

The content and structure of the Vedic ritual - an enquiry into the common element

Prof. DIPAK BHATTACHARYA, Santiniketan

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1. Introductory

1a. The aim of the paper

The primary aim of the paper will be clear from its title. The reason for taking up this topic is the fact that though the Vedic ritual has been subjected to detailed treatment by philologists, most of the treatments have mainly aimed at the description of the rituals, one does not find much ofenquiries into whether there is any basic similarity among them. This purpose, it appeared to me, is best served by examining how the operation of the ritual leads its performance towards the desired end.This is not a totally

unexplored aspect but the studies made till now have been sporadic and limited to individual rituals (eg., Eggeling: SBE 43: 1894) and without any attempt to take a theoretical stand based on the enquiry. It is expected that a more extensive study involving the analysis of the contents of quite a few rituals as inter-related elements, as aimed by us, will conduce to clarity regarding the operation of the ritual of which a comprehensive idea can thereby be formed.

As for the traditional interpretation of the Vedic ritual, a purpose is recognized by the Mīmāṃsakas but not any analysis of the mode of operation. The theory is that one does something according to the canons and attains heaven. The Mīmāṃsā polemics centres around the consistency, authenticity etc of the Vedic injunctions. Some commentators and¹ modern thinkers have put emphasis on the spiritual aim of the sacrifice while most have remained silent with implied acceptance of the well-known give and take theory that came to great prominence later but was not so in early Vedic stage. To make things more complicated a few philologists have denied the very existence of a purpose in the ritual². As we have tried to show (1c and 5c) this idea is wrong.

An examination of the mode of operation can serve other purposes too. Till now scholars go by the traditional mode of classification of the Vedic ritual that distinguishes between the śrauta and grhya varieties. This classification depends on whether the ritual has been prescribed in the Brāhmaṇa literature or not. They differ in detail and the amount and nature of implements. But one may like to know if there is any essential operational similarity? It may be noted that the above is not the only way of classifying the rituals. Scholars also classify into magical and non-magical rituals. Here the aim of the ritual serves as the criterion of classifying. And here too one does not speak of any operational peculiarity.

The net result of adopting these different criteria with the immediate need in mind is that though there are popular ideas about the classification of ritual like magical, spiritual, śrauta, grhya etc., a uniform method is lacking. Some are based on purpose (magic, spiritual), some on source (śrauta, grhya) but these do not take into

¹Sāyaṇa on the caturhotārah in the Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka; Sri Aurobindo etc.

²Staal 2004. Apparently Kashikar, too. See below

consideration the operational aspect that is to say how the operation serves to meet the end of the ritual.

We should of course speak of the exceptions too. Eggeling analysed the Cayana and found out its purpose and modus operandi, so did Magoun in the study of the Āsurīkalpa. Also Frazer made his well-known study of rituals showing how they aimed at some result. These scholars showed that the ritual had a purpose and how that purpose was supposed to have been served. But in India ritual study, particularly Vedic, seems to have been kept apart from the Frazer's ideas.

The following will further clarify why it has been thought necessary to make a new approach differing from some existing works dealing with ritual, particularly with magic.

In some researches (THITE: 1982) just the existence of superstition has been deemed sufficient for drawing the conclusion that there is magic in them. THITE's treatment of the matter does not lack in details but, obviously, his aim and methodology are different from ours. THITE shows that the ideas of the causes of disease, the methods of curing, of prophylactics and keeping good health are all unscientific and based on beliefs of the influence of evil beings, sins, irreligiousness, holding heretical view, astrological situations and so on. Such beliefs are known as superstition. Now, superstitions play the leading role not only in medical treatment but in the daily life of pre-modern people. But a ritual is not mere belief. It is an operation executed along with prayers with the belief that the operation will have some effect. That means they prepare an apparatus on the basis of those beliefs and use that for treatment. An assertion with evidence that some unscientific beliefs do exist does not explain the operation with the said apparatus. Hence THITE's thesis does not help in research into ritual.

Here one must admit with admiration that Dandekar's 'Foreword' to the work (p.9) draws attention to the necessity of throwing light on the operational aspect of medicinal practice: 'One of the distinctive features of ancient Indian thought is the correspondence which it always seeks to establish between the macrocosm and the

microcosm. This feature is very well reflected in ancient Indian medicine..... So far as I can see Dr. Thite has not developed this point sufficiently.'

Dandekar hits at the right point by stating a vital positive feature of Indian ritualism that THITE had missed. And it is here that our approach differs from the majority of the existing ones. Our enquiry into ritual and allied matters follows this line. It has been made irrespective of the existence of superstition in ritual just aiming at finding out the operational mechanism.

Since maximum misunderstanding rises around the concept of magic, one of our aims has been to understand whether the mechanism for magical cure differs from what goes on in the name of non-magical ritual.

Among THITE's predecessors, WINTERNITZ [(1907) 1927: 120] speaks of 'priests of magic' in which the function of the priest is combined with that of the wizard without stating how and why the two functions differ. There is an underlying axiom that the function of the non-wizard priest is altruistic preaching of truth and love. CALAND (1900) too, apparently, took the ethics of the aim as the criterion for determining what is magic and what is not. At least, like WINTERNITZ, CALAND too did not state why he distinguished the Atharvavedic ritual from the Rgvedic by terming it magic.

The paucity of analytical attempts among the writings of the earlier philologists towards clarifying how magic differed in operation from the so called non-magic ritual has not been conducive to the growth of a scientific understanding of the ritual. As far as common usage indicates, it has, on the contrary, helped preserve the wrong notion, not only at the popular level but also among philologists, of the existence of some fundamental difference between non-magical ritual and magic. Now, of course, every ritual has its own aim. One may classify and sub-classify them according to motivation. But a distinction solely on the ground of motivation or ethical stand is misleading. For, motivation itself does not make rituals fundamentally different. By the nature of their idea of cause and effect relation, all of them belong to the arena of what is known as 'pre-scientific science'.³

³ My use of this term is for the sake of convenience. It does not mean an approval of this categorisation. In spite of a kind of consensus on its employment it is not devoid of the pomposity common to all

The employment of the term magic for some rituals while keeping the others free of stigma by calling them simply ritual looks odd in face of the fact that the already done analyses of some rituals, eg., the one of the Agnicayana by EGELING (SBE 43: 'Introduction' xiii-xv), show that operationally there is fundamental similarity between what is known as magic and what is known as common ritual. An appreciation of this deduction is often missing in the works of philologists.⁴

While stating these words I should make it clear that analysing magic or witchcraft is not the main aim here. It is the ritual with its complex operation that is the object of enquiry and not only what is known as magic. But since magic is usually distinguished from ritual it had to be paid some special attention.

b. Previous works

Some previous works have been referred to above. Among the writings of Sanskritists some beginnings with clarification of aspects of the ritual are to be found with BERGAGNE (1878-1883)⁵ who understood the Vedic ritual as acts of gods imitated on earth eg., sympathetic magic to induce rain through imitation, EGELING⁶ – a case specific imitation of a cosmic beginning in the Cayana etc., HEESTERMAN (1957) – inducing divine authority into the mortal king, GONDA (1950, 1959) -- ideas of the strengthening of prayer etc. But, as already indicated, in spite of these case specific observations or words of general wisdom (eg., the idea of pre-scientific science), so far as the building up of a general structure is concerned, it was for long the prerogative of cultural anthropologists.⁷ On the part of Vedic scholars further exposition of the ritual

outbursts of sudden wisdom. There is no post-scientific science in any ceremonial observation or protocol that occurs at the highest level of society and seems to have general approval.

⁴ It should be stated here that it is not denied that progress is being made in philological research on the whole,

particularly in the West. But since the author of these lines belongs to India there might have been some information gap. Such gaps result in deficiencies on both sides. Naturally, what is stated here about the state of

research conforms to things as perceived in India.

⁵ Paranjpe's transl. Vol. 1 p.viii,xiii,xv,104-5,109.

⁶ SBE XLIII: 'Introduction', particularly pp. xiii - xv; BHATTACHARYA 1984: 165,178 etc. for more details.

⁷ FRAZER 1922: 49ff and *passim*, particularly Ch.3.

with classification and detail that can correlate them to the findings of anthropologists is still, on the whole, lacking. Thus, though it is much more than hundred years that imitation was philologically discovered as a major instrument for attaining the goal of the sacrifice, and James FRAZER⁸ proposed that as a general theory and the psychologist Erich FROMM⁹ saw its utility in explaining some non-Indian rituals, one does not find much reflection of the theory among Sanskritists.

Barring the few cases mentioned, scholars from Oldenberg and Hillebrandt to Gonda via Macdonell have harped on the hackneyed theme – pray to the deity or please him and get something in return. This view, strongly current among the orthodoxy,¹⁰ has banalized the concept of ritual. This popular view gained strength with medieval mysticism that saw divine grace as the sole source of happiness. And the medieval preponderance of this idea seems to have misled philologists who have exhibited a general trend of moving away from classical anthropology while dealing with the Vedic ritual. As a result, further examination of the validity of the imitation mechanism has been rare among Indologists dealing with the Vedic ritual excepting among non-mainstream socio-cultural historians.¹¹

For many of these scholars only a vague undefined sense of pagan obnoxiousness inherited from medieval European days acted under an unwritten consensus as the criterion for identifying magic. Because of such general reticence with magic, the universal existence of magical operation in prayer and in more complex

⁸ N. 6 above.

⁹ 1951: Ch. VII and passim; comments on the Sabbath.

¹⁰ Gītā 3.11, Raghuvamśa 1.26. A recent defence of this purpose of the sacrifice will be found in C. G. Kashikar's (1989:324) following criticism of my attempt (1984) to interpret the Vedic ritual, "It is generally agreed that in the Vedic religion the sacrificer gratified the god by making him offerings, and the god in his turn fulfilled the sacrificer's desires – the give-and-take theory in the Bhagavadgītā. As against this the author finds in RV IV.1.9 a common proprietorship of Agni with the mortal that is the sacrificer."

¹¹ E.g., D. P. CHATTOPADHYAY: 1959. Specially see Book II, Ch. Five (Tantra)

forms of ritual has been overlooked. This stand of ours on the universal existence of magical operation that has been sought to be shown in this paper ultimately reduces itself to the assertion that operationally there is no difference between what is by consensus understood as magic and what is understood as plain ritual.

c. Some recent works

Some recent developments on the study of ritual structure should be mentioned here. With the trends of time there have been some attempts at sketching the structure by STAAL and others, now continued by Houben. Apparently, STAAL is more concerned with the geometrical structures visible at the built up site of the sacrifice and in the physical movements of the performers. See eg. STAAL 2004. Since he (1979, 1989) denies the existence of any meaning in the ritual he cannot show the structure of the sacrifice as an organization of meaningful events with a beginning and end. Houben (2009, 2010.1, 2010.2) is more successful in that. These attempts are expected to direct our attention more and more to the ritual structure. But, till now the works by Sanskritists have been ritual specific and even ritual-item specific and require verification of detail and workability as a starting point acceptable to all.

