

J. Gonda

EPITHETS
IN THE R̥GVEDA

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EPITHETS IN THE ṚGVEDA

DISPUTATIONES
RHENO-TRAJECTINAE

DISPUTATIONES INSTITUTI AD LINGUAS
ORIENTALES

DOCENDAS ATQUE INVESTIGANDAS
IN UNIVERSITATE RHENO-TRAJECTINA
CONDITI

EDIDIT
J. GONDA

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EPITHETS IN THE RĠVEDA

BY

J. GONDA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Of all stylistic devices the epithet is, perhaps, the one which has been most abused in certain genres of poetry and prose compositions. But in its proper and moderate use it may have the effect of increasing the author's vocabulary and enriching his power of expression. A well-chosen epithet often constitutes a picture by itself, adding an element of vividness to the context, rubbing up a vague and worn noun and throwing light upon those of its connotations which should attract the attention of the audience. An epithet may typify and express an opinion, beautify and add to the intelligibility of a passage, without interrupting the course of the narrative or the movement of the poem by a long parenthesis or burdening them by a cumbersome description. It often is the best way to secure brightness, beauty, distinction and sublimity to the style.

This treatise is devoted to inquiring into the function of the epithets in R̥gvedic mantras and to the discussion of some other particulars regarding the uses of these words.¹ As there does not appear to exist complete agreement among authorities in point of terminology,² the preliminary remark may be made that by epithets are here intended, not only the formulaic or petrified epithets (or, in German, *stehende Epitheta*) or *epitheta ornantia*,³ but also all non-distinctive,⁴ logically often, but by no

¹ See e.g. W. Wüst, *Stilgeschichte und Chronologie des R̥gveda* (*Abh. Kunde Morg.*, 17) (Leipzig, 1928), p. 27. The study of epithets in Sanskrit literature has been much neglected. Some remarks on epic occurrences were made by Ch. Autran, *L'épopée indoue* (Paris, 1946), p. 339 ff.

² Whereas some authors – or languages – are inclined to identify epithets and adjuncts (cf. e.g. O. Jespersen, *The philosophy of grammar*, London, 1924 (1935), p. 354) or to limit the use of the word to those adjectives which as attributes, are intimately associated with a noun (see J. Marouzeau, *Lexique de la terminologie linguistique*, Paris, 1933, p. 77; Ch. Bally, *Linguistique générale et linguistique française*², Berne, 1944, p. 176), others apply the term exclusively to those attributive adjectives which have lost any distinctive function, that is to say which are, in epic style, frequent or permanent accompaniments of nouns, whatever the sense of the utterance in its entirety (see e.g. G. S. Overdiep, *Stilistische grammatica van het moderne Nederlandsch*, Zwolle, 1937, p. 269).

³ It would in defining the technical term under discussion be advisable to avoid expressions such as “sächlich nicht erfordernten Schmuck” (E. Schwyzer–A. Debrunner, *Griechische Grammatik*, II, München, 1950, p. 181). Nor should we accept without

means always, superfluous, descriptive, significant adjectives used attributively and denoting a quality or attribute which while being characteristic of or inherent in a person, object, event, or phenomenon, are, or may be supposed to be, known to the audience of the speaker or author,⁵ or which are at once recognized as true and pre-eminently suitable to characterize the substantive.⁶ Also those frequent cases where words usually, or elsewhere, used in the above way occur instead of a proper name or appellative noun or serve as a mode of address, are included here. In so doing we shall not aim at anything like lexicographic completeness, because this publication is, on the contrary, mainly intended to illustrate by a large number of examples some points of interest regarding the use of epithets in the Veda from a stylistic point of view. It should however be borne in mind that the adjectival epithet often is, to a greater or

reserve statements such as “das Epitheton... ist historisch betrachtet nichts weiter als Mechanisierung einer ursprünglich lose und in Form einer nachträglichen Verdeutlichung oder Korrektur hinzugefügten Apposition” (J. B. Hofmann, in M. Leumann-J. B. Hofmann, *Lateinische Grammatik*, München, 1928, p. 454). As is well known the *epitheton ornans* has been very diversely defined, e.g. “Das Epitheton ornans ist eine Figur, welche der Darstellung dadurch Anschaulichkeit verleiht, dass sie an dem Begriffe eines Dinges ein bedeutsames Merkmal hervorhebt, durch welches unsere Imagination den Impuls erhält das Bild des Ganzen zu schaffen, mit einem Schlage, wie es vor der dichterischen Anschauung stand” (H. Storch, “Das Epitheton ornans”, *Programm Ratibor*, 1858, p. 6); “Un epitheton ornans est un adjectif qui n’ajoute au contenu d’une proposition aucune détermination intellectuelle, un adjectif dont la valeur affective même a disparu au point de ne plus servir soit à rendre le mot principal plus compréhensible dans le contexte, soit à éveiller un sentiment chez l’auditeur ou le lecteur, soit à contribuer à la formation d’une certaine *Stimmung* justifiée par le contexte” (L. Bergson, *L’épithète ornementale dans Eschyle, Sophocle et Euripide*, Thesis Uppsala, 1956, p. 18).

⁴ An attributive adjective added to distinguish between the species of the same genus etc. (e.g. *the big house* in contradistinction to smaller houses) may be called distinctive. Instances such as Ṛ V. 2, 27, 13 *śucir apaḥ sūyavasā adabdhā / upa kṣeti* “the pure one dwells unimpaired on waters that abound in good pastures” are therefore, generally speaking, left out of consideration.

⁵ However, for practical reasons no hard and fast lines will, in the following passages, be drawn and at times adjectives will be discussed which do not completely come within this definition. It may, on the other hand, be observed that, if appearances are not deceptive, in many cases context and situation provide us with indications as to whether the qualities or properties attributed to a particular noun were non-distinctive and known to the audience. – A distinction should also be made between postpositive epithets (*Abraham der guote* in medieval German works) and appositions (*Philipp der Gute*).

⁶ If the adjective arouses in the audience or in the readers the feeling: “this is the true, this is a well-chosen characterization, this adjective brings to the fore an aspect of the idea expressed by the noun which in the given situation is of outstanding importance” it may be considered to be “an ihrem bestimmten Platze bedeutend” (A. W. Schlegel, quoted by R. M. Meyer, *Deutsche Stilistik*, München, 1913, p. 57).

lesser degree, equivalent to other expressions, that is to say that words of other categories may also act as epithets.

Among the older studies on epithets there is very much which can no longer bear reasonable criticism. It is of course true that many theses and other essays on the use of descriptive adjectives in the works of a definite author or of a definite epoch may still be of considerable use as collections of material, the theoretical foundation of these works as well as the aims the author had in view in writing them are however often largely antiquated.⁷ For these authors epithets were, generally speaking, devices for the use of poets, enabling them to make their style more vivid and agreeable than the mode of expression preferred in prose works. The real importance of epithets for the poetical style was however not discovered before the first decade of the XXth century. One of the first scholars who emphasize the essential part they play in a great variety of poems and prose works was R. M. Meyer,⁸ who even went so far as to defend the thesis that a thorough inquiry into this subject should be the principal task of modern students of stylistics. Among the observations made by this scholar are the following: the epithet ("dieser licht- und lebenssprühende Begriff") is an adjective used emphatically. "Dieser Nachdruck kann auf zweierlei Weise erreicht werden: entweder durch Häufigkeit oder gerade umgekehrt durch auffällige Seltenheit."⁹ "In beiden Fällen aber ist es Aufgabe des Beiworts, den Hörer sofort in eine bestimmte

⁷ See for instance L. Cholevius, *Epitheta ornantia quibus utitur Vergilius*, Thesis Königsberg, 1865; A. Lackner, *Das schmückende Beiwort in der deutschen Dichtung des 12. Jahrhunderts*, Thesis Greifswald, 1903; W. Hawel, *Das schmückende Beiwort in den mittelhochdeutschen volkstümlichen Epen*, Thesis Greifswald, 1908 (a book which does not even contain an introduction or recapitulation); W. Lotz, *Das attributive Beiwort bei Hartmann von Aue*, Thesis Giessen, 1901; A. Salzer, *Die Sinnbilder und Beiworte Mariens in der deutschen Literatur und lateinischen Hymnenpoesie des Mittelalters* (Linz, 1886); E. Zellmer, *Die Epitheta in der Weltchronik Rudolfs von Ems*, Thesis Greifswald, 1915. These books like other works of the same class are products of great diligence and valuable as collections of facts, but the authors have missed almost any point of linguistic or stylistic import, limiting themselves almost completely to enumerations of the relevant adjectives and substantives and, sometimes, also to questions of a chronological or text-critical order.

⁸ R. M. Meyer, *Deutsche Stilistik* (München, 1906), 1913², par. 54–58. According to the definition proposed by this scholar (²p. 52) an epithet is an adjective, "das zu einem bestimmten und individuellen Wesen oder Gegenstand in feste Beziehung tritt; 'fest' muss die Beziehung in dem Sinn sein, dass sie sich für uns mit dem Begriff des betreffenden Wesens oder Gegenstandes unauflöslich verbindet. ... Dagegen ist ein attributives Adjektiv, das nicht den Menschen, sondern lediglich einen Zustand desselben kennzeichnet, noch kein Epitheton". Cf. also E. Elster, *Prinzipien der Literaturwissenschaft*, II (Halle/S., 1911), p. 160 ff., who is perfectly right in drawing attention to the type *der sorgenbrechende Wein*.

⁹ Meyer, *o. c.*, p. 50.

Stellung zu den genannten Personen oder Gegenständen zu bringen.”¹⁰ “Auch das am besten gewählte Adjektiv (kann) an sich nicht genügen, wenn ihm nicht aus der speziellen Verbindung mit gerade diesem Nomen eine spezifische Nuance der Bedeutung zufließt.”¹¹ The insight came to prevail that in many sentences the descriptive, attributive adjective is not only, to quote Aristotle, “to relieve the monotony and to give an air of distinction to our style”,¹² but also the main means of achieving graphical-ness, the best way to secure colour, brightness, beauty and animation. The idea expressed by a noun being apt to lose, by frequent use, its original freshness, preciseness and fullness of meaning is often revived by adding an attribute, just as the vague and general character of a large number of substantives is as a rule defined and particularized by an adjective. An epithet often essentially adds to bringing out in fuller relief worn down substantives. In many passages an unaccompanied noun would pass by quietly without making all its implications felt to the audience; here a well-chosen attribute compels attention, forces the hearers to dwell upon at least part of the aspects of the noun, focusses their thoughts on those nuances and connotations which are either characteristic of the idea expressed by the noun or deserve, in the eyes of the author, special notice in a particular context. The adjective, bearer of emotions and phantasy,¹³ creates those combinations of ideas which the poet wishes to become active in the imagination of his hearers. It helps him to lift the substantive out of the sphere of vague notions, by lending a concrete shape to it. The combination of the intellectual and emotional values of the noun and the well-chosen adjective may throw surprisingly new light on old ideas and traditional images.¹⁴

The traditional term ‘epitheton ornans’ is however far from felicitous. Additions which from the point of view of a matter-of-fact description or a sober statement of facts are redundancies are not necessarily ornaments and superfluities when occurring in other styles. Besides, the hearer may become so used to a fixed epithet that he hardly notices it when it occurs.¹⁵

¹⁰ Meyer, *o. c.*, p. 51.

¹¹ Meyer, *o. c.*, p. 57.

¹² Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1406A, transl. R. C. Jebb (Cambridge, 1909), p. 153. The same authority also observed that a too frequent use of epithets is worse than speaking at random, for a random style lacks merit, but excess is vicious.

¹³ For the adjective as ‘Eindruckswort’ see H. Seidler, *Allgemeine Stilistik* (Göttingen, 1953), p. 101 ff.

¹⁴ See e.g. also W. Kramer, “Het epitheton als stijlwaarde”, *De nieuwe taalgids*, 22 (Groningen, 1928), p. 1 ff.; the same, *Inleiding tot de stilistiek* (Groningen, 1935), p. 69 ff.; G. Stotz, *Epitheta ornantia im Kudrunlied...*, Thesis Tübingen, 1930, p. 1 ff.

¹⁵ The term ‘fixed epithet’ is not entirely felicitous either, “since in the first place

The hard and fast line formerly drawn between 'indispensable' attributive adjectives – e.g. πόντιον ὕδωρ "sea-water", *that old man*, *the French republic*, etc. – and the merely ornamental epithet is no stylistic reality. An adjective may be redundant from the point of view of the hearer who is only interested in the intellectual content of the communication, but at the same time convey a definite connotation and emotional value which are intended by the speaker: *an infernal nuisance* is, of course, a nuisance, and *deuced bad* is bad, but the adjectives are exhaust-valves of emotion which lend a special stylistic colour or flavour to the utterance. It is obvious that there is a relation between the force of epithets and the frequency with which they occur in a given document or context.¹⁶ Another point of interest concerns the character of the text, the 'tempo' of the narrative. It is easily understood that epics and reflective compositions give an author fuller scope for applying epithets than dialogues in dramas or novels.

The character of the epithets varies with that of the style of the passages in which they occur. In ancient poetry of an idealistic nature, the epithets are as a rule general and typical.¹⁷ The ancient historiographers applied such typical adjectives to outstanding persons as *Magnus, the great*, a king being per se great. As the character of the 'primitive'¹⁸ song, tale, or ballad in general leans towards the idealistic, it likes to represent persons and objects as perfect ones of their kind: a king has unlimited power because he is a king. "Dem modernen Menschen ... erscheinen die Formen, unter denen die frühere mittelalterliche Literatur das Leben darstellt, in ihrer überwiegenden Mehrheit als formelhaft und typisierend."¹⁹ Modern, individualistic authors largely prefer realistic and individualistic adjectives which help them to bring out the characteristic features of the persons or objects of which they speak. Certain romantic poets and prose-

the noun may sometimes occur without its usual epithet, and in the second place it may sometimes have another epithet" (C. M. Bowra, *Heroic poetry*, London, 1952, p. 222). See also G. Stotz, *o. c.*, p. 1.

¹⁶ Compare the remarks made by K. H. Meyer, *Untersuchungen zum schmückenden Beiwort in der älteren griechischen Poesie*, Thesis Münster, 1913, p. 2 ff., with regard to ancient Greek poetry.

¹⁷ Cf. e.g. J. G. Böhner, *Das Beiwort des Menschen ... in Wolframs Parzival*, Thesis Heidelberg, 1909, p. 1.

¹⁸ In order to avoid misunderstanding it may be remembered that this term does not express any appreciation whatever, conveying a sense opposite to that of 'modern' and more or less synonymous with 'pre-scientific', 'natural', 'universally human'; in language and literature primitive tendencies manifest themselves wherever 'affective' or 'emotional', 'naive' or 'natural' factors are only to a small extent counteracted by rational or scientific thought etc.

¹⁹ Böhner, *Das Beiwort des Menschen...*, p. 1.

writers experimented with new and surprising combinations of nouns and adjectives or utilized these to express feelings and emotions rather than specific characterizations. Whereas popular, antique and medieval epics preferred so-called fixed epithets of the "green grass", "brave warrior" or "mountain-bred lion" varieties and modern authors had a predilection for completely new or at least rare attributes it was the endeavour of a poet like Horace to find new combinations²⁰ and to pursue variation.

That the so-called *epitheta ornantia* of the ancient epics, though originally intended to characterize, fulfilled this function only to a certain extent is obvious. If any hero is brave or valiant, just because he is a hero, and if every princess is a beauty,²¹ because the idealistic view of things does not admit the existence of plain women of noble birth, these words only intimate that the person under discussion is up to the standard: "der edle König heisst kaum mehr als bei uns "seine Majestät"."²² In more recent periods new trends in literary activity have however in choosing epithets often pursued the completely new or utterly rare.²³ The new light in which they looked at the world conjured up combinations of great plasticity, phantasy, and imagination: *vaag brokkelden de zonoude muren der kantelen* (the Dutch prosaist Van Looy: "vaguely the sun-old walls of the battlements crumbled"); *daar liggen de doffe peinzende aardappelen naast de opgewonden tomaten* (the Dutch author Roland Holst: "there lay the dull-pondering potatoes beside the excited tomatos"); *krakende geraamten van grijze verveling* (Van Deyssel, another Dutch man of letters: "creaking skeletons of grey boredom"). "Toute une échelle de valeurs peut être observée, depuis les qualificatifs quasi obligatoires et stéréotypés: *une fine allusion, une amère déception*, jusqu'à l'épithète inattendue qui réclame presque un commentaire: *ces impressions restaient douillettes* (J. Romains); *le lézard, fils spontané de la pierre fendue* (J. Renard)."²⁴

In heroic poetry leading parts are assigned to men of superior gifts, who are presented and accepted as being greater than ordinary people. Although it is true that much of their interest lies in what happens to them,

²⁰ Cf. A. Goldschmidt, *Philol. Wochenschrift*, 49 (1929), p. 229 ff.

²¹ In the Sundanese pantun literature of Java the words *nu gölis* "the beauty" often precede the names of princesses of the blood, becoming, like the similar Javanese phrase *radèn ayu* a sort of title.

²² R. M. Meyer, *o.c.*, p. 52; the same, *Altgermanische Poesie*, p. 491 f.

²³ R. M. Meyer, *Stilistik*, p. 56, argues that "jede neuere literarische Richtung mit einer frischen Pflege des Epithetons einsetzt, die nach einiger Zeit wieder einem gewissen Erstarren weichen musz".

²⁴ J. Marouzeau, *Précis de stylistique française* (Paris, 1946), p. 135. See also W. Kramer, *Het epitheton als stijlwaarde*, l.c.

their characters and personalities are far from indifferent. True heroes awake not only interest in their adventures, but also admiration and even awe for themselves.²⁵ Yet, it is not only the narrative itself, the situations in which they find themselves, the deeds which they perform and the words they speak that afford the ancient poets opportunities to delineate the characters of their heroes, the very choice of words in presenting them to their audience, in describing their activities, in having them addressed by the other figures of their poems is a great help to them in drawing characters, in creating men and women who are “both examples of pre-eminent humanhood and emphatically themselves”. Not rarely however the adjectives, and especially the fixed epithets play a great part in this process. If a poet is not able to bring out the qualities of his heroes by indirect means he may almost completely rely on epithets added to their names: “the courteous A., the valiant B.”²⁶

Gods, even the Homeric gods are, however, to a greater extent typical figures than the human personages in the early remainders of poetry. Descriptive adjectives and additional names and attributes are, even if the gods to whom they are applied are less anthropomorphous than the splendid characters of the Homeric pantheon, an important source of knowledge of the views and opinions entertained by the poets and their milieus with regard to the figures to which they dedicated their poems and eulogies. If we could make no use of the almost innumerable epithets and other attributes our knowledge of the Vedic gods would be considerably reduced. Being one of the most outstanding characteristics of any literary genre the epithets of the R̥gveda are, also by their wealth and variety, a very valuable element in the composition of the hymns, the delineation of the divine personalities and the expression of thoughts.

It would however be a mistake to regard the epithet as an exclusively literary device. It is on the contrary not foreign to normal daily usage. Here also the epithetic adjective (e.g. *le cygne au long cou*) should be distinguished from the “attribut spécialisant” (*le cygne à bec rouge*). Here also “il semble que l'épithète allonge, qu'elle explicite: en fait elle suppose que, de toutes les qualités d'une substance, on n'en retient qu'une, parce qu'elle intéresse ou frappe; ... c'est comme si l'on disait: 'le cygne, qui a, entre autres caractères, celui de posséder un long cou'.”²⁷ Naive

²⁵ See Bowra, *Heroic poetry*, ch. III.

²⁶ See also E. Drerup, *Homerische Poetik*, I (Würzburg, 1921), p. 60; O. von Jiriczek, *Die deutsche Heldensage* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1913), p. 113 ff.; W. Wollner, *Untersuchungen über die Volksepik der Groszrussen* (Leipzig, 1879), p. 11 f.

²⁷ Ch. Bally, *Le langage et la vie* (Zürich, 1935), p. 135; J. B. Hofmann, *Lateinische Umgangssprache*² (Heidelberg, 1936), p. 119 f., while defining an epithet as “the

speakers, the common people in general, like to use a certain number of substantives in fixed combinations with attributive adjectives. And they have often set a model for writers of literary works. In order to recommend his merchandise a Dutch street-hawker used to talk of *honigzoete kasdruiven* "hothouse grapes as sweet as honey", whatever the taste and the quality of the fruits, and of *hagelwitte bloemkool* "cauliflower white as snow" (lit. "hail"), even if the colour of that vegetables was rather dingy. Notwithstanding their practical function from the point of view of business these adjectives had developed into mechanically reproduced decorative epithets which never did combine with other substantives. Nor did that merchant ever speak of *suikerzoete* ("as sweet as sugar") *druiven*, or *sneeuw witte* ("white as snow") *bloemkool*. There are, in common usage, such fixed and traditional phrases as, in Dutch, *zijn trouwe gade* "his loyal wife", heard also when any reference to conjugal fidelity is altogether out of the question; *mijn lieve zuster* "my dear sister", used by many persons as a stereotyped word group; *onder de groene* ("green") *zoden rusten* "to lie under the sod". Thus we find in German, *werter Freund*; *darf ich um den werten Namen bitten?*²⁸ or *bitte, hier die werte Unterschrift*; *nein, mein lieber, alter, verehrter Freund*.²⁹ In colloquial usage fixed combinations are of considerable frequency: *he got himself into a nasty mess*; *a nice cup of tea*. It often is a matter of milieu which epithets are preferred and which of them come to stay, like *rot* "rotten, wretched" in colloquial Dutch, or *mieters* "fine, splendid" in young people's slang, which are of very general applicability. In popular songs and tales things are often called after a property that strikes the eye or after the impression otherwise made by their outward appearance:³⁰ thus, in German, *die grüne Wiese*; *mein junges Leben*; in ancient English ballads the favourite colour of horses was *milk-white*. Not rarely the noun and its epithet are more intimately connected by alliteration: *the merry month of May*; in Dutch *hun lieve landje* (iron.) "their precious country".

attributive addition of something known" considers it to be "nichts wie ein mechanisierter appositioneller Zusatz unter Aufhebung der Pause"; his opinion that in contradistinction to the *epitheton ornans* and the *épithète rare* of the "gehobene Sprache", "die Umgangssprache ... auf dieser ... ererbten Nachtragsweise durchaus stehen (bleibt)" may easily lead to misunderstanding.

²⁸ Cf. E. Steinmeyer, *Über einige Epitheta der Mhd. Poesie*, Rede Erlangen, 1889.

²⁹ H. Wunderlich, *Unsere Umgangssprache* (Weimar-Berlin, 1894), p. 162 f.

³⁰ See e.g. also R. Petsch, "Volksdichtung und volkstümliches Denken", *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde*, II (1903), p. 208; R. van der Meulen, *Die Naturvergleiche in den Liedern und Totenklagen der Litauer*, Thesis Leiden, 1907, p. 6 f.; L. Wolf, "Der groteske und hyperbolische Stil des Mittelhochdeutschen Volksepos", *Palaestra*, 25 (1903), p. 20 ff.

Since this point – which may be of interest for a correct understanding of the frequent use of more or less fixed epithets in archaic and ‘semi-primitive’ literatures – does not appear to have attracted the attention which it deserves, a somewhat larger number of Dutch instances may be added here.³¹ There is no doubt the sure promise of finding a large number of counterparts in other ‘modern’ languages. In Dutch popular or colloquial usage a *stijve hark*, lit. “a stiff rake” means “a clumsy, awkward person, a person of stiff manners”: rakes being as a rule stiff and not flexible, the epithet is ‘logically’ superfluous; its emotional and characteristic force are, however, considerable; a *stijve hark* is a sort of intensive variant of a *hark* “a muff”. The somewhat vulgar *een vervelende klier* “a boring or dull rotter” is in a similar way stronger than *een klier* “a pig, a rotter”; *een stomme eend* “a stupid goose” is stronger than *een eend* “a goose, an empty-headed person”; *het arme schaap* “the poor mite” more affectionate than *het schaap*, lit. “the sheep”; in *een onschuldig lam* “the innocent lamb” the epithet, serving mainly to emphasize the most outstanding characteristic of the animal, is practically speaking tautological. If the idea of “consolation” is to be expressed intensively one has often recourse to the cliché *schrale troost* “poor (cold) comfort”. The adjective *diep* (“deep”) expresses, in a similar way, a high degree, for instance in connection with *geheim* “secret”: *een diep geheim* “a dead secret”; and the adjective *bitter* “bitter” is in Dutch, as well as English, very much adapted to qualify intensive weeping: *bittere tranen* “bitter tears”. Instead of “deep” or “profound” the adjective *heilig*, lit. “holy” often qualifies the noun *ontzag* “awe, respect”; in *blakende* (lit. “burning”) *welstand* means: “in radiant health”. If in popular usage the idea expressed by *schoft* “scoundrel” is to be intensified, the epithet *vuil* “dirty” is as a rule added to it: *vuile schoft*. Similarly, *een gemene smeerlap* “a foul blackguard” is stronger than the single *smeerlap* “dirty fellow”; *een vette kluif* “a fat knuckle” stronger than *een kluif* “a knuckle of pork”; *een bliksemse kwajongen* lit. “an urchin like lightning” i.e. “a devilish urchin” is a sort of standard intensivum beside *kwajongen*; in *een oude zeur* “a bore” the adjective *oud* renders the same service, whereas *vuil* is often preferred to intensify certain substantives indicating persons, which in certain milieus are emotive and apt to serve as terms of abuse: *vuile kapitalist* “dirty capitalist”; *vuile koloniaal* “dirty colonial”.

If one wishes to express compassion or merely sympathy with an animal the epithet *stom*, i.e. “dumb” may, like the English *poor* in *poor brute!*,

³¹ I owe part of these examples to the kindness of my pupils Miss B. Th. Koppers and Miss H. Wijnholt.

serve as a term of endearment: *het stomme dier!* A more 'emotional' variant of *vrede* "peace" is *de lieve vrede* "dear peace" in *om de lieve vrede* "for the sake of peace". The good quality of potatoes is by the Dutch greengrocers preferably indicated by the adjective *puik* "choice, first-rate". For "I have not the faintest idea of it" the Dutch say *ik heb er geen flauw* ("dim") *idee van*.

In other cases the fixed adjective is not to intensify but rather to qualify the meaning of the noun to which it is attached. Thus *uitbundig* "exuberant" is more or less habitually qualificative of *vreugde* "joy" and *lof* "praise"; *opgeschoten* "shot up" of *jongen* "boy", the phrase meaning "stripling"; *zoetsappig* "goody-goody, namby-pamby" of *glimlach* "smile"; *diep-geworteld* "deep-rooted" of *overtuiging* "conviction"; *hooggespannen* "high-strung" of *verwachtingen* "expectations"; *welwillend* "benevolent" of *overweging* "consideration". In a similar way: *oorverdovend lawaai* lit. "ear-deafening (i.e. an ear-splitting) noise"; *uitgestreken gezicht* lit. "smoothed face", i.e. "smug or poker face"; *spreekwoordelijk gezegde* lit. "proverbial saying"; *uitgelezen gezelschap* "select party". Some expressions of this class are almost exclusively current in metaphorical use: *doorgestoken kaart* lit. "pierced card" i.e. "put-up job, plant"; *opgeschroefde vrolijkheid* "screwed up, i.e. inflated merriment"; *opgekropte woede* means "pent-up rage".

There are formulas which may conveniently be dealt with under the head stereotyped or hackneyed phrases, such as *lekker weer* "nice weather"; *een flauwe mop* "an insipid, i.e. a poor joke"; *een armzalig zootje* "a poor lot". In these combinations the adjective is far from superfluous; on the contrary, *een flauwe mop* is just the opposite of *een goede mop* "a capital joke", but in qualifying a joke these two adjectives are the standard expressions, synonyms being practically unusual. The traditional epithet to qualify a man's life as loose and licentious is *losbandig*: *een losbandig leven* (alliteration!); the opposite idea is commonly denoted by *serieus* "serious": *een serieuze levenswandel*. The latter term is, like many other adjectives, practically connected only with a rather limited number of nouns: *een serieus gegadigde* ("intending purchaser"); *een serieus zakenman* ("business-man") etc.

Commonplace expressions belonging to the vocabulary of journalism, of semi-intellectuals etc. are, for instance, *dodelijke stilte* "a dead silence" i.e. "a hush (falling upon an assembly)"; *een sprekend evenbeeld* "a speaking likeness"; *een grove belediging* "gross offence" i.e. "outrage"; *grove ketterij* "rank heresy"; *tedere kus* "affectionate kiss"; but *een teer punt* "a tender or delicate point" (*teder* now being a bookish variant of the

colloquial and standard *teer*); if the idea of innocence is to be emphasized the phrase *heilige onschuld*, lit. "sacred innocence" may serve.

In second-rate literature palms are usually "waving": *wuivende palmen*, and reed or rush "rustling": *ruisend riet*; the dunes are "white, fair, light": *de blanke (blonde) duinen*, but not: *de witte* (i.e. "white") *duinen*; waves, especially small waves, are "rippling": *kabbelende golfjes*; whereas daisies are often qualified as "humble": *het nederige madeliefje*; violets are "modest, unpretentious": *het bescheiden viooltje*. Instead of "the sky" many authors and speakers prefer *de blauwe hemel* "the blue sky". In a similar way *een donzen perzik* lit. "a downy peach" and *een blozende appel* "a ruddy apple" are beside *fonkelende wijn* "sparkling wine"; *verblindende witheid* "dazzling whiteness"; *inktzwarte duisternis* "a darkness as black as ink"; *een verfrissend bad* "a refreshing bath"; *een armzalig overschot* "a poor remainder"; *een innige omhelzing* "a hearty embrace" favourite commonplace phrases in which the epithet is as a rule almost obligatory in the speeches and writings of those who aspire to a certain sort of 'distinction' in the use they make of their mother-tongue. That among the combinations which have a fixed place in their diction are also more or less evidently tautological phrases such as *een reine maagd* "a chaste virgin", does not worry these authors, who do not even shrink from combinations such as *een moedige held* "a brave hero" or *een geheimzinnig mysterie* "a mysterious mystery".

Another kind of adjective-substantive phrase is that which forms unity to such a degree that the substantive by itself does not express a sense comparable to that which it conveys in the combination. The Dutch expression *een hoge ome*, lit. "an exalted uncle" – notice that *een hoge oom* does not exist, *oom* being the standard variant of the low-colloquial *ome* – means "a great gun, a big johnny" or in more modern English "a brasshat", or a V(ery) I(mportant) P(erson); the noun *oom* or *ome* is, as far as I know, never used in the sense of "somebody important". Similarly, *een kale jakhals* lit. "a bald jackal" i.e. a "beggarly fellow", the name of the animal being never employed for "shabby people" or for "fellow" in general; *een oude sok* "an old buffer" (*sok* means "sock"); the alliterative *een brave borst* is "a brave lad" i.e. "a good boy", the unqualified word *borst* for "youth" being as good as obsolete. Rumours spread *als een lopend vuurtje*, i.e. "like wild-fire or like lightning", never *als een vuurtje*. An instance such as *de rode haan* lit. "the red cock", i.e. fire (*de rode haan op het dak zetten*: "to set fire on a house") is self-evident. In colloquial language the single name of the vegetable is, in contradistinction to *een rare snijboon*, lit. "a queer French bean" i.e. "a queer

chap" is as far as I know, only seldom applied to persons. The alliterative *een brutale bliksem* lit. "an impertinent lightning" and *een arme bliksem* "a poor lightning" are standard expressions for "a very impudent fellow" and "a poor devil". The term *snoeshaan* is in colloquial Dutch rarely used without one of the adjectives *vreemd* and *raar*, *een vreemde snoeshaan* meaning "a foreign chap", *een rare snoeshaan* "a queer customer, an odd fish". A similar expression is *een olijke snaak* lit. "a sly or roguish wag". One never promises mountains, nor do Dutchmen promise *bergen*, but *gouden bergen beloven* is a well-known expression "to promise mountains of gold". The only kind of gloves with which persons may be handled are kid or velvet gloves: *met fluwelen handschoenen aanpakken*. Among the vulgar expressions which exclusively occur in this form, the noun by itself being unusual, is *flauwe kul* "twaddle".

To this class belong a number of Christian names which, accompanied by fixed epithets, are more or less frequently used to characterize men or women, boys or girls or rather to indicate that they belong to a particular type. The names and epithets are hardly ever interchangeable. Thus *een saaie* (or also *stijve*) *Piet* "a dull Peter" means "a dry stick, a bore";³² *een brave Hendrik* "a honest Henry": "a smug, a paragon of virtue"; *een vrolijke Frans* "a merry Francis": "a jolly dog, a gay spark"; *een houten Klaas* "a wooden Nicholas": "a numb hand, a stick"; the combination *stijve Klaas* is less frequent; *een dolle Dries* lit. "a foolhardy Andrew": "a dare-devil"; *een nieuwsgierig Aagje* "an inquisitive Aggie": "Miss Curiosity" or "Miss Inquisitive"; *een vlijtig Liesje* "a diligent Lizzy": "an industrious girl"; *een bijdehande Ka* "a quick-witted Kate": "a quick-witted woman, a be all there". Instead of 'like one mad' or similar expressions the Dutch often use the expression *als een razende Roeland*. The Dutch equivalent of "Goodman Bones" is *Magere Hein*, which literally means "lean Harry".³³ There are, of course, English

³² Besides, we find: *malle Piet*; *hoge Piet* (= *hoge ome*).

³³ Some of these expressions go back to titles of books or personages in popular dramas. As my colleague, Dr. C. B. van Haeringen, professor of Dutch language, Utrecht University, kindly informs me, *Nieuwsgierig Aagje* is borrowed from a low comedy by A. Bormeester, 't Nieuwsgierig Aagje (1679); *Vrolijke Frans* seems to originate in the title of a book by an anonymous author, 't Kluchtige leven van Vrolijke Fransje (1643); *De brave Hendrik* was the title of a very frequently reprinted moralizing reading-book for schools (sixtieth and last edition in 1877). The origin of other expressions of the same type cannot however be traced back to similar sources. Thus *Houten Klaas* occurs already in the works of Cats (XVIIth century), but has not been invented by this poet. Nor does the alliterative *Gierige Gerrit* "Avaricious Gerard" seem to be a phrase of Bredero's making (XVIIth century), although he knows the synonymous *Gierige Geraart* (with popular etymology: *Geraart* ~ *be-ger-en* "to want, covet"). For *Ongelovige Thomas*, *Doubting Thomas* see N.T. Ev. Joh. 20, 25.

counterparts: *Meddlesome Matty*; *Smart Alec*; cf. also *Nosey Parker*.

Some phrases have a fixed place in the vocabulary of irony. In order to disapprove of a person's manners one may use the ironical expression *nette manieren* i.e. "refined manners"; thus *een mooie boel* lit. "a precious mess" means "a pretty kettle of fish, a precious mess"; *een fraai heer*, lit. "a pretty gentleman" stands for "a nice specimen".

Certain adjectives are almost, or completely, unusual outside such a fixed combination: *op de begane grond* lit. "on trodden ground", i.e. "on the ground-floor".

Often it is hardly possible to replace a traditional syntagma by a homonymous expression. If we want to say that somebody learns or hears a message or a piece of news *met gemengde gevoelens*, "with mixed feelings", we might, theoretically, imagine that we could have recourse to other expressions, but in practice it is always the cliché to which we resort. Stereotyped phrases are also *zalig uiteinde* "blessed last hours of the year" – a cliché even among Dutch Protestants who do not like their Roman Catholic compatriots use the word *zalig* in other blessings –; *ons dagelijks brood* "our daily bread"; *een bonte menigte* "a motley crowd".

Moreover, there are stereotyped phrases of a special sense which are not directly intelligible from the meanings of the components: *een blauwe Maandag* lit. "a blue Monday", i.e. "a very short time". "Our Lady" is in Dutch always *Onze Lieve Vrouwe*, lit. "Our dear Lady".

Some of these idiomatic word groups are used only as a part of a larger expression: *bekend als de bonte hond*, lit. "known as the spotted dog", i.e. "be known all over the place". If the word *varken* "pig" is, in Dutch, to qualify a sluggard the adjective *lui* "lazy" is, as far as I know, obligatory: *lui varken* "lazy pig"; otherwise the name of the animal rather suggests dirtiness.

It may further be observed that in many, and perhaps – so to say – in all languages stereotyped syntagmata are current to such an extent that they form unities: in Dutch *gezond verstand*, lit. "sound mind or sense", i.e. the English *common sense* or *natural good sense*.

A few special lines may be devoted to those epithets which from the point of view of morphological analysis are compounds. We would be greatly mistaken if under the impression of the famous Homeric *διοτρεφής* "fostered by Zeus", *ποδάρκης* "succouring with the foot, swift-footed", *ροδόδακτυλος* "rosy-fingered" or more exactly "whose fingers are like

In other cases, e.g. the phrases with *Piet*, the speech-making community seems to have added one or more epithets to a very common Christian name.

roses”, or of R̥gvedic compounds such as 1, 172, 1 *ahibhānu*- “glittering like serpents”, *mayūraroman*- “peacock-haired”, or *bhāsāketu*- “perceivable through light”³⁴ we were to regard these words whenever and wherever they occur integrally as products of poetic inventiveness. It may be true that colloquial speech and familiar conversation largely prefer simple adjectives, such pithy attributes as *godvergeten* (*ellendeling*, *kwajongen* etc.), “God-forsaken” (“villain, urchin”) are too well known to be in need of much comment. Similar ‘intensive’ combinations are *hooglopende ruzie* “flaming (lit. running high) quarrel”, *vastgeroeste gewoonten* “deep-seated (lit. rusted up) habits”; *ingekankerde haat* “deep-rooted (lit. festered) hate”; *onweerlegbaar bewijs* “irrefutable demonstration”; *met pijlsnelle* or *bliksemsnelle vaart* “as quick as an arrow, as lightning”; *oorverscheurend gekrijs* “ear-piercing screeching”; *ongelikte beer* “unlicked cub”; *dienstwillige dienaar* (alliteration) “obedient or eager servant”.

Composition is indeed an effective means of enhancing the force and expressive value of an epithet. In ancient Frisian laws the night is called “mist-dark” and the coldest season of the year “distress-cold”, gold: “fire-red”. It is clear that the idea expressed by these adjectives is considerably extended and intensified: “mist-dark” adds an essential feature of darkness as it is known to the inhabitants of the low Frisian countries on the North Sea; “distress-cold” (*notkalt*) evokes the many evils and miseries of the long winter. These epithets often imply similes: “fire-red” means “as red as fire”.³⁵

It may in this connection be permitted to make a digression on the history of the bahuvrīhi compounds,³⁶ which are very compressed linguistic devices to express the functional interdependence of several ideas, their implied syntax connoting a great variety of syntactical relations. Neither the theory about the origin of this important class of words developed, about 60 years ago, by Jacobi³⁷ – according to whom they originated in primitive subordinate sentences, being “versteinerte beziehungswortlose Nebensätze mit dem Begriff des Besitzes”³⁸ – nor the still older explication as ‘mutierte karmadhārayakomposita’ given by L. von Schroeder³⁹ and Brugmann⁴⁰ – have carried complete conviction.

³⁴ See also L. Renou, *Histoire de la langue sanskrite* (Lyon, 1956), p. 17.

³⁵ The relations between these epithets and similes in the proper sense of the term will be commented upon in the second part of this volume.

³⁶ For a rapid survey of the relevant literature see W. Henzen, *Deutsche Wortbildung* (Halle/S., 1947), p. 90 f.

³⁷ H. Jacobi, *Compositum und Nebensatz* (Bonn, 1897), p. 83 ff.

³⁸ Cf. also J. Wackernagel, *Altindische Grammatik*, II, 1 (Göttingen, 1905), p. 288 ff.

³⁹ L. von Schroeder, *K.Z.*, 24 (1879), p. 102.

Important remarks were made by W. Petersen⁴¹ who drew attention to the great influence of name-giving. This class of compounds, he argued, must have been due to a widespread tendency to use appellatives denoting a person or an object after a conspicuous characteristic, as proper names. It is beyond doubt that not only simple nouns, such as *nose* (in Dutch *de neus* may mean: the man characterized by a remarkably big or otherwise conspicuous nose), *cuckoo*, *bald* (*Charles the Bald*), or abstracts such as *Joy* or *Irene* came to be used as names of persons, but also complex expressions such as, in Russian, *Marja Krasa čornaja kosa* "Marja Krasa black hair"; in French, *des yeux tabac d'Espagne*; in German, *Kehrwieder* (name of an inn); in Dutch, the nickname *Grijpgraag* lit. "eager to catch".

It is anyhow worth noticing that a considerable part of the ancient bahuvrihi compounds express, in Greek⁴² and elsewhere, striking or characteristic qualities of gods, men and animals, in Homer also of ships, weapons and other much-used and important objects. Many of them were used as more or less fixed epithets. The second member of these compounds usually was the name of a limb, a weapon, garment etc.: αἰολοθώραξ "with gleaming breastplate"; καλλίκομος "beautiful-haired". Many other ancient bahuvrihis denote psychical or intellectual qualities such as πολύμητις "of many resourceful thoughts"; κρατερόφρων "stout-hearted". In other cases the second member refers to material and valuable property: πολύιππος "rich in horses"; πολύχρυσος "rich in gold"; εὐμηλος "rich in sheep". Other bahuvrihis, again, express a comparison: μελιδής "honey-sweet"; ῥοδοδάκτυλος "with fingers like roses". Not all of them are usually applied to human beings: εὐπρῦμνος "with goodly stern"; δολιχόσκιος "casting a long shadow". Many bahuvrihis are, already in the earliest documents, proper names: Εὐίππος "well-supplied with horses, delighting in horses"; Κύκλωψ "round-eyed"; Λυκόφρων "wolf-minded"; Εὐβοία "well-supplied with cows".⁴³ Vedic bahuvrihis very often express parallel ideas, such words as *ugrabāhu-* "one whose arms are powerful"; *ugradhanvan-* "one whose bow is power-

⁴⁰ K. Brugmann, *Grundriss der vergl. Grammatik der indogerm. Sprachen*, II (Strassburg, 1892), p. 87 f.

⁴¹ W. Petersen, *I. F.*, 34, p. 254 ff.

⁴² For a survey of the main relevant facts see E. Risch, *Wortbildung der homerischen Sprache* (Berlin, 1937), p. 167.

⁴³ For other instances also from other ancient Indo-European languages see e.g. Brugmann, *Grundriss*², II, 1 (Strassburg, 1906), p. 117 ff.; F. Solmsen, *Indogermanische Eigennamen als Spiegel der Kulturgeschichte* (Heidelberg, 1922); F. Bechtel, *Die griechischen Personennamen* (Göttingen, 1894); the same, *Namenstudien* (Halle, 1917); W. Schulze, *Zur Geschichte der lateinischen Eigennamen* (Göttingen, 1904); J. A. van Velze, *Names of persons in early Sanskrit literature*, Thesis Utrecht, 1938.

ful”; *dīrghaśravas*- “renowned far and wide”; *bahupraja*- “with a numerous progeny”; *purudāṃsas*- “abounding in marvellous deeds”; *śukra-vāsas*- “bright-robed”. Such names as *Suśravas*- “famous” closely correspond to the Avestan *Haosravah*- and Gr. Εὐκλής. In Celtic, which has, generally speaking, preserved the original types of nominal composition very well, characterizing bahuvrīhis are of considerable frequency: thus we find in ancient Irish texts: *cruaid-chend* “hard-head” i.e. “with a hard head”; *coel-chos* “slender-leg”; in Gallic the proper name *Dubnotalus* “with a low forehead”, etc. etc.⁴⁴ The German names of the type *Kuonrat*; *Chlodwig* etc. are too well known to need comment.⁴⁵ Such translations as “white-armed” for λευκώλενος or “rosy-fingered” for ῥοδοδάκτυλος are indeed apt to lead us astray, not to speak of the literal translation of the otherwise correct and useful Indian explication bahuvrīhi- means “whose rice is much” (*vrīhir bahur yasya sah*). In our own ancient tales and stories we encounter a (Dutch) *Blauwbaard* or *Bluebeard*, a *Roodkapje* or “Little Red Riding-hood”, a *Daddy-long-legs*, and in our own history a *Richard Lionheart*. In Old High German *langmuot* expressed the sense of the later *langmütig*; and the German *barfusz* still exists to convey the idea expressed in English by “barefooted”. Thus *Adelheit* was a woman “of noble nature”, and *Hartmut* a man “of steady mind”. We had therefore better speak of Hera “white-arm”, of Poseidon “Dark-hair” (κυανοχαίτης), just like *Daddy-long-legs*, and (in Dutch) *Jan Krom-poot* “Crooked-legs” in our own languages; just like *hook-nose* which means “a hook-nosed person”.

Since names of persons and other concreta are very often derived from characteristics concerning only part of them, that is to say that human beings are often called after notable bodily or psychical features⁴⁶ – beards, noses, hair, legs, mind and intellect providing an abundance of striking peculiarities arousing the interest and exciting the inventiveness of fellow-men – the origin of such names as Gr. Λέπτος “thin, fine, delicate”; Μίτος “thread”; Σῆμος “Flat-nose”; Πύρρος “red-haired”; the Dutch nickname *Buikje* “Tummy” is easily intelligible. In addition to these *Poincaré la guerre* and *Marschall Vorwärts* may be quoted to illustrate the tendency to derive names from qualities of character and typical utterances of those concerned. What interests us most is that compounds or complex

⁴⁴ See H. Pedersen, *Vergl. Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen*, II (Göttingen, 1913), p. 1; 4 f.

⁴⁵ Cf. also E. Fabian, *Das exozentrische Kompositum im Deutschen*, Thesis Greifswald, 1931; W. Last, *Das Bahuvrīhi-Compositum* (Greifswald, 1925).

⁴⁶ The question as to how far at least part of these names were nicknames before becoming regular proper names may be left out of consideration here.

phrases may be used in the same way. German proper names such as *Pfeffersack*, *Sauerteig*, *Eisenhart*, *Breitkopf* may in this respect be put on a par with such well-known animals' nicknames – part of which may originally have been tabu substitutes⁴⁷ – as *langbeen* “long-shanks”, i.e. “stork”; and terms of abuse of the type Dutch *schaapskop* “mutton-head”; *melkmuil* “milksop”. In French the type *un visage gendarme* and the above-quoted *des yeux tabac d'Espagne* run parallel, just like *un manteau cerise* and *des cheveux poivre-et-sel* or the Rhaeto-Romanic *iⁿ p^arsun^a be^e tēm^as* “a person only fears” i.e. “a person who is always afraid”.⁴⁸ In all those cases the supposition does not seem too bold that simple nouns or phrases which ‘originally’⁴⁹ were substantives, were as appositions added to nouns or names or used instead of names and in the course of time developed into adjectives or proper names. The omission of a pause between noun and apposition and a shift of the word accent often are essential factors in this process,⁵⁰ which was mainly induced by the commonly human inclination to notice and to express the distinguishing features of his fellow-creatures and of many objects around himself.

Thus the predilection for epithets – to which we have to revert – is no doubt a question of ‘Elementarverwandtschaft’⁵¹ and a ‘primitive’ trait in early poetry, which it shares with popular or archaic epics, ballads and similar genres of literature.⁵² In the Russian epics simple adjectives are attached to certain characters. The Tale of Igor’s Raid, composed in 1187, speaks of “grey wolves”, “black ravens”, “green grass” and “valiant retinue”. These noun-adjective combinations are not quite fixed or constant, but very favourite and part of them – for instance those which ancient Russian and Yugoslav poems have in common – may be old and derive from a common ancestry. In the ancient French Song of Roland, Charles is *l’emperere magne*, France is always *France dulce*, and Oliver’s sister is *Aude au vis cler*. In the Tibetan ‘epic’ of Gesar epithets, qualifying as well as replacing a noun, are likewise very frequent, the bee being named after its six legs, thunder after its noise “the drum of the

⁴⁷ See e.g. A. J. Portengen, *De Oud-Germaanse dichtertaal in haar ethnologisch verband*, Thesis Leiden, 1915.

⁴⁸ See W. Havers, *Handbuch der erklärenden Syntax* (Heidelberg, 1931), p. 23.

⁴⁹ I.e. before analogy made its influence felt.

⁵⁰ Cf. also O. Behaghel, *Deutsche Syntax* (Heidelberg, 1923), I, p. 2 ff. The real apposition often emphasizes the uniqueness or ‘Einzelartigkeit’ of the idea expressed by the noun: Gott, der Allmächtige, God Almighty. Cf. also R. Otto, *Das Gefühl des Überweltlichen* (München, 1932), p. 137.

⁵¹ Cf. e.g. Havers, *o.c.*, p. 8; 210 ff. and passim.

⁵² See e.g. C. M. Bowra, *Tradition and design in the Iliad* (Oxford, 1930), p. 81; the same, *Heroic poetry*, p. 223 f.

summer”; the weasel is “the enemy of the rats”, the cloud “the container of water”.⁵³ There clearly is a simple pleasure in attaching an epithet to a name also when there is no need to distinguish one person from another. Early history and literature abound in combinations such as Richard ‘coeur de lion’, “Sadko the merchant, the rich stranger”, “fair Miroč mountains”, “mighty Philip the Magyar”.

In popular poetry as well as in daily speech this remarkable predilection for more or less fixed epithets is one of the ‘formulaic elements’ in which naive and popular usage abounds. Sets of words used, with little or no change, whenever the situation with which they deal occurs are an ancient possession of many communities. They meet the almost generally felt wish to be graphical, to avoid single substantives which, denoting classes and genera, often are vague or abstract; they afford the speaker an opportunity to typify and to classify, to throw a sidelight on one of the most interesting aspects of the person or object described, to distinguish them from other people or things belonging to the same class; they are a means of expressing praise, derision or appreciation and a device for giving vent to phantasy or emotions; they may become a deposit of traditional opinions and estimations, more or less thoughtlessly to be reproduced by the younger generations; and as such they often are an element of economy, condensations of more complex ideas, schematic expressions of truths and relations. Often they tend to coalesce to such a degree that one member of the formula almost automatically calls up the other. Thus the frequent tendency to use graphic, emotive, concrete and characteristic adjectives as epithets is closely related to the striking preference for typical scenes, which led the ancient narrators to describe the same happenings over and over again by the same words or lines, to dwell on descriptions of persons and their characters, on arrivals and departures, scenes of dressing, arming or fighting, feasts and entertainments as often as the occasion arises.⁵⁴ There often is, in popular poetry, a conventional uniformity in the use of epithets. As in European epic ballads the principal actors in the popular poetical compositions of, for instance, Baluchistan have their own proper appellations such as “the gold scattering one”, “bitter in reply”; a father is generally spoken of as “venerable”, sons are called “young” or “beloved”; horses bear epithets such as “swift”, “spirited” or “slender chestnut” (the latter term indicating

⁵³ See R. A. Stein, *L'épopée tibétaine de Gesar* (Paris, 1956), p. 390 ff.

⁵⁴ See e.g. Bowra, *Heroic poetry*, ch. V; W. Arend, *Die typischen Scenen bei Homer* (Berlin, 1933), p.127 ff.; M. Lüthi, *Das europäische Volksmärchen* (Bern, 1947), p 59 ff.

the colour); a man's beard is always "a curly beard", enemies are constantly "bitter". Whereas warriors of their own camp are known as "valiant", those belonging to other peoples are scornfully associated with little feet: "short-footed", "little-feet" and similar defects.⁵⁵ These phrases are *mutatis mutandis* counterparts of *the noble king Arthur, the anoynted king, the comely king, the bold barons and rich merchants* of the ancient English ballads,⁵⁶ and of the *fair and merry England, the forests fresh and gay* in the same class of literature. In a considerable number of cases a reference to the prolixity and circumstantiality liked by 'primitive' speakers in general may make for an explication of the frequency of these formulas. Like repetitions for the sake of clearness, 'epexegetic' additions and corrections, examples, similes, clichés, proverbial sayings and similar devices, standing phrases may to a considerable degree satisfy the preference of the common people for a slow progress of the narrative.⁵⁷ They may become so common and so thoughtlessly reproduced as to join the noun to which they belong almost inseparably: in ancient English ballads it was possible to refer to a *false true-love*, in the sense of a *false love*, the combination *true love* (or rather *true-love*) being of the utmost frequency.⁵⁸ In the German Tannhäuserlied st. 26 runs as follows: *O Venus, edle Jungfrau zart, Ihr seid ein Teufelinne*.

In order to show that the occurrence of word groups consisting of a noun and an often fixed epithet is however far from being an exclusively poetical device some examples may be quoted from ancient Frisian laws which are rich in various stylistic procedures. In three cases of need a mother may sell the patrimony of an infant: "... Die zweite Not ist die: wenn schlimme Jahre kommen und der *heisze Hunger* über das Land fährt. ... Die dritte Not ist die: wo das Kind ist stocknackt oder hauslos, und dann die *nebeldüstere Nacht* und der *notkalte Winter* über die Zäune steigt."⁵⁹ "Bildlichkeit und Formelhaftigkeit des Ausdrucks vereinigen sich in dem s.g. Epitheton ornans, dem schmückenden Beiwort. ... Zu bestimmten, vielgebrauchten Substantiven tritt stets ein ganz festes Adjektivum hinzu, das entweder eine Farbe, oder sonst eine für Auge,

⁵⁵ Cf. M. Longworth Dames, *Popular poetry of the Baloches*, II (London, 1907), p. 187 ff.

⁵⁶ See: M. C. Borregaard, *The epithet in English and Scottish, Spanish and Danish popular ballads*, Thesis Amsterdam, 1933, p. 21 ff.; 6 ff.

⁵⁷ See e.g. Wunderlich, *Unsere Umgangssprache*, p. 122 ff.; W. Havers, *o. c.*, p. 119; 169; 175; J. Gonda, *Remarks on similes in Sanskrit literature* (Leiden, 1949), p. 25. For redundancies in general see e.g. also F. A. Stoett, *Middelnederlandsche Spraakkunst*³ ('s-Gravenhage, 1923), p. 248 f.

⁵⁸ Borregaard, p. 27.

⁵⁹ See C. Borchling, *Poesie und Humor im friesischen Recht* (Aurich, 1908), p. 43 f.

Ohr oder andere Sinne auffallende Eigenschaft des Gegenstandes bezeichnet. Das *rote Gold*, das *weisze Silber*, der *grüne Rasen*, die *salzige See*, die *düstere Nacht*, das *kalte Eisen*, der *heisse Hunger* und die *glühende Glut* sind einige der auch im Friesischen häufigst vorkommenden. Auf dem *grünen Anger* (in valle viridi) heisst die alte Gerichtstätte ... bei Franeker. ... *Leuchtendes Gold* und *vierfüsziges Vieh* bringt die Frau mit in die Ehe. ... *Vierfache Bezahlung* bietet der Totschläger an mit dem *roten Golde*, mit dem *weisen Silber*, mit dem *grünen Erbe* (Landbesitz) und mit dem *zugeschnittenen Tuche*". "Der Hunger heisst der *heisse*, aber auch der *scharfe*, wie das Schwert und das Rad, das den Missetäter zermalmt."⁶⁰

We need not dwell on the a priori evident fact that the epoch and the nationality of the poet, the character of his work, the literary genre⁶¹ to which it belongs, his individual predilections and social and geographical surroundings are among the factors which may determine his choice of more or less fixed attributes. Differences in climatic conditions are for instance reflected in the choice of the times of the year at which events occur: in English ballads harvest time and the *merry month of May* are often mentioned as such. In Denmark the sun was particularly appreciated. Danish and English ballads breath a love of nature which is absent in Spanish popular poetry.⁶² Whereas English diction has for centuries been influenced by words pertaining to mercantile life, the sea, and athletic sports, the Veda "smells of the cow-pen and the byre".⁶³ Even in comparatively ancient times and under rather homogeneous and undifferentiated civilizations individual poets may show an evident preference for a special type of epithet.⁶⁴ Even then a poet may pass by some of the usual sources of literary devices – for instance the *copia verborum* of his predecessors – and draw on the resources of popular usage and his own faculties of imitation and imagination. Authors dealing with special subjects or interested in a single thema may on the other hand be easily

⁶⁰ Borchling, *o. c.*, p. 21 f.

⁶¹ For pathetic epithets, e.g. in the works of Schiller (e.g. in the 'Taucher': *Schwarz wimmelten da, in grausem Gemisch, / zu scheuszlichen Klumpen geballt, / der stachlichte Roche, der Klippenfisch, / des Hammers greuliche Ungestalt* ...) see Elster, *o. c.*, II, p. 164; other poets prefer lyrical, humoristic or other characterizations.

⁶² See Borregaard, p. 124 ff.

⁶³ Ch. R. Lanman, "Sanskrit diction as affected by the interests of herdsman, priest, and gambler", *J. Am. Or. Soc.*, 20 (1899), p. 12; "die Beiwörter des charakterisierenden Stils werden die Eigenart der Lebenserscheinungen in scharfen Beleuchtung rücken" (Elster, *o. c.*, II, p. 163).

