enters, as it were, his body with shame (praviveśeva svānī gātrāṇi lajjayā).

Though reflecting his rash excitability and irascibility, which so carries him to the extreme that, after being sobered down by his brother, he feels like creeping into his own body for shame, L.’s ireful behaviour is but another testimony of his tender-hearted devotion—expressing itself in an over-vigilant guardianship, an 'over-anxious zeal to protect his brother from any emerging peril. Srinivasa Sastrī expresses this very beautifully when he says—"Laksmana, so single-minded was he in guarding the interests of his brother, so like a faithful dog, he can only suspect everybody. What made him suspect is not his interest, is not any small idea, but the desire to protect what he conceived were the imperilled interests of Sri Rama..." And when L. realizes his folly and is so filled with shame that he feels like creeping into his own body, it is a manifestation
of his painful awareness that the way of expression of his benevolent concern for his brother was of so 'shallow' a kind that, while it failed to obtain acknowledgement on account of over-stepping its limits and upsetting R.'s mind, it exposed, to the depth of his heart, his own over-excitement and irascibility. (II 90-91)

L.'s brotherly dedication comes to a severe test when S., on hearing the cry of distress "O Sītā, O Lakṣmaṇa" and taking it for that of her husband, urges him to immediately go and save him. But L., though he earlier, when S. took a fancy to the golden deer, warned R. against the sorcery of Mārica—at that time she did not pay heed to his warning—(41.4-7), stands firm by his brother's instruction not to leave her out of his care under any circumstances because he has absolute confidence in R.'s invincible prowess. And even though S., who is in a state of emotional desperation, misinterprets his firmness in this agonizing situation and charges him with the exorbitantly hurting words that he is an enemy in the form of a brother who has no other desire than to destroy his brother in order to take advantage of her, he first conceals these cruel words in his heart and, assuring her of the invulnerability and invincibility of R. from all the beings in the three worlds, requests her to be comforted—for the cry of agony was not that of R., but of a Rk., for since the destruction of Khara Rks. lurk everywhere to take revenge, and so, in the face of such a danger, it would be a misdemeanour on his part if he did not abide by the word of his elder brother, who has entrusted her to his care. But when S., so beside herself with anguish and wrath, heaps outrage after outrage upon him—one more cruel than the other—picturing him as a villainous hypocrite, who acting in the dark, has followed R. out of sinister desires for her, it is a shock too traumatic, a thought too unbelievable, an injury too hurting his innocence, an insult too wounding his honour as that L. could have any longer command over himself and restrain himself from proving the purity of his intention to her even at the
cost of ignoring the sacred command to protect her, and could
do so without gently criticizing her attitude as an attitude of
womanish fickleness and harshness while affirming, at the same
time, his restraint from reproving her out of respect for her,
who is a Goddess unto him, and without indicating, by way of
a warning pronouncement, that he would only wish, against
all the inauspicious omens, that she may be protected by the
deities of the forest, that she may be safe when he returns.
Indeed, so utterly desperate is S. that, though L. is already
about to leave her against his own conviction, she, as if not
convincing yet of L.'s sincerity before he has not really put it
into action, or as if not willing to allow him to have any second
thought about it and to see him hesitate any longer, even if it
is for a fraction of a moment (two possible interpretations;
probably both together apply), threatens him with all types of
suicide and vows that she will never even with her feet touch
any other man than R. For a last time, L. tries to console
her, looking into her eyes, himself depressed to the core of his
heart, but, not noticing any response from her, he, at last,
takes her leave, again and again casting a backward glance at
her. (III 43)

L., for the first time, has failed in his brotherly dedication
as a guardian; but he has failed in the midst of an excruciating
experience of humiliation—an experience so depressing, so
agonizing, so hurting his innocence and wounding his honour
that for him, to whom the well-being of R. and S. has been
the upper-most concern, the all-in-all of his life, who has ever
looked at S. with the eyes of a son looking at his mother, it is
too unbearable as that he could remain a silent listener to such
outrages heaped on him, to such frantic gesticulations of
anguish and menaces of suicide, without giving once and for
all witness, though with the utmost reluctance, to the purity of
his intention. Surely, the poet himself looks sympathetically
at L.'s failure, though it is natural that he makes R. on seeing
L. approaching alone rebuke him for leaving alone S., for
too precious is the prize he has staked and too manifest the
portents predicting gruesome disaster ever since the ill-omened cry of the dying Rk. (s. 55 latter part), and that R.'s reproach becomes more and more forceful as his apprehension of the absence of S. becomes more and more a painful reality, reaching its climax when L., on arriving at their dwelling-place, does not find S. And when then L., who first keeps quiet at R.'s reprimands, defends himself by explaining the whole story in all details, R. has no word of appreciation even then, but blames him and expresses his displeasure at him for having committed an improper deed by disobeying his mandate, as he listened to the angry words of S. inspite of his better knowledge that no Rk. would be able to attack him (III 56-57).

It is then that R. breaks into the most heart-rending, the most pitiable and despair-ridden lamentations and expressions of grief—so wringing and moving one's heart in their unfathomable depth and overwhelming power of pathos, so intimate and touching in their ardent professions and pinings of love, so awe-imposing in their wrathful proclamations of destruction to the whole world, and it is in this terrible plight of R. that L. never fails to prove himself a source of comfort and solace to his brother's pining heart: According to the emotional gravity of R.'s pinings, he tries to comfort and cheer him up with sweet words; tries to encourage him with hope-inspiring advice and exhortation; tries to restrain him from his despair-ridden, wrathful proclamation that he is going to destroy the whole universe together with the Gods—when the discovery of traces of S.'s ornaments and the remnants of a bloody battle, with weapons, armour and chariot lying shattered on the ground, makes him believe that his beloved one has been abducted, killed or devoured by cruel Rks. And at a point where R.'s agony and wrath have reached a state of seemingly no return and a degree of violence never witnessed before by L., a point where R. has lost so totally control of himself that he is no longer himself, L. for a moment changes roles with R. Displaying a magnificent self-control and a deep
insight into the psychological nature of R.’s despair, he acts as a counsellor who makes R. aware of the unprecedented paroxysm into which his grief has led him, a paroxysm which is not only totally unbecoming of a wise man like him, but totally unjust and unwarranted in the extent of its wrath and revengefulness—the more so when the whole world, nay even the Gods, are subject to grief and misfortune and even ordinary beings are destined to endure their sufferings, as no creature can shun its destiny; a paroxysm so in contrast with the exemplary dignity of R.’s self-disciplined nature and the unexcelled acuteness of his power of discernment, for which he does not require any counsel even from Brhaspati, how much less from him, but which now has been totally obscured by the weight of his grief. And while he admonishes him thus, he urges him to engage his unexcelled prowess, a prowess so great that he does not need to feel intimidated by any being in the world, in searching for S. in all the worlds, sustained by his (L.’s) ever-ready assistance and that of the rśis, and advises him to resort to violence only if the Gods do not hand over S. to him. (III 58-62, spec. 60-62)

We see thus a L., who, though himself often tossed by the storms of grief and anger and in earnest need of the wise and moralizing counsel of R., in the unprecedented moment where the peace of mind of his brother is at stake, not only knows to control himself with great exemplarity, but knows to give, and knows to awake from slumber in R.’s own self, that very moralizing, that very wise and yet so affectionate counsel which R. himself would have given at a reverse situation. We see the miraculous efficacy of L.’s brotherly love and concern, a concern that, while at other times it had driven him to emotional upsurges and outbursts of revolt, now has impelled him to cure the unprecedented paroxysm of despair of his brother.

And when R. and L., after the coronation of Su., withdraw to the Praśravaṇa hill to spend the rainy season and the spell of nature awakens in R. again and again pining thoughts of S. (IV 26-27, 29), L. again displays his wise counsel in that he
appeals to his brother not to allow himself to be subdued by grief, but to fortify his energy—so as to be able to display his prowess, when the occasion comes, in destroying the Rks. and, when R. acknowledges his words, commends his realization of the need to be true to himself and to his own nature and to wait patiently for the proper occasion (IV 26.8-14; 19-23); in that, when R.'s thoughts in the midst of his painful musings turn towards Su., whose regained happiness he contrasts with his own unfulfilled desire, the fulfilment of which appears to him far away due to the unfavourable climatic conditions and his unwillingness to disturb Su. all too soon in his happiness, and he, while his thoughts revolve on Su., suggests to himself, with a ray of hope flashing up in his mind, to nourish his hope by trusting in Su.'s favour and sense of gratitude, L. strengthens his brother in this hopeful trust of his. (IV 27 /// 27. 45-46)

But tranquil, self-controlled, sympathetic L. is abruptly transformed into the old L.—flying into wrath and filled with revenge for his brother: When R. is led by his sentimental musings on the manifestations of beauty and joy in nature—reawakening in him painful longings for S.—to the disheartening thought of Su.'s seeming lack of compassion for him, and, flying more and more into anger at what he conceives to be Su.'s vile, ungrateful breach of loyalty, commissions L. to go to Kişkindhā and communicate his warning mixed with words of conciliation and cynical threats to kill Su. with all his relatives if he should transgress his promise (see s.v. Sugrīva)——L., in his flaming ire for his brother, now abuses the Vn. king with yet more vengeance-and-wrath-breathing words, calling him a hypocrite who changed his mind and took advantage of R.'s gentleness and proclaiming that, unable to restrain his anger, he will kill that liar today. And he does this with such outbursts of ire that R. has to reprimand his behaviour as sinful and unworthy of a hero like him and has to instruct him to admonish Su. in a peaceful manner. (IV 30.1-8) And even these admonishing words do not have their immediate effect.
Nay, unable to bear such a grave injustice done to his brother, L., his heart burning with rage, upsets trees and rocks as he proceeds like a mad elephant towards Kiṣkindhā; and as he sees formidable Vns. seizing hundreds of mountain-peaks and tall trees, he gets doubly flamed with rage like fire nourished with fuel, whereupon the Vns., frightened, flee in a hundred directions and the leaders them enter the palace of Su. and try to report the matter to him, though in vain, since the king of the monkeys is drunk and dallying with Tārā. And as then the most formidable Vns. are stationed to guard the entrance to Kiṣkindhā, L., at the thought of Su.'s unloyalty, flies into an anger so terrible, so like the doom's day fire, that Aṅgada, seeing him, falls into dejection for fear; and L. immediately directs trembling Aṅgada to announce his arrival to Su. (s. 30). Meanwhile things are going on inside the palace. But L. is too impatient to wait any longer, and so he enters the gate, while the Rk. guards, seeing him enraged, stand up with folded hands and don't raise a finger to restrain him from entering. Going through the city while admiring its magnificent palaces and gardens and reaching the resplendent palace of Su., he enters, after passing through a number of courts, unchecked the glamorous female apartments, much to the consternation of the Vn. king, whom he finds seated on a golden seat adorned with the most precious ornaments and garlands and surrounded by beautiful damsels while vigorously embracing Rumā (IV 32). Burning with anger at Su.’s vile ingratitude, this sight makes him so furious that he reviles Su. in the midst of his wives far beyond the accusations made by R., describing Su.’s meanness of not returning his friend’s favour as an unpardonable meanness greater than that of killing a Brāhmaṇa, drinking wine, committing theft or breaking religious vows (s. 33).

But when Su. propitiates L. with words expressing his gratitude to R. and his inefficiency in rewarding such a heroic deed, thereby assuring R. of his own unequalled power, through which he will recover S. and kill Rv., and also promising his humble assistance, and asks R.’s forgiveness if he has com-
mitted any transgression with regard to trust or love, L. is, as it were, completely transformed. Not only has his anger completely calmed down, but his response is a total reversal of his earlier accusation: He expresses his delight at and appreciates the great value of Su.'s help to R., praising him as worthy of being R.'s friend, as knowing dharma, grateful, heroic in battle and equal in strength and power to R., and asks him to come now with him to his brother in order to console him, as R. is deeply lamenting the loss of his beloved one. And he confesses to Su. that it is for this reason that he has spoken such harsh words to him and requests his forgiveness. (35.4-20)

We see a L., who, though only a little while ago swept away by storms of anger on imagining a vile breach of loyalty against his brother on the part of Su., now that he has been convinced of Su.'s sincerity and loyalty, is so extremely happy for his brother that he not only sheds at once all grievances and forgives all the negligence and sexual debaucheries of Su. which caused the latter to delay the execution of his promise, but pours praise after praise upon Su. and even requests him to forgive him his harsh words—another transformation of L., this time from an angry to an over-joyed L.; a transformation which finds its explanation only in the very depth of his nature, a nature that is a blend of an over-flowing tender-hearted love with an inborn irascibility and an eruptive emotional state of mind.

In fact, if we look back, we have been seeing all along a L. immersed in tender, sympathetic concern for his brother; a L. engaging his whole self in self-less love to relieve, protect, comfort, encourage and defend his dear brother; in short, a L. being to his brother like a son unto a father; (and to S. like a son unto a mother); and yet we have been seeing all along a L., whose psychological state of mind was widely fluctuating along a scale ranging from rash excitability (irritability), tantalizing agony, flaming wrath and revengefulness, and sad and pessimistic musings — to the calmness and tranquility of offering solace, showing the highly tender and emotionally
eruptive nature of L.——a nature so susceptible indeed that in a traumatic moment of humiliation it has induced him for once to violate his own fraternal commitment, which has always been the very heart-beat of his character and which he himself has professed to be the sarvasva of his own life.

VI 70.10-42

Laksmana in ire against dharma as he thinks that Sita has been beheaded by Indrajit

Translation

Having heard those words of his, Rāghava, deprived of his senses for grief, fell on the ground like an uprooted tree. (10) Seeing that Rāghava resembling a God fallen on the ground, the most excellent monkeys came jumping hither from all sides.(11) As he was burning with rage, unbearable like fire blazing up, they sprinkled him with lotus-scented waters.(12) Then L., greatly distressed, embracing him with his arms, spoke to R., who was indisposed, these words endowed with reason and meaning (13)—"Useless dharma, O noble one, is unable to save you, who, with senses subdued, follow an auspicious path, from calamities.(14) In the manner in which non-moving and moving beings are perceptible, dharma is not; therefore dharma does not exist, that is my opinion.(15) In the manner in which a non-moving being is manifest and likewise a moving being, in this manner this aim and end are not, otherwise, O righteous one, a righteous man like you does not fall into misfortune.(16) If adharma existed, Rv. would go to hell, and you possessed of dharma would never obtain misfortune.(17) And since
there is no misfortune to him, while you have fallen into misfortune, he should obtain dharma to the extent of his dharma and adharma to the extent of his adharma.(18) If men should be enjoined with dharma and not indulge in adharma, dharma should be the fruit of those acting according to dharma.(19) Since riches (prosperity) increase in those on which adharma has its firm hold and those who are committed to dharma suffer, these two are meaningless.(20) If sinners are slain by adharma, O Rāghava, whom shall dharma slay when it is itself killed in the act of slaughter? (21) Or if he is killed or kills somebody else by a fixed order, it is destiny which is stained by that sinful act, and not he.(22) How can one obtain final bliss by dharma, O destroyer of enemies, the reward of which is unseen, which is unmanifest and non-existent? (23) If righteousness were existent, O foremost of the righteous, there would not be any such unrighteousness as you have obtained; therefore righteousness does not occur.(24) Or if dharma, itself weak and impotent, takes refuge in strength, then it is feeble and devoid of propriety and should not be attended to, that is my opinion.(25) And if dharma is like a quality of strength existing in manliness, then abandon dharma and resort to strength as you do to dharma.(26) Then, if truthfulness to one's word is dharma, as they say, O harasser of enemies, why has father, a liar and being ruthless to you, not been confined by you? (27) If dharma or adharma were existent, O harasser of enemies, Indra would not have performed a sacrifice after slaying a sage.(28) Dharma taking recourse to adharma causes destruction, O Rāghava; as it is in his desire, so a man accomplishes all this.(29) And this, O dear, is what I consider to be dharma, O Rāghava. By renouncing the kingdom, you have then chopped the root of dharma.(30) All actions proceed from riches collected and accumulated from here and there, as rivers proceed from mountains.(31) All the actions of a man deprived of wealth, possessed of little energy, are extinguished like small rivulets in the hot season.(32)
Such a man, longing, after he has abandoned wealth, for pleasure, as he grew up in pleasure, starts committing sin; thus vice has its origin.(33) He who has riches has friends; he who has riches has relatives; he who has riches is a man in the world; he who has riches is learned.(34) He who has riches is powerful; he who has riches is intelligent; he who has riches is endowed with great fortune; he who has riches is endowed with many graces.(35) These faults enumerated by me have been committed by you in as far as you resolved on renunciation of wealth by abandoning the kingship.(36) He who has riches possesses dharma, pleasure and wealth, and has all reverence. For a man without wealth, who desires for wealth, wealth is not attainable, even though he may strive after it.(37) Joy and pleasure and pride, dharma, anger, tranquility, self-command, all these proceed from wealth, O king.(38) Whose is the world of those living the life of a dharmacāri, their world perishes. And those riches are not seen in you, like the planets are not seen on cloudy days.(39) When you went forth to the forest, O hero, abiding by the word of father, your wife, dearer than your life, was abducted by a Rk.(40) Today, O hero, I shall remove by my action that immense grief, caused by Indrajit. Therefore stand up, O Rāghava.(41) So, O faultless one, I am rising, prompted by concern for you and inflamed with anger, seeing the destruction of Jānakī; I shall completely destroy Laṅkā with my arrows, together with its horses, elephants and chariots, together with the lord of the Rks.”(42)

Analysis of characterization

(1) Structural analysis of the argument

Dharma does not exist, for it is not perceptible like non-moving or moving beings.
If dharma-adharma existed, R., following the path of dharma,
would not have fallen into misfortune, and Rv., following
the path of adharma, would have gone to hell.
Dharma and adharma should bear respective fruits.
But what we see is that those who are committed to
adharma prosper, while those who are committed to dharma
suffer.
Dharma can also not be a power of meting out retribution
since it is itself annihilated in its process, any more than
fate can be, which itself would be stained by the sinful act
rather than the agent.
Further, how could it be such a power if its efficacy is un-
seen and it itself is unmanifest and non-existent; and if it did
exist, then R. could not have suffered such adharma.
And if dharma takes refuge in strength, if it is a quality of
strength existing in manliness, then it is weak, devoid of
dignity, and one should abandon it and resort to strength
just as one does to dharma.
— Cārvāka logic
If truthfulness is dharma, then how is it that R., rather
than punishing D., a ruthless liar, followed his word?
Real dharma is a dharma that resorts to adharma, that
respects the desire of man, because only as such it has an
efficacy as befitting for a Kṣatriya. — Kṣatradharma logic
Real dharma has its root in artha and not in renunciation
of artha.
It is artha from where all actions proceed, while all actions
deprived of artha are extirpated.
All good comes from artha: friends, relatives, manliness,
learnedness, intelligence, fortune, respect etc., joy, pleasure,
pride, tranquility, self-command.
All misery and vices come from renunciation of artha.
The world of the renouncing dhrmacār, like that of R.,
is a perishable world.
By conforming to dharma, R. has fallen into the greatest
misfortune.
But L.’s manliness will put an end to it and take revenge
for it,
— practical common man logic
(2) An ethico-psychological interpretation of the argument

Comparing L.'s argumentation in the sanātana with the arguments exposed here, we find, speaking on a purely logical level, a remarkable transformation in L.'s philosophic conception of morality. While earlier he upheld a philosophy of kṣatradharma—advocating a dharma that aspires for equity and justice under all circumstances even at the cost of inflicting injury on others, against R.'s philosophy of satyadharma—advocating a dharma that aspires for righteousness for the sake of truth, goodness and peace, with no concern about one's own welfare, in a spirit of utter selflessness and forbearance towards whatever injustice done to oneself— he now glides off into a very this-worldly, materialistic ideology of practical morality, sharply rejecting R.'s idealistic philosophy of dharma and renunciation. Nay, at the very first impulse, he seems, in a spirit of Cārvāka logic, to do away altogether with any consideration of dharma-adharma, which do not possess any perceptible reality, which only lead to perverse results, subjecting men following the path of righteousness to endless suffering and misery, while they make those who follow the path of unrighteousness prosper, and seems to suggest as the only way out to have recourse to bala—only slowly to revert to a more positive philosophy of life, in which he admits dharma, but such a dharma that does not degrade the personality of man, that respects human aspiration and is conducive to efficiency in life. But to be so, it cannot remain an abstract, idealistic dharma of renunciation, but must absorb a good deal of hardness (adharma), so as to stand up to life and guarantee justice (kṣatradharma ideology), and must be built on a solid mundane foundation of life, that is, on artha, for all human endeavours are rooted in artha, otherwise they just don't reach anywhere. All that is of value in this world: all human relationships, all human qualities and virtues, have their root in artha, while all misery and vices have their root in renunciation, since man can never still his desire for happiness and, unable to do so, remains a
stunted personality and, always thirsting for happiness, but never reaching it, finally resorts to vices.

Truly, the cause of L.’s change of attitude is very serious. While L.’s earlier advocation of a kṣatradharma ideology was, as we said, very much the outflow of his sympathetic brotherly concern for R., whom he saw plunged into a calamity brought about by an unjust plot of Kai., his instant materialistic mentality of viewing things is the outflow of the most traumatic of traumatic experiences, the most agonizing thoughts he could have ever visualized; is, were it really true, the most fool-proof negation, the most total reversion, of what should be R.’s due reward for his indefatiguable pursuit of all the ideals and values of dharma which he committed himself to, which he advocated and defended with unflinching devotion and with total selflessness and forbearance towards any this-worldly, any peace-disrupting, injurious consideration. R. himself is so totally crushed down by this agonizing news of S.’s decapitation that he is unable to respond even with a single word to L.’s speech, that, when Vibhīṣaṇa consoles him by clarifying Indrajit’s magic trick, he has to ask to repeat his clarification since his senses were too dimmed then to grasp anything.

So we see a L., whose overflowing fraternal concern, now that he sees his brother plunged into the most heart-rending and agonizing misfortune, and that as a “reward” for all the idealism and self-sacrifice R. displayed, cannot but re-awaken in him all the scruples which he had at the time when R. so adamantly insisted on following the word of his father and cannot but form in him a strong conviction of the futility of R.’s idealism of dharma and renunciation and of the necessity for him to resort to a more down-to-earth, practical view of life, which does not degrade the aspirations and endeavours of man, but valorizes them and endows them with efficacy and reward, and cannot but urge him, now that the worst has happened, to once and for all awaken his brother from the
slumber of his idealism and bring him back to a sound mundane conception of life, lest he emotionally succumb.

Laksmana, a valiant and heroic warrior

Resumé

The Yuddhakanda shows us a warrior possessing all the qualities of an ideal yuddhavira next only to R. and H., namely, an awe-inspiring, unexcelled super-natural heroism, valour, strength, martial lustre, and skill in astras exhibited in fighting the Rks.; a formidable Herculean bellicose ardour and wrath, and a relentless and irresistible pugnacity; an awe-imposing Herculean display of martial braggings and scornful vilifications of the enemy—heroic traits (the ingenuity and gamut of their poetical depiction can be fathomed only by reading) which reach their highest elevation in L.’s spell-binding duel with Indrajit, in which he secures a triumphant victory extolled to the highest heaven by R., and in his thrilling duel with Rv., in which he, after a most valiant fight, falls unconscious because of the wounds inflicted upon him by Rv.—both unsurpassed duels which fall only little short of the awe-inspiring thrill of the duel of R. and Rv.

VI 116.77-99

Resumé
V. closes the portrait of L. with a brief, but thought-evoking testimony of L.'s selfless love: R. offers L. the heir-apparentship. But L., though solicited by him with all his heart, does not accede to this appointment— in order, so the poet means to say, to make way for his brother Bh.
A SYNTHETIC VIEW OF THE POET’S CONCEPTION AND PORTRAIT OF LAKSMANA’S CHARACTER

Conception

What strikes us most when we read through the passages portraying L., is the unity in disunity of his character, the unity being constituted by his selfless love and brotherly devotion, the disunity by the fluctuation of his emotional reactions. Both are intended as such by the poet, and the very conception of L.’s character is one of unity in disunity. But because of the fluctuating and very often eruptive nature of L.’s psychic temperament, which is always part of his self-revelation, the poet has been able to give full scope to the development of the pattern of spontaneous improvisation. He uses many stereotyped devices to express L.’s psychological reactions, but impregnates them with a personal spirit of liveliness, so that they evoke much more than they stand for, evoke the whole personality of L. This is one of the most immediate impressions one gets from listening to the poet’s exposition of L.’s character. And in fact, this is part of the ingenious art of V. as a bard-poet, and though we have seen it all along, it has perhaps nowhere found such a universal application as here, with, at the same time, such a depth of evocation and personal touch.

Another characteristic in the portrayal of L.’s character is the use of the pattern of unspoken self-revelation, which we have already mentioned in the context of Bh.
Since a fairly cohesive portrait of L.'s character emerges from a successive reading of the interpretative portions of our analysis, we better prescind from unfolding the portrait of L.'s character step by step and give, instead, an over-all outline of his personality as it imprints itself in the mind of the listener in the impression the poet has left on him.

L., the very heart-beat of his elder brother R. ever since his early childhood days, R.'s second life outside his own self, is the embodiment, as it were, of fraternal devotion, a devotion that finds its expression in an overflowing brotherly affection, a tender-hearted sympathetic concern and self-sacrificing love, and prompts him to consider it the all-in-all of his life, the most intimate desire and happiness of his heart to share whatever destiny with his brother, to alleviate whatever hardships and comfort whatever sorrows of his and to conduce in whatever way possible to his happiness by serving and guarding him with never-failing loyalty. This brotherly affection and concern of L. is of an extremely delicate nature, for L. is by nature of a psychic temperament that is tender-hearted and emotionally eruptive and is blended with an innate irascibility and a deeply engrained attitude of intolerance towards inequity. L.'s attachment to R. is thus of so tender a nature that anything he would think would disrupt the well-being, happiness and peace of mind of his brother, would disrupt his own well-being, happiness and peace of mind; that any insult done to, any injustice inflicted upon his brother, would be an insult done to himself, an injustice inflicted upon himself.

But he sees how his brother, venerated as the ideal of all men, has been subjected to the greatest misfortune by the heinous ambition of Kai. and, what he thinks to be, the perverse infatuation of D., and he sees how R. in his idealistic spirit of
forbearance, allows himself persistently to be strung with the fetters of a dharma that makes him the victim of the heinous cruelty of others and pays homage to an incomprehensible fate which turns the most virtuous into the most miserable while it makes the most evil ones prosper. And so he cannot bear the thought of such atrocious injustice inflicted upon his brother, and, though shallow as his efforts may appear in pledging himself to the vanity of kṣatradharma, he cannot but feel impelled with flaming ire to engage his whole self in saving R. from the clutches of Kai.’s heinous ambition and to dispel in him all fancies of dharma and daiva that invariably hold in check his mind and rob him of his power of right judgement, and so to instigate him to take charge of the kingdom by force, proclaiming firm protection to R., under the unassailable shield of his power and vowing destruction to all those who should obstruct his brother’s installation.