Another point must be added here. It goes without saying that this paper could not proceed on the acceptance of STAAL's (1979, 1989) theory of the meaninglessness of rituals. It is meaning that the present paper seeks to know. Against STAAL's idea see Houben 2010: 29-63.

However, STAAL's 'meaninglessness of ritual' agrees with the traditional point of view. According to the priestly tradition, rituals are to be performed without questioning why and never with an independent interpretation. This is a corollary of the belief in the infallibility of the Vedas. The explanations offered in the Brāhmaṇas are regarded as arthavādas (below n.19). Vedic injunctions are to be obeyed. Sacrifices are to be performed by Vedic injunctions and one cannot seek to know 'why' by interpreting it. From this point of view they are meaningless.¹²

¹² The present author's (1984) observation that an exclusively Brāhmaṇa based interpretation of the Vedic ritual could be misleading because they put emphasis on sacrificing to Prajāpati when the deity of the relevant prayers was Indra, was objected to by C. G. KASHIKAR (1989: 324) on this ground that is to

STAAL's reluctance to see meaning in ritual might encourage one to draw the analogy of a hypothetical disappointment of visitors to ruins commenting, say, that Hastināpura had been built for no purpose, for no one lived there. With STAAL on the Vedic ritual, however, it is the archaeologist himself who is making such comments.

The Vedic rituals had come into being with meanings but they lost them on the close of the Vedic age. And the break caused by the interlude of trade and urbanism till around the 3rd century CE made it certain that the lost age did not come back. Still, the ruins do not hide the basic structures.¹³

STAAL was, perhaps, not aware of the fact that the said priestly wariness about interpretation also has got its own corollary that a literary or mythological interpretation of the mantras is as good as blasphemy. Cf., mantrāḥ punaḥ ananyaprayojanāḥ prayogasamavetārthasmārakā .../¹⁴“But the mantras ...having no other application, remind us of things connected with the performance.” The only meaning of the mantras, then, lies in reminding one of the correct ritual employment. Inferably, one cannot interpret mythologically! Meaninglessness of the ritual, thus, leads to the meaninglessness of mantras.

This approach to the Vedic ritual will not be acceptable also to etymologists or grammarians too if they are true to the tradition. The theory of meaninglessness falls flat before Patañjali's or Yāska's insistence on learning the Vedas with meaning as in the saying yad adhītam avijñātam nigadenaiva śabdyate/anagnāv iva śuskaidho na taj jvalati karhi cit// ‘What is got by heart but is not understood produces mere sound of chattering. Like dry fuel in (ash) without fire it never

say on the ground that that did not ‘mislead’ one about the performance of the ritual. He was reluctant to allow interpretation here. The change in the notion of the most important deity, according to this view, has no effect on the ritual. But we see the progressive decline of the Vedic ritual in the middle ages with the inroad of Smārta and Purānic rituals. According to me notions of the deity changed, hence the mode of worship changed.

¹³ Also see 5. *Note on the meaninglessness of ritual* below.

¹⁴ *Mīmāṃsānyāyaprakāśa* = EDGERTON 1929: 203, p.235, 120.

blazes.'(Mahābhāṣya Paspaśāhnika¹⁵). Even performing ritualists like SASTRI (1953: 64-65) have approvingly spoken of interpretation.

The present enquiry, on the contrary, proceeds with an integral approach to ritual and myth where myth includes developed theory of mysticism.

d. The arrangement of the topics

The case studies given below (3 - 7) as illustrations mostly pertain to Indian rituals. Seven of these are Vedic, three of them Atharvavedic; one belongs to Buddhist tantra; two belonging to early Vaiṣṇava tantra and medieval Śāktatantra have been treated as sectarian varieties of the same substrata material; one ritual belongs to later Vaiṣṇavism under Bhakti influence.

The analysis of rituals has been made in three parts. The aim and mode of operation of some varied Vedic rituals not recognized as 'magic', have been first dealt with. This part serves like an introduction with four illustrations showing the general mechanism of the Vedic ritual as understood by me. The three non-Vedic rituals mentioned above have been taken up after that in order to examine their common features, if any. In the last section it has been examined how far the common features in their modus operandi are valid for three Atharvavedic rituals known as magic. Finally we have made some comments on the Eucharist and the relation between myth and ritual. As far as possible, it has been attempted to be comprehensive in choosing the age, location and sectarian affinity of the rituals in order to help see the range of the applicability of the theories put forward.

So far as the seven Vedic rituals are concerned, some importance has been attached to prayer, the invariable yet simplest ingredient of ritual forming the common element of the process that involves a series of components beginning with a model to be realized at the venue, various embellishments of the components, the power of dravya that is next to prayer in importance and the acts - the most enigmatic part of the ritual.

¹⁵ Nirukta 1.18 has *yad gr̥hitam* etc.

2. Purpose orientation of ritual

According to its authors the Vedic ritual is performed for the accomplishment of a thing. Later theologians speak of svargaas the afterlife reward that is to say as a potential gain from the sacrifice to be achieved through the accrual of merit that remains in potency.¹⁶ But in the Brāhmaṇas the accomplishment is usually a this-worldly achievement.

The ritual literature furnishes us with evidences of how a this-worldly gain was later conceived as an after-life heavenly gain. The following sentence occurs in the Mādhyandina Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa 2.2.2.7 in explanation of why the sacrificial fee should be paid to the priests : tād yáthā yónau réto dadhyād evám évaitád ṛtvíjo yájamānam loké dadhati ‘As the seed is placed in the womb, in like manner do priests establish the sacrificer in the world.’ The intention is clear. The seed is secured to grow into the foetus and to become a fully-fledged living being. The priest ensures such turn for the sacrificer. The sacrifice aims at vṛddhi ‘prosperity’ which the priest ensures.¹⁷ Now, the Kāṇva recension of the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa (1.2.2.5) adds the word svarge before loke. But the subsequent sentences in the passage show that that the attainment of the heavenly world is not envisaged in it:tād yád ebhya etád dádāti yé medám samprāpi pann íti nú dákṣinānām/. (ŚBM ibid) “That he gives this to them (he does that thinking) ‘It is they who have made me attain this (world).’ Hence the custom regarding the fee.” There is no hint of an after-life reward.

3. The common ingredients of ritual: imitation, identity and extension of power

As for the mechanism to achieve the aim, imitation and establishment of identity were mentioned above (1). Some cases, not understood as magic, are being examined below.

¹⁶The technical term used by the Mīmāṃsakas is *apūrva*. See Śabaravāmin on Mī.Sū 2.1.5. A clear definition will be available in Kṛṣṇayajvan’s *Mīmāṃsāparibhāṣā* Section 3 on Apūrvapramāṇam =MEDHĀCAITANYA, 1968: 7-8. Also see *Mīmāṃsānyāyaprakāśa* EDGERTON (1929: 71) where the term ‘transcendental result’ has been used. Lit.*apūrva* = ‘unprecedented’; meaning ‘(a consequence) without immediate antecedent’?

¹⁷BHATTACHARYA 1984: 166 ff. Also see the references to Oldenberg, Lüders and Gonda there.

Case I. Mahāvīra pot. Burning and eating the burnt remnants from the mahāvīra pot in the Pravargya¹⁸ ritual is a good instance of imitation and identity. The mahāvīra pot is filled with ghee and heated unlimitedly so that the whole pot burns producing a dazzling scene of heat and light around the round pot. Since the Pravargya is the rite of bringing back the lost head of the sacrifice that is the sun,¹⁹ the burning pot should be meant to represent the sun. The imitation of the blazing sun is not, of course, the end of the process nor the main thing. The aim is endowing the sacrifice with its lost head. Once the priests have got the sun in the Mahāvīra pot they eat the remnants in the burnt pot that is to say get it in themselves and thus become one with it. The Pravargya is performed along with the Upasad-iṣṭi twice a day on the second, third and the fourth day after the Dīkṣāṇīyeṣṭi that is to say till the day preceding main day of the Agniṣṭoma, the one of soma-extraction and drinking (sutyādina). Inferably these performances endow the sacrifice with its lost head. The sacrifice, the sun and the priests, thus, become one. We find three steps – 1. Bring the powerful and glorious archetype (=the sun) to the venue by imitation. 2. Establish your identity with it, have its glory and be powerful. 3. Repair the sacrifice giving it back the lost head.

It will be worth examining if the analysis of rituals will yield such results in plenty allowing us to set a general rule for ritual structure. It appears that the theme of identity with the deity for gaining power permeates the whole Soma sacrifice. Thus, soma is

¹⁸Several descriptions are available in the Brāhmaṇa literature. ŚB (M) 14 and TA 5 are elaborate. So is CALAND- HENRY 1906. SASTRI 1953: 62-65 furnishes a brief, faithful account; partly interpretative. Houben 1991 is reliable, also interpretative.

¹⁹ TA 5.1 among others. SASTRI 1953: 64-65 gives a short but faithful account. The story belongs to the purākalpa type of arthavāda – interpretative story usually showing the origin of the rite. Arthavāda is one of the constituents of the Brāhmaṇa part of the Vedas. The most lucid definition of arthavāda will be found not in the Mīmāṃsāsūtras but in Nyāyasūtra 2.1.64 *stutir nindā parakṛtiḥ purākalpah!* Other metereological or cosmic interpretations (see Houben 1991: ‘Introduction’ 3;pp.4,7ff) have been made. They are of subjective character and, according to me, are to be rejected. The Adbhutas notwithstanding, the Śrauta rites could hardly have been conceptualised as mechanism for controlling the cosmos. The cosmos, as far as the Rgveda is concerned, is a received thing whose benefits are to be derived through the sacrifice.

offered to many deities the principal one being Indra. It means that the deities drink the beverage. The ritual drinking by the priests follows. It is important that the priests drink it afterwards when they formally know that the offering has been made. Cf.,

« Après avoir offert les libations pour les cinq hotrās. - c'est-à-dire les cinq hotrakas, -- l'adhvaryu, portant le gobelet de l'āgnīdhra, se rend au sadas, s'assied devant le hotar, face à lui et tourné vers l'ouest, et celui-ci lui demande: « L'agnīdh a-t-il fait oblation? » Réponse de l'adhvaryu (ou de l'āgnīdhra lui-même, Śāṅkh., Vait.): « Il a fait oblation. » Ou bien , sans qu'on l'interroge, l'adhvaryu peut annoncer: « L'agnīdh a fait oblation. » Le hotar répond: « Il a fait bonne oeuvre (bhadram) : grâce à lui, nous allons pouvoir consommer le roi Soma.» (CALAND-HENRY 1906: 213)

The dialogue shows the importance of the sequence -- the priests shall drink after a satisfactory accomplishment of the task of offering the drinks to the deities that is to say after successfully feeding the deities. The prior consumption by the gods is vital. It means that the soma is now in the deities or, in other words, its attainment of divinity has been accomplished. Hence, now, when the priests drink it after the said accomplishment, the act should serve the same purpose of bringing about identity with the deities as it does with the sun in the Pravargya. Naturally we may conclude that the Soma drinking on the sutyā-day serves the same purpose of establishing identity with Indra and the other deities for gaining the same strength as those deities have been made to gain through soma offering.