⁶⁴ Compare e.g. P. R. Pope, *Die Anwendung der Epitheta im Tristan Gottfried's von Strassburg*, Thesis Leipzig, 1903; cf. especially p. 54.

inclined to use the traditional attributes proper to their particular vocabulary.⁶⁵

Epithets may render a speaker or author yeoman service in expressing a certain emotional value or bringing those characteristics to the front which in his eyes are most important. Many poets have evinced special predilection for certain descriptive adjectives. Hartmann von Aue for instance reserved the word *schoene* "handsome" – which was, in the German Middle Ages, of frequent application – exclusively for his favourite figure *Enite*; *junc* and *der junge man* are over and over again applied to Erec whose youth is by this device emphasized and contrasted with the old age of other figures.⁶⁶ In popular tales and ballads such characterizations are far from rare. Those particulars which have arrested the attention of the narrator and his audience are brought to the fore and are often repeated; "all die fruchtbaren Momente weisz das Volk mit feiner Witterung herauszugreifen, die sich für starke Gefühlswirkungen eignen. Konkrete Handlungen aber, vor allem neu auftretende Figuren und Gegenstände werden grell beleuchtet, auftretende Personen werden nach ihrer äusseren Erscheinung charakterisiert, auch wo nicht darauf ankommt."⁶⁷ The epithets are, in this way, a great help in expressing appreciation. This rôle of adjectives in daily life, even if they are of a wide application, is too well known to be in need of a long comment: *a nice cup of tea; he got himself into a nasty mess*. It largely depends on the social and cultural milieu of the speaker which epithets, or what type of them are preferred or favoured. Those characterizations which do not suit the view of life or the ideals of the circles to which the poet and his audience belong are avoided, those which are in accordance with the spirit of the age or the standards accepted or conceptions aspired to in the milieu of the author decidedly favoured. The German adjective *küene* which had been of frequent application at an earlier period fell into disuse in the 'höfische' epics;⁶⁸ other words which point not only to social esteem, but also to moral nobility were retained or preferred.

There is no reason for doubting the veracity of the statement that a too lavish supply of epithets is apt to become tedious: *ces belles paupières turques, ce regard limpide et profond, cette chaude couleur d'ambre pâle, ces longs cheveux noirs, lustrés, ce nez d'une coupe fine et fière ...* (Th.

⁶⁵ Cf. e.g. Salzer, *Die Sinnbilder und Beiworte Mariens* (see above).

⁶⁶ See A. van der Lee, *Der Stil von Hartmanns Erec*, Thesis Utrecht, 1950, p. 57 ff.

⁶⁷ Petsch, *l. c.*

⁶⁸ See O. Jaenicke, *De dicendi usu Wolframi de Eschenbach*, Thesis Halle/S., 1860, p. 14.

Gautier). Abused they soon become idle and superfluous. What is abuse depends, however, to a great extent, on the style and the period of writing, and above all on the function which they fulfill. If a long series of epithets helps to introduce a personage in the narrative and to delineate his character or if it emphasizes the aspects of a deity which are for the moment of the greatest importance the epithets are functional and, generally speaking, far from being mere decoration. In reflective and especially narrative works their rôle is, or may be, considerably different from the part they play in dialogues or relations of facts: the more the chorus of a Greek tragedy intervenes in the course of the drama, the less the number of epithets.

It has repeatedly been asserted that in poetry the metre, or rather the exigencies of versification, was largely promotive of the more or less redundant insertion of epithets. For some authors this even was a truism,⁶⁹ whereas others⁷⁰ attempted to show that, even in Homer, at least part of the epithets suit the context more or less felicitously. Here also we should not weave all pieces on the same loom, and form an idea of the methods used by the author in composing his work, the devices and techniques applied in writing or narrating, the style and character of the composition, etc. etc., and above all of the function of the epithets before entering into a discussion of a particular device. It is now, thanks to the important studies of Sir Maurice Bowra,⁷¹ Milman Parry⁷² and others, perfectly clear that oral heroic poetry which was to a large extent the fruits of improvisation could hardly exist without formulae, that is to say without sets of words which are used, with little or no change, whenever the situation with which it deals occurs. Among the formulae noun-adjective combinations – thus the “black ravens”, “open plain”, “damp mother earth” of the ancient Slavonic bards, the “good horse”, “mighty thunder”, “black mother night” of the Yakuts – are of outstanding interest. Being an ancient possession of the bards of a great variety of peoples they have a special character because in them the epithet, being formulaic, fulfills, generally speaking, no very obvious function so far as

⁶⁹ See e.g. K. H. Meyer, *o.c.*, p. 3.

⁷⁰ E.g. C. Franke, *De nominum propriorum epithetis homericis*, Thesis Greifswald, 1887; cf. also P. Cauer, *Grundfragen der Homerkritik*² (Leipzig, 1909), p. 403.

⁷¹ Bowra, *Heroic poetry*, esp. ch. VI.

⁷² M. Parry, *L'épithète traditionnelle dans Homère* (Paris, 1928); *Les formules et la métrique d'Homère* (Paris, 1928); “Studies in the epic technique of oral verse-making, I: Homer and Homeric Style”, in *Harvard Studies in Class. Philol.*, 41 (1930), p. 73 ff.; “II: The Homeric language as the language of an oral poetry”, *ibid.*, 43 (1932), p. 1–50.

the narrative is concerned. In this they differ from formulae which consist of repeated phrases, parts of lines or complete lines which are necessary to the narrative. The main task of the noun-adjective combinations is to make it easier for the poet to compose as well as for the audience to listen.⁷³

Homer's epithets however, are more than useful and traditional, they are also highly felicitous and often unsurpassed in imaginativeness, or to speak with Bowra,⁷⁴ illuminating and delightfully decorative. Yet, as Milman Parry⁷⁵ has shown, they are to a large extent determined by the needs of versification, especially by the place which the formula has to take in the verse. "The noun has a metrical value which allows little change, but by adding to it an ornamental epithet one can make a phrase of the needed length which, since the epithet has no bearing on the idea of the sentence, can be used as freely as the simple noun".⁷⁶ The same scholar showed that, unless the language itself stood in the way, 'Homer' had a noun-epithet formula to meet every regularly recurring need, and that there usually is, curiously enough, only one such formula. Other scholars had already drawn attention to the importance of the phonetic character of the words concerned. Thus *μενεχάρμης* accompanies, in the Iliad, the proper names *Ἀντίλοχος*, *Ἰππόλοχος*, and *Ἰππόνοος* which whilst being of the same rhythm have one of their constituents in common.⁷⁷

Yet Parry's theory has not remained uncontradicted. In a very meritorious thesis which unfortunately has not been printed, Miss Wilgundis Hinterlechner⁷⁸ argues that the main – and so far as we know

⁷³ See also Bowra, *o.c.*, p. 231.

⁷⁴ Bowra, *o.c.*, p. 234.

⁷⁵ Before Parry, H. Düntzer, *Homerische Abhandlungen* (Leipzig, 1872), p. 539, had already made some observations to the same effect, inter alia: "eine grosse metrische Bequemlichkeit liegt schon allein darin, dasz der Dichter nach Belieben einem Worte ein solches (Epithet) geben kann oder nicht, ohne dasz der Sinn dabei betheiligt wäre".

⁷⁶ Parry, *Harv. Stud. in Class. Phil.*, 41, p. 73.

⁷⁷ For other examples see K. H. Meyer, *o.c.*, p. 4.

⁷⁸ W. Hinterlechner, *Typische und untypische Verwendung homerischer Epitheta*, Thesis Wien, 1953 (type-script). Some other names might find a place here. J. T. Sheppard, "Zeus-loved Achilles", *Journ. of Hellenic Studies*, 55 (1935), p. 113 ff. made an attempt to show that the distribution of the epithets in Homer had also an aesthetical function: for the understanding of the Greek epic it is, he holds, "most important that such formulae are often used as part of an ascending or descending series, in a pattern which by repetition, or variation, and accumulation emphasizes the plain meaning of the words". For other criticism see e.g. J. Defradas, "Epithètes homériques à valeur religieuse", *Revue de philologie*, 29 (1955), p. 206 ff., who shows that there are, in Homer, epithets which were not, or not merely, inserted for the sake of metrical convenience. Cf. also A. Severyns, *Le poète et son oeuvre* (Bruxelles, 1946), p. 50 ff. who ingeniously argues that the existence of fixed formulas means that the poets were not given full

oldest – function of many true epic epithets was a distinctive one: they served, first and foremost, to distinguish definite persons or objects from similar entities, referring to their characteristic features and properties. In the course of time adjective and substantive came to fuse into a unit, a formula with a more or less fixed and traditional meaning. But, owing to the poets' genius these phrases often are excellent means of marking the distinguishing features of the person or object described and not rarely the effect of a passage largely depends on the choice of the epithet. The nature and the function of the Homeric epithets are especially apparent from a critical and unbiassed study of those accompanying names of gods. A large part of the many relevant passages show an inextricable amalgamation of characterizing force, justified and functional use in the given context and adjustment to the requirements of versification. The view expressed some sixty years ago by P. Cauer⁷⁹ that not rarely an epithet which started its life in perfect harmony with its surroundings was transferred to a passage in which it did not fit, and that a frequent use in a variety of contexts blunted its original freshness and suitability is, it is true, always worth remembering. There are in Homer petrified and purely traditional epithets, but in most cases this class of words is in perfect, and often even in wonderful harmony with the situation, the characteristics of which are felt and interpreted with unparalleled delicacy and sensitivity. It is for instance perfectly right that Hector should be called *χορυθαλλος* just before he takes his small son in his arms and frightens him with his horsehair plume.

But, it may be true that the Homeric epithets justified themselves by their beauty, they, too, served another purpose, which they have in common with all archaic and 'semi-primitive' oral compositions that abound in formulaic elements. Formulae and repetitions, epithets and other devices which from the intellectual point of view may seem re-

scope in choosing the terms they liked. See also Bergson, *L'épithète ornementale...* (see n. 3), p. 19 ff. who is right in observing that Parry "tire, des faits qu'il a bien établis, des conclusions par trop rigoureuses". A la fin de sa thèse il (P.) résume, en quelques points, les caractères d'une épithète fixe: 1. Les épithètes fixes sont employées d'après leur valeur métrique et non d'après leur signification; 2. elles sont traditionnelles; 3. elles sont toujours ornementales; 4. elles sont souvent génériques... A la première des quatre affirmations de Parry, il faut objecter qu'il existe ... dans Homère des épithètes fixes qui sont employées ... pour le sens dont elles sont porteuses. ... Le troisième point du résumé de Parry est évidemment infirmé en même temps que le premier".

⁷⁹ Cauer, *Grundfragen der Homerkritik*, p. 269 f. See also E. Drerup, *Homerische Poetik*, I (Würzburg, 1921), p. 461; O. Kretschmar, "Beiträge zur Charakteristik des homerischen Odysseus", *Prog. Neunkirchen* (Trier), 1903.

dundancies are indispensable to the improvising minstrel, for whom the simultaneous task of narration and composition would be too difficult without these points of support which help him to surmount almost any difficulty. But formulae are, as already observed, also helpful to the listeners. "Just as the bard rests himself for a fragment of a second while he uses a noun-adjective combination, so too the audience on hearing it can also ease its attention, since the phrase is familiar and demands no effort of comprehension."⁸⁰ Besides, most formulae are traditional and familiar, and these qualities make the audience – conservative in their tastes as 'primitives' generally are – feel at home and know in what world of imagination it is moving. The listeners expect them and like them, and even need them if they are to respond fully to what the bard says". Easing their attention they help to give the narrative that looseness of texture which saves its hearers from too much concentration. The Homeric epithets, beautiful as they are, are as a rule also quite appropriate from this point of view.

Another point of interest – which does not appear to have received too much attention – concerns the use of epithets in religious texts. It is true that they are of considerable use in attempting to get an insight into the character of a divine person. Very often they do not denote an accidental or self-evident quality of a god, but one of his essential characteristics, one of his 'cardinal virtues'. The comment made upon the frequent use of epithets in the well-known handbook of Vedic Mythology by Macdonell⁸¹ is, however, as a rule far from exhaustive: "his (Indra's) liberality is so characteristic that the very frequent attribute *maghavan-* "bountiful" is almost entirely monopolized by him in the *R̥gveda*"; in a passage on Indra's weapon, the *vajra-* which is exclusively appropriate to this god, the additional remark is made⁸² that epithets derived from or compounded with *vajra-* are almost entirely limited to Indra; in dwelling upon the strength and power of the same divinity⁸³ the author enumerates a large number of epithets, such as *śakra-* "mighty", *śacīvat-* "possessed of might", adding the number of their occurrences and their more or less sporadic applications to other gods, but he leaves his readers in the dark with regard to the contexts in which these words are used, their religious

⁸⁰ Bowra, *Heroic poetry*, p. 231.

⁸¹ A. H. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1897), p. 63. For a systematic survey of the epithets applied to *Vṛtra* and describing the demon's character see L. Renou in E. Benveniste et L. Renou, *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna* (Paris, 1934), p. 157 ff. See also K. R. Potdar, *Sacrifice in the R̥gveda* (Bombay, 1957), *passim*.

⁸² *Ibidem*, p. 55.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, p. 58.

implications, their special function from the point of view of the student of ancient religious documents and sources of cultural history.⁸⁴

Hymns, litanies, prayers, exorcisms, and other religious compositions often abound in divine names and epithets. Far from being, as a rule, mere ornaments or useless expletives, these names and surnames fulfill very important functions. Generally speaking they are either confirmations of the poet's or speaker's belief in the god who is addressed or attempts to approach the divine power in the right way; besides, they may be exhaust-valves for an excess of emotions, or substitutes when the ordinary name of the god should be avoided.

After having stated that the idea of a god who is in some way or other personal, is not an absolutely necessary element in the structure of religion, Van der Leeuw⁸⁵ argued that "the man who must come to some understanding with a power and who therein experiences a will, attempts by every possible means to give an outline to this experience, in order to delimit it from other similar experiences; and this he does by assigning to it a Name. For the Name is no mere specification, but rather an actuality expressed in a word". It is no doubt correct to say that in the name is reflected experienced Will and experienced Power. The name and its bearer were in so-called primitive and archaic milieus widely believed to be intimately connected. The name was a sort of immanent centre of power, that expressed, and hence also determined, the very essence of its bearer and, as an attributive or quality, enabled him to perform the functions to which it referred.⁸⁶ When a god is constantly called righteous, truthful and veracious it is obvious that he also expects his worshippers to have the same qualities.

A name is for primitive and archaic man no abstraction,⁸⁷ but an essential part of the bearer's personality and there is an intimate connection

⁸⁴ Similar observations could be made with regard to the relative chapters in A. B. Keith, *The religion and philosophy of the Veda and the Upanishads* (Harvard Univ., 1925), e.g. p. 124 ff. Cf. also H. Willman-Grabowska, "Sarasvati...", *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, 17 (Kraków, 1953), p. 263. – For the names of the god Viṣṇu see the present author's *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism* (Utrecht, 1954), p. 105 ff. – Cf. also A. Eggers, *Der arische Gott Mitra*, Thesis Dorpat, 1894, p. 59 ff.

⁸⁵ G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in essence and manifestation* (London, 1938), p. 147; see e.g. also F. Schwenn, *Gebet und Opfer* (Heidelberg, 1927), p. 27 ff.; V. Larock, "Essai sur la valeur sacrée et la valeur sociale des noms de personnes dans les sociétés inférieures", *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 51 (1911), p. 29 ff., 101 ff.; G. Conteneau, *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 81 (1920), p. 316 ff.; the same, *La magie chez les Assyriens et les Babyloniens* (Paris, 1947), p. 127 ff.

⁸⁶ Cf. e.g. also E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (Leipzig-Berlin, 1913), p. 143 ff.

⁸⁷ See also my book on *Stylistic repetition in the Veda* (Amsterdam, 1959), chapter XXIV.

between this 'part' and his corporeal appearance and physical faculties. The ancient Egyptians even went so far as to regard the gods' names as their limbs;⁸⁸ or the name was believed to be hidden in the body of the bearer. "Der Name stellt das lautliche Bild von einem Menschen, einem Tier oder einem Gegenstand dar. ... Man glaubt im Lautbild ... gewissermaßen ... einen Teil des Ganzen zu besitzen."⁸⁹ Just like 'primitive' men who under changing conditions may change their names, divine powers may bear a variety of names, each of them expressing part of their personality or an aspect of their essence. Only when he knows the god's name man can enter into relations or come to some understanding with him, and – in magic – exert influence on him or even dominate him,⁹⁰ for gods and demons obey the man who knows their name, that is: their very essence. In a hymn addressed to Rudra, especially as Bhava and Śarva, AV. 11, 2, 1 it reads: *bhavāśarvau mṛdataṃ mābhi yātaṃ / bhūtapatī paśupati nāma vām* "O Bh. and Ś., be gracious; do not attack (us); ye lords of (evil) beings, lords of cattle, homage to you!": as a lord of cattle the god may be expected to protect man's most valuable possessions, as lord of the evil beings he may be able to keep his demoniac servants from annoying those praying. Mentioning the names and epithets of a mighty person is, moreover, a widespread form of praise, and praising is, as will be set forth in chapter III, strengthening. In repeating the god's epithet "lord (i.e. protector) of cattle" man helps to support the god in fulfilling that particular function, supplying him with the new 'cattle-protecting force' which is generated by the potent spoken word. Cf. e.g. RV. 5, 31, 4 *brahmāṇa indram mahāyanto arkair / avardhayann ahaye hantavā u* "the brahmans glorify Indra with eulogies, they fortified him with a view to killing the snake".

If however the name of a deity was not known, or if those praying were not sure that they knew his names correctly, they could either address him as the "unknown god", the ἄγνωστος θεός,⁹¹ or attempt to be sure of the right appellation – that is to say to approach the god in the right

⁸⁸ Cf. Van der Leeuw, *o.c.*, p. 148; H. W. Obbink, *De magische beteekenis van den naam inzonderheid in het oude Egypte*, Thesis Utrecht, 1925, chapter I.

⁸⁹ R. Thurnwald, in Ebert's *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte*, VIII, p. 432, s. v. Name. Compare also the same, *Des Menschengesistes Erwachen, Wachsen und Irren* (Berlin, 1951), p. 149 f.

⁹⁰ See also Schwenn, *Gebet und Opfer*, p. 27, and E. Arbmänn, *Rudra. Untersuchungen zum altind. Glauben und Kultus* (Uppsala, 1922), p. 167.

⁹¹ See Norden, *Agnostos Theos*², *l.c.* The Romans had special lists of divine names (indigitamenta) prescribing not only which deity was to be invoked in a particular case, but also the names with which they were pleased. See also G. Appel, *De Romanorum precationibus* (Giessen, 1909), p. 75 ff.

way, to enter into relation with that side of his personality which may help or assist the worshipper – by enumerating a long series of names, additional appellations and epithets. Then the chances become less that the god can elude the prayer.

Primitive and archaic names of the divinity often are, at least in our eyes, just as general and indeterminate as is the divinity itself. In many cases they are adjectival rather than proper names. The dark or fair, the wild or winterly and the radiant person are indeed – to quote Usener⁹² – far older pairs than Aegeus and Lycus, or even than Lycurgus and Dionysus.

With the ancient Egyptians a plurality of names was an indication of special might; the more names a man possessed the mightier he was in the eyes of his fellowmen: the king had many names, and so had the gods.⁹³ Because giving names was a creative act⁹⁴ every new name attributed to a god added something, not only to his dignity and prestige, but also to his power. Similar beliefs were far from absent in other religions and civilizations: the Babylonians gave 50 names to Mazdah, the Moslems 100 to Allah and the ancient Christians 10, 40, or 70 to God, always to express their belief in the superior power and majesty of the Highest Being.⁹⁵ We may indeed safely assume that a plurality of titles and epithets was, also outside Egypt, believed not only to express that the god or king who bore them was mighty but also essentially added to their power. Hence also such enumerations of names as are well-known to every reader of Indian religious literature, or texts such as R̥V. 10, 55. According to stanza 1 of this sūktā Indra had a secret name which was at a great distance when both components of the universe invoked the god to bestow the vigour proper to the prime of life: these words refer to the name as the bearer of which Indra set at rest the great mundane commotion and confusion (cf. also 10, 54, 1; 2, 12, 1f.). Another name belongs to him when he creates the world: “that is the great, secret, much desired, name, by which thou hast produced all that exists and is to exist” (st. 2). As the great champion who succeeded in slaying Vṛta he is (st. 7) called “the wielder of the thunderbolt” (*vajrī*), and in a reference to the great exploits which he achieved together with the Maruts he is “all-powerful” (*viśvaujāḥ*, st. 8). Whereas these epithets allude to sides of his personality

⁹² H. Usener, *Göttliche Synonyme, Kleine Schriften*, IV (1913), p. 304.

⁹³ Obbink, *o.c.*, p. 17; 62.

⁹⁴ Obbink, *o.c.*, p. 43 ff.; cf. p. 69.

⁹⁵ Cf. also R. Hirzel, *Der Name, ein Beitrag zu seiner Geschichte im Altertum* (Leipzig, 1918), p. 18.

which were familiar to his earthly admirers and worshippers the secret names represented aspects of the divine nature which were beyond human comprehension. This is the deeper sense of the belief that the gods have also secret names: their power and resourcefulness,⁹⁶ their will and achievements are for a large part beyond our intelligence, control and expression.

Knowledge of a god's name, insight into the hidden meaning implied in an epithet, was on the other hand a key to special power or a way to success and prosperity. When, AiB. 3, 33 tells us, the gods were unable to punish Prajāpati who had had sexual intercourse with his own daughter, they brought together their most dreadful forms; these became the god Rudra (*tāḥ sambhṛtā eṣa devo 'bhavat*); therefore is his name containing the word *bhūta-* (*tad asyaitad bhūtavan nāma*); the man who has insight into the meaning of this name prospers (*bhavati vai sa yo 'syaitad evaṃ nāma veda*). The man who knows and understands the meaning of the name Paśupati – another form of the god – will in a similar way come into the possession of cattle.

Finally, there is another point to be mentioned. If among men – and not only under so-called 'primitives' – the 'real' name is for some reason or other to be avoided, or if the speaker does not want to pronounce it, 'nicknames' or other familiar descriptive appellations are often used instead. These may have reference to a form of behaviour, a characteristic, a personal idiosyncrasy, or even to a locality or to an occasion.⁹⁷ Similar reasons of taboo have no doubt contributed something to the great number of epithets applied to the ancient Indian gods and other powerful beings. If it was, for instance, too dangerous to mention the name of Rudra, one preferred to replace it by a harmless epithet. This god bears inter alia the surname *jalāṣabheṣaja-* "possessing healing remedies" (ṚV. 1, 43, 4; AV. 2, 27, 6); that this epithet was essential to his character appears from a passage in which various deities are described without being named (8, 29, 5): "one bright, energetic – and – formidable, possessing healing remedies, holds a sharp weapon in his hand". The very occurrence of these verses in the corpus of the Ṛgveda shows that it was sometimes desired to avoid the names of the gods.

⁹⁶ See also H. Oldenberg, *Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft* (Göttingen, 1919), p. 103 f.; M. Falk, *Nāma-rūpa and dharma-rūpa* (Calcutta, 1943), p. 1 ff.

⁹⁷ See also G. A. Reichard, "Social life", in F. Boas, *General anthropology* (Boston, 1938), p. 451.

CHAPTER II

A SURVEY OF ṚGVEDIC EPITHETS STUDIED IN THEIR CONTEXTS

In this chapter an attempt will be made to study a large number of epithets and other attributive adjectives or appositions occurring in connection with a variety of gods and other important nominal concepts. In so doing attention will be chiefly focussed on the contexts in which they occur; the problem will be discussed of how to explain the existence and the frequency of these elements and the question will be submitted for consideration as to how far the Ṛgvedic epithets are due to the arbitrariness of the poets who needed more or less meaningless words and phrases to fill up their verses, and how far they had, in the context, a function and significance of their own. If the present author is not greatly mistaken, it will appear that in a considerable number of passages the epithets are far from meaningless; that, far from being mere stuffing or meaningless additions *metri causa*, they have a stylistic, literary, and religious function which is worth investigating in detail.

Whereas in the following pages the material is arranged according to noun and epithet, chapter III will be devoted to a study of the functions of the epithets from various points of view. Some points already touched upon in chapter II will be dealt with more systematically and with a view to this some examples will be repeated or submitted to renewed consideration and explication. The author, while fully conscious of the tentative character of his expositions which are over and over again apt to exceed the limits of admissible subjectivity, regrets to observe that the large number of relevant facts and examples to be discussed on the one hand, and want of space on the other, did not allow him to give these chapters a more attractive form.

INDRA

Śatakratu-, an epithet of very frequent occurrence in the Ṛgveda, which is with two exceptions exclusively attributed to Indra, is not easy to translate. Whereas Macdonell¹ simply rendered it by “having a hundred

¹ Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 58.

powers” Monier-Williams,² following the Petrograd Dictionary,³ translated: “having hundred-fold insight or power or a hundred counsels”; in contradistinction to Grassmann⁴ who explained the word as “hundert Kräfte habend, hundertfach wirkend”, Geldner preferred “hundertfache Willens- oder Verstandeskraft besitzend”,⁵ resorting, however, in his translation of the R̥gveda to expressions such as: “der hundertfachen Rat weiss”, “der Ratreiche”, “der hundert Ratschlüsse hat”. The oft-discussed noun *kratu-* should not be interpreted in the light of one of the etymologies with which it has been provided,⁶ because even the least objectionable of these – the original identity with the root of Greek κράτος “strength” – does not carry conviction in all respects,⁷ not to mention the fundamental disadvantages of preposterous methods. Neisser was no doubt right in emphasizing that the general sense of the word “wirksame Stärke, erfolgreiche Kraft”, though never applying to merely physical strength was sometimes too onesidedly interpreted as a faculty “geistigen Charakters”, but wrong in qualifying the R̥gvedic use of the term as magical.⁸ The faculty denoted by *kratu-* was rather one of these power-substances or Daseinsmächte which within some form of experience were supposed to be present in persons, objects and phenomena, and by virtue of which these are powerful, effective, influential. It may rather vaguely be described as a kind of effective mental power or intelligence, mental energy and determination, which enables its possessor to have a solution for a practical difficulty; “efficience intentionnelle”⁹ rather, perhaps, than “la faculté de comprendre qui précède immédiatement l’acte créateur”¹⁰; “an internal psychical and intellectual power such as resourcefulness or inventiveness enabling its possessor to proceed to successful action” rather than “eine bestimmte Sinnesart oder Seelenverfassung ... der bestimmende, energische Sinn des mutigen Kriegers”.¹¹

² M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1899), p. 1048.

³ *Petrograd Dictionary*, VII (1875), 43.

⁴ Grassmann, *Wörterbuch zum R̥g-veda* (Leipzig, 1936), 1373.

⁵ K. F. Geldner, *Der R̥gveda in Auswahl*, I (Stuttgart, 1907), p. 176.

⁶ See M. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgef. etym. Wörterbuch des Altindischen* (Heidelberg, 1955), p. 276.

⁷ See the present author’s essay on *māyā*, in *Four Studies in the language of the Veda*, *Disp. Rheno-Traj.*, III, p. 182 f.

⁸ W. Neisser, “Zum Wörterbuch des R̥gveda”, *Abh. Kunde Morgenl.*, 18, 3 (Leipzig, 1930), p. 66 f. For objections to an excessive use of the term ‘magic’ see the above-quoted study on *māyā*, p. 131 f.

⁹ L. Silburn, *Instant et cause* (Paris, 1955), p. 423.

¹⁰ L. Renou, *Études védiques et pāṇinéennes*, II (Paris, 1956), p. 58.

¹¹ K. Rönnow, “Ved. *kratu-*. Eine wortgeschichtliche Untersuchung”, *Le monde oriental*, 26 (1932), p. 1–90. Some salient points were summarized on p. 72–75; remarks

Very often the epithet *śatakratu-* seems rather vaguely to be used to characterize the god as the one who is equal to the occasion, or who finds ways and means. R̥V. 8, 91 relates how a girl named Apālā who was suffering from a skin-disease after having pressed soma with her teeth and offered it to Indra, was cured by the god,¹² who, being *śatakratu-*, gave her a sound and radiant skin. In 8, 1, 11 an anonymous divine being is related to have, in the conflict with Śuṣṇa, urged on the steed of the sun and the flying horses of the god of wind and the god described by the epithet *śatakratu-*, i.e. Indra, to have ridden on the same car as the warlike hero Kutsa who was wafted by the god: from 4, 30, 4 we know that Indra tore off one of the wheels of the sun for Kutsa when this hero was pressed by his enemies, while in 5, 29, 10 he is related to have given the other to the same companion to drive on with. Cf. also 1, 54, 6. Among Indra's renowned deeds is the rescue of the abandoned son of the unmarried mother who even, through the intervention of the *śat.* god, came to share in the songs of praise (4, 30, 16). Indra displays the quality expressed by this epithet in battles: 8, 32, 11 *yaḥ samsthe cic chatakratuḥ*, in accordance with the fact that man is keenly anxious for the god's *kratu-* with a view to assistance in war: 5, 35, 1 *yas te sādhiṣṭho 'vasa / indra kratuḥ tam ā bhara*.

Is it any wonder that a man who is extremely worried invokes Indra *śatakratu-* (10, 33, 3; 1, 105, 8; cf. 8, 80, 1¹³)? Or that the epithet is

on *kratu-* in later Vedic literature are made on p. 48–54; the Avestan *xratu* is discussed on p. 54–72, the etymology on p. 75–83. The author is in my opinion wrong in emphasizing the existence of special meanings such as “Siegeskraft, Heldenkraft, -sinn, -mut, Mut, Tapferkeit, Kampfeslust, männliche Tüchtigkeit” although some of these words may help to illustrate aspects of the total idea denoted by *kratu-*, and especially in supposing “männliche Gesinnung, Hochherzigkeit, Kraft, virtus in Bezug auf Menschen” and “Herrschermacht, Majestät hinsichtlich gewisser Götter” to be further semantic developments (p. 73). In R̥V. 4, 21, 2; 1, 156, 4; 10, 159, 2 which are p. 42–44 adduced to substantiate this view as far as concerns the sense of “majesty or lordly power” the term *kratu-* has, in my view, its usual sense. It may on good grounds (5, 85, 2) be admitted that *kratu-* is as characteristic of man, or at least of ‘rational beings’, as milk is characteristic of the cow, but this is not to conclude that it is “Rechtschaffenheit und ethische Kraft” (Rönnow, p. 45). I, for one, fail to see why 7, 60, 6 Mitra and Varuṇa “sogar den Unbesonnenen zum Verstehen bringen durch (Hinweis auf) den rechten Wandel, und die weise Gerechtigkeit verstehend, den Menschen befreien”, the text referring rather to an intelligent use of their effective mental power and resourcefulness in rescuing people from distress by a good path. In 7, 89, 3 *kratvaḥ dīnatā* is, as far as I am able to see, not “Charakterschwäche” (p. 46), but “deficiency of resourcefulness”.

¹² See H. Oertel, *J. Am. Or. Soc.*, 18, p. 26.

¹³ Rönnow compares the use of *kratu-* in 6, 17, 6 where this noun in all probability belongs to *pādas* ab alone (“Gesinnungsart, die zu Befreiungswerken treibt”, Rönnow, *o.c.*, p. 4 would not be my translation).

frequently used in prayers for aid and assistance?: 1, 30, 6 *ūrdhvas tiṣṭhā na ūtaye / asmin vāje śatakrato*; – cf. 15 where the fulfilment of the request by the *śat.* one is compared to a piece of evidence of special technical skill; – 2, 16, 8 *purā sambādhād abhy ā vavṛtsva / ... sakṛt su te sumatibhiḥ śatakrato / sam patnībhir na vṛṣaṇo nasīmahi*, i.e. “before (it comes to) being afflicted by distress we should like to meet thy benevolence, O *śat.*”. R.V. 8, 99, 8 is a prayer for aid addressed to the same god who is described as “setting in order or healing without needing any healing himself”,¹⁴ who is produced as power (*sahas*),¹⁵ and possessed of hundredfold help and *kratu-*, a “possessor and raiser of goods” and implored to lend assistance to those speaking. In 8, 98, 10 f. the poet asks Indra, the *śat.*, to give creative or vital power (*ojas*), courage, and a hero, for he, the *śat.*, is father and mother to his devotees; in 12 the god of hundredfold *kratu-* is invoked to give manly vigour (*suvīryam*). Elsewhere Indra is, in this aspect of his character, described as conquering enemies: 5, 35, 5 (without damaging the chariot), as a charitable bestower of food and goods: 8, 93, 28 f.: compare 2, 13, 11 where he is stated to obtain goods by his very *kratu-*, and 1, 62, 12: “the riches in thy hand are not diminished; thou art illustrious, of resourceful intelligence (*kratumān*), skilful (*dhīraḥ*¹⁶); do thou exert thyself for our benefit”.

Of special interest are the many passages in which this epithet occurs together with references to soma and intoxication. The connection between the idea expressed by *śatakratu-* “of a hundredfold effective mental power” and the inspiring and instigating beverage is obvious: 6, 41, 5 *śatakrato mādayasvā suteṣu / prāsmāṃ ava pṛtanāsu pra vikṣu* “O *śat.* take delight in the pressed (juices), assist us in war and in our settlements!” Cf. also 10, 113, 1 *pītvī somasya kratumāṃ avardhata*. When the god had partaken of this drink, the *śat.* became a destroyer of enemies, a helper of the conquerors in battles (1, 4, 8); 10, 112, 6 *pibā somam enā* (sc. *pātreṇa*) *śatakrato* may therefore be considered to be an incitement to keep his *kratu-* up to the mark. Soma is, indeed, in 10, 25, 1 invited to inspire excellent ideas, energy and *kratu-* to those praying and is in st. 4 implored to support this *kratu-*: *kratum naḥ soma jīvase dhārayā*. The poet of 8, 62, 10 informs the god of the fact that his protégés at the soma sacrifice have added to his new-born heroic power and his *kratu-*. The soma draught is explicitly called *kratuvid-* “who knows, finds, discovers,

¹⁴ But see also Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, II, p. 427.

¹⁵ See *Some observations on the relations between “gods” and “powers” in the Veda* (s-Gravenhage, 1957), p. 47.

¹⁶ For the sense of *dhīra-* see also the above-quoted treatise on *māyā*, p. 146 ff.

locates *kratu-*, who gives ‘inspiration’”: 9, 44, 6 etc. In 8, 78, 7 the stomach of the Vṛtra-killer and drinker of soma is even said to be full of *kratu-*;¹⁷ cf. 1, 175, 5. Hence also invitations such as 3, 42, 5 *indra somāḥ sutā ime / tān dadhiṣva śatakrato / jaṭhare vājinīvaso* “O I., these soma juices have been pressed out; take them, O *śat.*, possessor of *vāja*-power”; 8, 36, 1 “Thou art the helper of the man who presses soma ..., take the soma in order to be intoxicated, O *śat.* ...; 76, 7 “drink, O I. *śat.*; 92, 16 *yas te nūnam śatakrataḥ / indra dyumnitamo madaḥ / tena nūnam made madeḥ*. Cf. also 1, 82, 5; 8, 33, 14.

It is therefore no matter for astonishment that in the sūkta 3, 37, which is dedicated to Indra Śatakratu, the following invitation is put into words: st. 8 *śuṣmintamaṃ na ūtaye / dyumninam pāhi jāgrvim / indra somaṃ śatakrato* “drink the strongest ... soma, O I. *śat.*, in order to lend us assistance”; then the adjurations to slay Vṛtra – st. 6 *tvām īmahe śatakrato / indra vṛtrāya hantave* – and to conquer the enemies – st. 3 *nāmāni te śatakrato / viśvābhir gīrbhir īmahe / indrābhimātiṣāhye* – will no doubt be effective. Invoking the god in order to display his strength and superior power (3, 37, 1; 9) the priests will direct his eyes and attention to the interests of their patrons (cf. st. 2): I. *śat.* (= *bahuprajña*, Mādhava) is expected to further their plans and hopes. R̥V. 8, 52, 4 this epithet combines with *vāje vājin* “winning (in a contest) the generative power which manifests itself in cattle etc., and by which new food and new life are obtained”; hence also the statement (8, 53, 2) that those who are desirous of *vāja*- implore the help of the *śat.* In 7, 31, 3 I. *śat.* is said to be eager for the possession of kine, gold and *vāja*-.

We may perhaps learn something from combinations of epithets such as occur 8, 61, 18 where I. is called a hero, a crusher, liberal, and, in connection with his strong arms, *śat.*: no doubt another hint of the god’s willingness to hand over the booty to his worshippers;¹⁸ does the epithet intimate that efficacious intelligence must join physical force in pursuing these ends? R̥V. 8, 61, 9 seems to be unambiguous: “the man who has duly addressed thee should be free from care, O *śat.*, thou that strivest to move forwards and claimest for thyself” (*ś. prācāmanyō ahaṃsana*). Nor is the combination 3, 51, 2 *śat. śākinam ... / vājasanim pūrbhidaṃ tūrṇim apturaṃ / dhāmasācam abhiṣācam svarvidaṃ* a mere coincidence: a god who is able to destroy fortresses, to cross the waters¹⁹ and to take

¹⁷ See also Rönnow, *o.c.*, p. 5 f.

¹⁸ See the relative observations in other sections of this chapter.

¹⁹ Cf. Neisser, “Zum Wörterbuch des R̥gveda, I”, *Abh. Kunde Morg.*, 16, 4 (Leipzig, 1924), p. 54 ff. P. Thieme, “Studien zur indogerm. Wortkunde und Religionsgeschichte”, *Ber. Verh. sächs. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl.*, 98, 5 (Berlin, 1952), p. 7.

possession of the sun must be equal to a variety of occasions. Indra has indeed been born together²⁰ with his *kratu-*, *ojas*²¹ and deeds of manly courage (*vīrya-*), being a conqueror of adversaries, a distributor of goods: 2, 22, 3.

In the light of the above observations the use of the epithet may become more intelligible in cases such as 8, 77, 1: the new-born Śatakratu asked his mother Śavasī to tell him the names of his enemies; having learnt these he crushed them at once, no doubt enabled to perform this extraordinary feat by his hundredfold inventiveness and resourcefulness. Those who are anxious for wealth invoke with songs of praise the lord of wealth who possesses a hundredfold *kratu-*: 8, 61, 10 *vasūyavo vasupatiṃ śatakratum / stomair indram havāmahe*: the eulogies are to strengthen the god, his *kratu-* is expected to find out how to convey the wealth to those interested. Hence also 8, 92, 12 and 13 where Indra *śat.* being satisfied with eulogies is assured that those speaking have their wish. Thus 1, 5, 8 and 1, 10, 1 the songs of praise are stated to have fortified the god who is addressed as Śatakratu, probably to suggest reciprocation. In 6, 45, 25 the eulogies are recited for the *śat.* A more outspoken attempt to influence the mighty deity occurs, e.g., 1, 4, 9 *taṃ tvā vājeṣu vājinaṃ / vājayāmaḥ śatakrato / dhanānām indra sātaye*. Cf. also 8, 54, 8. In another eulogy, 1, 51, 2, Indra is described as being helpful, assisted by 'Assistances', surrounded by 'Powers' and the skilful Ṛbhus – clever artisans who are generally associated with Indra –, and exhilarated by soma; "to (him), the *śat.* one, the swift "Youthful Vitality"²² has ascended" (*ś-m javanī sunṛtāruhat*). In 1, 30, 1 a reference to the enjoyment of soma joins the epithets *śat.* and "the most generous one" (*manhiṣṭha-*) in an appeal to the god's helpfulness. In praising his liberality and asking him to bestow his favours on those praying, the poet of 5, 38, 1 addresses Indra as *śatakratu-*, repeating this significant name in st. 5 in which he implores his protection. See also 8, 93, 27; 98, 11; 10, 134, 4. Hence also the combination *śatamūte śatakrato* (8, 46, 3). – See also 8, 13, 31.

According to Rönnow the Ásvins were believed to be possessors of the power-substance *kratu-* because this expressed "die für die Menschen so wertvolle Geschicklichkeit im Wagenlenken ..., dank welcher sie die Lebenskost geniessen können"²³ (cf. 1, 183, 2). Notwithstanding 7, 90,

²⁰ For a comment on the expression "being born together with ..." see *Some observations on the relations between "gods" and "powers" in the Veda* ('s-Gravenhage, 1957), p. 28; cf. also Rönnow, *o.c.*, p. 5.

²¹ For Indra and *ojas* see *Ancient-Indian ojas ...* (Utrecht, 1952), p. 9 ff.

²² See *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism* (Utrecht, 1954), p. 182.

²³ Rönnow, *o.c.*, p. 19 f.

5²⁴ where Indra and Vāyu are stated to drive while being equipped with *kratu-*, such a specialized meaning is hardly probable. The only passage attributing the epithet *śatakratu* to the twin gods may in any case be explained in harmony with the above occurrences of the epithet: “do ye approach with the same display of helpfulness with which ye, O *śat.* ones, assisted Kutsa and others”. In 10, 97, 2 the epithet is very significantly used in addressing the medicinal herbs: *śataṃ vo amba dhāmāni / sahasram uta vo ruhaḥ / adhā śatakratvo yūyam / imam me agadaṃ kṛta* “a hundred, O mothers, are your abodes, and a thousand your sprouts, herefore restore on my behalf, O resourceful ones, this man to health”.

The adjective *kratumat-* “possessing or exhibiting *kratu-*” is, in connection with Indra, used so as to suit the context.

An examination of the contexts exhibiting the frequent epithet *maghavan-* – which is traditionally translated by “bountiful” or “possessing or distributing gifts, munificent” (“der Geschenke oder Lohn auszuteilen hat, reichlich gebend, gabenreich, reich, mächtig” Grassmann; “généreux” Renou) – may, if the main conclusion of this chapter, viz. that in the Ṛgveda the choice of the epithets is generally speaking not fortuitous – perhaps enable us to determine the sense of this word more exactly. Basing our researches exclusively on a study of the contexts in which the epithet is met with, its meaning seems to have been larger, namely somewhat as follows: “possessing or bestowing benefits or advantages; benevolent, active for the advantage of man”. In 6, 27, 3 the abstract noun expressing this quality of the god’s character and the epithet are juxtaposed: *na maghavan maghavattvasya vidma*; here Geldner’s translation runs as follows: “... kennen wir nicht deine Freigebigkeit, du Freigebiger”; it is however probable that the sense of the *ἄπαιξ* *maghavattva-* was in keeping with that of the epithet.

That a divine being – we will limit our investigations first to Indra – which is characterized as *maghavan-* is liberal and munificent is evident from a great number of passages. Indra’s generosity is for instance extolled ṚV. 8, 1, 6 *mātā ca me chadayathaḥ / samā vaso vasutvanāya rādhase* “thou and my mother, ye appear to me to be alike, O excellent one, with a view to wealth and kindness-and-liberality”; 7, 27, 3; 8, 1, 14; 14, 4.²⁵ The epithet *maghavan-* occurs 10, 42, 8 in connection with bounteousness: *nāha dāmānam maghavā ni yaṃsat / ni sunvate vahati bhūri vāmam* “it is not to be expected that the *m.* will refuse his gift; he brings

²⁴ Cf. also ṚV. 10, 159, 1 where I have grave doubts about the correctness of Rönnow’s (*o.c.*, p. 20) interpretation.

²⁵ The reader may also consult Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 63.

much desirable good to him who presses soma". An interesting place is also 7, 28, 5 *vocemed indram maghavānam enam / maho rāyo rādhaso yad dadan naḥ* "we should like to call him the *m.*, when he gives us from the gift of his great wealth". In 6, 44, 10 Indra, while being addressed as *m.*, is called a "giver"; compare also 4, 31, 7 (and 8 f.). According to 10, 43, 3 Indra is the god who averts indigence and hunger; he, the *m.*, is the lord of affluence and goods; 8, 49, 1 (= Vāl. 1, 1) runs as follows: *abhi pra vaḥ surādhasam / indram arca yathā vide / yo jaritṛbhyo maghavā purūvasuḥ / sahasreṇeva śikṣati* "stimme euer (Lied) auf den freigebigen I. an, wie er bekannt ist, der wie ein schatzereicher Freigebiger mit tausend (Kühen) den Sängern gern zu Diensten steht" (Geldner): it would be better to write that I. as a *maghavan*- wishes to help the eulogists. In 10, 49, 11 the god is, after a long enumeration of his exploits and various benefits conferred on men, called *maghavā satyarādhāḥ* "a *m.* who is really liberal and beneficent".

Thus Indra is often besought to bestow gifts upon his worshippers: 7, 29, 1 *dado maghāni maghavann iyānaḥ* "give thy *m.*, O *m.*, supplicated"; 3, 36, 10 *asme pra yandhi maghavann ṛjīśinn / indra rāyo viśvavārasya bhūreḥ* "present to us, O *m.* ... from your abundant possessions which contain all goods". In formulating these prayers there is considerable variation in the choice of words: 7, 18, 2 *piśā giro maghavan gobhir aśvaiḥ / tvāyataḥ śiśīhi rāye asmān* "adorn the eulogies, O *m.*, with cows and horses; incite us, who long for thee, unto (gaining) possessions"; 7, 37, 3 *uvocitha hi maghavan deṣṇam / maho arbhasya vasuno vibhāge* "then thou, O *m.*, takest pleasure in giving when it comes to apportioning large and small property"; 8, 21, 10 *ā tu naḥ sa vayati gavyam aśvyam / stotṛbhyo maghavā śatam* "do thou drive on to us who praise thee, O *m.*, a hundred of cows and horses"; 8, 1, 4; see also 4, 17, 11 (to be quoted further on); 8, 50, 1; 10, 42, 8. Compare, in addition to the above 4, 17, 5 d, a verse of disputed interpretation:²⁶ *rātiṃ devasya grṇato maghonaḥ*.

Generosity and open-handedness presuppose an abundance of material resources. Hence statements such as 7, 32, 24 *abhī śatas tad ā bhara indra jyāyaḥ kanīyasaḥ / purūvasur hi maghavan sanād asi / bhare bhare ca havyaḥ* "to those who are, O I., the small men do thou bring the larger goods, for thou, O *m.*, art always abounding in goods, and to be invoked in every battle". For the combination *m.* and *purūvasu*- see also 8, 1, 12; 49, 1; for that of *m.* and abundance: 4, 20, 2; 8, 53, 1.

However, the grants bestowed by Indra are not rarely called *vāja*- "generative power believed to reside in vegetation, cattle, etc. and by

²⁶ See Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, I¹, p. 438.

which new food and new life are obtained” and qualified by attributes such as *śravasya*- “praiseworthy”: 8, 96, 20 *sa prāvitā maghavā no ’dhivaktā / sa vājasya śravasyasya dātā* “this *m.* is our patron and advocate, he is the giver of renowned *vāja*”; 4, 20, 2 *tiṣṭhāiḥ vajrī maghavā ... imaṃ yajñam anu no vājasātau* “the bearer of the vajra, the *m.*, will, I hope (or expect),²⁷ attend to our sacrifice with a view to the acquisition of *vāja*”, not, with Geldner, “... möge bei der Preisgewinnung unserem Opfer hier beistehen”; 7, 27, 4 *nū cin na indro maghavā sahūti / dāno vājaṃ ni yamate na ūti*; 4, 17, 8 *hantā yo vṛtram sanitota vājaṃ / dātā maghāṇi maghavā surādhāḥ*; id. 9; 3, 30, 22; 7, 32, 23. Cf. e.g. also 7, 19, 11; 21, 7; 26, 5; 8, 2, 34. Moreover, Indra, called killer of *Vṛtra*, benevolent, and the wealthy one is, 8, 46, 13, desired to be the aid and leader in the attempts to gain *vāja*:- *sa no vājeṣv avitā purūvasuḥ / purasthātā maghavā vṛtrahā bhuvat* “he will be, with a view to (acquire) *vāja*- our aid, the wealthy one, ... the *m.*, the killer of *Vṛtra*”.

It is however not only power, wealth, goods or property which the *maghavan*- is implored or believed to give to his worshippers, but often also non-material benefits. Very often mention is made of his aid and assistance in a variety of circumstances: 1, 102, 3 *taṃ smā ratham maghavan prāva sātaye / jaitraṃ yaṃ te anumadāma saṃgame* “verhilf diesem Wagen, du Gabenreicher, zum Gewinn, dem wir als deinem Siegeswagen in der Schlacht zuzubeln wollen!” (Geldner); 1, 104, 8 the god is besought to save those praying: “do not break our eggs to pieces, do not break the shells together with the offspring” (to be taken in a metaphorical sense); 10, 43, 1 (*ūtaye*); 8, 36, 2; 3, 31, 19 *druho vi yāhi bahulā adevīḥ / svaś ca no maghavan sātaye dhāḥ* “frustrate the many impious injuries and place O *m.*, the sun at our disposal so that we may gain it”; 3, 53, 21 *indrotibhir bahulābhir no adya / yācchreṣṭhābhir maghavañ chūra jinva*; 4, 24, 2 *sa yāmann ā maghavā martyāya / brahmaṇyate suṣvaye varivo dhāt* “the *m.* gives (will give), on his march, to the devout mortal man who prepares soma, room (free scope, ease, comfort)”; 5, 31, 1 *indro rathāya pravataṃ kṛṇoti / yaṃ adhyasthān maghavā vājayantam* “I. provides the *vāja*-winning chariot which he, the *m.*, has mounted with a swift course”; 8, 1, 12 the wealthy *maghavan* is described as being able to set broken or dislocated limbs: *saṃdhātā saṃdhim maghavā purūvasur / iṣkartā vihrutam punaḥ*; 10, 43, 8 *sa sunvate maghavā jīradānave / avindaj jyotir manave haviṣmate* “the *m.* found light for soma-pressing mankind which gives quickening gifts and oblations”. “Many

²⁷ For the conjunctive see the author’s *The character of the Indo-European moods* (Wiesbaden, 1956), p. 68.

teams of horses (= compositions of verses)²⁸ have been offered to the killer of Vṛtra, great is the song of praise, we have become his favourites, be thou, O *m.*, our protector” (3, 31, 14). Friendship, help, and protection are the benefits to be derived from rites and worship: 7, 19, 8. Elsewhere, 1, 104, 5 the prayer is for salvation: *adha smā no maghavañ carkṛtād in / mā no magheva niṣṣapī parā dāḥ* “nun gedenke unser, du Gabenreicher; gib uns nicht preis wie der Verschwender seine Reichtümer” (Geldner). That the poets and their audiences were conscious of the relations between the laudatory recitations they dedicated to the god and his help and benevolence may appear, e.g., from 6, 46, 10 *adha smā no maghavann indra girvaṇas / tanūpā antamo bhava*. Cf. also 4, 17, 20; 20, 2; 6, 47, 15; 10, 167, 2. Sometimes it is Indra’s might and overwhelming power which seems to have determined the preference for this epithet: 1, 52, 11 *atrāha te maghavan viśrutam sahaḥ*; 1, 165, 9 *anuttam* (viz. *vīryam* or *kṣatram*²⁹) *ā te maghavan nakir nu / na tvāvām asti devatā vidānaḥ*; cf. 5, 34, 3; cf. 8, 3, 11.

Special attention must be requested for those stanzas in which the god while being called *maghavan*- is stated to gain the victory or to dislodge the enemy from his positions and to distribute the booty among his worshippers: 4, 17, 8 “(the god) who is always destroying, the bold, strong I., the great, boundless bull, well-armed, the killer of Vṛtra, the winner of *vāja*, the bestower of benefits, the *maghavan*-, the bountiful”; 1, 102, 10 *tvam jigetha na dhanā rurodhitha / arbheṣv ājā maghavan mahatsu ca* “du hast (von jeher) gesiegt und die gewonnenen Schätze nicht zurückbehalten – in kleinen und in grossen Kämpfen, du Gabenreicher” (Geldner); 7, 32, 25 *parā ṇudasva maghavann amitrān / suvedā no vasū kṛdhi / asmākam bodhy avitā mahādhane / bhavā vṛdhaḥ sakhinām* “drive away, O *m.*, the enemies, make that we may obtain the goods easily, be our aid in the great battle – it is to be noticed that *mahādhana*-primarily meaning “a great booty taken in battle”, came to express the sense of “a great battle (for booty)” –, be the promoter of the companions.”³⁰ The purport of 1, 57, 5 is perfectly clear: “thy manly courage (*vīryam*), O I., is great, we belong to thee, satisfy, O *m.*, the wish of praiser”. Compare also 4, 17, 13; 19; 10, 167, 2. Hence also 1, 173, 5 *yaḥ śūro maghavā yo ratheṣṭhāḥ*. Now this side of Indra’s activity is often emphasized in other hymns: 7, 21, 7 *indro maghāni dayate viśahya* “I. allots the *maghas* (“rewards, bounties, gifts” or rather “material tokens of

²⁸ See also Renou, *Études véd. et pān.*, I, p. 15, n. 1.

²⁹ See Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, I², p. 239.

³⁰ *sakhinām*: *stotṛṇām asmākam vasiṣṭhānām*, Sāyaṇa.

helpfulness and benevolence”) after having subdued (the opponents)”, a verse immediately followed by the statement that people call upon this god when their object is to gain *vāja*. Indra is, the next stanza continues, the aid and the protector of the man who destroys (the enemies);³¹ 7, 25, 2 the same god is implored to strike down the enemies who advance violently, and to bring with him a mass of property; cf. also st. 3; 7, 27, 1 *śūro nṛṣātā śavasaś cakāna / ā gomati vraje bhajā tvam naḥ* “thou that strivest, in the capturing of men, after heroic superiority, do thou allot us a share in the cow-pen (which has been captured)”; cf. also 7, 30, 1; 8, 2, 34 etc.

Indra is not infrequently spoken of as the *maghavan-* in passages commemorating his warlike exploits. It may at first sight be strange that 1, 32, 3 where the god after having partaken of soma is related to have seized his weapon and slain the serpent is called *maghavan-*. Yet the surname, if not stereotyped and serving as a substitute for the name, may imply that in killing the great enemy Indra shows his benevolence which will enable man to live and to have plenty of food. Similar places are: 4, 17, 7 *tvam ... / ahiṃ vajreṇa maghavan vi vṛścaḥ* “thou hewest, O *m.*, the serpent in pieces with thy thunderbolt”. More generally, Indra, the *maghavan*, is called a conqueror and destroyer of enemies in 1, 33, 12 *yāvat taro maghavan yāvad ojo / vajreṇa śatrum avadhīḥ pṛtanyum* “with all thy energy and all thy vitality, O *m.*, thou killed the pugnacious enemy”; 1, 32, 13 when I. and Vṛtra fought the *m.* remained victorious; 1, 103, 2 “he killed the serpent, he pierced Rauhiṇa, he crushed V. the *m.*, with all his might”. R̥V. 6, 44, 17 the god, addressed as a hero and as *maghavan-*, is incited to drink soma and to kill the enemies: it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that these two epithets point to the double aspect of the god’s action; in destroying the hostile powers he shows his benevolence. In the self-laudation of the two gods Indra and Varuṇa, R̥V. 4, 42,³² the former invites (st. 5) attention while he, the *maghavan-* Indra, being of superior vitality, performs a match or combat (*āji-*). – A reference to I.’s superiority in the art of war – he was able to conquer the sun – contains the epithet twice: 10, 43, 5. – If 1, 103, 4 goes with what precedes, this stanza provides us with a significant example of a deliberate use of the epithet: after having given a circumstantial account of Indra’s exploits

³¹ This may be the sense of the genitive *abhikṣattuḥ*, cf. 2, 29, 2 where this meaning fits the context, and Mādhava: *kṣadiḥ śakalībhāvakarmā śatrūṇām abhihiṃsituḥ*, and Sāyaṇa: *abhihiṃsakasya*.

³² For the interpretation of which see H. Oldenberg, *R̥gveda. Textkritische und exegetische Noten* (Berlin, 1909), I, p. 301 ff.; M. Bloomfield, *Rig-veda repetitions* (Harvard, 1916), p. 233.

the poet states that he bears the glorious name of *maghavan-*, and also, on account of his success in destroying the dasyus, that of “son of glory”. R̥V. 3, 30, 16 is a regular encouragement to the fighting god: “cut off, kill, cleave, subdue ..., O *m.*”.

Elsewhere the *maghavan-* is praised on account of the aid and assistance rendered in war and danger. See 1, 33, 15: he has assisted, in conquests, the domesticated bull and the cow. R̥V. 1, 102, 4 is a prayer for victory, asking the *maghavan-* to destroy the manly vigour of the opponents. Other tokens of his benevolence are requested 1, 178, 5: *tvayā vayam maghavann indra śatrūn / abhi śyāma mahato manyamānān / tvam trātā tvam u no vṛdhe bhūh*; 6, 44, 18 *āsu śmā ṇo m. i. pṛtsv / asmabhyam mahi varivah sugam kah*. See also passages such as 1, 54, 1 (do not fail us in battles and distress); cf. 3, 30, 3. In 4, 17, 11 I., the *m.*, is stated to have captured gold, cows, horses, and to be a collector and distributor of property. “Together with these men who are attached to thee, O I., the benevolent ones, O thou that art benevolent, (I invoke) thee in every combat (race)” (4, 16, 19).