And while he happily shares R.’s destiny in the forest and serves and guards him with unflagging devotion, he is tossed by various psychological experiences: He is necessitated to muse on the pitiful plight of R. and the agony of those whom he left behind. He witnesses with his own eyes how even R., in a moment of depression, gives vent to sorrowful musings. He fears that he (R.) is being persecuted by his own brother Bh. He witnesses how R. falls into greatest misfortune and how his heart is tantalized with grief and mental agony. He witnesses how he is apparently cheated by his own ally. And so, in such moments, although always losing himself completely in the heart of R., always engaging his whole self in relieving, protesting, comforting, encouraging and defending his dear brother, in short, always being to him like a son unto a father and to S. like a son unto a mother, L.’s emotionally tender and eruptive psyche is tossed hither and thither in a state of often violent fluctuations along a scale ranging, according to the nature of his experience and the emergency of the situation, from tantalizing agony, rash excitability, flaming wrath and revengefulness, and sad and pessimistic musings—to the serene calmness
and tranquility of offering solace and an all-forgiving enthusiasm. So susceptible indeed is L.’s psyche that in a moment of a traumatic humiliation it forces him to violate his own fraternal commitment, which has always been the very heart-beat of his character and which he himself has professed to be the sarvasva of his own life. But it is a violation in the midst of a crushing experience of humiliation—an experience so depressing, so agonizing, so hurting his innocence and wounding his honour that for him, to whom the well-being of R. and S. has been the uppermost concern, the all-in-all of his life, who has ever looked at S. with the eyes of a son looking at his mother, it is too unbearable as that he could remain a silent listener to such outrages heaped on him, to such frantic gesticulations of anguish and menaces of suicide, without giving once and for all witness to the purity of his intention. And yet a short while later, when R.’s mental agony has reached an unprecedented state of paroxysm, L. for a moment changes roles with R. Displaying a magnificent self-control and a deep insight into the psychological nature of R.’s despair, L. knows to give, and knows to awake from slumber in R.’s own self, that very wise and yet so affectionate counsel which R. himself would have given at a reverse situation. We see the miraculous efficacy of L.’s brotherly love and concern that, while at other times it had driven him to emotional upsurges and outbursts of revolt, now has impelled him to cure the unprecedented paroxysm of despair of his brother.

It looks then as if there were almost no emotional state of mind where L.’s heart would not be tossed to in traumatic moments: For, when he sees his brother plunged into the most pitiable and agonizing misfortune that he could have ever imagined (as he deems S. beheaded by Indrajit)—so unjust a reward for all his idealism and self-sacrifice, L. cannot but affirm his conviction of the utter futility of R.’s ideal of dharma and renunciation and pledge himself to a more down-to-earth moral view of life, a view that does not degrade the aspirations and endeavours of man, but valorizes them and
endows them with efficiency and reward, and cannot but feel impelled to once and for all awaken R. from the slumber of his idealism and bring him back to a more sound mundane conception of life, lest he emotionally succumb.

But though L.’s heart has often been flung hither and thither by the winds of emotion, his intimate and self-sacrificing fraternal devotion has always stood out like a lofty peak, commended by R. again and again and praised and acknowledged by S. without envy and expressed by her in these beautiful sentiments: V 36.44-48—

pitaram mātaram caiva sammānyābhiprasādy ca  
anupravrajito rāmaṁ sumitrā yena suprajāḥ  
ānukūlyena dharmātmā tyaktvā sukhmanuttamam ||44
anugacchati kākutsthāṁ bhrātaram pālayanvane  
simhaskandho mahābāhubhurmanasvī priyadarśanah ||45
pitravardtate rāme mātṛvānmāṁ samācaran  
hriyamāṇāṁ tadā viro na tu māṁ veda lakṣmanāḥ ||46
vrddhopasevī lakṣmīvānsakto na bahubhāṣitā  
rājaputraḥ priyaśreṣṭhaḥ sadṛśaḥ śvaśurasya me ||47
mattaḥ priyataro nityāṁ bhrātā rāmasya lakṣmanāḥ  
niyukto dhuri yasyāṁ tu tāmudvahati vīravān ||48
A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER-PORTRAYAL OF SITA

Prelude

We see a first emergence of the ideal character-portrait of S. in the description by an early interpolator of the budding of an intimate conjugal love between R. and S., a heart-to-heart intimacy uniquely enhanced by their sublimity of character and brightness of appearance that makes them look like Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī incarnate—a beautiful symbol fore-shadowing the sublimity of S.’s character and, par excellence, her unique wisely devotion. (I 76.14-18).

In the original version, however, V. introduced S.’s personality straight-away in her role as a living testimony of wisely fidelity and devotion to her husband, face to face with a critical situation, which, though not demanding the utmost from her, elicits a most momentous test as to the depth and intimacy of her love and devotion. The poet does so straight-away—after giving the audience only a few faint glimpses of her personality: in the manner of her prayerful meditation to Viṣṇu for the welfare of her husband (II 4.32-33) and her blessings to him on his being summoned to D.’s palace (II 14.17)—glimpses which do foreshadow some light on the loftiness of her devotion, but still leave the audience in the dark as to her real role in critical situations, which alone are the real touch-stones of a character.
II 23-27

Sīta's sublime love and devotion to Rāma—exemplified in her heroic resolve on sharing his life in the forest

Contents (in an interpretative light)

(23) After bidding farewell to Ks., R., endowed with her blessings, went along the royal road filled with people, agitating the hearts of the people with his virtuosity, his heart agitated on account of their joy. Vaiḍehi did not know anything. After worshipping the Gods with grateful and joyful heart according to the customs of the kings, she waited for the prince to come. But R., with the joy of the people revolving in his head and the thought of Ks.'s agony on account of him still vivid in his mind, howsoever strong his commitment to dharma was, could not but feel restless with sorrow and anxiety as to S.'s state of mind with which she would receive this bad news and entered his palace with his head stooping down for shame. Seeing her husband in such an unprecedented dejected state, she asked him why there was this dejection in him, why his loving face did not shine protected by a royal umbrella, why..., why...; in short, why all the glamour associated with the day of consecration was absent and his face looked so dispirited—when today was the Puṣya Bṛḥaspata, the most auspicious day declared by the learned Brāhmaṇas, and everything was ready for his consecration. At this, R. answered with gentle words—"You see, venerable father sends me into exile. Listen how this came about. My father, truthful to his promise, had once granted Kāśi two boons. She has now lawfully stopped my consecration by asking for this boon: my stay in the forest for fourteen years and Bh.'s installation as heir-apparent. I have come here to see you once
more before I go to the forest. You will be under the dominion of Bh. So, act discreetly, never speak too much of me in his presence, for experience teaches that men endowed with prosperity do not bear another’s praise. Therefore, do not relate my merits before him. Don’t let yourself be treated with special care, but always act with kindness in his presence. I, on my part, shall fulfil the promise of my father and go to the forest. Devote yourself during my absence to fasting, worshipping the Gods, honouring with due respect father D. and aged mother Ks. afflicted with grief as also my other mothers, and treat L. and Śatrughna dearer to me than my life like your brother’s sons. Never offend Bh., who is king and lord of the country and the family. Kings rejoice when propitiated with virtuous conduct and attended upon with great care, but they are angry if it is the contrary... I shall go to the forest, you shall dwell here and observe my words in a manner that you do not do anything displeasing to anybody.”

(24) Hearing such words, Jānaki, whose heart knew nothing than love for her husband, was filled with anger and said—“Dear husband, all other relatives, father, mother, brother, son and daughter-in-law, forge their own fortune by resorting to their own merits. The wife alone shares the fortune of her husband. Her husband’s fortune is her fortune, his destiny is her destiny. Whatever destiny befalls her husband, befalls her, too. If her husband has been ordered to stay in the forest, she too has been ordered so. Her only aim in life consists in sharing the destiny of her husband. After death, nobody, neither father nor son nor her own Self nor mother nor friend, but her husband alone is her refuge. If you go to the forest, I shall walk in front of you, removing kuśa grass and thorns. Throw away your īṛṣya and roṣa [R.’s firm resolution to leave her back in the palace, however much his decision is meant to be for the good of his wife, cannot but awaken the impression in S. that R. has no interest for the desires of her heart, that he simply passes her over, that he is impatient and angry] and take me with you to the forest—
free of anxiety. I have not committed any sin that I should be punished to stay at home. Be it in foremost palaces or in heavenly cars or in flights through the air, be it in whatever condition, the shadow of a husband’s feet is above everything. I have been taught by mother and father various forms of seeking protection. Now I don’t need to be told how I have to behave. I shall live as happily in the forest as in the palace of my father. I do not care for the three words, but I do care about my fidelity to my husband. As a self-controlled brahmacārīṇī, always obedient to you, I shall sport with you in the forests fragrant with honey. You are able to protect even other people in the forest, how much more then me! I shall take full delight in living an ascetic life, shall never cause you grief, I yearn to enjoy in your company all the enchantments and the majestic beauty of nature [spun out] even for a 100,000 years. Without you I would not even find happiness if I were given the choice to stay in heaven. I shall stay in the forest like in father’s house, as your beloved wife grasping your feet. Please, take me, whose heart and mind are wholly devoted to none but you; who, forsaken by you, am determined to die. I shall not be a burden to you.” But virtuous R. was unwilling to take her with him to the forest, and in order to dissuade her completely, he said to her:

(25) “S., you are born of a noble family and always intent on dharma. Do here your dharma, don’t let yourself be carried away by the fancy of your heart. Drop this resolution of living in the forest, for the forest is full of miseries and dangers, I am saying this for your own good. I know the forest solely as a source of pain and never as a fountain of joy [especially for a woman]: The roarings of mountain-torrents and of lions living in mountain-caves cause pain to your ear. After the toil of the day, one has to sleep on a bed of broken leaves on the naked ground. One has to undertake fasts with all one’s strength and to wear matted locks and bark-garments. These is terrible wind and darkness, there is
constant hunger and there are great dangers: Many serpents with all kinds of forms move across the earth with unrestrained power; snakes having their hiding-place in tortuous rivers block your way; night-birds with awesome shrieks, scorpions, worms, snake-bites, mosquitoes plague you all the time... It is too much for you to go to the forest, the forest is unfit for you; it contains too many miseries.”

(26) Though R. was not resolved on taking S. with him to the forest, she did not pay heed to his words and spoke to him, filled with tears, gently these words—“All the doṣas related by you concerning stay in the forest are converted into merits in as far as they are governed by my love for you. By the order of my elders, I have to go with you; separated from you I have to abandon my life. In your presence not even Indra can assault me. A wife forsaken by her husband is unable to live. In fact, so you yourself have pointed out to me (or: you yourself have been a proof of this to me). Further, I have heard from Brāhmaṇas—knowing good and bad signs—in my father’s house that it is my destiny to stay in the forest. Since that time I have always had a desire to stay in the forest, and it is my duty to comply with this order of staying in the forest. Now the occasion has come to fulfil it. I know that in staying in the forest there are unpleasant moments in manifold ways, but they are experienced as such only by men whose minds are uncontrolled. When I was a girl, I heard a virtuous bhikṣuṇī predict my stay in the forest to my mother. And formerly I propitiated you many a time to allow me to go with you for vanavāsa. I am waiting impatiently for the moment to go, I desire to serve you as a hero staying in the forest. I shall be a faithful wife, following my husband out of love, pure-minded and stainless, for my husband is my God. Even in the next world I shall be in happy union with you, for a sacred text of the Brāhmaṇas says—‘To whom a wife has been given by her parents according to svadharma, his she will also be in the
next world.' For what reason do you not wish to take me along—your own virtuous and faithful wife? It is your duty to take me with you—your devoted and faithful wife, your afflicted wife even—tempered in joy and sorrow. If you don’t take me with you, I shall end my life by taking poison or entering fire or water.' Though S. enticed her husband in many ways, he did not consent to taking her with him to the forest. Thereupon Maithili fell into great anxiety and bathed the earth with tears of grief and anger. As she was thus engrossed with sorrow, R., in order to bring her back to herself, tried to comfort her repeatedly.

(27) But S., intent on living in the forest, utterly agitated, embraced her husband out of love and affection and said—‘Why did my father approve of you, having obtained a woman in the form of a man as his son-in-law? A lie it is, alas, that people through ignorance will say that greater lustre than in R. there isn’t even in the blazing sun. Why are you so dejected, why are you so afraid that you wish to forsake me—devoted to none but you? Know me to be devoted and self-controlled like Sāvitri devoted to Satyavān. I do not see even with my mind any other than you. Would I go with you, O Rāghava, like some other one defiling her race? Do you wish to give me, you chaste wife, who has served you for such a long time, away to others like an actor does? Without taking me, you ought not to go to the forest. Whether it be penance or the forest or heaven, it will be together with you. I shall not feel any weariness in walking behind you or even in sleeping in groves. With you as my companion the pricks of kuśa, kāśa, sara grass and of reeds and thorny trees will be soft like cotton and deerskin. I shall consider the dust falling on me like precious, sandal-paste, and when I rest on grassy grounds on a bed of kuśa grass in the woods, what greater happiness is there than this? Whatever leaf or root or fruit you fetch for me, be it little or abundant, will be like amṛta to me, I shall not remember
mother or father or the palace, happily enjoying myself with the flowers and fruits of the seasons. You should not see anything disagreeable in taking me with you, you need not be worried about me, not shall I be a burden to you. Whatever is with you, is heaven, whatever is without you, is hell. Knowing this, obtain joy with me. If you do not take me with you, I shall drink poison. Let me not come under the subjection of enemies. Forsaken by you, I shall not be able to live even for a moment, how much less for fourteen long years of grief!" Lamenting pitiably and filled with utter distress, S. deeply embraced her husband and wept aloud. Pierced by these words of R., she could no longer suppress her tears—now flowing unrestrained from her eyes. As R. saw his wife almost unconscious for grief, he embraced her affectionately and comforted her—"If you are in sorrow, I do not even desire heaven. I have no fear of anything, like Svayambhu himself. Not knowing your whole mind, I disagreed with your staying in the forest even though I am able to protect you. But since you are determined to stay in the forest together with me, I cannot abandon you, like a self-possessed person cannot abandon fame. I shall follow dharma as practised by the sages of old—like Suvarcalā follows the Sun. This dharma is to follow the command of my mother and father. If I violate this command, I am unable to live. As my father, abiding by the path of satyadharma, orders me, so I wish to act, for that is the eternal dharma. Follow me and walk in the same path of dharma. Give jewels to the Brāhmaṇas and food to the beggars and quickly prepare yourself." When S. saw her husband approve of her going with him, she quickly set out, with cheerful and contented mind, to distribute wealth and jewels.

Analysis of characterization

The Sītā-Rāma-saṁvāda, as one may call this complex of
scenes, is one of the highlights of the *Rm.* Though a dialectics of arguments in its external form, it is not so much a confrontation of two views, of two ideologies, and thus not a representation of two characters, but a conflict of hearts and a conflict of two motivations.

To begin with, let us examine the nature of R.’s motivation, first, in not taking into account S.’s heroic desire to share, in a spirit of joyful devotion and love, any destiny of life with her husband when he actually ought to know her deep devotion and loyalty to him, and secondly, in refuting that very heroic desire of hers even though she asserts it with such vigour as leaves no doubt to her sincerity and unflinching determination and accepting it only when she is near to an emotional breakdown.

R.’s first attitude is not only intelligible, but it reveals his tactfulness and consideration in as much as he does not expect from his wife such heroic renunciation as would be beyond the capacity of any normal human person, not to speak of a tender lady like her nurtured in the midst of royal glory and comfort, and, instead, gives her lavish advice as to how to behave tactfully in the presence of Bh., commending her to devote herself to fasting, religious worship, honouring D. and Ks., etc. and never to do anything in her sorrow that might give the impression of her dissatisfaction with or resentfulness against her superiors. R.’s attitude, thus, is both an expression of his dutiful concern for her happiness of mind during her separation from him as well as a tactful device to divert her attention from the grief-evoking present situation to the future she has to face before she may lose herself in lamentation at her plight or may allow herself to be carried away by an indeliberate, fanciful whim of her heart to follow him to the forest— in short, it is but an outflow of his love and selfless concern for her welfare, carried by a spirit of firm responsibility and tactful consideration,
However, R.’s rejection of her emphatic wish to follow him becomes less and less intelligible, especially, the more insistent her desire becomes. It is still intelligible when R. refuses her request despite her almost sermonizing enunciation that a wife’s vocation lies in sharing the destiny of her husband, who is her fortune, destiny and refuge; despite her insistence on her purity and sinlessness, for which she does not deserve the punishment of being left behind; despite her firm declaration that she knows what to do and does not need to be told how to behave; despite her assertions that she will find supreme happiness in serving her lord like a brahmacārīni, in living an ascetic life in the forest, and that she yearns with every fibre of her being to enjoy all the beauties and charms of nature even for a 100,000 years in his loving company, deprived of which she would not even feel happy in heaven were she given such a choice—since R. may believe that, in the first impulse of her boundless love and devotion to him and her over-enthusiastic fancy for the romance of forest life, she, a tender lady brought up amidst the comforts of city life and unaware of the hardships and terrors of life in the forest, may not know what she is talking about, cannot really apprehend the hardness of reality: the miseries, hardships and dangers awaiting her in the forest, and may, facing such adverse reality, however devoted she may be, lose heart for sheer inability to cope with it and may then repent of her rash decision which she had made without having the faintest idea of what dangers would await her. Such a terrible thing he wants to prevent by all means as he knows too well the psychology of women and knows too well that in such a crucial situation things cannot be taken lightly, cannot be deliberated often enough. And so he sets out to paint with glowing colours all the terrors and hardships and dangers of forest life so as to disillusion her once and for all and all her indeliberate and romantic ideas and ideals springing forth from her heart at the first impulse of her boundless devotion.

But it is less intelligible when he remains obstinate even as she asserts that she will take whatever miseries and hardships
in a spirit of love and self-forbearance, that she has been predicted by astrologers as well as by a bhikṣuṇī in her father’s house that it is her destiny to live in the forest and that she has ever since desired for it, nay even repeatedly requested her husband for it; as she points out the sacredness of the union between husband and wife, which is indissoluble so as to even endure after death, and declares that she, a devoted and faithful wife, pure-hearted and stainless, ought not to be forsaken by her husband and entertains him in the most affectionate manner while she warmly embraces him—displaying a dramatic air of anxiety and distress in her pining for her husband’s consent to allow her to share his life of hardships. It is less intelligible when he turns a deaf ear to such heartfelt professions and entreaties and opens up only when she is near-to an emotional break-down—after staging, in a state of utter despair and restlessness, an almost frantic display of a woman’s psyche: in that she designates him ironically as a cowardly woman in the form of a man, a victim of dejection and fear—belying the saying of the people that there is more lustre in him than in the blazing sun; in that she accuses him of degrading her—an ever-devoted, chaste and faithful wife like Sāvitṛi, to the status of a common woman sold by actors; in that she once more asserts and paints in loud colours how she will experience all the hardships and miseries of forest-life as sources of supreme joy and happiness, and assures him that she will never be a burden to him; in that she declares that her life has no fulfilment but in his company, that whatever is with him, is heaven, whatever is without him, is hell, and that she will not be able to live without him even for a moment; nay, if abandoned by him, she will take her own life—all the time embracing him affectionately and entertaining him beseechingly, her heart well-nigh broken for distress and despair merely because she pines for her husband’s consent to her wish to share his hardships.

R. says:

\[ tava sarvamabhiprāyamavijñāya śubhānane / vāsaṁ na rocaye’ranye śaktimānapi rakṣane //26 \]
yatraṣṭāsi mayā sārdham vanavāṣāya maithili
na vihātuṁ mayā śakyā kīrtirātmavatā yathā //27

But is this true? Did not S. give full proof of her unflinching
determination (s.26)? Either R.’s justification is not quite
sincere, or S.’s words did not convince R. sufficiently. Or,
they did convince him, but the situation was too crucial
a one, the happiness of her mind and spiritual welfare too
precious a thing as that R. could, head-over-heels, even at
the assurance of her deepest devotion to him, fall in with her
determination before she would testify with her whole personality
to how supremely happy she would be in sharing with her
husband the gravest of miseries, and this in a way that it would
emerge as her most intimate, her most heartfelt desire to an
extent that its rejection would throw her into the darkest
abysses of unhappiness, nay, would make her well-nigh despair
of her life: This, because only then he can be absolutely sure
that his wife may not lose heart in even the gravest difficulties,
only then he can be absolutely sure that he has not staked his
responsibility, the consequences of which would be irremediably
disastrous. And in fact, as soon as his doubts have been
allayed, he breaks the spell of incomprehension with his enthusi-
astic consent spilling a pain-and-love-laden heart with the
confession that her sorrow has tormented him so much that,
for it, he would not even desire heaven: na devi tava duḥkhaṇa
svargapanyabhūrocaye // (25)

And so, R.’s hesitation is ultimately not a lack of com-
passion, but a testimony of the highest and deepest love, a love
that does not allow itself to be at the mercy of first impulses
and indeliberate fancies or even the sincerest and firmest as-
surances when such assurances could be thwarted by life’s insuper-
able vicissitudes, but bases itself on a deep responsibility and
foresight, to the perpetual spiritual welfare of his beloved,
even though this may subject her to the gravest initial agony.

As against R.’s, S.’s motivation is crystal-clear, and so we
can frame straight-away a portrait of her sublime devotion as
it emerges in this complex of scenes, taking into account our
conclusions on the psychology of R.’s attitude.

As S., engrossed with happy thoughts of the great glory awaiting her husband and engaged in fervent prayers for his welfare, sees R. lost all of a sudden in sorrow and anxiety instead of being filled with joy and happiness and surrounded with the pomp and glamour of royal festivity customary on the great, auspicious day of a prince’s consecration in the heir-apparentship, she is at once taken aback and, apprehending that something has perturbed his peace of mind, that some misfortune has befallen him, she inquires what happened, with all the display of restlessness and anxiety that is characteristic of the feminine temperament. S.’s restless and anxious questions only intensify R.’s sorrowfulness, which had entered his mind at the thought of the state of mind in which his wife would receive his bad news, and which is nourished by the painful thought of his mother’s mental agony on account of him and the joyous festivity of the people; and so, driven by an anxious and dutiful concern for her peace of mind both for the present unhappy moment and for the future, he sets out with tactful consideration to lend her his generous advice as to how to behave tactfully in the presence of Bh. and instructs her to devote herself to fasting, worshipping the Gods and honouring her relatives. But S. cannot but receive such an attitude of R. with great indignation, since for her, the very embodiment of wifely devotion and love, a wife’s vocation of life lies in sharing the destiny of her husband, who is her fortune, her destiny, her refuge, who is her all-in-all; for her a wife’s union with her husband is so sacred, so indissoluble as to even last after death; for her all life with her husband, even amidst the gravest of miseries and hardships, is heaven, all life separated from her husband, be it even in heaven, is hell; for her, in short, a participation in the gravest of her husband’s destiny is the most intimate desire of her heart, the greatest happiness to indulge in. And so, if R. expresses his resolution to leave her behind in the palace, it cannot but create the impression in her that he does not really fathom the depth of her bound-
less devotion to him, that, on the other hand, he is indignant
and angry at her for some wrong done by her, or that he must
consider her a nuisance in his company—all the time pestering
him with her troubles and indisposition and not knowing how
to cope with them. These are the impressions coming to her
mind—not that she may no longer believe, in the back of her
mind, that the actual motive of her husband is a distorted idea
of his concern for her welfare. But these impressions are
emotionally so irresistible that she, whether she is now con-
vinced or only half convinced of them, has to revolt against
them, has to wipe them once and for all off her husband’s mind
and, more than that, has to instill into him an irrevocable
conviction of what it means to her to be his devoted and
faithful wife.

She does it by enunciating that a wife’s vocation lies in
sharing the destiny of her husband, who is her fortune, destiny
and refuge; by demonstrating her purity and sinlessness, for
which she does not deserve the punishment to be left behind,
and asserting that she knows what to do and does not need to
be told how to behave, that she will find full happiness in
serving him like a brahmacārīṇī, in living an ascetic life in the
forest, and that she yearns with every fibre of her being to
enjoy all the charms of nature even for a 100,000 years in his
loving company, bereft of which she would not even feel
happy in heaven were she given such a choice. But she does
not succeed since R. still thinks that in the first impulse of her
boundless love and due to an over-enthusiastic fancy for the
romance of forest life she, a tender lady brought up amidst the
comforts of city life and unaware of the terrors and hardships
of forest life, does not really visualize the hardness of reality:
the miseries, hardships and dangers awaiting her in the forest,
and that she, facing such adverse reality, may lose heart for
sheer failure to cope with it. And so he sets out to paint with
glowing colours all the terrors and hardships and dangers of
forest life—so as to disillusion once and for all her, what he
thinks to be, rash and romantic ideas and ideals springing forth
from her heart at the first impulse of her boundless devotion.

As R. paints the doṣas of the forest, S. apprehends what he has in mind, but this pains her all the more, since in the depths of her heart she knows nothing more joyful than to experience these hardships and miseries if only for the sake of her husband, in whose loving company they become, through her spirit of love and self-forbearance, sources of supreme joy and happiness. But R. does not read this inmost desire of her heart, and he has revealed this now openly, but he speaks of all kinds of ungrounded fears and scruples, and this is what tantalizes so much her heart that her husband, whom she has loved and served with ever-loyal devotion, thus creates an impression in her as though he had not grasped how unfathomable the depth of her love is; as though he had not intuited the all-in-all of her devotion, her total readiness to sacrifice her all in love for her husband. And so she once more asserts, lavishing all her affection on him and pouring out the sorrows of her heart, that she will take whatever miseries and hardships come in the way in a spirit of love and self-forbearance, thereby pointing to a prediction made by astrologers and a bhikṣunī in her father's house that it was her destiny to live in the forest and to the desire she has cherished ever since to accomplish this prediction; and once more enunciates the sacredness of the conjugal bond between husband and wife, which is so indissoluble as to even endure after death, and declares that she, a devoted and faithful wife, pure-hearted and stainless, ought not to be forsaken by him.

But R., being, as if, deaf even to the most heartfelt protestations of the unfathomable depth of her self-sacrificing devotion, S.—unable to grasp what is going on in his mind—is left in a state of utter desperation and, unable to move him by the sincerest of her asseverations, stages an almost frantic drama of a woman's psyche: in that she goes as far as to designate her husband ironically as a cowardly woman in the form of a man, a victim of dejection and fear,
belying the saying of the people that there is more brightness in him than in the blazing sun, and accuses him of degrading her, an ever-devoted, chaste and faithful wife like Sāvitrī, to a common woman sold by actors; in that she once more and most emphatically asserts and describes how she will experience all the miseries and hardships and dangers associated with life in the forest as sources of supreme joy and happiness and assures him that she will never be a burden to him ... a drama so fraught with despair at her frustrated longing for her husband's consent to her wish to share in his hardships as shows that she is short of no less than an emotional breakdown.

S. thus delivers the most unique testimony of a wife's love for and devotion to her husband—so unfathomable in depth and so total in its commitment and self-denial, that she considers it the most intimate desire of her heart, the greatest joy and happiness of her life to share the adverserst destiny of life with her husband, to take upon herself the gravest of miseries and hardships for the sake of him, who is her fortune, her destiny and refuge, who is the all-in-all of her life, in whose loving union all life, even amidst the gravest miseries and hardships, is heaven, in separation from whom all delights of the world, even heaven, are hell. And so her heart is deeply distressed and agonized at the thought that her husband may not read this intimate desire of her heart, that he may not even intuit how unfathomable the depth of her devotion is and how total her commitment and readiness to sacrifice her life for him are. And when R., turns, as if, a deaf ear even to the sincerest of her asseverations, she is left in a state of utter desperation, her mind being unable to grasp what is going on in the mind of her husband. But a woman with as indestructible a resolution as imperishable a devotion, with no less unfathomable a wealth of emotions than unfathomable a wealth of love, S.'s whole personality vibrates so vigorously in her excruciating frenzy of sorrow and despair as she pines for her husband's consent that, though herself at the edge of an emo-
ional break-down, she has withstood to give the fullest and most unmistakable proof of her devotion, a devotion so transparent in its integrity and firmness that, to be sure, even the hardest trials in days to come will not prevail over it, that, whatever will come to test her personality, will only be further testimonies of her fidelity to her sublime love and devotion.

Great testimonies of Sita’s sublime wifely devotion and loyalty in the midst of tantalizing experiences of anxiety, agony and pinings for her husband

Many pages could be filled with descriptions of S.’s unique devotion to her husband as it transpires everywhere in the poet’s depiction of R.’s and S.’s life in the forest.