Case II. Agnyādheya: abhiśvāsa-ucchvāsa: One may examine the aim of another sacrifice namely the Agnyādheya, the basic Vedic ritual of establishing the fires without which one does not gain the right to sacrifice. Here a whole mythological scene is prepared on the ground. The universe in its three divisions in the heaven, atmosphere and the earth is represented by the three fireplaces which are made with material having the signs of vṛddhi that is growth and welfare. The story of Agni's coming into being and spreading in the three regions of the universe, namely, heaven, earth and the middle region is enacted by the production of fire followed by its establishment in the

three fireplaces representing the three regions of the universe. This is in imitation of the mythological birth of Agni.²⁰

Between the production of fire and its establishment in the three fireplaces representing the three divisions of the universes takes place the abhiprāṇana (so Baudhāyana-Śrautasūtra. 2.16.) or abhiśvāsa (exhaling) and ucchvāsa (inhaling) (so Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra 4.8.26-27.) the exhaling aiming at giving life to the produced fire, thus making it the living god and the latter at taking the deity in, thus establishing identity between the sacrificer and God in the produced fire.

The exact process for that is as follows. The sacrificer first exhales into the fire (abhiśvāsa) with the formula ‘I place the vital breath into the immortal’. Then he inhales fire (ucchvāsa) with ‘I place the immortal into my vital breath.’ Exhaling and inhaling on the deity serve the purpose of mutual extension of entity resulting in identity. According to me, the established identity aims at ensuring that whatever further vriddhi the deity got would occur to the sacrificer. For example, after the breathing in and out the fire is established in the three fireplaces representing the universe. The pre-established identity would mean that the same enrichment accrued to the sacrificer too.

Unfortunately, the two-way breathing, that is exhaling and inhaling, was missed by KASHIKAR (1989: 325) who interpreted Baudhāyana’s term abhiprāṇana as meaning only exhaling! Baudhāyana did not mean that. Prāṇa means ‘life-breath’ - both what is inhaled and what is exhaled. The Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra makes it clear that it is a two-way breathing. The exercise would have been meaningless without a two-way breathing. As told above, the first one gives life to the elemental fire making it a god with life in it. Then one gets the deity’s entity into oneself.

We shall see (Case VI below) that an establishment of identity occurs also in the Śākta Tantric fire-ritual where it is called vaktraikīkarāṇa²¹ and nāḍīsandhāna ‘joining of arteries’. There it takes place between God, the produced fire and the preceptor. Naturally, I cannot but stick to the explanation offered above.

²⁰BHATTACHARYA 1984: 143ff; Ch.3, Sections 3-5.

²¹ See Śāradātilaka 5.71-72 with the Padārthādarśa and also Case. VI below. The reading *bahvaikīkarāṇa* also is found in the Śāradātilaka. There is, however, considerable difference between the conceptualizations of the two rituals – the Vedic and the Tantric.

It is clear that the same purpose of extension of enrichment through the establishment of identity as in the two previous cases is served in the Agnyādheya too. How the identity is realized may not be the same everywhere. Creating a situation where identity with a beneficial entity can be brought about is the main aim. Imitation is one of the means of creating the desirable situation and entity. But it may vary in nature from case to case. In the Pravargya the archetype that is the sun is artificially produced in the microcosmic plane; so also in the Agnyādheya where the birth of Agni and his spreading into the three regions of the universe are imitated. But it may not be so concrete in some cases (below).

Case III.Soma drinking.

Thus, in the soma drinking by the priests as described above, apparently, there is no tangible replica like the Mahāvīra pot or the three fire places. Only the mythological drinking of soma by gods led by Indra is effected on the spot by soma-offering. It means that the myth serves as the archetype and is imitated for establishing identity with the deities. The result is similar to the other cases – achieving the power of the deities with identity accomplished.

The examples show some operational similarity allowing one to place them in a single category. Some more examples have to be given to show the wide prevalence of the principles.

Two types of Vedic archetypes have been shown – one type consists of cosmic or mythologically coloured tangible elements like Agni or the sun that are concretely represented; the other type consists of believed happenings (soma drinking). A third type is shown below.

Case IV.The Maṇḍūka hymn.RV 7.103 We spoke above(1d) of the prayer with its power as the central element running through all the components of the ritual. In a written account the details of the acts and implements may hinder a proper appreciation of the role of prayer. The ritual with the Maṇḍūka hymn does not suffer from that disadvantage. For, here the accompanying ritual is the prayer alone and nothing else. The Rgvedic hymn has no other ritual employment than that. Cf., Sāyaṇa: vṛṣṭikāmenaitad japyam. ‘This is to be muttered by one desiring rains.’ No sacrifice, ie

homa or any oblation, is to be performed. This I think reflects an early state of affairs when the oblations and sacrifices had not become so important in the Aryan religion.

Ājya-homas are prescribed in the Kauśika-Sūtra (41.1-7) for the Atharvavedic (AVŚ 4.15.13) version that occurs in a mixed hymn with other mantras praying for rains. But this is decidedly later and reflects a more developed state than the one inferable from the Rgvedic hymn. The exclusive employment in prayer is supported also by the Nirukta (9.6) which just mentions Vasiṣṭha's prayer to the frogs Vasiṣṭho varṣakāmaḥ parjanyam tuṣṭāva, tam maṇḍūkā anvamodanta, sa maṇḍūkān anumodamānān dṛṣṭvā tuṣṭāva/ tadabhibhivādiny eṣarg bhavati. 'Vasiṣṭha prayed to Parjanya for rains, frogs rejoiced at that; seeing the frogs rejoicing, Vasiṣṭha praised frogs. This ṛk relates that.' This comes to support the above said idea that in its original form the sacrifice and offering were less important in Aryan religion than the prayer itself, a state of affairs somewhat reflected in the Nirukta tradition.²²

Though the hymn is meant as a simple prayer for rain, it is not a simple prayer but is dependent on a model which is imitated. The reciter imitates the frog whose croaking is supposed to cause rain. Here the purpose is making it rain. For that the situation that is supposed to make rains is imitated. The situation is croaking by frogs. Hence croaking is imitated. This is nowhere stated in so many words but without this there can be no explanation of the hymn occurring both in the RV and the AV. So we have a non-mythological model or archetype – some particular circumstances that recur every year. That is imitated. A similar follow up is expected. But note that there is no dravya to cure the disease of drought. The prayer itself is the dravya. Here the parallelism stands as follows:

Model = croaking → preventing drought

::

ritual= imitation of model by croaking-like prayer → preventing drought

4. Note on the oblationless sacrifice and prayer-ritual

²²See n.29.

The role of prayer in the rain-spell points to the important place it occupied in the ritual.²³ It has survived and is still current in the form of japa made with specific purpose like cure of disease etc. The evidences point to its antiquity. One may ask if the prayer-ritual was the original form of the Vedic sacrifice. The Brāhmaṇas which are later than the Saṃhitās elaborately describe complex sacrifices with post-Saṃhitā innovations. It will not be unreasonable to infer that the role of prayer came to be relatively diminished in the process. At least, earlier it must have been much more important than in the Brāhmaṇas, where it seems to have been superseded by the elaborate Vedic ritual requiring many concrete oblations and implements. The Maṇḍūka hymn should have belonged to an earlier stage where the form of the ritual had been simpler.²⁴

Now, since the requirement of the normal sacrificial offering of concrete oblation was at least much less if not absent in what I propose as prayer-ritual, this prayer-ritual can be regarded as oblationless sacrifice. Now, Houben (2012) too speaks of a type of oblationless sacrifice (*vihavya*) in the Vedas in a paper on the concept of the sādhyas. Though a discussion of the whole idea of Houben (2012) will not be relevant here, his proposal of the existence of a kind of oblationless sacrifice requires careful notice at least for avoiding possible confusion.

As far as I understand, the oblationless sacrifice proposed by Houben is different from the prayer ritual of the Maṇḍūka hymn as understood above by us. Of the various Vedic topics that find place in Houben's (2012) discussion, namely *sādhyāḥ*, *svādhyāya*, *lokapaktí*, *yajñéna yajñám ayajanta* and *vihavya*, the last one occurring in AVŚ 7.5.4d *yád vihávenejiré* 'that they sacrificed without oblation' is a reference to an oblationless sacrifice. All these come in the said paper in the context of Houben's exploration of what he understands as auto-referential structure of the Vedic ritual, a theme introduced mainly by Houben.

²³ On the prime importance of the prayer in early Vedic ritualism also see Bhattacharya 2002: Preface, last paragraph and III.6.c on pp.47-50. One may also note the importance of *mantraśakti* 'power of prayer' in medieval Indian ritualism.

²⁴ It has been noted as a rain-charm, obviously under the notion that 'charm' is different from prayer just as 'magic' is different from ritual. It has been shown in this paper that one cannot establish any such distinction.

As Houben (2012:32-33) understands, the concept of vihávya came into being by way of reform within the growing importance of the ‘auto-referential structure’. Before this Houben [2010 (2)] demonstrated the auto-referential structure of the svītakṛt by showing it, among others elsewhere, [Houben2010(1)], as self-aiming. Apart from stating this, we have to leave aside any further discussion on the auto-referential structure here. However, even without that it is not difficult to see²⁵ that this oblationless sacrifice mentioned as vihávya came as the culmination of an under-current of reformative thought that detested the animal sacrifice. It will require some discussion to substantiate this observation of mine as done below.