Indra’s compassion is implored 1, 84, 19 *na tvad anyo maghavann asti marḍitā*; cf. also 1, 171, 3 where he whilst expected to have pity on his devotees is called a *maghavā śambhaviṣṭhaḥ*, i.e. the one who excels in causing happiness, who is pre-eminently characterized as benevolent.

Not infrequently the benevolent god is besought to hear the praise and prayers of the poets: with the addition, in 1, 82, 1, that if he really wishes to make his devotees rich in youthful strength, he should pursue that object seriously. An instructive stanza is 7, 20, 9: “(the eulogist) has lamented ..., O *m.*: the desire to possess goods has taken possession of him who sings thy praises; thou alone, O mighty one, art able to give him a share”. The poet of 7, 29, 4 emphasizes the fact that the god has heard others who were, like himself, men: “that is why I call upon thee, O *m.*, for thou, O I., art our providence like a father”; and in the preceding stanza which is to press the god for an answer, the question is posed with what should the god be honoured in order to win his favour: *kadā nūnam te maghavan dāśema*. There are more places to show that hearing the prayers of mortal man is characteristic of the god who lays claim to the name of honour *maghavan-*: 7, 32, 23 (see above); 8, 3, 18; 33, 13 where the god is, as most heroic (*śaviṣṭha-*) invited to the soma feast, and as benevolent (*maghavan-*) and inventive (*sukratu-*) implored to hear eulogies. As songs of praise are a favourite means of strengthening the god and inducing him to satisfy his worshippers, the use of the epithet is 1, 82, 3 perfectly clear: ... *tvā vayam maghavan vandiṣimahi* (cf. 8, 2, 29).

In 7, 22, 3 the god is asked to pay attention to the words of praise addressed to him. Cf. 7, 26, 1; 8, 33, 13.

Sometimes poets use the epithet in praying Indra to accept an invitation: 8, 3, 14; 17; 30, 9; cf. 13; or to stay in order to partake of the soma: 3, 53, 2; 7, 22, 6. Cf. also 3, 53, 8. Invitations to soma feasts, indeed, sometimes contain the epithet under discussion: 3, 32, 1; 4, 27, 5; cf. 16, 1 and 7, 32, 8; 8, 36, 2; 10, 167, 2. That soma in exhilarating the god causes him to exhibit kindness and liberality may appear from 7, 26, 2 *uktha ukthe soma indram mamāda / nīthe nīthe maghavānam sutāsaḥ*; 7, 32, 9; compare 8, 61, 1 where the god is called *m.* and *śaviṣṭhaḥ*.

Success, prosperity, well-being, happiness are other aims for which the *maghavan-* is besought: 3, 30, 22 *śunam huvema maghavānam indram asmin bhare ...* (success in war etc.); 6, 47, 11 *svasti no maghavā dhātv indrah*; R̥V. 6, 46, 8 is a wish to be given manly vigour in order to win the victory.

Several passages are perhaps not intelligible at first sight: in 3, 53, 4 and 5, being a farewell to I. *m.* who obviously has been the guest of his worshippers, the implication may be that the god who has shown his benevolence by coming and drinking soma (cf. st. 2 and 6), is *maghavan-*, or the author may have had a preference for this epithet (cf. 2; 8; 14).

In the following passages the surname *maghavan-* appears under a variety of circumstances. R̥V. 1, 55, 4 seems to refer to Indra's coming to his worshippers and joining in their celebration:³³ *vṛṣā chandur bhavati haryato vṛṣā / kṣemeṇa dhenām maghavā yad invati* "wohlgefällig ist der Bulle, begehrenswert ist der B., wenn der Gabenreiche friedlich die Lippe (Rede)³⁴ in Bewegung setzt" (Geldner). That means that the god deserves the honorific name *maghavan-* if he does his devotees the favour to come personally to their ceremonies, joining in their prayers and confirmations of divine power, and enhancing the efficacy inherent in the rites, cf. 1, 10, 4; 173, 2; 6, 40, 1. In 10, 42, 6 *yaḥ śīsrāya maghavā kāmam asme* "the *m.* who has directed his affection towards us" it is friendliness on the part of the god which characterizes him as *maghavan-*.³⁵ If, 10, 43, 6, Indra is described as "lying near" every settlement, the meaning must be that he makes the round of the human habitations in order to select those who are worthy of his favour; for a similar situation see also 6, 23, 1; 10, 160, 4 provides us with an example of somebody who had lost the god's esteem;

³³ See Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, I², p. 71.

³⁴ This sense should be preferred; see also Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, I, p. 11.

³⁵ For the construction of the sentence see the author's article on the original character of the Indo-European relative pronoun *io-*, *Lingua*, 4 (Amsterdam, 1954), p. 21 ff.

5, 34, 3 relating the chastisement of a selfish man calls the god *śakra-* and *maghavan-*. The benevolent one may, indeed, have good reasons for withholding his favour. Places such as 8, 24, 11 are an interesting sidelight on ancient Indian religiosity: “never our prayers went out to another than thee, O lord of the pressing-stones; O *m.*, do thou, on our behalf, exert thyself in this by thy help”. R.V. 8, 54, 5 (Vāl. 6, 5) Indra, standing out from all others by his munificence and benevolence, is for their benefit invited to the convivial party of his worshippers. Presumably 1, 102, 7 “thy fame (*śravas*), O *m.*, outshines all others” is a sort of *captatio benevolentiae*. Compare also 6, 24, 1 *arcatryo maghavā nṛbhya ukthaiḥ* “as the *m.* he is with recitations to be praised by men”; (8, 32, 12).

Other passages of interest occur in the Atharvaveda: 2, 36, 4 (in an invocation for conjugal harmony etc.); 3, 1, 3 (for victory); 16, 4 (for divine favour); 6, 58, 1 (for glory); 7, 31, 1 (for aid); 50, 4 (for aid); 14, 2, 47.

A few remarks may be subjoined on the occurrences of the same epithet in connection with other gods.³⁶ The few places where it is applied to Indra and another deity are of little importance: this god and Bṛhaspati are R.V. 2, 24, 12 praised as *m.* because with them all things are *satyam*, i.e. in accordance with reality and truth, valid and effectual; the stanza however ends in an invitation. Indra and Soma have for the benefit of mankind taken revenge on the dasyus and recovered treasures: 4, 28, 5. The poet of 5, 86, 3 uses the epithet in connection with the pointed missiles of Indra and Agni. The latter god is given the title in 1, 58, 9 where he is requested to be a shelter (*śarma*) for the benevolent ones; in 2, 6, 4 in connection with his wealth and munificence: *sa bodhi sūrir maghavā / vasupate vasudāvan*; 6, 15, 15 he is implored to assist his worshippers in their attempts to win *vāja-*: *ava no m. vājasātau*; 1, 127, 11 the epithet is especially used in a prayer for *suvīryam* i.e. “an abundance of heroes, in particular of heroic sons”; 8, 103, 9 the god is implored to procure “a good repute consisting in heroes” *ā vaṃsate maghavā vīravād yaśaḥ*; in 5, 16, 3 mention is made of the god’s friendship. The Aśvins, being regarded as *maghavānau*, are 1, 184, 5 and 3, 58, 5 honoured by a eulogy and invited to make, for the benefit of men, their round³⁷ or to approach. The poet of 8, 26, 7 is more explicit on this point: “do ye come, O A., together with all-nourishing property, ye benevolent (*m.*),

³⁶ The goddess Uṣas will be the subject of a separate paragraph.

³⁷ For the meaning of *vartis-* see Geldner, in R. Pischel und K. F. Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, II (Stuttgart, 1897), p. 30 ff. “Ronde oder Wachtgang zu Wagen” and V. K. Rajvade, “Words in the Rgveda”, *Ann. Bhand. Or. Res. Inst.*, Poona, 9 (1928), p. 208 ff.

heroic, faithful ones". Soma is also among the *maghavānaḥ*; 9, 96, 11 the epithet is accompanied by two instrumentals: *vīrebhir aśvair maghavā bhavā naḥ* "do thou show thy benevolence with heroic sons and horses"; 9, 97, 55 Soma, being identified with Bhaga, a god regularly conceived as a distributor of wealth, is called a giver of the gift and benevolent to the benevolent. With regard to Pūṣan 6, 58, 4 says that he is a good friend of heaven and earth, the lord of "libation or refreshing draught" or rather "nutritive power" (*iḍ-*), and *maghavan-*, presumably owing to the implication that the god will give his devotees a share in the nutritive power. In 7, 58, 6 and 8, 94, 1 (Maruts) no such indications of the poet's view of the *maghavan-* concept appear, except for the implication (7, 58, 6) that the eulogy may induce the god to prove himself to be such a benefactor. Compare 7, 48, 1 where the Ṛbhus, addressed as *m.*, are invited to a soma feast. – In the Atharvaveda the sun's greatness is 13, 4, 44 praised: *tāvāṃs te maghavan mahimā*: perhaps an attempt to induce the divine luminary to show his benevolent aspect.

It might be useful to add some remarks on the occurrences of the noun *magha-*. Grassmann³⁸ was no doubt right in stating that the 'meanings' "Reichtum, Fülle", and "Geschenk, Gabe" gradually merge into each other. It is indeed difficult to find an exact equivalent, the term obviously expressing the sense of property, wealth, possessions, viewed from the angle of a donor or recipient. See e.g. ṚV. 5, 10, 3 where the term is explained by *dhanāni* (Mādhava) or *maṃhanīyāni gavādidhanāni* (Sāyaṇa): "mehre du, A., Haus und Wohlstand dieser unserer gönnerhaften Herren, die durch (unsere) Loblieder Schätze (zum Verschenken) erlangt haben" (Geldner); 10, 147, 3 "be thou pleased with these institutors of sacrifices ... who increasing (in wealth), O *maghavan-*, have obtained magha"; 7, 19, 10 *asmadryāñco dadato maghāni* "those who give m. should be kindly disposed towards us"; 5, 30, 12 "we have received the offered maghāni of Ṛ."; 7, 30, 4; 67, 9; 10, 32, 9; 132, 3.

It should in connection with this term for "property (to be) given away" be remembered that among many peoples on a certain cultural level gifts often have a social and economic function which is widely different from our attitude in respect to donations or to the exchange of presents. It is certainly not true, as has often been asserted, that all so-called primitives recognize the principle that the acceptance of a present invariably binds the receiver to return something of equal or even greater value. There are on the contrary peoples among which the giving of presents is a one-sided affair. With the Maori the first fruits and the

³⁸ Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 971.

catch of birds or of fish is “given” to the chief who redistributes it, giving to each according to his rank, needs etc.³⁹ Among the Kwakiutl and other North-West American Indians honour comes not from the possession of wealth but from giving it away. Elsewhere (New Guinea) a man gains status in his group not by possessing an object but because he has once possessed it. “Keeping a treasure for a time longer than the rules specify gives rise to ... criticism or censure”.⁴⁰

The word *magha-* is indeed very often accompanied by a verb of giving, and the god Indra is not rarely concerned in this process. The author of RV. 4, 20, 7 negates that there is somebody who can annihilate (or frustrate) his gifts (*rādhas-*) and *m.*; cf. also 8, 14, 4, and, further, 4, 32, 8; 7, 27, 5; 29, 1; 8, 21, 17; 24, 2; 88, 6; 9, 75, 5, etc. In 7, 26, 4 Indra is called the only helping distributor of *m.* Passages such as 7, 21, 7 *indro maghāni dayate viṣahya* “I. allots the *m.*, when he has conquered” are in perfect harmony with some of the above occurrences of *maghavan-*. As is well known this word occurs also in connection with the institutors of sacrifices who ‘give’ to the priests and singers (e.g. 6, 27, 8), i.e. who ‘remunerate’ them with a *dakṣiṇā*. Far from being an ordinary ‘fee’ the *dakṣiṇā* is sacred in character.⁴¹

The use made of the cognate verb *mañhate* is likewise worth mentioning: 8, 61, 8 ... *yūthā dānāya mañhase* “du (I.) hast ... Herden zum Verschenken bereit” (Geldner); 1, 11, 3 Indra is said to grant the eulogists a share in the *vāja-* consisting of cows (*mañhate magham*); 4, 31, 8; 6, 45, 32; 8, 45, 12; 9, 1, 10; 10, 62, 6.

The central Indra-myth is the conflict with *Vṛtra*. Owing to its importance the chief and specific epithet of the god is *vṛtrahan-* “slayer of *Vṛtra*”.⁴² In the literal sense of “slayer of *Vṛtra*” this name is indeed connected in the *Ṛgveda* itself with the great feat, the victory over the

³⁹ R. Bunzel, “The economic organization of primitive peoples”, in F. Boas, *General anthropology* (New York, 1938), p. 391.

⁴⁰ G. A. Reichard, “Social life”, in Boas, *o.c.*, p. 461.

⁴¹ See “Reflections on the *ārṣa* and *āsura* forms of marriage”, in *Sarūpa-bhārati*, Dr. L. Sarup Mem. Vol. (Hoshiarpur, 1954), p. 227 f.

⁴² For a discussion of the origin of this epithet see E. Benveniste and L. Renou, *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna* (Paris, 1934), according to whom the Iranian *Vṛθragna* was the god who destroyed resistance and so gives victory; whereas in Vedic mythology *Vṛtrahan* had originally the same character, he was later absorbed by the hero Indra, become god; the confused mythological texture took up three originally distinct themes: victorious god, serpent-killing Indra, the liberation of the waters. It should be noticed that the last point was in the Vedic *Vṛtra*-combat the central feature, and this event meant the transformation of an inhabitable chaotic universe into a cosmos (see also H. Lüders, *Varuṇa*, I, Göttingen, 1951, p. 183 ff.; Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, The Hague, 1954, p. 30).

demoniac serpent: 8, 24, 2 *śavasā hy asi śruto / vṛtrahatyena vṛtrahā* “for thou art renowned by thy heroic strength, owing to thy slaying of V. thou art V.”; 8, 93, 2 *ahim ca vṛtrahāvadhit*; 10, 111, 6 *vajreṇa hi vṛtrahā vṛtram astah* where Geldner incorrectly took *vṛtrahā* to be a ‘Satz-apposition’.

Man believes himself to be able to help the god in his severe struggle by praising him, stimulating his zeal and mentioning the epithet which refers, in a compressed form, to his victoriousness: 8, 89, 3 *vṛtram hanati vṛtrahā*, a verse which amounts to: “let the god who has proved himself a Vṛtra-slayer *par excellence* give another sample of his ability to do so”. Cf. 1, 84, 3 and 10, 152, 3, where I., the V., is moved to dispatch a variety of enemies, a demon, contemners, Vṛtra, human adversaries. There is indeed no essential difference between these passages and stanzas describing I. V.’s successful fight against other opponents: 8, 17, 9 *vṛtrāṇi vṛtrahañ jahi*; 10, 49, 6 *aham ... / sam vṛtreva dāsam vṛtrahārujam*; 6, 60, 3 *ā vṛtrahanā vṛtrahabhiḥ śuṣmair / indra yātaṃ namobhir agne arvāk*. Compare also 10, 133, 1 “(Indra) ... in war and battles the V.”.

The tendency to invoke the god in his warlike aspects also to inspire courage and pugnacity in the soldiers and to give *vāja*- to the horses appears 10, 103, 10; cf. 3, 12, 4. Hence also the prayers for aid: 1, 106, 6, for it is clear that I. V. who is able to destroy the most terrible demon can also avert danger and mishap from a single individual. Cf. 8, 13, 15; 46, 13. Even a mere statement may suffice to stimulate the god and to rouse his interest in the need of those praying: 6, 45, 5 “thou, O V., art the helper of one, of two, also for such a man as we”; 7, 31, 6; 8, 61, 15. He is invoked to be attentive: 8, 93, 18. Aid and assistance often consisting of a share in the profits of a successful campaign the poets ask, on behalf of their patrons, the Vṛtra-killing god also to treat them generously: 8, 24, 8; 10, 138, 5. Compare also 3, 31, 14; 10, 23, 2; 8, 62, 11; 7, 93, 4.

Soma stimulates Indra, enabling him to gain the victory. This is the reason why the name *vṛtrahan*- very often combines with references to drinking this beverage and invitations to sacrificial sessions. See 1, 16, 8; 1, 81, 1; 6, 47, 6; 7, 32, 6; 8, 2, 26; 4, 11; 6, 40; 33, 1; 37, 1; 90, 1; 92, 24; 93, 20; 33; 97, 4; 9, 98, 10; 10, 152, 2 and the interesting places 8, 33, 14; 78, 7.

The name *vṛtrahan*- is not infrequently applied to the god in descriptions of his strength and valour: 8, 77, 3 *sam it tān vṛtrahākhidat* “the V. pressed them together”; 66, 3; 10; 93, 15; 96, 19; 10, 138, 5; cf. also 2, 20, 7; 5, 86, 3. Similarly in references to his superior might: 8, 93, 4; 8, 32, 11. “Because the overpowerer of fortresses has very often gained the victory,

I., the V., has been faithful to his names" (10, 74, 6 *vṛtrahendro nāmāny aprāḥ*).

The opening stanza of 8, 70 *yo rājā ... / viśvāsām tarutā prtanānām / jyeṣṭho yo vṛtrahā grṇe // indram taṃ śumbha* "the king ... the conqueror in all battles, who is celebrated as the chief V." and 8, 27, 8 may lead us to the conclusion that V. was a special honorific title which was in common use to refer to the god also in contexts unrelated to the Vṛtra combat or similar events. Although part of these occurrences are primarily confirmations⁴³ – cf. e.g. 10, 153, 3 *tvam indrāsi vṛtrahā*; 8, 45, 25; cf. 1, 108, 3; 8, 38, 2 –, the epithet under consideration is strikingly often another – somewhat more honorific – name of the god: 8, 1, 14; 45, 4 "new-born the V. asked his mother ..."; 66, 9 "by which renown the V. has not become renowned from his birth".

The 'superlative' *vṛtrahantama-* properly denoting the one who distinguishes himself from others in being a *vṛtrahan-* applies several times to Indra: 5, 40, 1 in an introductory stanza inviting the god to a soma sacrifice; cf. also 8, 3, 17; 93, 30; 32; 97, 5; 5, 35, 6 in connection with the acquisition of *vāja-*; also 8, 6, 37; with generosity: 8, 93, 16.

In 8, 24, 7 the context has no particular bearing on one of the connotations of the attribute. In 8, 46, 8 and 92, 17 Indra's intoxication (*mada-*) receives the epithet. Elsewhere (9, 1, 3; 24, 6; 10, 25, 9) Soma, being clarified, or when styled generous, helpful, or Indra's friend, is called *vṛtrahantama-*. For Agni see 6, 16, 48; 8, 47, 4; for the Aśvins (assistance) 8, 8, 9; 22.

Grassmann⁴⁴ at the time observed that the adj. *suśipra-* which is usually translated by "having beautiful lips",⁴⁵ occurs "am häufigsten an Stellen, wo vom Trinken des Soma die Rede ist". The same remark holds good with regard to *śiprin-* "having (fair) lips" and the two rare synonyms *śipravat-* and *śipriṇīvat-*. Compare e.g. ṚV. 6, 17, 2 *sa īm pāhi ya ṛjīṣi tarutro / yaḥ śipravān vṛṣabho yo matīnām* "do thou who art the receiver of the residue of soma, drink it, (thou) who art a conqueror, who openeth thy lips (in order to drink soma)";⁴⁶ 10, 105, 5 *vanoti śiprābhyām*

⁴³ For the use of this term see also G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in essence and manifestation* (London, 1938), p. 430.

⁴⁴ Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 1554.

⁴⁵ See Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, I, p. 131: "śipra- ... bezeichnet jedenfalls einen Teil des Gesichts oder Mundes und zwar denjenigen, der bei dem Somatrinken vorzugsweise beteiligt ist. Darum erscheint śipra- besonders in Verbindung mit dem Soma von dem Somadurstigen oder Somatrinkenden". For śipra- see also V. Henry, *M.S.L.*, 9, p. 249.

⁴⁶ Compare also Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, II, p. 113: "der die Lippen (nach dem Soma) öffnet".

śipriṇīvān “der Lippenspitzer verlangt mit geöffneten Lippen (nach Soma)” (Geldner); for *suśipra-* 3, 32, 3 *pibā ... suśipra*; 3, 50, 2 *iha tvā dheyur harayaḥ suśipra / pibā ...*; for *śiprin-*: 8, 17, 4 *pibā su śiprinn andhasaḥ*; 8, 33, 7 *mandānaḥ śipry andhasaḥ* “wenn er mit geöffneten Lippen sich am Saft berauscht” (Geldner); 8, 92, 4; 1, 30, 11 *śipriṇīnām ... somapāvnām*; cf. also 6, 44, 14; 8, 32, 24 (pour out). R̥V. 7, 37, 1 the gods in general being invited to fill themselves with the potent beverage are addressed as *suśiprāḥ*. In other passages soma or the pressing of this draught is mentioned without special reference to its being drunk: 2, 12, 6 *yuktagrāvno yo avitā suśipraḥ / sutasomasya* “who, fair-lipped, is the helper of him that has set to work the stones and pressed soma”; 8, 2, 28 the god is invited to the soma feast, the beverage being mixed. Thus 8, 1, 27 *gamat sa śiprī* is no doubt to be supplied by “to the soma sacrifice”; cf. 7, 24, 4; 8, 69, 16; (5, 36, 5?).

While the verb *mādayasva* in 1, 101, 10 (cf. 8, 99, 2) doubtless refers to drinking soma – *ā tvā suśipra harayo vahantu* “the bay steeds must bring thee hither, O fair-lipped one!” –, 1, 9, 3 invites Indra to enjoy, at the soma sacrifices, the songs of praise. In offering soma to the god, man invokes his aid: 8, 32, 4, where he is described as *suśipra-*: *huve suśipram ūtaye*.⁴⁷ Getting drunk unhindered the fair-lipped one rewards the man who presses soma: 8, 66, 2. In 10, 96, 3 Indra is described as the *suśipra-* one⁴⁸ whose wrath and arrow are the yellowish one (i.e. the soma). Is therefore 6, 46, 5, where fame is expected from the fair-lipped one, a covert allusion to an invitation?

Elsewhere the epithet is used in a prayer for a long life and offering. At first sight it seems, in 3, 36, 10 cd, to be a mere ornament, but the parallelism between the two halves of the stanza, in addition to the consideration that the principle “do ut posses dare” is, in these hymns, very often undisguisedly recognized, leads us to the conclusion that the stanza contains a double request to make those praying a present of wealth and to grant them a long life etc., in exchange for the soma draught to which the god is implicitly or indirectly invited: *asme pra yandhi maghavann r̥jīṣinn / indra rāyo viśvavārasya bhūreḥ / asme śataṃ śarado jīvase dhā / asme vīrāṇ chaśvata indra śiprin* “schenk uns, du gabenreicher trestersomatrinkender I. von deinem allbegehrten vielen Reichtum! Gewähre uns hundert Herbste zum Leben, uns vollzählige Söhne, o I. mit der Trinkerlippe” (Geldner). A similar covert allusion to the soma offered to the god may be seen in 7, 25, 3 *śataṃ te śiprinn ūtayaḥ sudāse / sahasraṃ śamsā uta*

⁴⁷ See Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 343.

⁴⁸ Why “mit schönen Zahnreihen”? Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 304. See also I, p. 131.

rātir astu “(thou hast) a hundred acts of assistance for S., O fair-lipped one, (thy) praise and (thy) gift must be thousandfold”. In 8, 21, 8 the *suśipra*- is implored to make his devotees keen on *vāja-gomat*- “generative power manifesting itself in cattle”. The stanza 8, 66, 4 is very instructive: *nikhātam cid yaḥ ... vasūd id vapati dāśuṣe / vajrī suśiprah* “the vajra-bearer, fair-lipped one digs up even a buried treasure for the man who offers to him”; the vajra being the instrument used in digging up, the lips may be supposed to enjoy the offerings. Cf. also 8, 61, 4 (*śiprin* and *adrivah*, which means according to Geldner “possessor of the stone for pounding soma”, which is, as will be shown further on, open to doubt). The stanza 3, 30, 3 which opens with *indrah suśiprah*, though not containing a reference to drinking, immediately follows an invitation to a soma feast; the pādas a and b are piled up with epithets. Cf. also 1, 29, 2. In a few passages the epithet occurs, together with other qualifications, in a general description of the god’s person or behaviour: 1, 81, 4 ... / *ni śiprī harivān dadhe / hastayor vajram āyasam*. Is it due to mere chance that in 8, 93, 12 *suśipra* occurs in a stanza recalling the god’s *śuṣma*- “vigour, impetuosity, valour”, a quality also attributed to the soma?

One of the epithets peculiar to Indra is *pūrbhid*- “fort-shatterer”: 8, 33, 5, *indro yaḥ pūrbhid āritah* “I. who is renowned as the f.” It is appositely used ṚV. 3, 34, 1: *indrah pūrbhid ātirad dāsam arkaiḥ* “I. the shatterer of strongholds has prevailed over the dāsa by means of religious texts”,⁴⁹ cf. 2, 20, 7 *sa vṛtrahendrah ... puramḍaro dāsīr airayad vi (dāsīḥ viz. purah)*.⁵⁰ In 10, 47, 4 the epithet is in a rather homogeneous series of qualifications applied to sons for whom the god Indra is implored. In 10, 104, 8 mention is made of one of Indra’s exploits which has, at first sight, nothing to do with the destruction of fortresses: the god conducted his colleagues and the Aryan community safely across the rivers. However, this event might by itself be supposed to have been an incident of a campaign undertaken under Indra’s protection with a view to take or to destroy strongholds; if not, according to well-known theories⁵¹ the term “fortresses” stands in these contexts at the same time for “clouds” or for the mythical ramparts enclosing the waters. Interestingly enough the same epithet combines 3, 51, 2 with *vājasanim* and *tūrṇim apturam*⁵² “the

⁴⁹ According to Mādhava: *stutibhiḥ pravṛddhah*.

⁵⁰ See also Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, I², p. 301.

⁵¹ See e.g. A. B. Keith, *The religion and philosophy of the Veda and the Upanishads* (Harvard, 1925), p. 129 f.; H. Lommel, *Der arische Kriegsgott* (Frankfurt a.M., 1939), p. 20.

⁵² For the sense of *aptur*- (see also ṚV. 6, 68, 8) cf. P. Thieme, *Studien zum indogerm. Wortkunde und Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1952), p. 7.

expeditious river-crosser". In 10, 111, 10 the rivers are considered the concubines of Indra, the destroyer of strongholds. That this epithet is closely connected with Indra's *vrtrahan*-aspect appears also from 9, 88, 4 where soma is said to be "like Indra a slayer of Vṛtras and a destroyer of forts".⁵³ The synonymous *puramdara*-, mention of which has already been made, is mostly applied to Indra: 1, 102, 7 in a sentence referring to Indra's victorious activity, 3, 54, 15 together with *vrtrahan*- and references to the god's greatness and manly power. In 8, 1, 7 all three epithets have a bearing on war: *yudhma khajakṛt puramdara*; cf. also 8, 61, 10. The stanza 5, 30, 11 makes mention of I., the p.'s soma-drinking and restoring cows. Compare also the predicative use in 8, 1, 8. In 6, 16, 14 Agni is described as *Vṛtrahan*- and *puramdara*-. R̥V. 7, 6, 2 finds its explanation in 7, 5, 3. See also 1, 109, 8.

Indra's car is drawn by two tawny horses; the Sanskrit term for these animals (*harī*) is often used, and underlies the epithet *harivat*- "possessing bay horses". As the god is believed to be borne on his chariot to the sacrificial drinking-bouts prepared for him by his worshippers the epithet is very appropriately used in cases such as R̥V. 1, 3, 6 *indrā yāhi tūtujāna / upa brahmāṇi harivaḥ / sute dadhiṣva naś canaḥ* "O I. do thou come here, eager, to the manifestations of brahman (i.e. the ritual texts), O thou possessor of bay steeds, take delight in our pressed soma". See also 3, 30, 2; 5, 36, 2; 6, 41, 3; 7, 29, 1; 10, 96, 13; 104, 2; 6; and 1, 175, 1. In 3, 30, 2 the horses themselves are paronomastically added: *ā tu pra yāhi harivo haribhyām*; in 3, 52, 7 they are fed together with their master. The attribute is also used in inviting the god without any reference to the enjoyment of his favourite drink: 5, 31, 2 *ā pra drava harivo mā vi venaḥ* "do thou come very quickly, O H., do not be ill-disposed towards us, O giver of gold"; 7, 25, 4; in asking the god from where he comes and what he is about: 1, 165, 3. In 7, 37, 4 where the Vasiṣṭhas express the wish to honour the god with refreshments and ritual formulas, the epithet *harivat*- may perhaps have served to suggest that they are impatient for his arrival. Elsewhere the adjective impresses us as having developed into a surname: 8, 99, 2 *matsvā suśipra harivaḥ*.

In comparing the god to a race-horse the author of 10, 96, 10 observes that the *harivat*- has called for *vāja*-: was the epithet elicited by the comparison? Cf. 4, 16, 21? The relations between soma-drinking and

⁵³ "Daher herrscht bei der Eroberung wirklicher Rinderherden und wirklicher Wasserstellen durch einen Heereszug weithin die gleiche Ausdrucksweise, wie bei den mythischen Grosstaten Indra's. Der Mythos war Realität und die tatsächliche Wirklichkeit wurde erlebt als gleichlaufend mit dem mythischen Geschehen und ihm entsprechend ..." (Lommel, *l.c.*).

success in warlike exploits (cf. also 7, 20, 3) are indicated 8, 61, 3 “partake of the soma-drink, wealthy I., for we know, O H., that thou art the conqueror in battles, attacking boldly, irresistible”: however, Indra is also a “car-fighter” and a reference to his horses in a passage dealing with his success in war is therefore not unnatural. Cf. also 1, 174, 6; 3, 47, 4. Small wonder that this epithet occurs in a reference to hunting: 8, 24, 5 *na paribādho harivo gaviṣṭiṣu* “no hindrances, O H., on the cow raids”. Cf. 3, 47, 4. In relating one of the god’s feats, viz. his blowing away the wicked, he is, 1, 33, 5, addressed as *harivaḥ*, *sthātaḥ* “driver (of horses)” and *ugra* “energetic”.

The epithet occurs often in prayers for, or statements concerning, help and favour: 10, 61, 22 Indra, addressed as *vajrabāhuḥ* and *harivaḥ*, is implored to protect the patrons of the poet and to increase their well-being. Is it only by chance that the author of 6, 19, 6 in an eager demand to “bring” heroism and energy and to give all manly splendour should have resorted to this attribute?: compare 6, 22, 3: “we pray to I. for many sons, men, cattle...; bring that here, O *harivat-*, in order to give (us) pleasure”; 8, 24, 3 “being praised bring us wealth, for thou, O *h.*, art the sole donor”. R̥V. 8, 53, 8 (= Vāl. 5, 8) makes mention of assistance lent to people running a race. R̥V. 1, 167, 1 states that Indra, the possessor of bay steeds, has a thousand aids and refreshments for those speaking: does the epithet suggest that the god is coming to bestow these favours upon them? See also 4, 19, 9; 22, 7; 5, 42, 4; 6, 44, 10; 7, 19, 7. In 1, 173, 13 the *h.* is implored to find a way or egress for those praying.

The attribute *harivat-* is on the other hand often given to Indra without the context or situation making any allusion to horses or chariot-driving. It may perhaps be presumed that the god was by the poets and their audiences so often imagined as borne on a chariot drawn by the bay horses that the epithet had become a real surname. In 3, 51, 6 “for thee, O I., the eulogies are intended, O *harivat...*” it is difficult to see anything else than a stereotyped use of the epithet. Cf. e.g. also 1, 81, 4; 4, 16, 21; 8, 2, 13; 40, 9. This does not, on the other hand, mean that the epithet is merely an ornament, that it does not arouse any mental association which would fit in with the context: 7, 32, 12 *ya indro harivān na dabhanti taṃ ripaḥ* “I. the possessor of bay steeds – him the rogues do not injure”. In praying Indra to bestow wealth upon those speaking he is, 5, 36, 4 alternately addressed as *maghavan-* and *harivas*: here the epithet might be regarded as suggestive, but the words *harivo mā vi venaḥ* occur also 5, 31, 2, where they are more to the point. In 7, 20, 4 *h.* and the *vajra-* combine in a reference to I.’s fondness for soma.

Sometimes another attribute is added to the epithet: 5, 36, 2 *ā te hanū harivaḥ śūra... ruhat somah*; 10, 49, 11.

Passing mention may be made of some other compounds beginning with *hari-* and applying to the same god: *hariyoga-* “yoked with bay horses” of I.’s chariot (1, 56, 1 soma-drinking); *hariṣṭhā-* “borne along by b. h.” (3, 49, 2 unconquerable; 6, 17, 2 soma-drinking).

It is a matter of common knowledge that the *vajra-* – the weapon which in the mythological sphere of the Veda represents the lightning stroke⁵⁴ – is almost exclusively appropriate to Indra. Armed with it the great god accomplishes his exploits. Epithets derived from, or compounded with, *vajra-* are frequently used in a variety of contexts, it is true, but in a great majority of cases, so as to express a good sense, to shed light on the statement made in the stanza or part of the stanza in which it occurs, to be a useful addition, in short to fulfil a function.

In descriptions of, or allusions to, the god’s combat with Vṛtra these adjectives are of considerable frequency: in R̥V. 1, 63, 4 the voc. *vajrin* is in all probability not only added for the sake of alliteration, but also to remind the hearer of the weapon with which the god succeeded in defeating his opponent: *vṛtram yad vajrin vṛṣakarmann ubhnāḥ*. Thus 8, 12, 26 *yadā vṛtram... śavasā vajrinn avadhīḥ* does not, for practical purposes, differ very much from 1, 33, 12 *yāvād... vajreṇa śatrum avadhīḥ*. Cf. also 1, 80, 1; 2; 11. In 10, 22, 10 Indra is as *vajrivat-* implored to incite men to the ‘Vṛtra combat’. Elsewhere the god with the *vajra-* is stated to have been chosen by his colleagues to be their champion in this great event: 4, 19, 1. Or he is described as having increased in force so as to become able to kill Vṛtra: 10, 55, 7 *yebhir aukṣad vṛtrahatyāya vajrī*. Similar observations may be made in connection with other warlike exploits of the same god: 5, 32, 4 *vajreṇa vajrī ni jaghāna śuṣṇam*; 10, 22, 11 the whole brood of the same fiend is stated to be injured by the *vajravat-* one; cf. also 6, 45, 18. The poet of 1, 63, 5 in invoking the god to strike the enemies as it were with an iron club calls him *vajrin-*; 1, 131, 6 the same epithet occurs in a prayer to kill the contemners. Cf. 6, 22, 10. In 1, 52, 5 I. *vajrin-* is described as piercing Vala’s fences; cf. also 1, 130, 3; in 1, 63, 7 and 6, 20, 7 he destroys fortresses. As the *vajra* played an important part in the liberation of the waters a reference to this event may suitably contain the epithet *vajrin-*: 5, 32, 2; 8, 45, 8 the god is implored to eradicate all enemies. Cf. also 1, 103, 3 and 8, 96, 17. In 1, 121, 14 the *vajrivat-* god is asked to protect his worshipper against harm

⁵⁴ Compare e.g. also H. Lommel, *Der arische Kriegsgott* (Frankfurt a.M., 1939), p. 39; L. Renou, in L. Renou–J. Filliozat, *L’Inde classique*, I (Paris, 1947), p. 319.

and mishap; 10, 22, 12 expresses the desire to be always favoured by the (powerful) *vajrivat*. Cf. also st. 13. Here the epithet serves to remind the audience of the god's great power. Compare also 6, 37, 4.

In cases as R̥V. 1, 32, 1 – the opening stanza of a hymn in commemoration of Indra's successful combat with Vṛtra – the use and position of the epithet are very significant: *indrasya nu vīryāṇi pra vocaṃ / yāni cakāra prathamāni vajrī / ahann ahim anv apas tatarda / pra vakṣaṇā abhinat parvatānām*; the three great deeds performed with the *vajra*-are, introduced by *vajrin-*, enumerated in the second half of the stanza. Elsewhere the bearer of the *vajra* is implored for help or friendship: 8, 21, 8; 97, 15; cf. 8, 13, 33, or praised, i.e. strengthened in order to enable him to perform great deeds: 8, 66, 11, where the epithets *vṛtrahan-* and *vajrivat-* probably are to indicate that the praise is meant to stimulate Indra's heroic energy; cf. 8, 6, 33.

This epithet is, interestingly enough, often applied in contexts relating to the god's fondness for soma: 7, 32, 8 *sunotā somapāvne somam indrāya vajrine*; 8, 66, 6 and 7; 100, 8; 9, 30, 6; 51, 2; 63, 15; 86, 2; 10, 96, 6, cf. 8, 7, 10; 1, 30, 12; 82, 6; 6, 47, 14; 8, 99, 1; 10, 179, 3; 8, 37, 1; 66, 6. In 6, 59, 3 I. and Agni appear in a similar context. It is difficult not to conclude that the reference to the god's possession of the *vajra* is a complement to his predisposition to inebriety, both traits leading to his victory in the great combat. Moreover the use of soma stimulates the weapon which 8, 96, 5 is explicitly called *madacyut-* "stimulated by intoxication": *ā yad vajram bāhvor indra dhatse / madacyutam ahaye hantavā u*. Cf. 1, 84, 11 where Indra's drink is said to impel his weapon; 2, 16, 12; 3, 44, 5.

That the *vajrin-* is stated to have opened (dug) a bed for the rivers – cf. 1, 32, 1; 7, 49, 1 – is not strange; in the Mahābhārata, 1, 3, 132 the god sends his "thunderbolt" to open a passage to the subterranean regions. In 8, 66, 4 he succeeds in digging up a hidden treasure. In 1, 57, 6 he is related to have split, with his *vajra*, a mountain. The epithet is also found in passages describing the god's driving his chariot: 1, 7, 2; 5, 30, 1; 7, 34, 4; 10, 22, 4; 96, 6, where it no doubt helps to evoke in the minds of the auditors the image of the god who, in full armour, goes to war. Hence also its use in 1, 40, 8 which refers to his invincibility and in 6, 18, 6 describing him as a *vajrin-* in battles. In 8, 68, 9 those speaking desire to win the prize in battles, assisted by the *vajrivat-*; cf. 8, 92, 11. According to 4, 20, 2 the beneficent *vajrin-* who abounds (in booty etc.) may further the interests of those praying: the *vajra* enables the god to win property which he is expected to distribute to his wor-

shippers. Cf. 3, 53, 13; 5, 36, 5. The wielder of the “thunderbolt” is of course mighty and his strength and energy are often emphasized: 10, 22, 12 and especially 6, 29, 3 *dhṛṣṇur vajrī śavasā dakṣiṇāvān*; 32, 1. See also 5, 29, 14; 1, 80, 7. Statements such as 8, 12, 24 are no doubt to draw attention to his heroic power: *na yaṃ vivikto rodasī / nāntarikṣāṇi vajriṇam*; cf. 8, 70, 5; 74, 14. Prayers addressed to Indra in his *vajrin*-aspect – cf. 8, 49, 6 – may be explained as an appeal to his actual and armed assistance. See 4, 20, 3; 6, 19, 12. Those occurrences of the “epithet” which may be regarded as substantival in character will be discussed in another section of this book.

Similar observations may be made with regard to *vajrahasta*- “who wields the vajra” and *vajrabāhu*- “the thunderbolt-armed one”, epithets often applied to Indra in descriptions of his heroic and military activities: R̥V. 2, 12, 12 *yo rauhiṇam asphurad vajrabāhur / dyām ārohantam* “who armed with the bolt spurned R. as he scaled heaven”; in 2, 19, 2 the adjective is more evidently an apposition to the verb: *vajrahasto 'him indro... vi vṛscat*; other instances are: 1, 174, 5 (enemies); 6, 17, 1; 7, 18, 12; hence also the combination with *ratheṣṭhā* “warrior fighting from a chariot”: 6, 22, 5. In 1, 109, 8 Indra and Agni, destroyers of fortresses and wielders of a vajra, are supplicated for assistance. The possession of this weapon was no doubt a real help to the god in destroying the strongholds of his opponents: 7, 19, 5 *tava cyautnāni vajrahasta tāni / nava yat puro navatiṃ ca sadyaḥ*. See also 7, 21, 4. In 10, 103, 6 the v. god opens the cow-sheds and “finds” the cows. R̥V. 8, 24, 24 he is able to escape even death. Elsewhere I. v. is implored for protection: 1, 100, 12; 101, 1; 4, 29, 4; cf. 1, 173, 10; for assistance and victory: 4, 20, 1; cf. 39, 4. The wielder of the vajra fills the world with his glory: 6, 46, 5. R̥V. 1, 32, 15 is of special interest in that I. who bears the vajra is called a universal king; cf. 10, 61, 20 and 10, 44, 3 *nṛpatiṃ vajrabāhum*.

Not infrequently the bearer of the vajra is said to grant wealth: cf. 10, 61, 22, the well-known implication of heroic victoriousness; and especially 6, 29, 1 *maho hi dātā vajrahasto asti*; 7, 23, 6; 32, 3; 8, 90, 4. In 8, 2, 31 the *vajrahasta*- is stated to distribute *vājas*. Cf. also 6, 46, 2. Elsewhere the v. one is praised and expected to grant sons and kine in exchange for the strengthening laudations: 7, 23, 6. The epithet further occurs: in an invitation to drink soma: 3, 32, 3; 7, 32, 4; cf. also 9, 97, 49; in a general supplication for well-being: 4, 39, 4; in a description of the god's great power and formidableness: 2, 12, 13; in a request to mount his chariot: 5, 33, 3; to open a bed for rivers: 3, 33, 6; cf. 1, 165, 8.

The adjective *adrivant*- lit. “possessing stones (rocks) or a stone (rock)”

has been variously understood: “Steine mit sich führend, mit Schleudersteinen bewaffnet” (Roth in the Petr. Dict.); “mit Schleudersteinen versehen” (Grassmann); “armed with stones or thunderbolts” (Monier-Williams); “den Schleuderstein, den Keil besitzend” (Geldner, Glossar zum Rigveda in Auswahl; “Herr des Preszsteins” (the same, in Der Rig-veda übersetzt), etc. Sāyaṇa in explaining (e.g. 1, 10, 7) *parvato-palakṣitavajrayukta-* or (1, 11, 5) *vajrayukta-* – cf. also (1, 121, 10) *ādrṇāti anenety adrīr vajraḥ* – and (often elsewhere) *adrivas: vajravat* and *vāharūpameghayukta* (1, 80, 7; cf. 1, 33, 6), though in most cases identifying *adri-* “stone” with the vajra incidentally prefers the sense of “cloud”, and Mādhava holding (1, 10, 7): *adrīr ādrṇāty amitrān iti vajraḥ* likes the former explication better. It is worth emphasizing that this epithet, which is exclusively proper to the RV. and occurs only in the vocative, is often used in passages relating Indra’s heroic and military power and exploits, or even his forceful and violent actions. Cf. 1, 10, 7 when he is said to open the fenced places or caves where the cows are kept; and very unequivocally 1, 11, 5 “thou has opened the cave containing the cows, O *adrivas*”; 1, 121, 10 “throw the missile at the *phaliga-*” words followed by a reference to Indra’s shattering, from the heavens, the forts of the great antagonist Śuṣṇa. Elsewhere the epithet under discussion combines with *vajrin-* “possessor or wielder of the vajra”: 1, 80, 7 stating that to Indra heroism was accorded. In 1, 80, 14 mention is made of the god’s roaring or thundering noise (*abhiṣṭana-*) which causes all things standing and moving to tremble. The stanza 1, 129, 10 is a prayer for assistance, anticipating the god’s being a protector and assistant who while prejudicing the cases of others who are aiming at the petitioners will help the latter. In this long stanza no mention whatever is made of pressing soma; in a ‘military’ sense *adrivas* would on the other hand match the terms *ugram*, *mahimā* “greatness, might”, and *ojiṣṭha trātar* “most energetically powerful protector”. Here Sāyaṇa resorts to the explication *ādrer ādarter bhakṣaka vā śatrūṇām*. In 1, 133, 2 the same god is eagerly requested to cut off the heads of the ‘sorceresses’; in st. 6 to dash down the great antagonists who make the heavens fear, to the earth; here the military sense of *adrivas* would correspond with the other attribute *śuṣmintama-* “most impetuous one” and *śuṣmibhir vadhair ugrebhir īyase*. In 5, 35, 5 the *adrivant-* and *śatakratu-* lord of heroic power is implored to drive over the enemy with his chariot.

The epithet occurs also in general prayers for protection: 3, 37, 11 “do thou come, *śakra-* “mighty” and *adrivas*”; 4, 32, 5 (*adrivas: vajrin*, Sāyaṇa); 8, 61, 4; in requests for, or affirmations of, favour and friend-

ship: 7, 20, 8; 8, 1, 5; cf. 13; 8, 6, 22. Indra is the protector of the eulogist: 8, 13, 26; 21, 7; 8, 24, 6; 11; 68, 11; 80, 4; cf. also 8, 50, 10. Being “much invoked” (*puruhūta-*), the *adrivant-* is 5, 36, 3 informed of the great fear of the man who speaks. In 8, 2, 40 the *a.* has extended his favour to one of his worshippers. The eulogy is 8, 12, 4 said to have re-fortified the god, who is expected to make it successful. In 6, 46, 2 the “thunderbolt-handed” (*vajrahasta-*) and *a.* Indra is prayed for possessions, *inter alia*, *vāja-*; in 8, 62, 11 the god being addressed as *vṛtrahan*, *adrivas*, and *śūra* is asked to be the prayer’s associate for making profits. Indra’s valorious deeds lead to the superiority of both gods, i.e. of Varuṇa and himself: 5, 38, 3.

In 5, 39, 1 the *citra-* “excellent” god who is also *vidadvasu-* “finding possessions (for his worshippers)”, being addressed as *adrivas* is implored to bring a gift to those speaking, but in st. 3 the poet asks him to make accessible (this gift in the form of) *vāja-* by force, by breaking open even the firmly closed or massive places (*ḍṛḷhā*). The same object of the god’s forceful activity recurs in 6, 45, 9 *vi ḍṛḷhāni cid adrivo / janānām śacīpate / vṛha māyā anānata* “spreng ... selbst die festen (Behälter, oder: Schätze, Burgen) der (fremden) Leute, du Kräftermeister, (zerspreng) ihre Blendwerke, Ungebeugter!” (Geldner, whose “o Herr der Preszsteins” is out of tune here). The poet of 10, 147, 1 uses the epithet in connection with the god’s fury as he killed Vṛtra, the earth trembling because of his impetuosity. In 8, 64, 1 Indra is asked to practise liberality while driving away the haters of brahman (*brahmadviṣaḥ*), i.e. the opponents of the poet who detract from the power inherent in his verses.

Occasionally the epithet seems to be traditional: 8, 92, 27; 97, 9; 98, 8.

There are, on the other hand, places where the epithet combines with references to soma: 3, 41, 1 “do thou approach, O *a.*, in order to drink our soma” (*adrivaḥ: vajrin*, Sāyaṇa); 8, 15, 4 where the god’s intoxication which is bull-like and enables him to come off victorious in battle, which creates space (*lokakṛtnum*) and is gold-coloured (that is to say: soma is yellow), is praised; in 8, 61, 4 asking for the god’s aid and victory *a.* joins the above-discussed epithet *śiprin* which usually occurs in passages bearing upon soma-drinking; 8, 76, 8 soma is offered and eulogies are dedicated to Indra, who is accompanied by the Maruts. The value of his presents is known, the poet of 8, 92, 18 holds, addressing him as *a.*, *satya* “truthful, faithful one”, *somapāḥ* “drinker of soma” and *dasma* “accomplisher of wonderful deeds”.

The stanza 9, 53, 1 is of some interest because while addressed to Soma it would excellently fit in with praise of Indra: “Thy courage and energy

have arisen, piercing the evil power (*rakṣas*), O *a.*; thrust the rivals away". According to Sāyaṇa the epithet means *grāvavan soma*, i.e. "possessing, or being accompanied by, pressing-stones", i.e. Soma. In 7, 89, 2 the epithet is, curiously enough, used in a prayer for forgiveness addressed to Varuṇa who is intimated to have punished the person speaking by illness. It may be observed that even the vajra epithets are sometimes applied to another god.

From the above discussion of the relative texts the conclusion might be drawn that the traditional, i.e. Indian, explication: *adrivas* is an aspect of Indra's heroic and military activity and 'synonymous' with *vajrin* is correct. If I am right in contending that the Ṛgvedic epithets are very often used so as to suit the context, the contents and tenor of the majority of the stanzas in which this vocative occurs do not leave room for doubt. The question may however arise whether the passages 3, 41, 1 etc. exhibit a rubbed off or stereotyped use of the word, or whether they show a transferred or secondary, or possibly another more or less independent meaning. Since *adri-* occurs not only to denote "rock" or "stone", but also, and often, in the sense of "pressing-stone", *adrivant-* may be a regular derivative from the noun in that meaning. That the sense of "stone for a sling" assumed by Grassmann and others in 1, 51, 3; 61, 7; 168, 6 is at least in two cases – in 1, 168, 6 *vy adriṇā paratha tveṣam arṇavam* there may perhaps be something said for Sāyaṇa's interpretation: *vajreṇa dīptam udakavantam megham viśīrṇam pātayatha* – very uncertain is on the other hand no reason for disputing the assumption that *adrivas* conveyed an idea similar to *vajrin*. Although Indra's weapon is usually explicitly designated by the term *vajra-*, and *vajra-* is generally described as metallic (*āyasa-*, e.g. 1, 52, 8), it is incidentally spoken of as a rock (*parvata-*, 7, 104, 19) or "stone of, or: from, the heavens" (*divo aśmānam*, 1, 121, 9). Whether these terms refer to the *vajra-* – cf. also 4, 22, 1 (Indra: *yo aśmānam śavasā bibhrad eti*, where Sāyaṇa: *a.* = *vajram*; 2, 30, 5) – or to another implement, so much is clear that the god sometimes hurled stones at his enemies. As is well known substantives denoting matter, and their derivatives are often in definite circles mainly or preferentially used in a specialized meaning: the Greek *δῆρον* etymologically meaning "(a piece of) wood, tree, stem" was in military phrases "the shaft of a spear, or the spear itself", in nautical terminology "the plank(s) of a ship", or "the mast", under other circumstances "the pole (of a standard)", etc., and *leather* may, in English, stand for any of various objects made of leather, e.g. a football or cricket ball, a strap holding the stirrup iron etc. A similar polysemy could therefore be safely assumed

in the case under discussion. There is another point to be borne in mind, viz. a certain parallelism in function between Indra's weapon and the pressing-stones: they destroy, both of them, evil beings (see e.g. 5, 31, 5; 7, 104, 17; 10, 36, 4; 10, 100, 8); while the *vajra*- is the instrument by which the champion of the prosperity of mankind rouses and generates the powers and substances which mean food and life, the pressing-stones enable man to produce the fluid of life, because soma when pressed is *amṛta*- (VājS. 19, 72). This 'parallelism', felt as 'identity', may perhaps account for the use of *adrivas* in both groups of passages. For a closer semantic relation between *adrivas* and *vajrin* attention may finally be drawn to the adjective *vajrivas* = *vajrin* which must have arisen under the influence of *adrivas*.

Although *śakra*- "mighty" is not the only epithet deriving from the root *śak*- "to be able" which applies to Indra, it may be discussed separately because it has developed into another name of the god. It is small wonder that this adjective often occurs in stanzas commemorating or merely mentioning Indra's victories or heroic exploits: ṚV. 1, 54, 2 *arcā śakrāya śākinē śacīvate...* / *yo dhṛṣṇunā śavasā rodasī ubhe* / *vṛṣā vṛṣatvā vṛṣabho nyrñjate* "sing dem mächtigen, dem machtreichen, machtvollen..., der mit kühner Kraft als der riesige Bulle durch seine Bulleneigenschaft beide Welten zwingt!" (Geldner); 10, 104, 10 *sasāhe śakraḥ pṛtanā abhiṣṭiḥ*;⁵⁵ 10, 167, 2 *svarjitam... śakram*; 7, 104, 21 *abhīd u śakraḥ paraśur yathā vanam* / *pātreva bhindan sata eti rakṣasaḥ*. Similarly, in a prayer to come off victorious: 10, 38, 2 *syāma te jayataḥ śakra medinaḥ* "we should like to be thy companions, O mighty one, when thou winnest the day!"; and in passages such as 8, 69, 14 *atīd u śakra ohata indro viśvā ati dviṣaḥ* "the mighty Indra holds all (his) enemies in contempt", and 8, 92, 11 *ayāma dhīvato dhiyo arvadbhiḥ śakra godare* / *jayema pṛtsu vajrivaḥ* "allons! we wish to defeat the poems of the poet (as it were) with steeds in battles, thou mighty one, opener of the stables of the sky, bearer of the vajra!" The mighty one is indeed invoked to grant the victory to his worshippers: 10, 43, 6 *yasyāha śakraḥ savaneṣu raṇyat* / *sa tīvraiḥ somaiḥ sahate pṛtanyataḥ*. Elsewhere the same epithet occurs in connection with energetic action or other evidence of the god's physical strength and superiority: 1, 62, 4 *sa... adrim... phaligam indra śakra valaṃ raveṇa darayas*; 8, 97, 14 *tvam pura indra cikid enā* / *vy ojasā śaviṣṭha śakra nāśayadhyai*; 8, 66, 3; 4, 16, 6 *viśvāni śakro naryāṇi vidvān* / *apo rireca sakhibhir nikāmaiḥ* "the mighty one who is skilled in all manly

⁵⁵ See Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, III, p. 322.

activities has set the waters free...";⁵⁶ 7, 104, 20. In 6, 35, 5 the mighty one is praised as a hero, who opens the doors (of the cow-shed, or of riches⁵⁷); 5, 34, 4 he is described as a person of great moral courage and undauntedness (cf. 3). The epithet is also used in stanzas containing a reference to the Vṛtra conquest: 8, 13, 15; 97, 4. The mighty Indra is of course considered a protector: 6, 47, 11; 8, 31, 2, the former stanza commemorating his heroism and readiness to assist his devotees: *trātāram indram avitāram indram / have have suhavam sūram indram / hvayāmi śakram puruhūtām indram / svasti no maghavā dhātv indrah*; the latter expressing confidence in the god's assistance in the case of distress (*aṃhas*).⁵⁸ Wherever he is, he helps: 8, 13, 15. Whereas he is 1, 104, 8 implored to spare those praying, he is 8, 93, 18 asked to hear them. At soma sacrifices the presence of the mighty one is requested: 1, 177, 4; 3, 37, 11; 8, 12, 17; 8, 97, 4, the epithet being, perhaps, a covert allusion to the god's power to reciprocate the hospitality of the sacrificers: compare also 3, 35, 10 where he is invited to drink soma (see 8, 2, 23; 52, 1) and 1, 10, 5. The worshipper's interested motives are in any case more explicitly mentioned in 8, 45, 10: *aram te śakra dāvane / gamemed indra gomataḥ* "we should like to come readily to thy granting (boons), O possessor of cows, mighty one"; 8, 92, 26; 10, 42, 3 "my hymn must be profitable, O mighty one". In 1, 10, 6, a prayer for possessions and manly vigour, the god is stated to be *śakra*-, a distributor of possessions, and is expected to exert himself for the benefit of those speaking: *sa śakra uta naḥ śakat*.⁵⁹ It is easily understood that this god is considered able to let men partake of goods: 7, 20, 9. Sometimes, e.g. 1, 104, 8 and 8, 32, 12, the epithets *śakra*- and *maghavan*- combine; 1, 10, 6; 7, 20, 9 and 8, 32, 12 (*sa naḥ śakraś cid ā śakad / dānavān... / indro viśvābhir ūtibhiḥ*) the former adj. and the verb *ā śak*- forming cases of paronomasia⁶⁰ occur in the same pāda. Whatever influence the tendency to combine words of the same root may have had upon the choice of the epithet, it is clear that it was used in reference to Indra's ability to exert himself for the benefit of man. The stanza 10, 134, 3 is of special interest: *ava tyā brhatīr iṣo... / śacībhiḥ śakra dhūnuhi* "shake down that solid affluence, O mighty one, with thy might".

Sometimes, however, *śakra*- has already become a substitute for the god's name, e.g. 8, 50, 1 (= Vāl. 2, 1) *pra su śrutam surādhasam arcā*

⁵⁶ See Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 435.

⁵⁷ See Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 133.

⁵⁸ For *aṃhas* see *Indo-Iranian Journal*, I (1957), p. 33 ff.

⁵⁹ *asmadīyarakṣaṇe śakto 'bhūt*, Sāyaṇa; *śaktān karotu*, Mādhava.