—as e.g. in her wonderful protestations of her ever-loyal devotion to her husband, in answer to Ks.’s well-wishing fare-well counsel (II 34.19-21; 22-27)—cf. the wonderful verses 25-27:

nātantrī vādyate vīṇā nācakro vartate rathaḥ  
nāpatiḥ sukhamedheta yā syādapi satātmajā  ||25  
mitaṁ dadāti hi pitā mitaṁ mātā mitaṁ sutāḥ  
amitasya hi dātāram bhartāram kā na pūjayaḥ  ||26  
sāhamevaṅgata śreṣṭhā śrutadharmaparāvarāḥ  
ārye kimavamanyeyam strīnāṁ bhartā hi daivaḥ  ||27

or to the loving instructions given by Anasūyā, Atri’s venerable sage-wife, who is herself a symbol of sublime wifely devotion (II 109-110); in her fervent prayers for the welfare of her dear ones to the Gaṅgā (II 46.47-73) and Śyāma (II 49.13); in the manifestations of her exuberant joy she finds in sharing her husband’s austere life in the forest despite the fact that she is physically pulled down by its
hardships, in sporting with him in the romantic woods whilst taking delight in the enchantments of nature and the company of birds and animals—explicitly expressed in many places, but perhaps nowhere so beautifully as in R.’s pathetic lamentations—, to name only a few examples — —

but we shall restrict ourselves to such testimonies which are real touchstones of her love and devotion, involving her whole personality and subjecting her to great emotional trials.

In III 8 the poet gives us a wonderful example of S.’s concern for the spiritual welfare of R. S. has known her R. as ever and whole-heartedly committed to satyadharma, as always aspiring for righteousness for the sake of truth, goodness and peace, forbearing every injury done to him while refraining from every kind of himsā to others. But the sudden realization that her husband has promised to the sages of the Daṇḍaka forest that he will slay the Rks. for their protection, that he is entering the Daṇḍaka forest, weaponed with bow and arrow, though he has pledged himself, prompted by his firm resolve on following the word of his father, whole-heartedly to the life of an ascetic, has filled her with great anxiety. She fears that the use of arms may divert her husband from his commitment to asceticism in that it may arouse his ardour for fight so dear to Kṣatriyas—do not the tales of old teach us examples how the most devoted sages, by resorting to arms, have become infatuated with wrath and engaged in wanton cruelty, as a punishment of which they have gone to hell?—. Nay, she feels that the very idea of killing Rks. without provocation is a great offence against the dharma of a muni, whose duty is to keep his mind pure and untainted by himsā whilst devoting himself to austerities of his own self. And so she fears that, by becoming unfaithful to his commitment to dharma, to which he has pledged himself so whole-heartedly and with such firm and heroic resolve in obedience to the word of his father, the happiness of mind and spiritual welfare arising from it may abandon him. It is for this, the happiness and welfare of her husband, that she shows such deep anxiety, which is a pure and genuine anxiety untainted
by any didactic motivation though she cannot help appearing didactic. Nay, in her great humility and respect for her husband, she feels as though she is an inconsiderate woman displaying her fickleness in attempting to advise somebody who is the very embodiment of loyalty to dharma. But still, her wisely love and concern for her husband is of too tender a nature, her heart is too throbbling with tender feminine sentiments and emotional urges as that she could restrain herself from emptying her anxiety, howsoever she may feel the impropriety of her action.¹

Thus, S. manifests a concern that is the deepest a human being can show for a fellow human being since it touches the very depth of his self and affects the ultimate spiritual destiny of his being—cf. the wonderful verses of R.’s response, III 9.2:

hitamuktam tvayā devi snigdhayā sadṛśam vacah /
kulaṁ vyapadiśyantyā ca dharmajñe janakātmaje //2—

and 9.20:

mama snehācca sauhārdādidamuktam tvayā vacah /
parituṣṭo’smyahāṁ sīte na hyaniṣṭo’muṣiṣyate /
sadṛśam cānurūpaṁ ca kulasya tava śobhane //20—

and a concern that is deeply feminine—springing from a heart that is filled with tender sentiments and emotional urges, coupled with a bashful awareness of its impropriety, an awareness of it as something that has its root in womanish fickleness.

Before depicting with glowing colours S.’s great mental agony, which she suffers as a result of her separation from R. and the harassments inflicted on her by brutal Rv., V. shows us S. in a great emotional crisis. In doing so, he leads us with a profound psychological insight into the depths of her tender-hearted feminine psyche, which, though firmly rooted in wisely devotion, is tossed by a breeze of feminine fancies and moods surging up through the force of external circumstances into an unprecedented state of high emotions—to ebb away then in a depression of restless pensiveness.

It all starts with the appearance of the heart-stealing kana-
kamṛga—so irresistible in its unprecedented, spell-binding beauty and grace of movements (which the poet takes pains to depict with glowing colours) that Jānaki, who has grown a special liking for the enchantments of nature and the denizens of the forest, is so intoxicated by its sight that she simply cannot help feasting her eyes on it in sheer wonder and delight and cannot help begging her husband to secure it for her—as an object of wonderment for her and her relatives, if he captures it alive, or for its beautiful golden skin, if he kills it—, paying not the least heed to L.’s warning that the whole show may be the cunning trick of the sorcerer Mārica having a sinful motive in mind. (III 40.12-41.20)

Already in great emotional excitement, S., on hearing the agonized cry “O Sītā, O Lakṣmana”, is immediately filled with the utmost anxiety. And by this traumatic anxiety, she is carried away into a state of utter desperation when L. refuses her urgent request to go and save her husband, so totally losing control of herself as to misinterpret L.’s firm attitude and to charge him with the exorbitantly hurting words that he is an enemy in the form of a brother, who has no other desire than to destroy his brother in order to take advantage of her. Nay, at the sincerest assertions of L. that R. is unconquerable by any being in the three worlds, that the cry of agony was that of a Rk. who wanted to take revenge for the hostilities inflicted on the Rks. in Janasthāna and that in the face of this danger it would be a misdeemeanour on his part if he were to leave her, she flies into such an unprecedented frenzy as to pour outrage after outrage upon him—one more cruel than the other—picturing him as a villainous hypocrite, who, acting in the dark, has followed R. out of an evil desire for her. And though L. is already about to leave her against his own conviction, she, as if not yet convinced of his sincerity before he has not really given proof of it, as if not willing to allow him to have any second thought about it, as if not willing to see him hesitate even for so little as the fraction of a moment, threatens him with every kind of suicide; and vowing that she will never
touch even with her feet any other man than R., she is left in a state of a complete emotional break-down.

V. shows us in this great emotional ordeal of S. how even a wife of the greatest sublimity of character loses, prompted by her boundless love and devotion for her husband and owing to the tender nature of her feminine sentiments and emotional urges, so totally control of herself in a traumatic moment of anxiety that she indulges in the most cruel and hurting defama-tions against her own brother-in-law, who has not only treated her but with the purity of innocence with which a son treats his mother, but whom she herself has ever looked upon as the embodiment of pure and loyal devotion. (III 43)

After this frantic upsurge of emotions, S. is left in a state of silent grief and restless pensiveness, thinking about the fate of her husband. It is in this state that she is interrupted by the arrival of Rv. dressed as a parivrajaka, whose salutatory speech is so full of ambiguous compliments that she cannot help feeling a little strange about it—which the poet indicates in a hidden, delicate way. But a respectful lady ever honouring the Brāhmaṇas with due respect, S., in her mistaken belief based on Rv.’s external behaviour that he is a Brāhmaṇa, restrains her odd feelings and offers him all hospitality, without, however, being able to hide her internal restlessness, which is subconsciously nourished by her suppressed feeling of uneasiness: She stretches, as it were, her eyes to gaze upon R. and L. in the distance, and, after she has given a full introduction of herself and an account of her life, she says that R. would soon return from his hunt, thus hiding the real state of affairs. (III 44-45, passim)

Thus, though S.’s emotions, after their stormy upsurge, have ebbed away in a depression of restless pensiveness, it all looks as if another storm is bound to come and bound to come very soon with Rv.’s self-revelation of his identity and unholy intention, but the poet keeps us in suspense as to what this storm will be like till the Rk. has ended his “blandishing” “love” proposal (III 45.21-27).
S.'s reaction (III 45.28-43) is unique in its kind. Not only does she assert her firm devotion and loyalty to her husband and thereby, while drawing sarcastic, derogatory parallels with Rv.'s boastful self-assertion, extol the insurmountable greatness of R., not only, to speak in symbolic language, does she stand like an immovable rock against Rv.'s insolent assaults, but, prompted by her indignation at his exorbitantly mean and insolent intrusion upon her, she becomes like another Kālf, as it were, fuming with rage and contempt, scorning Rv.'s aspiration for her as an aspiration for the wife of a personality whose greatness of character is a world above the despicable lowness of his own, with words so full of abuse as would force any honourable man to gasp for relief.

"But you, a miserable jackal, desire me—a lioness unattainable for you. I am unable to be touched by you like the radial rays of the sun. (32) You wretched one are seeing plenty of golden trees—in that you desire, O Rv., the beloved wife of Rāghava. (33) You wish to extract from its mouth the fangs of a hungry lion, the foe of animals, or the fang of a swift-moving poisonous snake. (34) You wish to take away mount Mandara, the foremost of mountains, with your hand; you wish to drink deadly poison and then go in peace. (35) You are rubbing your eye with a pointed blade, you are licking a razor with your tongue—in that you wish to approach the beloved wife of Rāghava. (36) You wish to cross the ocean by clinging to a stone round your neck, you wish to catch both sun and moon together—in that you wish to assault the beloved wife of R. (37) Seeing blazing fire, you wish to capture it with your clothes—in that you wish to capture the blessed wife of R. (38) You wish to walk over pointed iron-lances—in that you wish to approach the respectable wife of R. (39) There is as great a difference between Dāśarathī and you as there is between a lion and a jackal in the forest, as there is between the ocean and a drop of saliva and as there is between the choicest liquor and sour gruel. (40) There is as great a difference between Dāśarathī and you as there is between the metals of gold
and lead, as there is between sandal-water and mud, as there is between an elephant and a cat in the forest. (41) There is as great difference between Dāśarathi and you as there is between Garuḍa and a crow, as there is between a peacock and a coromorant, as there is between a vulture and a crane in the forest. (42) As long as that R., whose power is equal to that of thousand-eyed Indra, stands there with bow and arrows in hand, I shall not decay, even if I am taken away by you, as little as a diamond swallowed by a fly. (43)"

Thus, S. reveals herself in her rejection of Rv.’s love-proposal both as a wife possessed of an unflinching firmness of devotion and fidelity to her husband and as a wife, who, though in a state of gravest anxiety about her and her husband’s fate and future, is so strong-minded, so self-assured of her virtue, so like a task-mistress lashing her whip, as to scourge her self-imposed courtier with the most abominable and contemptuous abuses ever heard of.

And when Rv., as if not having enough of her scorn, reiterates his proposal, resorting to bombastic braggings about his omnipotence and heroism, about the glamour and magnificence of his city, Laṅkā, which, so he thinks in his perverse imagination, would make S. forget human ladies and R., and to utterances disparaging R. as a poor ascetic, who has been banished on account of his weakness and is useless for S., and appealing haughtily to her conscience that she ought not to reject the lord of the Rks., who has personally come to her out of “love”, S. has only words of sarcastic contempt predicting an abominable end for him and all the Rks. (III 46—see also under Rāvana).

But the situation is too grave, and soon S. is subjected to a most tantalizing ordeal: She is forcefully seized by Rv. and abducted into the air; she is aghast to see Rv.’s ruthless slaughter of Jāṭāyu, who, trying to thwart his way, sacrifices his life for her; she is pestered again and again by Rv.’s per-
verse love-advances, and, finally, as he is rebuffed by her, she is confined in the Aśoka grove, heavily guarded by hideous Rākṣasīs, with the warning that, if she does not yield to Rv.'s wishes within twelve months, she will be cut into pieces by the cooks to serve as his break-fast. While spending her time in the Aśoka grove in deep sorrow and pining for her husband—a state in which H. finds her—, she is again tormented by Rv.'s advances and submitted at his instigation to the most terrifying threats of the Rākṣasī.

During these emotional ordeals, S.'s heart is first, at Rv.'s cruel abduction of her, pierced by frenzied pangs of agony fraught with tantalizing grief and fear, an agony expressing itself in her despair-ridden cries for R. and L.'s help, in her pitiful entreaties to the creatures of the forest to tell R. of her abduction and in her heart rending pathetic lamentations over her destiny, with all nature vibrating with her in sorrow and sympathy; an agony, however, blended with an outburst of wild fury and a sadistic desire to find an outlet for her disdain and scorn, which she then, amidst gravest emotional despair and fear, relentlessly heaps upon her self-imposed courtier, with provocative, sarcastic and abusing words, carried by a heroic spirit of firmness, strong-mindedness, courage of heart and a staunch pride in her wisely devotion. (III 47. 50-51)

This emotional gamut of mental agony and fear, of a surging wrath and desire to find an outlet for her scorn, of courage of heart and wifely pride, all prevailing at one and the same time, reaches the most dramatic climax in the wild abuses, scornful vilifications, bitter revilements and sarcastic, derogatory warnings by means of which she, meeting Rv.'s repeated love-advances, upbraids his abominable sinfulness and fickleness of mind, his exorbitant presumption in aspiring after the wife of a man who is a world above his despicable lowness of character and his shameful cowardice of robbing her in the absence of R. (III 54 ; V 19-20 passim; for more detailed contents see s.v. Rāvana)—all the time displaying a heroic
spirit of firmness, courage of heart and pride in her wifely devotion while yet, to the core of her being, afflicted with agony and grief and tossed by despair-ridden anxieties and fears.

While S. is alone with herself in the Aśoka forest, in the midst, though, of hideous-looking Rākṣasīs, lost in sorrowful musings, restless fears and tantalizing pinings for R.—while emaciated with fasting and penance,—which so impregnate her whole physical and external appearance as to make her look like Beauty, but divested of its embellishment (the poet uses a series of beautiful similes to express this idea)——it is all a wonderful, silent testimony of her sublime chastity, devotion and fidelity to her husband in the midst of agony and grief, which so impresses H. that his thoughts often and again stray away to R. and his state of mind, that he is prompted to reflect with praise and joy on the intimate bond of love uniting R. and S. (V 13. 15 passim) and that he relates all this with heart-felt sympathy to her husband. (V 63.12 ff.)

S.’s agony of heart is greatly intensified at the sight of approaching Rv. The poet draws all resources of poetic imagination to depict the fear haunting her mind and the overwhelming distress and pain of her heart—so impregnating every fibre of her person as to make her look like a divested figure of beauty and pining devotion—lost in an ocean of grief and praying to the Gods for the destruction of Rv. (V 17). And when Rv. subjects S. to the torturing persuasions and threats of the guarding Rākṣasīs, she looks like agony and fear embodied, yet in the midst of all despair she asserts her ever-loyal devotion and fidelity to her husband, for which she is ready to sacrifice her life; but, being so disconsolate, so filled with grief and despair at her never-ending miseries and so filled with pining thoughts of R., she breaks, before the very eyes of the Rākṣasīs, into most gloomy and frenzied lamentations, musings and imaginations, her heart being tossed hither and thither: from pathetic exclamations addressed to her dear ones—to disconsolate musings on her
miserable life so devoid of any hope that death would seem her only relief were it only that it took pity on her; from remorseful self-accusations about her past deeds—to impreca-
tions against her human existence and subjection to others, against not being able to end her life by her free will, and back to despair-ridden lamentations; from abuses of Rv.’s abominable sinfulness—to affirmations of her unflinching fidelity to R.; from disheartened broodings on the incomprehensible fact that R. has not come to her rescue inspite of his unexcelled prowess—to the consoling thought that he may not be aware of her location, and to memories of Jaṭāyu, who laid down his life for her, the only witness of her abduction; from playfully fancying what would happen if R. came to know her situation: turning Laṅkā into a cremation ground, he would cause endless sufferings to all the Rākṣasīs surpassing the suffer-
ings she has experienced from their hands—to vividly imagining that this will actually happen and happen very soon; from the midst of such hopeful visions to the despairing thought that the villainous and cruel Rks., who do not know righteousness, may cut her to pieces, a thought which drives her to still more pessimistic and gloomy, nay, even “unholy” imaginations (that R. and L. have given her up as alive; that R. has renounced his life for grief; that he, being a rājarṣi with dharma as his only desire, has no need for his wife; that, as she is out of sight, he has no affection for her; that she has been forsaken by him for her lack of merits and fortune; that R. and L. have laid down their weapons and are roaming about in the forest or have been killed by Rv.); imaginations which fill her with but one desire, the desire to die, were it that death took pity on her; imaginations which make her envy the tranquility of mind of the sages, who are unaffected by love and loss of love: But she, forsaken by R. and under the subjection of sinful Rv., has no other desire than to renounce her life. (V 23-24) In short, in her disconsolate state of mind, in her despair at her never-ending miseries, in her pining thoughts of R., her heart traverses the entire gamut of her despondent soul, so filled with all kinds of dark and gloomy
imagination as to make her even think R. has lost love for her and make her feel as if her only relief lay in renouncing her life, were it that death had pity on her.

Thus, we can sum up S.'s psychological demeanour in meeting the emotional ordeal of her abduction and confinement in the Aśoka forest as follows:

In her encounter with the gravest and most tantalizing sorrows, fears and pinnings, which so impregnate her personality as to leave her constantly engrossed with sorrowful musings and laments—as to make her a veritable emblem of sorrow and beauty, yet of silent, sublime fortitude—; which, at times, make her so disconsolate and so fill her with despair as to make her heart traverse the entire gamut of her despondent soul and make her give in to the darkest and gloomiest of imaginations, imaginations as dismal as that R. has lost love and interest for her, in the midst of which she feels she would that her heart would break and feels that her only relief would be that of renouncing her life were it only that death took pity on her—; in her encounter with such grave tortures and fears, S., governed by an unfathomable devotion and loyalty to her husband, reveals not only an unshakable firmness of conjugal fidelity, but a heroic spirit of strong-mindedness, of courage of heart and pride in her wifely chastity—a spirit so heroic indeed that she, notwithstanding her pangs of agony and fear, allows her wrath, hatred and her vindictive desire to find an outlet for her abomination of Rv. free vent to relentlessly gush out on him, using all her resources by way of abuses, vilifications, revilements and derogatory warnings, to chastise his exorbitant presumption, insolence, shameless cowardice and cruelty and his perversity of mind in aspiring after the wife of a man who is a world above his despicable lowness of character.

Annotation: Throughout the poet's depiction of the perversity of Rv.'s love, there shines through the great inspiring personality of S., who, on account of her physical as well as moral excellencies, has, against his own will, aroused feelings of adoration even in a brutal savage like him. S.'s personality
as an embodiment of all virtues, including her great physical excellences, is highlighted also in the context of H.'s observation of her in her emotional trials. All throughout the Rm. V. has depicted the beauty of S. only indirectly and much after his first introduction of her personality to the audience. This is a very delicate and, I think intended, device to bring out the over-all greatness of S.'s character: By first making his heroine give witness to her deep love and devotion for her husband, he reveals the great sublimity of her character and thus leaves an inextinguishable impress of her greatness of personality, a greatness which can no longer be surpassed by the high-lights of other merits, but only be unfolded or completed by them. By tacitly allowing S.'s physical excellences to transpire through the mouth of other characters, V. gives the natural complement to her spiritual personality.

From the abyss of S.'s emotional ordeals, V. leads us, in the Śītā-Hanumān-saṁvāda (for detailed contents see s.v. Hanumān), to a struggle of her heart in a conflict of sentiments and feelings: of oddness, fear, distress and anxiety on the one hand, and of wonder, hope and joy and confidence on the other hand:

It is feelings of wonder blended with oddness and doubt that imprint themselves first in her mind when first encountering H.—wonder at the sweet-sounding words of his encomium on R., oddness and doubt at the dream-like sight of his vānaratva (V 29-30).

It is hope and joy that arise from the midst of her sorrowful heart when H., to prove the authenticity of his presentation, asks her a chain of guess-questions—seemingly imposing themselves upon him and urging him to the conclusion that she is S., and that prompt her to introduce herself and her life-story and intimate her pitiful situation of him (V 31).

It is utmost delight and confidence abruptly converted into sorrowful fear and apprehensive anxiety when S. hears H.
convey R. and L.'s well-wishes, but, on H.'s coming closer and closer to her as they begin talking to one another with mutual confidence, all of a sudden suspects him to be Rv. —for too deeply engrained in her heart are her experiences of the harassment inflicted upon her by Rv. (V 32).

It is ecstatic joy expressing itself in overflowing praise and gratitude when H., in answer to her request, eulogizes with beautiful words betraying his deep psychological insight R.'s greatness and love for her and his concern for her welfare, as a proof of which he stands before her, and assures her of R.'s coming with the Vns. and rescuing her, and as a confirmation of it all presents to her R.'s ring (V 32 latter part; 34 beginning)——slowly, slowly to be supplanted by a surging fear latent in her heart that something has gone wrong with her husband, as he has not come to her rescue for such a long time; a fear expressed in the fact that she asks H. a series of questions inquiring whether, and expressing the hope that, everything is alright with R. concerning his emotional stability (whether undisturbed by agitation, grief and fear), his prowess, heroism and enterprises, his continued love for her and eagerness to rescue her, his happiness of mind (whether undisturbed by grief on account of her) etc. (V 34.12-30)

It is joy and grief that alternately flash through her heart when H., to console her and cheer her up, draws her attention to the fact that R. is completely unaware of where she is, assures her and swears that, hearing his words, he will immediately come with the Vns. and destroy the Rks., and draws with beautiful words a picture before her mind how her husband, plunged in grief and lost in thoughts about her, is totally disinterested in life and oblivious of anything else than her, assuring her that he is not leaving a stone unturned to recover her. It is joy at the thought of R.'s devotion to her and grief at the thought of his grief for her. And subsequently, her heart is torn between disconsolateness at her desperate situation (only two
months are left after which Rv. will cut her to pieces) and a re-awakening trust in R.'s prowess. (V 34 end, 35 beginning)

It is odd feelings of surprise mixed with moral scruples that are at the bottom of her heart when H., motivated by an anxious desire to put an end to her pitiful plight, offers to carry her on his back to R.—feelings which she conceals and delicately suppresses by pretending amusement at his offer and ridiculing his smallness of body and monkeyish nature; and, when H., a little humiliated at her "ignorance", proves his strength and power of transmutation, by pretending a gamut of fears of entailing too great risks which may frustrate all efforts made and lead to the ruin of R., L. and all the Vns.' lives, while indicating her real scruples—namely, that, respecting her devotion to R., she would not like to touch anybody else's body—only, so to say, by way of an appendix; though clearly enough to reveal her real mind to H., who, in his answer, expresses his delight and high praises at her exemplary wifely modesty, promising to relate everything to her husband. (V 35-36 beginning)

It is all with feelings of confidence and an anxious concern to have her husband know about her pitiful plight and have him come to rescue her quickly when she relates to H., in virtue of a token of recognition, with words directly addressed to her husband, an intimate story, ending her account with pathetic exhortations to R. and L., and then entrusts an armlet to H., requesting him to give it to R. and, if commanded by the latter to understand the task, to extend his counsel to him as to the ways and means of its achievement. (V 36-37 beginning)

It is a sudden upsurge of feelings of distress, fear and anxiety, amidst all the feelings of confidence and hope she has already gained, that take command of her—first revealing themselves obscurely in her stammering plea
interrupting H., who is already about to start off, to
give her regards to R. and L. and all the Vns. and to see
to it that R. will come to her rescue, but then breaking
out uncurbed as she feels yet unconsolated by H.’s words
of encouragement— —on her apprehending the absence
of the solacing company of H. and reflecting upon the
seemingly insurmountable task that faces the Vns. and
R. in crossing the ocean (since only Garuḍa and he (H.)
are known in the three worlds to have the power to leap
over the ocean).

This swaying to and fro, this mutual blend and supplanta-
tion of feelings of wonder, delight, hope and confidence on the
one side, and of oddness, fear, distress and anxiety on the
other side, which have been going on in S.’s heart all through-
out her colloquy with H.—a heart that oscillates widely and
abruptly, at the mere occasion of some sudden pensive or
apprehensive thought, towards the negative side of the scale
in the midst of all the fresh feelings of hope and trust— ,

reveal how deeply her agony—arising from the harassments
inflicted upon her by Rv.—has engrained itself in her
heart ;

reveal her pining love for R. which is sighing for relief and
an answer to the tantalizing uncertainty about the
reason of the absence of any sign from R. ;

reveal her joyful hope for an eagerly expected re-union with
R., a hope which, however, is blended with anxiety at
the thought of the seemingly insurmountable difficulties
thwarting its achievement ;

reveal last but not least the sublimity of her moral conscience
concerning her wifely chastity, which does not allow
her to violate any of the etiquettes of moral behaviour
expected of a noble and virtuous woman even under
the force of critical circumstances; and yet no less than
that her delicate feminine tactfulness, which prompts
her to rationalize her rejection of H.'s offer—so as not to hurt his well-disposed feelings of concern for her.

S. again proves her courage of heart and presence of mind in the midst of grievous circumstances when the Rākṣasīs question her who the Vn. is with whom she was talking. Knowing H. to be in danger and anxious to protect him from calamity, she eludes the truth by cynically remarking that it is none of her business to know the movements of Rks. assuming different forms at will; it must have been some Rk. in disguise who came to her and frightened her. (V 40 beginning 3) A little later, she casts her concern for H.—arising from the news that his tail has been set afire by the Rks.—into a fervent prayer to Agni for his protection.

When S. sees Rv. running towards her with upraised sword—restrained though by his friends, she feels that her last hour has come, that Rv. is going to take her life for the unflinching profession of her devotion to her husband and her refusal to become Rv.'s wife, or that Rv. has killed R. and L., who have sacrificed their life for her. And in this state of death-despair she feels remorse for having caused the destruction of her dear ones by neglecting H.'s well-meant offer; feels pity for Ks., whose heart she thinks will break at this unbearable news of the death of her only son and who, remembering with tears streaming down her face the stages of his life she followed up with such loving affection, will put an end to her life; and she feels prompted to curse the evil hunch-back Mantharā, on account of whom such misery has befallen Ks.

Thus, the poet depicts a S. who even in death-despair goes out in thoughts of remorse and pity to those for whom she considers herself the cause of death and irredeemable grief, a S. whose heart has no word of self-pity, but is united in love and concern with her dearest ones even in the gravest minute of her life, even in the very face of death itself. (VI 80.39-49)
Sita's joy
(VI 101)

S.'s reaction to H.'s happy news of R.'s victory is one of so unbounded a joy and gratitude as to almost rob her of her power of speech and urge her to lavish sentiments of praise on H. — intimating that she does not find anything on earth that would be a worthy reward for him; sentiments which H. acknowledges by saying that listening to her noble words which express her ever-loyal devotion to her husband and concern for his welfare is worth more than gold and jewels and even more desirable than the kingdom of the Gods and by requesting her, out of an anxiety to do her a favour, to allow him to kill the Rākṣasīs, who have caused her such immense grief. But S.'s nobility of mind is far above any feelings of retaliation and vindictiveness towards the Rākṣasīs, nay, she is all ready to forgive them, for, while she herself, she says, suffered the fruits of her former bad actions, they only carried out the command of their ruler Rv., and, more than that, it is the duty of all noble men of character to have compassion with all men, whether sinners or good men, for there is no one who does not commit faults, and thus to refrain from doing any injury even to such Rks. as are persecutors of mankind and sinners. Cf. the eternal verses 35-37:

na paraḥ pāpamādatte paresāṁ pāpakarmanāṁ
samayo rakṣitavyastu santaścārītrabhūṣanāh ///35
pāpānāṁ vā śubhānāṁ vā vadhārhānāṁ plavaṅgama
kāryaṁ kārūnyamāryeṇa na kaścinnaṃparādhyati ///36
lokahīṁśāvihārānāṁ rakṣasāṁ kāmarūpiṇāṁ
kurvatāmapi pāpāntaiva kāryamaṇsobhanam ///37

Thus, S., a paragon of wifely devotion, is also a paragon of nobility of heart, a heart that has compassion with all beings and forgives those who have done injury to her. And she is not only an embodiment of nobility of heart, but also an
embodiment of tenderness of heart, as we see from the context of her colloquy with H. and from the way the poet concludes her chapter by delicately depicting how R., after offering S. a jewelled necklace, recognizes her desire to offer it to H. and so tells her to give it to anybody she likes, and she then (a little earlier she has presented him with precious ornaments and clothes) gives it to H., "in whom ever manliness, valour, intelligence" reside (VI 116. 68-72).
A SYNTHETIC VIEW OF THE POET'S CONCEPTION AND PORTRAIT OF SITA'S CHARACTER

Conception

V.'s conception of S.'s character is identical with his conception of her as a paragon of wisely devotion. This conception, in turn, is identical with the conception of her as a paragon of spiritual sublimity. Her sublimity of character and her wisely devotion are identical expressions of her personality. As it is, V. also highlights her radiating beauty and charm, to show the over-all greatness of her personality. But, knowing that this only complements the spiritual sublimity of her character, never supplants it, he leaves it to his pattern of spontaneous improvisation to expound it to the audience, but much after his first presentation of her character to the audience.