The enigmatic word vihávya, (to be distinguished from the more well-known vihavyà VSM 27.5 among others, also vihávya AVŚ 2.6.4, AVP 3.33.5, ‘to be severally invoked’) on which the relevant part of Houben’s thesis of oblationless sacrifice stands, occurs only once in the AVŚ in 7.5.4²⁶. The AVŚ verse runs as follows: yát púruṣena havíṣā yajñám devā átanvata/ ásti nú tásmād ójīyo yád vihávyenejiré ‘That the gods spread the sacrifice with puruṣa for oblation, there is still a more forceful one in that they have sacrificed oblationless.’ This view of the Śaunakiya Atharvaveda should be regarded as the culmination of a debate, apparently a low-key one, on the ethical standing and efficacy of the animal sacrifice, human sacrifice to wit, that had been going on for some time. The reason for coming to this conclusion is that the Paippalāda-

²⁵ And not in disagreement with Houben. A mail of 6.2.13. reads “In view of the evidence you have provided your understanding of the relationship AVP - AVŚ is most reasonable. Indeed, we have to conclude that “questions about the efficacy/ethics of the animal sacrifice had begun to rise in Vedic circles” quite early on, they were not the result of a late and slow, gradual, post-Vedic development, as is generally held.”

That was in reply to “If your interpretation were correct ..., then the AVP version by its own merit should stand between the old and the new when questions about the efficacy/ethics of the animal sacrifice had begun to rise in Vedic circles. Just that doubt is expressed in the AVP. It is not impossible that the AVŚ gives its seal upon the new interpretation which had crystallized when its version, post-AVP, came into being.”

²⁶ Houben does not refer to RV.1.108.6^b *ayám sómo ásurair no vihávyah*. Geldner HOS :140 derives the word from *vi-hve*; Vishva Bandhu VVRI 1962 *A Vedic Word-Concordance* I.2962 fn.a from *vi-√hu*, fn.b proposes the reading *vihá-havyena* for the AVŚ!

Samhitā which is the older version of the Atharvaveda²⁷ records a different reading that speaks for the existence of a non-mainstream feeling, continuing for some time, over the desirable nature of the oblation. The relevant verse AVP 20.2.6 runs as follows
yat puruṣena haviṣā devā yajñam atanvata / kva svit tad adya no brūyād yadi haviyenejire//²⁸'That the gods spread the sacrifice with puruṣa for oblation, who indeed should speak it out to us today that indeed they have sacrificed with oblation.' The translation assumes the emendation kah svid in a and yad id (d)havyenejire in d. The intended meaning is, 'Who, indeed, is to explain to us today the matter that they have indeed performed the sacrifice with an oblation.' Since the relevant oblation was one of puruṣa it is only that type of oblation that could have been called into question. So by all appearances the query about the nature of the oblation hints at the existence of doubts about the human sacrifice. That doubt has been eventually removed in the AVŚ which speaks for an oblationless -- bereft of human oblation according to the context -- sacrifice.

Personally, I feel that the said questioning of the human sacrifice was a real event in the history of Vedic thought and ritual. Currently the Śrauta-Sūtras are interpreted in the line of denying any place for human sacrifice. This tradition could not come into being without a background. Some ritualistic upheaval as surmised above has to be admitted as having taken place. The evidences point to its occurrence within the Vedic age.

The oblationless sacrifice of AVŚ 7.5.4 brought to notice by Houben, then, should be different from the prayer-ritual of the Maṇḍuka hymn. The former was the culmination of a new understanding of the sacrifice that would circumvent the offering of an animal, Puruṣa to wit, while the prayer-ritual was an earlier prevalent form of ritual

²⁷BHATTACHARYA 2011: Introd.5 lviii – lxxxiii.

²⁸ Our readings are taken from the press copy of the fourth volume of the AVP being published by the Asiatic Society, Kolkata. The readings are based on the palmleaf manuscripts discovered by Durgamohan Bhattacharyya and one given to me by Nanaji Kale. See Introductions to BHATTACHARYA 1997, 2008 and 2011 where the manuscripts have been described. The verse is missing in the Kashmir ms of the AVP. UPADHYAYA's (2010) edition reads *yad vi haviyenejire*. UPADHYAYA does not mention whether he has changed the manuscript reading. His edition does not have a critical apparatus.

inferable from the stylistics of the poetry in the mantras, from the special purposeful use of epithets, from the emphasis on hermeneutics visible in the Brāhmaṇas that gets its maximum expression in the principles of nirukti of Yāska²⁹etc. In the available ritual literature, however, one does not find the pure prayers as rituals excepting in the svādhyāya. Remnants are available in the prātaranuvāka, āśvinaśastra etc. Otherwise, they have been superseded by the elaborate Vedic ritual. The Maṇḍūka hymn's going back to the original was not a freak. At least apparently, it had not been forgotten till the time of Sāyaṇa. The strong belief in the power of the mantra in Hindu rituals in general points to the fact that the idea never lost its importance.

Till now we have dealt with four Vedic rituals that are not known as magic. Before comparing them with magic as cases VII, VIII and IX, three post-Vedic non-magic rituals are analysed below as V and VI(a) and VI(b) in order to examine if there is any pattern common to both Vedic and post-Vedic rituals. Case V deals with a Buddhist tantric ritual. Three cases in VI deal with three Āgamic rituals. In VI(a) two rituals have been described -- a Śākta ritual and an early Vaiṣṇava ritual. I clubbed them together in the same section because of their identical pattern. VI(b) describes a later Vaiṣṇava ritual which developed new features.

Case V.Mantranaya: Main ritual

In the Kālacakrayāna as well as in the Śaiva-ŚāktaandVaiṣṇava tantras there is a ritual enactment of the union between the two originalprinciples of creation, Vajra and Kamala or Śiva and Śakti or Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, that is enacted on earth either in crude physical plane (Mantranaya) or through symbolic gestures like homa (Śākta/Vaiṣṇava tantra). To be noted is the fact that it is the imitation of the first act of creation that takes place aiming at bringing power to the actor. The power originally belonged to the joint creators. Two joint creators on the microcosmic level imitate them to gain their power.

A description of the central ritual of the Buddhist tantras may be found, among others, in the Hevajratantra and the Sekodeśatīkā belonging to the Kālacakrayāna.

²⁹See BHATTACHARYA 2002 *passim* and n.23 above.

Since the two texts differ only in minor detail and terms I state below the outline of the central ritual of only the Kālacakrayāna.

As recorded in the Sekodeśatīkā of Nāropā, the central ritual of the Kālacakrayāna is conceptualized as an enactment of existence as a flux -- myriads of beings in the process of coming into being from and being absorbed into the Kālacakra. Closely similar to the Pratyabhijñā philosophy's idea of an ever-going-on creation and absorption, the conceived phenomenon is represented as going up and down within the Kālacakra which, in this system, plays the same role as of the Śiva-Śakti complex in the Pratyabhijñāsystem.³⁰

It is obvious that the archetypal model of the Kālacakra 'Time-wheel' system is not just a static ideal like a personal or impersonal divinity, but a two dimensional all-encompassing transcendental with a flux of beings within it, in their different stages of becoming or what can be termed reverse becoming, after issuing from it and before being absorbed into it. This concept is clear from the verse that defines the Kālacakra with a post-Nirukta type of etymology: kā-kārāt kāraṇe santé, la-kārāl layo 'travai/ ca-kārāc calacittasya, kra-kārāt kramabandhanaiḥ// (CARELLI 1941:8) "kā means 'When the cause of becoming (kāraṇe) has been inactivated' la means 'one gets absorption (layah) into it', ca means 'of the restless mind' (calacittasya) kra means 'by gradual restraint' kramabandhanaiḥ"³¹ The Sekoddeśatīkā does not explain the coming into being but aims only at inactivating the cause of becoming.

The central ritual means a microcosmic enactment within the practitioner's body of the drama of the flux in Kālacakra. Now, Kālacakra is conceived as having a male-cum-female dual entity (prajñopāyātmaka). So it requires the yogin to stand united with his female counterpart technically called mudrā (CARELLI 1941 5-6, 21-22). The enactment takes place, through a kind of psycho-physical exercise in the form of moving the male seed (termed 'enlightenment mind' bodhicitta, 'drop' bindu etc) up and down through a central channel of the body.³² The idea is that the dramatization of the

³⁰The close similarity between the Pratyabhijñā and the Buddhist Tantric philosophy has been noted in BHATTACHARYA 2009 : 3.Observations pp.65-68.

³¹ Also see BHATTACHARYA 1977-78: 92-94.

³²So theoretically.

coming of the practitioner to his phenomenal existence that took place during his embryonic growth as well as of his potential journey back results in his palingenesis as Kālacakra. That means the drama of generation and reverse generation is for the sake of the establishment of identity with the Kālacakra.

Anyone acquainted with tantric practice, Buddhist or Hindu, should know that two aims are believed to be served by such practice – attainment of miraculous power or attainment of divine proximity or salvation. Whatsoever the aim, the operational similarity with the three already mentioned Vedic rituals cannot escape notice – imitate, establish identity, then gain power.

In spite of the fundamental similarity, a characteristic feature too is to be noted. As in the soma-drinking in the Agniṣṭoma, but unlike with the Mahāvīra pot and the three fire-places in the Agnyādheya, in the Mantranaya too there is no creation of a replica. The archetype is imitated by the beneficiary.

CaseVla Śākta and early Vaiṣṇava tantra (Jayākhya-Saṃhitā)

In the Śākta and Vaiṣṇava tantras³³ the physical union waned in practice. Inferably medieval reforms ate into the crude form of the ritual. Instead, as in the Vedic ritual, oblations were made into the fire symbolizing the enactment of the union which takes place in the dīkṣā (=initiation) ceremony.

To begin with, in the Śākta procedure, prior to the production of the ritual fire, Vāgiśvara and Vāgiśvari³⁴ are contemplated and worshipped on a fireplace which might be a portable square-shaped plate (kuṇḍa) or a built up small fire-place on earth. A union is enacted through gestures and homas. A fire is collected or produced with a sunstone. This completes the conception andis followed by the pre-natal sacraments,

³³The works mostly used here are -- *Sāradātilaka* by Lakṣmaṇadeśikendra (10th-11th cent.) with Rāghavabhaṭṭa's *Padārthādarśa* commentary (1492 CE) ch.5 and the Śāktānandataraṅgiṇī by Brahmānanda Giri (16th cent.), ch.18 for the Śāktatantras; *Jayākhya Saṃhitā* ch.15 for Vaiṣṇavatantra. CHAKRAVARTI 1963 discusses some of the dates. The editions too discuss the same. BHATTACHARYA 1984: Ch. 4 also makes some observations.

³⁴ These are the names of God and Goddess in the Śākta tantras.

as enjoined in the Dharmaśāstras, culminating in a ‘birth’ enacted by the placing of the fire in the kunda – every act being represented by homas. What is ‘born’ now serves as the ‘desired deity’ (iṣṭadeva) of the one to be initiated.