⁶⁰ See the author's book *Stylistic repetition in the Veda*, chapter XI.

śakram: hearing this opening stanza the audience is expected to understand to whom it is addressed. There are two passages – and a third in the Vāl. 4, 1 (= 8, 52, 1) – in which the terms Indra and *Śakra* (or *śakra*?) run parallel: 7, 104, 21; 8, 91, 1 *indrāya sunavai tvā / śakrāya sunavai tvā*. However, in both texts the epithet has, in all probability, its full sense, only a mighty god being able to cure the girl Apālā, etc. The same observation may be made with regard to 8, 1, 19.

In 8, 4, 15 the epithet is applied to Pūṣan, who possessing much wealth is chosen the associate of the singers: “O mighty one, O thou who art much invoked, help us on account of our prayer to procure wealth, O liberator”.⁶¹ Whilst invoking the Aśvins the poet of 2, 39, 3 calls them *śakrau*, no doubt a covert allusion to their ability to render assistance. In 5, 41, 15 the varūtri or guardian goddess, implored to spare the speaker’s life, is for similar, obvious reasons called “mighty”. That they are mighty appears from 10, 24, 4.⁶² The epithet applying to the Maruts fits the context perfectly in 1, 166, 1: *yudheva śakrās taviṣāṇi kartana*.

The other adjectives derived from *śak-* “to be able” are of similar interest. They also often express the poets’ conviction that a god must be mighty if he is to help man (see e.g. also ṚV. 4, 20, 9). In prayers for help, victory, and benefactions the power of the god is therefore very often emphasized. In applying these epithets to the god the poets not only draw an essential feature of his character, they also attempt to increase his capability. Compare e.g. ṚV. 1, 54, 1 f. “do, Thou bounteous one, not fail us in this battle, in (this) distress; it is not possible to attain the end of thy heroic power (*śavas*); praise the powerful Indra who hears us, who by his bold heroism subdues heaven and earth” (*arcā śakrāya śākinē śacīvate / śṛṇvantam indram mahayann abhi ṣṭuhi / yo dhr̥ṣṇunā śavasā rodasī ubhe / vṛṣā vṛṣatvā vṛṣabho nyr̥ñjate*); 6, 24, 4 likewise with exuberant paronomasia: *śacīvatas te puruṣāka śākā / gavām iva srutayaḥ saṃcaraṇīḥ / vatsānām na tantayas ta indra / dāmanvanto adāmānaḥ sudāman* “deine Kräfte, des Kraftvollen, du Vielkräftiger, sind wie die gangbaren Wege der Rinder. Wie die Stricke der Kälber sind deine (Kräfte) schenkend (bindend) ohne Fesseln, du reichlich schenkender Indra” (Geldner). In 6, 31, 4 the poet leaves nothing to be guessed: *tvaṃ śatāny ava śambarasya / puro jaganthāpratīni dasyoḥ / aśikṣo yatra śacyā śacīvo / divodāsāya sunvate ... vasūni* “thou hast pulled down the hundred irresistible strongholds of the dasyu Ś., on which occasion thou hast bestowed a fortune upon the soma-pressing D...”. Thus various aspects

⁶¹ See also S. D. Atkins, *Pūṣan in the Rig-veda* (Princeton, 1941), p. 78.

⁶² For which see Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, III, p. 161.

of Indra's power are emphasized in 4, 22, 2 *vṛṣā vṛṣandhiṃ caturaśrim asyann / ugro bāhubhyāṃ nṛtamaḥ śacīvān*; 8, 68, 2 *tuviśuṣma tuvikrato śacīvo viśvayā mate / ā paprātha mahitvanā* "O high-spirited one, O thou of efficient power of mind, O mighty one, ... thou hast by means of thy greatness filled (the universe)". Being himself unbent, Indra is invoked to smash the strongholds of the foreigners to pieces and to annihilate the products of their creative imagination (*māyāḥ*⁶³): 6, 45, 9; he is the one who defeats Vṛtra, a feat of heroism (*śava upamam*) commemorated 8, 62, 8: *yad dhaṃsi vṛtram ojasā śacīpate*; and his desire to be victorious is stimulated: 8, 15, 13 *indram jaitrāya harṣayā śacīpatim*. Being a saver and a protector of those who worship him – cf. 4, 30, 17 – and expected to exert himself for the benefit of his worshippers – cf. 1, 62, 12 *śikṣā śacīvas tava naḥ śacībhiḥ* "do thou exert thyself, O mighty one, for us as much as thy might permits"; 8, 2, 15; 8, 14, 2 – Indra who has extended his kindness to a multitude of people in distress – cf. 1, 106, 6; 8, 37, 1; 10, 104, 4 *ūtī śacīvas tava vīryeṇa*... – is, as a "lord of power", implored to come to his worshippers' aid – cf. 8, 61, 5; 66, 14; 3, 53, 2. He is invited to the soma feast: 8, 2, 28, and stated to be a liberal and bounteous lord; 4, 31, 7; 10, 24, 2 "we approach thee with offerings, O lord of power, comply with our wishes"; he is asked to hold out a prospect of cows and horses, because he is a lord of *vāja*-,⁶⁴ *śacīvat*- and possessed of marvellous skill (*daṃsanā*: 1, 29, 2). "O powerful I., yours are these goods, take them and bring them here, O thou of superior power (*abhibhūti*-), do thou not leave the wish of thy praiser unfulfilled" (1, 53, 3); cf. 8, 2, 39. – A confirmation of the god's power: 10, 49, 11.

An epithet which is in a large majority of cases given to Agni, "son – i.e. representative, manifestation – of conquering and overwhelming power": *sūnuḥ sahasas*, is sometimes attributed to Indra, the god who in the belief of Vedic man represented force, energy, and vitality in nature, and who was intimately connected with victoriousness and with the irresistible powers of rain and lightning. Whereas the main function of this phrase in 6, 18, 11 is to be a reminder of this aspect of the god's nature – "approach, Indra ... with affluence, thou brilliant one, s. o. p., ..." –, it is in 6, 20, 1 very appropriately used: "that affluence which through heroic power is superior ..., which carries off (as spoil) a thousandfold, which procures fertile land and overcomes inimical influences, grant us that, O son of power". In commemorating one of Indra's wonderful masterpieces, viz. the production of milk, the author

⁶³ For *māyā*- see *Four studies in the language of the Veda* (The Hague, 1959), ch. IV.

⁶⁴ For *vāja*- see *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism* (Utrecht, 1954), p. 48 ff.

of 1, 62, 9 applies the same epithet to him. In 6, 21, 11 Indra is, as son of power, invited to approach.

In 4, 24, 1 the poet calling Indra a son of “heroic power” (*śavasaḥ sūnum*) states that it is he who gives the eulogist objects of great value. In 8, 90, 2 the god is described as great and liberal, and an alliance with him is desired. In another passage Indra is addressed as a “son of śavas” and at the same time described as unsurpassed and as being a god who realizes man’s hopes: 8, 92, 14. However 1, 103, 4 regards a similar phrase, *sūnuḥ śravase* “son of fame”, a name (*nāma*), which the god had obtained by setting out to kill the dasyus.

Indra’s power, courage and greatness are lauded in lavish terms. He is strong, heroic, victorious, of boundless force and irresistible might. Epithets expressing this aspect of his character are *tavás-* “mightily and vigorously active”; *tura-* “prompt, eager, victorious”; *śūra-* “hero, heroic, brave, valiant”. They frequently occur in passages extolling, stimulating, or simply mentioning the god’s fighting spirit, valour and victoriousness. The intoxicating soma juices are expected to stimulate him into bellicose activity: 6, 17, 4 *te tvā madā br̥had indra svadhāva / ime pītā ukṣayanta dyumantam / mahām anūnam tavaśam vibhūtim / matsarāso jarhṛṣanta prasāham*. The epithets belonging to this semantic field often occur accumulatively so as to make the stanzas containing them true confirmations of the god’s superior power and heroism: 6, 18, 4 *sad id dhi te tuvijātasya manye / sahaḥ sahiṣṭha turatas turasya / ugram ugrasya tavaśas tavīyo / ’radhrasya radhraturo babhūva* “real indeed is, I believe, the preponderating force⁶⁵ of thee that art strong-born (of strong nature), O most powerful one, of thee, that pressest forward promptly; it is energetically powerful, belonging to thee, that art energetically powerful, vigorously active *par excellence*, appropriate to the inflexible one, who furthers him who is inclined to submit”. Cf. also 6, 32, 1; 7, 20, 3; 8, 61, 18; 97, 10, and statements such as 10, 55, 6 *śākmanā śāko... yo mahaḥ śūraḥ*. The epithet is an adequate means of enhancing the impressiveness of a passage: 1, 133, 6 *śuṣmintamo hi śuṣmibhir vadhair ugrebhir īyase / apūruṣaghno apratīta śūra satvabhis / trisaptaiḥ śūra satvabhiḥ*. In stanzas such as 1, 178, 3 the epithet is appositely used: *jetā nr̥bhir indraḥ pṛtsu śūraḥ* “I, the hero, is with the men victor in the battles”; 2, 17, 2 *śūro yo yutsu tanvam parivyata / śīrṣani dyām mahinā praty amuñcata* “the hero who in the battles girded up his body, he placed, powerfully, heaven on his head”; 7, 18, 11 describing a king’s acts of heroism: *śūraḥ sargam*

⁶⁵ For the meaning of *sahas* see *Some observations on the relations between “gods” and “powers”*, p. 15 etc.

akṛṇod indra eṣām “the hero I. performed a race amongst them”; cf. also 1, 63, 4; 8, 45, 3. In 1, 32, 12 the epithet being applied to Indra refers to the god’s taking possession of the cows and the soma: *ajayo gā ajayaḥ śūra somam*.

In imploring Indra’s assistance the poet emphasizes that he is *tavās-* “vigorously active” in any enterprise: 1, 30, 7. In 1, 131, 7 Indra, of powerful nature (*tuvijāta-*) and heroic (*śūra-*), is moved to slay the enemy. A significant effusion is contained in 8, 50 (Vāl. 2), st. 9 *etāvatas te vaso vidyāma śūra navyasaḥ / yathā prāva etaśam kṛtvye dhane yathā vaśam daśavraje*; in demanding the god’s assistance he is, with reference to former evidence of his readiness to help, addressed as a hero and a benefactor. Compare also 1, 132, 6; 10, 22, 9; 112, 1; 131, 1 and 1, 51, 15. In 10, 22, 12 Indra the hero is asked to hinder the manifestation of superior power in the wrong place; in 2, 30, 10 – “ein Lied zum bevorstehenden Kampf”⁶⁶ he is moved to perform the acts of heroism together with the heroic warriors amongst those speaking, the stanza giving occasion to paronomasia: *śūra śūraiḥ*. The author of 2, 11, 18 asks the god to assume the heroic power (paronomasia: *śavaḥ śūra*) by means of which he had pierced Vṛtra and his companion. Elsewhere hopes are cherished that man, aided by the hero (Indra), will defeat the enemies and enjoy wealth: 6, 19, 13. In 1, 63, 8 Indra is expected to bestow vitality to those praying.

Not infrequently these epithets are a special demand upon the hearer’s attention in affirmation of the god’s warlike abilities, courage, and physical strength. In R.V. 10, 105, 6 *tataḥ śūraḥ śavasā* – notice the paronomasia, *ś.* and *ś.* deriving from the same root – the author, dilating upon the god’s strength observes that “he, a hero, has fashioned the thunderbolt by force”. The Vṛtra combat is commemorated 2, 11, 2 *sṛjo mahīr indra yā apinvaḥ / pariṣṭhitā ahinā śūra pūrvīḥ*; ibid. 5... *ahann ahiṃ śūra vīryeṇa* “thou killedst, O hero, the serpent with manly courage” is likewise a confirmation of the highly important mythological event, an expression of the poet’s belief in the god’s heroism and an attempt to keep this up to the mark. Cf. also 2, 11, 18; 8, 2, 36; 10, 28, 7, and for other warlike enterprises 6, 35, 5.

Strikingly frequent are the passages in which the god, being addressed as strong or valiant, is just praised or offered a eulogy: 1, 61, 1 *asmā id u pra tavase turāya / prayo na harmi stomam māhināya... / indrāya brahmāṇi rātataṃ*. The element of confirmation is, here also, unmistakable: the god is energetic, prompt and mighty(?) and by praising him one

⁶⁶ Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 313.

adds to his power and greatness. Completely new words⁶⁷ are 6, 32, 1 pronounced which please the great hero, the strong, prompt, exuberant, powerful wielder of the *vajra*- very much; some examples of Indra's power are added in st. 2. In 2, 11, 3 Indra, addressed as a hero (*śūra*), is likewise stated to be pleased by the hymns of praise. Other instances are 2, 19, 8; 3, 32, 9; 5, 33, 1; 8, 96, 10.

Attention has already been drawn to the connections between Indra's heroism and liberality. The poets are not rarely quite explicit on this point: 7, 27, 1 "thou (Indra) that as a hero strivest, in the capturing of men, after feats of heroic power, do thou give us our share in the cow-pen (which has been captured)". These relations are no doubt also referred to in statements such as 1, 11, 6 *tavāhaṃ śūra rātibhiḥ praty āyam* "with thy gifts, O hero, I returned": st. 5 mentioned the god's forceful opening of Vala's caves in which the cows were kept imprisoned. In 4, 32, 21 Indra, addressed as *śūra vṛtrahan* is said to be in good repute as a munificent god, and implored to give those speaking a share. Other passages worth mentioning are: 1, 57, 1; 8, 49, 3. Hence also combinations of epithets such as 8, 61, 18 *prabhaṅgī śūro maghavā tuvimaghaḥ / saṃmiślo vīryāya kam* "he (Indra) is a destroyer, a hero, bounteous, he gives much, fully equipped for a display of manly courage". In 1, 173, 5 Indra is qualified as a *śūro maghavā* "a bounteous hero", the stanza referring to his superiority in warfare.

Intoxication, heroic activity and distribution of gifts are 9, 1, 10 mentioned together in a concise form and in their natural order: *asyed indro madeṣv ā / viśvā vṛtrāṇi jighnate / śūro maghā ca maṇhate* "in his fits of drunkenness I. slays all malignant influences, and grants, as a hero, gifts". Another instance is 1, 81, 8 *mādayasva sute sacā / śavase śūra rādhasē* "rejoice with the pressed soma, in order to display heroic force, O hero (paronomasia), in order to display generosity"; 9, 81, 1; 10, 22, 15. As appears from some of the above examples the reference to the god's heroic conduct or qualities is sometimes expressed exclusively by the epithets: 1, 103, 6 *bhūrikarmaṇe vṛṣabhāya vṛṣṇe / satyaśuṣmāya sunavāma somam / ya ādṛtyā paripanthīva śūro / ayajvano vibhajann eti vedaḥ* "let us press out soma for the very active vigorous bull, the truly valiant one, the hero who ... is continually distributing the prosperity of him who does not worship"; 7, 24, 3 *vahantu tvā harayo madryañcam / āṅgūṣam achā tavaśam madāya*. In other hymns the connections between a soma feast or sacrifice, the god's heroism and the aid expected from

⁶⁷ For the significance of new hymns or words of praise see "Ein neues Lied" *W.Z.K.M.*, 48, p. 275 ff.

him are indicated in plain terms: 4, 21, 1. Soma being said to exhilarate Indra to carry out his warlike deeds and to perform other great actions, his indulgence in this drink is in a natural way often mentioned together with his strength and heroism. Cf. R.V. 2, 11, 11 *pibā pibed indra sūra somam ... / pṛñantas te kukṣī vardhayantu*; 11, 17; 2, 18, 7; 4, 27, 5. In 1, 155, 1 Indra is briefly called “the great hero” (*mahe sūrāya*).

Let us now pass on to the adjective *ugra-* which – being etymologically related to *ojas* “a supernormal power, force and powers manifesting itself in great performances and primarily exhibiting the character of vital and creative energy”⁶⁸ – is very difficult to translate.⁶⁹ Being applied to a rather large number of gods, it is mostly an epithet of the mighty champion Indra. With the exception of two instances the vocative is always addressed to this god who R.V. 5, 32, 2 slew the great serpent “assuming (or exhibiting) by that deed courage (or violent power)”: *ahim cid ugra ... / jaghanvām indra taviṣīm adhatthāḥ*; who 8, 24, 7 is called a *vṛtrahantama* and an *ugra pranetar*; who 6, 25, 1 is addressed as great and “impetuous” (*śuṣmin*) and is implored to assist his worshippers in war (cf. also 7, 25, 1); who 1, 129, 5 *ugrābhir ... ūtibhiḥ* bends down haughtiness, keeps 8, 37, 2 the enemies under control, 6, 53, 4 is requested to chase away the contemners; who, being “terrible” (*ghora-*) is by his very resourcefulness (*kratu-*) invincible (*aśālha-*) when he wields the *vajra-* (7, 28, 2); who is, in 10, 113, 3, said to have, in the Vṛtra combat, been strengthened by the Maruts, who 3, 46, 2 is described as a buffalo, great by his virile power, a conquerer of others who carries away property. In other passages Indra, the *ugra-* one, is renowned as a bull: 8, 6, 14 where mention is made of his victory over Śuṣṇa, and 8, 13, 10, a stanza describing him as unchecked. He is also violent: 4, 20, 7, stating that nobody is able to hamper his activities, and great: 7, 22, 8 where his unparalleled heroism and munificence are emphasized. The *ugra-* one is a bestower, excellent or wonderfully distinguished, most attentive, kind, victorious, and the foremost winner of *vāja-*: 8, 46, 20. In 1, 33, 5 the *ugra-* lord of the bay steeds is said to have blown away the sinners in both worlds. The author of 4, 24, 4, in stating that the peoples while preparing plans for a military expedition incite each other, addresses Indra as *ugra-*. Tvaṣṭar fashioned, for the great and *ugra-* god, the *vajra* with which he annihilated the demoniac serpent: 6, 17, 10. In a minority of cases however other sides of Indra’s character come to the fore: 6, 23, 8 and 37, 1, inviting him to enjoy the offerings; in 7, 25, 4 the impetuous

⁶⁸ See the author’s relative treatise *Ancient-Indian ojas ...* (Utrecht, 1952).

⁶⁹ See *Anc.-Ind. ojas : ...*, p. 13 ff.

and *ugra-* one is implored to come every day to those who request his presence. In 8, 6, 18 the *ugra-* one is implored to respond to the call of the eulogist. The conclusion must be that it is mainly the military side of Indra's character which is brought to the fore in the above quotations. As the god's bellicose activity was, however, on the one hand a token of his vitality and on the other hand believed to promote the creative force of nature, the epithet is no doubt in harmony with these contexts, the more so as it is the element of energetic powerfulness, of superior creative might, which is often primarily denoted by the adjective *ugra-*.

Coming now to the other case-forms of this word it may be noticed that it, also elsewhere, often refers to Indra as a mighty god who is enabled by the power of vital and creative energy (called *ojas*) to perform great and impressive deeds which are not rarely bellicose in character. Compare 1, 7, 4 "Indra, assist us in acquiring *vāja-* as an *ugra-* one with *ugra-* assistances"; 100, 12; 1, 55, 3 "he distinguishes himself among the collectivity of the gods by manly courage, the *ugra-* one placed in front in order to perform every deed"; see also 165, 6 (cf. 10). In 1, 51, 11 the *ugra-* one is said to set the waters free and to mount (chariots) that hasten along. Individual acts of heroism are mentioned: 10, 113, 6 the *ugra-* one cut, by his *ojas*, *Vṛtra* to pieces; 1, 130, 7 where the *u.* one is related to have pushed, for the benefit of *Atithigva*, *Śambara* down from the mountain; 5, 32, 8 where he is said to have overpowered a mighty enemy; 8, 32, 2; 5, 31, 8. The epithet is used in connection with the god's manly power: 3, 36, 5. As an *ugra-* one Indra helps man in distress: 3, 30, 3; 4, 20, 1; 8, 21, 2. A very appropriate use of the adjective is made also in 1, 102, 10 *tvām ugram avase saṃ śiśīmasi* "dich, den Gewaltigen, machen wir scharf zum Beistand" (Geldner) and in 3, 30, 22, which is a supplication for assistance. In 6, 18, 6 the *u.* one who renders (his devotees) able or powerful (*īśānakṛt-*) is, in the conquest of enemies, to be invoked with prayers; cf. 8, 65, 5. R̥V. 3, 47, 5 he is an *u.* bestower of conquering power (*sahodām*); cf. 5, 35, 6; 6, 17, 13. In inviting the god to the sacrifice he is 8, 49, 1 (*Vāl.* 1, 1) addressed as *ugra-*. Elsewhere the poet enhances by his hymn (and by the soma offered) the *ugra-* one's *saho balam* "victorious and physical power": 10, 116, 5. Those speaking in 8, 4, 7 formulate the desire not to be afraid or tired as long as the *ugra-* one is their friend.

The epithet often combines with semantic relatives: 1, 165, 6; 171, 5 *u. ... sthaviraḥ sahodāḥ*; 3, 30, 3; 48, 4 *u. turāṣāl abhibhūtyojāḥ*; 8, 61, 12 *ugram ... pṛtanāsu sāsahim*; 4, 20, 1; 6 "who is inherently powerful like a mountain, sublime, from of old born to victorious force, *u. ...*"; 4, 22, 2;

6, 38, 5; 7, 20, 1; 8, 33, 9; 70, 4; 96, 10; 97, 10; 13; 10, 103, 5.

At times the epithet has however no special bearing upon the contents of the sentence. Thus 10, 29, 3 Indra is invited to come: *duro giro abhy ugro vi dhāva* “laufe du, der Gewaltiger, durch das Tor zu den Lobreden” (Geldner).

It may be useful to add some quotations in order to illustrate the use of the adjective in connection with other divine beings. The Maruts are as great as the sky, surpassing heaven and earth; being ageless, vigorous, impetuous, fierce and terrible, they are unequalled for might: in 1, 166, 8 they, being *ugrās tavaso virapśinaḥ* “powerful on account of their vitality, strong-and-energetic, exuberant”, protect their favourite from curse and calumny. Their help is, 3, 26, 5, *tveṣa-* “impetuous” and *ugra-*; man yields, 1, 37, 7, to their *u.* wrath. Being *u.* themselves they are stated to shake the earth: 5, 57, 3; to make the forests bow down before them through fear: 5, 60, 2. They are irresistible because of their *ojas* (*ugrāḥ: tīvrāḥ*, Sāyaṇa), cf. 1, 19, 4 and 23, 10. Cf. also 6, 66, 6; 7, 57, 1; 8, 20, 12.⁷⁰ When requested to disperse the enemies and to make the paths lead to *vāja-* Pūṣan is, 6, 53, 4, called *ugra-*. Manyu, who being of irresistible might is implored to check the enemies, is in possession of *ugraṃ pājāḥ* (“vigour”): 10, 84, 3.

The idea inherent in the adjective is, however, not necessarily military or bellicose in character. It is in harmony with the central idea expressed by the related noun *ojas* that Agastya when said to perform the process *puṣ-* “to make to thrive or prosper” is considered an *ṛṣir ugraḥ*: 1, 179, 6. Bhaga, who is conceived as a distributor of wealth, is called “winning early” and *ugra-*: 7, 41, 2. Varuṇa, by whose *māyā* the rivers flow, surveyed, being *ugraḥ* and having a thousand eyes, their paths: 7, 34, 10, a deed no less characteristic of a possessor of *ojas* than the Aśvins’ bestowing dominion (1, 157, 6). It is unnecessary to give a complete enumeration of the relevant passages because it will be sufficiently evident from the above that the context, generally speaking, afforded the poets a motive for applying this epithet.

It is sometimes at first sight difficult to understand the motives which led a poet to insert a definite epithet in a definite stanza. Thus the 2nd stanza of RV. 10, 152, which is a prayer for protection against various threats and assailants, consists almost exclusively of epithets of the god addressed, Indra, most of which are immediately clear and in harmony with the purport of the hymn: *svastidā viśas patir / vṛtrahā vimṛdho vaśī / vṛṣendraḥ pura etu naḥ / somapā abhayaṃkaraḥ* “the lord of the

⁷⁰ See *Anc.-Ind. ojas* :... , p. 15.

people who confers well-being, the killer of Vṛtra, the averter of enemies, the ruler, the bull I. must lead us, the soma-drinker, who causes safety". What has a reference to drinking soma to do with protection against opponents? The answer may be found in 8, 14, 15 *asunvām indra saṃsadam / viṣūcīm vy anāśayaḥ / somapā uttaro bhavan* "thou drivest, O I., the assembly which does not press soma away to all directions, being predominant as a drinker of soma". Drinking soma gives superior power – cf. 3, 39, 7 *somapāḥ somavṛddha*; 8, 12, 20 –, the beverage stimulating the god to perform his great deeds, for instance to conquer enemies: 6, 27, 1 f.; 7, 22, 2.⁷¹ Compare also 1, 54, 8. The draught enables the drinker to be liberal because it gives him the power over wealth and booty – hence the combination 1, 30, 11 *somapāḥ ... vajrin* –: 1, 55, 7 *dānāya manaḥ somapāvann astu*, and 6, 19, 5 *dhanadāḥ somavṛddhaḥ*; liberality is in this connection also mentioned 1, 76, 3; 8, 97, 6. The soma-drinking god is also implored to animate the worshippers: 8, 32, 7; and his intoxication is much desired by them: 8, 12, 1. Hence no doubt the frequent invocations: 1, 10, 3 "come, O soma-drinking Indra"; 4, 32, 14; – cf. also 1, 21, 1; 3; 6, 45, 10 "we have called on thee, O true one, drinker of soma, I., lord of vājas, being desirous of glory" – and the expectation on the part of the author that the god will appreciate the songs of praise: 3, 39, 7. Hence also the statement that the poems caress the drinker of soma: 3, 41, 5. Passages such as 1, 4, 2 though at first sight tautological express the hope and the desire that the god who is known as a drinker of soma should accept the devotee's invitation to do so in the particular case referred to in the text: *upa naḥ savanā gahi / somasya somapāḥ piba / godā id revato madaḥ*; the last pāda stating that "the intoxication of the wealthy one gives cows" is significant. See also 8, 92, 18 (cf. 17; 19); very evident instances are 3, 32, 1 *indra somaṃ somapate pibemam ... / ... maghavann ṛjīṣin / vimucyā harī iha mādayasva*; 5, 40, 1; 8, 21, 3: "drink s., lord of s.", i.e. "prove thyself, now and here also a d. of s."; 6, 42, 2; in a frequency of passages exhibiting one of these epithets mention is made of drinking, pouring or offering soma: 8, 46, 26 "(stimulated) by these soma-pressing men into a display of liberality by means of soma, O drinker of soma"; 8, 17, 3; 33, 15; 66, 6; 97, 6; 4, 32, 14; 49, 3. The epithet "drinker of soma" may replace the proper name: 5, 40, 4; 8, 78, 7; or alternate with the name: 7, 31, 1; 8, 12, 20.

Turning now to the epithet or, rather, title (cf. 9, 97, 34) *gopati*- "lord of cows" which is chiefly given to Indra (cf. also 10, 108, 3), it should be remembered that cows and horses are the principal goods which this god

⁷¹ See also Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 56.

is besought to present to his worshippers. The use of this epithet is in most cases in perfect harmony with this fact: 3, 30, 21 *ā no gotrā dardṛhi gopate gāḥ* “make the cow-pens, the cows, accessible to us, O lord of cows”; 6, 45, 21 *sa no ... ā prṇa / kāmam vājebhir aśvibhiḥ / gomadbhir gopate* “do thou comply with our wish with manifestations of *vāja*-, viz. horses and cows, O lord of cows”: a god who has the disposal of cows must be a *gopati*-. “Thou art the sole lord of cows, O I.; we should like to share in the goods bestowed by thee” (7, 98, 6); “he is the lord of the donations which are due to us, viz. the cows” (4, 24, 1 *sa gopatir niṣṣidhāmanah*, lit. “er ist der Kuhherr der Dankeschulden” (Geldner)); also 10, 47, 1; 67, 8 (and 10, 166, 1). Thus “lord of cows” is a function of the god who is also called *Vṛtrahan*: 3, 31, 21 *adediṣṭa vṛtrahā gopatir gāḥ* “der V. hat als Rinderbesitzer die Rinder zugewiesen” (Geldner). That the title may occur without any reference to cows appears from 8, 62, 7 where *viśvasya gopatiḥ* means “lord of the universe”; in 8, 69, 4 it is a mere title of Indra. In 8, 21, 3 the epithets *aśvapate gopata urvarāpate* are stereotyped; in 1, 101, 4 and 4, 30, 22 *gopati*- is used predicatively (also 8, 62, 7).

Adjectives referring to the important service rendered by Indra to mankind in setting the cows free or making a present of these animals are *gojit*- “conquering cattle” 2, 21, 1; *gotrabhid*- “who opens the cow-pens” 6, 17, 2 and 10, 103, 6 in a description of Indra’s power and great deeds. The author of 8, 21, 16 uses the epithet *godatra*- “bestower of cows” while referring to Indra’s liberality and inviting him to bring treasures which were stowed away. The synonymous adjective *godā*-, which is of greater frequency, is used predicatively 8, 45, 19; in 3, 30, 21 and 4, 22, 10 Indra, addressed as *maghavan*, is invited to be a *godā*; in 1, 4, 2 the god’s intoxication is qualified by this adjective.

Another term characteristic of the god Indra is *vasupati*- “lord of wealth or of good things”. It is very significantly used in 1, 170, 5 *tvam īśiṣe vasupate vasūnām / tvam mitrāṇām mitrapate dheṣṭhaḥ* “thou, lord of w., art master of goods, thou lord of friendship, art the greatest giver of friendships”. In 4, 17, 6 the statement: “thou art throughout the lord of wealth” is followed by “thou hast helped all races of men to a donation”. Other places of interest are: 10, 112, 10 *abhikhyā no maghavan nādhamānān / sakhe bodhi vasupate sakhīnām* “auf uns, die Schützsuchenden, blickend, o Gabenreicher, gedenke, o Freund, deiner Freundes, du Schätzherr!”; 8, 61, 10 *vasūyavo vasupatiḥ śatakratuḥ / stomair indram havāmahe* “desiring wealth we invoke the lord of wealth, who is of hundredfold inventiveness, Indra, with songs of praise”; 8, 52, 6 (= Vāl.

4, 6); “like the sea our desire has increased; fulfil it, O lord of goods” (3, 30, 19); “we have seized thee by thy right hand, O Indra, desiring wealth, O lord of wealth” (10, 47, 1; paronomasia); cf. also 1, 9, 9; 3, 36, 9 where the poet exclaims that he and his companions know the god to be a lord of goods. The wish expressed in 6, 52, 5 is of a more general character: ... *paśyema nu sūryam uccarantam / tasthā karad vasupatir vasūnām / devām ohāno ’vasāgamiṣṭhaḥ*. The poet of 5, 4, 1 invokes Agni, the lord of wealth, in order to win *vāja*-.`

It is right that Indra in 8, 99, 4 should be praised as *vasudā* “granting wealth”, because he is stated not to withhold his gifts,⁷² which are called *bhadrā* “auspicious”. In 2, 6, 4 the same god is in accordance with a well-known procedure asked to be a liberal lord and addressed as a *vasupate vasudāvan*. Curiously enough the compound *vasuvid-* “finding or procuring wealth” is applied to other gods, not to Indra. Brahmanaspati is 1, 18, 2 called wealthy, a destroyer of illness, a *vasuvid-* and an increaser of the well-nourished condition (of his worshippers). In 1, 91, 12 the last three adjectives combine to describe Soma (cf. also 9, 86, 39; 96, 10; 101, 11). Similar qualities are ascribed to Sarasvatī’s breast, a fountain of precious gifts (1, 164, 49). It is easily intelligible that Bhaga, whose name means, or is considered to mean, the “dispenser”, and who was regularly conceived as a distributor of wealth, is 7, 41, 6 called *vasuvid-*; compare also 10, 42, 3 and 8, 61, 5. In stating that they intend to kindle Agni in order to (bestow) wealth, the poet and his companions speaking in 8, 23, 16 call this god a *vasuvid-* (see also 1, 45, 7; 6, 16, 41). Cf. 1, 46, 2 (Aśvin). In 8, 60, 12 the adjective is conveniently used, although there is no reference to wealth or possessions in the context.

Indra is 1, 104, 9 addressed as *uruvyacas-*, i.e. “widely capacious”: the context shows that this quality refers to the size of his stomach and belly which are to contain large quantities of soma. The same epithet recurs 6, 36, 3 where it replaces the proper name: the songs of praise – obviously put on a par with strengthening food – enter the capacious god; 7, 31, 11 where a song of praise is said to be produced for the capacious and great god; 8, 2, 5 where Indra is described as being fond of any sort of soma, as *uruvyacas-* and *suhārd-* i.e. “having a good stomach”: that is to say that he can carry a good deal of any sort of soma.

In 3, 50, 1 the same compound is used as an adjective, being syntactically equivalent to a causal clause: *uruvyacāḥ pr̥ṇatām ebhir annaiḥ* “da er (Indra) reichlich Raum hat, soll er sich mit diesen Speisen füllen” (Geldner). In 10, 128, 8 the same god is called an *u.* buffalo. Applying

⁷² Or something to this effect (*anarśarātim*); cf. Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 427.

to other deities it qualifies attributively, in 5, 46, 6 Aditi,⁷³ in 10, 18, 10 the earth; and in 1, 160, 2 appositively, heaven and earth.

Passing mention may also be made of the adjective *uru-* which is applied to Indra in 2, 22, 1, where soma is said to have inspired the great and “broad” one, in order to achieve a great deed; 3, 41, 5 where the poems are stated to caress the broad drinker of soma, the lord of heroic power, no doubt an allusion to Indra’s good stomach. It is therefore right that 8, 65, 3 the great and broad god is invited to drink this beverage. Another signification should be attributed to *uru-* when used, 2, 27, 3, in connection with the Ādityas who “being broad and deep” with many eyes see what is good and what is evil. The Maruts are on the other hand broad like the firmament: 5, 57, 4. In 6, 21, 12 the epithet was obviously needed to give the hearers an idea of the strength of Indra’s horses: *ye aśramāsa uravo vahiṣṭhāḥ* “the indefatigable, broad ones which draw best”. Geldner’s translation “stämmig” may 6, 75, 9 (where the word applies to the deceased Fathers) be correct.

In the great majority of instances *satpati-* is appropriated to Indra. This term was variously translated – e.g. “starker Gebieder oder Beschützer, zum Theil fast adjectivisch” (Grassmann), “rechtmäsiger Herr” (Geldner), “strong lord” (Macdonell), and (from *sadaspati*) “maître de la maison” (Renou)⁷⁴ – and it is indeed difficult to conclude as to its exact signification from the contexts in which it occurs, because they are widely different. In 1, 174, 1 this epithet is applied to Indra, the king of all gods who is implored for help and protection and is stated to be a liberal lord, who carries (his devotees) over difficulties (*tarutra-*), who is true (*satya-*) and a bestower of conquering power (*sahas*). The idea expressed by *tarutra-* recurs in 6, 26, 2 *satpatiṃ tarutram*. Victory and destruction of enemies are the themes of 6, 56, 2 *uta ghā sa rathītamah / sakhyā satpatir yujā / indro vṛtrāṇi jighnate*; 1, 53, 6; 8, 36, 1. In 6, 46, 1 Indra, the *satpati-*, is implored, in battles and race-courses, for *vāja-*. May we conclude that the poet wishes to intimate that the victory belongs to his patrons by right or on grounds of fair play? The god’s strength is praised in 6, 46, 3 where the *satpati-* is asked to bestow strength upon his worshippers; in 8, 12, 18 he is stated to enhance their power; 8, 61, 17 is a prayer for protection: “do thou, I. s. protect us always”. Does the singer, again, suggest that the god’s favour would, in these cases, be an act of justice? Cf. also 8, 13, 12; 68, 1. In 3, 34, 7 Indra is stated to have given liberty to the gods by fighting. Is this again a token of his

⁷³ For the broadness of this goddess see *Some observations*, p. 76.

⁷⁴ Renou, *Grammaire de la langue védique* (Paris, 1952), p. 25.

adherence to what is real, true and good? This conclusion would be far from improbable with regard to 10, 8, 9 where I. s. strikes off the head of Viśvarūpa who aspired to great might. We might perhaps compare 6, 18, 4 where his overwhelming power is described as *sat* “real”. In 8, 69, 4 Indra is on the other hand called *satpati-* as well as “son of truth (reality)”: *sūnum satyasya satpatim*; as this combination is, to all probability, due to the tendency to paronomasia, it has no conclusive force with regard to the meaning of the epithet. The above 1, 174, 1 and 8, 93, 5 may however suggest a connection with the idea expressed by *satya-*: *yad vā ... satpate / na marā iti manyase / uto tat satyam it tava* “when thou, O s., thinkest: ‘I will not die’, then this too is true (in connection) with thee”. In 1, 165, 3 Indra is supposed to come to an arrangement with the Maruts; is that the reason why he bears this title? The poet of 5, 32, 11 uses the word predicatively: I. has been born as the *satpati-* of the five peoples: here Geldner’s “rechtmäsziger Herr” seems to be the correct translation. Elsewhere there seems to be no doubt that the epithet is petrified and traditional: in 10, 43, 9 the *satpati-* (Indra) is compared to the sun; in 3, 40, 4 (and 1, 53, 6) reference is made to his fondness for Soma. In 8, 53, 6 the epithet replaces the name; in 8, 21, 10 it occurs among other qualifications. Perhaps: “lord of *sat-* (the existing, beings, the correct)”.

Now that we have reviewed the most important and characteristic epithets used in connection with Indra, it soon becomes obvious that the numerous strings of descriptive or attributive terms found, at irregular intervals, in the hymns dedicated to him, do not always constitute such varied and unsystematic collections as we are inclined to believe at first sight. A not uncommon function of these enumerations is to characterize the personality of the god from a more or less limited point of view. Thus 10, 74, 5 which – with the exception of a very short syntactic “frame”: “sacrifice to the mighty-and-helpful god in order to obtain his assistance” – consists entirely of epithets, may doubtless be considered a successful attempt to throw two sides of his personality into relief, viz. his might and willingness to help: *śacīva indram avase kṛṇudhvam / anānataṃ damayantam pṛtanyūn / ṛbhukṣaṇam maghavānaṃ suvṛktim / bhartā yo vajraṃ naryam purukṣuḥ* “O mighty-and-helpful one⁷⁵ –, sacrifice to I. for assistance, the unbent one who subdues the assailants, the chief of the Ṛbhus, the benevolent one, the god praised in hymns, who carries the heroic thunderbolt, and is rich in herds”. Indra’s warlike temperament and his generosity often go together as we have seen. After

⁷⁵ I would, in contradistinction to Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 254 f., prefer to regard the vocative as anacolouthic.

having expressed the ardent desire to live under the protection of the god, the author of 8, 61 adds an final stanza (18), the first line of which runs as follows: *prabhaṅgī śūro maghavā tuvīmaghaḥ / saṃmiślo vīryāya kam.*

In emphasizing the warlike features in Indra's character – appreciated because they become so often evident in his helpfulness and readiness to save man from distress – the poet of 3, 30, 3 links a number of epithets together which may at first sight, but incorrectly, be regarded as a strange medley: *indraḥ suśipro maghavā tarutro / mahāvrātas tuvikūrmir ṛghāvān / yad ugro dhā bādrito martyeṣu / kva tyā te vṛsabha vīryāṇi* “I. mit schönen (Trinker) Lippen, der Gabenreiche, der Überwinder mit der groszen Heerschar, der Tatenreiche, Drohende – was du, der Gewaltige, unter den Sterblichen in der Bedrängnis tatest, wo bleiben diese deine Heldentaten, du Bulle?” (Geldner). There is no doubt a considerable degree of coherence between the six epithets in 10, 104, 7: *sahasravājam abhimāti-śāham / suteranam maghavānam suvrktim / upa bhūṣanti*⁷⁶ *giro apratītam / ...* “the hymns strengthen (the god) who wins *vāja*- a thousandfold, who subdues hostility, who delights in the pressed soma, the benevolent one, who is duly praised in hymns, the irresistible”: soma and eulogies enhance the god's power by which he is enabled to subdue enmity, win *vāja*- and prove himself to be *maghavan*-.

That in invoking Indra mention is made of the eulogies which are to fortify the god, that he is described as deserving praise and as much invoked especially in an opening stanza, is not surprising. The addition of other attributes such as *maghavan*-, *śatakratu*-, *śākin*- “powerful-and-helpful”, *vājasani*-, *pūrbhid*- etc. may be supposed to prepare the audience – that is to say: first and foremost the addressee himself – for the statement that the man who pronounces the praise is honoured by the distributor of goods, a statement which is to intimate that the god will show his power, courage and liberality for the benefit of those praying: cf. 3, 51, 1–3.

AGNI

A similar use of the epithet is seen in those places where the god of fire is extolled or merely referred to. In reading, for instance, ṚV. 1, 12, 6 *agnināgniḥ sam idhyate / kavir gr̥hapatir yuvā / havyavād juhvāsyah* “Agni is kindled by means of Agni,⁷⁷ the wise young lord of the house, the carrier

⁷⁶ For the meaning of *upa-bhūṣ*- see the present author's study on *bhūṣati* in *Disputationes Rheno-Trajectinae*, vol. III.

⁷⁷ From the first fire which has been produced by friction, the other sacrificial fires were taken: PañcBr. 16, 1, 3.

of oblations, the tongue-mouthed one” the question might arise whether the author has completely used his own discretion in choosing the epithets and in combining them together. There can be no doubt that the answer must be in the negative. In describing the ignition of the sacrificial fire, which is intended to carry the oblations to the gods and is believed to be the mouth by which they eat the offerings – Agni himself consuming the oblations by means of his tongues –, the god is, as we shall see further on, very often called “the youngest”, i.e. the newly kindled one. Being more closely associated with human life than any other deity, Agni is the only god called *gr̥hapati*- “lord of the house”, and is constantly spoken of as a guest in the dwellings of men. In the considerations of these functions and aspects of the ignited sacrificial fire the conclusion must be that the choice of the epithets is well adapted to the situation.

This “priestly” function is so salient a feature of Agni’s character that the epithets *havyavah*- and *havyavāhana*- “bearing the oblations (to the god)” are exclusively appropriate to him. Interestingly enough, these words are in most cases no epithets in the traditional sense of the term, but ordinary appellations occurring in statements with regard to the functions and qualities of the god. In about 15 instances they are used predicatively in communications which, as a matter of fact, are confirmations of the speaker’s belief in the god’s most important offering-bearing activities, and entreaties addressed to the divine one to continue to perform his task on which the well-being of world and mankind are believed to depend. R̥V. 5, 8, 6 may be quoted in illustration: *tvām agne samidhānaṃ yaviṣṭhya / devā dūtaṃ cakrire havyavāhanam* “thee, O A., who takest fire, O youngest, the gods have made (their) messenger and oblation-bearer”. Cf. e.g. also 1, 128, 8; 3, 5, 10; 17, 4 etc. Hardly less is the number of affirmative stanzas exhibiting one of these words in contexts such as 1, 44, 2 *juṣṭo hi dūto asi havyavāhano / agne rathīr adhvarāṇām* “for thou art the welcome messenger, the oblation-bearer, O A., the charioteer of the sacrifices”. In other places these words are employed as appositions: e.g. 7, 15, 6 ... *agnir juṣata no giraḥ / yajīṣṭho havyavāhanaḥ* “A. will delight in our eulogies, the pre-eminent worshipper, the o.-b.”; 7, 10, 3; 10, 118, 9 etc.

However, the context is not completely indifferent. In 7, 15, 6 Agni is invited to come, to find pleasure in the words of the officiants, he is stated to be a worshipper himself; that means that the god is addressed here as an intermediary between heaven and earth, so that the reference to his oblation-bearing activity is far from being out of place. In 5, 6, 5 which forms part of a *sūkta* intended to persuade the god into bringing refreshing

food to the eulogists, the poet assures him that it is to him, the lord of the bright glow, the wonderworker of beautiful glittering, the lord of the clan, the oblation-bearer, that the offerings are presented; for similar statements see 7, 10, 13. In 1, 36, 10 the gods are stated to have made the oblation-bearer the best worshipper.

Elsewhere the poet has obviously endeavoured to bring together some epithets which represent various sides of the god's personality: 1, 44, 5 *staviṣyāmi tvām ahaṃ / viśvasyāmṛta bhojana / agne trātāram amṛtam miyedhya / yajisṭhaṃ havyavāhana*. Or the addition of the epithet is a welcome means of indicating which function of the god is meant in a particular place: 2, 41, 19 *yuvām id ā vrñīmahe / agniṃ ca havyavāhanam* "ye both we chose, and A. the o.-b.". In 10, 118, 9 the poet by inserting the epithet *havyavāham* explains the motive for which the fire was kindled; cf. also 8, 102, 17. In 3, 10, 9 the epithet may be said to bring the function of the god to the fore: "it is thou whom the inspired sages kindle, the immortal oblation-bearer"; in 1, 12, 2 it is no doubt this aspect of the fire-god which induces men to invoke him: *agniṃ agniṃ havīmabhiḥ / sadā havanta viśpatim / havyavāham purupriyam*. Cf. 6, 15, 4. In 8, 44, 3 the epithet and the proper name occur alternately; in 4, 8, 1 the former serves to indicate Agni's identity.

Being produced every morning for the sacrifice the god of fire is appropriately called the "youngest": *yaviṣṭha-*, *yaviṣṭhya-*: in 3, 1, 20 his new births are opposed to his old. These frequent epithets are exclusively applied to him. The vocatives are much more usual than the other cases, the adjectives being always employed in addressing the newly kindled fire. Cf. 7, 12, 1 *aganma mahā namasā yaviṣṭhaṃ / yo dīdāya samiddhaḥ* "we have come with abundant adoration to the youngest who shines, being kindled"; 6, 48, 7; 2, 7, 1 *śreṣṭhaṃ yaviṣṭha bhārata / agne dyumantam ā bhara / rayim*; 1, 161, 1; 5, 26, 7; 6, 5, 1; 16, 11; 6, 15, 14 *havyā vaha yaviṣṭha yā te adya* "carry the oblations, O y., which today (have been offered) to thee!"; in 7, 7, 3 Agni's parents are mentioned from whom the youngest has been born as a darling; cf. also 1, 141, 4; 7, 4, 2 "as soon as he has, as the y., been born"; the author of 10, 2, 1 implores him to satisfy the gods who desire to enjoy the oblations. The poet of 1, 26, 2 after having asked him in st. 1 to don his clothes (i.e. his flames) invites the youngest Agni to sit down. Cf. 3, 28, 2; 7, 3, 5. Compare also 7, 1, 3 (see st. 1). "Protect us now that thou hast caught fire": 1, 189, 4. Agni is the youngest guest: 1, 44, 4. Agni, the youngest, is asked to lead the gods to the sacrifice: 1, 22, 10; 3, 19, 4; 8, 60, 4; 10, 1, 7; cf. 1, 141, 10; 3, 9, 6. Although the connections with the newly

ignited fire are not always so obvious as in the above quotations – cf. also 6, 6, 2 –, it is hardly doubtful that this is meant also in the other passages exhibiting this epithet. All men go up to him who is the messenger of gods and men (cf. 2, 6, 6): 10, 4, 2. He is able to conquer enemies: 10, 69, 10, and sorcerers: 10, 87, 8. Cf. also 8, 102, 3. In 3, 15, 3 the god is requested to conduct those praying safely and to enable them to obtain wealth; cf. also 5, 3, 11; 6, 48, 8 (protection); 7, 10, 5; 8, 84, 3; 1, 36, 15; 7, 16, 10; 8, 60, 8; 10, 80, 7 (aid). In 10, 45, 9 the wish is pronounced to be conducted, by Agni, the youngest, to happiness and divine favour. Cf. also 4, 12, 3.

Being considered a good conductor, Agni, the youngest, is expected to give riches and to extend his favours to priest and worshippers: 4, 2, 13; there can be no doubt that the most recent sacrificial fire is meant; cf. st. 10; 4, 4, 6; 11. Hence also the occurrence of the epithet in addressing and praising: 5, 8, 6. He is in 1, 36, 6 called *subhaga*- “possessing (and bringing) good fortune”; the wish is expressed that he will be well-disposed to his worshippers. Cf. also 1, 44, 6. The epithet may, in addressing the newly kindled fire, alternate with the proper name: 4, 12, 4; 5, 1, 10; 3, 11; 6, 48, 8; 8, 23, 28; 10, 80, 7; 87, 8; cf. also 10, 20, 2. So the conclusion may be that the connection of these epithets with the newly ignited fire is in many cases evident at first sight, and elsewhere beyond doubt.

A frequent epithet which for obvious reasons is exclusively connected with the god of fire is *dhūmaketu*- “(the) smoke-bannered (one)”. The smoke of this divine power is often mentioned by the poets so that there is no great difference between descriptive passages such as 5, 11, 3 where smoke is said to have become the god’s banner (*dhūmas te ketur abhavad divi śritah*) or 7, 3, 3 where his red smoke is stated to rise up to heaven and 10, 4, 5 where he is said to stand upright in the wood with smoke as a banner: *vane tasthau... dhūmaketuḥ*, or 10, 12, 2 a stanza dwelling upon the god’s ability to convey the sacrifice, moving through the fuel, with smoke as his banner. Elsewhere however the epithet has become more or less fixed, helping to describe or identify the god: 8, 44, 10 *vipraṃ hotāraṃ adruhaṃ / dhūmaketuṃ vibhāvasuṃ / yajñānāṃ ketuṃ īmahe*. In 8, 43, 4 the adjective is completely descriptive: *harayo dhūmaketavo / vātajūtā upa dyavi / yatante vrthag agnayaḥ* “the reddish yellow fires, s.-b. and driven by the wind fly one by one (?)⁷⁸ towards the sky”. In 1, 27, 11; 1, 44, 3 the epithet merely serves to remind the audience of the

⁷⁸ See Geldner’s note, *o.c.*, II, p. 356.

identity of the god addressed, and to lay new emphasis on an important side of his character, not to say that it is ornamental.

The well-known Vedic phrase *sūnuḥ sahasaḥ* “son of (conquering or overwhelming) power” applies also to Agni, the god of fire. Although authorities seem to have been almost unanimous with regard to the interpretation, the epithet being generally considered to find its explanation in the god’s being generated by the powerful friction of the kindling sticks, the present author has ventured to pronounce a different opinion.⁷⁹ What strikes us in perusing these R̥gvedic passages in which it occurs is in the first place the comparatively frequent references to Agni’s protective power, his victoriousness, his readiness to assist and protect his worshippers, his ability to ward off influences and circumstances inimical to success and prosperity. In 6, 13, 5 Agni, the son of power, is asked to bestow his favours upon his worshippers through his heroic power (*śavasā*). The son of power is at night gracious to that man whom he assists in order to arrive at a state of well-being: 4, 11, 6 *doṣā śivaḥ sahasaḥ sūno agne / yaṃ deva ā cit sacase svasti*. Cf. also 8, 19, 25. In 5, 4, 8 the god is invited to the sacrifice and eagerly asked to watch over those addressing him; in 10, 142, 1 the eulogist has recourse to A., the s. o. p.; Agni, the s. o. p., is watchful with his splendour: 3, 24, 3. Cf. also 7, 7, 7. It is no doubt right that a representative of victorious and overwhelming power – for this seems to have been the central meaning of the epithet – should be invoked to protect those who are in need of help.

In invoking the son of power the ancient poets not infrequently omitted the name of the god: 1, 58, 8 *achidrā sūno s. no ... stotr̥bhyo ... śarma yacha* “extend, O s. o. p., uninterrupted protection to us, (thy) eulogists”; 6, 15, 3 “extend wealth and an extensive secure residence (*chardiḥ*)”; 5, 3, 9 the priest implores the god’s protection; 7, 3, 8 he is expected to assist man by means of invincible (strongholds or manifestations?), over which the demons have no hold. The son of power annihilates distress, providing those praying with wealth: 6, 11, 6. This feature is often emphasized: 6, 5, 1 “I invoke, on your behalf, the s. o. p., the youth ... who has the disposal of (and advances) property and all good things”.

Hence also such pompous tirades as 6, 1, 10 “to thee, the great one, we will reverentially dedicate a great (gift), O A., s. o. p. ...; we would endeavour to reach thy benevolence”. The mortal man who succeeds in propitiating him will be rich, harvesting good crops: 6, 13, 4. Whoever worships him and glorifies him with songs of praise will be rich and

⁷⁹ J. Gonda, *Some observations . . .* (see n. 15).

renowned: 6, 5, 5; 10, 11, 7. The god is implored to extend his favour to individual men, granting their wishes: 7, 16, 4 “give us, O s. o. p. all enjoyments (food) of men”. “Our songs of praise should reach A., the s. o. p., in order to make him present us with treasures” (8, 71, 11). In 10, 45, 5 the same god is called “s. o. p.” as well as “bearer of possessions”. But it is not only wealth and fame which induces the poets to prevail on the god of fire; power, victory, children, *vāja*-, food, and enjoyments are also among the objects of his eagerness: 6, 13, 6; 7, 1, 21; 7, 7. The son of power has proved able to make sacrifices effective: 10, 50, 6; and is expected to favour and further the sacrifices of men: 6, 6, 1. In 3, 11, 4 he is stated to have been made by the gods the conveyer of the oblations. Cf. 3, 28, 3; 5; 6, 4, 1.

The son of power is elsewhere described as spreading himself with his radiance: 6, 12, 1; as magnifying the abodes by his assistance: 3, 25, 5; as having yoked stallions: 4, 2, 2. The function of the epithet is also clear in cases such as 7, 1, 22 where the poet and his patrons express the hope that they will not incur Agni’s displeasure. It is obvious that all the above deeds, favours and performances could be expected from a being who is strong and powerful, who is a representative or manifestation of power.

Curiously enough the phrase under discussion is also used in asking Agni to conduct the gods to the sacrifice: 6, 50, 9. Here the epithet replaces the name. The phrase belonging in 10, 45, 5 to a series of terms that describe various aspects of the god of fire may in a similar way be regarded as doing duty for his proper name: “liberal of objects of material prosperity, holding possessions ... the brilliant (excellent) s. o. p. diffuses light ...”. Compare also 8, 60, 2; 75, 3 “Thou, O youngest s. o. p., became especially worthy of worship”. Stanzas such as 3, 1, 8 may however be regarded as alluding to the god’s marvellous abilities: *babhrāṇaḥ sūno sahaso vy adyaud / dadhāṇaḥ śukrā rabhasā vapūṃsi*. Other enumerations of epithets are: 1, 127, 1; 1, 143, 1.

There can be hardly any doubt that the expression *ūrjo napāt*- “descendant of vigour (strength, refreshment)” is practically speaking synonymous.⁸⁰ Being a form of address it is 1, 58, 8 used to implore Agni for protection – the above phrase *sūno sahasaḥ* occurs in the same stanza –: *agne gr̥nantam aṃhasa uruṣyorjo napāt pūrbhir āyasibhiḥ*. The character of the function indicated by this expression is very clear in 5, 17, 5 “O son of vigour, protect us, do thou exert thyself for our well-being, be the one who fortifies us in battles”. In 8, 71, 3 and 9 the same

⁸⁰ See “*Gods*” and “*powers*” ..., p. 51 f.

aspect of the god is concerned in man's acquisition of wealth and possessions. Cf. also 10, 20, 10. ṚV. 10, 115, 8 *ūrjo napāt* is in a significant way followed by *sahasāvan* "O mighty one". In 6, 16, 25 it is, the poet holds, a good thing for a mortal man who wishes to eat, to see Agni, the son of strength: here the god is the cooker of food, an activity which presupposes physical strength. In 2, 6, 2 the phrase whilst accompanying the name of the god seems to be used in a *captatio benevolentiae*: "we wish to honour thee, O A., son of vigour, well born one". Cf. also 5, 7, 1; 8, 84, 4; 10, 140, 3. In 8, 19, 7 *sūno sahasaḥ* and *ūjām pate* combine. For *ūrjaḥ putra-* see 1, 96, 3. Although the phrase occurs also when no reference is made to special exhibitions of physical strength – e.g. 10, 140, 3 "O descendant of vigour, Jātavedas, find pleasure in these laudations"; 3, 27, 12 where the shining Agni is invoked as d. o. v.; 6, 48, 2 where those speaking intend to present gifts to Agni, called d. o. v., in order to cause him to convey the oblations to the gods; 7, 17, 6 where the gods themselves are related to have made him their oblation-bearer – there seems to be room for the supposition that in the views of the ancient Indians activities which were beyond human strength were attributed to the god's possessing a high degree of *ūrj-* "vigour". Cf. also 8, 19, 4; 44, 13.