V. does not leave it simply at an impressive portrayal of S.'s unfathomable wisely devotion, but he allows it to be subjected to the gravest emotional ordeals, to show both her heroic endurance as well as her tender feminine heart, which, in its overflowing love, is tossed into the darkest abysses of emotion. And so the poet leaves large stretches in his characterization of S. in her emotional trials to the pattern of spontaneous improvisation without ever losing sight of her paramount virtue that impregnates every fibre of her temperament.

But, all in all, S.'s character is conceived not so much,
though also, as reflecting a unity in disunity, i.e. a unity of wisely devotion in a disunity of emotional fluctuation, as it was the case with L., but rather as reflecting a unity versus disunity, a unity of wisely devotion versus a disunity of emotional tribulations. This conception of unity versus disunity also reflects a dramatic conception of personality versus experience. By giving us a portrayal of S.'s sublime wisely devotion and its heroic endurance, V. not only unfolds the whole of her sublime personality, but presents a sublime, dramatic human story. More than any other character so far treated, S. is both a character and a very essential part of the story itself. Her personality is no longer only dramatically involved with the story (as, e.g., D.), forms no longer only some of the dramatic highlights of the story (as, e.g., Rv.) [that of course should not mean that these characters are less integral parts of the story, in fact, all of them do have an important role to play and a vital message to convey], but she, or her potential role as an ideal character, is part of the very pulse of the story itself, a force for the sake of which the story has been primarily taken up by V.—once he was inspired by the vision of R.'s ideal character.

Portrait

S. is a paragon of wisely love, devotion and fidelity to her husband and, in that, an embodiment of the spiritual sublimity of feminine character. Her moral sublimity and her wisely devotion are identical expressions of her personality, a personality lofty in its nobility and yet deeply human and womanly in its tenderness of heart and overflowing emotional urges.

Her loving devotion to her husband is so unfathomable, in
depth and so total in its commitment and readiness to sacrifice her all as to make her consider it the most intimate desire of her heart, the highest joy and happiness of her life to share the most adverse destiny with her husband, to take upon herself the gravest of miseries and hardships for the sake of him, who is her fortune, her destiny and refuge, who is the all-in-all of her life, in whose loving union all life, even amidst the most grievous miseries and hardships, is heaven, in separation from whom all delights of the world, even heaven, are hell. And her heart is so tender in its overflowing love that the thought that her husband, who declines to take her with him to the forest for reasons of hardships and miseries that may await her in the forest may, despite her sincere protestations, not read this intimate desire of her heart, may not intuit how unfathomable the depth of her devotion is and how total her commitment and readiness to sacrifice her life for him are, fills her with grave distress and anxiety. But her resolution is too unbending, her wealth of womanly emotions too inexhaustible as that the incomprehensible reluctance of her husband to even accept the sincerest of her asseverations would not force her desperate heart to stage an excruciating drama of sorrow and despair, which, leaving her short of an emotional break-down, gives the fullest and most unmistakable proof of her devotion.

As deeply as her devotion manifests itself in her unflinching determination to follow her husband and in her wonderful professions of her loyalty to her husband, so it manifests itself in actuality during her stay in the forest with R. It manifests itself in the happiness she feels in sharing R.’s austere life and in the delight she takes in sporting with him in the romantic woods and enjoying the beauty of nature, and above all it manifests itself in her constant concern for the welfare of her husband and her dear ones: so in her fervent prayers to Gangā and Śyāma. It manifests itself in a concern that goes as deep as human concern can go for a fellow-being and is as tender in its sentiments and emotional urges as a wife’s concern can be for a husband—when she expresses her anxiety to R. that he
is in danger of becoming unfaithful to his commitment to dharma, to which he has pledged himself so whole-heartedly and with such firm and heroic resolution in obedience to the word of his father, and that, by doing so, he may lose happiness of mind and spiritual welfare.

In the midst of the austerities of forest-life, S.’s heart is overflowing with self-sacrificing concern and love for her husband, but, as if still greater heroism were demanded from her, it is subjected to a chain of gravest and most tantalizing emotional trials culminating in the excruciating ordeal of viraha—trials which make her deep devotion and love for her husband stand out in a heroic spirit of fortitude, courage of heart and wisely pride, a spirit so heroic indeed as to allow her wrath, hatred and her desire to find an outlet for her abomination of Rv. to gush out relentlessly on him, with all her resources being invested by way of wild abuses, scornful vilifications and bitter revilements, to chastise his exorbitant presumption, insolence, shameless cowardice and cruelty, and his perversity of mind in aspiring after the wife of a man who is a world above the despicable lowness of his character; trials, however, which beset her with the most torturing sorrows, fears and pinings and drive her to the edge of despair with herself, a despair that not only takes, in a traumatic moment of anxiety for her husband’s life, so totally control of her as to make her defame L. with the most vulgar and humiliating accusations and abuses, but traverses the entire range of her disconsolate and despondent soul down to the darkest and gloomiest abysses of imaginations, imaginations so dismal as that R. has lost love and interest for her, in the midst of which she feels as though her heart would break and her only relief would be that of renouncing her life were it only that Death took pity on her.

Indeed, so deeply engrained are her agony, fears and worries, so sighing for relief and an answer to the tantalizing uncertainty about R.’s coming to her rescue is her pining love for her husband that all the joy and hope and confidence she feels arising from the midst of her grieved heart at H.’s mes-
sages are too quickly extinguished, too quickly supplanted by feelings of fear, distress and anxiety at some sudden pensive or apprehensive thought that crosses her mind. And yet again, in the midst of such grievous circumstances, there reigns high S.'s sublime conscience of chastity, which does not allow her to violate any of the rules of behaviour expected of a virtuous and chaste woman like her, and no less high reigns her delicate feminine tactfulness, which prompts her to rationalize her arguments for rejecting H.'s offer—so as not to hurt his well-disposed feelings of concern. And, hearing that H. has been subjected to great trouble, she casts her concern into a fervent prayer to Agni for his protection.

S.'s agony of heart reaches its climax in a traumatic moment of death-despair, when she thinks that cruel Rv. is going to take her life and that R. and L. have been killed by him, which is for her a moment of remorse and pity for R. and L., whose death she deems to have conjured, and for Ks., upon whom she has brought irredeemable grief and misery—showing us a S. whose heart has no word of self-pity, but is united in love and concern with her dearest ones even in the gravest minute of her life, even in the very face of death itself.

Sublime as S.'s mobility of heart is in the midst of an ocean of grief and mental agony, as sublime is her nobility of heart in the midst of joy and jubilation at the happy news of R.'s triumphant victory: Hers is a heart that vibrates with boundless joy and gratitude to H. and expresses fine sentiments of appreciation for him intimating that she does not find anything on earth (gold and all the riches of the three worlds) that could be a worthy reward for him; a heart that is free of all misgivings and feelings of retaliation towards the cruel Rākṣasī, whom H. offers to kill for her; a heart that has compassion with all beings and readily forgives those who have done injury to her. And no less sublime is her feminine delicacy of heart, which prompts her to express her sentiments of gratitude to H. by presenting him with a precious jewelled necklace that R. actually had selected for her.
Indeed, S. is no less a paragon of feminine nobility and tenderness of heart than a paragon of wifely devotion and sublimity of character. It is the feminine nobility of her heart which makes her sublimity of character truly sublime, and it is the feminine tenderness of her heart which makes her wifely devotion truly devotional. S., then, is a perfect embodiment of spiritual sublimity and womanhood at the same time. This spiritual sublimity and femininity of character, which makes her an ideal of womanhood, is complemented by a radiating beauty and charm of personality—so that S. is the veritable embodiment of all excellences, physical and spiritual, of an ideal wife. The greatness of her personality, though, consists first and foremost in her spiritual sublimity of character, but it is rounded off by the grace and charm of her personality. Yet, though S. is an embodiment of all wifely excellences, an ideal of womanhood greater than whom perhaps no other poet has pictured (to speak in the words of Iyengar, p. 150), and so lives on in the hearts and dreams of all devout men and men of ideals, for what S. stands first and foremost, for what she has been given her place by the poet, is her undying wifely devotion and fidelity, uniquely demonstrated by her unflinching resolve on sharing her husband’s destiny—so that we can say with sage Agastyā: III 12.2-7—

adhvaśramena vāṁ kheda bādhate pracuraśramaḥ |
vyaktamutkāṇṭhate cāpi maithilī janakātmajā ||2
eśā hi sukhumāri ca duśkhaiśca na vimānītā |
prājyadośam vanam prāptā bhartṛṣneha-pracodita ||3
yathaiśā ramate rāma iha sūtā tathā kuru |
duśkaraṁ kṛtavatyesā vane tvāmanugacchati ||4
eśā hi prakṛtih strīṇāmāśṛṣṭe raghunandana |
samasthamanurajyante viṣamastham tyajanti ca ||5
śatahradānāṁ lolatvāṁ śastrānāṁ tīkṣṇatāṁ tathā |
garudānīlayoh śaighrīmanugacchanti yositaḥ ||6
iṇam tu bhavato bhāryā doṣaśreṣṭairvivarjita |
ślaghyā ca vyapadeśyā ca yathā devi hyarundhati ||7
1 For R.'s answer see s.v. Rāma.

2 We give here only a section of S.'s rebuff, namely vv. 32-42.

3 A great debate seems to have turned round the question how S., the paragon of all virtues, could tell a lie. For us this question is irrelevant. We refer the reader to Srinivasa Sastri, who has discussed this "problem" and given a very sound solution (pp. 390-392).
RAMA
A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER-PORTRAYAL OF RAMA

Rama as a youth

In the original version of his epic—as we reconstruct it—V. launched the story by conjuring up before the minds of the audience scenes of the magnificence and splendour of Ayodhyā—to focus gradually on the theme of his story. In the background of this illustrious atmosphere, he first introduced the ideal character of D. and the citizens of Ayodhyā and then focussed straight on the birth and name-giving of D.'s four sons, which was followed by a short characterization of their excellent qualities: sacred wisdom, heroism, concern for the welfare of the people, service to their father—in short, a characterization of them as models of virtues—and of their youthful dispositions. In this short character-portrayal he pictured youthful R. as the most eminent and the most beloved of them—being, as it were, like Swayambhu among the beings. By doing so and by painting in glowing colours the budding love between R. and L., V. sowed the seed of R.'s sublime character—instantly to bud forth and unfold itself before the minds of the audience in his own exposition of R.'s character in words appearing as though they were at the same time the reflections of D. and in the citizens' eulogies.

However, the audience of a slightly later age hardly
listened any two minutes to their bard to get a most comprehensive, though abstract, character-portrait of their hero—related by Narada to V. himself—, a portrait which the original author had kept reserved for himself to expound it to them after casting a spell over their minds of the glory and splendour of Ayodhyā and her king. Endowed with a full abstract portrait of R.'s character, as also with an abstract picture of his awe-inspiring life-experiences (s.1), the audience soon listened to the extraordinary circumstances of the birth of R. and his brothers and followed with wonder and awe youthful R.'s spell-binding heroic enterprises on the journey with Viśvāmitra (so great as to be fully estimated only by a sage like the latter) and at the court of Janaka, delighted time and again by the bard's interludes and edified by R.'s youthful curiosity for sacred wisdom, his fervent commitment to dharma and the words of his elders, his reverence and devotion to his elders and dear ones and his nobility of heart and tender disposition.

Instructive though these scenes by later bards may be with regard to the character-facets of R. they expound, we shall meet them all again, and with greater abundance and richness and in the light of a deeper, more existential involvement of the hero's personality. Yet, one feature we shall miss, and that is the landmark of these Bālakāṇḍa scenes: the aura of youthfulness pervading R.'s already manly personality. As for the abstract character-portrait of R. of s. 1 we must say that the portrait given by V. himself through the quasi-reflections of D. and the praises by the citizens of Ayodhyā is no less instructive and comprehensive and more vivid, more intuitive, more personal. And so, if we open the curtain on the character of R. as V. himself once upon a time had done, we feel like having the best access to his personality. To begin with, let us give the word for a moment to the poet himself (II 1-2):
Rama's sublime character-traits

Of them, in turn, the illustrious R., the enhancer of the joy of D., was the more eminent, like Svayambhu, as it were, of the beings. (10) And when Bh. had gone, R. and powerful L. then honoured his father like a God. (11) Giving everywhere priority to the order of his father and the duties towards the citizens, virtuous R. did many favours and works of charity. (12) Doing his duties to his mothers as they pertain to mothers, he, a man of exceeding self-control, looked after his duties towards his elders. (13) Thus D. and the Brähmanas and the citizens, all the inhabitants of the country were pleased with the virtuous conduct of R. (14) : For, he always speaks, possessed of a tranquil mind, sweetly and before-hand; even when addressed harshly, he does not give a reply. (15) He is pleased with a single favour done to him in some form or other, but, through his self-control, he does not remember even a hundred of offences. (16) Speaking with virtuous men advanced in virtuous conduct or in wisdom or in old age, he never even rested in the pauses of martial exercises. (17) He was of a blessed family, virtuous, free from distress, truthful and honest, instructed by the aged Brähmanas showing him dharma and artha. (18) He knew the essence of dharma, artha and kāma, was endowed with memory and brightness of intelligence and proficient in, and conversant with, mundane practices. (19) He was conversant with the śāstras, grateful, conversant with the hearts of men, a man who was proficient both in chastising and in bestowing favour, in accordance with justice. (20) He was conversant with expedition in the object of acquiring wealth and conversant with the aim of well-seen expenditure; he acquired perfection in a multi-
tude of even intermixed śāstras.(21) Having gathered artha and dharma, he gave himself to enjoyment and, yet, he was not indolent, having his share in the well-known practices of pastime arts.(22) He was competent in riding and training elephants and horses and the best in the world of those knowing the Veda of the bow and considered an unrivalled warrior from the chariot.(23) He was an assailant and combatant, skilled in leading the army and invincible in battle, even by the wrathful Gods and Asuras.(24) He was free from malice, one who subdued his anger, neither proud nor jealous, one who did not think lowly of people nor was a slave of time.(25) Thus endowed with the most eminent qualities, the son of the sovereign of the people was regarded in the three worlds as possessed of the qualities of the forbearance of the Earth, as equal to Brhaspati in intelligence and to Indra in heroism.(26) Thus R., with his excellences—pleasing all the subjects and bringing joy to his father, shone like the blazing sun with its rays.(27) As he was possessed of such virtuous conduct and invincible prowess, the likeness of the protector of the world, the earth decided upon him as her lord.(28) .........

"Many good qualities, O king, has your son.(18) Possessed of godly qualities, R., of true prowess, is like Indra, for he has excelled even all the Ikşvākus, O king. (19) R. is the best man in the world, devoted to satyadharma, conversant with dharma, truthful, possessed of virtuous conduct, and free from malice (20), forbearing, conciliatory, gentle, grateful and of subdued senses, tender-hearted, ever firm in his mind, handsome and free from malice.(21) Kind in speech to the people and sincere, Rāghava honours the highly-learned aged Brāhmaṇas.(22) Therefore, he possesses unequalled fame here, and his glory and lustre are growing. He is well-versed in all the weapons of Gods, Asuras and men.(23) When he goes to a battle on behalf of a village or city, he
never returns— with L.— without conquering it.(24) On returning from battle either on elephant or on chariot, he always asks the citizens about their well-being, like their own kinsman (25), concerning their sons, sacrificial fires, wives, their flocks of servants and pupils; asks them about everything like a father his own sons (26): 'Do your pupils obey you and do they adhere to their works?'— like this, the tiger among men, R., always addresses us.(27) At the misfortune of the people, he is extremely sorrowful, but on all their joyous occasions he rejoices like a father.(28) How fortunate that this son of yours, Rāghava, who is truthful, a great warrior, an attendant of the aged and of subdued senses, has been born for your welfare! How fortunate that he is possessed of the qualities of a son as is Kaśyapa, the son of Marīci! (29) All the people in the kingdom as well as in the excellent city wish learned R. strength, health and a long life.(30) People from inside and outside, countrymen and citizens, women, the old and the young worship everyday in the morning with collected mind all the Gods for the sake of illustrious R.— let their prayer, O king, by your favour be gratified.(32) Let us see your excellent son R.— dark-blue like a blue lotus,— the destroyer of all enemies, established as heir-apparent.(33) Quickly consecrate, O conferrer of boons, for our benefit that joyful son of yours resembling the God of Gods—intent on the welfare of all the people, possessed of nobility.(34)"

The poet, no doubt, reveals a gamut of intentions in this comprehensive, all-embracing portrayal of R.'s ideal character-traits. He reveals his intention of showing us, with D. and the citizens, R. as an ideal and perfect prince, the ideal of a king-to-be, and thereby foreshadows the heinousness and atrocity it would mean to frustrate such an ideal prince from becoming king. He reveals his intention of
showing us R. as an ideal and perfect character, ideal and perfect in every aspect of his personality, and, more than that, as a sublime, super-human personality unrivalled by any other man in the world, in heroism unrivalled even by the Gods, resembling, as it were, the God of Gods himself. And last but not least, the poet foreshadows his intention of showing us in R. a man of perfect idealism, who will endure the severest trials in life and will ever and unflinchingly adhere to his commitment to dharma; foreshadows his intention of showing us R. as a model of humanity; unexcelled though in sublimity, a fellow-traveller of man in his most tantalizing experiences of life. As a model of a prince, as a model of an ideal personality, as a model of humanity, he sings of R.

as possessed of a nature as eminent and sublime in greatness of character as that of the highest of Gods, as that of Svayamprabhu, the Deva of Devas,
and as human in emotion and temperament as that of the most human of humans—
as skilled and heroic in warfare as the most chivalrous and heroic of Gods like Indra,
and as tranquil-minded and self-controlled as the greatest of sages—
as altruistically concerned and benevolent as the closest of kinsmen, as father and son,
and as grateful and forbearant as the most forbearing of mothers like the Earth—
as exemplary in virtuous conduct and conversant with sacred wisdom and mundane arts as the greatest of gurus like Brhaspati,
and as filially observant as the most loyal servants like Kaśyapa,
and as respectfully attentive to elders as the humblest of pupils—
as unflinching in adherence to dharma and truth as the most
unflinching judges like Yama,
and as amiable and gentle as the most tender-hearted of children—
as proficient in the accumulation of *arthā* as the most exempl-
ary of *grhastraḥ*,
and as bountiful and generous as the most bountiful of kings
like Kubera—
as firm in endurance as the immovable Himavān
and as deep in character as the unfathomable Ocean—
as beautiful and effulgent in glory as the brightest of stars,
as the blazing sun,
and as beloved and dear to the people as their sons.

Rama’s heroism of character (*dharma-vīrya*) exemplified in his unflin-
ching resolve on following the 
word of his father and in his 
cheerful and forbearing
spirit in taking up his
commitment

After drawing this magnificent character-portrait of R.,
which he substantiates now and then by giving the audience
a few glimpses of his respectful and affectionate nature, V.
soon unfolds dramatically the unfathomable depth of his
heroic character:

II 16. As R. sees his father, who otherwise used to greet
him with cheerfulness and affection, afflicted with unprece-
dented grief and agony, his loving concern for him fills him
with such restlessness and anxiety as to make him impatient
to know whether he perhaps has incited his father to anger
without his knowledge, or whether perhaps mother Kai. has done so; impatient to ask forgiveness and profess his boundless remorse if he should have offended his dear father, who is a God before his eyes; impatient to know whether his father has some desire on his heart and to promise with a zealous heart to do whatever he wishes from him, even if it were to sacrifice his own life.

And when Kai. declares with brazen impudence that the king at the time of the war between the Devas and Asuras had given her two boons and at that time she had asked him for Bh.'s installation and R.'s banishment, and that, if he wished to make his father truthful to his promise, he should abide by his order, which she then explicates,—R., hearing these cruel, traumatic words ("resembling death", to speak in the words of the poet), is not the least agitated. Nay, in his boundless filial love and unflinching commitment to dharma, he responds with such heroic equanimity that he not only cheerfully and loyally accepts these brutal words with an immeasurable spirit of forbearance and self-denial, but loses himself so completely in his self-sacrificing concern for his father as to go out to express his inability to understand why his father does not welcome him as before, why he has not told him his intention himself and why he keeps his eyes pressed on the ground and sheds tears—when he should know that it is his son's most intimate desire of his heart to do whatever favour to him—his father, benefactor and king, when he would offer S., the kingdom and even himself to Bh. on his own account and how much more if he is asked so by his loving father and thereby can help to maintain his promise and fulfil the desire of Kai. How deeply engrained in his heart are his commitment to dharma and his sense of filial duty to obey the word of his father! So deeply, indeed, that he would think it to be as much a matter of course for his father to know that it is his son's most intimate desire to do any sacrifice for him, even to the
point of sacrificing his life, as it ought to be a matter of course for his father to demand any amount of self-sacrifice for him—his son, howsoever big it may be. And the thought that his father may not know this and that it may cost him immeasurable grief to enjoin his order on him perturbs his heart, a heart which so throbs with love for his dear father as to not know anything greater than service to him—while it does not even occur to him what it may mean to his father to lose his beloved son, whom he has ever loved so dearly, out of his eyes.

And when Kai., instead of acknowledging the heroism of these words of R., shamelessly urges him to delay no longer and immediately send messengers to Bh., for, until he has reached the forest, his father, who is unable to talk to him out of shame, will not take bath and eat—a gross lie to cover her impatience to see R. expelled—, R. meets such heinous cunning with a response of a zealous eagerness to exchange his life of seeking artha for a life of seeking dharma—in order to do a favour to his worthy father, for the sake of whom he would be ready to even forgo his life, since there does not exist any greater observance of dharma than obedience to one's father and carrying out his words. Nay, even without being told so by his father, he would most gladly and eagerly obey her words if she had requested him to go to the forest since she is his mother and has a right to expect any sacrifice from him, her son; but it looks as if she did not believe in any merit of his since she has not straight-away intimated her order to him, instead, has intimated it to her husband. And he leaves her with the assurance that he will go to the forest and the request to her to see to it that Bh. will protect the kingdom and carry out the word of his father.

We gasp in awe and reverence at this unfathomable forbearance and selflessness of R., at this lofty homage to the word of his father and this extraordinary filial respect for
his unworthy mother Kai. Not only does he, in his unflinching commitment to dharma and his sublime, selfless devotion to the word of father—which for him is the par-excellence expression of dharma—forbear all the unjustic upon him by Kai. (the poet describes him as he leaves with the words:

\[ \text{na cāsyā mahātīṁ lakṣmīṁ rājyanūsopakārṣati} / \\
\text{lokakāntasya kāntatvāṁ śītaraśmeriva kṣapā} //58 \\
\text{na vanaṁ gantukāmasya tyajatāśca vasundharāṁ} / \\
\text{sarvalokātigasyeva lakṣyate cittavikriyā} //59 \],

and forbear it with heroism and enthusiasm; not only does he go out to accept her most shameless and mean words—spoken in a spirit of ruthless ambition diametrically opposed to the discretion which he extends to her—as words prompting him with an eagerness to renounce all selfishness for the sake of gratifying his father; but he even expresses his regret that she did not personally give him this order when he, a loyal son, would do her any favour she would ask from him as a mother; his regret that she does not appreciate sufficiently enough his self-sacrificing motives—while, in reality, Kai. knows too well R.'s unflinching commitment to truth and makes use of it with the most shameless cunning—so as to shut off the last ways for a possible escape of D. from his promise.

II 17-21: With howsoever heroic equanimity R. forbears his calamity, an equanimity so strong that he is able to restrain any feeling of grief coming up in his mind at the imminence of his traumatic intimation to mother Ks., that he is able to show no sign of perturbance in order not to cause any shock to his relatives (II 16.59-61), the very thought of the immeasurable pain his news is bound to inflict upon Ks. cannot but fill him with distress (II 17.1), and the sight of her engrossed in devout prayers to Viṣṇu for his welfare and her affectionate welcome to him—breathing an aura of happiness and joy at her prospect of the glorious consecration of her
son—cannot but prompt him to betray his distress in the very way of communicating his news to her (II 17.8-16).

R.'s intimation arouses an unprecedented agony in Ks., who feels that all her life was but a life of never-ending pain with solely her hope for her son sustaining her, that, since this last ray of hope is extinguished, it would have been better for her never to have borne a son, for then she would have only to suffer the pain of being a childless woman, but not the pain of being a queen humiliated and insulted by her co-wives; who feels as though everything is black and dark for her, all her life useless, all her religious vows and austerities in vain, and no relief from this burden of grief, no mercy even on the part of death (II 17.17-33). And Ks.'s agony, in turn, arouses the wrath of L., who, prompted by his love and loyal devotion to his brother, gives vent to his indignation at the unwarranted injustice behind the order of D., appealing to R. to take charge of the kingdom by force under the auspices of him, who will shield him like Death and who, unassailable by anybody, will root out whoever should try to obstruct him, and promises Ks. to engage his whole prowess to restore justice to R. and dispel her sorrows (II 18.1-15). In her bitter agony Ks. finds these words of L. a welcome relief and so, in her feeling that her son is the victim of injustice, she takes, out of her deep love for him, recourse to a little bit of cunning in as much as she wants to bind him to her by reminding him that it is as equally high a duty of a son to serve his mother as is obedience to his father and expresses her formal disapproval of his going to the forest, threatening that, if he fails to listen to her order, she will commit suicide (II 18.16-24).

The way R. meets these emotional eruptions of Ks. and L. reveals the unfathomable depth of his heroic character. He meets them with delicacy and tactfulness and his loving acknowledgement, but, at the same time, with an uncompromising firmness and steadfastness that does not allow him
to swerve an inch from his commitment to dharma, even though this conduces to the heart-wringing grief of his mother and brother; an uncompromising firmness of commitment not to an abstraction, but to a dharma that aspires not for equity for the sake of equity, but for righteousness for the sake of truth and goodness and forgoes every concern about his own welfare, in a spirit of utmost selflessness and forbearance towards whatever injustice done to him; to a dharma that is the expression of the most sublime, the most selfless filial love for his father—to a dharma, thus, that has its resonance not in the fulfilment of a merely temporal and emotional good, but realizes that which is the deeper, the everlasting good of all of them though it may fill their hearts with sorrow and agony; and so, to a dharma that, uncompromising though it may be, that, heart-wringing though it may be, has in view a more supreme realization of the good of both of them, a deeper concern, a deeper love for them, which has its resonance not in a temporal attachment, but is firmly grounded in truth and goodness.