One may have curiosity regarding the ontological position of the entity that is ‘born’ from the two creators. According to Rājānaka Kṣemarāja’s auto-commentary to the first sūtra of the Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya all created entities are covered by the categories³⁵ beginning with Sadāśiva and ending with bhūmi. These are preceded by Śiva and Śakti, the two first principles. The Śāradātilaka (1.6^{cd} - 15) too enumerates Sadāśiva as the first creation. This must be the theoretical entity of the born Agni.

The post natal sacraments too are observed. The identity of the initiator ie the chief priest (ācārya) is established with the deity who has been made to be born, to descend on the kunda and has been reared up according to the Dharmaśāstra rules. All the acts are done through gestures and homas. After that the ācārya initiates the disciple.

Similar ideas seem to have been responsible for the formation of the ritual procedure regarding the fire in the kunda prior to the initiation ceremony in the Vaiṣṇava tantric (Pāñcarātra) ritual as depicted in the Jayākhyā-Samhitā XV.149^{cd} -- 152 . The verses run as follows:

iti samskāraśuddham vahnim nārāyaṇātmakam//149^{cd} // caturmukham
caturvaktram śaṅkhacakragadābjinam/ kuṇḍamadhyasthitam dhyātvā^a
udayārkasamaprabham//150// tatra tajjanitam kuṇḍāj jvālāmārgena cāgatām(tam?)/
parānandaprakāśābhām (bham?)....//151// tato 'vatārayogena praviṣṭām(tam?)
bhāvayed dhṛdi/ 152^{ab}

‘Having meditated upon the fire, that has been thus purified through sacraments, as identical with Nārāyaṇa with four hands, four faces, endowed with the conch-shell, the wheel, the club and the lotus, shining like the morning sun and placed in the middle of the kunda, he should make him, who has been made to be born there, who has come

³⁵ The thirty-six categories (*tattvas*) are well-known in Tantric parlance. These include the 25 tattvas of Sāṅkhya and 11 more above them -- Śiva, Śakti, Sadāśiva, Īśvara, vidyā, māyā, avidyā, kalā, rāga, kāla and niyati in the order of descent. See ADHIKĀRI 1966:54. So also SIDDHĀNTABHŪṢANA 1928: 123 on Paraśurāmakalpasūtra 1.4. The Śāradātilaka is not so explicit.

in the manner of flames, who shines like the supreme bliss, enter into the heart, from the kūḍā coming by way of the descent (of God among men)'

The verses are corrupt but the intention is not difficult to understand. The last words pravīṣṭām (-ṭam) bhāvayed dhṛdi 'He should make him enter unto the heart' do not mean entrance into the mind as the object of adoration which could have been the meaning if the entrance was automatic. But the deity has been 'made to enter' which means that the entrance is the result of a ritual effort and not a psychological happening. So the entrance means the accomplishment of unity with the deity that was made to be born on the kūḍā.

So here too the deity is made to be born in the form of Agni on the kūḍā serving as the fireplace.

It is natural that the Vaiṣṇava tantras have sectarian differences with the Śākta tantra terminology in that the deity 'born' gets the name Nārāyaṇa while it was Śiva in the Śākta dispensation. Similarly Goddess is known here as Lakṣmī and not as Pārvatī. Apart from that, as stated below, there may be also some procedural difference.

When comparing the described Śākta ritual with the Vedic ritual of Agnyādheya (Case II above) or with the Mantranaya ritual (Case V above) one notes a change in the role of the patron in the former. Unlike in the latter two rituals the role is passive in the former. For, although there is an imitation of a mythological beginning followed by the establishment of unity in all of them, unlike in the Vedic abhiprāṇana or the Mantranaya ritual, in the shown Śākta tantra procedure the identity is established not between the yajamāna (Veda) or the practitioner (Mantranaya) and the transcendental but between the initiating ācārya and God. The Śākta idea is that it is God in the form of the ācārya who initiates the disciple.

Now, though the Jayākhya-Saṃhitā on the whole agrees with the general ideas of the Śākta tantras, unless the corruptions in the Jayākhya-Saṃhitā have distorted the picture, which is not unlikely, in the Vaiṣṇavī dīkṣā, apparently, it is the disciple, and not the ācārya, who is made to have unity with the deity. If that was really the case, there could be two possible reasons for this difference with the Śākta tantra. The Jayākhya-Saṃhitā has inherited the active role of the patron of the ritual from the Vedas. That

means the guru had not yet assumed the all-powerful role that we see later in the Śākta tantras. Or, there might be a distant possibility that it apprehends the changed situation (Case VIb below) under the impact of the bhakti movement. I prefer the former as the cause behind the difference. Before going into the influence of the bhakti movement we have to note the important agreement between the Śākta tantras and the Jayākhya-Saṃhitā that in the latter too there is a bringing of the archetype to the venue and the establishment of identity with the same.

Case VIb.Bhakti and ritual in later Vaiṣṇava tantra (Lakṣmītantra)

As for further details in the ritual procedure in the Vaiṣṇava tantras, in the Lakṣmītantra too, which is later than the Jayākhya-Saṃhitā, the described procedure indicates that the disciple is himself united with God. But the Lakṣmītantra exhibits considerable difference from both the Jayākhya-Saṃhitā and the Śākta tantras in showing the influence of the bhakti movement in its rituals. It is necessary to note the following facts in this connection. The Lakṣmītantra is later than the Jayākhya-Saṃhitā from which it extensively quotes (GUPTA 1972: XX). The Jayākhya-Saṃhitā, as B. Bhattacharyya shows (KRISHNAMACHARYA 1931: Foreword 34), belonged to around the 5th century CE while GUPTA (1972: XX) is unwilling to place the Lakṣmītantra before the ninth century. It is influenced by the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa and bhakti mysticism. The latter has inherent ideas of the eventual presence of the Deity in the vicinity of the true devotee. The leading idea of bhakti ie that of devotional love taking the devotee near God means a more developed form of ritual than that of sympathetic magic. Its mechanism of getting hold of the archetypal model by imitation is replaced by love and devotion in bhakti. The element of higher religion introduced by the bhakti movement could not be present in the age of the Jayākhya-Saṃhitā. Though the Śāradātilaka is not earlier than the Lakṣmītantra, the former is still free from any gross influence of bhakti mysticism. Hence ideologically the Śāradātilaka too, belongs to a more archaic stratum than the one of the Lakṣmītantra. As a result the archaic ritual structures of the Jayākhya-Saṃhitā and the Śāradātilaka are less perceptible in the Lakṣmītantra and vice versa.

Now it may not be difficult to see that the influence of bhakti could render the role of the guru less important than what it was in the pre-bhakti period. For, it will be less necessary to bring down the Deity by the power of magic that is to say by sort of forcing an entrapment of the deity the mechanism of which is known only to the ācārya. The devotee has himself or herself access to the deity by means of devotional love. The following citation will show that.

The mystic vicinity is spoken of in the following

“And he, having reached the state of karmasāmya (pacification of karman), then confines himself to performing good deeds, to attaining knowledge of the Vedānta, to following (the course of speculation and meditation laid down in) the Sāṃkhya and Yoga and through a correct understanding of Sāttvata (philosophy), becomes imbued with pure devotion for Viṣṇu. Then (gradually) after lapse of time the yogin (the meditating adept) who has shaken off all accumulated afflictions (kleśas) by freeing himself from every shackle, glows brightly (liberated) from all attachments and (ultimately) becomes one with the supreme Brahman represented by Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa.” (GUPTA 1972: 70=LT 33.12-14)

This becoming ‘one with the supreme Brahman’ makes taking recourse to magic for bringing down the deity unnecessary.

So the bhakti-mysticism renders magic unnecessary. This said, it is still possible to note traces of the old structure of identity, with or without imitation, in the Lakṣmītantra in its rituals like initiation that involve the preparation of a fireplace. The following description testifies to the surfacing up of occasional links with the earlier less mystic and strictly ritual procedures with the known role of the guru in the tantras.

‘(The preceptor) should envisage Īśvara as (located) on (his own) forehead.... He should visualize the five (cognitive organs)...as placed equidistantly between his throat and the lotus of his heart.... He should visualize the gross elements within the space extending from his thighs to his ankles.....This is called the oblation of sampāta. On completion of this sampāta sacrifice the preceptor himself becomes identical with Lakṣmī....Next he should offer the final oblation....Thus completing the sacrifice (called) sampāta he should offer to me the strong knotted thread...Leading the disciple there (to

the sacrificial site) he should remove the disciple's eye-cover. The disciple should then duly salute the preceptor, who gave him this book.'³⁶(LT Ch.41.19-29 GUPTA 1972:271-272).

Here one finds the ācārya comprehending the twentyfive-plus-one tattvas of Yoga beginning with Īśvara (God) and ending in the gross elements. We saw imitation of the Kālacakra in its totality ie with the continuous flux within it. Here too there is perception by the ācārya of the totality including the Transcendental, individuals and gross matter. Obviously the intention is to attain vicinity of or unity with God and the Goddess by the ācārya in a scheme with blendings of the Yoga scheme of categories. The categories and the frame work of the transcendental are different from those of the Śākta tantras but the frame work of the ritual is the same as there. The ācārya has been made to have the power of God extended to him by vicinity or identity and to extend the same to the disciple. There is a clear echo of the Śāktatantra description of the ācārya initiating the disciple as God who has been made to descend at the venue.

The editor seems to regard the occurrence of such ritual in the bhakti cult as evidence of the eclectic character of the Lakṣmītantra. According to her (GUPTA 1972:XIX) the Lakṣmītantra 'attempts to make a synthesis out of all the various concepts current in the Pāñcarātra and Tantric milieu. It does not always succeed in blending all these notions smoothly.' In fact old customs tend to survive in India.

In any case, the creation or imagination of an archetypal model and its imitation at the venue take place in each of the described rites. The said model may be some visible cosmic entity like the sun (blazing mahāvīra pot) or mythological Agni as cosmic light in the three divisions of the universe represented by the ritual fire eventually established in the three fire places. It may also be the mythological drinking of the soma by gods represented in the ritual by somabhakṣanam or the Transcendental (Kālacakra) or the desired deity (iṣṭadeva in Śākta-Vaiṣṇava tantra).

³⁶ The idea in the last sentence is not clear. GUPTA thinks that 'preceptor' here means the disciple's 'primary teacher who taught the disciple how to read etc.' This does not look relevant to the context.

Examples of such operation in non-magic rituals can be proliferated. Before coming to recognized magic-rituals and to the possibility of further analysis and classification, I add anoteon the claimed meaninglessness of rituals.