The phrase *ūjām pati-* "lord of vigours (plur.)" likewise applies to the god of fire: in 8, 23, 12 he is implored to grant wealth and to assist man in war; in 8, 60, 9 he is besought to extend his protection to those praying. In 1, 26, 1 he is implored to put on his festive attire (i.e. his flames) and to perform the acts of worship. ṚV. 8, 19, 7 is a prayer for the possession of good fires. That a god who represents, or wins, *ūrj-* is expected to put it at the disposal of his worshippers appears from 6, 4, 4 *sa tvam* (Agni) *na ūrjasana ūrjam dhāḥ*.

Those adjectives which are generally translated by "omniscient" are often misunderstood. In archaic and so-called primitive, i.e. non-modern, and prerationalistic societies knowledge, science and "omniscience" as a rule mean practical and useful knowledge, ability, resourcefulness.⁸¹ Omniscience, moreover, does not, in connection with divine beings, mean universal or infinite intellectual understanding, experience of knowable facts, or profound familiarity with all branches of learning in any modern sense of the word, but rather complete information concerning the doings of men.⁸² The Ṛgvedic terms which must be considered

⁸¹ See the present author's treatise on *māyā* in *Disputationes Rheno-Trajectinae*, vol. III, p. 119 ff.

⁸² Cf. R. Pettazzoni, *The all-knowing god* (London, 1956).

here are *viśvavid-* and *viśvavedas-* “allknowing”. They are added to the names of several gods, which will, for convenience, be dealt with together. Before entering into particulars and discussing text places the observation should be made that the root *vid-* does not only express the sense of “knowing”, but also that of “discovering, looking for, contriving, accomplishing, effecting”. The “omniscience” of Agni – who in the Veda is especially the sacrificial fire – is seen particularly in connection with the office of *hotṛ* or officiant, with his status as a *kavi-*, with his resourcefulness. The poet of RV. 10, 91, 3 praises the god as follows: *sudakṣo dakṣaiḥ kratunāsi sukratur / agne kaviḥ kāvyenāsi viśvavit / vasur vasūnām kṣayasi tvam eka id / dyāvā ca yāni prthivī ca puṣyataḥ* “thou art, O A., clever in abilities, resourceful and efficient in matters of practical mental power, in the qualities of an inspired sage, A. (real) sage (and) all-knowing etc.”. Here the quality of “omniscience” is closely connected with Agni’s status as a *kavi-*, i.e. as an inspired sage or an enlightened person of extraordinary wisdom and insight.⁸³ Compare also 3, 19, 1 where Agni, being described as a judicious *kavi-*, omniscient and sharp-sighted, is elected sacrificial priest (*hotar-*), because he is an uncommonly good worshipper, obtaining benefices which lead to affluence and the possession of *vāja-*.

According to 3, 25, 1 Agni, the “omniscient”, is the clever or attentive (*pracetāḥ*) son of heaven; in the second part of the stanza he is however besought to worship as an experienced one. The epithet frequently combines with references to his priestly and intermediary functions: 1, 12, 1 *agniṃ dūtaṃ vr̥ṇīmahe / hotāraṃ viśvavedasam / asya yajñasya sukratum* “we chose A. as a messenger, as the *hotar* of this sacrifice, the o. one, the resourceful one”; similarly, 36, 3; 128, 8; 3, 29, 71 the word is an adjective to *havyavāha-*; 3, 58, 3. The god of the ignited fire is eagerly implored to conduct the divine powers to the sacrifice: 1, 44, 7.

The practical side of knowledge comes to the fore in 3, 20, 4: *sa vr̥trahā sanayo viśvavedāḥ / parṣad viśvāti duritā gṛṇantam* “may he, of old the killer of V., the “omniscient”, convey the eulogist across all difficulties”. “Bad courses”, discomfort, and distress in general were much feared;⁸⁴ innumerable times the gods are entreated to exert themselves to rescue man therefrom; the god who will succeed in giving lasting relief must indeed be intelligent, inventive, and resourceful. In extending his favours to those imploring his aid Agni employs guards, protectors or protecting powers (*pāyu-*): 1, 147, 3 = 4, 4, 13, where the omniscient god is praised

⁸³ Cf. also H. Lommel, *Die Yāst’s der Avesta* (Göttingen–Leipzig, 1927), p. 171 f.

⁸⁴ See “The Vedic concept of amhas”, *Indo-Iranian Journal*, I (1957), p. 33 ff.

on account of the succour rendered to those who, *in religiosis*, are well-conducted.

The hymn 4, 8 begins with the double phrase *dūtam vo viśvavedasam / havyavāham amartyam* “the o. messenger, the immortal carrier of the oblations” who is immediately after called the best worshipper. A more fixed use occurs 1, 143, 4.

In a prayer for food and vigour heaven and earth are styled *v.* – probably expressing the idea of “applied knowledge” – as well as “accomplishing mighty deeds” (*sudamśasā*) (6, 70, 6).

Varuṇa is *viśvavedas-* in 8, 42, 1. It is doubtful whether Pettazzoni⁸⁵ is right in attributing the sense of “omniscient” to this occurrence of the epithet. The god is described as having propped the sky and measured out the width of the earth: *astabhnād dyām asuro viśvavedāḥ*; in this sūkta no mention whatever is made of his ability to see through the designs of men (cf. AV. 4, 16, 2), to behold both what has been and what hereafter will be done (RV. 1, 25, 11), to observe all that is between heaven and earth (AV. 4, 16, 5). Mitra, who is often associated with Varuṇa, and the latter are the *viśvavedasau* referred to in 8, 25, 3 where the epithet is however stereotyped: Aditi has given birth to the two *v.* of great might (*pramahasau*). It is difficult to see why this single reference to their “omniscience” should with Pettazzoni⁸⁶ be connected with 7, 61, 5 where they are credited with profound knowledge of human affairs: “there are no secrets that ye cannot fathom”.

Indra too is *viśvavedas-*:⁸⁷ 6, 47, 12 = 10, 131, 6. It is of course true that the god who is also called “thousand-eyed” (*sahasrākṣa-*) has, like Mitra and Varuṇa, his “spies” (1, 33, 8), and is even himself thought of as a “spy” (8, 61, 15), could easily be conceived as fathoming the intentions of men, but the context in which the epithet occurs points rather to the god’s helpfulness, his readiness to chase away inimical influences, to protect his worshippers and to secure their safety.

The Aśvins who repeatedly receive this epithet are typically succouring gods, delivering from distress, rescuing ships, bringing back lost treasures, healing diseases and curing the blind, sick, and maimed. They are sages of profound wisdom (8, 8, 2) and possess even that ability to achieve the marvellous that is understood by the term *māyā* (6, 63, 5). One of their most distinctive epithets is *dasra-* “accomplishing wonderful deeds”. As

⁸⁵ Pettazzoni, *o.c.*, p. 119.

⁸⁶ Pettazzoni, *o.c.*, p. 120.

⁸⁷ There is no need to translate the adj. in connection with Indra, with Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 1304, and other scholars by “all-possessing”.

they are, in 1, 47, 4, called “omniscient” in a context relating that they sweeten the sacrificial gifts, an activity extolled in AV. 9, 1 – by means of their “whip of sweetness” they sweeten the soma juice, “uniting man with splendour, progeny and a complete life-time” (AV. 9, 1, 15) –, it seems that their “infinite knowledge” is, here, not without connection with the popular idea that those who are able to achieve what is not understood must “know” much. Nor does 1, 139, 3 point to “omniscience” in the religious sense of the term: *yuvor viśvā adhiśriyaḥ / prkṣaś ca viśvavedasā* “with you are all manifestations of well-being and satiations, O v.”. Is the implication: “ye know how to supply us with every kind of well-being”? In 10, 143, 6 this epithet, as well as *manhiṣṭhā* “granting most abundantly” occurs in a prayer for favour and comfort and refreshments. Is *viśvavedas-* in these passages not something like “all-accomplishing” rather than “all-knowing”?

Similar considerations may apply to those texts in which the Maruts are credited with the same qualification: 5, 60, 7 Agni and the v. Maruts are entreated to bring the sacrificers any desirable good. With regard to 1, 64, 8 and 10 Geldner seems to have been in doubt about the meaning of v.;⁸⁸ in st. 10 the epithet combines with *rayibhiḥ samokasaḥ* “closely united with goods”, *virapśinaḥ* “living in abundance” and other descriptions which do not point at “omniscience” in the literal or religious sense of the terms. Cf. also 3, 26, 4, and (stereotyped) AV. 6, 92, 1; AV. 6, 93, 3 the v. Maruts are asked to save those speaking.

Relying on Geldner’s translation of 1, 91, 2 “du, Soma, bist an Einsicht wohleinsichtig, an Verstand wohlverständlich, du der Allwissende” we would be tempted to take the epithet at issue in an intellectual sense; we have however seen that the terms used by the poet apply to resourcefulness and skill rather than pure knowledge: *tvam soma kratubhiḥ sukratur bhūs / tvam dakṣaiḥ sudakṣo viśvavedāḥ*. In 9, 97, 56 v. and *manīṣin-* “wise, prudent” combine. In 9, 86, 39 Soma is called a v. *suṁvira-* i.e. a hero,⁸⁹ who knows how to find cows (*govid-*) and gold and to further impregnation and fertilization. Here too, the epithet seems to express the “practical” aspects of the ideas conveyed by the root *vid-*. The stanzas 9, 27, 3; 64, 7; 86, 29 have little conclusive force, but 9, 28, 5 *viśvā dhāmāni viśvavit* must mean “alle Formen vollständig kennend” (Geldner).⁹⁰

RV. 1, 89, 6 the epithet is given to Pūṣan, the pastoral god, protector

⁸⁸ Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, I², p. 85, n. 2: “v. zugleich “allwissend” und “all-besetzend”.”

⁸⁹ “Meister” (Geldner).

⁹⁰ For *dhāman-* “la forme, en tant que résultant d’une fonction” (Renou, *Etudes védiques et pāṇinéennes*, I, Paris, 1955, p. 21).

of herds and flocks, who is also interested in growth and wealth, and who, besides being conceived as a guardian of the roads, is implored to remove distress: Grassmann, Geldner and other scholars may be right in translating it by: "der alle Güter hat".⁹¹ It should on the other hand be remembered that he is also regarded as wonder-working and intelligent (1, 42, 5) and 6, 56, 4: *dasra mantumah*; in the latter passage he is asked to carry into effect the thought of those speaking. The epithet is also applied to the Ādityas in general, who are besought (8, 18, 11) to avert enmity and *amati*- "absence of thought",⁹² and in 8, 47, 3 to extend their protection over those praying. Although in 5, 67, 3 three of them, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, receive this qualification – they are stated to protect mankind against injury, watching the observance of their ordinances –, Pettazzoni's thesis⁹³ that the "omniscience" of the Ādityas seems a kind of extension of the same attribute of Varuṇa or of Mitra-Varuṇa remains unproved, the more so as the poet of 8, 27 uses the term several times in connection with the gods in general: they are implored, in st. 2, to promote the thoughts of the poet as expressed in his hymn: *viśve ca no vasavo viśvavedaso / dhīnām bhūta prāvitārah*; in 4 to render protection and to further man's prosperity; in 11 the eulogy is dedicated to the "omniscient one" in order to obtain a share in affluence; in 19–21 the epithet occurs three times in connection with their establishing order, rendering protection, granting any desirable good. If we may depend on the context the "omniscience" has, here and also 10, 66, 1; 5, a bearing upon clever and expedite ingenuity and inventiveness. AV. 19, 27, 6 is of no use.

The adjective *pracetas*- "clever, wise, attentive" which also qualifies a special aspect of practical knowledge is not only applied to Agni, but also to a variety of other deities. It is in connection with the god of fire always appropriately used: RV. 10, 87, 9 Agni is asked to guard the sacrificial gift and to convey it to the gods, a task which no doubt required attention and cleverness; 7, 17, 4 he is asked to achieve all desirable objects; cf. also 6, 5, 1; 13, 3. In 2, 10, 3 the adjective replaces Agni's name, stating that the clever one is, also at night, not enveloped by darkness; in 4, 6, 2 he is called *pr.* and an *amūro hotā*, i.e. "an intelligent, sacrificial priest"; in 7, 16, 5 a *pr. potar* i.e. "a purifier" (title of one of the sacrificial priests)". RV. 10, 79, 4 *pr.* is used predicatively: Agni is wise because he understands

⁹¹ "The master of all possessions" (S. D. Atkins, *Pūṣan in the Rig-Veda*, Thesis Princeton, 1941, p. 36).

⁹² See Renou, *Etudes védiques*, I, p. 2, n. 1; G. Liebert, *Das Nominalsuffix -ti- im Altindischen* (Lund, 1949), p. 141.

⁹³ Pettazzoni, *o.c.*, p. 121.

phenomena which are above human comprehension. This place is in harmony with the statement made in 7, 4, 4 “the clever immortal Agni has been given a place among the mortal beings as the wise or inspired one among the unwise”, i.e. as the one who really “knows” among those who have no supranormal knowledge; compare also 4, 1, 1.

Another interesting predication occurs 3, 25, 1: “O A. thou art the *pr.* son of heaven”. In 8, 84, 2 the god is described as *pr.* like a *kavi* whom the gods have appointed among mortal men. The poet of 10, 110, 1 tells us that Agni is the messenger, the *kavi* (“inspired seer”), the *pr.* one; cf. also 6, 14, 2. A similar combination of epithets occurs 1, 44, 11, where those speaking appoint Agni performer of the sacrifice and priest; cf. also 8, 102, 18 *pracetasam tvā kave ’gne / dūtām vareṇyam / havyavāhaṃ ni śedire*; 7, 16, 12; 3, 29, 5.

From these indications it is clear that this epithet is especially given to Agni because of his important sacrificial functions which require intellectual abilities that are beyond human understanding: cf. also 10, 52, 4 *agnir vidvān yajñam naḥ kalpayāti* “A., der Kundige, soll unser Opfer regeln” (Geldner; the words are attributed to the gods). Cf. also 10, 140, 5 where the god who conveys the sacrificial gifts is stated to grant food and wealth to man.

As the poets use this epithet in connection with Varuṇa and the gods who are often mentioned together with him it is likewise appropriate in places such as 1, 24, 14 where the *pr.* asura and powerful king is implored for remission of sins; 5, 71, 2 the *pr.* M. and V. bear sway over all things; 1, 41, 1 the man who is protected by the *pr.* V., M., and Aryaman does not suffer. As stated elsewhere⁹⁴ the texts exhibiting this adjective are illustrative of the special relations between “power” and “wisdom”. In 10, 63, 8 the gods in general are addressed as “those who rule the whole world, *pr.* (“vorausdenkend” Geldner) and *māntavaḥ* (“advisers, managers, disposers”) who take care of the world and protect man from sinning. In a similar way the Aṅgirasas, mentioned 10, 164, 4 – i.e. Agni or Bṛhaspati – is expected to protect man against distress originating in sin. Curiously enough Indra, being asked for a gift of affection, is in 8, 90, 6 addressed as a *pracetas-asura-*. As the asuras are repeatedly regarded as possessors of *māyā* – the power, beyond human comprehension, of achieving the marvellous, especially the wonders of nature – they obviously were generally or traditionally considered “clever”. In 4, 53, 1 Savitar, the sun, being implored for protection, is spoken of in the same way. It is

⁹⁴ In the above-quoted essay on *māyā*, p. 154 f.

more difficult to say why Uṣas, 3, 61, 1 should receive the qualification: is the invitation to enjoy the eulogy of the poet in itself a sufficient reason to be entitled to the epithet? Or is it a simple *captatio benevolentiae* of the goddess whose remunerations are desired in the same stanza? Nor are there clear indications in the context why Indra should be called *pracetas-* (in 1, 5, 7; 7, 31, 10). The quality was in all probability supposed to be proper to those great gods who excelled in intellectual abilities, cleverness and resourcefulness in achieving extraordinary deeds: thus it is 1, 43, 1 applied to Rudra, the *pr.*, strongest and most bountiful one; 1, 64, 8; 8, 7, 12 to the Maruts. However, the quality denoted by the epithet and a prayer for protection or assistance go not rarely together – cf. also 8, 9, 15 and 20 (Aśvins); cf. 8, 90, 6; 1, 39, 9 (Maruts); 10, 36, 2 (heaven and earth). It is at first sight strange that Manyu “Fury, esp. “Kampf-wut”” should be among those gods who receive this qualification; however, in 10, 83, 5 the man speaking states that he had to conform to the will (*kratu-*, also “mental power and resourcefulness”) of the *pr.* and powerful god.

Agni, Indra, the Aśvins and some other gods receive, for obvious reasons, the attribute *rakṣohan-* “killing demons, evil beings, evil influences etc.” It is very appropriately used in connection with Agni 10, 162, 1 ... *agniḥ ... / rakṣohā bādhatām itaḥ / amīvā yas te garbham / durṇāmā yonim āśaye* “... soll A., der Unholdtöter, den Verrufenen von hier austreiben, der mit Krankheit auf deiner Leibesfrucht, deinem Schosze liegt”. That Agni *rakṣohan-* was a definite view of the activity of fire, the apotropaic character of which needs no comment, appears e.g. from Sāyaṇa’s introduction to 10, 87 *rakṣohāgnir devatā* “the deity (to which the hymn is dedicated) is A. R.”, the first stanza running as follows: *rakṣohaṇam vājinam ā jigharmi / mitram prathiṣṭham upa yāmi śarma*. We might compare 10, 97, 6 where the inspired brahman is called physician, killer of demons, an exorcist of diseases. The epithet is given to Soma 9, 1, 2; 37, 3; 67, 20 (cf. especially 1, 129, 6); this divine power is believed to drive away demons (9, 49, 5), to slay the wicked (9, 28, 6) etc. Bṛhaspati, being Indra’s domestic priest, accompanies the latter in war, and as such he is, 10, 103, 4, styled a killer of rakṣas, a dispeller of enemies, a crusher of armies etc.; similar abilities are 2, 23, 14 ascribed to his chariot. Cf. 1, 129, 11 (Indra); 7, 73, 4 (Aśvins). The main function of Agni, in the Veda, being that of conveying the sacrifices and of officiating at the ceremonies (cf. e.g. 10, 1, 7), he came to be celebrated as the divine priest. Hence the application of some terms connected with priesthood, to this god (cf. 1, 1, 1). He is for instance called a

purohita-⁹⁵ and described as the “domestic priest” of the gods: 1, 44, 12; 10, 150, 4. The title *purohita*- is, as an apposition, very appropriately used in 1, 128, 4 *sa sukratuḥ purohito dame dame / agnir yajñasyādhvarasya cetati*; 3, 2, 8; 3, 2; 10, 92, 2; 122, 4.

With the words *havyavah*- and *havyavāhana*- “bearing (bearer of) oblations” things are not so simple. It often occurs in enumerations of epithets, but is accompanied by the statement that the sacrificial gifts are offered to the god of fire: 5, 6, 5; that he is kindled: 10, 118, 5; 150, 1; that his mouth – into which the offerings are poured – is his tongue: 1, 12, 6 (cf. 10, 8, 6); that the inspired experts kindle the immortal oblation-bearer who increases strength: 3, 10, 9. The term occurs beside other references to the god’s priestly function: 6, 15, 4 the hotar, who performs the sacrifices well; cf. also 8, 102, 18. 8, 44, 3 the messenger and o.-b. is asked to cause the gods to sit down at the speaker’s sacrifice. R̥V. 2, 41, 19 *havyavāhanam* is the only qualification of Agni, whose name is passing-ly mentioned in connection with two powers which are beneficent to the sacrifice. These words are far from being always used as epithets: Agni is stated to have been appointed oblation-bearer: 1, 128, 8; 3, 5, 10; 17, 4; 7, 11, 4; the poet of 6, 15, 8 states that “they made the immortal one messenger and o.-b.”; cf. also 10, 46, 4; 1, 36, 10. In view of the frequent statement that Agni is the oblation-bearer (e.g. 1, 67, 2; 3, 2, 2 “Agni is the o.-b., ever young”; 5, 28, 5; cf. 10, 124, 1), the appositional phrase “the ever young oblation-bearer” (*havyavāḥ ... ajarah*) added to the god’s name may safely be regarded as the expression and affirmation of a well-known and constant quality of the god of fire: 5, 4, 2; 1, 12, 2; 8, 56, 5. The words are indeed very suitable appositions for this deity: 7, 10, 3; 10, 118, 9 ... *havyavāham sam īdhire / yajīṣṭham mānuṣe jane*; 7, 15, 6.

Although the term itself is mainly used in statements about the god’s functions, descriptions of his activities, and adhortations to perform his duties (cf. e.g. 8, 39, 3; 10, 8, 5; 110, 1;), Agni is characteristically termed a *dūta*- “messenger”. Moving between heaven and earth (e.g. 4, 7, 8) or between gods and men (e.g. 4, 2, 2), he conveys the sacrifices (1, 72, 7; 1, 188, 1; 3, 11, 2) and visits all abodes (4, 1, 8). In the passage mentioned first the poet adds that the god was from of old elected messenger, because he was particularly familiar with the ascents towards heaven. Cf. also 6, 15, 9. He is a messenger of gods as well as men: 10, 4, 2; see also 4, 9, 2.

⁹⁵ For the original sense of this term see *Studia Indologica, Festschrift-W. Kirfel* (Bonn, 1955), p. 107 ff.; Geldner’s translation “Bevollmächtigter” (e.g. 5, 11, 2) is not to be recommended.

Not infrequently the god is described as carrying out a task in his capacity of a messenger: 3, 53, 4; 7, 3, 3; 10, 2; 8, 39, 9. In 6, 16, 23 and 8, 23, 6 he is called the hotar and the messenger who bears the oblations. References to his activity as a messenger go often together with statements about his familiarity with the ways in the universe, his journeys, his activities as an intermediary or as a promoter of the traditional rites: his zeal in inviting the gods: 6, 16, 6 *tvam dūto amartya / ā vahā daivyaṃ janam*; 1, 58, 1; 2, 6, 7; 3, 3, 2; 5, 9; 55, 9; 4, 8, 1 (cf. 2); 5, 26, 6.

It is in keeping with the above observations that the messenger is mentioned in the same breath as the oblations: 1, 74, 4 “in the house of whom thou art the messenger, thou desirest to accept the oblations ...”. The epithets *dūta-* and *havyavāhana-* combine e.g. 5, 11, 4; 6, 16, 23 speaks of a *d. h.*; cf. 8, 23, 6. The addition of the adjective “youngest” points likewise to the sacrificial function of fire: 2, 6, 6. Small wonder that we find also allusions to daybreak: 3, 5, 2 *saṃ dūto adyauḍ uṣaso viroke*; 10, 122, 7. At times the title *dūta-* is used instead of the proper name of the god; but so as to fit the context or situation: 3, 9, 8; 1, 161, 3. When used, in 1, 12, 8; 36, 4; 4, 1, 8, as an apposition the term throws light upon the rest of the communication; cf. also 7, 16, 1. Agni is constantly called a “guest” (*atithi-*) in the human abodes, because he has been established or settled among men. This apposition is as a rule accompanied by one or more attributes. In 8, 74, 7 Agni is addressed as “a pleasant, noble, inventive, sharp-sighted accomplisher of wonderful works and guest” (*mandra sujāta sukrato amūra dasmātithe*); 3, 26, 2 it is one among a number of epithets. In 8, 103, 10 he is called “the dearest of the dear ones, the guest” (*preṣṭham u priyāṇām stuhya ... atithim*), whereas in other descriptive passages the adjective *preṣṭha-* accompanies the noun *atithi-*: 8, 84, 1 *preṣṭham vo atithim stuṣe*; 1, 186, 3; cf. 6, 2, 7 (*priya-*); 16, 42.

Although the stanzas in which the above quotations occur do not by themselves provide us with particulars concerning Agni’s guestship, the situation becomes clear enough from introductory stanzas such as 8, 74, 1 *viśo viśo vo atithim ... purupriyam / agniṃ vo duryaṃ ... stuṣe* “I will praise your much beloved guest of every homestead, Agni who belongs to the house...”, from contexts such as 1, 44, 4 where he is described as the youngest (i.e. newly kindled) guest, well-sprinkled with ghee (cf. also 3, 3, 8); 6, 15, 6 where the noun “guest” combines with fire-wood (cf. also 4, 2, 7!); 5, 3, 5 “the community whose guest thou art will outshine all others in sacrificing”; 5, 4, 5 *juṣṭo damūnā atithir duroṇa / imaṃ no yajñam upa yāhi vidvān* “as a welcome friend of the house, as a guest in

the dwelling, come towards this sacrifice of us as an expert"; 7, 42, 4 *yadā vīrasya revato durone / syonaśīr atithir āciketāt / suprīto agniḥ sudhito dama ā / sa viśe dāti vāryam iyatyai*; cf. 10, 91, 2. Agni is indeed the guest of the homesteads: 2, 4, 1 when he is called their well regaled guest; 3, 2, 2 where, after a reference to his birth he is described as the carrier of the oblations; 5, 1, 9; 8, 2 where he is also styled the lord of the house. He is the guest of men: 1, 127, 8; 6, 7, 1; 23, 25. This guest of men is instrumental in conveying the oblations to the gods: 1, 127, 8; cf. also 2, 2, 8; he is like the lord of the house "adorned" in the homestead; 5, 1, 8; cf. 7, 3, 5. Spreading light in the early morning he is a guest also who awakes with daybreak (*uṣarbudh-*); cf. 5, 18, 1; 6, 15, 1; he is a bright guest, an expert hotar, and the carrier of the oblations: 6, 15, 4; cf. also 1, 128, 4 where his merits as a sacrificer are praised. In an oft-quoted stanza,⁹⁶ 4, 40, 5, the manifestations of Agni are described as follows: "the swan dwelling in the light (A. as the sun); the Vasu, dwelling in the air ..., the guest dwelling in the house, among men ...". In 7, 8, 4 the divine guest is said to have flamed up brightly. Cf. 10, 1, 5; 92, 1; 122, 1. The noun *atithi-* may be used as a mere apposition 1, 58, 6; 127, 8; 2, 2, 8 or alternate with the name of the god: 8, 44, 1; 84, 1. Cf. also 8, 103, 12 where the name seems to be an apposition to *atithi-*.

Agni is the only god who because of his intimate association with the dwellings of men is characterized by the epithet *gr̥hapati-* "lord of the house". It is used, 1, 12, 6; 5, 8, 1 and 7, 1, 1 in connection with kindling; 10, 122, 1 with the god's priesthood. Especially evident is the relation between the use of the attribute and human dwellings in 2, 1, 2 = 10, 91, 10 "thou art the *brahman-* as well as the *gr̥hapati-* in our house";⁹⁷ in 7, 15, 2 where the wise young *gr̥hapati-* is stated to have sat down in every house, and in 8, 60, 19 "as a lord of the house thou doest not leave home". Cf. also 1, 60, 4; 4, 9, 4. In 8, 102, 1 the young seer and *gr̥hapati-*, i.e. the newly kindled sacrificial fire, burning at home, is said to grant strength to the worshipper. Being the *g.* of all clans of men he is called upon to grant protection (6, 48, 8). According to 5, 8, 2 Agni is a *gr̥hapati-* and the first guest of the clan; to 6, 16, 42 he is a dear guest, the *gr̥hapati-* on his comfortable seat.

The word *damūnas-* "belonging to, or lord of, the house or the family" occurs predicatively 1, 60, 4 and elsewhere. In 5, 1, 8 Agni is stated to

⁹⁶ See Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, I¹, p. 472. Cf. e.g. ŚB. 6, 7, 3, 11.

⁹⁷ See also Geldner, *o.c.*, I², p. 275. For the idea of "lord of the house" in connection with *damūnas-* (see further on) now see also W. Meid, *I.F.*, 63 (1958), p. 151 ff.

be cleaned as a, or being the, *damūnas*-; in 5, 4, 5 he is a “welcome” (*juṣṭo*) *damūnas*-. In 3, 1, 17 he is said to have assigned, as a (or the) *d.*, a dwelling to all men; 4, 4, 11 he is implored to pay attention to the singer’s words. Elsewhere the term replaces the god’s proper name: 10, 31, 4 where it combines with *svapati*- “one’s own lord”; 1, 68, 10; 3, 31, 16; 10, 91, 1; in 4, 11, 5 and 5, 8, 1 it combines with *gr̥hapatim*. In 3, 1, 11 *d.* and the name are placed in an appositional relation; cf. also 3, 3, 6. So far as Agni is concerned the signification of the epithet is clear; 1, 123, 3 it is applied to Savitar.

The epithet *viśpati*- “lord of settlers, or of settlements” is frequently connected with the domestic Agni who caused mortals to settle (ṚV. 3, 1, 17), protecting (1, 96, 4: *viśāṃ gopā*) and leading them (3, 2, 5). There are some instances of a deliberate use of this attribute: 6, 2, 10 “thou desirest to be, O Agni, the priest of the settlers in (their) house(s); work well-being, O *viśpati*; delight in the oblation ...”; 2, 1, 8 “thee, O A., the lord of settlers, the settlers propitiate in (their) house(s), thee the propitious king”; 6, 15, 8: the watchful one has been made the lord of settlers of far-extending might; 7, 15, 7; cf. 1, 60, 2 *viśpatir vikṣu vedhāḥ*; 2, 37, 8; cf. also 6, 64, 26. In 8, 23, 14 the “lord of settlers” is besought to hear the eulogy and to consume by fire the demoniac possessors of *māyā*; 8, 103, 7 to save the offspring of those speaking and to enable the liberal ones to bestow gifts (on the eulogists). Being the dear carrier of the oblations, Agni, the lord of settlers is always invoked (1, 12, 2). That the “lord of settlers” is the domestic fire appears e.g. also from 10, 4, 4 “he wanders eating with his tongue, he licks (kisses) again and again the youthful female (i.e. the libation)”.

The ‘title’ *draviṇodas*- “granter of property” applies to the deity concerned 1, 15, 10 where he is implored to bestow his gifts on those speaking; 2, 6, 3 in connection with similar adjectives (cf. 4); otherwise 2, 37, 1–3 where the compound impresses us as a proper noun.

Places are comparatively few which could be adduced in favour of the hypothesis that the well-known name *Vaiśvānara*- originally meant “related to him, who possesses the total amount of vital strength”^{97a}: ṚV.

^{97a} F. B. J. Kuiper, “Νώροπι χαλκῶ”, *Med. Kon. Ned. Akad. v. Wet., Lett.*, N.R. 14, 5 (Amsterdam, 1951), p. 221 (21). See also J. C. Heesterman, *The ancient Indian royal consecration*, Thesis Utrecht, 1957, p. 46. Nevertheless the remarkable fact that Agni is ṚV. 7, 4, 6 called the lord of life (*iṣe hy agnir amṛtasya bhūrer / iṣe rāyaḥ suvīryasya dātoḥ*) which he confers on mortal men (1, 31, 7 *tvam tam agne amṛtatva uttame / martam dadhāsi śravase dive dive*) has, as was justly noticed by Kuiper, its counterpart in ŚB. 10, 6, 1, 4 ff. where he who knows *Vaiśvānara* is said to repel death and to attain all life.

6, 8, 6 the wish is expressed to win *vāja*- through Vaiśvānara's help: *vayaṃ jayema ... / vaiśvānara vājam agne tavotibhiḥ*; in st. 3 he is said to have the strength of a bull; in 6, 7, 7 he is a "protector of life" (*amṛtasya rakṣitā*); 6, 9, 7 he is himself *amartya*- (*vaiśvānaro ... amartyaḥ*); 6, 8, 7 he is invoked in order to promote long life; 1, 59, 4 he is *nṛtama*- "most manly"; in 1, 98, 2 he has entered the plants and requested to protect those praying.

UṢAS

Turning now to Uṣas, the goddess of Dawn,⁹⁸ it may be recalled to memory that she has many epithets, sixteen of which are enumerated – and regarded as names of the goddess – in the Naighaṇṭuka 1, 8: *vibhāvarī* "brilliant"; *sūnarī* "the youthfully vital";⁹⁹ *bhāsvatī* "shining"; *odatī* "sprinkling (refreshing)"; *citrāmaghā* "granting wonderful gifts"; *arjunī* "(the) ruddy white (one)"; *vājinī* "possessing *vāja*-"; *vājinīvatī* "possessing what is related to *vāja*-, i.e. possessing swift horses"; *sumnāvarī* "bringing favour, kind, benevolent"; *ahanā* "indestructible" (?); *dyotanā* "shining, illuminating"; *śvetyā* "white, brilliant"; *aruṣī* "reddish"; *sūnṛtā* "youthfully vital"; *sūnṛtāvatī* "rich in youthful vitality"; *sūnṛtāvarī* "id.". The list is not complete and not all of these words are, on the other hand, of the same frequency. Among these epithets those bearing upon her bright, shining, golden-hued appearance are especially characteristic.

One fact of importance will be clear, namely the general reference of these attributes and descriptive names to the salutary appearance and activities of this goddess Dawn, the daughter of heaven. The latter phrase, which is rather frequently applied to her,¹⁰⁰ is used either in connection with day's beginning to grow light or with the gifts of the early morning to mankind. Thus ṚV. 1, 48, 1 may to a certain extent be considered a résumé of the prayers and salutations addressed to the eternally young goddess: *saha vāmena na uṣo / vy uchā duhitar divaḥ / saha dyumnena bṛhatā vibhāvari / rāyā devi dāsvatī* "together with fortune, O Dawn, diffuse for us (your matutinal) light, O daughter of heaven (the sky), together with ample splendour, O brilliant one, liberal with wealth, O goddess". Similarly, st. 9 *uṣa ā bhāhi bhānunā / candreṇa duhitar divaḥ / āvahantī bhūry asmabhyaṃ saubhagaṃ / vyuchantī diviṣṭiṣu* "Aurore,

⁹⁸ Now see L. Renou, *Etudes védiques et pāṇinéennes*, III (Paris, 1957), p. 1 ff.

⁹⁹ For the sense of this word now see also Renou, *o.c.*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁰ See also Renou, *o.c.*, p. 15.

rayonne de tes rayons dorés, Fille du ciel, en amenant vers nous l'abondance ..." (Renou); 113, 7. In 1, 92, 7 the daughter of heaven is praised by the Gotamas as a bright conductor of things representing youthful strength:¹⁰¹ *bhāsvatī netrī sūnṛtānām / diva stave duhitā gotamebhiḥ*. Disclosing the treasures concealed by darkness and distributing them bountifully (cf. 1, 123, 4; 6), the daughter of heaven is repeatedly stated to bestow joy and all that is desirable upon her worshippers: 7, 78, 4 *aceti divo duhitā maghonī / viśve paśyanty uṣasaṃ vibhātīm* "the bounteous daughter of heaven has appeared; all (men) see how brightly Uṣas shines"; 7, 79, 3 *vi divo devī duhitā dadhāty ... sukrte vasūni*; 81, 3 *prati tvā duhitar diva / uṣo jīrā abhutsmaḥi / yā vahasi puru spārhaṃ vananvati / ratnaṃ na dāśuṣe mayah* "wir haben dich, U., Himmelstochter, munter herangewacht, die du viel Begehrenswertes, Freude gleichsam als Belohnung für den Opferwilligen mitbringst, du Wagenbesitzende (?)" (Geldner); st. 5 *tac citraṃ rādha ā bhara / uṣo yad dīrghaśruttamam / yat te divo duhitar martabhojanaṃ / tad rāsva bhunajāmahai* "bring that excellent gift, O Dawn, that is most renowned far and wide!; the nourishment of men thou hast, O d. of h., give that; that we shall enjoy (it)". Cf. also 1, 49, 2; 7, 77, 6. In 1, 30, 22; 5, 79, 3; 8; 6, 64, 4; 65, 6 the epithet *duhitar divaḥ* suffices, the name Uṣas being omitted; (5, 79, 3) *sa no adyābharadvasur / vy uchā duhitar divaḥ* "leuchte du uns heute schätzebringend auf, o Himmelstochter" (Geldner). Sometimes this name of the goddess is merely accompanied by an epithet referring to her generosity, not by an explicit statement or a demand: 5, 79, 2; 9. In 8, 47, 14 ff. she is implored to drive away evil dreams, a task suitable for a representative of the celestial light.

A more special function is attributed to the daughter of the sky in 1, 48, 8: *apa dveṣo maghonī duhitā diva / uṣā uchad apa sridhaḥ* "the bountiful d. of h., U., will, by her light, drive off hostility and failings", light being the natural dispeller of evil and the powers of darkness. Being a young woman she has her charms which she shows to those who see her: 5, 80, 6 *eṣā pratiṇī duhitā divo nṛṇ / yoṣeva bhadṛā ni riṇīte apsah*: here the epithet far from being misplaced emphasizes the youthful femininity of the goddess, preparing the simile. Cf. also 1, 113, 7, describing her as a bright-robed young woman.

Elsewhere the epithet has completely replaced the proper name: 7, 81, 1 where the goddess is described as dispelling darkness; 1, 92, 5 (in

¹⁰¹ For the sense of *sūnṛta-* see F. B. J. Kuiper, "Νώροπι χαλκῶ", *Amsterdam Acad.*, 1951, p. 17 ff.

connection with light); 10, 39, 12. In 1, 183, 2 name and epithet combine: *divo duhitroṣasā sacethe*.

Dawn being a recurrent phenomenon, a plurality of Uṣasas is invoked in 4, 51 where there is more diversity among their functions: st. 1 *nūnaṃ divo duhitaro vibhātīr / gātum kṛṇavann uṣaso janāya* “now the Dawns, the d. of the sky, shining afar, will make a path for man”; st. 10 is a prayer for wealth accompanied by offspring: *rayiṃ d. d. vibhātīḥ / prajāvantam yachatāsmāsu devīḥ*.

In part of the above instances the goddess fulfils her beneficial function by, or in, shining and diffusing light. This important ‘activity’ is often emphasized and expressed by some epithets which occur in passages mentioning Uṣas’ radiance and liberality: 1, 92, 14 *uṣo adyeha gomaty / aśvāvati vibhāvāri / revad asme vy ucha sūnṛtāvati* “U., thou that art rich in cattle and horses, brilliant one, do thou today shine forth (i.e. give by shining) here to us prosperity, O thou that art rich in youthful force”. The very idea of ‘youthful force’ – if this translation is approximately correct – suggests prosperity, ability to help and to bestow gifts and advantages. A similar combination with other epithets which are no doubt to specify the nature of the blessings man expects from her occurs 5, 79, 10 *etāvad ved uṣas tvam / bhūyo vā dātum arhasi / yā stotṛbhyo vibhāvāri / uchantī na pramīyase / sujāte aśvasūnṛte*. The last two words “thou nobly born one, whose vitality of youth is apparent by (gifts of?; the daily appearance of the sun’s?) horses”¹⁰² are repeated at the end of each stanza of this hymn. See also 1, 48, 1; 4, 52, 6.

In 1, 92, 7 and 1, 113, 4 Uṣas is described as a “brilliant bringer of forces of youthful vitality”¹⁰³ (*bhāsvatī netrī sūnṛtānām*), an epithet occurring in a more expanded form 7, 76, 7 *eṣā n. rādhasaḥ s. “b. of bounty or favour and y. v.”*, all three places referring to the goddess as a promoter of goods etc. If this translation of *sūnṛtā* be correct this term is well adapted to the nature and functions of Dawn. She is under similar circumstances also called *sūnṛtāvati*: 1, 92, 14 (see above); and 7, 81, 6 where she is asked to drive off, by her brightness, failings: cf. 4, 52, 4 *yāvayaddveṣasaṃ tvā ... sūnṛtāvāri* and 1, 113, 12 where the same adj. *yāv.* combines with *sūnṛtā irayantī* and other descriptions. These combinations are not likely to be mere accidents, youthful strength being

¹⁰² Various translations have been proposed for *aśvasūnṛta*:- “vom Jubel der Rosse begleitet” (Roth, in the *Petr. Dict.*); “durch Rosse herrlich, an Rossen reich” (Grassmann); “pleased with horses” (Monier-Williams); “libérale en chevaux” (Renou).

¹⁰³ Less probable: “Bringerin der Schenkungen” (Geldner) or “conductrice lumineuse des libéralités” (Renou), although the ‘etymological’ meaning may have shifted.

required to drive away evil: see also 1, 123, 5 (*uṣaḥ sūnṛte*¹⁰⁴ *prathamā jarasva*): disappointment of evil-doers. In 1, 124, 10 *sūnṛtā* occurs likewise in connection with awaking and, moreover, with allotting gifts, two other natural consequences of vital strength; cf. also 8, 9, 17; 4, 55, 9. In 1, 48, 5 Uṣas being described as a young woman who gives enjoyments¹⁰⁵ is called *sūnarī* which is certainly not, with Geldner, “noble” (“edel”), but rather something like “characterized by youthful strength and vitality”:¹⁰⁶ *ā ghā yoṣeva sūnary / uṣā yāti prabhuñjatī*. In 1, 48, 10 breathing and life of the entire world are said to be in her, the *sūnarī*, when she shines. These passages may be explained in the light of the revivifying nature of dawn; in 7, 80, 2 the goddess is explicitly stated to renew life: *navyam āyur dadhānā*.

Returning for a moment to Dawn’s radiance mention may be made of 1, 49, 3 *arjuni* “O reddish-white one”, in connection with the daily awakening of all beings; 1, 157, 1 *vy uṣāś candrā mahy āvo arcīṣā* “die schimmernde grosse U. ist mit ihrem Strahl aufgeleuchtet” (Geldner), in a description of daybreak.

Not infrequently Dawn is called *vājinīvātī* “possessing the generative power by which new food and new life is obtained”:¹⁰⁷ 1, 48, 16 *saṃ no rāyā brhatā viśvapeśasā / mimikṣvā saṃ ilābhir ā / saṃ dyumnena viśvatu-roṣo mahi / saṃ vājair vājinīvati* “do thou endow us with solid wealth of all forms, with comfort, with all-surpassing glory, O great Uṣas, with various representants of *vāja*-, O thou that art rich in *vāja*-!” Cf. st. 11 *uṣo vājaṃ hi vaṃsva*. The connection between the phenomenon of dawn and the generation of new food and new life is very evident in stanzas such as 1, 92, 13 *uṣas tac citram ā bharāsmabhyaṃ vājinīvati / yena tokam ca tanayaṃ ca dhāmahe* “O U., bring us that conspicuous (gift), O thou ..., by which we obtain children and offspring” and 15 *yukṣvā hi vājinīvaty / aśvāṃ adyāruṇāṃ uṣaḥ / athā no viśvā saubhagāny ā vaha* “put now, O thou ..., the reddish-white horses (to thy chariot), O Dawn, and bring us

¹⁰⁴ Geldner’s translation “du grossmütige” is problematic.

¹⁰⁵ The meaning of the ἄπαξ *prabhuñjatī* is disputed: “dienstfertig (sein)” (Roth, *P.W.*); “to befriend, protect (?)” (Monier-Williams); “Gutes tuend” (Geldner); *prakarṣeṇa sarvaṃ pālayantī* (Sāyaṇa); *prakarṣeṇa rakṣantī* (Mādhava); *svena jyotiṣā kṛtsnaṃ jagat prakarṣeṇa pālayantī* (Skandasvāmin).

¹⁰⁶ Mādhava explains as follows: *sūnarīty apy uṣaso nāma śobhananareti manu-ṣyāṇām*. It is very difficult to decide whether this meaning, if etymologically correct, has completely passed into “beautiful” (Renou, *o.c.*, p. 19), words of this semantic field being often polyvalent from the point of view of a modern European vocabulary.

¹⁰⁷ It would appear to me that “porteuse des prix” (Renou, *o.c.*, p. 14; 21) is too vague and approximative a translation.

all forms of happiness”; in 4, 55, 9 the bounteous (*maghonī*), *sūnṛtā*,¹⁰⁸ and *vāj*. U. is asked to bring many objects of value (*vāryā*); cf. also 7, 75, 5 and 8, 24, 28¹⁰⁹ relating particular manifestations of the goddess’ benevolence. In 3, 61, 1 *uṣo vājena vājini* “O U., thou that art exceedingly rich in *vāja*” is stated to be a munificent goddess. In 1, 48, 6 there does not seem to exist a special motive for using the epithet *vājinīvatī*. – In 7, 76, 6 Uṣas is called *gavāṃ netrī vājapatnī* “she who leads (brings) cows, mistress of *vāja*”.

The epithet *maghonī*¹¹⁰ which is likewise frequently applied to this goddess is as a rule very well adapted to the context. A very significant passage is 4, 55, 9 *uṣo maghony ā vaha ... vāryā puru* “O U. m. bring many valuable objects”. In 1, 113, 5 and 6 the poet enlarges upon her salutary activity: she, the *maghonī*, has waked up all beings affording them an opportunity to pursue a variety of professions and occupations; here the idea of willingness to make great, rich, powerful, happy, fortified etc. which seems to be conveyed by the word group to which the adj. *maghavan-* belongs, shows to full advantage: the bountiful goddess enables one man to hunt after wealth or honour, the other to earn his livelihood. Another significant prayer occurs 1, 113, 17 *adyā tad ucha gr̥ṇate maghony / asme āyur ni didīhi prajāvat* “shine therefore today for him who declares thy glory, O m.;¹¹¹ bestow on us by shining down a complete duration of life with offspring”. The poet of 5, 79, 6 and 7 asks the *maghonī* to confer on the liberal patrons the fame of many heroic sons, splendour and renown. Cf. also 6, 65, 3 and 6: renown and possessions and heroic offspring. Expulsion of evil powers is another part of her task: 1, 48, 8. In other text-places the goddess shows her benevolence indirectly: 1, 124, 10 *pra bodhayoṣaḥ pr̥ṇato maghoni* “wake those who are liberal up, O U. m.!” an urgent request followed by the demand to grant in awaking them to those who are liberal and to the eulogist much wealth: *revad ucha maghavadbhyo maghoni / revat stotre sūnṛte jārayantī*. Cf. 4, 51, 3. In 5, 77, 4 she is implored to stimulate, on behalf of the eulogist, liberality. Compare also the paronomastic 5, 79, 4. In being *maghonī* Uṣas is most Indralike, producing works of renown for the sake of welfare: 7, 79, 3 *abhūd uṣā indratamā maghonī*, but the close association between the most essential aspect of her character and her ‘liberality’ is clearly expressed in 1, 113, 13 *śaśvat puroṣā vyuvāsa devy / atho adyedaṃ*

¹⁰⁸ Not “du Grossmütige” (Geldner).

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Sāyana and Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 333.

¹¹⁰ See also Renou, *o.c.*, p. 23.

¹¹¹ “ô généreuse” (Renou, *o.c.*, p. 43 f.).

vy āvo maghonī / atho vy uchād uttarām anu dyūn / ajarāmṛtā carati svadhābhiḥ “from time immemorial the goddess U. has diffused her light, and today the bounteous one has shone forth here; and she will diffuse her light all days which are to come; without being subject to old age or death she comes periodically according to her habit”, and 7, 75, 5. The use of the epithet is more stereotyped in the difficult stanza 3, 61, 4; 7, 78, 4.

Uṣas is also *subhagā* which though translated by the German “Holde” (Geldner¹¹²), seems rather to be “bien heureuse” (Renou¹¹³): shining forth and disposing of all earthly things of value (1, 113, 7), bringing wealth, a good repute, heroic sons, *vāja-* (1, 92, 8); the goddess, being praised with eulogies by those who awake in the early morning (7, 76, 6), comes with a hundred chariots to us (1, 48, 7); making the sun visible (cf. also 7, 77, 3) the *subhagā* and *sudamṣā* (“accomplishing mighty and splendid actions”) goddess has spread as far as the ends of heaven and earth (3, 61, 4; cf. 1, 92, 12).

The adjective *sumnāvarī* translated by “huldreich” (Grassmann), “gnadenreich” (Geldner), “riche de faveurs” (Renou) occurs 1, 113, 12 in a long enumeration of qualities, some of which are of the same tenor.¹¹⁴ The sense of the hapax *ahanā* (1, 123, 4) cannot be ascertained.¹¹⁵

The voc. *sujāte* often translated by “O thou of noble birth” is – besides 10, 172, 4 where it is used predicatively – in three other hymns applied to this goddess. In 1, 123, 3 she is stated to apportion shares in fortune among men; in 7, 76, 6 her nobility is related in connection with an injunction to rise first of all; in 7, 77, 6 she is implored to grant wealth to those speaking. The question may arise whether the above translation is completely adequate, “well-born”, i.e. “whose birth is a fact to be appreciated positively” expressing more distinctly the implications of the term, which is not rarely applied to Agni who 2, 1, 15 is said to outshine all other gods; and 8, 74, 7 is described as *mandra s. sukrato* etc. Elsewhere, e.g. 1, 197, 2; 3, 15, 2; 10, 51, 7 the epithet is stereotyped and mainly intended to win the god’s benevolence.

Other epithets applied to the goddess of dawn are: 1, 48, 1 *dāsvatī* “disposed to give”, following the invitation to come *saha vāmena* “with splendid or lovely things”: “il s’agit de biens qu’Uṣas possède et que, par la réciprocité connue des actes védiques, elle confère aux humains”.¹¹⁶

¹¹² But 1, 48, 7 with “Glückbringende”.

¹¹³ See also Renou, *o.c.*, p. 22.

¹¹⁴ Cf. also Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 350 f.; Renou, *o.c.*, p. 50.

¹¹⁵ See Renou, *o.c.*, p. 57.

¹¹⁶ Renou, *o.c.*, p. 14.

ṚV. 3, 31, 17 Uṣas and Night are *vasudhitī* “possessing or bestowing wealth” and Dawn alone is 6, 64, 1 called *vasvī dakṣiṇā maghonī* “la riche, la généreuse dakṣiṇā” (Renou). These epithets and the context are in favour of Bloomfield’s explication of *viśvasuvid-* < *viśvavasuvid-* 1, 48, 2.¹¹⁷

An interesting word is *citrāmagha-* “qui se signale par ses bienfaits” (Renou¹¹⁸), “granting wonderful gifts” (Monier-Williams), which occurs 1, 48, 10 in an invocation: “hear our call, O thou bright one, who grantest w. g.”; 7, 75, 5 is very illustrative: *vājinīvatī sūryasya yoṣā / citrāmaghā rāya īśe vasūnām* “la jeune femme du soleil, porteuse des prix, aux bienfaits éclatants, elle règne sur la richesse et sur les biens” (Renou). Cf. also 7, 77, 3 “thus U. has appeared adorned with the rays (of the sun), showing her benevolence by granting excellent gifts (*citrāmaghā*), becoming visible over the whole (universe)”. In 8, 58, 3 (Vāl. 10, 3) the epithet is stereotyped, replacing the proper name.

Dawn and Night are sometimes described as *supeśas-* “schönverziert” (Geldner), “well adorned”. Renou¹¹⁹ rightly observes that “*peśas* est ... l’équivalent de *takṣ-* dans un ordre de travail plus fin”. AV. 8, 9, 12 *pepiśānā* qualifies the same goddesses: “greatly adorning themselves” (Whitney-Lanman¹²⁰), that is to say with the celestial light and luminaries. The adjective is a stereotyped apposition in ṚV. 1, 13, 7; 142, 7; 10, 36, 1; but 1, 188, 6 it is accompanied by two other terms of the same semantical class: *surukme ... / adhi śriyā virājataḥ*. That this term for “being well adorned” is no otherwise meaningless ornament may appear from those places where it applies to human beings: 10, 27, 12: a girl will become a happy married woman when she, being well adorned, wins (chooses) her husband among men.

As is not rarely the case an epithet applying to a person may also occur in connection with one of its attributes. In 1, 49, 2 Uṣas’ chariot is described as *supeśas-*. A similar remark may be made with regard to the wealth expected from Uṣas which 1, 48, 13 is called *supeśas-*. Whereas 5, 57, 4 the Maruts receive this qualification, the author of 2, 34, 13 applies it to their colour or complexion.

It is no matter for astonishment that the goddess – i.e. the phenomenon – of daybreak should receive an epithet which derives its origin from her

¹¹⁷ Cf. also Renou, *o.c.*, p. 16.

¹¹⁸ Renou, *o.c.*, p. 13; cf. p. 24.

¹¹⁹ Renou, *o.c.*, p. 26.

¹²⁰ Who incorrectly translate (Atharva-veda-saṃhitā translated, p. 508) “the two ... dawns”.

whitish red appearance: *aruṇapsu-*:¹²¹ 5, 80, 1; 8, 5, 1; 8, 73, 16. In 1, 49, 1 her draught-animals are described by the same term. In 7, 75, 6 the same animals are called *aruṣa-* “reddish”; elsewhere this adjective is used in connection with Dawn herself: 1, 71, 1 etc.

Another adjective worth mentioning is the participle *ruśat-* “brilliant, bright, shining” which is not only applied to the goddess herself – cf. 1, 113, 2 –, but also to her outward appearance (cf. 1, 62, 8; 4, 51, 9), the rays of her light (1, 48, 13; 92, 5), her garment: 7, 77, 2 *ruśad vāso bibhratī śukram aśvait*.

Uṣas shares the epithet *supratīka-* “having a beautiful face, lovely” with Agni and other luminous and brilliant powers: 1, 92, 6 the *s.* goddess is said to smile in order to be illustrious, inciting men to have happy thoughts. In 5, 5, 6 dawn and evening (*doṣā*), stated to increase the vigorous age of men, are likewise called *s.*, no doubt because they display their kindness, the ‘psychical counterpart’ of their ‘bright face’. In 7, 61, 1 the sun, called the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa, is *supratīka-* “schön anzuschauen” (Geldner) and *tatanvān* “diffusing (light)”. The adjective is also applied to Agni, 1, 94, 7 predicatively.

Uṣas is also *yaśasvatī* “glorious”, or rather, “granting fame, renown, repute, distinction”: 10, 11, 3 where she is at the same time described as bringing cattle and *bhadrā* “auspicious”. In 1, 92, 8 the wealth granted by this goddess is called *yaśás-* “renowned”.

Another epithet is *yāvayaddveṣas-* “driving away enemies”, occurring 1, 113, 12 in a long series of epithets, and 4, 52, 4 in an assurance that those speaking, after having waked up in the morning, have attentively honoured Dawn (called *sūnṛtāvarī*) with songs of praise.

Dawn is rich in cows: 1, 92, 14 being called rich in cows and horses she is implored to grant wealth, which as is well known for the greater part consisted in cattle. Hence Geldner’s translation of *aśvāvatīr gomatīḥ* in 1, 123, 12 “Rosse, Rinder bringend”. An interesting place is 1, 113, 18 where *aśvadāḥ* “giving horses” occurs beside *gomatīḥ* “rich in cows”; cf. 1, 48, 2 *aśvāvatīr gomatīr viśvasuvidaḥ* ... “(les aurores) qui possèdent des chevaux, des vaches, qui procurent aisément tout (bien) ...” (Renou); and 7, 41, 7 *a. g. na uṣāso / vīravatīḥ sadam uchantu bhadrāḥ*. The same epithet applies to *iṣaḥ* “refreshing draughts, enjoyments derived from an abundance of good food and drink, refreshment”¹²² in hymns dedicated to Dawn: 1, 48, 15; 5, 79, 8 *gomatīr iṣaḥ* “Speisegenüsse samt (nebst)

¹²¹ For the sense of *-psu-* see P. Thieme, *Festschrift–W. Schubring* (Hamburg, 1951), p. 1 ff.; Renou, *o.c.*, p. 29.

¹²² See Oldenberg, *ZDMG*, 55, p. 304.

Kühen" (Geldner), a formula which, while being in perfect conformity with the Greek syntagma Pind. O. 5, 54 ὕγιεντα ἔλβον "happiness with health"¹²³ seems to have been modelled on an ancient type. The same phrase *g. i.* is found 8, 5, 9, dedicated to the Aśvins; 8, 23, 29 (Agni); 9, 62, 24 (Soma).

With Agni Uṣas shares the epithet *candraratha-* "with a brilliant carriage": 3, 61, 2 where she is invited to shine brightly, causing the gifts of youthful vitality to appear; the implication may be that the chariot has a share in diffusing the matutinal light as well as in bringing the gifts of the young daybreak to the inhabitants of the earth: in 2 cd her horses are said to drive the goddess near. In 6, 65, 2 the dawns are described to shine brightly on their chariots: *citram bhānti uṣasaś candrarathāḥ*; 1, 123, 7 the idea conveyed by the epithet is expressed by two words: *adyaud uṣāḥ śośucatā rathena*. As far as Agni is concerned in 1, 141, 2 he is asked to lead those speaking to happiness, in 3, 3, 5 he is called *candram agniṃ candraratham*.

The participle *uṣatī* "willing" is sometimes without being an 'ornament' added to the appellative noun *jāyā* "wife": 4, 3, 2; 10, 71, 4; 85, 37; 91, 13. In 5, 43, 11 and elsewhere it is to be connected with the subject as well as the verb, being translatable by an adverb: *devī (sarasvatī) uṣatī śṛṇotu* "die Göttin soll ... gern hören" (Geldner). In 10, 70, 6 it is however added, as an epithet, to the compound *uṣāsānaktā* "Dawn and Night", preceding *uṣantaḥ* which belongs, in the above way, to *devāsaḥ ... sīdantu*: it should be remembered that 1, 124, 7 Dawn alone is compared to a willing enamoured wife, and that in 1, 124, 13 all Dawns were by way of generalization called *uṣatīḥ*.