While R. engages himself in a full-grown debate with L., which unravels the deepest grounds of his unfathomable heroism of character, while it reveals all the gamuts of L.’s heart (18.1-15,32-36; 19-20)—we have discussed it extensively s.v. Laksmana—, he acquiesces in meeting Ks.’s despair-ridden outburst of agony and her disapproval of his going to the forest with a tactful delicate (though no less energetic) reminder that it is the highest duty of a son to follow the word of his father, which he substantiates as well with accounts of old as Ks. did earlier and with insistent entreaties for her consent; in short, he acquiesces in arguing with his mother with the delicacy and tactfulness that becomes a loyal and respectful son. (II 18.25-31,37-39)

And Ks. takes R.’s reminder with a silent approval, but, howsoever she realizes and appreciates his high-minded inten-
tion, howsoever she has been impressed by his professions of his allegiance to his sanātana dharma to accomplish the words of his father, she cannot find consolation, for the painful thought of R.'s austere life in the forest—contrasted with the luxurious life he has been hitherto accustomed to, the painful thought of his separation from her, make it almost impossible for her to admit this to happen; and so she entreats R. to allow her at least to follow him like a cow follows her calf. As R. faces this disconsolate despair-ridden disposition of his mother, he, in order to put this idea once and for all out of her mind, howsoever this may grieve his own heart, cannot but feel urged to inculcate upon her her mission, her sanātana dharma as a wife to attend upon her husband, her God and master as long as he lives, a mission now more momentous than ever before in view of the fact that her husband has been subjected to the greatest agony of his life and is left to the mercy of the wiles of Kai., who has deceived him, and to inculcate upon her her duty—as irrevocable to her as to him—to accomplish the word of father, who is king, husband, preceptor, the foremost lord and master; thereby consoling her by assuring her that Bh. will attend upon her with filial affection, by encouraging her to spend her time in devout homage to the Brāhmaṇas in expectation of his arrival and by promising that he will accomplish her desire when he returns from the forest after fourteen years. (II 21)

We see, thus, a R., who, tactful and delicate though he is in meeting his mother's first emotional outburst, is necessitated by her renewed disconsolateness of mind, in the midst of which she urges him to take her along to the forest, in view of his duty and in view of the realization of her own spiritual happiness, to inculcate upon her the momentousness of her wisely mission to attend upon her husband, who is her God and master and who has been subjected to the greatest agony of his life, so as to motivate her to give up her frenzied idea; is necessitated, thus, to take upon himself, with all tactfulness and filial respect, the role of an instructor, or better,
of a counsellor at a moment where he knows his mother's heart to be in a disposition so fraught with disconsolateness and near-to despair that only a strong motivation recalling her anew to her mission in life would lead her back from her emotional paroxysm.

II 23-27. 28. For R.'s supreme altruistic motive in remaining adamant to S.'s plea to share her husband's exile see s.v. Sītā.

While it costs S. almost an emotional break-down till she succeeds in persuading her husband to allow her to go with him, it takes L. only a little persuasion to do so, and this inspite of his ignoring the possibility of Kai.'s harassment of Ks. and Sumitrā, which R. holds out to him as one of the objections (the other being that Ks. and Sumitrā may not be able to sustain themselves). The poet remains absolutely silent as to why R. gives in to L. so easily, as in contrast to S.; yet it is almost evident (though tacitly presupposed in the minds of the audience) that R., in the mind of the author, first of all does consider L.'s arguments—trivial though they may be—that Bh. will treat Ks. and Sumitrā with honour (and Ks., who possesses thousands of villages, will be able to maintain thousands like him) as sufficiently grounded since he does believe—much more strongly than L. himself—in the sincerity and benevolence of his brother Bh.—to this he bears witness several times, in fact, this is the consolation he gives to the people of Ayodhyā following him in desperation—; and that, secondly, R. has not to worry about the possibility of his brother losing heart or courage in face of difficulties and dangers as it would be the ease with S., a tender-hearted lady unaccustomed to the hardships of forest-life, since he knows him to be a mighty and fierce warrior, who is able to defy the hardships and miseries of forest-life. When R., nevertheless, first objects to L.'s request, he is therefore motivated more by a tactfully hidden consideration not to demand such
heroic renunciation from his brother rather than by worries about Kṣ. and Sumitrā—true these worries are there subconsciously in his heart, but they are, as said above, sublimated by his trust in Bh.'s benevolence—; by a consideration, thus, so supremely selfless and altruistic as that he wishes to asseverate complete freedom to the feelings and inclinations of even his closest friend, with whom, though, he would share all his joys and sorrows and to whom, though, he would empty his heart whenever it has to say something and whatever it has to say and who, though, he knows would be all too eager to share even the gravest hardships with him—as asseverate which he does by drawing in a rationalizing manner L.'s attention to certain anxieties which he pretends are perturbing his mind, but which are, in actuality, not so grave as to be real barriers that ought to restrain his brother from his zeal to follow him and which he thus also immediately puts out of his mind without any second thought as soon as L. declares them to be ungrounded howsoever trivial though his declaration may sound.

Annotation: There is no positive evidence to show that our interpretation is correct and an alternative interpretation (the only alternative interpretation possible) considering R.'s spontaneous consent as an outflow of his special affection for L., which is so strong as to make him overlook his anxiety about Kṣ. and Sumitrā is wrong. But we would intuitively feel that the second alternative is impossible for the reasons given above and also from the point of view of the very nature of R.'s response to L.'s declaration:

rāmāstvanena vākyena suprīṭaḥ pratyuvāca tam/
vrājāprcchasva saumitre sarvameva suhṛjjanam //11

For, such an extreme and abrupt response on the part of R. can be explained only if it presupposes his being psychologically prepared for, nay, more than that, his julling himself in the expectation of L.'s company. We
feel this psychological expectation of R. unmistakably expressed in the words *anena vākyena suprīṭah*.

In the scenes to come—all, somehow or other, parting-scenes, the poet makes R. display many a noble feature of his character: first and foremost,

his cheerful and unflinching spirit in taking up his commitment, realized in

his boundless generosity in distributing wealth to Brāhmaṇas, priests, pages and the poor (II 29);

in his giving expression, to console his grief-forlorn father, to the exuberant joy he finds in making his words true and living an ascetic life in the forest, a joy so great that he does not wish the kingdom or happiness or even Maithilī at the cost of making him untruthful (II 31 end);

—a spirit, however, no less permeated with heartfelt affection and sympathy:

heartfelt affection and sympathy for his parting relatives, especially his father D., and his mother Ks., whom he does everything to console (II 31.28-37; 33.1 ff.; 34.29-31) and whom he motivates to be a solace to one another in grief (II 33.16-19; 34.30); whose grief wrings his heart as severely as it does theirs, and the pitiful sight of whom running after the chariot in desperate agony and crying out to the charioteer to stop is so unbearable to him that he, in order to conceal his sorrow from them and to shorten their trauma of agony, urges Sumantra not to listen to the plea of D. to stop the cart, but to drive on faster, bidding him to tell the king, if
asked, that he could not hear him on account of the tumult (II 35.29-34);
and to all of whom he sends affectionate greetings, messages of consolation and exhortation through Sumantra (II 52.11-16)——

heartfelt affection and sympathy for the citizens of Ayodhyā—incessantly following him,
whom he does everything to persuade to go back and whom he advises to transfer their affection and love they cherish for him to Bh., who is good-natured, possessed of all virtues and qualities and who will do everything to remove their sorrows and fears and will conduce to their happiness (II 40.5-10);
and whose grief and incessant devotion to him—becoming the more intensive the more he dissuades them—deeply move his heart, but urge him, in view of their unflinching determination to follow him and bring him back—which would subject him to still graver sufferings—, to leave them tacitly behind, however this may agonize their hearts (II 41.16-21)——

heartfelt affection and sympathy for Sumantra,
whom he consoles as he sees him weeping for grief at his departure by gratefully acknowledging his devotion to him and requesting him to be a solace to, and pay obeisance to, D. and convey his greetings and messages of consolation and exhortation to D., Ks., Bh., etc., which he explicitates;
whose heart-rending supplications—prompted by his inability due to a paroxysm of grief to bear the thought of leaving his master and returning to Ayodhyā alone—to allow him to find his happiness in following him and serving him with loyal devotion he gently diverts by motivating him to do him the favour of seeing to it that Kai. will obtain her
desire (see s.v. Sumantra).

In short, V., in these parting-scenes, makes R. display a gamut of emotional manifestations all converging to depict his heroic sublimity of character—expressing itself in his unflinching and enthusiastic spirit in taking up his commitment, on the one hand, and in his gentleness and nobility of heart revealing itself in his deep affection and love for his dear ones as also for all the citizens of Ayodhya, whose grief wrings as much his heart as it does theirs and whom he does everything to console, on the other hand: both an expression of the same boundless spirit of altruism and total self-nega-
tion which is so characteristic of his personality.

All throughout, R.'s (first stage of) forest-life bears witness to his heroic commitment to the fulfilment of the word of his father: a life in utter austerity—reflecting the sincerity and earnestness of his determination, and a life of supreme happiness—reflecting the cheerful spirit with which he has taken up his commitment, a happiness, no doubt, enhanced by the splendour and charm of nature and the loving company of L. and S., upon whom he allows it to flow out with incessant affection and gratitude and an insistent urge to share and intimate the sentiments of his heart. The poet tacitly alludes to this overflowing happiness of R. every-
where in the depiction of his first stage of forest-life, but perhaps nowhere does he depict it with such rapturing charm as in the wonderful scene where R. intimates to S. his extreme happiness at experiencing in her loving company the enchan-
ting beauty of the Citrakūta forest (II 88-89), or in the charming scene where R. delicately expresses his gratitude and intimate affection to L. for his building a graceful cottage after he (R.) himself has, with rapturing enthusiasm, selected a beautiful site for it at the instigation of his brother, who, while faithfully carrying out his request to build a cottage, tactfully declined his offer to choose a site (III 14).
Happy and firm though R. is in his commitment, it is not so that he would never think of his dear ones at home or of the people of Ayodhya. Nay, the very first night they spend away from Ayodhya makes him feel as though all nature surrounding them was weeping; makes him deeply pensive about the immense grief the city of Ayodhya will feel at their absence and, only as he diverts his thoughts to the good-nature and filial affection of Bh., gather again confidence in the welfare of his father and mothers; and makes him express his gratitude to L. for his loyalty in following him, as otherwise he would have had to search for an assistant to guard and protect S. (II 41.1-8).

And as he spends the first night without the comforting presence of Sumantra, the thought of whose ardent devotion to him—pouring itself out in heart-rending supplications—and of his having had to decline them has left an unspoken sore in his heart, even he, the very embodiment of steadfastness, for once is overcome with deep depression and self-pity as his mind goes out to his father, and in this state of depression envisages a gloomy picture of the evil and destructive agency of Kai., who, having entrapped D., a victim of infatuation to her charms, in the clutches of her shameless cunning, may now give the king the death-blow and may in her bitter hatred harass, or even kill, poor Ks., the thought of whose never-ending sufferings for his sake fills him with boundless grief and remorse and urges him to request L. to go to Ayodhya and protect her against the evil doings of Kai. (II 47.1-27).

A son of such sublimity of character that he sacrifices his total self in his filial love for his father; a son of such high-minded filial respect for Kai. as a mother that he is reluctant to think anything bad of her even when aware, and forcefully made aware by L., of her cruel intention as well as of the stunning transformation in her relation to him as a son; a paragon of putradharma, R., in a moment of a deep depression
occasioned by the absence of a loving friend, whose heart-
rendering supplications to take him with him to the forest he
has had to turn down, a depression that at once makes him
think of the agony of grief-forlorn D., so goes out of the way
that, what in his filial regard he would have never been ready
to even think of, however often this was brought to his mind
by his relatives—namely the visualization of the truth of the
heinous and cruel activity of ambitious Kai.—now oozes out
unhampered and so strengthens his fear of her cruel harass-
ments of D. and Ks. that he feels an urge to send L. to
Ayodhya to protect his mother against her evil designs; and
so indulges in self-pitying imaginations that he even plays
with the idea that D. has expelled him on account of his
infatuation for Kai.—imaginations which otherwise would
have been so sacrilegious to him that he would never have
allowed them even to come to his mind.

Exceptional though it is and seemingly untrue of R.'s
nature—this paroxysm of anxieties—in its sudden eruption
of unprecedented misgivings against Kai., an eruption, how-
ever, which does have an explanation in the extraordinary
situation into which his heart has been tossed: the absence
of the loving company of Sumantra, the thought of his ardent
devotion and of the decline of his heart-rendering supplications,
the thought of the agony of grief-forlorn D. and Ks.—sub-
consciously convulsing his heart, the thought of the seemingly
endless journey of hardships and trials lying before him—
exceptional, as we said, and seemingly untrue of his nature
as R.'s paroxysm of anxieties may be, it only reflects together
with his earlier pensive musings on the eve of the first night,
how intimately his heart and mind are with his dear ones in
Ayodhya; it reflects his human tenderness of heart, his
intimate affection and loving concern for his dear ones in the
midst of all the heroic firmness to his commitment: a commit-
ment to which he will be ever and unflinchingly loyal, even
at the cost of its causing grief and agony to his relatives—
and in as much this commitment is itself an expression of the
most heroic love, the most sublime altruism; and yet a commitment that is never a cause to him to forget his tender human affections and does never prevent him from giving vent to a gamut of emotions convulsing his heart. R., thus, is not only the most fervent and heroic in commitment, not only the most sublime in nobility of character, but also the most human in tenderness of heart—which is but another and the most capturing expression of his sublimity of character.

Again and again we meet this human tenderness of R.’s feelings in the course of the Rm. We meet it in his heartrending lamentations and eruptions of grief at the news of D.’s death (II 95 passim); in his tear-choked fare-well to his mothers (II 104.25); in his feeling sad and homesick for the intimate affection of Bh. as L., while describing to R. the spell of the winter-season, evokes and praises Bh.’s selfless love with pathetic images (III 15.28-38 // 36 etc.); and last but not least in his tantalizing agony at the loss of his beloved S.

We said that R., prompted by the loving company of L. and S., is always filled with happiness and that this happiness of his flows out with affection on them. At one occasion, however, when L. oversteps his limits in his zeal to protect his brother and, at the mere sight of Bh.’s army, falls into so dark apprehensions as to think Bh. has come to kill them and to vow—with words breathing wrath and vengeance—destruction upon Bh., who, after all, the cause of all misfortune, rightfully deserves to be killed, as he was the first to inflict harm on them, as well as to Kai. and the entire host of “enemies”, R. not only reproaches L. for his rash, unjust apprehension and displays before his mind the pure, selfless intention of Bh., but gently puts him down by saying that, if he spoke those words out of a desire for the kingdom, he would tell Bh., and Bh. would gladly agree—words so effective that L., to speak in the words of the poet, enters his body for shame. It appears as though R.’s ironical remark
was meant to hurt L., at least so it would look from the impact it has on L.’s feelings. But actually, R.’s irony is an irony with affection; a wise measure to make his younger brother, as he has gone out of the way in reviling Bh., silent as fast as possible and, secondly, to reveal it to him how much he has overstepped his limits of decency. In fact, R. is so tactful when he sees his brother ashamed as to immediately divert his feeling by saying (II 91.10-11):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{vri} \text{di} \text{tām} & \text{ laks} \text{ma} \text{n} \text{a} \text{m} & \text{ dr} \text{ṣ} \text{ṭvā} & \text{ rāg} \text{hava} \text{ḥ} & \text{ pratyuv} \text{āca} & \text{ ha} / \\
\text{e} \text{ṣa} & \text{ man} \text{ye} & \text{ mah} \text{ā} \text{bh} \text{ā} \text{h} & \text{ ur} \text{i} \text{h} \text{ā} \text{sm} \text{ā} \text{n} \text{d} \text{ra} \text{ṣ} \text{t} \text{u} \text{m} \text{ā} & \text{gata} \text{ḥ} & //10 \\
\text{van} \text{avās} \text{an} \text{um} \text{d} \text{hy} \text{ā} & \text{ya} & \text{ gr} \text{h} \text{ā} \text{ya} & \text{ prati} \text{ne} \text{śyati} & / \\
imàm & \text{ vāpye} \text{ṣa} & \text{ vai} \text{de} \text{him} \text{a} & \text{y} \text{a} \text{nta} \text{s} \text{u} \text{kha} & \text{se} \text{vin} \text{ī} & //11
\end{align*}
\]

For R.’s sublime arguments professing his unflinching commitment to his filial duty in response to Bh.’s entreaties to him to accept the kingship see under Bharata.

**Rama’s commitment to the protection of rṣis**

Though R. is unflinchingly committed to a life of austerity and asceticism and to a life of *ahimsā*, in obedience to the word of his father, he turns a willing ear to the supplications of the *rṣis*—looking up to him as king of the Ikṣvākus excelling in renown, valour, filial duty and *dharma* and their virtual ruler and protector in the forest, and appealing to his duty as a king² to protect them and save their lives from the cruel Rks. harassing them (III 5.7-21). Not only does he willingly promise them protection, but he declares that incidentally it is for the accomplishment of this task that he has come to the forest (III 5.20). By this, R. reveals that to commit him-
self to his duty as a Kṣatriya to kill evil Rks. in order to save the lives of virtuous sages is not only compatible with his duty as an ascetic, but both are the expression of one and the same ideal of dharma.

Yet, for S. this is not intelligible. Deeply worried about his spiritual destiny, she fears that, by promising the sages to kill the Rks., to have recourse to hiṁsā, he has become unfaithful to his commitment to the dharma of an ascetic, whose duty is to keep his mind pure and untainted by hiṁsā, a dharma to which he has pledged himself so whole-heartedly and with such firm and heroic determination in obedience to the word of his father; and that by doing so he may lose happiness of mind and spiritual welfare (III 8).

R. acknowledges her deep love and concern for him with affectionate and grateful words, but immediately sets out to inculcate upon her the invariability and sacredness of his duty as a king to protect the lives of innocent and virtuous sages, who have renounced all worldly desires and given themselves completely to austere penance and whose virtual lord and protector he is, from the cruel harassments of the Rks. And he does it by first drawing her attention to a statement made by herself that the bow is worn by Kṣatriyas so that there may not be any sound of distress and then by giving a pathetic account of the sages’ fear-ridden description of their harassments by the terrible, man-eating Rks. and their own reluctance to mete out punishment to them—lest they lose their spiritual merits—as well as of their beseeching supplications to him—their lord and refuge in the forest—to protect them and his assurance of his full protection to them; an account which he ends by emphasizing the invariability of the promise he has given them—venerable Brāhmaṇas, a promise so sacred that he could not forget it even at the cost of his life or that of S. and L., in a matter so momentous as to demand his full cooperation even without his being requested for it, how much more then when he has given a solemn pledge. (III 9)
V. does not give us any direct clue to the philosophical presuppositions of why R.’s role as an ascetic in the forest is different from the role of the other ascetics in the forest. But it is all too clear from R.’s own words that, though he has pledged himself full-heartedly and with unflinching determination to a life of austerity and ascetism in obedience to the word of his father, he cannot, since he is a Kṣatriya by birth and nature called upon to protect the innocent people from all distress and harassment, renounce hīṃsā at the cost of allowing innocent and virtuous Brāhmaṇas in his surroundings to be harassed and killed, and this inspite of their humble supplications to him—their lord and refuge in the forest—to save their lives. Indeed, were he to pledge himself to ahiṃsā at such costs, he would conduce to still greater hīṃsā than he would by killing the Rks., and, what is far graver than that, he would avoid an invariable duty. For, however much he has to keep aloof from anything that is due to him as a prince by way of privileges and however much he wards off all such aspects of kṣatradharma that conduce to reprisal and self-conceit in place of forbearance and self-negation, he cannot forgo that aspect of kṣatradharma which is conducive to the security and welfare of all beings and which he alone, by virtue of his birth and nature, is called upon to give. It is in this sense that R. can say, as he does, to the rṣis that incidentally he has come to the forest to fulfil their objects. Both of R.’s resolutions—to live a life of renunciation and asceticism in fulfilment of the word of his father, and to protect those who ask for his shelter—are the expressions of one and the same commitment, the commitment to a dharma which realizes and aspires for the supreme truth and goodness, aspires for the unflinching fulfilment of the good of his father and the good of those who seek his shelter. The second is no less great than the first. Directed towards the supreme good of fellow-beings, it only enhances the goodness ensuing from his commitment to the word of his father, which is the par-excellence-expression of filial altruism.
Rama’s yuddhavirya exemplified in his single-handed eradication of Khara’s 14000 Rakṣasa army and in his spell-binding combats with Dusanā, Trisirās and Khara.

We are here barely outlining the traits which characterize R.’s chivalrous heroism, for the ingenuity and gamuts of its poetic depiction—imbued with an intense sentiment of adbhutavirarasa—cannot be fathomed by any amount of analysis, but only by reading.

In these battle-scenes, R. shows the gamut of all the heroic facets of an invincible and unequalled super-natural yuddhavīra, which reach their highest elevation in his awe-inspiring duels with Dūṣaṇa, Triśiras; and the most spell-binding of all, with Khara; shows

an unsurpassably spell-binding, dooms-day-fire-like display of martial devastation and bellicose fury;

a formidable, Herculean ardour for fighting and a deadly and irresistible pugnacity in the midst of an onslaught of attacks;

an unsurpassably spell-binding, super-natural display of martial lustre, heroism, valour and skill in astras, which reaches an unparalleled grandeur in his duel with Khara;

a bellicose Herculean ardour, an ardour growing into an almost sadistic urge, to provocatively revile and vilify Khara and mete out Yama’s judgement to him for his tyrannic cruelty and vicious violation of dharma as well as for his exorbitant presumption, and, as Khara ridicules R.’s reprimands and disparages him as a
foolish, despicable Kṣatriya obsessed by vain self-eulogy on account of killing 14,000 Rks. and declares his revenge on him, to pour his feelings of scorn, abomination and vengeance on him for all the vanity of his presumption and heinousness of his tyranny and to proclaim his abominable destruction, to the terror of the Rākṣasīs and to the relief of the sages of Janasthāna (III 19.23-29).

Rama in agony

Considerations of space do not allow us to analyse the emotions of R. in agony in detail, though their depiction belongs to the most beautiful of V.'s poetical gallery.

R.'s agony of love (vipralambhaśṛṅgāra) runs through the most fluorescent gamut of emotions a distressed heart can traverse and through all the intensities it can assume:

All throughout and with seeming incessancy, R.'s agony expresses itself:

- in the most heart-rending and despair-ridden lamentations and manifestations of grief—unbounded in their unfathomable depth and overwhelming power of pathos;
- in the most heartfelt and passionate professions and yearnings of love—unbounded in their tenderness and sentimentality;
- in so total an absorption in sorrow and so gloom-ridden musings and reveries about S. that he becomes utterly disinterested in life; that, to speak in the words of
H., he does not even ward off gad-flies, mosquitoes, insects and serpents from his body; that he does not get sleep and awakes with the sweet utterance "Sītā"; that, when he sees a fruit or a flower or something else that delights a lady, he addresses her with the words, "O dear one", overwhelmed with grief and uttering her name (V 34.35-45).

All throughout R.'s agonized heart vibrates in a feeling (consciousness) of a mystical communion with the encompassing nature,

with the spirits and denizens of the forest, whom he implores for information about his beloved one (III 58);

with its manifold and exuberant manifestations of beauty and joy, which, as they awaken melancholy memories of his happiness of love in him, invariably reinforce his pangs of grief and painful longings for S. (esp. III 71 end; IV 1; IV 26-27: 29).

Again and again, it flares into the highest pitch of wrath, which in a moment of a traumatic experience (the discovery of traces of S.'s ornaments and remnants of a bloody battle) that makes him consider that his beloved one has been abducted, killed or devoured for sure by the Rks. resumes such an unprecedented intensity and violence in R. that he proclaims and vows destruction to the whole universe; reaches a point where he has lost so totally control of himself as to no longer be himself, a point of seemingly no return—were it not for L.'s magnificent display of counsel and solace. (III 60.15-52; 61)

No less than an unfathomable wealth of emotions, R.'s agony reveals an unfathomable depth of conjugal love,
a love that is as devout in its blissful romanticism and overflowing tenderness of sentiments as in its sublime spirituality and as benevolent in its unflinching loyalty and chastity as in its gentle, self-sacrificing devotion,

a love that would give everything in dedication to his beloved,

a love that would read and grant the most intimate wishes and fancies of her heart; that on one occasion, namely, when S., disregardful of L.'s warning, starts singing the praises of the magic deer in superlative terms, would be so infected by her admiration for the animal that he himself would feel an infatuation for it and start extolling the beauty of the deer to the highest heaven, as supremely unique of its kind, and would, at last, even go out himself to fetch the deer (or to kill it if it is Mārica), leaving S. to the care of L., and by this, paradoxically enough, contribute to the circumstances of her abduction (III 41).³

Rama's friendship with Sugriva

Annotation

For centuries of Indian tradition, the story of R.'s friendship with Su. has raised questions about certain moral aspects in R.'s dealings as a result of his alliance with Su. We shall discuss these questions critically, yet, independently from the point of view of Vāli's accusations, which are late interpolations, before we go to un-
fold R.'s demeanour in his dealings with his ally. The questions are the following:

(1) How can R. — so committed to righteousness — so readily enter into an alliance with Su. (a) and so spontaneously and enthusiastically give his promise, in gratitude for Su.'s affectionate consolation and assurances of help, to offer whatever assistance he should ask from him (b) — when, on the one hand, he is fully aware that Su. is involved in hostilities with Vālī and that he will be called upon to kill Vālī, and yet, on the other hand, he does not know as yet things about Vālī sufficiently in detail — the only allusions to the cause of Vālī being III 68.11.16; IV 3.18;4.19 —, and Su. relates the whole affair only afterwards, at the instigation of R., who wants to know about the prowess of his enemy?

(2) Why does V. not give a clearer picture of the whole affair, expounding the dark side of Vālī more conspicuously, and why does R. kill Vālī, however much he may feel it to be his duty to kill him, unawares, without engaging himself in battle with him?

Our answer:

ad (1) Though logically speaking it is justified to separate the two issues, R.'s readiness to enter into alliance (a) and his spontaneity in giving his promise (b) — for one could say it is intelligible if R. enters an alliance, driven by the urgency of his agonized pangs of longings for S., but unintelligible why he should come out with such indeliberate promises playing with the lives of people —, this is not the case, psychologicaentially or ethico-psychologically.

It is not so psychologically. For, however urgent his pangs of longing may be, he could never, owing
to the delicacy of his emotions, feel satisfied in acceding to an alliance with a person in whom he could not put his full trust and confidence. Yet R. does not only have every reason to trust in Su. for the mere fact that Kabandha has given such an optimistic picture of Su.'s unreserved and boundless readiness to help (III 68.11-22), but he now finds this picture confirmed in the kind and amiable intimations and assurances of H. (IV 3; 4.16-21), which even for L. are an assurance of his speaking the truth (IV 4.22-24); and when he first meets Su. personally and meets him vibrating with cheerfulness and loving affection, and Su. spontaneously offers him his hand in friendship, he is all happy and confident (IV 5.8 ff.). In fact, there is a saying that the first impression of a person is the lasting one. Exaggerated though this saying may be, it reflects the idea that it does not require a psychologist to intuit the sincerity of a person at first sight—though this may sometimes be dangerous. Yet the fact is that R. does feel confident and, in fact, has been all confident from the time of Kabandha's message, and the more so he is now, at H.'s amiable intimations and his first impressive personal contact with Su.