5Note on the meaninglessness of ritual

We said (1c.Some recent works) that the urban gap between the Vedic age and the reappearance of Brahminism along with the decline of Buddhism in the early medieval period could not but result in lot of details of the original Vedic ritual being in disorder and lost. What happened with the Vaiṣṇava tantras after the rise of devotional Bhakti mysticism is a pointer to how that could happen. As we saw, it is difficult to correlate the Laksmitantra's ritual with that of the Jayākhyā Saṃhitā. Not only that, the ritual in the Jayākhyā Saṃhitā cannot be interpreted in its entirety. But that is natural because the known religious upheavals that took place in between could not but affect the earlier texts.

In my opinion the very same thing had happened to the orally preserved Vedic ritual texts before the need was felt to write them down in the early medieval period when Brahminism was re-asserting itself. The original texts were oral. Surely they were expected to remain in the memory of performing priests. But they were not preserved with svādhyāya like the Rgveda. There is no evidence of any such practice. When practice declines so does oral preservation when there is no compulsory recitation of the rules. That resulted in disintegrated versions of the ritual appearing in their written forms that we have received. A reconstruction may be possible if a palaeontological rule telling the exact relation of a part to its whole, as found with fossils, can be enunciated for the Vedic ritual. That is a desideratum.

6. Resumé

Till now we have dealt with more than sixrituals that have not been stigmatized with the label of 'magic'. On the basis of the discussion, the mechanism of such ritual is to be defined as follows.

Towards achieving an end the ritual, very generally speaking, tries to get hold of something and then to act upon or with it. This may be a secular practice. When a modern doctor treats he/she does the same thing -- gets a medicine and works with it. In the ritual too one works upon or with the archetype after entrapping it. The difference lies in the method of getting hold on something and/or in comprehending how that works which is not subject to accepted cause and effect relation.

As we shall see below, the thing to be got hold of is, usually, the archetype. But, unlike in the common ritual, in the ritual for the treatment of disease there is often a secular ingredient that is the actual medicine. Even where the secular ingredient is present but not yet extricated from the ritual extras, we consider that to be magic. It is the structure of this magic and not the secular medicine that is one of the aims of this small enquiry. For that we shall consider three new cases. In one the secular element is not present and the result expected is based on purely a wrong cause and effect relation and in the two other there is a secular element in the operation of the ritual.

Before dealing with new cases we may first see how far the observation holds good with the six cases already examined

(1). Mahāvīra pot: The sun is imitated for establishing unity. There is no secular ingredient. (2). Agnyādheya – abhiśvāsa, ucchvāsa: The produced fire is real but a mythical spread of fire in the three divisions of the universe is imitated. No secular ingredient. (3) Soma drinking: Indra's soma-drinking is imitated. The archetype is not real but the inebriation is. (4) Maṇḍūka hymn: The effect is supposed to be the cause and is imitated. No secular ingredient. (5). Mantranaya: Supposed creative principles imitated. No secular ingredient. (6) Śākta- and early Vaiṣṇava-tantra; later Vaiṣṇava tantra: Supposed creative principles imitated or is neared by induction of its quality. There is no secular ingredient

7. Identity with and extension of power from the archetype with or without imitation -- three cases of 'magic'

Now to three new cases known as magic.

Case VII. Producing power of learning: AVŚ 1.1 Kauśika-Sūtra 10.1-3

As in the Maṇḍūka hymn, a sacrificeless ritual with the creation of a situation conducive to the achievement of the aim is to be met with also with the first hymn of the AVŚ (AVP. 1.6), praising and invoking Vāk, for generating intellectual efficiency (medhājanana). The verse prays for the induction of the three-into-seven forms of speech into the person of the prayer. The three-into-seven forms of speech are the twenty-one declensional forms of Vedic with seven vibhaktis each having threevacanas (BHATTACHARYA 1984:33-40) as later codified by Pāṇini.³⁷

There is no imitation theme here though a situation is sought to be created under the supposition that it shall be conducive to the achievement of the aim of the rite. Towards that ie generating intellectual efficiency, after the usual ājyahoma ending in abhyātāna, the tongue of a speaking bird (parrot, lark, sārikā) is seasoned with the hymn 1.1 and tied to the neck of the student followed by the common post ritual formalities ending in abhyātāna. The tongueis then further ritually processed and eaten.³⁸

Tying the tongue of a speaking bird and eating it are the main acts here. The purpose of the rite is to generate learning efficiency that is to result in efficient recitation in ritual or in praiseworthy speeches in sabhās. The supposed source of that power is the tongue. Identity with it is accomplished by tying it to the neck of the beneficiary and by making him eat it.

It is not difficult to see why there is no imitation here. Imitation takes place where the archetype is beyond the reach of the sacrifice. Here it is within reach and hence it is made to be itself present.

³⁷Differently THIEME 1985. THIEME arrives at the figure 21 by omitting from the Māheśvarasūtras the vocalic ! from the vowels and abstracting the sparśa varṇas into five according to their place of articulation, thus coming to eight vowels, five sparśas, and y, r, l, v, ś, ṣ, s and h. That gives 21 but not 3x7 sounds as required to explain the word *triṣaptāḥ*. Only the paradigmatic structure of declension as current in the Indian grammatical system explains the term *triṣaptāḥ*.

³⁸Dr. Julieta Rotaru, Indologist, University of Bucharest, pointedtomeKauśika-Sūtra 7.1 *aśnāty anādeśe sthālīpākaḥ*: 'If what is to be eaten is not mentioned then it should be cooked rice'. I have followed the commentators on eating the tongue.

The presence of the archetype means that here too the theme common with the earlier mentioned imitations is the bringing of the source of power to the venue for the extension of power to the beneficiary of the ritual through the establishment of identity.

Here the ritual has no secular ingredient and works with false cause and effect relation.

Case VIII. Treatment of partial paralysis AVŚ 6.80 (AVP 19.16.12-14)

Kauśika-S.31.18-19 prescribe this for paralysis of one side of the body.

The hymn praises a heavenly dog with its kālakañjas that is the morning sun with its three accompanying stars. It runs as follows, “1. He flies through the atmosphere looking down upon all beings. The greatness which is of the heavenly dog, with that as oblation would we worship you. 2. The three kālakāñjas that are fixed (in the sky) like gods in heaven, all of them have I called for aid, for this person’s relief from harm. 3. Your birth is in the waters, your home is in heaven, within the ocean, on the earth is your greatness. The greatness which is of the heavenly dog with that as oblation would we worship you.”

Bloomfield’s commentary (1897: 501) is as follows: “The paralysed part of the body is rubbed with earth taken from the footprint of a dog, while keeping in quick motion. Then the part is fumigated by burning an insect (taken from a dog). The dog..... refers, of course, to the ‘heavenly dog’ in the mantra; the quick motion is opposed to the palsy of the patient; the use of the insect seems to symbolise the fate of the kālakāñja who in the legend become spiders.”

The ‘legend’ is a Yajurvedic story³⁹ of the creation of spiders from the Asuras called kālakañjas two of whom flew to heaven and became heavenly dogs. The kālakañjas are apparently the insects on the body of dogs. The story of their flying to heaven might facilitate comprehending them as archetypes. But one cannot be sure that the Ātharvaṇa poet had this story in mind. It could be an improvised one. For us the very mantra is sufficient for guessing the archetype in operation.

³⁹ “...Maitr.S. 1.6.9; Kāth. S.8.1; Taitt.Br. 1.1.2.4-6 (cf. also Śat.Br. 2.1.2.13-16).” BLOOMFIELD 1897: 500.

Barring his mixing up the process with the YV myth which is superfluous here Bloomfield correctly understands the treatment process following the Kauśika-Sūtra after Keśava.

The archetype is the heavenly dog that is the sun and its accompanying three luminous bodies called kālakañjas. The dog on earth represents the archetype that is the sun and its insects the three kālakañjas. The fumigation represents heavenly heating. Thus the archetype is imitated in detail and its power is meant to be extended to the earthly medicine.

The irony of the treatment here is that it is the secular treatment that precedes the myth and the archetype that look like afterthoughts. Since treatment on earth must be accomplished with heavenly power, the heavenly archetype is invented and then made to intervene.

Case IX. Applying a catheter.AVŚ 1.3

As noted by WHITNEY (1905: 3) AVŚ 1.3, a hymn praising śara that is reed, is against retention. The reed is employed like a catheter intended to flush out the fluid. On this Whitney states “The ‘reed’ implies some primitive form of a fistula urinaria, the vastiyantra (one of the nāḍīyantrāṇi) of the later physicians ...”

There are nine verses in the hymn. The first five verses praise Parjanya as the father of the reed, ie of the primitive catheter, desiring the end of retention.⁴⁰ Parjanya ‘of hundredfold virility’ (hundredfold showers? śatávrṣṇyam) is the father of reed. The purpose of invoking Parjanya as the father of the reed with the suggestion of giving it the power of the rain-god Parjanya, ie., the power of showering fluid, in a hymn against retention, is clear. Parjanya is the archetype and the reed is identified with it and the power of rains is meant to be extended to it.

Obviously, the fatherhood of Parjanya is the way to establish the identity of the reed with him facilitating the intended extension of power. There is no imitation, nor any

⁴⁰ Like a discharged arrow according to BLOOMFIELD 1897:236, ‘The performances are in part ...symbolic (the shooting of the arrow)’. This is wrong; better ‘like rains’ as suggested by Parjanya’s fatherhood. See the sequel of the discussion.

known already current mythological connection in the establishment of this identity. The myth of Parjanya's fatherhood of the reeds is improvised.

This may also be viewed as a stylistic fortification of the ritual through the prayer by way of suggesting the source of the power of one of the dravyas.⁴¹ The employment of the reed is secular but its effectiveness is expected to be enhanced because of the notion of a wrong cause and effect relation.

As with the treatment of paralysis (Case VIII above) here too it is the secular treatment that precedes the myth and the archetype. That, again, shows the compulsion of heavenly intervention in the collective mind.