In 3, 61, 2 and 7, 77, 2 Dawn is called *hiranyavarṇā* "gold-coloured": in the former passage she is asked to shine brilliantly, the latter makes mention of her white garment, her splendour and radiance.

A goddess who is born in truth and order (*rtejāḥ*) and at the same time is a protector of that order (*rtapāḥ*: 1, 113, 12) may be described as *yāvayaddveṣāḥ* "driving away enemies (or: enmity)"; cf. 4, 52, 4, and especially 1, 48, 8 where she is asked to drive away by her brightness enmity and failings (*sridhaḥ*). That this goddess is *asredhantī* "not failing"¹²⁴ herself (5, 80, 3) is no matter for astonishment: "l'idée est celle de l'immanquabilité des promesses d'Uṣas, coïncidant avec ses apparitions

¹²³ For the form see U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindaros* (Berlin, 1922), p. 423, n. 1.

¹²⁴ "sans erreur" (Renou, *Et. véd. et pāṇ.*, III, p. 81) is preferable to Geldner's "ohne Unfall".

mêmes”,¹²⁵ the epithet being followed by the adverb *aprāyu* “assiduously”.

VIṢṆU

The name of the god Viṣṇu – which it is true occurs not rarely in enumerations of names – is often left without an epithet. But those descriptive terms that are used are a substantial help in determining the god’s character.¹²⁶ His essential feature is that he takes three strides, which are in the Ṛgveda referred to about twelve times. Two epithets, *urugāya-* “wide-going” and *urukrama-* “wide-striding” allude to this action.¹²⁷ In 1, 154, 1 the former is very appropriately used: the poet enumerating some of the god’s main exploits adds it to a reference to his striding activity: *viṣṇor ... / yo askabhāyad uttaram sadhastham / vicakramāṇas tredhorugāyaḥ*: one might be tempted to prefer an interpretation “after having made strides in three places going widely” or even: “... made wide strides ...” to Geldner’s “nachdem er dreimal ausgesprochen war, der Weitschreiter”: cf. also st. 2 *yasyoruṣu triṣu vikramaṇeṣv / adhikṣiyanti bhuvanāni viśvā*. Cf. also 8, 29, 7. In 1, 154, 3 the same epithet again suits the context: *pra viṣṇave ... etu manma / ... urugāyāya vṛṣṇe / ya ... vimame tribhir it padebhiḥ*; in st. 6 it is associated with the god’s highest step. Sometimes the epithets are descriptive, characterizing the god and emphasizing his most notable peculiarity: 3, 54, 14 “the eulogies go to V.; he is the wide-striding eminent being”. Elsewhere however these epithets have assumed a permanent character: 2, 1, 3 “thou Agni art Indra ..., thou art the wide-going, venerable V.” (*viṣṇur urugāyo nama-syaḥ*); 4, 3, 7; 6, 86, 10; 7, 100, 1; 8, 77, 1. This is also apparent in 1, 90, 9 where the name of Viṣṇu, being the last in a long series of similar invocations is, in accordance with the tendency to increasing magnitude,¹²⁸ accompanied by an epithet: *śam no viṣṇur urukramaḥ*. Thus the epithet alone may be a sufficient indication of the god’s identity: 5, 87, 4 *sa cakrame ... urukramaḥ*; 1, 154, 5.

Sometimes he is appropriately called *evayāvaḥ*, *eṣaḥ* and *evayāḥ* “swift-travelling” (1, 90, 5; 1, 156, 1; 2, 34, 11; 7, 40, 5; 8, 20, 3); “Viṣṇu heisst so wegen seinen bekannten Riesenschritten”,¹²⁹ which are however left

¹²⁵ Renou, *o.c.*, p. 82.

¹²⁶ For which see *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism* (Utrecht, 1954), *passim*.

¹²⁷ See *Aspects*, ch. VII.

¹²⁸ The so-called tendency of Behaghel.

¹²⁹ Geldner, *o.c.*, I², p. 115.

unmentioned. The reference to his greatness (5, 87, 1; 8) may be mentioned in the same connection. Whereas in 1, 61, 7 *sahīyān* “stronger” is used as an apposition, an adjective of similar sense is in 7, 100, 3 expanded into the phrase *tavasas tavīyān*¹³⁰ which accounts for the statement that Viṣṇu should have priority.

If 1, 154, 2 and 3 are regarded as closely connected with each other the compound *girikṣit-* “mountain-dwelling” in 3 – which is not to be connected with the god’s highest step, or with his living in celestial abodes,¹³¹ but with his association with the mountains as stores of water and the abode of beneficial plants¹³² – is in harmony with the context. In st. 2 Viṣṇu is described as roaming about and abiding in the mountains (*giriṣṭhāḥ*) like a terrible animal; in st. 3 part of the contents of this stanza is with some variations repeated. In 5, 87, 1 the adjective *girijā* “mountain-born” enlightens, in a parenthesis, the audience on a characteristic of the god: *girijā evayāmarut*.

That a god who is generally believed to occupy the highest abode¹³³ should also be considered a guardian or ‘herdsman’ is not an unreasonable assertion: 3, 55, 10 *viṣṇur gopāḥ paramam pāti pāthah*; in 1, 22, 18 he is called a *gopā adābhyah*. In 1, 186, 10 he is passingly called *adveṣo viṣṇuḥ* “the benevolent”; in 8, 25, 14 he belongs to a group of bountiful gods who are expected to grant man’s wishes; (cf. also 6, 48, 14). He may be adored, because he does not falsify the hopes of his worshippers: 8, 25, 12.

An interesting passage is, perhaps,¹³⁴ 7, 100, 4 *urukṣitim sujanimā cakāra* “he who promotes the birth of offspring, prepared spacious room to dwell in”. However, the adjective may hardly be considered an epithet in the ordinary sense of the term.

The epithet *sumajjāni-* the literal meaning of which seems to be “with whom the wives (married women) are”¹³⁵ occurring 1, 156, 2 in a series of epithets finds its explication in 3, 54, 14 “Viṣṇu to whom belong many

¹³⁰ For this type of Ausdrucksverstärkung see H. Oertel, “Satyasya satyam”, *Sitz. Ber. Bayer. Akad. d. Wiss. München*, 1937.

¹³¹ Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 39.

¹³² *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, ch. VIII.

¹³³ *Ibidem*, p. 93.

¹³⁴ That is to say: if the sense of the adjective is as suggested by our translation (cf. Geldner’s note); Sāyaṇa takes it to mean *śobhanāni janimāni kīrtanasmaraṇādīnā sukhahetubhūtāni yasya tādr̥śo viṣṇuḥ*.

¹³⁵ According to Mādhava the compound means: *sumacchabdaḥ suśabdaparyāya ity uktaṃ śobhanā jāyā bhavaty asya tasmai*, according to Sāyaṇa: *svayam evotpannāya ... yad vā sutarāṃ mādayatīti sumat, tādr̥śī jāyā yasya sa tathoktaḥ, tasmai sarva-jaganmādanaśīlaśrīpataya ity arthaḥ*.

women; the young women, the mothers are not remiss";¹³⁶ 7, 36, 9; 100, 4; 10, 184, 1.

Two phrases of related meaning combine in 8, 19, 7 *svagnayo vo agnibhiḥ / syāma sūno sahasa ūrjām pate* "may we, O s. o. p., lord of strength and vigour, have, through your fires (i.e. those of the sacrificers), good fires".¹³⁷

A group of epithets occurs 1, 156, 1 *vibhūtadyumna evayā u saprathāḥ*.

PŪṢAN

The god Pūṣan though celebrated in no more than eight hymns receives a great number of epithets.¹³⁸ The individuality of this deity is rather indistinct. A comparatively large number of places points to his being closely connected with the sun. Besides he was in a sense an ideal of herdsmen-worshippers, protecting herds and flocks and interested in growth, wealth, and well-being in general.¹³⁹ There seems to be a certain similarity in concern in these and some other respects between Pūṣan and Indra, who are according to R.V. 6, 55, 5 'brothers' and are (6, 57, 1; cf. 7, 35, 1) invoked for friendship, for well-being and *vājasātaye* "for the acquiring of the generative power called *vāja*".¹⁴⁰

Some epithets are exclusively connected with Pūṣan: *vimocana*- "deliverer" and *vimuco napāt*, lit. "descendant (i.e. representative¹⁴¹) of deliverance, i.e. deliverer". The former¹⁴² occurs twice (8, 4, 15 and 16) in stanzas commemorating the god's wealth and liberality: "O mighty one, O thou that art much invoked, help us by reason of our prayer to procure wealth, O deliverer"; "grant us riches, deliverer". The meaning seems, more or less elliptically, to be that the god is conceived as a deliverer from evil and impediments. The phrase *vimuco napāt*¹⁴³ is 1, 42,

¹³⁶ See *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 19 f.

¹³⁷ I.e. "may we, on behalf of the sacrificers for whom we act as priests and eulogists be successful with regard to our fires"; for a different interpretation see Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 319.

¹³⁸ An index of them may be found in S. D. Atkins, *Pūṣan in the Rig-Veda* (Princeton, 1941), p. 98 ff.; R. N. Dandekar, "Pūṣan the pastoral god of the Veda", *New Indian Antiquary*, 5 (1942), p. 57 f.

¹³⁹ See Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 35 ff.; Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 110 f.

¹⁴⁰ Otherwise, Atkins, *o.c.*, p. 24.

¹⁴¹ See *Some observations on the relation between "gods" and "powers" in the Veda*, p. 52 f.

¹⁴² Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 290 explains "Ausspanner"; I am however afraid that he is mistaken; see *Some observations*, p. 53.

¹⁴³ For which see also Atkins, *o.c.*, p. 33.

1 very appositely used: “remove the obstacles (that may be met on the ways), O son of d.”; “as the god of the ways he delivers the wayfarer from all dangers and brings him to his destination safely”;¹⁴⁴ he makes, indeed, the paths free and passable, he makes them safe from the wolf and the robber (cf. st. 2 and 3). In 6, 55, 1 the phrase is used instead of the name. In AV. 6, 112, 3 Pūṣan is, as *v. n.*, invoked to deliver from sin and difficulties (*duritāni*).

He is a protector of cattle (6, 58, 2): *paśupāḥ*, an epithet which though occurring in a catalogue of qualities, may find its explanation in 6, 54, 5; 6, 10. He is repeatedly implored to make the paths good, safe and auspicious (10, 59, 7) and to lead to good pasture (cf. 1, 42, 7; 8); he is the guardian of every path (6, 49, 8 *pathas pathaḥ paripatim*), and hence 6, 53, 1 addressed as *pathas pate* “lord of the way”: cf. st. 4 “make the paths free for the acquiring of property”. His herds are never lost: 10, 17, 3 where beside this epithet (*anaṣṭapaśuḥ*) occurs “herdsman of all creation”; cf. 6, 54, 8 where he is also called *irya-* “watchful”.

Pūṣan’s car is drawn by goats; hence his exclusive epithet *ajāśva-* “who has goats instead of horses”, which occurs twice in a prayer for assistance (1, 138, 4), probably to animate the god to come soon (“we would like to turn thee (hither) at once (to us) ... with effective praises”). Cf. 9, 67, 10. In 6, 55, 3 and 4 the epithet is in all probability stereotyped.

He is called *rathītama-* “a most excellent charioteer”: 6, 55, 2; 56, 2; 3: the lord Indra, in company with him, slays the enemies; he drove down the golden wheel of the sun; men who seek wealth come to him who may become the charioteer of their rite (6, 55, 1), so that the epithet in st. 2 seems to be used metaphorically. Cf. also 7, 39, 2.

Some attributes point to the god’s strength: 1, 138, 1 *tavās-* “strong”: “(the might) of powerful (*tuviṣṭasya*) P. is ever praised, the might of him who is strong does not become less”; 6, 58, 4 he is called “strong and swift”; in 5, 43, 9 *tavyas-* (and “a dispenser of property”). Elsewhere he is *anarvāṇam* “irresistible”: 6, 48, 15 after a series of laudatory comparisons; or addressed as *ugra* “possessed of ojas, mighty”: 6, 53, 4 “vanquish our enemies; let our prayers attain their purposes”; *māhinaḥ* “mighty” 10, 26, 1 “the mighty P.” (is invoked to assist); 9 “let m. P. advance our chariot (i.e. the hymn) by his might (*ūrjā*)”; *śakra* “mighty” 8, 4, 15 “O m. one ... help us ... to procure wealth”.

Some epithets have a bearing on the god’s beneficent activity in granting prosperity, nourishment etc.: 6, 48, 14 *sṛprabhojas-* “bringing fat or abundant food” (occurring in an enumeration of laudable characteristics);

¹⁴⁴ Atkins, *l.c.*

8, 31, 11 *sarvadhātama*- “all-bounteous” (the adjective is 9, 18, 1 added to Soma’s name, and 5, 82, 1 to Bhaga’s *bhojanam* “food, enjoyment”); *viśvasaubhaga*- “bringer of all good fortune” is 1, 42, 6 very appropriately used: “make wealth easy to acquire for us”; 1, 157, 3 the chariot of the Aśvins, receiving the same epithet, is invited to bring happiness; 6, 55, 6 the goats are invited to convey P. *janaśrī*- “who is (brings) good fortune to men”; 10, 17, 5 he is *svastidāḥ* “giving well-being” and implored to keep the prayers’ offspring undiminished; 8, 4, 15 “for our associate we choose P. who possesses much wealth (*purūvasum*); O mighty one ... help us to procure wealth”; 4, 3, 7 *puṣṭimbhara*- “bringing a well-nourished condition” (no indications in the context); 1, 138, 1 “desirous of his favour I sing of him who is at hand with help (*antyūtim*), the bringer of delight” (*mayobhuvam*); 4 “be of assistance to us at once for the attainment of this ... generously giving” (*rarivān*); R.V. 1, 89, 6 whilst asking well-being, calls him the master of all possessions (*viśvavedāḥ*).

It is evident that P. as “the friend of every suppliant” might be called “steadfast” (*anapacyutaḥ*; 10, 26, 8).

Some of the god’s epithets testify to his interest in the prayers of his worshippers: 1, 89, 5 “we summon to our furtherance the lord ... who stimulates worship (*dhiyaṃ jinvaṃ*) so that he may be a protector to us ...”; the same epithet recurs 6, 58, 2 in a series. Soma is 9, 88, 3 compared to *pūṣā* ... *dhījavanaḥ* “prayer-rousing P.”: Soma is, indeed, a most inspiring deity, who in the same stanza is described as “most beneficent at the invocation”.

Pūṣan is twice styled *kapardin*:- 6, 55, 2 “seeking wealth we come to our friend who ... has his hair adorned with cowry-shells (*k.*)”;¹⁴⁵ cf. 9, 67, 11 where the god’s name is omitted: “may he allot us our share of maidens”. Does this wish refer to a sexual or fertility character of the god??, and have the cowry-shells anything to do with this??.¹⁴⁶ As the epithet is also applied to Rudra it may, however, rather represent them as ‘countrymen’.

The use of the epithet *kavi*- “gifted with insight, enlightened, wise, sage” is interesting: in 6, 53, 5 and 7 it occurs in connection with the prayer to pierce the heart of the misers; the term implies, it would seem, the knowledge of the doings of men and other creatures, that is to say a sort of ‘omniscience’ behind which lies punitive sanction against wrongful

¹⁴⁵ For this explication see A. Grünwedel, *Ethnologisches Notizblatt* (1895), 2, p. 10, which though quoted by Atkins, *o.c.*, p. 65, seems to have been overlooked by others.

¹⁴⁶ For the relations between shells and female fertility see *Aspects*, p. 100 f.

actions.¹⁴⁷ Compare 10, 139, 2 where Pūṣan is described as *nṛcakṣāḥ*, probably “with a lordly and watchful eye”,¹⁴⁸ “sitting in the midst of the sky, filling heaven and earth” and “overlooking”.

ṚV. 1, 42, 10 prays for goods from the wondrous one (*dasmam*), i.e. from the god who achieves deeds that are beyond human understanding; 1, 138, 4 the epithet recurs in an invitation to come to those praying; 1, 42, 5 the wonder-working (*dasra-*) and *mantumat-* “intelligent”¹⁴⁹ god is implored to favour his worshippers; 6, 56, 4 *dasra-* and *mantumat-* are used in a prayer for successful fulfilment.

In the same stanza, 6, 56, 4 Pūṣan is called *puruṣtuta-* “much-praised”; 8, 4, 15 “the much invoked one” (*puruhūta-*) and “possessor of much wealth” is implored to help and to procure wealth.

The meaning of the epithet which is most frequently applied to this god and is exclusively his, *āghṛṇi-*, is disputed. According to Mādhava its sense is *āgatadīpti-* “bright, glowing”; according to Sāyaṇa: *āgata-dīptiyukta-*; Skandasvāmin explains: *kṣarītā ghṛṇiḥ, dadhnā pūrṇo dṛtiḥ, sā kakṣe rathe vā yasya sa āghṛṇiḥ ... dīptir vā ghṛṇiḥ; sāgatā yasya sa vā upajātadīptiḥ*. Hence the usual translation: “glowing with heat”. The hypothesis of phonetic shortening is in this case largely problematic (in TaittB. and TaittĀr. the formula *svastidā āghṛṇiḥ* (ṚV. 10, 17, 5 c)¹⁵⁰ is given as *s. agh.*), and the interpretation of *āghṛṇi-* – which is recorded in no lexicon – as the privative *a-* and *ghṛṇi-* improbable (cf. the classical *aghṛṇin-* “not disdainful”).¹⁵¹ Whereas Neisser¹⁵² took the word to mean “Gutiger, Spender”, Geldner leaves it untranslated.

It is very difficult to discover the sense of the epithet from the passages in which it occurs. Two of them (1, 23, 13; 14) relate to Pūṣan’s finding the King (i.e. Soma) who was concealed.¹⁵³ The god who protects the roads and drives back the lost cattle (see 6, 54 *passim*) may be supposed to have found the King who was lost, and be asked to bring him like a lost head or herd of cattle. But has *āghṛṇi-* anything to do with these activities?

¹⁴⁷ For *kavi-* see also Neisser, *Abh. Kunde d. Morgenl.*, 18, 3 (Leipzig, 1930), s.v.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. K. F. Geldner, *Der Rigveda in Auswahl*, I, *Glossar* (Stuttgart, 1907), p. 102.

¹⁴⁹ For the implications of wisdom and intelligence see *Four studies in the language of the Veda*, *Disp. Rheno-Traj.*, III, ch. IV, p. 183 ff.

¹⁵⁰ See M. Bloomfield, *A Vedic Concordance* (Harvard, 1906), p. 1053.

¹⁵¹ See M. Bloomfield and F. Edgerton, *Vedic variants*, II (Philadelphia, 1932), p. 231.

¹⁵² W. Neisser, “Zum Wörterbuch des R̥gveda”, *Abh. Kunde d. Morgenl.*, 16, 4 (Leipzig, 1924), s.v.

¹⁵³ N. Flensburg, “Bidrag till Rigvedas Mytologi: Om Guden Pūṣan i Rigveda”, *Lunds Univ. Årsskrift*, N. F., I, 5 (1909), 4, p. 39 ff., unconvincingly argued that in st. 13 Agni is meant: the adjective *citrabarhiṣam* in 13 as well as 14 seems conclusive.

In 1, 138, 4 the poet emphasizes that he does not slight nor disdain the god's friendship; in 6, 48, 16 and 8, 4, 17 the desire is expressed to praise the *āghṛṇi*- one; in 3, 62, 7 "this newest song of praise is for thee, O *ā. P.*" In 6, 53, 3 the *ā. P.* is asked to stimulate the man who is not inclined to giving, to bestow presents upon the priests. In 6, 55, 3 he is called a stream of wealth and an abundance of riches; has *āghṛṇi*- anything to do with wealth? In 7, 40, 6 *P. ā.* is implored to be not envious. In 6, 53, 8; 9 he is said to carry a goad that stimulates brahman which drives cattle forward and with which he may rend the hearts. Elsewhere the epithet is used instead of the god's name: 6, 55, 1; 8, 4, 18; 9, 67, 12. In 10, 17, 5 the term forms part of a group of epithets. We are driven to conclude that *āghṛṇi*-, which is a typical Ṛgvedic word, was completely conventional; perhaps the poets themselves did not know its real original meaning.

VĀYU

Vāyu, the wind and as a rule the god of that element, is variously characterized. In cases such as ṚV. 5, 19, 5 the epithet impresses us as characteristic and at the same time traditional: *bhasmanā vāyunā* "(fire joining) the pulverizing wind"; cf. also 10, 107, 4: those who grant a *dakṣiṇā* have an insight into the nature of the wind which has a hundred streams (of rain). A prayer for wealth and glory, 8, 26, 22, however contains the epithet *īśānam* "powerful, ruling", no doubt in a significant way, because a mighty ruler was justly supposed to be able to render people wealthy and distinguished. In invoking the god's favour he is 5, 41, 6 for obvious reasons said to yoke his chariot: *vāyum rathayujam*; cf. also 10, 64, 7 "with hymns of praise summon hither Vāyu who yokes the chariot, *Puraṁdhi* (i.e. Plenty or rather 'Receptacle of Plenitude'), and Pūṣan for friendship; for these deities ... attend upon the offering". Hence also 6, 49, 4 *pra vāyum achā brhatī manīṣā / brhadrayiṁ viśvavāraṁ rathaprām* "(my) well-founded thought (goes) out to V., the bestower of all good things, who has solid possessions and fills his chariot".¹⁵⁴ Elsewhere the name of the god occurs in a comparison. In 3, 49, 4 Indra is compared to the *ratha*- "charioteer" Vāyu. In 6, 45, 32 the liberality of a man called *Br̥bu* is stated to be auspicious and showing itself speedily like Vāyu's. Agni's fires are 10, 46, 7 stated to be *vanarṣadaḥ* "sitting in (the) wood(s)".¹⁵⁵ As the god of wind was the first to receive, in the morning,

¹⁵⁴ I would prefer to take this attribute literally (see Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, II, p. 150).

¹⁵⁵ See Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, III, p. 204, whose opinion I do not share, supposing the wind "to sit in the forests".

an oblation of Soma the pressing stones could, 10, 76, 5, be addressed as more desirous of Soma than Vāyu. The god's fondness for Soma is also illustrated by the attribute *śucipā-* "drinking the clear (soma)" applied to him in 7, 90, 2 ... *yas ta ānaṭ chuciṃ somam śucipās* ..., where the epithet is no doubt employed to have the hearer understand that Vāyu can appreciate the drink. In inviting the god to a soma sacrifice the same epithet is 7, 92, 1 appositely used. In imploring his aid the author of 8, 26, 21 addresses him by the title *ṛtaspace* "O lord of *ṛta-* ("truth, order")": justly, because a lord or protector of the right order may be expected to be loyal to his worshippers and to give heed to his obligations.¹⁵⁶ That he is called *śiva-* "gracious" when invited to come down from heaven is likewise intelligible: *ibid.* 23.

TVASṬAR

Tvaṣṭar, the skilful workman among the gods and the maker of their implements receives some characteristic attributes, which are, generally speaking, very appositely applied. Whereas other parts of his physical form are left unmentioned his hands or arms with which he holds his tools are repeatedly referred to. In 7, 34, 20 T. "the dexterous-handed one" (*supāṇi-*) is implored to create sons. In 3, 54, 12 the same epithet combines with *sukṛt* ... *svavāṃ ṛtāvā / devaḥ* "the skilful ..., helpful god who keeps within the fixed order" in a prayer for favour ("he may arrange these things for help"); in 6, 49, 9 with many other attributes in an otherwise irrelevant context. In 1, 85, 9 T. *svapāḥ* "the good artisan" is related to have fashioned Indra's vajra: cf. 5, 31, 4; 6, 17, 10. ṚV. 10, 18, 6 T. *sujanimā* "promoting birth and creation" is called upon to accord a long life. ṚV. 3, 55, 19 commences as follows: *devas tvaṣṭā savitā viśvarūpaḥ* "the god T. the stimulator (or, rather, "vivifier"), of various forms (or "omniform") (= 10, 10, 5b); he has, the text continues, created and fostered much offspring, and all creatures are his making. In 10, 10, 5 he is stated to have made, in the womb, twin children husband and wife. Now, the epithet *viśvarūpa-* does not necessarily mean that Tvaṣṭar himself is omniform. Being called, in later Vedic texts, a creator of forms (TB. 1, 4, 7, 1; ŚB. 11, 4, 3, 3; cf. also AV. 2, 26, 1) he is also in the Ṛgveda described as a deity who develops the germ in the womb and is the shaper of all forms, human and animal (1, 188, 9; 10, 184, 1). The

¹⁵⁶ See also *Some observations on the relations between "gods" and "powers" ...*, p. 74 ff.

epithet may therefore apply to his activity rather than his person:¹⁵⁷ cf. especially 10, 110, 9. For *viśvarūpa*- see also 1, 13, 10. It is however true that in the eyes of Vedic man to whom the nature of a god and his activity were largely identical, a divine being which creates all forms was apt to be characterized as 'omniform'. Remarkably enough a demon *Viśvarūpa*¹⁵⁸ was considered his son, and 'sonship' often meant representation of the character of the father. In 7, 34, 22 the god, while being implored to bestow gifts is given the attribute *sudatra*- "granting good gifts". Some other passages throw no light on the god's character: he is the firstborn (9, 5, 9) and one who goes before (*ibidem*).

VARUṆA

Varuṇa is the god of the fixed ordinances, of oath and rules. The epithet *dhṛtavrata*- "who maintains his rules", "of fixed law, orders, customs" though also applicable to Indra, Agni, Mitra, is in most cases his. Although the limited number of instances does not allow of very reliable conclusions one might be under the impression that the attribute has been largely fossilized and come to remind the audience of one of the most prominent features in the god's character. Thus the name of the god is accompanied by this epithet in RV. 1, 141, 9 which might also be quoted to exemplify the tendency to increasing magnitude: *tvayā hy agne varuṇo dhṛtavrato / mitraḥ śāsādre aryamā sudānavaḥ*; in 1, 44, 14; 8, 27, 3, and 10, 66, 5 likewise at the end of a pāda. In 2, 1, 4 Agni is identified with Mitra and Varuṇa: *tvam agne rājā varuṇo dhṛtavratas / tvam mitro bhavasi dasma īdyaḥ*: "king V. of fixed order" is a sort of unit. This being so, we would probably lose our labour in attempting to detect a special connection between *dhṛtavrata*- and holding the royal dignity (1, 25, 10), if the god was not in 8, 25, 8 together with Mitra related to bear sway, clinging to the *vratas*. That the god who knows the months, i.e. time should be *dhṛtavrata*- is small wonder (1, 25, 8). In both cases the epithet is again placed at the end of a pāda. Together with Mitra Varuṇa receives this surname: 1, 15, 6 *ṛtunā yajñam āśāthe* "they have attained the sacrifice in due season"; 8, 25, 2; together with Indra 6, 68, 10 in being invited to a soma feast. Savitar, being described as bearing sway over the great path or career, is rightly characterized by the same

¹⁵⁷ Otherwise: Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 116; H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda* (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1923), p. 237 f.

¹⁵⁸ Oldenberg, *o.c.*, p. 141; A. B. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads* (Harvard, 1925), p. 205.

epithet: 4, 53, 4; Indra without a perceptible motive: 6, 19, 5. – In 2, 28, 8 stating that he is the firm foundation of law and order the same god is called *dūdabha-* “difficult to be deceived”.

Varuṇa is often called *māyin-*, the possessor or wielder of that incomprehensible creative power or faculty to achieve the marvellous which was known as *māyā*:¹⁵⁹ from 10, 99, 10 and 147, 5 “*m.* like V.” it appears that this quality was characteristic of this god. Varuṇa’s superior power includes also the ability to deliver man from sin: 7, 28, 4 *prati yac caṣṭe anṛtam anenā / ava dvitā varuṇo māyī naḥ sāt* “when the god who is not liable to sin (error) perceives a falsehood, may V. of incomprehensible inventiveness by all means deliver us (from it)”.

Adding for the sake of convenience some observations on the same epithet when used in connection with other beings it may be stated that Indra who as a possessor of *māyā* is (10, 99, 10; 147, 5) compared to Varuṇa is 8, 76, 1 invoked as *māyin-*: *imaṃ nu māyinaṃ huva / indram īśānam ojasā*, the power over *māyā* and *ojas* being, in this introductory stanza considered the god’s chief characteristics. In an introductory stanza, to typify: 5, 48, 1.

BRHASPATI

Bṛhaspati, being a domestic priest and the ally of Indra, occupies a prominent position in the Ṛgveda. His name occurs, in this form, about 120 times and in that of Brahmanaspati about 50 times besides. He is called ‘divine’ or rather ‘asuric’ (*asurya-*) ṚV. 2, 23, 2 where the gods are said to be indebted to him for their share in the sacrifice. B. sings chants (cf. also 1, 40, 5): 10, 36, 5 “B., the praiser, must sing hymns of praise” (apposition). The author of 10, 64, 4 in discussing the god’s interest in songs of praise, calls him *tuvīravas-* “making a loud sound”. In praising him the poet of 7, 97, 5 describes him as *śucikranda-* “clear-voiced”. In 3, 62, 4 he is called *viśvadevya-* “related (because of his priestly function) to all gods”: “take pleasure in our offerings”. In 2, 30, 9 he is a king: “conquer the enemies...” ṚV. 1, 139, 10 B. while being stated to sacrifice is called *vena-* “yearning, anxious” (*kāmayamānaḥ*, Sāyaṇa), or “Späher, Schauende, Seher” (Geldner;¹⁶⁰ cf. *medhāvin-* Naigh., *paṇḍita-* comm.); may we compare 1, 190, 7, where he is said to look or observe as one who knows, being compared to a vulture (*gṛdhraḥ*)?¹⁶¹ ṚV. 7, 97, 4 he is in an

¹⁵⁹ For which see the relevant chapter in *Four studies in the language of the Veda* (Disp. Rheno-Traj., III). I cannot agree with Geldner’s translation “listenreich”.

¹⁶⁰ Geldner, *Der Rigveda in Auswahl*, I, p. 173.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Geldner, *Der Rig-veda übersetzt*, I², p. 271 f.

invitation to sit down among his worshippers styled “the dearest” (*preṣṭha-*) and “cherished by all” or rather “possessor of all desired objects” (*viśvavāra-*) – similarly 7, 10, 4 –; in 7 he is called sublime and easy of access (?), preparing a cordial drink for his friends.¹⁶² As Brahmanaspati he is 7, 97, 3 regarded as *suśeva-* “kind, friendly”, praised and adored. In an injunction to worship B. (3, 62, 5) he is called *śuci-* “pure, honest”. He is also among those gods whose munificence is hoped for by poets who address them as wealthy (*purūvasu-*, 5, 42, 7) and winner of riches. In 1, 190, 1 and 8 he is called a bull, in st. 1 even an irresistible (*anarvāṇam*) bull (cf. 6, 73, 3; for the epithet also 7, 97, 5, a prayer for help); in st. 8 also “great, of powerful nature, mighty” (*mahas tuvijātas tuviṣmān*) (cf. 4, 50, 5); in st. 8 he is made god. Cf. also 10, 67, 10; 92, 10 (stereotyped); 3, 62, 6 bull of the peoples. R.V. 6, 73, 1 introduces him as a splitter of mountains, as a firstborn one, who keeps within the fixed order, as an Āṅgīrasa, etc., the stanza being silent about the motives for these appellations (cf. however st. 2). It is worthy of notice that the name of this god, especially when called Brahmanaspati, is – e.g. in 10, 68 – often mentioned without any epithet whatever.

AŚVINS

The twin deities named the Aśvins occupy a prominent place in the Rgveda. The following survey is not meant to be exhaustive; attention will be directed mainly to instances of significant use of an epithet. Refraining for the moment from a discussion of the phrases attributed to their name we may draw attention here to some other epithets. The adjective *dasra-* “wondrous” (Macdonell), “Meister” (Geldner), rather: “exhibiting marvellous skill” is almost entirely limited to them: 1, 30, 18 in the statement that their immortal chariot traverses the sea without changing draught-animals; st. 17 in a request to come and to give gold and cows; 1, 47, 3 and 6 in a prayer to bring goods on their chariot – obviously a deed of exceptional skill – and to give satiation to the liberal worshipper; cf. 1, 92, 16; 3, 58, 3 likewise in connection with their smoothly running chariot; cf. st. 5; 5, 75, 9; 7, 68, 1; 8, 5, 2; 8, 1; 87, 6; in 8, 87, 5 they are even addressed as *dasrā* with golden felloes (of their chariot) so that the conclusion must be that this attribute often refers to their skill in chariot driving. From 1, 116, 25 it however appears that their marvellous skill and activities prove to be many-sided. R.V. 1, 117, 21 they are said to have sown corn and provided men with food; 1, 118, 6 in

¹⁶² According to Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, II, p. 267.

a reference to their succouring activity; 4, 44, 6 in a prayer for many sons; 10, 40, 14 they are entertained: here the epithet may be a mere honorific captation, the more so as they are also styled “lords of auspiciousness” (*śubhas patī*). In appreciating the value and implications of the epithet 8, 22, 18 is of some importance: “at your arrival we should like to receive your well-distinguished and very valuable heroic ability (*suvīryam*), and many objects of pleasure”. The epithet *suvīra-* itself occurs 8, 26, 7 in an invitation to come. Elsewhere the epithet *dasra-* seems merely to be a means of winning the gods’ favour: 1, 118, 3 (or has it been chosen because of their driving through the air?).

A compound of similar sense is *purudāṃsas-*, which occurs as a captation 1, 3, 2 in the statement that they accept the eulogies with intelligence; similarly, 8, 87, 6. In 8, 10, 3 they are, in being invited to come, called *sudāṃsasā* “accomplishing deeds of marvellous skill”; 8, 22, 3 under similar circumstances, *purubhūtamā* “who (more than others) are present in the interest of many” (cf. st. 12).

The adjective *sudānu-* “bounteous” occurs 3, 58, 7 in an invitation to drink soma: again the principle *do ut possis dare* (cf. also 1, 117, 10; 1, 184, 4); 1, 112, 11 in a reference to their favours bestowed on men; 1, 180, 6 in connection with their beneficent activity in general. – R̥V. 1, 184, 5 is a eulogy addressed to the *maghavānā* gods, no doubt a *captatio benevolentiae*. – The epithet *vedhas-* which may mean “disposer” is 1, 181, 7 used in a prayer for protection, in which the fact is emphasized that they are glorified: *do (praise) ut possis dare (protection)*. – Similarly, 1, 118, 10: *sujāta-* “noble”.

They are, in an invitation to enjoy the eulogies, aptly addressed as *vipanyū*, i.e. “rejoicing in praise” (8, 8, 19; 87, 6).¹⁶³ – R̥V. 1, 15, 11 they are, without an obvious reason, called *śucivrata-* “of pure habits or observances”, an adjective elsewhere applied to Agni, Mitra and Varuṇa and other beings. – The epithet *avadyagohana-* “concealing imperfection” suits, 1, 34, 3, the context very well: “mingle our oblations with sweetness”, i.e. “assist us in preparing them so that they may be savoury”: the adjective represents, so to say, a causal clause.

The epithet *śubhas patī* “lords of what is advantageous”¹⁶⁴ occurs 1, 34, 6 in a prayer for “the protection of the beneficent”.¹⁶⁵ As the Aśvins are typically succouring deities, who are deliverers from distress, the

¹⁶³ “redeskundig” (Geldner).

¹⁶⁴ For the idea of lordship see also *Notes on brahman* (Utrecht, 1950), p. 67 f. In 10, 40, 4 Geldner translates: “Gatten der Schönheit”.

¹⁶⁵ See Geldner’s note, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, I², p. 41.

epithet does not seem to mean “Meister der Schönheit” as was preferred by Geldner; Sāyaṇa seems to have been nearer the truth in interpreting *śobhanasyauśadhajātasya pālakau*, i.e. “protectors of everything useful included under the name simples”. As stated elsewhere¹⁶⁶ the term *śubh-* does not only refer to what is aesthetically beautiful, but also to what is pleasant, agreeable, useful, virtuous, honest, righteous, prosperous etc. It can hardly be doubted that for the Vedic Indians daybreak – with which the twin gods were anyhow connected – was in the first place an auspicious and advantageous event (cf. also 8, 22, 14). A survey of the passages in which they are called *śubhas patī* shows that it occurs in connection with prayers for protection: 1, 47, 5; 5, 75, 8; 8, 5, 10–12; 10, 93, 6 etc.; for favour: 1, 120, 6; 8, 22, 4; 6; 14 etc.; in statements of their beneficent activity: 10, 40, 4 “ye bring that man who punctually sacrifices, strengthening food”; cf. also st. 12 and 8, 5, 5; 10, 131, 4; in praise on account of beneficial activities: 8, 22, 6, and sometimes as a mode of laudatory address: 8, 87, 5.

In 1, 89, 4 they are in a prayer for medicines (the elixer of life) called *dhiṣṇya-* “benevolent, attentive” rather than “weise (?)” (Geldner).¹⁶⁷ The practical nature of science and knowledge appears in the use of *viśvavedas-* “omniscient”, i.e. “being skilful in all respects” in 1, 139, 3 *yuvor viśvā adhi śriyaḥ / prkṣaś ca viśvavedasā* “with you are all manifestations of well-being and all kinds of satiation, O v. ones”.

Curiously enough they are called *amartya-* “immortal” in a request to bring to those praying much invigorating nourishment, which they are supposed to eat themselves on their way: 8, 5, 31.

RV. 4, 43, 4 the Aśvins are, in a prayer for protection, addressed as *mādhvī* “the two sweet ones”, an epithet considered to be due to their fondness of honey;¹⁶⁸ 5, 75, 1–9 the same attribute recurs in a refrain, bespeaking the gods’ interest. In 7, 71, 2, however, the adjective is used in a request for protection against illness and want of vigour: we should remember that ‘honey’ often is a general name for wholesome and life-giving draughts, that it in all probability was the predecessor of the soma which is often called *madhu-* “honey”.¹⁶⁹ Compare also 1, 157, 4; 1, 22, 3 etc. Geldner’s translation “ihr Süszerliebende” is therefore not right (*madhumantau*, Sāyaṇa). Elsewhere they are, in similar circumstances,

¹⁶⁶ “Gods” and “powers”, p. 54, n. 41.

¹⁶⁷ For the meaning of this word see also M. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen*, II, p. 103 f.

¹⁶⁸ See Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 49 f.; cf. e.g. 4, 45, 3.

¹⁶⁹ See Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, p. 364 ff.; J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation* (Zürich–Leipzig, III), p. 301.

called *ariprā vṛtrahantamā* “blameless and greatest killers of inimical powers” (8, 8, 9).

In an invitation to approach and to bring objects of value they are 5, 75, 3 called *vājinīvasū* “rich in manifestations of *vāja*- (such as horses etc.)” (also 8, 5, 30; 10, 5; 22, 7; 14; 85, 3), the same epithet applying to them 8, 8, 10: “when Sūryā mounted your chariot”, 10, 40, 12 in stating that their favour has reached those speaking; in the statement that the voice of the poet urges their chariot to come,¹⁷⁰ st. 4 *vṛṣaṇvasū* “enormously wealthy”; cf. st. 9 v. and *dasrau*: “your chariot was yoked”; 8, 5, 27 in a prayer for aid; 22, 8 and 9 in an invitation; cf. 8, 26, 5; 15; 85, 7; in an invocation for favour *śacīvasu-* “rich in succouring power”: 1, 139, 5; 7, 74, 1 (not “Kunstreichen”, Geldner); cf. 8, 60, 12 (Agni). – The adjective *vājinā* “possessed of vigour” occurs in an invitation to drink soma: 8, 35, 2; as Soma is (9, 31, 2) *vājānām patiḥ* “lord of the *vājas*” the epithet may be used ‘proleptically’.

In a prayer for “body-building food that is swimming in ghee” these gods are 8, 8, 16 addressed as *dānunas patī* “lords (i.e. also distributors) of donation”.

In this connection it is worth while to study the frequent application of the term “men” or “lords”: *narā*. This term denoting “l’homme qui sort du commun, le héros”¹⁷¹ implies also the idea of “distributor of food and objects of value” (cf. 1, 48, 12; 10, 147, 5). R̥V. 8, 8, 17 is a prayer for wellbeing (*śrī-*); 1, 118, 10 a prayer for aid; similarly, 8, 8, 20 (cf. 21); 22, 12; 85, 5; the verses 7, 74, 4; 8, 8, 6 etc. are an invitation to approach; similarly, 1, 117, 2; 5, 75, 6; in a statement about their coming 5, 73, 7; 10, 40, 1; 3; cf. also 8, 26, 4; 11. In 10, 40, 4 the lords are said to bring food to the sacrificers. 1, 118, 5 Sūryā, the daughter of the sun, is said to have mounted their chariot. In passages such as 1, 180, 4 the phrase seems to be a polite mode of address, and in view of 10, 40, 5 where the princess Ghoṣā is related to have claimed their attention by addressing them as *narā* the term may perhaps have been a usual style of these gods who were physicians and protectors, the word *nr-* “man” being also used for experts and officiants.

In an invitation to grant the request, contained in the song of praise, to come near 8, 8, 17 they are called *riśādasā* – “devouring or destroying enemies” (cf. Grassmann); according to Geldner: “behende, reissend schnell”, “überlegen” or “Herrenstolz” – and *purubhujā* “giving enjoyment to many”. The latter epithet occurs also 8, 10, 6; 22, 16 like-

¹⁷⁰ See Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 81.

¹⁷¹ Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, III, p. 19; see also 66 and IV, p. 60.

wise in an invitation, probably to anticipate their beneficent activity; 1, 116, 13 in a reference to Purandhi's imploring the god's assistance. As to *riśādas*- the passages in which this word occurs do not seem to contain much to support Thieme's explication "für den Fremdling sorgend"; judging from the contexts "taking care of the worshipper(s) or petitioner(s) in general" seems to be more plausible a supposition, cf. e.g. 1, 77, 4; 6, 51, 4; 5, 64, 1; 8, 27, 4; 9, 69, 10 (but 10, 77, 3; 5?).¹⁷²

In a eulogy entreating them to be *puruṣprhā* "much desired" they are styled *purutrā vṛtrahantamā* i.e. "rescuing many" and "greatest killers of demonical enemies": 8, 8, 22.

The adjective *suhavā* "easily invoked" is 8, 22, 1 very appositely used: *o tyam ahva ā ratham... ūtaye / yam aśvinā suhavā... tasthathuḥ*: the chariot of the gods who "listen willingly is said to have been called for help"; compare 10, 92, 13; 10, 39, 11 their efficacious aid is praised. – An interesting variant is *yāmahūtāmā* "who allow themselves to be invoked by approaching": 8, 73, 6 (also 5, 73, 9), in being called upon.

"Granting good gifts" is their epithet 10, 143, 4: *cite tad vām surādhasā / rātiḥ sumatir aśvinā* "your favour, your good disposition, O liberal A., is (should be) perceived": "bring us over to safety". – *Viśvavāra*- "bestowing all wishes" likewise suits the context in 7, 70, 1 (invitation to come): cf. 1, 30, 10; 8, 46, 9 etc. in connection with Indra, 7, 5, 8 (Agni); 7, 92, 1 (Vāyu); 7, 97, 4 (Bṛhaspati) etc.; in these places the above sense seems preferable to Geldner's "Allbegehrter". – Another apposite mode of address occurring in a prayer to visit those speaking is 8, 26, 9 *viprau* "inspired or wise ones": the gods know why they are called upon and what is needed in the abodes of their worshippers.¹⁷³ Cf. also 8, 87, 6.

In the statement that they are invoked at daybreak the twin gods are 10, 61, 4 styled *divo napātā* "(grand)sons of heaven": although they are not distinctly connected with any definite phenomenon of light, they may safely be said to represent, to a certain extent, the salutary power inherent in celestial light, especially in the moments between dark and dawn.¹⁷⁴ – The term *prātaryujā* "yoking early" is appropriately used in 1, 22, 1 *p. vi bodhayā / aśvināv eha gachatām*.

¹⁷² Geldner, *Auswahl*, I, p. 149 ("dunkles Wort"); *Rig-veda übersetzt*, II, p. 303; cf. also Th. Aufrecht, *Bezenberger's Beiträge*, 14, p. 32; R. Pischel, in Pischel und Geldner, *Ved. Studien*, III (Stuttgart, 1901), p. 190 ff.; P. Thieme, "Der Fremdling im Rgveda", *Abh. Kunde d. Morgenl.*, 23 (1938), p. 158; see also Renou, *Etudes véd. et pān.* (Paris, 1958), IV, p. 39, and E. Benveniste, quoted by J. Brough, *The early brahmanical system of gotra and pravara* (Cambridge, 1953), p. XIII f.

¹⁷³ Sāyaṇa's *medhāvinau* should probably be preferred to Geldner's "ihr Redekundigen".

¹⁷⁴ Compare also "Gods" and "powers", p. 54.

The Ásvins are often given the name bulls (*vr̥ṣaṇau*): 1, 157, 5 in a reference to their generative activity: they place the germ in females and produce fire, water, trees; 1, 180, 7 in the statement that they protect the man who is in the presence of the gods, bulls being strong and powerful animals: cf. 1, 10, 10; 6, 57, 4 (Indra); see also 1, 112, 8; 117, 3; 4; 8; 15; 19; 25; 118, 6; 119, 4; 6, 62, 7; 8, 22, 7; 10, 39, 9, where the Ásvins, called bulls, are praised because of aid rendered or powerful deeds performed; and 1, 112, 24; 116, 21; 118, 1; 158, 1; 184, 2; 8, 22, 12; 16, where they are invoked for favour and assistance. Elsewhere, e.g. 7, 70, 7; 73, 3; 74, 3 the epithet seems to have become stereotyped. In 1, 181, 8 this frequent epithet may have given rise to the somewhat obscure expression *vr̥ṣā... meghaḥ*.

In 10, 184, 2 the Ásvins are, interestingly enough, called *puṣkarasrajā*. “wearing lotus-wreathes”: as the small hymn is meant to promote a successful conception (cf. AV. 5, 25) and the Ásvins, who are divine physicians, are explicitly implored to make the embryo develop well, the wreath may be supposed to have something to do with their doctor’s task: now, it is well known that the lotus was widely considered a representative of the force and energy inherent in the waters and of the humidity of the soil; being the first product of the creative principle it was conceived as a sort of generative organ of these very waters. Being, in mythology, the birthplace of Śrī and of the Creator-god Brahmā himself the lotus could act as the womb of creation.¹⁷⁵

GANDHARVA(S)

Among the mythical beings not regarded as having the divine nature fully and originally are the gandharvas. Of the twenty occurrences of this name in the R̥V. seventeen are in the singular, referring to a being which seems to have been localized in the high regions of air or sky. Hence the epithet *divya-* “celestial, belonging to the sky” connected with Viśvāvasu,¹⁷⁶ the measurer of space (10, 139, 5; cf. also 10, 123, 7) and also to the gandharva of the waters, i.e. Soma:¹⁷⁷ 9, 86, 36 *apām gandharvam divyaṃ nṛcakṣasam*. In 3, 38, 6 we encounter a descriptive epithet: *apaśyam... gandharvām api vāyukeśān* “I saw also the wind-haired g.”.

¹⁷⁵ See also *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 104 and n. 52. For the lotus see also F. D. K. Bosch, *De gouden kiem* (Amsterdam, 1948), p. 133 ff.

¹⁷⁶ For Viśvāvasu see e.g. Pañc. Br. 6, 9, 22.

¹⁷⁷ For the associations between Gandharva and Soma see Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 136 f.

In the majority of the relative passages there is no attribute at all: 1, 163, 2 etc.

RBHUS

The three Ṛbhus, the most important of the lower deities, are most spoken of in the plural, but the plural of each of their names may stand for the entire triad. Five times they are addressed as *śavaso napātaḥ* “descendants (i.e. representatives) of (heroic) power”,¹⁷⁸ an epithet almost peculiar to them. As they were considered to be very skilful and associated with Indra, Agni, Savitar, the first of which is called a lord of *śavas-* (1, 11, 2 etc.) or a son of *śavas-* (4, 24, 1 etc.), the second, Agni, being in 1, 145, 1 also a lord of *śavas-*, this probably fixed epithet seems to have been expressive of an important feature in their character. Being Indra-like, the Ṛbhus have a share in the soma draught (cf. e.g. 4, 34, 6). With Indra they help mortals to victory and are invoked to destroy their enemies, to give wealth and prosperity (cf. e.g. 4, 35, 8). The five relative passages (1, 161, 14; 4, 34, 6; 35, 1; 8; 37, 4) do not however contain special references to this side of their character.

An interesting epithet is *vājaratna-* “whose treasure consists in *vāja-*”: as it is used in different contexts – its occurrences are however limited to two – it may have a more or less fixed character (4, 34, 3 they are invoked to come to the sacrifice; 4, 35, 5 they fashioned Indra’s horses); it is however hardly a matter of chance that *vāja-* is identical with the name of one of the Ṛbhus. In 4, 37, 4 they are *vājinaḥ*, the stanza describing their fat horses, bright chariots and golden ornaments, the possession of *vāja-* being closely associated with well-being and prosperity. – In other invitations to partake of the soma juice they are called *ratnadhāḥ* “bringing treasures” (4, 34, 6; 35, 7); *maghavānaḥ* (7, 48, 1: a captation, do ut des; see especially 4, 34, 11 *madatha ... ratnadheyāya*); *madhupsarasaḥ* “delighting in the sweet (Soma) draught” (4, 33, 3, to the point). – Elsewhere it is however stated that they have deserved, as a reward, their share in the soma by their great skill: 4, 35, 3 and 9, where they are called *suhastāḥ* “skilful with the hands” (cf. also 3, 60, 3). In 4, 33, 8, mentioning samples of this ability they are besought for wealth, being *svavasah svapasah suhastāḥ* “geschickt zur Hilfe, zum Werk und mit der Hand” (Geldner). The compounds *sukṛt-* and *suhasta-* seem to have assumed a fixed character: 7, 35, 12; 10, 66, 10.

¹⁷⁸ See “*Gods*” and “*powers*”, p. 50; 52.

In the statement (4, 36, 1; 2) that they made a horseless and reinless three-wheeled cart they are aptly styled *sucetasah* “clever”.

Being regarded as not having been gods from the beginning they are explicitly stated to have acquired their high rank by their incomparable skill: thus 1, 110, 4 where they are called *sūracakṣasah* “sun-eyed, whose eye is the sun”: the sun being the eye of the gods (7, 76, 1; 77, 3) this quality characterizes them as divine.

MARUTS

The Maruts, a troop of deities, particularly associated with the phenomena of wind, storm, rain, lightning, etc. receive some very characteristic attributes. Their playfulness and swift movements (cf. e.g. 1, 166, 2) are often emphasized; they are sometimes spoken of as *krīlayah* “playing, sporting” e.g. 1, 87, 3; cf. also 1, 37, 1 and 5 *krīlaṃ vaḥ śardho mārutam; dhunayaḥ* “rustling” 1, 87, 3; by their sounds and movements the gods are said to praise their own greatness. R̥V. 6, 48, 15 Pūṣan is said to be as terrible as the *śardho mārutam tuviṣvaṇi* “roaring powerfully”. In 2, 3, 3 where they are invited to come near, the troupe (*śardhaḥ*) of the Maruts is epithetically described as *acyutam* “unwavering”. R̥V. 5, 46, 5 *uta tyan no mārutaṃ śardha ā gamad / divikṣayaṃ yajatam barhir āsade*: in inviting the Maruts to sit down on the sacrificial bed the poet calls them “denizens of heaven and worthy of worship”; 5, 52, 8 *śardho mārutam uc chaṃsa / satyaśavasam ṛbhvasam* and R̥V. 1, 64, 1 are praise and captation.

The plural ‘vocative’ is very often left without an adjective. Elsewhere however, an epithet is added which is appropriate to the occasion. In 1, 86, 7, asking for happiness, *prayajyavaḥ* “adorable” is a captation. Cf. also 1, 88, 3; 166, 12 *sujātāḥ* “noble”, the latter passage explaining their greatness. The adjectives in 1, 166, 1 suit the context very well: *aidheva yāman marutas tuviṣvaṇo / yudheva śakrās taviṣāṇi kartana* “as if with flames, O loud-sounding M., as if with a fight, O mighty ones, ye exhibit on your march strength”. In a prayer for favour and benevolence they are 1, 166, 1 addressed as *ugrāḥ* “energetically powerful”; in a petition for favour and protection 1, 166, 8 as *ugrās tavaṣo virapśinaḥ* “e. p., strong, powerful”; in the statement that those speaking have the upper hand through these deities (1, 166, 14) and in a prayer for favour and mercy (1, 171, 1) they are called *turāsaḥ* “prompt, strong”; in a reference to trembling 1, 168, 5 *ṛṣṭividyaṭaḥ* “glittering with swords”; the same adjective occurs, 5, 52, 13 in an injunction directed to the ṛṣi to pay homage to them.

The Maruts are 1, 40, 1 (an invitation to approach) called *sudānavah* “pouring out or bestowing abundantly”: being one of those laudatory captations with *su-* which are of considerable frequency in the Ṛgveda, it recurs under similar circumstances in the final verse 1, 44, 14 *śṛṇvantu stomam marutaḥ sudānavah*; cf. also 5, 52, 5; 8, 20, 18; in 10, 78, 5 it is predicatively used. As their gifts consisted of rain, one of their main functions being to shed the atmospheric waters the epithet which no doubt contains the substantive *dānu-* “fluid, drop” is appositely used in contexts such as 1, 64, 6 *pinvanty apo marutaḥ sudānavah*... “the...M. cause the waters to swell (to overflow)” – in the same stanza they are said to milk the unfailing thundering well and to cause their stallions to make water –; 2, 34, 8; 5, 53, 6; they cause the heavenly pail to pour and Parjanya to moisten both parts of the universe; and 1, 85, 10 where they according to the legend handed down by Sāyaṇa procured water for the ṛṣi Gotama (cf. also st. 11). In 3, 26, 5 this epithet combines with *svāninaḥ* “noisy, turbulent” and *varṣanirṇijaḥ* “clothed with rain” (5, 57, 4 the latter compound occurs in a graphic description of their appearance); in 5, 57, 5 with *purudrapsāḥ* “abounding in drops of water”.

Lightning is so characteristic of these gods that all the five compounds of *vidyut-* are applied to them and, excepting a single instance, to them alone. They are *vidyuddhasta-* “holding l. in their hands”: a fact which 8, 7, 25 contributes much to their beauty (cf. 5, 54, 11); *vidyudratha-* “with lightning for a vehicle” 3, 54, 13 (descriptive); in 5, 54, 3 they are called *vidyunmahaso naraḥ* “heroes rejoicing in l.” who are *vātatviṣaḥ* “impetuous as wind” and *parvatacyutaḥ* “shaking mountains”. “Lightning-speared” (*rṣṭividyut-*) is another epithet of theirs that seems to describe their might and impressive appearance: see the above 1, 168, 5 where there seems to be a certain opposition between this adjective and the supposed trembling of the gods; 5, 52, 13.

RV. 1, 166, 3 states that the Maruts shed rain for the man who has given many sacrificial gifts; in so doing they are *mayobhuvah* “delighting, causing pleasure”; the same adjective applies to them 8, 20, 24 in references to their aid; 6, 52, 6 to Parjanya; 2, 27, 5 to the “aid, assistance” (*avaḥ*) of the Ādityas which is *m.* in danger; 1, 89, 4; 10, 186, 1 to medicine; 2, 33, 13 to the medicines of the Maruts which are also *śucīni* “pure” and *śamṭamā* “most auspicious”.

In another invocation emphasis is laid on their brilliant outward appearance (cf. e.g. also 1, 165, 1) by the adjectives *prṣadaśva-* “with piebald horses” – which is exclusively connected with these gods – and *śubhaṃyāvan-* “riding in beautiful (i.e. at the same time auspicious)

array": 1, 89, 7 the former recurs 1, 87, 4; 186, 8 (cf. 7, 40, 3) in connection with riding and moving; elsewhere, e.g. 3, 26, 6 it is used predicatively. Another epithet is *śubhra-* "shining, beautiful" 1, 167, 4 (cf. 7, 56, 16 as a predicate); 1, 19, 5 in connection with their outward appearance; 1, 85, 3 and 8, 7, 25; 28 instead of the proper name; cf. also 2, 36, 2. In 8, 20, 4 they are, in a description of the rains, called *śubhrakhādayaḥ* "wearing glittering bracelets" and *svabhānavaḥ* "self-luminous". The latter epithet occurs also 1, 37, 2 in the statement that they were born together with their weapons and ornaments (hence no doubt part of their 'luminous' appearance); cf. also 5, 53, 4, and in a more stereotyped form 5, 54, 1; 6, 48, 12.