Possessing full confidence—here comes in the ethico-psychological point-of-view—, R. will believe H. and Su. in what they say about Vâli, even if they refer to him only by way of a side-remark and in the briefest possible manner. And, as it is expected of a true friend, he will be therefore, meeting so much kindness from H. and Su., only the more strongly motivated to spontaneously promise his help when he sees Su. subjected to a similar grief as is his and the more so when Su. now shows all affection and concern for him—so deep and genuine affection
and concern that R. embraces Su., saying—“You have done, O Su., what a loving and well-wishing friend should do. I have been restored to myself by you. It is difficult to get such a friend, particularly in this time”—, and promise him that he will do his best to restore S. to him after killing the Rks. in battle. Since R. believes H. and Su. in what they say about Vālī, namely, that he is a villain who has gravely humiliated Su., has driven him out of the kingdom and taken away his wife, he has all the right to kill him. His assurance to help to Su. by promising to kill Vālī is a case analogous to his assurance of protection to the ṛṣis by promising to kill the Rks. And the figure of Vālī is a figure analogous to that of Ṛv. So, there is nothing wrong whatsoever in that R. is so spontaneous in giving his promise, even with the vision in the background of his mind that he will have to kill Vālī, since by killing Vālī he does away with a villain, a persecutor of Su.’s brother, howsoever tragic a villain he may turn out at the end. In fact, when Su., in sheer delight at R.’s promise, bursts out into a eulogy on the beauty and firmness of love between good friends and then, falling into a tone of grief and fear, speaks of the grave humiliation he suffered at the hands of Vālī and pleads to R., the saranya of the world, to grant his favour also to him, who is helpless and oppressed by the fear of his brother, R. most spontaneously promises Su. to kill Vālī this very day, assuring him of the unfailing power of his arrows (IV 8.1-23).

ad (2) This, indeed, could be called a flaw on the part of V.—a flaw owing to the fact that, though he, as a rhapsodist, gives much importance to the development of all the various scenes of the Ṛm. in the sense that he intends them to be appealing devices designed
to capture the minds of the audience, some scenes, some aspects, have to be left undeveloped in a big epic like the Rm.—having its heritage, to a great extent, in oral poetry. This is the very ambivalence of bardic poetry. Though almost all scenes depicted are apt to arouse the emotions of the audience, some aspects are not even touched or are left undeveloped. Indeed we find so many undeveloped aspects in the Rm., which later interpolators and later epitomists considered to be gaps and tried to fill up. V.’s main motive in leaving this aspect undeveloped may be the fact that Vālī is only a secondary figure and even as a figure analogous to that of Rv. only an antetype, and so, though amply characterized in the process, he is not of primary importance from the point of view of the main story. As such he is only to be removed, and interesting and impregnated with characterization though the circumstances are—leading to Vālī’s death, there is no necessity on the part of V. to show the heroism of R.—though he does show his astrabala—and make him engage in a long-drawn battle with him, since Vālī is not the personal enemy of R., yet has to be killed, and since there are plenty of other occasions for the poet to do so. Probably, when V. took over the story from tradition and infused his poetico-psychological spirit into it, which worked itself out in an exuberant characterization of persons and a poetical elaboration of scenes, he took over the story of R.’s killing of Vālī as it was, without elaborating it vis-a-vis R.’s role, leaving it at the elaboration of the fight between Vālī and Su. itself, while yet, though not perfectly either, elaborating some of the circumstances leading to Vālī’s death. V. did so because he was a rhapsodist, at least by disposition, and was bound by the vastness of his subject to leave some scenes in a more
unrefined, purely bardic stage.

We do not agree with the opinion held by many scholars that V. intended to show a flaw in R.'s character, or that a historical R. committed a fault which V. accordingly describes and that we find a clue to this in Vālī’s accusations themselves.

As regards the first alternative, the author nowhere shows such an intention except in Vālī’s accusations, which are an interpolation and therefore out of question. If Vālī says, in his reaction to Tārā’s plea to reconcile himself with Su., among other things—“And you should not worry about Rāghava because of me. How shall he, who knows righteousness and gratitude, commit a sin.” (IV 16.5)—, it is from his point of view. A villain though he is, he is a man of honour, at least so he considers himself to be, though actually he is man of bellicose pride; and due to this distorted conception of honour, he so overrates R.’s sense of righteousness as to think, and think with all confidence and trust, that R., a man so committed to dharma, would never raise his hands against him—would never commit a sin, projecting, thus, his distorted sense of honour on R., for whom to interfere in his enmity with Su. would be tantamount to a violation of dharma, an incurrence of sin.

Secondly, we do not agree with the conception of a historical R. who committed a fault, which V. accordingly describes. If this were true, the poet would have taken pains to elaborate his fault. At best, we could conceive of a historical R. who kills Vālī, a fact which was either not considered a fault or something not very heroic, but which V. tactfully conceals. Possible. Yet even then we would not
think of a historical R., but rather of a conventional R. who kills Vālī unawares, a fact which was considered as something not very heroic and V. thus tactfully conceals. Possible. But then, if V. had an intention to white-wash R.—and this is a decisive point against it—, he should have elaborated still more on the sinfulness of Vālī than he does in the present Rm. and should have done so much earlier—before he makes R. enter into alliance with Su.—so that we would get a clearer picture. From this point of view, we prefer our explanation given above.

Also, we do not agree with the opinion that V. allowed some weakness on the part of R. as, after all, so they say, V. did not intend to portray R. as a perfect being and since we do come across many occasions where R. behaves in a manner unworthy of a hero. True, V. did not intend to portray R. as a perfect being, but surely he did intend to portray him as a paragon of humanity with near-to perfection. And the occasions where R. behaves “in a manner unworthy of a hero” are occasions of gravest emotional stress, and his behaviour under such emotional stress, rather than a behaviour unworthy of a hero, is a behaviour worthy of a man with a tender human heart. R.’s going unmāda in circumstances of grave emotional conflicts, though a weakness in one way, betrays the unfathomable richness of his heart, a richness that does not take away anything from the sublimity of his character, but makes it more genuinely human. We cannot put such human weakness on a par with the presumed weakness of R. killing Vālī unawares, which is done with all his deliberation.

Winding up our whole critical discussion, we can at least say this much for sure that on the part of V. the issue of R.’s killing Vālī unawares was not fraught with any
moral connotation. Reasons of ambiguity lie in the oral nature of the epic, perhaps also in certain conventions which V. took over—with or without adjustment, which is difficult to say.

We are now free to frame a character-portrait of R.'s friendship with Su.

R.'s seemingly unending agony, greatly reinforced by the tragic hero's death of Jaṭāyu (III 64), who sacrifices his life for S., finds, after a traumatic experience which R. goes through in the clasp of the yet-spell-bound Rk. monster Kabandha, a temporary relief through the latter's directions to him—which he gives while emerging with a glorious appearance after his cremation—to make friends with Su., directions which bespeak the optimistic prediction that Su. will do everything in his power to restore S. to him unfailingly (III 65-66 passim; 68-69).

Though R. falls into the most melancholic musings at the sight of the joy and splendour of nature, which awakens sad memories in him of his happy union with S. (III 71 end, IV 1), his meeting with H., who addresses them with such overflowing praises and inquires with such kindness and amiability about their whereabouts while tactfully introducing Su. and himself and speaking of Su.'s desire to open up friendship with them (IV 3), a meeting which makes him at once feel convinced of the optimistic picture drawn by Kabandha, now puts him into a very cheerful and confident mood. And this mood of his greatly strengthened by the continued friendly intimations and assurances on the part of H., who on hearing of their case, holds out the prospect to him that Su., who has undergone a similar fate, will happily assist them on their search for S., intimations so cheerful and amiable that even L. feels an urge to express his confidence that H. is speaking the truth (IV 4); and it is strengthened still more by his own personal encounter with Su., vibrating
with cheerfulness and loving affection as he greets him and full of praise for his virtues and readiness to make friends with him; a Su. spontaneously offering his hand in friendship, which is immediately contracted before the fire, with both of them looking at each other in affection that never seems to be satisfied; a Su., further, who expresses his concern for R.'s sorrow and consoles him with all his assurances of help, disclosing to him his surmise that it must be S. whom he has seen being carried away by a Rk. and that it must be her ornaments which she has thrown down—and which he then shows R.—; a Su., who tries to affectionately console R., as he now gives vent to his bitter grief at the sight of the ornaments, by lovingly advising him not to lose himself in grief, but to resort to steadfastness and manliness. (IV 5-7—see under Sugrīva)

R. is over-joyed at such a deep concern and love for him in such a grief-fraught situation of his life. He thinks that Su. is really a true and loving friend, a friend so good-hearted and sympathetic, so identifying himself with his (R.'s) worries as to feel prompted to assume the role of a sincere counsellor and to give him a good dose of consolation to cure him from his sorrow. And really R. feels, and expresses it, that Su. has restored him to himself. And so, on account of such signs of affectionate concern expressed by Su., R. feels himself an urge to ask Su. what he should do for him, promising whatever help he may ask of him and underlining his promise with the words that he has never told a lie nor will he ever do so. (IV 7.14-24)

And when Su., in sheer delight at R.'s promise, bursts out into a eulogy on the beauty and firmness of love between good friends and like them and then, falling into a tone of sadness and fear, speaks about the grave humiliation he suffered at the hands of Vālī and begs him, the saviour of the world, to grant his favour also to him, who is helpless and oppressed by the fear of Vālī (IV 8.1-18), R. expresses his sympathy by spontaneously declaring that he will kill Vālī this very day, assuring him of the unfailing power of his arrows (IV 8.19-23).
Indeed, so full of compassion and a feeling heart is R. has he not experienced on himself all the pangs of grief? that he not only listens patiently to Su.’s repeated paroxysms of grief and fear convulsing his heart as the pain and grief of his calamity come to his mind, in the midst of which he again pleads to R. to free him from his affliction and again relates the story of his humiliation, now with more pathos (IV 8.24-39), but sympathetically tries to divert Su.’s agonized heart by expressing his desire to hear the cause of his enmity—so as to be able to determine the relative strength and weakness of Vāli and, thus, be able to restore his happiness, of which he can be assured (IV 8.40-45).

Like this, R. shows again and again not only a feeling heart for Su.’s anxieties arising in his mind, but even listens patiently to, and tries to dispel sympathetically, his doubts and scruples—overcoming him with irremediable insistence on calling to his mind Vāli’s unexcelled power and heroism as well as his feelings of shame and anger at his (R.’s) failure to come to his rescue in his first duel with Vāli. And when Su. during the second battle, after a heroic fight with Vāli, shows sings of growing exhaustion, R. relieves him by shooting his arrow on Vāli. And he shows a feeling heart also for the sorrow overcoming Su. at the death of his brother, for whom Su. had, inspite of all enmity, an innate affection, by consoling him with words expounding the insuperability of the all-governing rule of kāla, which has determined Vāli’s death, and by assuring him that his brother has obtained heaven by the fruits of his heroism (IV 24.1-11).

As R., after cremating Vāli and ordering H. to install Su. etc., while instructing Su. to appoint Aṅgada as heir-apparent and to enjoy himself together with the citizens till the commencement of Kārtika, by which time he should make arrangements for marching out to kill Rv. (IV 25.8-15), retires with L. to the Praśravāṇa hill to spend the rainy season and, while
residing there, is overcast with grief and painful longings for S.—aroused at the magnificent spell of the rains and overcast so irremedially, with L. extending all affection to him to console him, he, in the midst of his painful longings, goes out in his mind to Su., whose regained happiness he contrasts with his own unfulfilled desire, the fulfilment of which appears to him far away on account of the unfavourable climatic conditions and his unwillingness to interrupt Su. all too soon in his happiness. But while he contrasts Su.’s happiness with his own agony of love, and while his thoughts revolve around him, he feels all of a sudden inspired by these thoughts to nourish his hope by putting his trust in Su.’s favour and gratitude. (IV 27; see s.v. Sugrīva) R., thereby, reveals an internal conflict that is going on in his heart, a conflict between his grief-ridden emotions—re-enforced by reflections on the dire prospects of nature and, in contrast to them, the happiness prevailing in Su.’s city—and his hopeful feelings of trust in the gratitude of Su., whom he has been knowing as so affectionate and so concerned for him; feelings of trust which, by the force of its optimistic prospect, become a source of fresh hope for him, in which he is strengthened by L.

Yet, when all nature is in an exuberance of joy and splendour proclaiming the advent of autumn, while there is no sign of Su.’s preparations far and wide, and this exuberance of joy in nature gravely re-awakens R.’s longings for S., it is all but natural that his heart is led by the sentimental vision of nature’s manifestations and the absence of any sign of communication from Su., for which he has been waiting so impatiently for months, to a state of deep disappointment at Su.’s lack of compassion, and that from such disappointment it is led to greater and greater anger at what he conceives to be a vile and ungrateful breach of loyalty—a heart which, by now, has reached a gamut of feelings which force him to tell L. to go to Kiṣkindhā and communicate his speech of admonition—blending words of conciliation with cynical
threats to kill Su. with all his relatives if he should transgress his promise. (IV 29; see s.v. Sugrīva) But, however fraught with anger, R. is too much a man of gentleness and tactfulness as not to feel prompted to restrain L.’s wild outbursts of ire breathing vengeance and wrath, as not to reprimand him for behaving in a sinful manner—unworthy of a hero like him and instruct him to admonish Su. in a peaceful manner (IV 30 beginning).

And when Su. finally appears before him and falls at his feet, there is no sign in R. of any misgivings, no sign of any feelings of disappointment, nay, he is so full of affection and regard for him that, before anything, he raises him up, embracing him affectionately, and, encouraging him to find out the whereabouts of S., after which the needful would be done, and entrusting the entire task to his guidance, he bursts out in words of praise and appreciation, saying that Su. is his second friend, heroic, wise ..., bent on his welfare, a person whose aim is to serve, who knows his aim thoroughly. (IV 37.15-19+39.10-14)

We, thus, have seen all along a R. who, while tossed by pangs of grief and pining love, has found a source of consolation in Su., whose spontaneous offer of friendship, whose deep and loving affection and concern for him, whose lavish solaces and expressions of sympathy, whose assurances and promises of help have been a source of new trust, of fresh hope and confidence, of a revived cheerfulness for him, have been a source of inspiration for him to lavish on Su., in gratitude for his friendship, his own wealth of affection, his own sympathy and concern and understanding for him, his own solace—sighing though for solace he has been—to, as deeply as he has experienced in himself the agony of grief, identify himself with his brother-in-sorrow. And he has done this with the utmost gentlemanliness, tactfulness and patience, and in a situation in which, though so pregnant
with hope, there has loomed large in the background of his mind the uncertainty of the future. Yet even at a time when the spell of nature cast again a net of sorrow, a net of uneasiness over his mind, he has comforted himself with the thought of the gratitude and friendship of Su. True he lost this confidence; he even felt for a moment as though he had been deceived; he flew into great anger at the seeming lack of compassion of Su. at what he considered to be his ungrateful breach of loyalty; but when Su., by his appearance, testified to the sincerity of his intention, R. has been all full of praise, gratitude and affection for him, has done as though he had never had any feeling of distrust, any misgiving thought in his mind.

This is perhaps the best place to say a word about R.’s friendship with Vibhīṣaṇa, which is of a similar nature, though the perspectives are different:

When Vibhīṣaṇa, in the midst of the bewildered Vns. staring at his resplendent appearance in the air, introduces himself to Su. and seeks refuge with R.—the refuge of the whole world,—as his brother, enraged at his advice to return S., has severely abused him (VI 11.9-15), and Su. conveys his grave suspicion to R., considering Vibhīṣaṇa to be a spy sent by the Rks. to kill them by his māyā, and pleads for killing him straight (VI 11.16-21), R. first remains perfectly calm, commending Su.’s words of concern and advising the chiefs of the monkeys to give their individual opinions (VI 11.23-24). When the monkey-chiefs, one after the other, express their warnings and advise R. to test Vibhīṣaṇa through skilled spies, to which then H. responds by telling R. that a scrutinization of Vibhīṣaṇa is impossible, unfounded and unbecoming and that Vibhīṣaṇa’s resolute words and cheerful appearance not betraying any sign of wickedness are a proof of his sincerity and integrity, for the expression of a face, though it may be veiled, cannot be entirely concealed since it by force reveals the
innermost feelings of man, and that Vibhīṣaṇa has come here after due consideration of his (R.'s) heroic deeds (VI 11.25-59)—R. is all in tune with H.'s argumentation, but, keeping his own opinion in reserve, he requests his companions to give their comment, indicating, however, that he can never forsake a person who has approached him for friendship, even though he may have his faults (VI 12.1-3). When then even Su. expresses his full confidence in Vibhīṣaṇa with overflowing words of appreciation for R.'s wonderful ideal of friendship and urges him to quickly make friends with Vibhīṣaṇa (VI 12.4-7), R. expounds his tenet of the duty and virtue that is to grant shelter to anybody who begs for protection in fear of oppression, whoever he may be, even if he be the greatest enemy and even if one has to sacrifice one's life for him, and stresses the great sin incurring him who forsakes or kills the person who seeks his protection, for fear, infatuation or desire (VI 12.8-22). R. expounds all this not because he would not intuit, with H., Vibhīṣaṇa's sincerity—his cheerful acknowledgement of H.'s speech and his overflowing, affectionate welcome of Vibhīṣaṇa show full confidence in him—, but to inculcate upon his companions, whose concern for him he acknowledges, the final irrelevance of any fearful and suspicious thoughts in view of an ideal that transcends all such considerations, an ideal that has its foundation in an eternal value, the value of saranagatataraksana, an ideal, therefore, that has to be upheld in utter neglect of what concerns one's own self. We see again R. committed to an ideal that has its source in supreme altruism and selflessness and we see him edify his companions on the supreme value of this ideal.

Rama's impatience to fight and recover Sita and his unequalled god-like heroism in battle
Too severe are the pangs of agony R. has suffered on account of his separation from S. as that he could restrain his impatience to fight the Rks. with all bellicose ardour and wrath in order to secure his beloved S.

This impatience manifests itself already

in his desire prompted by the encouraging message of H.—a desire that bursts out in optimistic visions and in a host of exhortations and directions addressed to his companions—to make immediate arrangements for marching towards Laṅkā (VI 4 beginning);

in his restlessness at the sight of the seemingly boundless and dreadful-looking ocean (VI 4 end), which fills him anew with disconsolate pinings for S. (VI 5);

in his terrible wrath at the Ocean’s reluctance to yield to his three-days’ propitiation to him to open up and grant them passage, which he (R.) considers to be a sign of haughtiness and contempt vis-a-vis his gentleness and forbearance, a haughtiness for which he threatens to chastise him by drying him up with his arrows and would have done so—in fact, he already discharged one arrow which upset the whole cosmos—if the Ocean had failed to appear from the bottom of the sea and, promising to grant complete safety from water animals to all the Vns., announce that Nala, the son of Viśvakarmā, should build a bridge (VI 14. 15.1-8);

in his being urged by the vision of gloomy portents for the Rks. to march towards Laṅkā in the early morning-hours (VI 31 beginning) and to send his ultimatum to Rv. through Aṅgada (VI 31 end).

But most of all, R.’s impatience manifests itself in the battle-scenes themselves:
in his deadly and unsurpassably spell-binding display of martial devastation and bellicose wrath and all the other awe-imposing land-marks of his god-like heroism — so magnificently displayed in his battle against the 14,000 Rks. of Janasthāna and in his combat against Khara,

reaching here perhaps a still higher elevation and more relentless embotterment, especially in his furious combat against the titanic Rk. monster Kumbhakarna and, above all, in his duel with Rv., a duel so spell-binding in awe and unparalleled in grandeur as no other duel has been among beings; a duel with an enemy well-nigh equal to him in prowess and heroism, an enemy who would have well-nigh withstood the prowess of R. — had it not been for fate acting against him, a duel the grandeur of whose depiction can be fathomed only by reading.

As resolute as R. is in his display of martial prowess, as overwhelmed with agony is his heart, breaking as it were in twain, in moments of sheer frustration — so when he believes that S. has been killed by Indrajit and so when L. lies on the ground, struck by Rv.'s śakti.

In the first case, his agony robs him straight-away of all his senses, crushing him down like a lightning crushes a tree; and renders him so totally forlorn in grief that he remains mute like a stone, not showing the slightest signs of life, as it were, not responding with a single word to L.'s long remonstrations on his (R.'s) unremunerated idealism; that, as Vibhīṣaṇa sets out to console him and, disclosing Indrajit's magic, urges him to send out L. to interrupt Indrajit's sacrifice, his senses are still too dimmed as to grasp anything and he has to ask Vibhīṣaṇa to repeat his speech. (VI 70.10-12, 13-42. 71-72.15) It is all an unspoken revelation of an encounter with the most traumatic of traumatic experiences,
an experience so a reversion of his hopes and trusts—devoted as he ever and indefatiguably was, and with such total self-negation and forbearance, to the pursuit of the highest ideals and value of dharma and to the cause of goodness—as that he would have never even thought of it in his mind, far less believed it to happen to him.

In the second case, his agony first fills him with such relentless wrath and vindictiveness that he vows to set an end to the unending miseries of his life by satiating his thirst for revenge with the blood of Rv., whom he will give a defeat appropriate to the efforts he has put up, a defeat as will be for ever remembered by beings moving and non-moving, by Gods and men, as long as the earth carries them; and, after impelling him to engage in a furious discharge of arrows till Rv. flees, driven by fear, from the battlefield, it forces him to empty his bleeding heart, with a paroxysm of physical weakness and mental discouragement, a feeling of disgust with life, as it were, overcoming him, in the most heart-rending and pitiful lamentations:—A picture though of utter disconsolateness, it stands testimony to his unique brotherly love for L., who is so dear to him that without him, he feels, life has no meaning for him, be it even in the glory of kingship or even in the loving company of S. (VI 88.36-39. 89.1-8).

Rama's elation

As relentless as R. was in his display of martial prowess to fight the Rks. and kill Rv., as elated he is in his victory amidst the rejoicings of the Vns. and the praises of the Gods (VI 97 end and elsewhere). But elated though he is, it is all
an elation in a spirit of benevolence and generatory:

an elation that forgets all enmities and misgivings against Rv. now that he has obtained his penalty and grants him an honourable cremation (VI 99.35-40)—

an elation that gives vent to an impatient desire in him to express his gratitude to Vibhiṣaṇa by immediately arranging his coronation (VI 100.9-10) and to communicate his good news to S. (VI 100.19 ff.)—

an elation that makes him entreat Indra—honouring him with a boon—to restore the Vns. to life and make their forests abound with fruits and flowers and spotless water, even though it is out of season (VI 108)—

an elation that flows out in sentiments of affection and gratitude to his loyal companions (passim) and the Vns., on whom he invites Vibhiṣaṇa to lavish his hospitality—meant for him—as they have suffered so much for him (VI 109.4; 110 beginning) and for whom he requests Bharadvāja to transform all the trees on the way to Ayodhya into trees bearing fruits for their enjoyment (VI 112.18)—

an elation that flows out in passionate longings for a reunion with his noble brother Bh. and all his dear ones at home, longings which are so strong as to urge him to even decline Vibhiṣaṇa’s offer of a luxurious bath, dresses and ornaments—for without Bh., who, in utter self-sacrifice for him, performs penance at home, no bath, no ornaments are pleasing to him (VI 109.1-7)—or his invitation to gratify him by staying one more day while promising him the Puṣpaka, which would bring him to Ayodhya in one day—for his mind is restless and impatient to see his brother, who took so much trouble to come to Citrakūṭa to persuade him to return to Ayodhya but whose beseeching suppli-
cations he has declined, as well as to see his dear mothers, elders and friends and the people of Ayodhyā with their sons (VI 109.8 ff.) ; longings which urge him to send H. ahead to communicate the good news to Bh. and give on the way his regards to Guha (VI 113)—

an elation that flows out in an exuberance of joy and affection to his re-united brothers, mothers, elders and citizens (VI 115 end) and to his loyal companions, in the midst of all of whom he experiences the glorious hour of his coronation and whom he rewards with generous gifts (VI 116)—

an elation that goes out to grant supreme happiness and protection to the citizens, radiating a spirit of universal love that permeates their hearts and minds and transforms them into an ideal people (VI 116.80-90).
A SYNTHETIC VIEW OF THE POET’S CONCEPTION AND PORTRAIT OF RAMA’S CHARACTER

Conception

It is not an exaggeration to say, though we can say this only on the basis of an intuition, that V.’s conception of the character of R. coincided with his conception of the R. story as he intended to re-fashion it. R. not only is a hero and paragon of nobility of character (dharmaṇīra, dhīrodattā), but he embodies the story of a human destiny in its most sublime expression. So, to cast R.’s heroic character, V. had to cast his heroic story, and to unfold his humanity he had to unfold the story of his human odysseys, and to unfold the story of his human odysseys he had to unfold the story of all such persons as had a deep bearing on R.’s life. So drawn, this is a somewhat exaggerated sketch, were we to consider it logically, for we could not rightly imagine that V. intended every other story, every other destiny, every other character to be secondary to R. No, surely he did not do so. Whatever page we may turn up in the Rm., it immediately be speaks the poet’s intention to portray a whole cosmos of life, a cosmos of persons and their destinies, characters and emotions, of nature, of cities, of what not. What we mean to say is that R. was the prime ideal in V.’s mind that moved him to take up the story as it was prevalent before him and make it an ideal story of life with an ideal ethical message, with R. as its living ethical apex, with
variegated ideal characters as living embodiments of an ideal ethical life, with many and variegated characters of life of variegated psychic temperaments drawn from variegated sections of life, from variegated classes of beings, with a gallery of life itself and life's environment, with anything that would capture the fancies and imaginations of the people in a due rhapsodic and poetic sense—with all conducing to form the stucco-work of a cosmos of life enthralling in its unfathomable richness and edifying in its unfathomable ethos.

If R. was the prime ideal in V.'s mind that inspired him to retell the R. story in the spirit of his poetical vision, R. must have been much of an ideal character in the tradition before him, though this tradition seems to have been more in the line of a delightful ākhyāna than in the line of a delightful saga with an ethical message of life. So we can say then more truly that, V.'s poetical vocation was awakened at the vision of the ideal character of R. and that this vision itself filled him with a poetical mission to make his story an ideal saga of life, with an ideal message of life, embodying in itself a whole cosmos of life—spell-binding in its richness, edifying in its purport.

Portrait

We have unfolded R.'s heroism and exemplarity of character as well as its human gamut. So we will do more justice to the poetical spirit of the Rm. to convey, as V. intended to convey, in a total and lasting impression on the audience, what the hero, the paragon R. stands for, and what all he embodies in his unfathomable richness of personality.
As V. opens the curtain on R. and sings the praises of R., he says everything about him he can say by way of words and the impressions these words convey, and he sings of a paragon of virtues, a dharmavīra, greater and deeper than whom none could be. He sings of him as a model of an ideal and perfect personality, a personality sublime and super-human, a personality unrivalled by any other man in the world, in heroism unrivalled even by the Gods, resembling, as it were, the God of Gods himself. He sings of him as a model of humanity; a man unexcelled in idealism and yet a fellow-traveller of man's most human experiences of life. He sings of him—

as possessed of a nature as eminent and sublime in greatness of character as that of the highest of Gods, as that of Svayamprabhu, the Deva of Devas, and as human in emotion and temperament as that of the most human of humans—

as skilled and heroic in warfare as the most chivalrous and heroic of Gods like Indra, and as tranquil-minded and self-controlled as the greatest of sages—

as altruistically concerned and benevolent as the closest of kinsmen, as father and son, and as grateful and forbearant as the most forbearing of mothers like the Earth—

as exemplary in virtuous conduct and conversant with sacred wisdom and mundane arts as the greatest gurus like Bṛhaspati, and as filially observant as the most loyal servants like Kaśyapa, and as respectfully attentive to elders as the humblest of pupils—

as unflinching in adherence to dharma and truth as the
most unflinching judges like Yama,
and as amiable and gentle as the most tender-hearted of children—
as proficient in the accumulation of artha as the most exemplary of grhasthas,
and as bountiful and generous as the most bountiful of kings like Kubera—
as firm in endurance as the immovable Himavān,
and as deep in character as the unfathomable Ocean—
as beautiful and effulgent in glory as the brightest of stars,
as the blazing sun,
and as beloved and dear to the people as their sons.

So, while hardly having opened the curtain on R., V. has told us, with words impressive and edifying, all that R., the hero and paragon, stands for, and all that he is. But he has told us all this in abstract words divested of all flesh and blood, divested of all experience of life, divested of all emotion. Yet he makes up immensely for that. For the story to come is the enthralling story of how unflinching his heroism of commitment is, how unexcelled his sublimity of character, how unfathomable his human-ness of heart, how god-like his supernatural lustre and prowess in battle.

How unexcelled is R.'s sublimity of character and his heroism of commitment!