8. A note on the prayer and its style

The hymn in AVŚ 1.3 has a bit to do with style. Style has a role in ritual in so far as it enhances the prayer. But since it is a function of prayer that is to say because it is not a direct function of the ritual it has not been possible to assign it a place in the diagrammed structures of ritual in 9 and 10 below which focus on the other elements of ritual mentioned in the title. In fact, in spite of its early importance in the R̄gveda, stylistic enhancement is not a stable aspect of prayer or ritual. I shall give an example. Take the word híranyahastāḥ in AVŚ 7.120 (WHITNEY 115). 2 yā mā lakṣmīḥ patayālūr ájuṣṭā 'bhicaskánda vándaneva vṛkṣám/ anyátrāsmát savitas tām itó dhā híra ḥyahasto vásu no rárāṇah// ‘The evil omen that has fallen upon me in flight like a creeper on a tree, place her O Savitar, elsewhere from us giving wealth to us, the golden-handed.’ Savitr̄ being golden-handed is appropriate as he is the giver of wealth. The word vajrahasta or vīḍuhasta would not have been suggestive of the poet's desire to see the liberal donor in Savitr̄. But that does not mean that strength cannot be suggested by híranyahasta. Cf., RV 1. 35. 10 híranyahasto ásurah sunītháḥ...apasédhān rakṣáso yātudhānān...// ‘The golden-handed Asura, the good leader... driving away rakṣases and sorcerers...’ Here the same word has been used to suggest strength. So one cannot mark fixed words for fixed stylistic suggestions which may vary from poet to poet and from context to context like dream symbols.

⁴¹ Also see 8 infra on style.

However, one may infer why a particular word has been used. Thus in AVŚ 1.3 Parjanya's fatherhood of the reed definitely suggests its identity with the god. For this, we have a Vedic tradition of the father being born as the son. Cf., Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa 33.1 (VII.13) ātmā hi jajña ātmanah ‘one is born from oneself (as son)’; patir jāyām praviśati garbho bhūtvā sa mātaram/tasyām punar navo bhūtvā daśame māsi jāyate//‘The husband enters into the wife, having become the embryo, he into the mother. Becoming renewed in her he is born in the tenth month.’ The sameness of the father and the son is a foregone conclusion.

Stylistic embellishment, thus, may aid the ritual. Aiding the ritual is a function of etymology toowhich, when occurring in the verse, becomes comparable to style as aiding ritual employment. Cf., RV 3.29.11c mātarīsvā yád ámimīta mātāri ‘He is called Mātarīsvā as he is shaped in the mother.’ The purpose of the poet is to connect Agni as Mātarīsvā to his aqueous mothers in the middle, atmospheric region where he is born in the form of lightning. Three mantras of the hymn, namely, 3.29.4, 8 and 10 are employed (Āśvalāyana-Śrau.Ś 2.17 and 3.10) in the production and establishment of fire in the Varuṇapraghāsa. There is a convention that a hymn may be employed according to indication in the mantras. Cf., Sāyana in the introductory lines sūktaviniyogo laiṅgikah. The hymn is explicitly a description of the production of fire. So our mantra can easily be employed in the production and establishment of fire in the Agnyādheya too. The etymology mentioning the shaping in the mother, thus, furthers the cause of the ritual that desires the growth of Agni.

The examples can be multiplied. It is not necessary that the etymology should occur in the mantra. When a popular etymology is asserted outside the mantra that is to say in some Brāhmaṇa or in the Nirukta, that will mean its employment for enhancing the power of the prayer in a ritual. There is an etymology of Agni in Nirukta 7.14 agnih kasmād agranīr bhavati ‘Why is (he called) agni? He leads forward.’ Now, this will enhance the power of the prayer in RV 4.1.10 sá tū no agnīr nayatu prajānán ‘May this Agni, the knowing one, lead us!’ This mantra too, according to the dictum sūktaviniyogo laiṅgikah mentioned by Sāyana in the introductory lines of his commentary to the hymn, may be employed according to the indication in the mantras. Secondly, it is also

employed in the prātaranuvāka and āsvinaśastra (Āśvalāyana-Śrauta S. 4.13 and Sāyaṇa's commentary) where the wise Agni's leadership in the impending savana will be welcome. The etymology will then aid the execution of the relevant ritual by enhancing the power of the prayer.

There are numerous examples of such 'etymological' embellishment for aiding the ritual. Among the many etymologies that Yāska (Nirukta 10.8) proposes for Indra one is *indra irām dṛṇātīti* ... Indra (is so called) because he splits/enforces food. Now, the following verse mentions Indra's splitting food : RV 8.6.23 ā na indra mahīm í ṣam púram ná darṣi gómatīm/ 'O Indra! Do enforcesabundant food for us like the stronghold of cows!' So also 2.12.15 yáḥ sunvaté pácate dudhrá ā cid vāja ḡ dárdarṣi sá kílāsi satyáḥ/ 'As he who, the irresistible one, enforces the booty for him that presses the soma and him that bakes...' Yāska had these prayers and the Soma samsthās in which they are employed in his mind. It is implied that these etymologies should be learnt by the priest who employs the mantra.

There are also other ways of bringing the prayer close to its ritual. According to the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa a mantra is known as rūpasamṛddha if it indicates its ritual. AB.6.2 (2.1.2), etad vai yajñasya samṛddham yad rūpasamṛddham, yat karma kriyamāṇam ḡ abhivadati 'This indeed is the embellishment of the sacrifice, that is embellishment of form, that the mantra states the ritual being performed.'⁴² How this is achieved in order to strengthen the ritual is seen in the same paragraph. Seven mantras are enjoined for the ritual purification of the sacrificial post (yūpasamśkāra) in the following order 3.8.1, 3, 2, 1.36.13, 1.36.14, 3.8.5, 3.8.4. The first and the last are each recited thrice thus making a total of eleven recitations. The section concludes 'Eleven syllables indeed is the triṣṭubh, the triṣṭubh is the thunder-bolt of Indra. He who knows thus attains prosperity by ḗks that are home to Indra. Thrice the first thrice the last he recites, the two ends of the sacrifice does he bind thereby, for steadfastness, for strength, for preventing looseness.'

After style and etymology, rūpasamṛddhi is then the third instrument for strengthening the prayer and the ritual.

⁴² Also see BHATTACHARYYA 1960: xxvi.

9. Summary of the cases treated

The following is a tabular presentation of the cases examined.

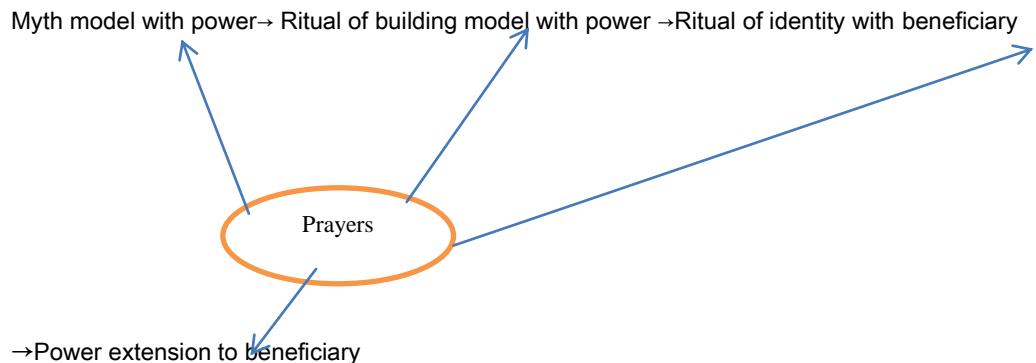
Ritual	Archetype X Replica	Source and receiver of power between whom identity is established	Logic	Ritual act done along with prayer
Pravargya	Sun X Mahāvīra pot	Sun→Pot→Priests Sun's glory to sacrificer/priest	Identity means achieving sun's power	Making Mahāvīra pot;eating remn- ants in burnt pot
Agnyādheya abhiśvāsa ucchvāsa Ādhāna	Agni : 3 divisions of universeX Fire: 3 fireplaces	Cosmic Agni → ritual Agni → sacrificer	Identity means achieving Agni's glory	Building three fire-places, producing fire, exhaling to and inhaling from Agni, placing fire in three fireplaces,
Agniṣṭoma Soma-drinking	Mythological Soma-drinking by Indra&gods X ritual drinking	Indra, gods → priest, sacrifice	Identity means achieving Indra's power	Offering soma to Indra, drinking soma
Maṇḍukahymn	Croaking before rain X Mantra recitation	Croaking frogs → Veda reciting Brahmacārins	Identity means extension of croaking's rain-inducing power to prayer	Prayer as imitation of croaking is the ritual act for producing rain
Mantranaya Seka	Becoming and reverse- becoming in united joint	Primeval pair → Mortal pair	Identity means achieving Kālacakra's	Physical union&special internal exercise

The table shows the ingredients that must exist in the ritual. They are, 1. an archetypal

	principles of creationXtwo way movement of seed in imitators		glory	
Śākta and early Vaiṣṇava tantra	Birth of creator <primeval union of joint principles of creationX symbolic homas	Creator → Ācārya	Identity means extension of creator's glory to ācārya	Symbolic union through homas, establishing ācārya's identity with creator through homas
Producing power of learning AVŚ 1.1	No imitation, tongue of talking bird tied to beneficiary's neck	Tongue of talking bird →student	Parrot-tongue transmits speech-power	Tying parrot tongue to student
Treatment of partial paralysis AVŚ 6.80	Heavenly bodies X Earthly dog	Sun and bright heavenly bodies conceived as dog and company →dog with fumigated insects	heavenly dog has power to cure paralysis	Using material from dog's body and environment on patient's body
Applying a catheter.AVŚ 1.3	Rain by ParjanyaX outflow of fluid	Parjanya→ hypothetical father of reed → reed used as catheter	Raingod's fatherhood transmits fluid-releasing power to reed	Using reed as catheter

pe which we may also understand as a model with power which is to be 2. imitated for being realized at the venue; 3. establishing identity of it with the sacrificer/priest/other beneficiary through the ritual; 4. extension of the power of the model to the beneficiaries. All these four items are bound by a single thread running through them that is prayer. A diagrammed presentation will be as follows

Diagram 1



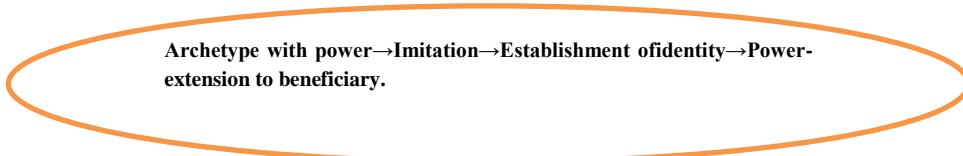
10. Comments on the structure

The components have been linked to the circle of prayer. It will look as follows if the components are to be arranged linearly:

Archetype with power → Imitation → Establishment of identity between the two
 →Power extension to beneficiary.

The role of prayer as the common thread running through the components can be shown also by placing the arranged components in a circle representing prayer like the following.