A frequently repeated epithet is *bhrājadr̥ṣṭayaḥ* "with bright spears". In 1, 31, 1 it seems to be traditional: *tava (= agner) vr̥ate... / ajāyanta maruto bh.*; cf. also 5, 55, 1 where however the outward appearance of these gods seems to be described: they are also *rukmaṇvakṣasaḥ* "wearing golden ornaments on the breast". The brightness and the sparkling of their weapons as they hurry on is no doubt compared to the glittering of rapidly flowing rivers in 10, 78, 7 *sindhavo na yayiyo bhrājadr̥ṣṭayaḥ*. In 1, 64, 11 they are said to throw open the mountains, being active (?), sprightly,¹⁷⁹ indefatigable,¹⁸⁰ going their own way, shaking even the immovable, boisterous¹⁸¹ and with bright spears / *makhā ayāsaḥ svasr̥to dhruvacyuto / dudhrakṛ̥to maruto bhrājadr̥ṣṭayaḥ*): it is difficult to decide whether *bh.* should be more closely connected with the process expressed by the verb, although the most plausible way of taking this line would be to consider it a homogeneous description of the impression made by the behaviour and activity of these gods. A similar passage is 1, 168, 4 where the epithet *bh.* again occurs in connection with their shaking what is solid. Anyhow, in 1, 87, 3 the adjective again enters into the composition of a lively description of these brilliant and impetuous gods: *te kr̥ṇīlayo dhunayo bhrājadr̥ṣṭayaḥ / svayam mahitvam panayanta dhūtayaḥ*.

Their lances, representing lightning, are often mentioned and *r̥ṣṭimat-* "having lances" is connected with them alone: 3, 54, 13; predicatively: 5, 57, 2; strictly speaking, it applies to their chariot in 1, 88, 1 (descriptive).

The adjective *anavadya-* "irreproachable" (cf. e.g. 9, 69, 10) is attached to the names of several gods: 1, 123, 8 to the Dawns who are said to be

¹⁷⁹ For the uncertain sense of *makha-* now see also Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, IV, p. 62.

¹⁸⁰ For *ayās-* see H. Oldenberg (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1905), p. 108. Geldner *o.c.*, I², p. 85.

¹⁸¹ For *dudhrakṛ̥t-* see R. Hauschild, in *Asiatica, Festschrift-F. Weller* (Leipzig, 1954), p. 258; Mayrhofer, *Kurzgef. etym. Wtb.*, II, p. 49 s.v. *dúdhitaḥ*.

exact and regular in their daily course: “l’infailibilité des Aurores, consistant d’abord en leur retour immanquable”;¹⁸² 1, 31, 9 to Agni when implored to be watchful; 1, 129, 1 to Indra in stating his ability to bring a chariot which lags behind to the front rank; 1, 174, 2 where he is said to have made the rivers flow; 10, 147, 2 in relating Vṛtra’s defeat; 1, 33, 6 in referring to the unsuccessful attacks of his enemies: the signification of the epithet seems to be that a god who is able to achieve these deeds and by whom the designs of mighty enemies are frustrated must be beyond reproach, because only the magically and morally pure are superior in skill and strength. The gods in general who have been strengthened by man’s worship are 7, 91, 1 styled *anavadyāḥ*: they instituted the phenomena of dawn and daylight. Hence also the view that the singers who aiming at *vāja*- invoke Indra were *anedyā anavadyā ariṣṭāḥ* “not to be blamed, irreproachable, proof against injury” (6, 19, 4). If they had not been so they would have failed to win the god’s favour. The use of the epithet in 3, 31, 13 and in 1, 6, 8 must in all probability be explained as due to the same connotation: “When Indra in whom the irreproachable words of praise unite slew Vṛtra all (his) powers were invincible”; “with the irreproachable, divine, band (of singers) who are dear to Indra, the practitioner¹⁸³ sings the victorious (song of praise)”. In 4, 32, 5 Indra’s aid and protection are called “excellent, irreproachable, invincible” (*citrābhir... / anūtibhiḥ / anādhṛṣṭābhiḥ*). To return to the Maruts: this epithet is 7, 57, 5 applied to them being *an.*, pure (virtuous, of unsullied reputation), bright, they are implored to rejoice in the sacrificial act and to further, by their benevolence, the interests of the petitioners.

It seems worth while also to examine the plural *rudrāḥ* when referring to the Maruts, who are the sons of Rudra. In 1, 39, 4 this name occurs in the statement that their “strength” (*taviṣī*) is unassailable. R.V. 5, 57, 1 the term is used in an invitation to come to the suppliant, replacing *marutaḥ*; elsewhere, 8, 20, 2 it occurs in similar passages together with the proper name. In 1, 39, 7 assistance of the Rudras is implored for obtaining offspring: this reminds us of the frequent prayers addressed to their father: cf. also 2, 33, 13 where they are associated with him in the possession of salutary remedies; in 8, 20, 33 ff. they are under their own name implored to bring medicine. The author of 5, 87, 7 supplicates “the sons of Rudra, the active (?) ones, who are, like Agni, of mighty prestige” for help. Their close association with Rudra is especially clear 2, 34, 9

¹⁸² Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, III, p. 59.

¹⁸³ *makhah*, the translation is more or less a guess.

where they are implored to protect those speaking from harm done by an enemy: “drive over him with a glowing wheel, hurl, O Rudras thy weapon at the cursed one”. They are youthful and undecaying; irresistible in killing victims (*adhrigu-*)¹⁸⁴ they slay the stingy (1, 64, 3). Elsewhere this name seems to be a mere substitute for *marutaḥ*: 1, 85, 2; 2, 34, 13; 5, 54, 4; 8, 13, 28; which is sometimes used alternatively: 5, 60, 6; 8, 7, 12; or appositionally: 5, 60, 2; 10, 64, 11; 92, 6.

RUDRA

Rudra, often described as a terrible and malevolent god with injurious features and on the other hand implored not to slay or injure, in his anger, his worshippers and their relatives, and even to bestow blessings, to grant remedies and to produce welfare and happiness, occupies a subordinate position in the R̥V., where his name occurs about seventy-five times.¹⁸⁵ What is especially interesting in connection with this very terrible god is the considerable number of places exhibiting a large number of epithets: in attempting to propitiate the god and to avert his wrath man does his utmost to get on his right side, to call him by those names and epithets which are most suitable to the occasion.¹⁸⁶ See e.g. 1, 114, 1; 4; 5. It is worth while to ascertain that the large majority of the places in these hymns which deal with him are negatively concerned with his formidable qualities and traits of character: also in the AV. he is supplicated not to attack man with illness, poison or the fire from heaven (11, 2, 26): “elsewhere than (on) us make that lightning fall” (*ibidem*).

An epithet which is frequently applied to him is *kṣayadvīra-* “ruler of heroes”. Characterizing him as a powerful lord it occurs four times in the hymn 1, 114 which is addressed to him “in order to promote the health and prosperity of men and animals” (st. 1). In st. 2 the *kṣ.* one is besought to be gracious, his worshippers will be his humble servants (*namasā vidhema te*; cf. 10, 92, 9); st. 3 implores his kindness promising to worship him (*aśyāma te sumatiṃ devayajyayā*); st. 10 his grace or benevolence (*sumnam asme te astu*), asking him also for pity and protection.

His weapons are often mentioned. In 2, 33, 3 he is by the epithet *vajrabāho* described as holding the *vajra-*, being “the strongest of the strong” (*tavastamas tavasām*). He is however usually said to be armed

¹⁸⁴ See also Mayrhofer, *o.c.*, I, p. 31.

¹⁸⁵ See E. Arbmman, *Rudra* (Uppsala, 1922), esp. ch. I; Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 74 ff.

¹⁸⁶ These passages will be dealt with in the next chapter of this volume.

with a bow and arrows: 5, 52, 16 (*iṣminam*) where he is the father of the Maruts, who are sometimes (e.g. 5, 57, 2) said to carry the same weapons. Cf. 7, 46, 1 – which will be quoted elsewhere –, where the addition *tigmāyudhāya* “having (casting) sharp weapons” to *sthiradhanvane* “with a strong bow” and *kṣipreṣave* “having quick arrows” shows that pointed weapons are characteristic of this god,¹⁸⁷ whose terrible shafts are much feared (cf. e.g. 2, 33, 14; 6, 28, 7; also 10, 125, 6). In 4, 3, 6 he even receives the epithet “man-slaying” (*nṛghne*; cf. Āśv. GS. 4, 8, 32, where he is said to be intent on slaying human beings): there are no indications in the context which would furnish a motive for using this word. In 2, 33, 9 and 11 he is *ugra*- “energetically powerful”, and a youth who hits like a wild beast; the epithet recurs in 10, 126, 5 where he, Indra, Agni, and the Maruts are invoked for well-being and deliverance from hostility. In 2, 33, 9 and 15 he is also *babhruḥ* “brown”, an adjective which evidently is so characteristic of him that in st. 5 it is used instead of his name. ṚV. 2, 33, 14 is a deprecation of this god’s wrath: he is implored to avert his great malevolence and his bolt from his worshippers: *pari tveṣasya durmatir mahī gāt*; the epithet *tveṣa*- “impetuous, vehement, causing fear” is well adapted to the context.

The epithet *mīdhvas*- “merciful, bounteous, liberal, blessing, gracious” is applied to various gods. In connection with Indra it appears 8, 76, 7 which is to invite the god to a Soma sacrifice: “do thou drink, O *m.*, Śatakṛatu, who art highly lauded”, no doubt a *captatio benevolentiae*; 10, 85, 25 and 45 in praying him to render a woman fruitful and sympathetic; 2, 24, 1 and 12 in asking and stating consummation of ambitions, fulfilment of prayers; 8, 46, 17 the god is called *m.*, *araṅgama*- “ready to help”, and *jagmi*- “quick, speeding”. – It is interesting to notice that this adjective is several times used in connection with Rudra, and in the later Vedas its comparative and superlative seem to have been exclusively applied to this god,¹⁸⁸ who whilst often depicted as malevolent, is often addressed deprecatingly.¹⁸⁹ Thus, 2, 33, 14 *ava sthirā maghavadbhyas tanuṣva / mīdhvas tokāya tanayāya mṛla* “unbend the bow in favour of our patrons, O *m.*, spare (our) children and offspring”: in the first half of the stanza the god is likewise besought to avert his weapon and to keep his anger down. See also 7, 40, 5. Elsewhere Rudra is supplicated to bestow his favour (or good disposition: *sumatim*) upon those praying: 1, 114, 3, where he is also invited to come graciously to their dwellings.

¹⁸⁷ See also Arbmann, *o.c.*, p. 8.

¹⁸⁸ See M. Bloomfield, *Amer. Journ. of Phil.*, 12, p. 428 f.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. also Arbmann, *o.c.*, p. 20.

Those who worship him no doubt hope that the god will show this side of his character. Cf. 1, 43, 1. Or the priest attempts to prepossess the god towards benevolence by inciting the officiants to offer him soma: 1, 122, 1 *pra vaḥ pāntam... andho / yajñam rudrāya mīlhuṣe bharadhvam*. The last quarter of 5, 41, 2 expresses “eine Art von Entschuldigung, dass Rudra in anderer Gesellschaft genannt wird, während er sonst eine Sonderstellung einnimmt...”:¹⁹⁰ *stomam rudrāya mīlhuṣe sajoṣāḥ*. The stanza is the expression of the wish that Mitra and the other gods who are praised may be pleased and well-disposed. The epithet occurs also in deprecating Rudra’s sons, the Maruts: 7, 58, 5 *tān ... rudrasya mīlhuṣaḥ* “the (sons of) the *m. R.*”. Here the father seems to receive praise in order to win the favour of the sons; see also 6, 66, 3. Geldner’s translation is “Lohnherr” or 6, 66, 3 (where it is more or less fossilized) “Brotherr”. – Another god who is described as *mīlhuvas-* is Agni: 3, 16, 3 in a prayer for wealth and sons. The opening stanza of 4, 5 praises the god, inter alia, as *mīlhuvas*, no doubt a captatio benevolentiae (cf. also 10, 188, 2); this character is still more in evidence in 7, 15, 1 where the name of the god is left unmentioned, and 2, 8, 1. Cf. also 4, 15, 5. The epithet alternates with the name: 7, 16, 3, and has become stereotyped: 8, 102, 15. – Soma is likewise addressed as *m.*: 8, 79, 9 in a prayer to prevent various disasters; 9, 61, 23 in an appeal to become wealthy; in a prayer for ample room to move in 9, 85, 4; in a record of assistance lent to man: 9, 97, 39; without an apparent motive: 9, 74, 7; 107, 7; 113, 2.

The epithet *sumakha*-¹⁹¹ in 4, 3, 7 may match the other attribute *havirdā-* “procuring (or: accepting?) the sacrificial gift”; cf. 5, 87, 7 *u*where the Rudras, i.e. Rudra’s sons, the Maruts, are *sumakha-*, *tuvidyumna-* “of mighty splendour or prestige”¹⁹² like Agni, while being implored for help: it seems to be a mere captation. In 7, 46, 3 he is an intelligent god (*svapivāta*) who possesses a thousand remedies: as is well known intelligence was, in ancient India, first and foremost practical ability.

In 1, 129, 3 and 10, 92, 9 Rudra is known as *svayaśas-* “glorious through himself” (“selbstherrlich”, Geldner), the former passage being a prayer for protection against enemies, the latter an appeal to praise the god. The poet of 1, 43, 4 addresses him as “lord of the religious chant, lord of sacrifice, with healing medicines”, asking for “the grace of the beneficent

¹⁹⁰ Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, II, p. 39.

¹⁹¹ See above, note 183.

¹⁹² For *dyumna-* see Wackernagel, “Indoiranisches”, *Sitz. Ber. Berlin*, 1918, p. 398 = *Kleine Schriften* (Göttingen, 1953), I, p. 317; Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, III, p. 15.

one" (*gāthapatim medhapatim rudram jalāṣabheṣajam / tac chamyoh sumnam īmahe*). In 7, 35, 6 he is, in a long enumeration of gods who are invoked for happiness, briefly called *jalāṣa-* "healing, appeasing".¹⁹³

The adjective *suhava-* "well or easily invoked, listening willingly" is applied to a variety of gods. It is in the first place very appositely used in prayers and urgent requests addressed to divine powers to be benevolent and munificent. In attempting to remove the god's suspicion the author of 2, 33, 5 calls Rudra "easily pleased and listening willingly". R.V. 1, 123, 13 Uṣas is spoken to as follows: *uṣo no adya suhavā vy ucha* "O U. shine today for us, easily to be invoked", and after this invocation the poet continues: *asmāsu rāyo maghavatsu ca syuh*. In 5, 46, 7 the goddesses, said to be *suhava-*, are supplicated for safety. Agni, being implored to be merciful and to propitiate Varuṇa (4, 1, 5) is no less *suhava-* than 3, 15, 1 where the poet asks the god to extend his guidance and protection to himself. Another intelligible use of the epithet occurs 4, 16, 16 *tam id va indram suhavam huvema* "we will invoke that god who is..." (paronomasia); 6, 47, 11 ... / *have have suhavam śūram indram / hvayāmi...*; 10, 63, 9 *bhareṣv indram suhavam havāmahe*; 10, 36, 7 (Maruts), cf. 8; 10, 39, 1 (the chariot of the Aśvins, cf. 8, 22, 2). Thus Agni and Parjanya are asked to favour the eulogy *asmin have suhavau* (6, 52, 16). Cf. also 7, 44, 2; 8, 22, 1 (Aśvins); 7, 82, 4 (Indra and Varuṇa); 2, 32, 4; 7, 93, 1; 10, 141, 4.

In 6, 49, 9 the hotar should worship Tvaṣṭar who is described as *suhava-*. Elsewhere the poet simply states that a god is *suhava-*, adding a prayer or request: 7, 1, 21 *tvam agne suhavo raṇvasaṃdrk...* "thou, A., art s. and of beautiful appearance, may we always have a son". Or he expresses the wish that the god may be *suhavaḥ*, e.g. 5, 42, 16.

However, the epithet may occur as a mere statement among other expressions of the poet's opinion with regard to a god's character and abilities: 3, 49, 3 Indra is victorious etc., and also *piteva cāruḥ suhavo vayodhāḥ* "dear like a father, s., bestowing (or possessing) the strength of the vigorous age". Cf. 3, 6, 8; 4, 19, 1. Agni is 1, 58, 6 an esteemed guest, s. and dear like a treasure. In 2, 36, 3 *suhava-* used in an invitation of the gods to come, is no doubt suggestive and adhortative: *ameva naḥ suhavā ā hi gantana*. Cf. 7, 40, 4. In cases such as 10, 39, 11 the function of the epithet is hardly other than a captatio benevolentiae and a confirmation of the speaker's belief in the readiness of the gods to hear him: the man whom you and other gods, O s. Aśvins assist, is safe from danger"; 2, 36, 3; 5, 98, 4; 7, 93, 1; 10, 92, 13; 141, 4.

¹⁹³ For this word, the meaning of which is somewhat uncertain, see the authorities quoted by Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, IV, p. 96, and K. Ammer, *WZKM*, 51, p. 135.

MANIFESTATIONS OF EVIL

The fact is not devoid of interest that words for unfavourable happenings, formidable beings, terrible objects or concepts, in short for all manifestations of evil, are generally speaking left without epithetical attributes. The question arises whether this rarity was due to the 'impersonal' character of the relative ideas or to the more or less laudatory and, hence stimulating, force of epithets in general. It is on the one hand perfectly true that in a great majority of cases epithets are, in the R̥V., added to names of individuals, that is to say, generally speaking, of single and distinct gods. If on the other hand the addition of an epithet to a proper name or an appellative is felt to be a form of praise, confirmation, stimulation and resuscitation,¹⁹⁴ if pronouncing words in general means setting power in motion, it follows that one has to be very guarded in one's speech, to be careful in using attributes when evil beings or dangerous phenomena are addressed or spoken of. Just as the names of demons, of inauspicious events and dangerous animals are avoided it was, no doubt, considered wise to conceal their qualities and properties, not to ascribe any honour to them, not to add to their power and influence by using in connection with them words that could be regarded as praise. Cf. e.g. R̥V. 5, 42, 10 *ya ohate rakṣāso devavītāv / acakrebhis tam maruto ni yāta* "who when the gods are invited honours the evil beings, pass over him, O Maruts, with your wheelless (chariots)". Even the undisguised ascertainment of their evil and dreaded character could be undesirable. "'Convey' the wise call it" said Autolycus concerning theft and rogues".¹⁹⁵ The Furies in ancient Greece changed their names to Eumenides "the kindly ones", and Rudra became in a similar way Śiva (10, 92, 9). Even this god has, as we have seen, many epithets of favourable meaning; malevolence is, it is true, frequently attributed to him, but mainly in prayers to spare his worshippers and to keep his anger down. A curious parallel is found even nowadays in England in the widespread belief among actors that ill luck attends a performance of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*; this is no doubt due to the fact that the text of the witches' incantations has, in a slightly modified form, been borrowed from old charms of black magic which are plainly evocative of evil.

Interestingly enough a great majority of occurrences of many terms for

¹⁹⁴ See chapter I, p. 32 f.

¹⁹⁵ Quoted from W. J. Entwistle, *Aspects of language* (London, 1953), p. 239. For Shakespeare's *Macbeth* see B. de Zoete and W. Spies, *Dance and drama in Bali* (London, 1952), p. 118, who add that the latest London performance was indeed attended by a series of disasters among those directly engaged in it.

evil beings and inimical powers are negative in purport, or rather deprecative – in both meanings of the term – in character. Great gods are ever and anon besought to destroy demons, annihilate evil, avert the consequences of sinful deeds. “The assaults of men must not prevail over you” (10, 69, 5 *mā tvā tārīd abhimātir janānām*); “this Agni must not abandon us to calumny” (5, 3, 12 *nāhāyam agnir abhiśastaye no / ... parā dāt*); “make disease disappear noiselessly” (7, 1, 7 *pra nisvaram cātayas-vāmivām*) are some random examples of prayers. See e.g. also 1, 185, 10; 2, 28, 9; 4, 11, 6; 5, 3, 7; 41, 17; 7, 94, 3; 8, 18, 11; 42, 3; 60, 20; 10, 43, 3; 97, 13. Thus *mṛtyu*- “death” or “Death”; *anṛta*- “falsehood, disorder and untruth”; *atrin*-, name of a class of demons which originally may have denoted the idea of “devourer”; *dhūrti*- “fraud, injury”; *duhunā* “calamity, harm”; *durita*- “mishap, disaster”; *abhimāti*- “assault, evil plot or plotter, insidiousness”; *abhiśasti*- “curse, calumny”; *amivā*- “disease”; *āgas*- “sin”; *kṣudh*- “hunger”; *jaras*- “decay, old age” – to mention only these – never receive, in the R̥V., an epithet.

There are however exceptions to the above tendency. Nirṛti, the goddess of Destruction and Disorder (“une force déstructurante, contre-partie équipollente des grandes entités positives de la pensée védique”¹⁹⁶ – whose name is 1, 38, 6 accompanied by *durhanā* which is a substantive for “harm, mischief” rather than an adjective (“unbarmherzig”, Geldner) – is 10, 36, 2 styled *durvidatrā* (“ill-disposed, envious” Monier-Williams, “unerbittlich” Geldner, but rather “Schlechtes austheilend, Böses erweisend” Grassmann) which is used to typify 10, 63, 12 the inimical behaviour¹⁹⁷ of the injurious or malicious (*arātiṃ durvidatrām aghāyataḥ*) and 10, 35, 4 a wicked person: *manyuṃ durvidatrasya*. In the above stanza 10, 36, 2 Heaven and Earth who act according to law and norm are invoked to protect man and to avert abuse of power on the part of Nirṛti.

As is well known the gods and the virtuous among men have redoubtable antagonists, and for the Vedic poets it was excellent that the latter should be as they described them, because by endowing the fiends and demons, the ‘sorcerers’ and evildoers with superhuman qualities of skill, courage and endurance they could throw into higher relief the power and abilities of the gods, and the exploits of these champions of right, order and prosperity. It seems therefore worth while to investigate into the question as to how the individual antagonists were characterized by epithets.

¹⁹⁶ Renou, “Védique nirṛti-”, *Indian Linguistics (Chatterji Jubilee Volume)*, 16 (1955), p. 11 f., esp. p. 13.

¹⁹⁷ See Thieme, *Fremdling*, p. 43.

Curiously enough the name of the great opponent Śuṣṇa – probably a demon of drought – who is mentioned about forty times in the R̥V., occurs only once in the nominative, and twenty-two times in the accusative in statements of his defeat or destruction. He receives the epithet *māyin-* “possessed of the supranormal power to achieve the marvellous, e.g. to produce and create objects and phenomena” 1, 11, 7 where Indra, by superior *māyā-*, is said to have overthrown him: *māyābhir indra māyinaṃ / tvam śuṣṇam avātiraḥ*. Also 1, 56, 3. The epithet *śṛṅgin-* “horned” seems to have been fixed denoting a characteristic feature in the fiend’s outward appearance: 1, 33, 12 Indra pierced the h. Ś. In 10, 22, 7 he is incidentally qualified as *amānuṣa-* “not human” which though contemptuous may refer to his unhuman condition¹⁹⁸ rather than his inhuman conduct. The apparently paronomastic epithet *aśuṣa-* (1, 101, 2; 2, 19, 6; 4, 16, 12; 6, 20, 4; 31, 3) tentatively translated by “gefrässig” (Grassmann, Geldner etc.)¹⁹⁹ no doubt bears upon a permanent trait of his character. In 2, 19, 6; 4, 16, 12; 6, 31, 3 he is in addition called a “bringer of a bad harvest” (*kúyava-*); cf. 7, 19, 2;²⁰⁰ the contexts do not, however, allude to harvests. The genitive of this proper name dependent on words denoting the strongholds, family, superhuman faculties or possessions of the antagonist likewise occurs in commemorations of his defeats. The only adjective which may be discussed here is *puruprajāta-* “having much offspring” (10, 61, 13); it seems to refer to a well-known particular.

Another great antagonist, Śambara, whose name occurs twenty times in the R̥V., is likewise, in the accusative or genitive, introduced to the audience as the justly chastised victim of the gods’ power and justice. The subject case of his name does not appear at all, and epithets are not applied to it. In 7, 99, 5 his castles are described as *dr̥mhita-* “fortified” (cf. 1, 51, 11); in spite of this valuable property they were destroyed by the mighty gods.

The opponent Pipru, mentioned eleven times – in the same grammatical forms – is 1, 101, 2 styled *avrata-* “behaving in defiance of well-established rules of good and correct conduct (which are founded on the eternal principles of truth, order and divine authority)”:²⁰¹ this behaviour was

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Pāṇini 2, 4, 23 and comm.

¹⁹⁹ Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 138, has it derive from *aś-* “to eat” (likewise Mayrhofer, *o.c.*, I, p. 59; Wackernagel–Debrunner, *o.c.*, II, 2, p. 491).

²⁰⁰ See Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 161.

²⁰¹ For *vrata-* see also K. Rönnow, *Trita Āptya* (Uppsala, 1927), p. 175, n. 2; W. Gampert, *Die Sühnezeremonien in der altindischen Rechtsliteratur* (Prague, 1939), p. 29 (with a succinct bibliography); P. V. Kane, in *J. R. As. Soc.*, Bombay Br. 29, 1954,

of course the reason why he was defeated by Indra. In 4, 16, 13 the same god is said to have subdued *piprum mṛgayam śūśuvāṃsam* and delivered him to R̥jīśvan: “having increased in might, i.e. “very mighty” is the demon, but Indra succeeded in overthrowing him (cf. also 5, 29, 11).²⁰² Being, like the other opponents, exclusively described as conquered by a mighty god, he is 10, 138, 3 an asura possessed of *māyā*.

The enemy Namuci, who is mentioned nine times in the R̥V. besides several times in other Vedic texts, once receives the epithet *āśura*-“demoniac”: 10, 131, 4²⁰³ which reminds the hearer of his origin and nature, so unlike those of the “Lords of what is good, useful and auspicious” *śubhas patī*, the Aśvins, who healed Indra when he was poisoned by the villain. He also is 1, 53, 7 *māyin*-, but was defeated by Indra.

Several others are mentioned as vanquished by Indra: Cumuri (six times) and Dhuni (five times) who do not receive epithets.

Vala, the guardian of the cows – the name denoting a demoniac being as well as the non-personal fenced place (cave) where these animals are “covered” or “enclosed” (*vḷ*- = *vṛ*-) – is 1, 11, 5 called *gomat*- “possessing cows”: *tvam valasya gomatā / apāvar adrivo bilam* “thou, O lord of the stone missile²⁰⁴ (Indra) hast opened the cave of V. (or the aperture of the *vala*-), the possessor of cows”, words alluding to the presence of cows in the place called a *vala*- or guarded by Vala.

By far the most important enemy is Vṛtra. Being conceived as a serpentlike demoniac being who obstructs and encompasses the waters he is, with the exception of three places, never mentioned in the subject case. The accusative, which is very frequent, is almost exclusively used in passages such as 1, 32, 5 “Indra killed V., the greatest enemy”; 1, 80, 4 “thou, O I., hast expelled V. from heaven and earth”; 1, 23, 9 “slay V. with I. as an ally (O Maruts)”; 2, 11, 9; 18; 14, 2 etc. that is to say in passages relating his defeat and destruction.

One of the epithets applied to this great antagonist has a bearing upon his outward appearance, and cannot therefore be considered to have been always as ominous as those emphasizing his power or depravity. He is without feet or hands (e.g. 1, 32, 7), and also “without shoulders”

p. 1 ff.; Renou, *Et. véd. et pāṇ.*, IV, p. 46, and especially H. P. Schmidt, *Vedisch vrata und awestisch urvāta* (Hamburg, 1958).

²⁰² For *mṛgaya*- see Geldner, *o.c.*, I², p. 436.

²⁰³ See M. Bloomfield, *J. Am. Or. Soc.*, 15, p. 143 ff.; the long note by Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 363.

²⁰⁴ For the sense of *adrivas* see above, p. 60 ff.

if this is the meaning of *vyam̐sa-*.²⁰⁵ When he was killed by Indra he was hissing or roaring (*śuśant-* 1, 61, 10); a picturesque attribute adding a trait of realism to the description. The adjective *nadīvṛt-* “stream-obstructing” in 8, 12, 26 may be regarded as an adjunct referring to the circumstances of the event: *yadā vṛtram nadīvṛtam / ... avadhīḥ*. The epithet “great” is, 8, 93, 7 in tune with the context which emphasizes V.’s bull-like nature. For 2, 11, 9 *indro... / māyāvinam vṛtram asphuran niḥ* see the comment made in the above passages on similar places. The addition of the participle *dodhat-* “fierce” is in 8, 6, 6 likewise mainly to throw Indra’s strength into relief: *vi cid vṛtrasya dodhato / ... śiro bibheda*; in 1, 80, 5 to enhance the graphic realism of the passage.

The plural, or the singular, accusative used ‘collectively’ – which is regularly employed with verbs for slaying²⁰⁶ –, though referring also to terrestrial enemies, properly expresses the idea of “representative or manifestations of the Vṛtra idea”: cf. the Engl. *devil* in the sense of “a wicked person”. The addition *amitriyā* “hostile” (6, 17, 1) to *vṛtram* does not, therefore, say very much. In 1, 53, 6 (cf. 2, 19, 4) *apṛati* “irresistible” marks the great power of the conqueror Indra; similarly 7, 23, 3; 8, 40, 5, and see especially 4, 17, 19.

The conclusion may be that, in spite of the formidableness of the demon and the frequent occurrence of his name, in spite of the most important part he plays in these texts, the epithets (in the proper sense of the term) applied to him are far from giving the hearer an adequate picture of his power, behaviour and fear-inspiring personality. Neither in number nor in meaning and variety they are comparable to those applied – and it must be added: readily and whole-heartedly applied – to his great opponent.

The noun *ahi-* “snake” which is often used in connection with Vṛtra is as a rule likewise left without attributes. Mention may be made here of the following exceptions: R̥V. 5, 30, 6 *ahim ohānam apa āśayānam / pra māyābhir māyinaṃ sakṣad indraḥ* where *ohānam* “boasting, vainglorious” is no epithet proper; cf. 6, 17, 9 *ohasānam*. In 8, 3, 20 the serpent is “great” (*mahām*), yet Indra blew him away. “Born in water” (*abjām*) in 7, 34, 16 is in harmony with the context which describes him as being seated in the rivers. – The participle *ojāyamānam* in 2, 12, 11 *oj. yo ahim jaghāna / dānum śayānam*, though translated by “gewalttätige” (Geldner), can hardly be considered an epithet: “who has slain the serpent as he

²⁰⁵ See also Geldner, *o.c.*, I², p. 37; 130. For Vṛtra’s epithets in general see L. Renou, in E. Benveniste et L. Renou, *Vṛtra et Vṛṣṭragha* (Paris, 1934), p. 157 ff.

²⁰⁶ See Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 159.

showed his strength, the son of Dānu, as he lay”; cf. 3, 32, 11. The participles in 4, 19, 3; 6, 17, 10 are also attributes rather than epithets.

Another class of inimical beings, the dasyus, in whom we must often see the aborigines, is however often described by typical epithets, expressing the disrespect of the Aryan worshippers and their conviction that they are wicked, mischievous, unbelievers and hostile to the gods. Thus 4, 16, 9 it reads *ni māyāvān abrahmā dasyur arta* (prayer for help); 10, 22, 8 *akarma dasyur abhi no amantur / anyavrato amānuṣaḥ* (lamentation of the distressed); 1, 175, 3 *dasyum avratam oṣaḥ* (prayer for help); the adjective *avrata-* “wicked, not observing religious rites and social obligations” seems to have been especially suitable to characterize these beings: 9, 41, 2. A descriptive and disdainful epithet is *anās-* “having no mouth or face”: 5, 29, 10 *anāso dasyūmr amṛṇo vadhena*. In a eulogy of Indra’s heroism and undauntedness his enemies are called *śardhataḥ* “bold, daring, defiant” (6, 23, 2). “The hostile Dāsas or Dasyus are regarded as black-skinned and noseless, doubtless a reference to flat noses, but their chief characteristic, and the one which makes them no real men, is their refusal to worship the Aryan gods, and to give gifts to the priest...”²⁰⁷

Typically deprecatory is the tenor of, and depreciatory are the attributes in, 7, 1, 13 *pāhi no agne rakṣāso ajuṣṭāt / pāhi dhūrter araruṣo aghāyoḥ* “schütz uns, Agni, vor dem unlieben Unhold, schütz uns vor der Falschheit des übelwollenden Knausers!” (Geldner); in 8, 60, 10 *pāhi viśvasmād rakṣāso arāvṇaḥ* “protect (us, O Agni) against every envious evil being”; in 1, 129, 11 *hantā pāpasya rakṣāsaḥ* “the killer of the evil (wicked) rakṣas”; in 4, 4, 15 *dahāśaso rakṣāsaḥ* “burn the accursed r. to death” (“verbrenn die verwünschten Unholde”, Geldner); in 7, 104, 7 *hatam... rakṣāso bhaṅgurāvataḥ* (“hinterlistig (?)”, Geldner) “kill the r. that have crooked ways, the crafty...” 10, 76, 4; 8, 23, 14 *ni māyinas* (“crafty”) ...r. *daha*. It is worth noticing that in all these passages a mighty god is implored to annihilate the rakṣas. Under these circumstances the unfavourable epithets are not only to typify the evil beings, but also to stimulate the readiness of the god to destroy them.

The neuter *rakṣas-* expressing the idea of “evil power, harm” in impersonal manifestation or collectively, with regard to which the wish is formulated that it may disappear or be annihilated through the gods’

²⁰⁷ A. B. Keith, *The religion and philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads* (Harvard, 1925), p. 129. See also S. K. Chatterji in R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalker, *The history and culture of the Indian people*, I (London, 1951), p. 156 f., and Pusalker, *ibidem*, p. 249 f. For descriptions and characterizations of the Dasyus see also Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, I, p. 356 ff.

intervention, does not receive any epithet in the proper sense of the term.

If the adjective *śaphāruj-* used in connection with *yātudhāna-* “sorcerer, wicked being” means “destroying hoofs”²⁰⁸ it is distinctive rather than epithetical; if however Sāyaṇa was right in taking it to mean “destroying with the hoofs” it may be a typical or generic epithet (10, 87, 12).

In connection with *asura-* in the sense of demoniac opponents of the beneficent god we find 8, 96, 9 the generic epithet *adeva-* “godless”, which may however also refer to their not being devas by origin. A typical epithet is 10, 151, 3 *ugra-*.

The noun *druh-*, another term for inimical evil whether represented as a power or as a demon, which may be translated by “destructive disorder, harm and falsehood”,²⁰⁹ is 4, 23, 7 characterized as “destructive, mischievous”²¹⁰ and “disregarding Indra”: *druhaṃ jighāṃsan dhvarasam anindram*; cf. also 1, 133, 1. Although this word is often accompanied by terms of a similar meaning it occurs elsewhere without an epithet, with the exception of 3, 31, 19 *druho vi yāhi bahulā adevīḥ*: “godless, impious”.

Another term, *arāti-* “inimical disposition”, which is likewise energetically deprecated is 10, 63, 12 styled *durvidatra-* (see above); 6, 59, 8 typified as *agha-* “bad, sinful”; 2, 23, 9 Brahmanaspati is implored to destroy the arātis that are destitute of merit (as the result of work i.e. of sacrificial acts): *anapnasas*;²¹¹ 8, 11, 3 Agni to drive back the *adevīr arātīḥ*. In a large majority of cases there is no epithet.

The rather frequent (78 occurrences) neutre *aṃhas-* “distress”²¹² is only once, viz. 4, 3, 14, accompanied by an attribute, which may however hardly be considered an epithet: *vi ruja vīḥv aṃhaḥ* “(O Agni), destroy the hard distress”.

The neuter *enas-* (29 occurrences), which seems to be the nearest equivalent in the Veda to our “sin”²¹³ is only 1, 189, 1 connected with an epithetical adjective: “remove (Agni is addressed who is fairly often stated to remove sin) from us the sin that leads us astray (*juhurāṇam*)”.

²⁰⁸ See Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 278.

²⁰⁹ “la tromperie personnifiée”, A. Bergaigne, *La religion védique*, II (Paris, 1881), p. 359, is too limited and onesided a translation. See also B. Geiger, “Amṛṣa spantas”, *Sitz. Ber.* 176, 7 (Wien, 1916), p. 179 ff.; S. Rodhe, *Deliver us from evil* (Lund, 1946), p. 52 ff.; K. L. Janert, *Sinn und Bedeutung des Wortes dhāsi* (Wiesbaden, 1956), p. 50.

²¹⁰ See Mayrhofer, *o.c.*, II, p. 119.

²¹¹ For the sense of the neutra on *-nas* see my *Ancient-Indian ojas, Latin *augos and the I.-E. noun in -es/-os* (Utrecht, 1952), p. 68 f.; Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Altind. Gramm.*, II, 2, p. 737 f.; Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, III, p. 48 f.

²¹² See “The Vedic concept of aṃhas”, *Indo-Iranian Journal*, I (1957), p. 33 ff.

²¹³ See Rodhe, *o.c.*, p. 137 ff.

The etymologically and semantically disputed²¹⁴ *amati-* which in any case denoted a form of psycho-physical misery, is 10, 42, 10 characterized as *dureva-* “ill-disposed, malignant”, and 7, 1, 19 as *durvāsas-* “badly clad”.

It is however important at this point to mention an interesting exception. The adjectives accompanying the neutre *tamas-* “darkness”, though not always epithets proper, are all of them very characteristic. The expression *dīrgham tamas* “a long d.” represents 1, 32, 10, like *tamo dudhitam* “a troublesome d.” in 2, 17, 4; 4, 1, 17, a sort of intensification of the idea which in these passages applies to special events. For “in complete darkness” 5, 32, 6 has *asūrye tamasi*. R.V. 10, 152, 4 has *adharam ... tamah* i.e. “the darkness of the lower regions” (in a curse). When Svarbhānu²¹⁵ eclipsed the sun the darkness was regarded as “contrary to the regular lines of conduct, perverse” (*apavrata-*: 5, 40, 6). –

A self-evident typical epithet of nocturnal darkness is *bahu-* “much”, i.e. “intense” (i.e. a pitch-dark night): 6, 10, 4: cf. fixed phrases such as the Dutch *dichte duisternis*. The darkness of night is 4, 45, 2 described as *parīvṛtam* “completely covered” (*parito vyāptam*, Sāyaṇa), and 5, 31, 3 as *saṁvavṛtvat* which was tentatively translated by Geldner by: “zusammengerollt (oder: bedeckend)”: the sense must be that complete darkness enveloping all things is as it were a cover spread out over, and enclosing, the world. Cf. also 1, 173, 5 *vavavruṣaś cit tamaso vihantā* (Indra). In 6, 21, 3 Indra is stated to have given, by means of the sun, marks to the extensive darkness which is devoid of marks (*sa it tamo 'vayunam tatanvat / sūryeṇa vayunavac cakāra*), that is to say: he has modified the state of primeval darkness in which no distinctions and differences could be perceived into the visible and perceptible world, the components of which can be distinguished, and in which time can be measured. The adjective *avayuna-*²¹⁶ obviously was a happy typical attribute of darkness. Dawn's activity is beneficent, she appears regularly and uncovers the unpleasant darkness and its unreliable disorderliness:²¹⁷ *apa druhas tama āvar ajuṣṭam* (7, 75, 1; cf. 2, 40, 2). The same typical

²¹⁴ See Rodhe, *o.c.*, p. 76, n. 21 (with a bibliography); Mayrhofer, *o.c.*, I, p. 43; Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, I, p. 2.

²¹⁵ See Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 160.

²¹⁶ For the sense of which see R. Pischel, in R. Pischel und K. F. Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, I (Stuttgart, 1889), p. 295 ff. (p. 299: “wegelos”, improbable); Renou, *Journal asiatique*, 1939, p. 382; Thieme, *Untersuchungen zur Wortkunde und Auslegung des Rigveda* (Halle/S., 1949), p. 17 ff. (“Umhüllung?”): Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, III, p. 34; IV, p. 76 („signe démarcateur, repère, articulation temporelle, points de repère (dans l'espace ou dans la durée)”).

²¹⁷ For this passage see also Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, III, p. 89.

epithet *ajuṣṭa-* recurs 7, 78, 3: at Uṣas' appearance *apācīnam tamo agādajuṣṭam*. Elsewhere, 7, 81, 1 the darkness of night is in a similar passage called *mahi* "great", a counterpart of 3, 31, 4 *mahi jyotiḥ*: the light of the sun. The *mahi tamaḥ* from which the Aśvins delivered Atri²¹⁸ was no doubt an intense darkness: 6, 50, 10; cf. 7, 71, 5 and 1, 182, 6 *anārambhane tamasi pravidham* (cf. 7, 104, 3).

Since *tamas* was considered "eine abfärbende oder bemalende konkrete Substanz"^{218a} the poet of R̥V. 10, 127 praising the starlit night attributes to darkness the properties "black" and "manifested" (*pepiṣat tamaḥ kṛṣṇam vyaktam*), the second of which may have been an epithet proper. The phrase *andham tamaḥ* (see 10, 89, 15; lit. "a blind darkness", i.e. "pitch darkness") recurs 10, 103, 12 – 1, 100, 8 the attribute marks an opposition: *so andhe cit tamasi jyotir vidat* –; and often in later texts (cf. ŚatBr. 1, 2, 4, 16; 9, 2, 35; Manu 8, 94 etc., the compounds *andhata-masa-* "intense darkness" etc.): it was no doubt an 'intensive' epithet – compare, in Latin, the frequent phrases *caeca nox*; *caeca caligo* etc. – fit to be used in curses. In 4, 16, 4 the primeval darkness which was dissipated by Indra is characterized as *andhā tamāṃsi dudhitā* (see above). In 9, 66, 24 *śukram jyotiḥ* "pure or bright light" and *kṛṣṇā tamāṃsi* "black darkness", both of them in the cosmic sense, are a pair of opposites. For *kṛṣṇa* see also 10, 89, 2.

OTHER NOMINAL CONCEPTS (POWERS, BEINGS, ETC.)

In Grassmann's Dictionary some 70 adjectives are given which accompany, in some passage or other, the noun *rayi-* "property, goods, possessions", besides children, cows, health and a long life one of the most eagerly desired and most frequently mentioned objects of man's craving in the R̥gveda. Cf. e.g. 2, 7, 1. A large part of these adjectives must however be excluded from our investigation: 1, 117, 23 *rayim ... apatyasācam* means "property accompanied with offspring" and 2, 30, 11 the same phrase is even translated by "property consisting of offspring" (cf. e.g. also 3, 62, 3). See e.g. also 1, 117, 23; 2, 4, 8; 4, 34, 10; 10, 167, 10.²¹⁹ The adjective 1, 73, 1 *pitṛvitta-* "patrimonial" is distinctive rather than epithetical; similarly, 4, 36, 5, "abundant" (*vibhūti-* 6, 21, 1) is 'intensive' and distinctive; so are "causing a well-nourished condition for a complete

²¹⁸ See e.g. Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 145.

^{218a} Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 357.

²¹⁹ Cf. also Geldner's introductory note on R̥V. 10, 47, *o.c.*, III, p. 204.

lifetime" (*viśvāyupoṣas-* 1, 79, 9; 6, 59, 9); "wealthy, having goods" (*vasumant-* 1, 159, 5); "nourishing all" (*viśvapūṣ-* 1, 162, 22).

Property is 1, 66, 1 in a simile qualified as "conspicuous, distinguished" (*citra-*; also 6, 10, 5); 9, 5, 3 as *dyumant-* "splendid"; 6, 15, 12 as *sprhāyāyya-* "desirable"; 3, 1, 19 as *saṃtarutra-* "conveying across (distress, difficulties etc.)"; 5, 33, 6 as *enīm (eta-)* "brilliant"; 6, 8, 5 as *yaśāsam* "conferring honour". These terms are typical and in harmony with the contexts in which the wish is formulated to possess property.²²⁰ Cumulations of attributes showing how eagerly property was desired are not wanting: 2, 7, 1 *śreṣṭham ... / agne dyumantam ā bhara / ... purusprham rayim* "bring, O Agni the most excellent, splendid, much desired property"; 6, 6, 7.

Expressions such as 4, 11, 4 *rayir devajūto mayobhuḥ* "property procured by the gods which causes pleasure" may be taken as metaphors, or "property" is used in a very general sense. Cf. e.g. also 1, 12, 1; 4, 2, 5; 6, 20, 1; 68, 7; 7, 15, 5. The wealth consisting of sons is not rarely elaborately described by a number of epithets: 1, 8, 1 *endra sānasim rayim / sajītvānam sadāsaham / varṣiṣṭham ūtaye bhara* "O I. do thou bring that property that procures gain, is victorious, always overpowering, the highest, for help"; 79, 8 *ā no agne rayim bhara / satrāsāham vareṇyam / viśvāsu prtsu duṣṭaram* "bring, O A., property to us, which is always conquering, desirable, irresistible (incomparable) in all combats". Cf. also 1, 64, 15; 92, 8; 6, 49, 15. These digressions on the various aspects of a large family while being of interest from a historical and psychological point of view are, generally speaking, very well adapted to the contexts in which they occur. If a man supplicates, for instance, Uṣas or other gods for many sons, these sons may with good reason be described as "honorific" (*yaśāsam* 1, 92, 8), "delightful" (*raṇvam* 1, 129, 7), as "desired by all" (*viśvavāram* 1, 48, 13), "filling the communities of men" (*carṣaṇiprām* 6, 49, 15); cf. e.g. also 8, 60, 11. Sometimes a prayer for "property" is at the same time a prayer for "a wealth of sons"; the attributes used are in these cases more in harmony with the nominal concept "son" than with "property (in general)". Cf. e.g. 1, 8, 1 f. (see above); 5, 23, 1 f. and especially 10, 47, 1 ff.

Property may, like a great variety of other 'concepts', also appear as a more or less divine person. Thus 4, 2, 7: in the house of the man who feeds the hungry 'liberal Property' will dwell continually (*rayir dhruvo astu dāsvān*).

In 9, 40, 6 the property for which the soma juice is supplicated is

²²⁰ For *ukthya-* see further on.

somewhat emphatically called *ukthya-* “worthy of words of praise”. At first sight these additions may seem to be merely decorative. However a survey of the passages exhibiting this adjective may show that it is often used expressly to underline that the god or object at issue is indeed worthy of praise, that is to say: that he (or it) deserves to be strengthened and fortified by the words of the poet because he (or it) is considered to further the interests of those praying and expected to do so in the future. Thus Agni in being extolled for warding off evil powers doubtless deserves the glorification accorded to him by the poet of 1, 79, 12: *hotā gr̥ṇīta ukthyaḥ*: “the hotar be extolled, the praiseworthy one” (again the last words of the hymn). RV. 3, 10, 6 is especially clear: *agnim vardhantu no giro / yato jāyate ukthyaḥ* “our words of praise must fortify A., ever since the praiseworthy one is born. It is superfluous to dwell at great length on the function of *ukthāni* or eulogies: they are to strengthen the god, cf. e.g. 1, 10, 5 *uktham indrāya śamsyaṃ / vardhanam puruniṣṣidhe* “a eulogy must (as a qualification) be recited for I., as a strengthening for him who is rich in success (?)”.²²¹

Indra, while being called *ukthya-* and *puruhūta-* “much invoked”, is 3, 51, 1 said to have been fortified by eulogies and to be the object of the poets’ praise (*vāvr̥dhānam... suvr̥ktibhiḥ*). The soma draught receives this epithet in being implored to flow off clear and to grant resourcefulness: 9, 86, 48. Indra’s resourcefulness (*kratu-*) which we know to be of the utmost importance for the universe, is rightly regarded as *ukthya-* in 8, 13, 1. In all these cases laudatory mention of the god’s merits and abilities is auspicious. The courage for which the Maruts are, in 1, 64, 14, implored on behalf of the poet’s patrons is described as *carkṛtyam ... duṣṭaram dyumantam ... ukthyam* etc.: courage makes a man earn praise, but the poet does his part to develop this courage and to make it successful. Cf. also 2, 32, 4. Thus the epithet is applied to highly valued ‘concepts’: 8, 76, 3 the Ādityas are said to extend their *citram ukthyam carūtham* “wonderful and praiseworthy protection” to the man who sacrifices; 9, 19, 1. The highly desired *vāja-* is *ukthya-* in 1, 48, 12; 10, 11, 5; 148, 1; and also the divine grace or favour (*sumna-*)²²² produced by the sun: 4, 53, 2 *ajījanat savitā sumnam ukthyam*. Deriving from *uktha-* “praise”, and more literally “saying, speech” the word illuminates how the mere statement of facts or utterance of auspicious words were, from

²²¹ The explication proposed by Geldner, *ZDMG*, 71, p. 331, and *o.c.*, I², p. 390 *niṣṣidh-* means “der schuldige Tribut oder die Dankesschuld” remains doubtful.

²²² See Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, III, p. 50; A. Minard, *Trois énigmes sur les cent chemins*, II (Paris, 1956), p. 320.

the religious point of view, acts replete with power for good. The opposite idea expressed by *durukta-* "injurious speech" is a dangerous power, prejudicial to man's interest: cf. 1, 147, 4.

With the above tendency to avoid pronouncements that might be understood as inauspicious the frequent habit runs parallel of explicitly denying the existence of an unfavourable quality, and by so doing to nullify the bad effect of the evocation of sinister ideas. Adjectives beginning with the privative *a-* which were used to negate the existence of the idea expressed by the second member²²³ were rather frequent. The compound *adruh-* "free from deceit, falsehood and enmity, without doing harm", i.e. "sincere" is e.g. used in invocations where it is an epithet proper: 6, 5, 1 Agni is implored who is *adruh-*, and whose words are absolutely reliable" (*adroghavācam*). Cf. 4, 56, 2; 8, 19, 34; 27, 9; 6, 11, 2; 15, 7. The adjective *achidra-* qualifies words for protection: 5, 62, 9 (a final stanza) Mitra and Varuṇa are implored to protect those speaking with their unbroken, unimpaired (or rather: whole) shelter. Cf. especially 8, 27, 9 with threefold negation. This explains why a poet in inviting the Viśve devāḥ to approach deems it wise explicitly to state that they are *asridhaḥ* "without (ritual) failures"²²⁴ and *adruhaḥ* (1, 3, 9).

Another adjective of this category is the oft-recurring *adābhya-* which though usually translated by "free from deceit, not to be trifled with" must rather be taken to mean "unimpaired" and hence "reliable": "vorzüglich Beiname der Götter, besonders auch, sofern sie als Gebieter (*pati-*, *gṛhapati-*) Beschützer (*gopā-*), Führer (*puraetṛ-*, *netṛ-*) aufgefasst werden. Eine andere Bedeutung hat es auch nicht, wo es als Beiwort des Schutzes (*chardis-*) oder der Göttesmacht (*asuria-*) oder des Lichtes (*śocis-*, *jyotis-*, *ketu-*) erscheint..."²²⁵ The epithet is to express the conviction, and to make the audience believe, that the guidance and protection of the powers "being proof against, and free from, unreliability, weakness, deceit, that it is sound and reliable": cf. 1, 31, 10 where Agni is called a father, provider, a protector of the *vrata(s)*, and *adābhya-*; 4, 53, 4 where Savitar, being *a.*, *vratāni...* *rakṣate*; 8, 5, 12; 85, 5.

The sun is pre-eminently the golden deity, being *hiraṇyākṣa-* "golden-eyed", *hiraṇyapāṇi-* "golden-handed", *hiraṇyajihva-* "golden-tongued" and *hiraṇyakeśa-* "golden- or yellow-haired". He invests himself with a golden or tawny garment (cf. 4, 53, 2). Luminous in his aspect, he mounts a golden car with a golden pole. Surrounded by a golden lustre he lights

²²³ See my relative treatise in *Four studies in the language of the Veda*, ch. III.

²²⁴ See Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, IV, p. 13.

²²⁵ Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 35.

up the atmosphere and all the regions of the earth.²²⁶ Subjecting these adjectives to a closer investigation we arrive at the following conclusions. The golden-eyed sun is 1, 35, 8 said to overlook the earth, plains and streams, and to bring the sacrificer desirable gems. The rays of the sun dispel the darkness, and hence also the powers of darkness; that is, in poetical diction, the asura with the golden hand (*hiranyahasta-*) should come to those speaking, keeping every enemy, the demons and sorcerers off (1, 135, 10). That may be the reason why elsewhere (e.g. 1, 22, 5) the poets in praying the god to come and to be gracious apply this epithet to him. For he is the protector: 6, 50, 8 *ā no devaḥ savitā trāyamāno / hiranyapāṇir yajato jagamyāt*. Certain motions or attitudes of hand and arm do not only convey the idea of protection, but also that of ruling (6, 71, 4 *savitā damūnā h.*) and enforcing obedience (2, 38, 2). Cf. 5, 12, 1; 5.

The same epithet is for obvious reasons used in inviting the sun to rise, that is to say: to expand his golden rays over the firmament, cf. 7, 38, 2. That the solar orb while moving between sky and earth and dispelling diseases shows its golden rays is clear to everybody: 1, 35, 9. Mention may also be made of VS. 1, 16 (in addressing the husked grain) “may Savitar ..., the golden-handed, with flawless hand unto himself receive you”. AV. 7, 14, 2 “Savitar, gold-handed, and inventive (*sukratu-*), fashioned heaven” (both qualities, skill and inventiveness are required in making something); AV. 7, 115, 2 the golden-handed god is asked to avert ill-luck and to grant good. Elsewhere the epithet is of a more conventional character: ṚV. 3, 54, 11 where however his tongue is rightly mentioned: *hiranyapāṇiḥ savitā sujihvas / trir ā divo vidathe patyamānaḥ*; AV. 3, 21, 8.

The plurale tantum for “water”, *āpaḥ*, is among those words which are in a large majority of cases left unqualified. The passages in which it is accompanied by an attribute are however worth studying. In connection with the most important mythical event of Indra’s victory over the demon Vṛtra the waters are not infrequently described as “great”: 6, 57, 4 *yad indro anayad rito / mahīr apo vṛṣantamaḥ / ...*; 8, 3, 10 *yenā samudram asṛjo mahīr apas / tad indra vṛṣṇi te śavaḥ* “that is, O I., thy manly heroic power by which thou caused to flow the great waters to the sea”. This epithet is no doubt to suggest that the god’s power passes all comprehension. But the dreaded opponent is almost as mighty as the god himself: 8, 6, 16 *yas ta indra mahīr apa / stabhūyamāna āśayat*; 9, 61, 22.

²²⁶ For a description of the sun see also D. P. Pandey, *Sūrya*, Thesis Leiden, 1939, passim.

Compare also 8, 12, 3; and 1, 174, 2 where the waters are in a similar context called “waves”; *ibid.* st. 9 where they are “roaring” (*dhunimatīḥ*), the god himself being *dhuniḥ*, and perhaps also 4, 26, 2. It is perhaps not too rash to conclude that the same implication is not foreign to passages such as 8, 7, 22 where the Maruts are stated “to have put together the great waters, the sun etc.” Elsewhere – 9, 7, 2; 99, 7 – the adjective must not be viewed in this light. ṚV. 1, 24, 6 and similar passages are dealt with in another section of this book.

In a reference to the help rendered by the waters to man they are 6, 50, 7 called *mānuṣīḥ* “favourable or propitious to men”. ṚV. 6, 66, 11 the words of the poet are said to have run a race like the powerful mountain waters (*girayo nāpa ugrā asṛdhan*): the epithet is very becoming to the occasion.

Sometimes however the epithet seems to have no connection whatever with the communication made in the sentence: 1, 165, 8 (Indra speaking) “I have made, for Manu, these all-glittering waters easy to traverse”.²²⁷

The expression *divyā āpo* “rain-water” does not belong to the subject-matter under discussion.

The plants or herbs sometimes receive interesting epithets. ṚV. 5, 83, 5: when it rains the herbs of various forms or colours sprout forth (*osadhīr viśvarūpāḥ*): although from an intellectual point of view superfluous, the adjective very appropriately marks the wealth of flowers produced by rain and hence the power of that natural phenomenon. Similarly, 10, 88, 10. In imploring Indra for herbs the author of 6, 39, 5 adds, for obvious reasons, the adjective *aviṣāḥ* “not poisonous”. Why are the herbs in 7, 101, 5 called *devagopāḥ*? The hymn is addressed to Rain, Parjanya, who is implored to favour man by his presence, so that the plants will bear ‘berries’: is not this a mark of the god’s favour? In 10, 169, 1 which is a blessing of the cows, the herbs are oppositely described as *ūrjasvatīḥ* “juicy, vigorous, nutritive”.

Curiously enough the only passage furnishing us with an epithet in the proper sense of the term to accompany the word for “tree” *vrkṣa-* (29 occurrences) is a simile: 10, 43, 4 *vayo na vrkṣaṃ supalāśam āśadan...* “as the birds have alighted on a tree with many (or beautiful) leaves...” (otherwise 10, 135, 6 which shows however that the phrase was usual).