R.'s highest ideal in life is an unflinching and enthusiastic commitment to satyadharma, to a dharma that aspires for righteousness for the sake of truth and goodness and forgoes every concern about personal welfare, all considerations of worldly attachment and egotistic claims for justice, in a spirit of total self-sacrifice and forbearance towards any injustice done to him; a dharma that, uncompromising though it may be, has its resonance not in a temporal emotional attachment,
but in the ever-lasting, supreme good of all beings, in a supreme altruism, an altruism that transcends all temporal attachment and seeks the eternal, spiritual welfare of beings. Its par-excellence-expressions are:

The most heroic and sublime self-abdicating filial love and concern for a father as well as filial respect for a mother (an unworthy mother) which a son can give witness to, in a spirit of total self-sacrifice and forbearance towards any injustice done to him,

so heroic and sublime that he not only bears up all the injustice inflicted upon him by Kai. and bears it with cheer and enthusiasm; that he not only would think it ought to be as much a matter of course for his father to know that it is his son's most intimate desire to do any self-sacrifice for him, even to the point of sacrificing his life, as it ought to be a matter of course for his father to demand any amount of sacrifice from him, howsoever big it may be, and is greatly perturbed by the thought that his father may not know this; that he not only goes out to accept the most shameless and mean words of Kai. spoken in a spirit of ruthless ambition diametrically opposed to the discretion which he extends to her as words prompting him with an eagerness to renounce all selfishness for the sake of gratifying his father; but that he even expresses his regret that she did not personally give him this order when he, a loyal son, would do any favour to her, his mother; expresses his regret that she does not appreciate sufficiently enough his self-sacrificing motives—while actually Kai. knows too well his unflinching commitment to truth and makes use of it with the most shameless cunning—

so heroic and sublime that he, reluctant to think anything bad of Kai. as a mother, even when painfully aware,
and forcefully made aware so by L., of her atrocious design, attributes, what actually is the result of her heinous ambition and shameless cunning, to the incomprehensible and irresistible efficacy of daiva, a consideration which, in turn, only consolidates him and further motivates him in his personal decision to fulfil his filial duty— — —

An unfathomable love for his grief-forlorn dear ones, his father D., his mother Ks. and his brothers L. and Bh., on whom he would lavish all his affection, to whom he would gratify all the desires of their heart, but whose beseeching persuasions—prompted by their inability to bear the crushing severity of their grief—to change his mind and protestations of love he, in view of a more supreme realization of their good, of a deeper spiritual concern for their well-being, has to gently turn down—even if he has to fill their hearts with dejection and agony—and has to sublimate towards the realization of the supreme value of his commitment to dharma— — —

The most intimate and the most dedicated and self-sacrificing love a husband can give to a wife,

a love that has nothing in mind but her supreme perpetual good,

a love that, read and take delight though it would in granting the most intimate wish and desire of her heart, would not allow itself to be at the mercy of even the deepest and most assuring of her asseverations of love when such asseverations, even if not the product of first-hand enthusiasm and indeliberate fancies springing from her bountiful heart at the first impulse of her boundless devotion, could be thwarted by the insurmountable vicissitudes of forest-life, and when a con-
sent thus would mean a stake of responsibility, the consequences of which would be irremediably disastrous,

but a love that, seeing as it does how S. testifies with her whole personality how supremely happy she will be in sharing the most grievous of her husband's miseries and testifies this in a way that it emerges as the most intimate and deepest desire of her heart, the rejection of which would bring her well-nigh to the grave, is spontaneously ready to consent and ready with extreme gratitude and affection—ever to be lavished on her during their arduous path of life—

A commitment to grant protection to those who are virtuous and oppressed and seeking his protection, as an expression of the same commitment to dharma that realizes and aspires for the supreme good of fellow-beings—

A commitment to grant shelter to any one who seeks his protection in fear of oppression, whoever he may be, even if he be the greatest enemy, as the most unflinching expression of this eternal ideal of saranagata-rakṣaṇa—

And many more ideals—

And yet, how unfathomable is his human-ness of heart!

How throbbing with affection and sympathy!

Throbbing with affection and sympathy on parting from his dear ones and his citizens, whose incessant devotion and protestations of love deeply move him, whose grief wrings as much his heart as it does theirs and
which he does everything to soothe and gently divert; whose agony of love he keeps ever in mind during his forest-stay and, in a moment of deep depression caused by the absence of the comforting presence of Sumantra—the thought of whose ardent devotion violently convulses his heart—, is so traumatically re-awakened in him that he breaks into an unprecedented paroxysm of misgivings against Kai., whose purity of intention he would have never questioned in his mind— — —

Overflowing with tender and intimate affection, devotion and love, gratitude and generosity, in joy, sorrow and longings, towards his over-devoted companions, his wife S. and his brothers L. and Bh., in sentiments and professions that belong to the most beautiful of the Rm., and towards all his other loyal companions on his path of life— — —

Lavishing a wealth of affection and an exuberance of sympathy, concern, understanding and solace on Su., in gratitude for his deep and loving friendship, which has been a source of new life and hope to him and which has prompted him to, as deeply as he had experienced in himself the agony of sorrow, identify himself with him as his brother-in-sorrow— — —

How bleeding in an agony of love!

A heart so bleeding that it runs through all the gamut of emotions a distressed heart can traverse—

through the most heart-rending and despair-ridden lamentations and manifestations of grief—unbounded in their unfathomable depth and their overwhelming power of pathos— — —
through the most heartfelt and passionate professions and yearnings of love—unbounded in their tenderness and sentimentality—

through such total absorptions in sorrow and gloom-ridden musings and reveries that he becomes utterly disinterested in life, that, to speak in the words of H., he does not even ward off gad-flies, mosquitoes, insects and serpents from his body; that he does not get sleep and awakes with the sweet utterance “Sītā”; that, when he sees a fruit or a flower or something else that delights a lady, he addresses her, saying “O dear one”—

through sentimental musings in mystical communion with the encompassing nature: with the spirits and denizens of the forest, whom he implores for information about his beloved; with nature’s exuberant manifestations of beauty and joy, which, as they awaken in him happy memories of love, invariably re-enforce his pangs of grief and painful longings—

A heart so bleeding as to flare into the highest pitch of wrath and vengeance it can flare to, assuming a point where he has so totally lost control of himself as to be no longer himself, a point of seemingly no return—were it not for L.’s magnificent display of counsel and solace—

A heart that, in encountering the most traumatic of traumatic experiences—so much a reversion of his hopes and trusts that he would never have believed it to happen to him, devoted as he was to the cause of goodness—, is so crushed down, so forlorn in grief that it has stopped, as it were, giving any signs of life—
And yet a heart that reveals through its unfathomable wealth of emotions an unfathomable depth of conjugal love as devout in its blissful romanticism and overflowing tenderness of sentiments as in its sublime spirituality and as benevolent in its unflinching loyalty and chastity as in its gentle, self-sacrificing devotion, a love that would give everything in dedication to his beloved, that would read and grant the most intimate wishes and fancies of her heart——

So, we see a R., who in the midst of the most heroic firmness to his commitment, a commitment to which he is ever and unflinchingly loyal and loyal with the greatest cheerfulness of mind—a par-excellence expression of the most sublime altruism and the most total self-sacrifice—, is the most human in tenderness of heart, affection and sympathy, is the most human in agony of grief and love, which is another and the most captivating expression of his sublime altruism—the spontaneous translation of his inmost ideals and principles.

R., thus, is not only the most sublime in sublimity, the most heroic in heroism, but the most human in human-ness, a human-ness which makes him truly and genuinely a paragon of humanity. And yet he is unequalled in his god-like and unpurpassably spell-binding, super-natural lustre and heroism in battle; a hero that delights Gods and men alike, a hero saves Gods and men alike from the terrible harassments of the super-demon Rv., a hero who is veritably the refuge of all beings and in all respects: as a paragon of dharma and virtues, as a protector of the righteous and the oppressed, as a saviour of the world, as a king of blessedness.

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1 We would like to mention in passing that, in depicting R.'s homage to eminent rṣis, like Atri, Anasūyā, Ṣarabhaṅga, Sutikṣṇa, Agastya and Śabarī, on the one hand, and their desire for and gratification at R.'s visitation and eagerness to bestow their blessings or favours—obtained by their yogic power—on him, in some form or other, on
the other hand, V. makes R. reveal both his filial respect for men of
spiritual perfection as well as his own spiritual glory, which is of an
insatiable inspiration even to such eminent sages.

2 Earlier (II 108), the sages of Citrakūṭa intimate their anxiety to him—
an anxiety caused by Khara’s eradication of rṣis of Janasthana and
the Rks.’ recent attacks on and harassments of them—and their deci-
sion to leave the place and invitation to R. to come along with them.
At that occasion R. listens sympathetically to them, but does not
comply with their request to go with them—though their propitiation
subconsciously induces him, together with other motives, to leave the
place (II 109 beginning).

3 I owe this idea to M.K. Venkatarama Iyer, “Sītā”, KK 27,54-60;
83-87 p. 58.

4 For contents of the story see s.vv. Hanumān, Sugrīva and Vāli (initial
sections).

5 Some scholars would like to equate R.’s śaraṇagatarakṣaṇa to
Vibhīṣaṇa with his friendship-pact with Su. We do not agree with
this opinion. The situation is quite different: First of all, from the
outset, the friendship between R. and Su. is mutual. R. is aspiring
for Su.’s friendship and Su., when he meets R., for his. Secondly,
there is no controversy, no possibility of any apprehension involved
whatsoever. Both intuit each other’s sincerity and virtuousness.
Not that the ideal of śaraṇagatarakṣaṇa is not implied in the back-
ground of either’s mind—no partners-in-grief can find together as
friends without being ready to give protection to one another in
need—but since it does not entail any point of ambiguity or contro-
versy, it is as spontaneous and natural as any other ideal that is part
and parcel of the character of a virtuous man: like sympathy with
persons in grief, generosity to persons in need etc. So, the whole
idea of śaraṇagatarakṣaṇa is only presupposed, but it does not have
any decisive role to play in the pact between R. and Su.’s friendship.

6 It is perhaps pertinent to discuss a few of the “abstruse” issues critical
writers have raised in their essays on the character of R. We shall
highlight two of these questions—

(1) What kind of an ideal is the ideal R. commits himself to? A
purely abstract or a highly humane ideal?

(2) Do R.’s agonized expressions of grief and pining for S. and other
emotional paroxysms elevate his character and make it
human or deprive it of its greatness?

—, which we shall illustrate with quotations and then critically com-
ment upon:
(I)

M.K. Venkatarama Iyer
("Śrī Rāma as a Dutiful Son", KK 26,50-55, pp.51-54)

"Man is indebted to his parents not only for his existence but also for his upkeep and preservation in his infancy and early childhood when he is helpless and has necessarily to depend on others for his food, clothing, bed and so forth. There is no end to the services which parents render to their children in their nonage. They spend sleepless nights watching over their children, nursing and tending them when they are unwell. They render these and other services in a spirit of selfless love and devotion and do not expect anything in return at all ... Rāma is full of appreciation for what his parents have done for him and hardly knows what he could do in return for it all. When Bharata’s arguments and oaths of persuasion have failed to bring about any change in Rāma’s attitude, Vasīṣṭha uses his position as the family-priest to convert Rāma and make him accept the offer of kingship. ‘I have been the officiating priest of your family for generations. By acting up to my word you will not be swerving in the least from the strict path of righteousness. Here are the merchants and citizens of Ayodhya, who request you in one voice to accept the kingship, and by acceding to their wishes you will not be violating Dharma even by an iota. Your mothers,—pious, old ladies,—desire the same and by fulfilling their desire you will not be transgressing the strict code of Dharma even by a hair’s breadth. There is Bharata, who is most earnestly supplicating you to assume the kingship and by yielding to his supplication you will not be overstepping the limits of Dharma in any sense of the term.’ To this forceful and at the same time touching appeal of Vasīṣṭha, Rāma gives his reply in three stanzas, which are equally forceful and touching:—

‘The services which parents do to their son and giving of their best, bathing and dressing the child, coaxing and cajoling and feeding him, —all this is not capable of being requitted. The least that I can do to my father is to respect his words and carry out his wishes.’

II, CXI, 9-11) Sheer gratitude requires that children should not act contrary to the will of their parents especially when the reputation of father is at stake. To let down one’s father in a critical situation is equivalent to murdering him, though without a weapon (Aśastraṇavāda).

To Rāma Daśaratha is something more than mere father. He is his king, his elder, and therefore his Guru. ‘Daśaratha is my Guru, my king, my father and my elder. Whatever command he gives—whether out of passion or anger or pleasure—who that walks in the path of duty will fail to carry out!’ (II, XXI, 59) In another context
he says: 'Daśaratha is our king, our protector, our Guru and our superior. He is our overlord. His words must therefore be respected not only by me but by you (Sītā) also.' (II.XXIV.16) This view, that Daśaratha, by virtue of his seniority, his experience and worldly wisdom, is entitled to be treated as one's respected 'Guru', invests his words with additional weight. They are not to be lightly set aside. They emanate from one who has seen more of life than the youngsters. He has no selfish ends in view and he gives advice solely in the interest of his children. Daśaratha is also their king and protector. He has a right to issue commands and they have to be peremptorily obeyed. 'Over his wives and sons the king wields unquestioned supremacy.' (II.CIV.18) If we put these ideas together we form an impression of the esteem in which Rāma held his father. He was at once an object of love, respect, adoration and fear. The king combined in himself the role of the protector, of the wise teacher, of the supreme commander and, in the case of his children, the role of the loving father. It is said in another context: 'By his superior bearing and conduct, the king excells Yama. Vaśravana, Indra and Varuṇa of might.' (II.LXVII.35) Rāvaṇa tells Māricha: 'A king has a five-fold aspect, the benignity of Soma, the severity of Yama and the graciousness of Varuṇa.' (III.XL.12-13). Emphasizing his superior might he observes in another place: 'I cannot be slighted and overcome in battle either by the fierce arrows of the thousand-eyed Indra, or of Varuṇa or of Yama.' (VI.XXIV.45) At the back of these statements there is the conception of the king as the concrete and living embodiment on earth of Lord Viṣṇu.

If we take Rāma's view against this background, we can easily understand his willing obedience to his father and the cheerful manner in which he undertook to carry out his wishes. To him his father's word carried the same authority as the injunctions of the Veda. There is no gainsaying it nor does it lie in the power of the son to question it or examine it or place clever interpretations on it to suit his convenience. It is not for a son to ask whether his father gave the order out of his own will and pleasure or under duress from anyone else. It is equally irrelevant to ask whether he gave the order with a full awareness of its implications and consequences.............

It is Rāma's firm conviction that 'no man will ever come to harm by obeying the orders of his father.' (II.XXI.37) This faith is so strong in him that 'at the word of his father he will unhesitatingly leap into the roaring flames or plunge head-long into deep water or drink deadly poison.' (II.XVIII.28-29) Having promised to carry out his father's wishes, whatever they are, he will not shift or prevaricate and, without counting the cost, will fulfil them to the very
letter. What inspires him to commit himself in such an irretrievable manner is his rooted faith in his father’s good intentions. He firmly believes that whatever is enjoined on him by his father will be in his own best interests. ‘Niyukto guruṇā pitrā nṛpēṇa ca hitena ca’ he says in one context. Here the important word is ‘hitena’. A father will always be intent on promoting the abiding welfare of his son. The course of action that he lays down may mean present discomfort, but it will prove to be most beneficial in the long run. Renouncing his claim to the throne and proceeding to the forest and agreeing to remain there for full fourteen years means in calculable danger and discomfort and yet Rāma accepts the order most cheerfully. He must have had an intuition that this renunciation was the harbinger of a most glorious future for him.................

Another line of thought in Rāma’s mind was that if the promise that his father had given to Kaikeyi was broken, his reputation will suffer irreparable harm. People will come to speak of him as one who made sweet promises to the ear but broke them to the heart. Such a situation will lead ultimately all-round deterioration of standards. To prevent such a sacrifice it is worth making any sacrifice. A private loss is a public gain. By giving up his claim to the throne and betaking himself to the forest in pursuance of his father’s promise to Kaikeyi, Rāma will no doubt be losing a great thing and subjecting himself to much suffering and discomfort; but nothing great or good can be attained without paying an adequate price for it. The fair name of the Ikṣvāku family was a previous heritage handed down by his forbears. It had to be safe-guarded at any cost. Incidentally public morality would stand high."

Critical comments: Iyer’s reflections are quite good. They, so to say, explicate the implicit psychological motivations of R.’s fervent commitment to the word of his father. The poet makes R. allude to these motivations only casually, and even then lets him state them categorically rather than advance further explanations to substantiate them (the Rāma-Vastūtha-sāṅvāda is not original!)—except in the case of a few vital points such as the undying value of fulfilling father’s promises which R. expounds with great ardour. But the motivation for his unflinching determination to do any sacrifice for his father—even to renounce his life—with the greatest cheer is never consciously expressed. And deliberately so: For the poet wants to show that R. does not reflect at all on why he should be obedient to his father. For R. obedience to his father is an eternal law, the par-excellence-expression of satyadharma, and the sign-posts that indicate to him this truth are invariably inscribed in his nature, which is through and through permeated with dharma. On the other hand, the poet takes pains to expound R.’s commitment to
fulfilling the promise of his father as the expression of the sublimest filial love a son can give to his father in a spirit of utmost forbearance and self-sacrifice.

V. Raghavan
(“The Infinite Excellences of Sri Rama (or Rama Guna Manasa)”,
VK 24, 218-222; 270-276, p.275)

“At the root of all the goodness of Rama was ‘sympathy’ and ‘sensitivity’. He strove that he might lead a blemishless life and live an untainted name. Such fame, he esteemed as heaven (Manyate parayaa Kilirtyaa mahat svargaphalam tatah II 1: 16). His anxiety was that there should not be even a speck of dust in him. Not a single being in the world should have anything to say against him. This he worked for and pursued as his ideal for a king, the greatest of the servants of the people. Lakshmana said that the tragedy of his banishment was that there was nothing against him to warrant that act and that there would be none in the entire kingdom to say a word against him. Even an enemy had nothing to say ill of him, even in his absence. Dasaratha tells Kaikēyī: ‘Ill-natured or slenderous talk is unthinkable in Rama’ Parivadaḥ apavaado va raghave no’papalyati II 12:25). Rama sought to please all and earn a universal good name. If Kaikēyī wanted the kingdom, he gave up; and before entering the city after the exile, he was still as desireless of the kingdom as before and sent Hanumān to see how Bharata was. If Bharata had meantime acquired a liking for the throne, Rama would retire again. Rama looked upon the public as God, and propitiated them in every way. He practised the religion of Loka-arādhana.”

Critical comments: Yes and no. While one can agree with Raghavan in saying that R.’s anxiety is to be absolutely unblemishable before the people, one has to disagree with him in stressing this point as the primary facet of his motivation. There is a far deeper motivation in R. than loka-ārādhana. In fact, the whole Rm. goes to show the supreme altruism and selflessness of R. behind his ‘sensitivity’ in according all his actions to the path of dharma and truth.

V. S. Srinivasa Sastri
(pp. 31-32, p. V of Summary)

“But at this point it is worth remembering that Rama was a unique character, and therefore it is necessary to remember that according to the Poet, these merely human attachments, these personal affections all yielded place in his heart to an even greater passion. And what was that? The passion for righteousness, the passion for high honour, the passion for Dharma! It was an active element in his nature, and we find that put to a supreme test more than once and Rama coming out
triumphantly as an eternal claimant to truth. This is what he says to Kaikkeyi when with great misgiving as to his attitude she breaks the news to him and asks him to abandon his coronation as 'yuvaraj'; Sri Rama says to her—this is remarkable—,'Why was I not told that before? Don’t you know my nature?'

ahām hi sitāṁ rājaṁ ca prānāṁśāṁ dhanāṁ ca
hrṣṭo bhṛatrē svayaṁ dadyāṁ bharatādya-pracoditaḥ // II.19.7

‘What would I not have given to him if it were right and proper that I should do so, wealth and kingdom and’ (I blush to add) ‘Sita? I would have given everything to Bharata, Why was I not told quickly and in time?’

Then there is the famous scene where Sita assumes the character of his confidential adviser. You remember the famous scene where Sri Rama made a pact with the Rishis to punish the Rakshasas. ‘Why do you agree to make war against them?’ she says. vinā vairāṁ ca raudratā (III 9.4). ‘To make war without righteous cause is one of the things you should avoid.’......‘You have a claim’, he says, ‘to be heard in all these matters, and I honour you for this confidence of yours,’ and he adds in striking words,

apyahāṁ jīvitāṁ jahyāṁ tvāṁ vā sīte salakṣmaṇām
na tu pratijānāṁ samākṛtya brāhmaṇe bhāvyo viśesataḥ // III.10.9

‘I may abandon my life, I may abandon you, I may abandon Lakshmana, I may abandon everything, but not my promise once made and particularly to Brahmans.’ A promise made must be carried out, no matter what tribulations and trials there may be. It is supreme. There then is Sri Rama’s character shining out as a beacon to all humanity. Not that this is stated for the first time. But it is worth remembering that many a man among us will keep a promise so long as it suits him, but there is no one who will risk all and lose all rather than break his promise.”

“What does Rama stand for today?
He stands for the highest in man—as son, husband, king and ally or friend of the oppressed.
Take this act of self-sacrifice, for instance. When only five or six and twenty he accepted exile without a demur and without visible sign of disappointment. Did not listen to prayers, entreaties, counsel. Asserted the sanctity of promise and the virtue of obedience. So unquestioned was his moral authority that he lectured dharma to father, mother, brother, wife and subjects. All who came into contact with him bowed to him in reverence.
The most striking proof of his moral supremacy is his repudiation of Sita. The world was shocked, but durst not protest. Their
attitude was one of awe as to a god; they accepted Sītā’s ordeal as some doom of fate.

Or take these incidents—

Inspite of the advice of eminent counsellors including Lakshmana, he granted protection to Vibhisana.

Having beaten Ravana in the first encounter, he magnanimously let him off, refusing to pursue his advantage.

When Vibhisana refused to perform Ravana’s obsequies, he offered to do them himself and brought Vibhisana to a sense of right.

Such were the heights of moral purity and grandeur reached by Rama. No wonder that the world bowed deeply and devoutly to him. He was almost immaculate."

Critical comments: According to Sastri’s explanations in these quotations, R.’s commitment to dharma is a commitment to a moral abstraction. And yet it is evident from the second quotation itself and from other passages that he is very well aware of the high altruism and humanism governing R.’s actions. There seems then to be some kind of dichotomy in R., at least, it would appear so from Sastri’s exposition, or, and this seems to be more likely, Sastri does not see the need of explaining R.’s ideal of dharma in line with his altruism. True though it is that V. does not give us such an explicit explanation either, he does make it unmistakably clear that the ideal of dharma R. pledges himself to is not a mere abstraction (DHARMA), but an ideal grounded in supreme truth and goodness, i.e. altruism. One can argue that R.’s repudiation of S. totally destroys this conception of dharma, but precisely this episode is not part of the original.

M. K. Venkatarama Iyer
(“The Personality of Rāma”, KK 27, 22-29, p. 27)

“In fact, Rāma is the meeting-ground of contrary qualities. He could be mild like the lamb and yet, when the occasion demanded it, ferocious like the lion; he was patient like Mother Earth and yet, when he was angered, not even the gods dared make a stand against him; he could speak the harsh, unpalatable truth without however offending the susceptibilities of people; he could be kind, loving and accommodating, and yet remain adamant like the rock when fundamental principles were at stake. This is the mark of a truly spiritual personality. What appear like opposite qualities lose their opposition in all embracing spirituality.”

Critical comments: There is some truth in it, but Iyer does not show how. It appears that for Iyer, who is a staunch believer that V., in drawing R.’s character, expounds his mission as an avatāra, these polarities
are the essential facets of the personality of an *avatāra*, and that all of his actions are done from his superior, supernatural plane. If so, the writer misses by far the message of the poet.

V. S. Srinivasa Sastrī

( pp. 64-65; 72 )

"Well, ladies and gentlemen, if there was a human being who could reach those unimaginable heights of moral purity and grandeur, is it any wonder that all the world bowed to him, accepted his smallest wish as the decree of Heaven? That he was And yet, thanks be to human nature which we all have, as the poet says, as the world says, one nature is common to us all. Full of dread and awe as we are, as we contemplate Sri Rama, it fills us now and then with pride that he too, he too thought very much as we should have thought. Trouble depressed him; sorrow struck him hard; he had his moments of anguish. Alas, the Poet says he cried and wept bitter tears now and then! He grew angry sometimes, he was in despair sometimes; he was about to commit suicide now and then. He said harsh things of people. He suspected just as you and I would suspect. He did everything that we with flesh and blood do. Don’t think that we bring him down from his high level; we raise ourselves to kinship with him as we notice these incidents. If being like us with flesh and blood, actuated by our motives now and then, feeling angry, feeling depressed, feeling sorry, if being like us, it was still possible for him to rise to those great altitudes, though we may not soar so high, may we not rise half an inch above ourselves? May we not subdue our nature to some extent? It won’t turn all to gold, this base lead of which we are made. No, it won’t. Nevertheless we could clean that lead, make it shine according to its own nature and then, ladies and gentlemen, we shall have read of Sri Rama to some purpose. We shall have heard the Ramayana with some advantage, and upon our lives and our character some influence of a very exalted and almost divine nature will have been exerted so that we shall all be somewhat the better for having come under the influence of this great epic of Valmiki."

"If he was always on the highest level and never came down, if he was always unapproachably great, what good is he going to be to us? In some respects he must be like us. There are other instances in which we perceive the kinship between Rama and ourselves, and as an adoring study of the great is only of value in proportion as it raises our nature, as it enables us to conquer our lower selves and live as long as possible and as firmly as possible on our own higher level, since our business is, if possible, to get from this epic that which will enable us from bad to get to good, we shall do well to dwell on the next occasion on some of the
other episodes where Rama shows his human qualities in a degree which so far from interfering with our adoration and worship of him, only make us love him the more dearly, regard him as closely bound with us, as also one through whose example we may be enabled in ever so humble a measure to rise above ourselves, as they say, from our lower to our higher selves. For so man improves. Not that he ever is above weakness, but when weakness assails him, he remembers these mighty examples and tries to rise above it. He may not succeed but even the trial is good for something. One trial may fail; two trials may fail, may often fail. The third may meet with partial success ... Our lives may be short; our lives may be bounded on every side by things that are coarse and sordid, nevertheless they are lives, let us remember, similar in quality to the life that Sri Rama had; and if, when we grapple with our weaknesses, we try to remember him, may be, as I said before, in some humble measure we shall improve our own nature and learn to live our better selves more often, more firmly and to better purpose.”

Critical comments: The author refers to the same idea in several places. We agree fully with his argument that R.’s human weaknesses do not detract anything from his ideal character, that they make us feel united with him more closely in kinship, make us love him more deeply and inspire us to imitate his great ideals, and to some extent with his argument that they are meant to show how R. has conquered his emotional trials to rise to soaring altitudes of sublimity, how his sublime nature has triumphed over his lower nature, and how we can do this with him. (In all that, we consider R. an ideal man, not an ideal God-man). Sastrī, however, has failed to see that, besides all that, R.’s emotional paroxysms, though weaknesses in one way, have a highly positive value: They reveal the unfathomable depth of his ideals of conjugal love, filial devotion, brotherly attachment etc. They render his sublimity of character really human and genuinely sublime since human emotions are the spontaneous translation of man's innermost ideals and tenets.
Valmiki’s Poetical Mission and the Message of his Character-Portrayals
For generations the heroic story (ākhyāna) of R. has been sung by rhapsodists in the courts of the Ikṣvākus. Though the date and nature of its origin will remain for ever obscure, it must have been a delightful, entralling tale of the heroism of R.'s exploits and the heroism of his Self in meeting the odysseys of his life.

There comes a man of great genius and spirit of mind, a rhapsodist by disposition and a first full-fledged poet by vocation, with a deep psychological insight into the human heart with its emotions, aspirations and ideals. His name is V. Inspired by the vision of the ideal character of R., he is inflamed with a poetical mission, the mission to picture this story anew and picture it as an ideal story of life with an ideal ethical message—embodying in it a whole cosmos of life, scintillating in its exuberant riches and edifying in its captivating purport; a story truly rhapsodic and truly poetic at the same time—a story truly rhapsodic in that it would depict a gallery of scenes and its environment of life as flowing from the inspiration of the moment, never failing to capture the hearts and minds of the audience; a story truly poetic in that it would impregnate this whole gallery with a spirit of delightfulness and edification and the spirit of a great vision enshrined in an entralling act of life throbbing with emotions, ideals and aspirations: a vision into the unfathomable wealth of the soul of life with its telling ethos and its inspiring models.