Diagram 2

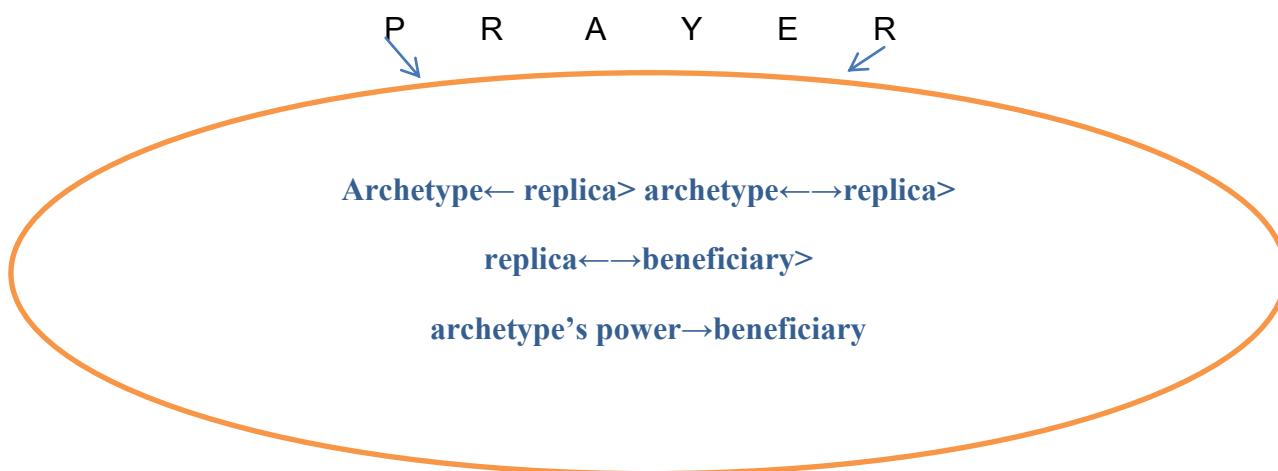


Between different rituals the components, namely, model, things to be identified with, etc. will be positionally similar but individually different in each particular variety. The second component in the Pravargya pertains to building the Mahāvīra pot. This is not like imitating the creative pair in the Mantranaya or tying the tongue of a speaking bird to the student in Medhājanana (Case VII). Each component has its own structure. Though this is not a sentence-level structure, we may say for the sake of analogy that, as in the sentence, each unit is to be seen as complexes formed of units of the lower level and hence as having sub-structures just as words have with its morphemes in a sentence. I have not tried to show abstract forms of the sub-structures of the component units, say, of the imitation phenomenon, which exist in the word level parallels of the

given ritual structure. But it should be understood that they too may have structures formed by quality, size, action etc and that these should be compatible between themselves. In the diagram it has been attempted to delineate only the higher structure.

The above means that though the simple structure itself does not tell much it is expandable, can be adjusted and made to speak for specific rituals. Hence one may examine if it might serve as a starting point for further research. When experimentally serving as a starting point, it is not only expansion that will be called for, also necessity and scope for improvements are bound to be found. I myself found some incongruities without satisfactory solution. For example, of the ingredients, two are concrete objects signified by nouns. These are the archetype and its imitation. The other ingredients are actions affecting the two. Of the actions, imitation affects the archetype directly as its object which is the case-role the archetype first plays. The next action that is establishing identity confers an associative case-role on it while making it one of a pair with whom as associate the other is to have an integral connection. The role, thus, changes from that of a direct object to one of an associate. The extension of power which now follows renders the object to a source conferring on it an ablative case-role. The three roles may be expressed with three indicators like say \leftarrow for the object-accusative role, x or \leftrightarrow for the associative role and \rightarrow for the ablative role as a source. Accordingly, the diagram now should be as follows.

Diagram 3



11 The imitation of Christ

I just showed the possible scope for improvement of which a demonstration cannot be exhaustively made here. Efforts for such improvements may be made only if and when the structure could be found suitable for further use. A reason for such hope is that the given structure is not a mere Indian phenomenon.

The imitation of Christ, for example, is a known thing but, originally, it could not have been, as taught by Thomas à Kempis (1418), merely an ethical ideal to be imitated as something noble or as the best conduct. This is a devotional reinterpretation as happened in Vaiṣṇava rituals (4 Case VIb above), with the difference that, in the case of Christianity, one finds the reform as mixed with the incipient but still latent rationalist way of looking at things that is to say without the mystic implications of the Holy Communion. But even though one may lack an analysis of the Eucharist in the manner one finds with Vedic rituals, how can one miss the original idea of establishing identity with Christ that extends the power of the original performer to the imitator? The early medieval idea of union⁴³ can have no explanation without that. The ritual imitation as distinct from habitual conduct in daily life, confers the beneficial power of Christ to the performer of the Eucharist.

For, the aim, as I understand, is the establishment of identity between Christ and the priest. The latter is to communicate with the layman. The said identity will mean the descent of Christ before the devotee. It is the same mechanism in the Tantric dīkṣā. There it is a drama of God being ‘born’ on the fireplace. The preceptor ritually establishes himself as identical with the God who is ‘born’. Then he initiates the layman just as the priest interacts with the layman as the imitation of Christ whom he has directly imitated.

Understood as such the imitation of Christ too will be consistent with the structure given above.

12. Further problems

Apart from the said requirement of perfection and ensuring scope for wide applicability, the following too may be noted. So far as the ritual is a happening with

⁴³Eg., see Book 7 of the Confessions of St. Augustine = CHADWICK 2008.

events in sequence, a structural presentation is not possible through a Chomskyan structure. We have to deal with a complex series of events. A structural presentation of a sentence just describing the eating of the remnants of the Mahavīra pot will tell little. As demonstrated above it has also to represent the element of imitation, the identity established between the sun and the priests and so on. The outcome is an organisation of linguistic elements that stands higher than the sentence structure. The presentation should belong at least to the level of text, if not to an even higher or more complex level.

Now, when it is granted that some advancement over sentence level structures is compulsorily called for with rituals, we have to go further. For, it is also to be admitted that it is not only ritual that is the issue in question. The ritual may have a text-base when a theory or a mythological event is enacted. Thus, with Mantranaya the enacted event will be regarded as a theory and in the Agnyādheya building the fireplaces and placing Agni on it come to be the enactment of a myth. The question is whether drawing a structure of these theories or events is possible or not. What holds good for a presentation of the ritual through a Chomskyan structure as told above, is valid also for a structural presentation of the myth or theory behind a ritual. As with a descriptive account of the ritual so also for the two myths told here : a Chomskyan structure will only give the structure of the sentence describing the myth. But since myths are bound to have antecedents and after effects those will not be myth-structures. For example, with the Parvargya there is also the traditional story explaining some antecedents that necessitated the recovery of the sun.⁴⁴ Here too the most glaring difference lies in that a myth is a text which is a level higher than sentence and has its own compulsions and niceties not associated with the sentence. Those will not be covered by a Chomskyan sentence structure. In other words linguistic structures cannot be explicative nor even expressive as those of PROPP 1928 (1958) or LÉVI-STRAUSS 1977.

There is more to it. As indicated in the above paragraph, it is to be granted that there will be cases where a myth and a ritual would be complementary to each other like the scenario and visual presentation of a cinema. The mythical birth of Agni in the three divisions of the universe and its production and placing on the three fire-places (3,

⁴⁴ N.19 above

Casell above) and the enactment of the Kālacakra flux (4, Case V above) are somewhat of this type. The relation between the structures of such a myth and of its complementary ritual has to be closely examined. Great problem will be faced with rituals which developed into huge and complex shapes at the end of the Vedic age. The very dimension and complexities may be great hurdles in structurally dealing with them. As a ritual the Gavām-ayana has a structure. It has also a myth or myths behind it, namely, the breaking of the mountain and release of cows or the release of waters which are well-known and complex myths. These are dramatised in the ritual. Is it possible to accommodate the two in one or inter-related structures? A metalanguage acceptable at least to the majority of philologists dealing with myth and ritual has to be developed.

At present the problems in such presentation seem formidable to me. Problems exist even with things less complicated than the case of the relation formulated in scenario : visual-presentation :: myth : ritual. For, attempts made till now indicate that even correlating parallel myths involves very complex operation. The complexities will be apparent to anyone when comparing the various figures representing aspects of the story of Asdiwal as given in LÉVI-STRAUSS-LAYTON 1977: 162-164, 177-180 etc.⁴⁵

I make only a formal presentation of some relevant Vedic myths below. The presentations relate to the following myths.

There are at least three parallels of what is known as Indra's heroic feat. In one Indra, in company of the Maruts, kills Vṛtra and releases the waters. In another Indra in company of the singing fathers/Aṅgirases with or without Brhaspati, leads to the breaking of the mountain resulting in the release of cows. There is yet at least one more

⁴⁵So much has been said on the problem of structural presentation of a series of events that a reference to the current literature beyond what I furnished was not possible in this paper. Still, among all these the one named 'Transformational platform' may, perhaps, serve as a common platform for all the structures, including the ones of Prof. Houben (auto-referential structure) that I mentioned in the paper. It would have required many pages to experiment with the efficacy of the 'common platform' that may remain a far-fetched dream for long.

version in which the fathers lead to the mountain confining the cows and obstructing the sun, but the inspiring divinity is Agni.⁴⁶ They will appear as

	Myth 1
Leaders	Indra + singing-Maruts
Action	Killing
Villain	Water-obstructing Vṛtra-in-mountains
Result	Release of waters
	Myth 2
Leaders	Indra+singing-Āngirases/ Br̥haspati
Action	Indra leads, Fathers sing
Villain	Cow-and-sun-obstructing Vala and mountain
Result	Cows released, darkness removed
	Myth 3
Leaders	Agni + 'Our fathers'
Action	Agni is born,; spreads in the three divisions of the universe; fathers sing and labour
Villain	Cow-and-sun-obstructing mountain
Result	Cows released, darkness removed

As just formal presentations these are no structures. A structure is not just the ingredients in sequence but is an organized presentation of the ingredients as integrally related. But in such complex cases Lévi-Strauss⁴⁷ too does not much rise above formal presentation. The above given myths with their ingredients are to be integrally presented among themselves towards ensuring diachronic or synchronic relations and then examined for structural integration with rituals like the Gavām-ayana.

⁴⁶BHATTACHARYA 1984 Ch.2 5 on the Āngirases. Also see vii-x on Hans-Peter Schmidt's *Br̥haspati und Indra*

⁴⁷ LEVI-STRAUSS - LAYTON 1977: 158-159; 210.

Such structural presentation of complementary rituals and myths may mean almost starting a new subject the very necessity and feasibility whereof has not yet been envisaged. This means, as with every scientific endeavour, stepping on to higher rungs in the ladder will be continuous.

Dipak Bhattacharya

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