V.'s foremost ethical message is the message of inspiring ideals of life which mirror the deepest aspirations of the human heart, a message embodied in the portrayal of ideal characters woven into entralling and edifying stories of their odysseys of life. The apex of all models of life is the ever-inspiring hero R., the paragon of all virtues, the prototype of humanity, the ṣaraṇya of all beings. His ideal personality is surrounded by a number of other, more or less, ideal characters incarnating
variegated ideals of life: the ideal of wifely devotion (S.), the ideal of brotherly love (L., Bh.), the ideal of parental love (D., Ks.), the ideal of wise and dedicated counsellorship (H., Vibhiśaṇa), the ideal of dedicated service (Sumantra), the ideal of friendship (Su.) and many others. But models though they are, they are designed, with a host of other characters, to highlight the rich wealth of the psyche of life. Life is not life with ideals alone. Life becomes life if it unravels all that is in its depth, all the phosphorescent richness of emotions, feelings and tenets, of joy and sorrow, love and hatred, forbearance and wrath, altruism and selfishness etc. etc., and if it encompasses all that is in its bosom, encompasses the milieu of variegated strata of society, of variegated walks of life, of variegated classes of beings, and if it encompasses all that makes up its environment. For then only, life is truly and vividly life. And life that is truly and vividly life is not only delightful for its pulsating heartbeat and its exuberant wealth and richness, but has an abundance of messages; and, more than that, the poet’s foremost message, the message of ideals, becomes truly and genuinely embedded in its life-source through its oscillation with other manifestations of life, and so stands out triumphantly and inspiring. Such life with its unfathomable depth and its all-encompassing horizon, with its motivation in creating rasa and proclaiming a host of messages and its arrow pointed towards the elevation of great ideals, is almost totally captured in the poet’s portrayal of characters specially designed so or getting their design from their involvement in the story. To show the richness of the pulsating soul of life and its all-encompassing width, to expound its innumerable messages which are conducing in an invaluable way to the elevation of ideals, V.’s depiction of ideal characters, the prime urge of his mind, is woven into a wider contexture, the contexture of a portrait-gallery of manifold characters of manifold temperaments—with manifold life-situations, from manifold paths of life, from manifold classes of beings.
We are going to unfold a little this portrait-gallery of V.'s characters in a few moments, but let us first say a word or two about those facets of life and its environment which are not taken into the character-portrayals: They are as encompassing in their richness as the facets of life mirrored in the character-portrayals, and far more. They, in the truest sense of the word, encompass a whole universe of life:

a universe of beings: Gods, mythological figures, super-humans, humans, super-animals, animals etc. etc.—

a universe of walks of life and ways of civilization: the kingly walk of life, the Brāhmaṇic walk of life, the domestic walk of life, the attendant's walk of life, the tribal walk of life, the ascetic walk of life, different vanavāsī walks of life, the Vn. walk of life, the Rākṣāsuric walk of life; the warrior walk of life; the Aryan way of civilization, the tribal way of civilization, the Vn. way of civilization, the Rk. way of civilization—

a universe of dharmas—views of life: the satyadharma-view-of-life, the kṣatradharma-view-of-life, the sannyāsa-dharma-view-of-life, the Rākṣasa-dharma-view-of-life—

a universe of social activities, customs and festivities —

a universe of life-environments: cities, palaces, gardens, forests, battles etc. —

in short, a universe to capture which would require many minds. Yet encompassing and elaborate as they may be, these scenes do not breathe the same life-spirit as the character-portrayals. But they do have a vital function: They, first of all, because of their richness and power of evocation, capture in a truly rhapsodic manner, the hearts and minds of the audience
savouring the beauty and wonder of things and broaden the vision of the already rich horizon of life. But they also contribute to enhancing the life-spirit captured in the character-portrayals in a variety of ways: They lead up to and enforce climaxes, they retard and divert so as to produce thrill, they relieve tension etc. etc. And they, especially nature-scenes, are often in direct attunement to the pulse of the characters' psychology: Nature sympathizes with the characters, revelling with them in their joy, lamenting with them in their sorrow, and imbues them with new feelings. And the characters, too, leave their specific impress on nature.

Let us now unfold a little of V.'s portrait-gallery of characters and see their messages in relation to the poet's primary message: the portrayal of ideals which express the deepest aspirations of the human heart.

(1) First and foremost, V.'s characters are characters with manifold individual inclinations and temperaments mirroring manifold states of the soul, or they themselves run, in meeting with manifold experiences of life, through manifold states of the soul. These states of the soul range over the entire gamut of emotions, sentiments, urges, tenets, principles which life is built of; from sublime altruism to heinous egoism, from tender-hearted affection to tyrannic cruelty, from patient forbearance to relentless wrath, from sublime goodness to vicious atrocity etc., and are as unfathomable and fluorescent as the waters of the ocean. And yet, amidst this vastness of fluorescent states of the soul, there emerges a universal pattern of polar conflicts. There is a struggle between the powers of goodness and the powers of evil, between the daivic and the ghoric forces, there is a struggle between the sattvic and the rajasic mentalities, between the ideology of satyadharma and the ideology of ksatriyadharma, there is a struggle between the elysium of happiness and the niraya of agony, between the spell of fortune and the doom
of misfortune, between the light of hope and the darkness of despair, between the sublime glory of the ideal and the diabolic magic of the anti-ideal. And the universal message of all these conflicts is the message of the final victory of the forces of light over the forces of darkness, of the sublime glory of the ideals over the diabolic magic of the anti-ideals. Whatever trials and reversals the highest ideals of life do have to undergo, whatever stages of darkness, agony and despair they do have to pass, with many a bitter tragedy on the way, they are bound to lead to a happy end, the final victory is bound to be theirs. Thus, the loftiest ideals of life are not only sublimely beautiful, are not only the expressions of the deepest dreams and aspirations of the human heart, but they are the eternal guiding-stars of the universe, dimmed by clouds though often they may be. They are thus eternal milestones on man's path through life, they have a sure and glorious goal, though hard and disheartening this path may be. Surely, this is the universal message of V., though this message is soon to be vitiated with pathos and pessimism taking hold of it.2-3

(2) V.'s characters are characters from manifold walks of life, manifold classes of beings, encompassing a manifold psyche and gallery of life. Though some of them reach an elevation far beyond the capacities of the average man, many others are flesh-and-blood characters from all walks of life, and even the greatest of them, however sublime in loftiness of character, are in their humanness and emotionality as flesh and blood as the common man is, are, as it were, fellow-travellers on his path through life. The Rm. is not composed for the spiritual perfection of a few individuals, but for the common man from every walk of life. True, the loftiest characters are guiding-stars of a sheer unattainable height, but they, too, have all the wealth of emotions and sentiments which mark the common man, and they, too, have to undergo all the ordeals of life, all the tragedies
which the common man has to cope with. The very audience of the *Rm.* is largely the common man, from all the walks and classes of society. And it is precisely because these loftiest of personalities are so human, so flesh and blood of their own that they are such inspiring models to them. Yet the common man needs not only these ideal characters, these guiding stars, however much he can identify himself with them, however much he can love, rejoice, lament, agonize and triumph with them, but he needs characters who, though perhaps still greater than them, are fully their own, who like them are not able to transcend their weaknesses and cope with their emotional trials and reversals. And he needs such characters as are below him, on whom he can, with the poet, pour out his contempt, or such characters as are outspoken villains, against whom he can lash his wrath and vengeance and with whom he can feel the devilry of evil. And what could be more apt for the poet than, next to delving into the depth of the heart, also to extend the horizon of life and take characters from all the walks of life and even from all classes of beings. By widening the cosmos of life, the poet not only enhances the delight and interest of the common man, but vivifies his identification with the story and its messages. Who these characters are we have explained in our thesis. We have spoken about them as characters-in-themselves. But though they are all characters-in-themselves, to a greater or lesser extent, they do have, in virtue of their messages, a relational value, both in their oscillation to one another (as mentioned above) and in their communication with the audience.

Let us therefore pick out a few of them, namely such characters as mirror deeply the mentality of the people, characters with whom they can identify themselves specially, and let us situate them in their psycho-communicative perspective:
There are the princes Bh. and L., who, in their attempt—prompted by their boundless love and concern for R.—to dissuade him from his firm determination to go to the forest, fall into a frenzy of psychic upsurges and, spell-bound by them, take recourse to a rājasic display of ideologies (L.) or to a frenzied display of arguments and psychological pressures (Bh.). There is king D., an aged father, who loves R. with paternal affection, but pays his infatuation for his younger wife, against his own intention, with the loss of his dear son and, unable to cope with the sorrow and agony taking hold of him, breathes his last. There is queen Ks., who, as the loving mother of R., cannot overcome her son’s misfortune and, thinking that all her life has been a life of gloom and unending miseries, never finds consolation till R.’s return. There is the charioteer Sumantra, who is so full of devotion and attachment to his master that he cannot help projecting the disconsolateness arising from his separation from R. even on D. and Ks. and thereby re-enforces their sorrow. There are the people of Ayodhya, who are so full of devotion to their R. that they would irresistibly follow his chariot, eagerly determined to leave house and home and share his ascetic life till they would move his mind to return to Ayodhya, but who, frustrated in their intention, fall into a spirit of melancholy and mourning, utterly disinterested in life. There is the Vn. king Su., who, though an amiable and affectionate friend of R. and full of concern for him and readiness to help, in his exuberant mood at the recovery of his kingdom, so loses himself in sexual pleasures and inebriety that he for some time completely forgets his duty towards R. and in this and other aspects reveals himself as a genuine representative of the monkeys. There is the Rk. Mārica, who is converted to a sage and who in his conscientiousness does everything to dissuade Rv. from his evil intention, but, realizing its futility, succumbs to his wishes. There are the various vanavāsīs, who are all full of hospitality and, greatly inspired by R.’s heroism, want to lavish all that is in their power on him. There is the devout sage-wife of Atri, Anasūyā, who inspired
by S.'s great idealism in following her husband, is prompted to instruct her about the virtue of a wife’s devotion to her husband and lavish presents on her and is filled with intimate curiosity to know about her life and marriage. There are the Vn. hosts, who, heroic and impetuous though in their fight, are timid in face of danger, dispirited in face of difficulties, fickle-minded in face of trials and indulgent and mischievous in their exuberance of joy. Many more such examples could be given.

What then is the Rm., the ādikāvya? In its universal purport, the Rm. is an ideal story with an ideal ethical message, woven into the contexture of a dramatic saga—truly rhapsodic and truly poetic—that captures a universe of life—enthralling in its pulsation and richness and edifying in its messages. It is a story that expounds the highest ideals of life embodied in the life-experiential portrayal of ideal characters, woven into a saga which, purporting to unfold the rich pulsation of the soul of life and its all-encompassing width and to proclaim innumerable messages conducing in an invaluable way to the elevation of ideals, captures a universe of life in the life-experiential portrayal of a universe of characters. It portrays a universe of characters which, rifted by polar forces, the forces of light and darkness, of sublime ideals and diabolic anti-ideals, embodies the gladdening message of the victory of light over darkness and of ideals over anti-ideals—ideals which, while mirroring the deepest aspirations of man, are expounded as his eternal milestones with a sure and glorious goal on his weary path through life. It pictures a universe of characters which [though a universe of characters in se with a purport to delight and a psycho-communicative function], mirroring the wealth of emotions, sentiments and ordeals of life of the common man of all walks, sets a stage towards his living identification with the lofty ideals incarnated by the ideal characters, who, unattained in their perfection, as it were, are flesh and blood of his own in their humanity. In its deepest
spiritual purport the *Rm.* is a hymn on the glory of altruism. Its highest ideal is the ideal of an unflinching and enthusiastic commitment to a supreme spirit of benevolence, which, forgoing every concern about personal welfare to the extent of a total self-sacrifice and transcending all temporal bonds of attachment, seeks the deepest welfare of all beings; an ideal which, being as much the deepest and loftiest dream and aspiration of man's heart as his eternal milestone on his path through life, embodies the assurance of a triumphant victory over all the ordeals and diabolic forces he is subjected to with many an agony and tragedy on the way and is crowned by the enactment of a golden age of felicity; an ideal which has its resonance in the unspoken intuition that, what validifies the truth of man's self-commitment as the highest aspiration of his heart, is an eternal bond of love with his fellow-beings, which endures beyond and against mere natural attachment.

There could not be any more fitting conclusion to our treatise than a quotation from Sri Aurobindo⁴, no doubt the most intuitive aesthetic critic of V. as a poet and a seer.⁵ Let us note that, though our investigations have led us to an estimate of the overall picture of V.'s poem and poetical mission different from Aurobindo's and though we would consider Aurobindo's approach too one-sided in as far as it overestresses the artistic mould of the *Rm.*, there is much on which we have fully identical views.

"The subject is the same as in the Mahabharata, the strife of the divine with the titanic forces in the life of the earth, but in more purely ideal forms, in frankly supernatural dimensions and an imaginative heightening of both the good and the evil in human character. On one side is portrayed an ideal manhood, a divine beauty of virtue and ethical order, a civilization founded on the Dharma and realising an exaltation of the moral ideal which is presented with a singularly strong appeal of aesthetic grace and har-
mony and sweetness; on the other are wild and anarchic and almost amorphous forces of superhuman egoism and self-will and exultant violence, and the two ideas and powers of mental nature living and embodied are brought into conflict and led to a decisive issue of the victory of the divine man over the Rakshasa. All shade and complexity are omitted which would diminish the single purity of the idea, the representative force in the outline of the figures, the significance of the temperamental colour and only so much admitted as is sufficient to humanise the appeal and the significance. The poet makes us conscious of the immense forces that are behind our life and sets his action in a magnificent epic scenery, the great imperial city, the mountains and the ocean, the forest and wilderness, described with such a largeness as to make us feel as if the whole world were the scene of his poem and its subject the whole divine and titanic possibility of man imaged in a few great or monstrous figures. The ethical and the aesthetic mind of India have here fused themselves into a harmonious unity and reached an unexampled pure wideness and beauty of self-expression. The Ramayana embodied for the Indian imagination its highest and tenderest human ideals of character, made strength and courage and gentleness and purity and fidelity and self-sacrifice familiar to it in the sauvest and most harmonious forms coloured so as to attract the emotion and the aesthetic sense, stripped morals of all repellent austerity on one side or on the other of mere commonness and lent a certain high divineness to the ordinary things of life, conjugal and filial and maternal and fraternal feeling, the duty of the prince and leader and the loyalty of follower and subject, the greatness of the great and the truth and worth of the simple, toning things ethical to the beauty of a more psychical meaning by the glow of its ideal hues. The work of Valmiki has been an agent of almost incalculable power in the moulding of the cultural mind of India: it has presented to it to be loved and imitated in figures like Rama and Sita, made so divinely
and with such a revelation of reality as to become objects of enduring cult and worship, or like Hanuman, Lakshmana, Bharata the living human image of its ethical ideal; it has fashioned much of what is best and sweetest in the national character, and, it has evoked and fixed in it those fine and exquisite yet firm soul tones and that more delicate humanity of temperament which are a more valuable thing than the formal outsides of virtue and conduct.”

1 This chapter intends to be an overall psychological reconstruction of V.’s poetical mission and the special message of his character-portrayals.


In another article of his Essays (VII: Rasa as a canon of Literary Criticism, pp. 64-71, ibid. pp. 67-69) Krishnamoorthy criticizes Anandavardhana’s theory as contradictory from the point of view of V.’s poetico-ethical intention and the Sanskrit conception of literature and then suggests as a variant interpretation that the sentiment of even the tragic finale of the Rm. may be interpreted, from the over-all point of view of the dominant rasa of the Rm., i.e. the virarasa, as a gamut of the heroic sentiment known as dharmavīra:

“The main point at issue is whether Anandavardhana has rightly interpreted the spirit of the Rāmāyaṇa in regarding Karuṇa as its prominent rasa. We have seen that the Sanskrit conception of literature, emphasizing the reward of virtue, does not allow room for the hero’s failure or frustration. Is it a feeling of good over evil we get prominently in the epic, or a sense of the unrewarded suffering of the good? Do Rāma and Sītā represent for us models of heroic duty and feminine fortitude or just objects of pity? If our answer is the latter, we are almost accepting the practical success of Rāvana, the embodiment of evil, in inflicting irrevocable sorrow on Rāma and Sītā; and this gives the lie to the very credo of success as the core of ethics. The present writer feels that the greatness of Rāma and Sītā stands out not so much in their passive sorrow as in their positive heroism in the midst of sorrow. No one can deny the presence of sorrow and suffering in the epic in a large measure. But one might say that the emphasis of the poet is not sorrow but on the heroic attitude to sorrow... If we understand that in the Rāmāyaṇa the poet’s emphasis is on the hero’s stern sense of duty amidst
trials and tribulations that might have unnerved another of a weaker fibre, the poet's natural ending of the story would be a trial, perhaps the greatest trial, that ever man faced. Such is the episode of the banishment of Sīthā culminating in her descent to the Netherworld. On this view, the rāsa can be described as that variety of the Heroic known as Dharmavīra (Heroic-in-Duty)". [A slightly variant interpretation of V.'s poetical vision—but with the same pivotal point of the hero's self-attestation in the midst of sorrow—is attempted by K. Chaitanya in his books Sanskrit Poetics (pp. 167 ff., 222 ff.) and A New History of Sanskrit Literature (pp. 173 ff.) from the perspective of the nature of the tragic itself. Chaitanya accepts both the kāruṇā and the vīra—as the two dialectical facets of an integrative life-vision, the tragic as a reflection of the life-force of the (seemingly) absurd and meaningless and the heroic as a reflection of man's spirit-force transmuting the latter into a meaningful whole. For him the Rm. is a symbol of the dialectical integration of the disparaging forces of human existence as a casual drift of events and of human self-attestation as a force of man's creative freedom through the instrumentality of an imperceptible supernatural power mobilizing the seemingly absurd drifts of history towards great purposes. But the flaws of his theory are an existentialistic bias in the interpretation of the poet's vision of life; an over-stress of aspects of the story which have merely a functional value and do not reflect the identity of the poet or the character in question; a reading of meaning into scenes which, being structurally alien to the whole, resist any coherent interpretation.]

In the view described here the perspective of the dharmavīra ideal, the leitmotif of the authentic Rm., is consciously or unconsciously extended to the tragic finale of the story, the Uttarākāṇḍa, on the basis of an apparent analogy, the analogy of ordeals. Yet, these ordeals as described in this late kāṇḍa allow far more room to be visualized as episodes of piteous sorrow than episodes of trials for self-attestation. Further, we feel that by equating R.'s active heroic commitment to the ideal of a dharma which, unflinching (not stern!) though it is, is motivated by truth, love and altruism, in the orginal Vālmikian epic, with R.'s passive heroic submission to a dharma that is stamped by some kind of a taboo mentality, in the late epic, the moral sublimity of R.'s dharmaviratā as visualized by V. is both downgraded and vitiated, for then the impression cannot be gainsaid that after all R. is not wholly irresponsible for the tragic course of events. Nevertheless a tendency towards a greater rigidity of the dharmavīra ideal may have been one of the contributive factors in the process of the story's elaboration. But the question is whether the main leitmotif in the minds of the later bards was this tendency or a tendency towards a stronger enforcement of the karuṇārasa? While
it is difficult to give an appropriate answer to this question since the process of elaboration was complex and went through many hands, it cannot be doubted that both tendencies (next to a variety of other processes) played a major role in transforming the original story, most probably working hand in hand and possibly being the different, outlets of a more intense penetration into the epic of the dreary side of life, which was up to then mirrored in the work only in an idealistic state, as also of an actually more rigid and dismal outlook on life. In the final analysis then, Ānandavardhana’s view of karuṇa as the key-note of the Rm., though not true for the original, does reflect the spirit that was deemed to pervade the story as it lay before him.

3 One of the central messages of the poem is the message of the sublimity of conjugal devotion embodied in the portrayal of R. and S.’s immortal love. For its exemplarity we have attempted to give a purport of V.’s portrayal of their love in an appendix essay. The reader’s indulgence is requested for the many repetitions of portions from the body of the book.


5 Though he wrote little on the subject and his planned essay on V. remained in its initial stage.
Appendix

The Purport of Rama and Sita's Immortal Love

R. and S.'s auspicious bond of wedlock is sealed by an intimate bond of mutual attachment and affection budding into the deepest union of hearts—an indissoluble bond of love uniting them through the thick and thin of the most turbulent vicissitudes of their life. Nay, the darkest gloom of their agony embosoms the brightest bloom of their love. For the ordeals of their life do not only elicit the deepest pivots of their benevolent souls, but bring into dialectical encounter and union the deepest polarities of their human psyches. In short, the story of R. and S.'s agony and ecstasy of love is the story of conjugal love sprouting its fullest blossom.

It starts blossoming with the traumatic moment when R. and S., seeing each other lost in sorrow and mutual anxiety gripped as they find each other by an unaccountable turn of fate, feel themselves stirred by an indelible flame of concern for each other's peace of mind and solace of heart, an inner urge to sacrifice their all for the supreme and abiding welfare of the partner. It is love's deepest encounter—as deep as the love of a woman and the love of a man can be and as deep as the polarity between the heart of a woman and the heart of a man can be. For it is the sublimation of the excruciating agony of uncleared hearts into the blissful quiet of transparent souls.

The agony of S. is the agony of her heart's most intimate desire to so totally dedicate herself and sacrifice her all to her husband as to share the adversity's destiny with him, to take
upon herself the gravest of miseries and hardships for the sake of him, who is her fortune, her destiny and refuge, who is the all-in-all of her life, in whose loving union all life, even amidst the gravest miseries and hardships, is heaven, in separation from whom all the delights of the world, even heaven, are hell. The agony of her heart is the agony of her anxiety that her husband, whom she has loved and served with ever-loyal devotion, but who adamantly refuses to take her with him to the forest for reasons of hardships and travails that may await her in the forest, may, despite her sincere protestations, not read this intimate desire of her heart, may not intuit how unfathomable the depth of her devotion is and how total her commitment and her readiness to sacrifice her life for him are. And so, when R. turns, as if, a deaf ear even to the sincerest of her protestations, her agony gives way to a state of utter desperation, her mind being unable to grasp what is going on in the mind of her lord. But a woman with as indestructable a resolution as imperishable a devotion, with no less unfathomable a wealth of emotions than unfathomable a wealth of love, S.'s whole personality vibrates so vigorously in her excruciating frenzy of sorrow and despair as she pines for her husband's consent that, though herself at the edge of an emotional break-down, she has withstood to give the fullest and most unmistakable proof of her devotion—so transparent in its integrity and firmness that its rejection would throw her into the darkest abysses of unhappiness, nay, would make her well-nigh despair of her life.

The agony of R. is the agony of his anxiety and concern for the happiness and welfare of heart of his beloved wife in face of the excruciating reality of their parting, an anxiety and concern rooted in the most benevolent and self-sacrificing love a husband can give to a wife—a husband who has nothing in mind but the supreme perpetual welfare of his beloved, forgoing every concern about his own welfare to the extent of sacrificing the deepest yearnings and dreams of his heart. The agony of R. is the agony of a heart that, read and take delight though it would in granting S.'s most intimate wish and desire—to share
in the gravest of her husband's destiny, would not allow itself to be at the mercy of even the deepest and most assuring of her protestations of love, fearing as it does that even the deepest and firmest convictions of her love, howsoever beyond any first-hand enthusiasm and indeliberate fancies springing from her bountiful heart at the first impulse of her boundless devotion, might not withstand the sheer severity of the hardships and terrors of forest life inconceivable even for the grossest imagination, how much more so for a tender lady brought up amidst the comforts and luxuries of city life and totally unaware of the dark side of life. R.'s agony of love is the agony of his fear that S. does not know what she is talking about, that she can never really apprehend the hardiness of reality and may, facing it, lose heart for sheer inability to cope with it. This would mean the most disastrous stake of responsibility, nay, the very reversal of altruistic love, which alone effects the ultimate spiritual welfare of a fellow being. And so, S.'s spiritual welfare is too precious a thing as that R. could spare himself the agony of witnessing the most excruciating frenzy of her tormented heart short of no less than an emotional break-down—because only then can he be absolutely sure that his wife may not lose heart in even the gravest difficulties, only then can he be absolutely sure that he has not staked his responsibility, the consequences of which would be irremediably disastrous.

Yet in this most traumatic moment when the most zealous hearts are subjected to the most agonizing ordeal of mutual incomprehension, S. and R. reveal and experience the elysium of love: As R. breaks the spell of incomprehension with his affectionate consent, spilling a pain-and-love-laden heart with the confession that S.'s sorrow has tormented him so much that, for it, he would not even desire heaven, and S. reverts into the eloquent silence of speechless joy, an ocean of tears of agony has verily crystallized into an ocean of tears of joy.

The story of R.'s and S.'s forest—sojourn is the story of the
blossoming into reality of their most intimate professions of love. In the austerity of their forest—life love's self-sacrifice attains its fullest Elysian bloom. Yet heaven's probation of their self-surrendering devotion is too demanding as to stop short of the most traumatic ordeal the zealous hearts of benevolent lovers can be subjected to: the excruciating ordeal of viraha—paradoxically brought about by love's own irrational impulses. For, though R. has never yielded to love's indeliberate fancies nor even to the deepest and sincerest asseverations when they could be thwarted by life's incalculable vicissitudes, he has so fallen a prey to S.'s infatuation for the magic deer that he himself has grown an infatuation for it urging him to go for his fateful pursuit of Márica. And S., who has asseverated her deepest confidence and trust in R.'s valour to protect her from the dangers and terrors of the forest, in a traumatic moment of anxiety for her husband's life, flies into such an unprecedented paroxysm of despair as to force an outraged L. to leave her in the clutches of ill-omened Rv.

The agony of R. and S.'s love in separation not only unleashes the most vibrating and fluorescent gamut of human emotions a despondent soul can traverse, not only elicits the most heartfelt and passionate professions and yearnings of love a pining heart can voice, not only evokes the most gloom-ridden and life-oblivious imaginations and reveries a disconsolate mind can conjure, but reveals and brings to execution, through its wealth of emotions, the immortal sublimity and unfathomable depth of their conjugal love—a love as devout in its blissful romance and over-flowing tenderness of sentiments as in its sublime spirituality, and as benevolent in its unbending valour as in its gentle self-sacrificing devotion.

Like R., whose search for the lost heart-beat of his life is a seemingly unending odyssey of sorrow and despair, S., in her encounter with the excruciating tortures of her agony of separation, is subjected to a chain of gravest and most tantalizing emotional ordeals. These emotional ordeals beset her with the most torturing sorrow, fears and pinings, and drive
her to the edge of despair with herself, a despair that traverses
the entire range of her disconsolate and despondent soul down
to the darkest and gloomiest abysses of imaginations, imagina-
tions as dismal as that R. has lost love and interest for her,
in the midst of which she feels as though her heart would
break and her only relief would be that of renouncing her life,
were it only that death took pity on her. And yet, in her
encounter with such grave tortures and fears, S., governed by
an unfathomable devotion and loyalty to her husband, reveals
not only an unshakable firmness of conjugal fidelity, but the
most heroic spirit of the feminine heart. Nay, as her agony
reaches its climax in a traumatic moment of death-despair
when she deems that cruel Rv. is going to take her life and R.
and L. have been killed by him, S., in the gravest minute of
her life, in the very face of death itself, has no word of self-
pity, but is united in sympathy and concern with her dearest
and dear ones, whose ill-fate she deems to have conjured.

It is the darkest night of love’s agony, but out of the
gloom of the night rises the dawn of love’s highest elation.
Brimming with the joy of love’s victory over the diabolic forces
of evil, R. and S.’s love-devoted hearts, flowing over, as if to
merge, into each other in sentiments of the highest affection
and gratitude and radiating an all-forgiving spirit of universal
compassion and love—permeating the hearts and minds of all
citizens and transforming them into an ideal people—, voice
the message of the universal truth: Whatever trials and
ordeal the ideal of conjugal love has to undergo, whatever
stages of darkness, agony and despair it has to pass, with
many a bitter tragedy on the way, it is bound to lead to a
happy end. For as the all-in-all of benevolent love, it is not
only sublimely beautiful, not only the expression of the
deepest dreams and aspirations of the human heart, but the
eternal guiding-star of the universe, dimmed by clouds though
it often may be; the eternal mile-stone and symbol of man’s
path through life with his fellow-beings, having a sure and
glorious goal: the paradisical quiet of altruistic felicity.
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