Mountains (*giri-*) receive various epithets. Among these *parvata-* is the most interesting because whilst originally meaning “rugged” it soon

²²⁷ In 4, 42, 4 *aham apo apinvam ukṣamānāḥ* “I caused the water to swell so as to splash about” the participle probably indicates the process produced by the main process of the sentence (the so-called prolepsis: see *Mnemosyne*, IV, 11 (1958), p. 1 ff.

developed into another term for “mountain, mountain-range”. It is therefore problematic whether Geldner is right in translating 1, 37, 7 *jihīta parvato giriḥ* by “es duckt sich der Fels, der Berg”. R.V. 5, 56, 4 the same scholar has the Maruts shake the *p.* mountains: the idea seems to be that they cause to move even the higher mountains which are characterized, not by gradual slopes and shelves, but by accidented masses of rock-work. Similar passages are: 8, 64, 3 Indra has broken even the *dr̥dhā* “solid” mountain; 1, 61, 14 and 63, 1 where even the *p. m.* are said to be in fear of Indra’s power. “Even the lofty (*ṛṣva-*) mountains” is the expression used 6, 24, 8. The substantive *parvata-* is accompanied, 5, 54, 9, by the more or less conventionally honorific *jīradānu-* “which drop or sprinkle (water) quickly (actively)”, because of their being sources of water; 1, 85, 10 by the typical or characterizing *dādr̥hāṇa-* “solid, strong, firm”; 6, 52, 4 (*avantu mā parvatāso dhruvāsaḥ*) and 10, 173, 4 (predicatively) *dhruva-* “immovable, fixed, lasting”; 4, 30, 14 and elsewhere *br̥hat-* which does not, in my opinion,²²⁸ in the first place mean “high”, but “massive, solid, bulky, firm”; cf. also 8, 88, 3 *na tvā br̥hanto adrayo / varanta indra vīlavah*; 5, 60, 3 *vṛddha-* “large, bulky” (typical epithet: *parvataś cin mahi vṛddho bibhāya*); 4, 17, 2 and 6, 52, 1 *subhū-* “enormous, huge” (4, 17, 2 similarly, *ṛghāyanta subhvah parvatāsaḥ*).

The extremely frequent word for “sky” or “heaven” *div-* is rarely accompanied by an epithet. Sometimes, if the context provides an opportunity to emphasize its greatness, height, ‘firmness’ or ‘solidity’ *mah-* or *br̥hat-* are added: 1, 59, 5 *divaś cit te br̥hato jātavedo ... pra ririce mahitvam*; 7, 61, 3; 5, 52, 7 *sadhasthe vā maho divaḥ*; 1, 52, 13; 54, 4; 121, 8. The phrase *divo br̥hataḥ* 8, 1, 18 may be stereotyped, but 2, 15, 2 *avam̐se dyām astabhāyad br̥hantam* “in (the region) that has no pillars he (Indra) supported the firm sky” (or rather: “he s. the s. so as to be firm”) the adjective is not superfluous. R.V. 6, 1, 7 *divo ... br̥hatā rocanena* may be a case of enallage.

Antarikṣa- “the intermedial space between heaven and earth and the middle of the three spheres or regions of life (through which the warmth, light and waters of the heavens unto the earth)”²²⁹ is a good example of a much-used word that is practically characterized by one single epithet, viz. *uru-* “broad, wide”. We can hardly escape the conviction that the poets used this combination so often to inculcate the truth of the extensiveness of the atmosphere and to express their hope and their belief

²²⁸ See my *Notes on brahman* (Utrecht, 1950), p. 31 ff.

²²⁹ See *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 61 ff.; *Numen*, III, p. 63; *Indo-Iranian Journal*, I, p. 33.

that the regions between heavens and earth would always be *uru-* so that all earthly life would continue.²³⁰ Cf. 1, 91, 22 Soma has created the plants and the cows and spread the *uru antarikṣam*; 3, 22, 2 Agni's illuminating power (*varcas-*) has penetrated the *u. a.*; 5, 1, 11 he is supplicated to convey the gods to their sacrificial meals through the *u. a.* 4, 52, 7 Uṣas is stated to penetrate, with her rays and brilliance, the wide and dear (notice this addition!) atmosphere: *a. u. priyam*. Cf. e.g. also 10, 124, 6. The combination *uru- mah-* "wide and great" is in 3, 46, 3 to suggest extensiveness in all dimensions: "Indra surpasses in greatness heaven, earth and the wide and great atmosphere". See also 5, 52, 7; 7, 98, 3; 10, 65, 2 and cf. 10, 89, 11. The epithet is often completely fixed: 3, 6, 8; 54, 19; 7, 39, 3; 9, 81, 5; 10, 128, 2. The noun may even be omitted: e.g. 4, 53, 2.

Horses are often mentioned in the same breath as *vāja-*, that particular generative power which manifests itself in vegetation, in cattle, in human beings, and by which new food and new life is obtained. The 'possessive' adjective *vājīn-*, commonly translated by "rasch, mutig; tapfer, kriegerisch; männlich, zeugungskräftig" (Petr. Dict.); "spirited, impetuous, heroic, warlike, strong, manly procreative etc." (Monier-Williams); "stark, kräftig, tapfer; reich; nahrungsreich, reich an Opferspeise" (Grassmann); "Siegeskraft besitzend, feurig, siegesgewohnt, siegreich, tapfer, kampflustig, streitbar" (Geldner) is to characterize those beings which possess, contain, win, occupy themselves with, produce, generate, *vāja-*. For practical reasons the Engl. "vigour" may be resorted to for translating the substantive, vigorous for the adjective.²³¹ The generation or acquisition of this highly appreciated power-substance was believed to take place in a variety of performances, such as, e.g. races, contests. As is well known in dealing with these potencies the ancient Indians did not sharply distinguish between their functions as substances and their being qualities attributed to other entities. As a 'quality' *vāja-* was attributed to horses, rams, bulls, mules, to the waters, to great divinities, e.g. Agni, Soma, Indra and other gods interested in man's welfare and engaged in supplying food, fertility and favourable atmospheric conditions.

It seems worth while to go over the passages where the term occurs in order to establish its relevant particulars when used as an epithet. RV. 1, 162, 22 is quite explicit on this point: *sugavyam no vājī svaśvyam / puṃsaḥ putrām uta viśvāpuṣam rayim* "the *vāja* winning (steed must bring) us the possession of many cows and horses, sons and all-sustaining

²³⁰ *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 226, s.v.; see e.g. RV. 6, 69, 5.

²³¹ See also *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism* (Utrecht, 1954), p. 48.

goods". The *vājin*- horse is stated to carry happiness on his back, if this is the sense of *śunápr̥ṣṭha*- (7, 70, 1). Added to words for "courser" this adjective emphasizes a special valuable quality of this animal, also in similes (3, 38, 1; 5, 30, 14; 9, 93, 1 etc.). The *vāja*- won by the animal does human beings good in a supranormal way: 1, 117, 6. Sometimes the passage in which this attribute occurs points to the high value attached to the horse from a religious or 'weltanschauliches' point of view: 1, 163, 12; 3, 29, 6; 4, 36, 6; 38, 10; 7, 37, 6; 44, 4. In other passages *vājin*- is a mere attribute: 1, 162, 3. Often however this adjective is merely distinctive: 1, 64, 6; 9, 93, 1; 96, 15; etc.

We now come to some other epithets qualifying horses. The adjective *suyuj*- "well yoked" is not rarely applied so as to fulfil a useful function in the sentence: 5, 62, 4 *ā vām aśvāsaḥ suyujō vahantu* "the well yoked horses must bring you (Mitra and Varuṇa) hither". Cf. also 3, 58, 3; 7, 78, 4 and (*harayaḥ*) 6, 44, 19; 6, 29, 2 (*yujānaḥ*) and 7, 71, 3 *rtayugbhir aśvaiḥ*. Elsewhere the same adjective has become more or less stereotyped: 4, 33, 10 "those who made Indra's bay steeds, both well-yoked horses" (in praying the R̥bhus for wealth). Needless to say that the quality expressed by this word was highly appreciated: 7, 70, 2 the horses of the Aśvins are stated to be as well yoked as those of the sun.

One of the most conspicuous and appreciated characteristics of the horse is its swiftness. In 8, 1, 9 Indra is besought to approach as soon as possible: *aśvāso ye te... raghudruvas / tebhir nas tūyam ā gahi*. Similarly, 8, 5, 71. The same word "running swiftly" is 5, 6, 2 a qualificatory attribute: *arvanto raghudruvaḥ*. In the so-called monologue of the drunken Indra – which in my opinion is a description of the ecstasy of someone who intentionally has drunk soma in order to reach a state of ecstatic bliss²³² – the person speaking fancies himself soaring and flying: 10, 119, 3 *un mā pitā ayamsata / ratham aśvā ivāśavaḥ*: here the adjective *āśavaḥ* while qualifying the horses suggests the speed with which the man who believes himself to be a god makes an imaginary journey through the air. Swift horses are apt to win races: such a steed was given by the Aśvins to Pedu (1, 117, 9): it won him *vāja*, and other things a thousandfold; cf. 7, 71, 5 where "the swift horse" given to Pedu suffices to recall this event to the hearer's memory.

The horses of the gods are because of their swiftness and their ability to move through the air compared to, or identified with, birds: cf. 6, 63, 7 *vayo 'śvāsaḥ*; 1, 117, 14 hence also those of the Aśvins 1, 118, 5 *pari*

²³² See my paper "The so-called secular, humorous, and satirical hymns of the R̥gveda", *Orientalia neerlandica* (Leiden, 1948), p. 312 ff., esp. 330 ff.

vām aśvā vapuṣaḥ patamgā / vayo vahantv aruṣā abhīke. In 7, 74, 4 the same Aśvins are requested to come to the abode of those reciting by means of their fleet, flying horses.

From the above survey it may appear that the 'archaic' practice of adding to the common names for useful animals etc. typical epithets²³³ is not entirely absent from the Ṛgveda.

Indra's bay steeds receive many attributes. Their name *hari-* obviously is of a secondary character; as it literally means "brown, tawny, bay" it is one of those colour names which by way of ellipsis or otherwise (tabu) were applied to animals.²³⁴ Curiously enough other words for similar colours are sometimes used to qualify this word, which then, it is true, does not always apply to Indra's horses. The adjective *śona-* "red" occurs 1, 6, 2; *aruṣa-* "reddish" 9, 8, 6 where Soma is compared to a *hari-* (cf. 9, 82, 1). These attributes do not always appear to have been chosen for a special reason which is obvious from the context. The adjective *prṣat-* "spotted, piebald" is 1, 162, 21 used of Indra's steeds; *keśin-* "having a mane" 1, 10, 3; *vītaprṣṭha-* "straight-backed" 3, 35, 5. These steeds are *dhr̥ṣṇu-* "courageous, fierce" 1, 6, 2; *nṛvāhas-* "conveying men" 1, 6, 2; *madacyuta-* "staggering with intoxication" 1, 81, 3.

In other cases the use of an epithet is significant. ṚV. 3, 35, 4 *brahmaṇā te brahmayujā yunajmi / harī* "with brahman (the potency inherent in the formulas and verses) I yoke your bay steeds which are yoked by mere brahman". Indra who 8, 24, 17; 33, 12; 46, 1 receives the appositional qualification of driver of the bay steeds, is st. 14 called the lord of these animals which are proper to him. Hence no doubt the occurrence of the attribute "dear": 10, 96, 6 *haryatā harī*. Does the adjective *suyujā* 4, 33, 10 mean that these horses are easily yoked by Indra himself (cf. 8, 12, 15)? In 10, 23, 1 he is described as the driver of the refractory bay steeds (cf. 8, 12, 15), in 10, 49, 2 the god himself boasts of being able to guide the two horses which are strong like bulls; the attribute *vṛṣaṇā* is not rarely applied to them, also in connection with Indra's yoking them: 1, 177, 1; 8, 4, 11; also elsewhere: 3, 43, 4; 2, 16, 6. Sometimes an epithet seems to be merely honorific: the above *vṛṣaṇā* in cases such as 7, 19, 6; 8, 4, 14; 8, 13, 10 "... (Indra) whose victorious (*prasakṣiṇā*) bay steeds come to the

²³³ "Les chevaux jouissent de belles épithètes; on vante leur belle crinière (ἐύτριχες, καλλίτριχες), leur port de tête (ἐριαύχενες, ὑψηλές)...; ils sont rapides (ὠκείες, ὠκύποδες, ποδώκεες)..." (H. Meylan-Faure, *Les épithètes dans Homère*, Thesis Lausanne, 1899, p. 111).

²³⁴ Cf. e.g. O. Engl. *bera* "bear": Lith. *béras* "brown"; Skt. *hariṇa-* "deer" from the above *hari-*; see also C. Darling Buck, *A Dict. of selected synonyms in the principal I.-E. languages* (Chicago, 1949), p. 136.

house of the worshipper". Cf. also 10, 93, 8 (*vājinā*); 96, 7 (*turā*); 105, 2 (*suyujā*). In 8, 13, 23 the horses are styled *suṣṭutā* and *vṛṣaṇā* "highly praised and strong like bulls". In the initial stanza 3, 45, 1 these horses, receiving unusual attention, are referred to as *mandra*- "charming" and *mayūraroman*- "peacock-haired".

Several passages dealing with Indra's bay steeds may however be quoted as fine instances of a vivid and picturesque accumulation of attributes which while referring to some of the most striking physical properties and intrinsic merits of the animals could not fail to give the hearers the impression of truly ideal draught-animals. R̥V. 1, 6, 2 "they put his two dear bay steeds to the chariot, which are on different sides (of the chariot?), the reddish, courageous ones, that convey the lord"; 1, 10, 3 "put thy two bay steeds (to the chariot, O Indra, drinker of soma), that have a mane, the stallions, that fill out the girth (are well fed)..."; 3, 43, 4 "when these two male-and-manly-vigorous (*vṛṣaṇā*) bay horses bring thee here, thy companions, which go well under the yoke, the fair-limbed ones (... *sakhāyā sudhurā suaṅgā*)...".

Wolves are animals of bad repute. Until the present day "malicious" (*boos*) is in Dutch and other languages an oft-recurring typical attribute in speaking of them.²³⁵ English story-tellers often refer to the *wicked wolf*. Small wonder that, also in the Veda, they receive a number of depreciatory attributes: R̥V. 1, 42, 2 *yo naḥ pūṣann agho vṛko / duḥśeva ādideśati / apa sma tam patho jahi*; 1, 120, 7 the Aśvins are implored to protect against the malicious (*aghāyu*-) wolf; 10, 95, 14 *vṛkā rabhasāsaḥ* "the wild wolves" are supposed to devour a man; in st. 15 these animals are called *aśivāsaḥ* "unkind" or rather "pernicious, dangerous"; 8, 66, 8 *vṛkaś cid vāraṇa urāmathiḥ*, in a simile: "like the wild wolf which kills sheep". R̥V. 2, 23, 7 *sānuka*- is obscure, but in any case deprecative.²³⁶ In 6, 13, 5 Agni is besought to give cattle to the patron of the poet, not to the hungry (or starved) wolf, an enemy (*vṛkāyāraye jasuraye*). In 1, 105, 18 *aruṇo ... vṛkaḥ* we find a colour epithet.

The word for "dog" (*śvan*-) is nowhere accompanied by epithets proper.

As far as the lion is concerned mention should not in the first place be made of 5, 15, 3 where the poet conjures up an episode from a 'battue':

²³⁵ Cf. also, in Homer, II 156 ὠμοφάγοι; II 352 σίνται, and phrases and proverbs such as λύκου βίον ζῆν "to live by rapine"; ὥς λύκοι ἄρν' ἀγαπῶσιν (of treacherous or unnatural love). The bad repute in which the wolf was held in the Avesta is well known, see e.g. H. Lommel, *Die Religion Zarathustras* (Tübingen, 1930), p. 290 s.v.

²³⁶ See Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Altind. Gramm.*, II, 2, p. 482.

simhaṃ na kruddham abhitaḥ pari ṣṭuḥ “like an irritated lion they surround (him)”. In similes this animal is called “terrible” (*bhīma-*, 4, 16, 14; 9, 97, 28), and “roaring” (3, 2, 11). No epithets proper occur.

THE KING

In a discussion of Vedic epithets, however incomplete, the title “king” which is often given to the leading deities may not be left out. The ancient Indian king was regarded as a divine being, a deva. The ideal ruler was a protector, and a mediator who was held responsible for the prosperity of the realm; he should delight and gratify his subjects, protecting them with care, upholding the dharma and punishing the wicked. Like Indra he possessed *ojas*, the power of vitality, creation and authority, like Viṣṇu, *śrī-* “prosperity”.²³⁷

It will be expedient to deal with the king-gods and the terms used in connection with them individually. Varuṇa who 4, 42, 2 calls himself the king (*rājā*) may indeed be said to represent the static aspects of dominion; being the lord of punishment he holds the sceptre even over rulers.²³⁸ From an enumeration of the passages applying the title *rājan-* to him it will be seen that they, generally speaking, emphasize, in one way or another, his might and power: 1, 24, 9 “thou hast, O king, a hundred, a thousand physicians”; 14 (*kṣayan... rājan*); cf. st. 7 and 8; 7, 64, 1, where he is at the same time called *sukṣatra-* “who rules well”. In 4, 1, 2 he appears as a king who supports (or protects) the races of men. In begging his pardon for transgressions and imploring his favour or protection the poets often call him *rājan-*: 1, 24, 12; 13; 14; 5, 40, 7. The same title is given to him in connection with his ordinances, Varuṇa being a great lord of the laws of nature: 1, 91, 3; 2, 1, 4. It is King Varuṇa who witnesses men’s truth and falsehood (7, 49, 3). Name and title often constitute an appositional phrase: *rājā varuṇaḥ*: 1, 24, 7; 8; 5, 40, 7; 7, 49, 3; 4; with a qualification 7, 87, 5. This points, especially in these passages where no allusion is made to the god’s special power, to a more or less stereotyped character of the epithet: 1, 156, 4; 10, 103, 9. However, the phrase admits of variations: 7, 64, 1 *rājā sukṣatro varuṇaḥ*.

Turning now to Indra it is clear from the very contexts in which the title “king” is used in connection with this god that in forming an idea of kingship as held by him the ancient Indians laid stress on other points.

²³⁷ Compare also *Atti dell’ VIII Congresso Intern. di Storia delle Religioni* (Firenze, 1956), p. 173 f., and *Numen* 3 and 4 (Leiden, 1956-1957).

²³⁸ *Ibidem*, vol. 3, p. 63.

“Indra has been appointed king”, the poet of 7, 31, 12 declares, “in order to have the mastery, to be victorious”. Indra is the wielder of the *vajra*-, he is a bull overpowering the mighty, an impetuous king (*śuṣmī rājā*), slayer of the Vṛtra, and drinker of soma (5, 40, 4). In 7, 18, 11 he is besides being a hero and running races a conquering king who throws down twenty-one opponents. He is believed to be a fighter, who comes to the rescue of his worshippers (1, 63, 77); he has the disposal of goods (6, 19, 10), who may grant them enjoyments (6, 39, 5; cf. 7, 27, 3), or frustrate the benevolence of other powers (1, 178, 2). In 1, 174, 1 where he is stated to be the king of all gods, he is implored for protection; in 7, 27, 3 he is the king of the world, the peoples and all that exists on the earth; in 6, 24, 1 he is called the celestial king of the invocations. It is evident that the use of this epithet is in harmony with Indra’s character as a representative of energetic action and of the dynamic aspect of leadership.

Of another character, again, is Yama’s kingship. Being the gatherer of people and ruler of the deceased, he is in the first of the funeral hymns (10, 14) honoured and worshipped: st. 1 “him... who has spied out the path for many... the assembler of people, Y. the king (*yamaṃ rājānam*) do thou present with oblation”; cf. st. 4; 15 he is implored to preserve the deceased: st. 11.

Soma is not only the lord of the plants²³⁹ – cf. 9, 114, 2; 10, 97, 22 – but also, like other important gods, called a king, whose protection is implored: 1, 91, 8 *tvam naḥ soma viśvato / rakṣā rājann aghāyataḥ*; 10, 141, 3; who is besought for remission of sins: 8, 48, 8, for long life: 8, 48, 7 (cf. also 6, 75, 18); and asked to accept offerings: 1, 91, 4. Sometimes the divine plant and beverage is meant by the single title “king”: 1, 23, 14 where Pūṣan is related to have found the king who was lost and hidden;²⁴⁰ 9, 61, 17; 70, 3; in 10, 97, 22 the medicinal plants address him, quite naturally, “your Majesty”. The title has largely been stereotyped, cf. e.g. 6, 75, 18; 10, 141, 3, and often combines with the name of the god, e.g. 1, 91, 4 *rājan soma*; 9, 114, 2; the phrase does not, however, constitute an inseparable unit: 6, 75, 18 / *somas tvā rājā* ...; 9, 114, 2 *somaṃ namasya rājānam*. The verbal expression of Soma’s kingship, which obviously was firmly rooted in Vedic thought, was commonly recognized. This god essentially was a sovereign, because his realm was the cosmos viewed in the perspective of the cyclically recurrent process of growth: decay: new

²³⁹ Now see also H. Lommel, *Numen*, 2 (1955), p. 196 ff.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 36; Atkins, *o.c.*, p. 31.

growth, in which process he manifests his royal power.²⁴¹ This conviction was, to a certain extent, reflected in the use of the title “king” in connection with this deity.

Agni is sometimes described, in the R̥gveda, as an earthly monarch:²⁴² cf. 2, 9, 2 describing him as a protector; 3, 6, 5 calling him a leader of the peoples; 6, 15, 8; 1, 36, 3 where his flames are said to extend and his rays to reach the sky. Besides, he is explicitly declared to be a king in 1, 98, 1; 6, 15, 13; cf. 3, 1, 18. The title is however not often applied to him: 6, 8, 4 and 7, 8, 1 where he is respectfully mentioned; 6, 1, 13 where the hope is expressed to obtain, through him, many good things.

Coming now to pairs of gods described as kings it must be admitted that *rājānau* has in connection with Mitra and Varuṇa assumed, to a certain extent, the character of a fixed phrase. Cf. e.g. R̥V. 7, 64, 4; 10, 64, 5. In 1, 136, 4 and 1, 137, 1 names and title occur alternately. However, 3, 38, 6 which refers to them merely by the title “kings” is preceded, in st. 5, by the statement that they, being grandsons of heaven and kings, occupy the royal office. See also 2, 41, 5 (cf. 4). References to power and dominion are, in stanzas exhibiting this title, of considerable frequency: 5, 62, 6 (dominion and protection); 6, 16, 24; 7, 64, 2; 8, 101, 2. In 2, 36, 6 – a collection of stanzas intended to be recited to a plurality of gods in turn – respectful salutation is addressed to both kings, the title being used instead of the proper name. The epithet, taking an attribute, replaces the name: 6, 16, 24 *ta rājānā śucivratā / ādityān...* “both kings, whose rule is pure, the Ādityas...”. In 3, 56, 7 it is whilst used in an appositional group accompanied by an attribute: *rājānā mitravaruṇā supāṇī*. In 6, 62, 9 the kingship of M. and V. is specified: *rājānāv... rajasah* “the kings of space”.

The plural *rājānaḥ* qualifies Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman as well as the Ādityas in general: in the last quarter of 8, 101, 5 it is a recapitulatory title, the names being mentioned beforehand; in 7, 40, 4 an apposition occurring in a reference to the gods’ work, directing universal order (cf. 2, 27, 12) and rescuing men; 8, 19, 35 the adj. *carṣaṇīśahaḥ* “overpowering the races of men” added to the title throws light upon an aspect of kingship; in 1, 41, 3 (protection) and 7, 66, 11 (dominion) it is the context which accounts for the use of the epithet. The Ādityas, being called “kings”, are described as great and mighty: 6, 51, 4 ... *satpatīṃr adabdhān / maho rājñāḥ / ... sakṣatrān kṣayato divo / nṛṇ ādityān...*; cf. 7, 66, 6.

²⁴¹ See J. C. Heesterman, *The ancient Indian royal consecration*, Thesis Utrecht, 1957, p. 75 ff.

²⁴² See *Numen*, 3, p. 61 f.

In 2, 27, 3 the title is given to the Ādityas who see and see through all doings of men: kings know or ought to know whatever happens in their realm. Appositional use: 1, 20, 5; 2, 27, 1; cf. 1, 139, 7. The title is met with instead of the name: 4, 34, 11.

Some words may be added on the human king. The title *rājan-* occurs, sometimes (e.g. 1, 54, 7; or, e.g. 1, 65, 7, in similes) without any epithet, sometimes (1, 53, 10; 126, 1; 8, 4, 19) with distinctive adjectives, elsewhere with attributes that may be epithetical in character: 4, 4, 1 *yāhi rāje-vāmavām ibhena* “march out (O Agni) like an impetuous (powerful) king with an elephant”; 9, 20, 5 where Soma in lending a ready ear to the eulogies is compared to a king who is strict in observing the rules of good conduct (*suvrata-*). The use of *susamdrś-* in 10, 78, 1 is no doubt that of a typical epithet: the Maruts are good-looking like kings of handsome features. In general statements about kings (cf. 5, 37, 4) there is hardly occasion for epithets.

The substantive *kṣatra-* “wordly power, dominion” is comparatively speaking often accompanied by an epithet: 5, 64, 6 it is called *br̥hat-* “firm, solid, well-founded”; cf. also 1, 160, 5 where *b. k.* is said to extend over all peoples. In connection with Mitra and Varuṇa it is 5, 66, 2 *avihruta-* “unbroken”; 5, 67, 1 *varṣiṣṭha-* “highest, greatest”; 7, 66, 11 *anāpya-* “unattainable”. The use of these attributes is easily intelligible from the contexts. Thus, in connection with Indra and Heavens, 4, 21, 1, *kṣatram abhibhūti* “superior, overpowering”; in a prayer for the continuation of the patron’s dominion the author of 5, 34, 9 characterizes it as *amavat tveṣam* “powerful and inspiring respect”; the poet of 6, 8, 6 as *anāmi* “unyielding”; of 7, 18, 25 *dūṇāśam* “unattainable” and *ajaram* “undecaying”; “great” (*mahe*): 8, 22, 7. The dominion of heaven and earth is 6, 50, 3 described as *uru br̥had... śaraṇam*.

Judging by the contexts in which the term *samrāj-* occurs, its sense “(supreme and) universal king”²⁴³ was as a rule in perfect harmony with the prayers addressed to the gods who received the title or with the qualities attributed to them. It applies to Varuṇa, 2, 28, 6, in a prayer for favour; 8, 42, 1 in the statement that he took possession of all the worlds; 5, 85, 1 and 6, 68, 9 praising the great deeds of the famous god; to Agni, 3, 10, 1 as an apposition, *samrāj-* of the peoples; 6, 7, 1 in an enumeration of his functions and qualities; 8, 19, 32 in a prayer for aid; to Indra, 8, 46, 20 in a long enumeration of his excellent qualities; 10, 116, 7 in a request to accept the oblations “not being angry”; 8, 16, 1 in a stimulation to

²⁴³ For *samrāj-* see “Ancient Indian kingship from the religious point of view”, *Numen*, III (1956), p. 136 etc.

sing his praise; 10, 134, 1; 4, 19, 2 predicatively; also 1, 110 (universal king of heaven and earth); to Indra and Varuṇa, 1, 17, 1 asking their favour; to Mitra and Varuṇa, 5, 63, 2; 3; 5 praising their might and impressive behaviour and asking their favour; 8, 25, 4; 7 referring to some of their important functions; 8, 23, 30; 1, 136, 1 predicatively; 2, 41, 6 instead of their names; cf. 5, 68, 2. In 8, 27, 22 the title is given to the gods in general, who are besought for protection and happiness. Cf. 3, 54, 10; 10, 63, 5.

OTHER PERSONS OF IMPORTANCE

The *kāru-*, i.e. the poet of eulogies, is justly called 1, 83, 6 *ukthya-* “skilled in praising”; 5, 33, 7 *grṇat-* “praising”; 7, 68, 9 *sumanman-* “uttering good thoughts or prayers”; 9, 17, 6 and elsewhere *vipra-* i.e. “wise, inspired”. Yet these epithets are to all probability mainly laudatory or ‘decorative’ emphasizing the most characteristic feature of the poets and eulogists. The expression *purutamasya kāroḥ* (3, 39, 7; 6, 21, 1) means according to Geldner²⁴⁴ either: “der erste unter den vielen”, or “der am häufigsten (sprechenden), am meisten dichtenden”; I would venture the explication: “the last among many”, being the poet who after a long succession of predecessors recites this particular poem; cf. e.g. ŚatBr. 11, 5, 1, 11 *saṃvatsaratamīm rātrīm* “the last night of the year from now (*saṃvatsarapūraṇīm antimām rātrim*, Sāyaṇa).

Most occurrences of *kavi-* “inspired sage”, when applying to men, are devoid of interest. In 3, 34, 7 the adjective may be regarded as a typical epithet: *viprā ukthebhiḥ kavayo grṇanti*.

Whereas the noun *jaritar-* “praiser, eulogist, invoker of the gods” is in general left unqualified, it assumes, as the subject of a sentence, sometimes epithets such as: 5, 43, 1 *vipra-* “inspired, wise, learned” in connection with the praiser’s invoking seven divine powers; 3, 12, 5 praisers are quite intelligibly called *ukthino nīthāvidaḥ* “uttering verses (and) knowing the musical modes”. It is a matter of doubt whether 7, 32, 2 *vasūyavaḥ* “desirous of wealth” must be considered an epithet. The adjective *avasyu-* 5, 75, 8 added to *grṇantam* must be left out of consideration.

In connection with 2, 38, 11 *jaritar- uruśaṃsa-* a digression may be made here. Authors do not completely agree with regard to the exact meaning of the adjective *uruśaṃsa-* “weithin rufend, laut preisend; weit-

²⁴⁴ Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 119. Sāyaṇa’s explication (on 3, 39, 7) can be left out of consideration.

hin gebietend (von Göttern)” (Grassmann);²⁴⁵ “(to be) praised by many” (Monier-Williams); “dessen Ruf weit reicht, weit berühmt” (Geldner quoting Sāyaṇa: *bahukīrti*-, *bahustuti*-);²⁴⁶ “far-famed” (Macdonell);²⁴⁷ “qui parle au loin, ou dont la parole (va) loin” (Renou).²⁴⁸ However the basic sense of the root *śams*- (I.-E. *kens*-) is in all probability not so much “to call, to speak”, or “to praise” as “to declare more or less authoritatively, solemnly or officially, to make a qualificatory statement about a person”;²⁴⁹ cf. the uses of the Latin cognates *cēseo* (*cēnsor* etc.) “déclarer d’une façon formelle ou solennelle; exprimer un avis dans les formes prescrites”,²⁵⁰ the Old-Persian *θātiy* “to declare, proclaim” (term used by the king himself). Thus *uru-śamsa*- may originally have expressed the idea of “declaring to (over) a distance, over a wide space”. This sense fits in with all the R̥gvedic contexts in which the word occurs: 1, 24, 11 *ahelamāno varuṇeha bodhy / uruśamsa mā na āyuh pra moṣiḥ* “be here, O V., not displeased; do thou, whose qualificatory statements extend over a wide space, not deprive us of our lives”. Varuṇa punishes those who infringe his ordinances (7, 86, 3 f.); he is, on the other hand, gracious to the penitent, removing his sins (2, 28, 5; 5, 85, 7 f.). Besides, he is omniscient, i.e. he knows the doings of men and other living beings (1, 25, 7 ff.; AV. 4, 16). He is also *urucakṣas*- “of wide vision” (RV. 1, 25, 5; 16); he has “spies” or “agents” (*spaśaḥ*) who look all around the two divisions of the universe (7, 87, 3). In 2, 28, 3 the same god is addressed as follows: “we wish to be under thy protection ... O V., whose statements etc.” The god who perceives everything and whose ordinances are constantly said to be fixed, who embraces the all and witnesses men’s truth and falsehood, is – thus I would be tempted to interpret this passage – supposed to make his statements about man’s doings and the punishment which he deserves, from afar, because he is a great god and does not dwell on earth. RV. 3, 62, 17 Mitra and Varuṇa are said to reign *uruśamsā namovṛdhā* and *śucivratā*.

Subjoining the other occurrences of *uruśamsa*-, we find a similar

²⁴⁵ Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 264.

²⁴⁶ Geldner, *Der Rigveda in Auswahl*, I, *Glossar* (Stuttgart, 1907), p. 36.

²⁴⁷ Macdonell, *Vedic reader* (Oxford, 1928), p. 228.

²⁴⁸ Renou, *Grammaire de la langue védique* (Paris, 1952), p. 134; cf. also *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, I, p. 2, n. 1; IV, p. 95.

²⁴⁹ See also A. Bergaigne, *Religion védique*, I (Paris, 1878), p. 305; H. Oldenberg, *Zs. d. deutsch. Morgenl. Ges.*, 54 (1900), p. 52 f.; L. Renou, *Journal asiatique*, 231 (1939), p. 177 f.; G. Dumézil, *Servius et la fortune* (Paris, 1943), p. 76 ff.; J. Gonda, *Acta Orientalia*, 20 (Leiden, 1948), p. 187 (not in complete agreement with the above authors).

²⁵⁰ A. Ernout et A. Meillet, *Dict. étymol. de la langue latine*³, I (Paris, 1951), p. 200.

statement about Pūṣan, 1, 138, 3 where he is supplicated to be *ahelā-mānaḥ* (see above). Indra is 4, 16, 18 asked to be, for the eulogist, an *uruśaṃsa-* (*bahvāśaṃsana-*, Mādhava; *mahatā śaṃsanena yuktaḥ*, Sāyaṇa) on every occasion, the preceding part of the stanza calling in the god's friendship and protection, and stating that men have turned to him as their provider or providence (*pramatim*). Soma being (8, 48, 4) requested to make the suppliant's life longer and asked to be a friend, and kind like a father to his son, is called *dhīra-* "wise" and *uruśaṃsa-*; to Geldner's "dessen Wort weithin gilt" I would prefer the above interpretation. It may be remembered that Soma sometimes is mystically identified with Varuṇa, because he employs agents (9, 73, 3; 4; 9) and finds the sinner (cf. 9, 77, 5). The Ādityas are, 2, 27, 9, described as *adabdhā* ("not to be deceived") *uruśaṃsāḥ*. The epithet is also applied to human beings, i.e. to the eulogist or sacrificial priest: 2, 38, 11 and 1, 31, 14 "whose qualificatory (i.e. laudative) statements (about the gods) extend over a wide space".

It may be remembered that Mitra, Varuṇa and the other gods are also "far-seeing": 1, 25, 5 *kadā kṣatraśriyaṃ naram / ā varuṇam karāmahe / mṛlīkāyorucakṣasam* "when shall we prevail upon V., the u., the lord, who has the dignity of sovereignty to be merciful?"; cf. 16. In 8, 101, 2 Mitra and Varuṇa are called *varṣiṣṭhakṣatra urucakṣasā* "of the highest lordly power and far-seeing"; 7, 35, 8; 63, 4 it is an attribute of the sun (Sūrya); in 6, 51, 9 the gods in general receive this epithet in a stanza which gives us a good insight into the idea of the divine faculty of seeing or stating at a great distance entertained by the Vedic thinkers: *ṛtasya vo rathyaḥ pūதாக্‌শান / ṛtasya pastyasado adabdhān / tāṃ ā namobhir urucakṣaso nṛn / viśvān va ā name maho yajatrāḥ*.

The attribute *sahasracakṣas-* "having a thousand eyes" is, 7, 34, 10, given to Varuṇa who inspects the paths of the rivers; 9, 60, 1; 2 and 65, 7 to Soma, who is elsewhere described as *nṛcakṣas-* "mit dem Herrenauge" (Geldner) or rather "watching men" (9, 8, 9; 45, 1; 80, 1).

For the meaning of *suśaṃsa-* see e.g. 7, 35, 6 (Varuṇa); cf. 1, 44, 6; 6, 52, 6 (predicatively); used of men: 7, 16, 6; 2, 23, 10.

When the word *ṛṣi-* "seer, inspired 'poet' or singer of the sacred hymns, patriarchal 'saint' etc." applies to individuals it is sometimes accompanied by adjectives marking particular features. In the plural denoting the *ṛṣis* as a class of persons the word is not often amplified by a typical epithet. Thus Agastya is 1, 179, 6 called an *ṛṣir ugraḥ* "energetically powerful *ṛṣi*": the adjective is honorific and distinctive. Other qualities proper to such exalted beings are *mahān ... devajā devajūtaḥ* "great, god-born,

god-spēd (incited by the gods)” which are in the same way applied to Viśvāmitra (3, 53, 9); *vipra-* “inspired” (“redegewaltig” Geldner) connected with Kakṣivat (4, 26, 1; cf. also 8, 79, 1; 9, 87, 3; 96, 6); *gambhīravepas-* “deeply excited” (10, 62, 5) – this adjective does not fail to give the hearer a correct impression of one of the most essential sides of the character and the activities of an ṛṣi – *dhīra-* “wise, clever” (Indra, 5, 29, 1); *vedhas-* “disposer, distributor”²⁵¹ (cf. 6, 14, 2: Agni). Soma is 9, 35, 4 called a *vājasā* (“vāja-winning”) ṛṣi; 9, 107, 7 an *ṛṣir vipro vicakṣaṇa-*, i.e. “clear-sighted, having a deep insight, sagacious”. Cf. also 8, 70, 14 *barhiṣmat-* “provided with sacrificial grass, i.e. worshipper”; 10, 89, 16 *grṇat-* “invoking, extolling”. Typical epithets are no doubt found in 5, 54, 14 *yūyam ṛṣim avatha sāmavipram* “ye (O Maruts) assist the ṛṣi who are inspired (so) as to (promulgate or sing) liturgical chants”; in 1, 162, 7; 3, 53, 10; 10, 108, 11 the above *vipra-* in 1, 164, 15 the above *devajā-* both in connection with the plural; the phrase *sapta ṛṣayah* occurs 4, 42, 8 without an epithet, but 9, 92, 2 this group of seven seers is described as *viprāḥ*.

²⁵¹ This translation is tentative; the word has been much discussed, see the succinct bibliography by Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, IV, p. 68.

CHAPTER III

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ṚGVEDIC EPITHETS

Before proceeding to discuss the functions and peculiarities of the Ṛgvedic epithets it seems, in order to avoid misunderstanding, useful to make some preliminary remarks. Although it is, in a variety of cases, rather difficult to distinguish between epithets in the proper sense of the term and distinctive adjectives, there can be no doubt about passages such as 8, 101, 16 in which the attribute serves to confine the statement made in the context to those individuals to whom the idea expressed by the adjective is applicable ... *gām / ā māvrkta martyo dabhracetāḥ*: the idea expressed by *dabhracetā-* “little-minded” cannot be considered an epithet of “man” in general. Elsewhere the adjective without being distinctive mainly serves to express an appreciation: 8, 70, 2 *hastāya vajraḥ prati dhāyi darśataḥ*; 7, 16, 8 *yachā naḥ śarma dīrghaśrut*; 7, 76, 7. In 1, 89, 4 a *bheṣajam* “medicine” is called *mayobhu* “causing pleasure or refreshment, bringing comfort, salutary”; cf. 2, 33, 13 and 5, 42, 18 *avasā... mayobhuvā*; 1, 92, 18 *devā mayobhuvā dasrāḥ*. Thus it is a *dhīra-* “skilful” artisan who constructs a chariot: 1, 130, 6; 5, 2, 11; 29, 15. See also 3, 33, 3.

How difficult it is to draw a hard and fast line between epithets and attributive or predicative adjectives in general, or nouns used as appositions, may appear from those passages in which, in a very common way, nominal terms are, often in conformity with the metrical structure of the stanza,¹ but in a rather free and easy way, strung together so as to provide the audience with a partial characterization. In 10, 91, 2 Agni is described as follows: *sa darśataśrīr atithir gr̥he gr̥he / vane vane śīśriye takvavīr iva*, translated by Geldner: “von augenfälliger Schönheit, der Gast in jedem Hause, ist er in jedem Holze versteckt wie der Jäger im Walde”. It is however not impossible to attribute a higher degree of independence to the words contained in the first quarter of the stanza. Cf. also 1, 103, 3 *sa jātubharmā śraddadhāna ojaḥ / ... acarat*; 3, 48, 4 *ugras turāṣāl abhibhūtyojā / yathāvaśaṃ tanvaṃ cakra eṣaḥ* “gewaltig, die Mächtigen bezwingend, von überlegener Stärke, hat er nach Belieben seinen Leib

¹ This point is dealt with in a study on the relations between syntax and versification in the Veda, which is in course of preparation.

gewandelt”: the first part of the stanza is nominal and descriptive, the second a verbal statement of an event.

Yet, some authors have been inclined to include too many adjectives – or uses of adjectives – in the survey of epithets. Thus *aprayuchan* and *prajānan* in *ṚV.* 10, 17, 5 *a. pura etu p.* “alert, let him go ahead (of us), knowing the way” are, in my opinion, not to be dealt with under this heading.² An adjective is in the ancient Indo-European languages often used where we from our modern point of view would expect to find an adverb³ or a word group introduced by a preposition or conjunction: 5, 5, 9 *śivas tvaṣṭar / ihā gahi* means “kindly approach, O T.” “komm wohlwollend hierher, O T.” (Geldner), and 10, 17, 6 *ā ca parā ca carati prajānan* may be translated by “he goes to and fro, knowingly”; 10, 70, 9 *uśan yakṣi* “worship willingly”. That is to say: these adjectives or participles do not only belong to the subject of the sentence, but also to the verb; in attributing a quality to the subject they especially modify the way in which it performs the process expressed by the verb. In some cases the above syntagmata admit also of another translation: 1, 190, 7 *sa vidvām ubhayaṃ caṣṭe* “(B.) erspäht als Kundiger beides...” (Geldner). Other examples of this use which may be called, in German, ‘verbal-appositiv’ are: 1, 63, 4 ... *yad ... vi dasyūmr yonāv akrto vṛthāṣāt* correctly translated by Geldner: “müheilos siegend”; 3, 58, 1; 4, 29, 1 *upa ... yāhi ... satyarādhāḥ* “komm... mit echter Freigebigkeit” (Geldner); 5, 80, 2; 7, 83, 2; 8, 26, 19; 9, 67, 1.

The marked predilection for epithets may however to a certain extent be explained from the abundant use made, in ancient times, of adjectives where modern standard languages would prefer adverbs, prepositional phrases, substantives or nominal groups.⁴ When a poet in deprecating afflictions prays the god of the sun “to put ill luck elsewhere” and, “being golden-handed, to grant happiness” (*AV.* 7, 115, 2 ... *hiraṇyahasto vane no rarāṇaḥ*) we might, in our modern style, render his thought also as follows: “avert with your golden rays evil and make us happy”, the rays of the sun being obviously the instrument used by the god in performing his task. The adjective impresses a modern reader as more vivid and graphic than many prepositional groups could be, but this is not to conclude that the ancient mode of expression was, for that reason, particularly ‘poetical’. At the first glance an adjective may

² S. D. Atkins, *Pūṣan in the Rig-veda* (Princeton, 1941), p. 98 f.

³ See a paper by the present author on ‘prolepsis’ of the adjective in *Mnemosyne*, 4, 11 (Leiden, 1958), p. 1 ff.

⁴ See e.g. also *Handbuch der erklärenden Syntax* (Heidelberg, 1931), p. 149; 253.

impress us as 'epithetical' – in the sense of decorative – in character, whereas it actually serves to modify and specify the vague or general meaning expressed by the substantive or to indicate what is the exact purport of the sentence of which the substantive is an important element. Thus R̥V. 5, 35, 1 *yas te sādhiṣṭho 'vasa / indra kratuṣ ṭam ā bhara / asmabhyam carṣaṇīśaham / sasniṃ vājeṣu duṣṭaram* Indra's resourcefulness or inventiveness (*kratu-*) for which he is eagerly implored is expected to produce, on behalf of those praying, victory and superiority. "Resourcefulness which overpowers men" is "resourcefulness leading to or resulting in superiority". R̥V. 10, 36, 10 *jaitram kratum* is in a similar way "inventiveness leading to victory" rather than "sieghafter Entschluss" (Geldner); cf. also 10, 140, 4 *sānasim kratum* "einträgliche Überlegung" (Geldner). Another instance is: 1, 136, 3 *jyotiṣmat kṣatram*. In this connection cases such as 8, 25, 5 should not be overlooked: the gods in averting the insidious behaviour of enemies manifest their excited activity: *abhimātim... pratighnanti bhūrṇayah*.

These observations lead us to discuss briefly the relations between words used as epithets as well as attributes, and predicates or appositions.

It is not difficult to understand that a word which is in frequent use as an epithet may also be employed in purely descriptive passages or statements of what in the eyes of the poets were facts. The validity of this statement is not lessened by the consideration that these descriptive passages are, as a rule, not intended to be didactic or informative, but affirmative, nay confirmative. By stating that the god has specified qualities these qualities are affirmed, consolidated, reinforced and intensified. In addressing Indra and Varuṇa: 4, 41, 7 *yuvām id dhi ... / vṛṇīmahe sakhyāya priyāya / śūrā maṇhiṣṭha pitareva śambhū* "for we chose ye for dear friendship, (that are) heroes; most generous, kind like parents". The qualities mentioned are indeed much appreciated in a friend. In a hymn dedicated to Agni Vaiśvānara a half-stanza (3, 2, 2) reads as follows: *havyavāḥ agnir ajaraś canohito / viśām atithir vibhāvasuḥ* "A. is the bearer of the oblations, ever young, inclined to do anything, the ... guest of the clans, who abounds in light". In 3, 27, 5 the god of fire is described as being of expansive vigour, immortal, clad in ghee etc. The Kaṇvas light, according to 1, 44, 8 Agni, the carrier of the oblations. Cf. also 3, 11, 2. In 10, 28, 5 Vasukra in addressing Indra asks: "how am I to understand this (word) of yours, the thought of the strong and judicious one, I who am ignorant?". The frequent epithet *ugra-* is 4, 16, 20 – it is true with reference to Indra – associated with *avitā tanūpāḥ* "helper and personal protector"; 4, 23, 7 the same god is called an *u*.

collector of debts; 6, 23, 3, by his favour, an *u.* promotor of the eulogist. In Vāl. 4, 5 (R̥V. 8, 52, 5) Indra is called the father, the great and energetically vital or powerful (*ugra-*) promotor of the lordly position of his devotees (*iśānakṛt-*). Indra is R̥V. 10, 44, 3 called an *u.* king: *nṛpatim vajrabāhum ugram*; 8, 45, 35 an *u.* destroyer.

In opening stanzas a more or less extended string of epithets may help to throw light upon different aspects of the god's nature to be a means of appealing to different feelings and functions of the mighty one, a device for recalling the many sides of his nature to the mind of the audience. Thus 1, 143, 1 *pra tavyasīm navyasīm dhītim agnaye / vāco matim sahasaḥ sūnave bhare / apām nāpād yo vasubhiḥ sahapriyo / hotā pṛthivyām ny asīdad ṛtviyaḥ* "I present an 'idea' (i.e. 'hymn') that is particularly new and effective to A., the utterance of words to the son of power, who being the offspring of the waters sat down as a dear hotar, together with the Vasus, on the earth, observing the proper moments". It is however not always easy to decide whether a descriptive name should be taken as a mere epithet, as a substitute for the proper name, or as a predicative noun or adjective. R̥V. 8, 61, 15 *indra spaḥ uta vṛtrahā / paraspā no vareṇyaḥ*, though translated by Geldner: "I. ist Späher, und der Vṛtra-töter ist unser vorzüglicher Schützer aus der Ferne" doubtless admits of the interpretation: "I. is a watcher and the killer of V., our excellent protector"; from the point of view of versification⁵ this translation should even be preferred. Cf. 10, 103, 4. Words which are in frequent use as epithets may indeed, naturally enough, also occur as attributive adjectives. In 1, 38, 7 *satyaṃ tveṣā amavanto / dhanvañ cid ā rudriyāsaḥ / mihaṃ kṛṇvanty avātām* "die wahrhaft zornfunkelnden, überwältigenden Rudra-söhne machen selbst in der Wüste Regenwetter ohne Wind" I would take the adjectives *tveṣāḥ* and *amavantaḥ* as purely attributive. In favour of a devout sacrificer the poet of 1, 40, 4 asks Brahmaṇaspati the comfort of sons who are victorious and without rivals (or incomparable): *tasmā ilām suvīram ā yajāmahe / supratūrtim aneḥasam*. In other cases the syntactic function called in German 'verbalappositive Verwendung' and the epithetical use occur one beside the other: *tigmajambha-* "having sharp teeth" which occurs four times to qualify Agni is used 1, 79, 6 as an epithet in a prayer to the god for the destruction of demoniac enemies, and 4, 5, 4 in the former function: *pra tāṃ agnir babhasat t*. In 8, 19, 22; 44, 27; it is a fixed epithet serving to characterize the god.

In other cases we had better avoid the term 'epithet' altogether. The word *uktha-* "eulogy, praise" though as a rule unqualified is, 7, 26, 1

⁵ Cf. also 1, 91, 5 *tvam rājota vṛtrahā*.

described as *nṛvan navīyaḥ* “belonging to men, characteristic of gentlemen, herrenmässig and new” the latter adjective is to emphasize that the eulogy has not been used before, a fact which enhances its efficacy and gives us to understand that it is a new ‘confirmation’ and a strengthening of the will and the power of the god with which the poet prays for new help and a new display of beneficent activity on the part of the gods.⁶ R̥V. 4, 11, 3 the *ukthā* are called *rādhyāni* “to be performed or accomplished”; 6, 67, 10 they are true: *ād vām bravāma satyāni ukthā*: here the adjective is to intimate that the contents of the eulogies are in accordance with the facts: the gods are as is stated by the poet; 7, 56, 23 *pitṛyāni*: the Maruts have induced the poet to make many songs of praise which were already known to the ancestors and were recited formerly.

Passing mention may also be made of a function of the attributive adjective which might be regarded as anaphorical in a large sense of the term, or rather as memorial or, sometimes, commemorative. R̥V. 7, 71, 5 is an instance to go by. In some hymns of the R̥gveda mention is made of a horse, which was offered by the Aśvins to a certain Pedu.⁷ This steed was swift, strong, white, incomparable, vāja-winning and demon-slaying. The author of 7, 71 however simply refers to the admirable animal and the Aśvins’ presentation to Pedu by observing *ni pedava ūhathur āsum aśvam* “ye brought to P. the swift horse”.

In particular cases the attributive adjective though habitually added to the noun is from the logical point of view a superfluity: thus the frequent addition of *daśa* “ten” to *kṣipah* “fingers”: 3, 23, 3; 5, 43, 4 etc., which occurs in connection with making fire or preparing soma, occasions on which, strictly speaking, not all ten fingers are needed. The expression, which as is well known recurs in many other languages, may therefore be considered a stereotyped intensive, or rather an attempt to express oneself as explicitly and unequivocally as possible. Comparable phrases with numerals are “the five tribes peoples”, e.g. 2, 2, 10 *pañca kṛṣṭiṣu* which however seems to have denoted a loose confederacy of Aryan tribes distinguished from other human settlements of communities,⁸ and *dvau* added to duals – e.g. 10, 17, 2 – which emphasizes that two entities belong together or form unity, or that both components of a twofold entity undergo a common experience.⁹

⁶ See J. Gonda, “Ein neues Lied”, *WZKM*, 48, p. 275 ff.

⁷ See also Macdonell, *Vedic mythology*, p. 52; 149.

⁸ See e.g. A. B. Keith, in *The Cambridge History of India*, I (Cambridge, 1922), p. 92; 116.

⁹ See *Reflections on the numerals ‘one’ and ‘two’ in the ancient Indo-European languages* (Utrecht, 1955), p. 21 ff.

Sometimes an epithet, though not strictly speaking necessary, may be useful to determine the noun to which it is added. Thus 1, 143, 5 and 1, 176, 3 the adjective 'heavenly' does not leave the hearer in doubt as to the nature of the *aśani*- "thunderbolt"; *aśani*- which originally must have meant "stone"¹⁰ also denotes "the tip of a missile"; 4, 16, 17 dealing with a hostile encounter of men speaks of a *tigma*- "sharp" stone.

These epithets should be distinguished from an instance such as 5, 6, 2 *sam arvanto raghudruvaḥ / sam sujātāsaḥ sūrayaḥ* "the swift coursers (come) together, the nobly born institution of the sacrificers", horses being per se swift and sacrificers being, actually or presumed, of noble birth.

It may therefore not be too rash to say that those attributive adjectives which whilst adding a new element rise from the special circumstances of the object or phenomenon described, are often border-line cases. The adjective can, though serving in other passages as a true epithet, always be distinctive and necessary for a correct understanding of the communication. A qualification such as "flowing towards the ocean" could easily be a fixed epithet of any word for river, but in a context such as 8, 76, 3 we need not follow Geldner in suggesting that *samudriya*- is a decorative redundancy: ... / *indro vi vṛtram airayat / sṛjan samudriyā apaḥ* means "Indra chopped up Vṛtra, allowing the waters to flow towards the sea" rather than "die nach dem Meere laufenden Gewässer freilassend". – Whereas *amṛta*- "not subject to death" is 1, 123, 1 a logically superfluous epithet: "the *a.* gods have mounted the chariot", it helps, in 2, 2, 9, to mark an opposition between the poem of men and the immortal inhabitants of heaven to whom it is addressed.

Many ordinary epithets may, in other passages, be used predicatively. In 1, 67, 2 Agni being well-disposed and auspicious is said to have become the sacrificial priest and bearer of oblations; 1, 36, 5 he is stated to be a pleasantly speaking hotar and lord of the house, and also the messenger of the Aryan community; 5, 11, 4 *agnir dūto abhavad dhavyavāhanaḥ* "A. became the messenger, the carrier of oblations"; 5, 25, 4 is very brief: "A. is our c. of o."; cf. 5, 28, 5. In 6, 15, 8 he is said to have been appointed c. of o. and messenger; cf. 1, 128, 8; 3, 17, 4; 29, 7; 7, 11, 4; 17, 6; 8, 102, 18; 10, 46, 4; 10, 52, 4; 124, 1. In 3, 5, 10 Mātariśvan comes into the picture. In 4, 1, 20 Agni is stated to be the guest of all men; cf. 7, 9, 3. The author of 1, 26, 7 expresses the desire that Agni will be a dear "lord of settlers"; 1, 31, 11 he is appointed by the gods *viśpati*- of Nahuṣa.

¹⁰ See H. Reichelt, "Der steinerne Himmel", *Idg. Forsch.*, 32, p. 23 ff.; M. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefasstes etym. Wörterb. des Altind.* I (Heidelberg, 1954), p. 59.

RV. 1, 44, 3; 5, 3, 8; 7, 3, 1 relate Agni's appointment as a messenger; 2, 9, 2 he is the m. and the protector of those praying; 3, 6, 5 he became a m. as soon as he was born; 7, 7, 1; 11, 3 he is asked to be a m. The Ásvins who 7, 69, 5 receive the epithet *rathirā* "riding in a chariot" are 1, 22, 2 stated to be *surathā rathītamā* i.e. "well-provided with a chariot and chiefs of charioteers". Compare e.g. also 1, 91, 5; 98, 1; 6, 15, 13; 7, 16, 5; 10, 97, 6.

These predications of well-known epithets admit of extension and variation: RV. 1, 36, 5 *agne dūto viśām asi* "O A., thou art the messenger of the settlers", the god of fire being often styled a *dūta*-; 1, 44, 9; 3, 17, 1 Agni is *inter alia* called *ghṛtanirniḥ* "with a garment of fat", but 10, 122, 2 the same adjective is, in the vocative, a mode of address of the god in a special sacrificial function; in 3, 27, 5 it serves with other attributes to describe the god as the one who conveys the sacrifices to the other gods; 2, 35, 4 it is an appositive epithet, while 4, 37, 2 it replaces a proper name.

A point already touched upon in the former part of this volume may be considered here at some length. Agni, the god of fire, is frequently stated to be the oblation-bearer; in addition to this he is called "ever young": see e.g. 1, 67, 2; 3, 2, 2 *havyavāḥ agnir ajarah*. In view of this fact the appositional phrase of the same tenor may be regarded as the expression and affirmation of a well-known and universally acknowledged constant quality of the god: 5, 4, 2. These appositions are no superfluity in cases such as 1, 44, 8 *kaṇvāsas tvā sutasomāsa indhate / havyavāhaṃ svadhvara* "the K. who have extracted the soma kindle thee, the o.-b., O thou who performest the sacrifice well" because it intimates that the god will convey the oblations to their destination.

Attention may also be directed to instances such as 10, 145, 1 *imāṃ khanāmy oṣadhiṃ / vīrudham balavattamām* "I dig up this herb, the most powerful plant": here the noun herb is accompanied by an explicative apposition which in its turn receives a characterizing adjective. Similar instances are 6, 49, 7 *pāvīravī kanyā citrāyuhḥ sarasvatī*; 5, 47, 7 *namo dive brhate sādānāya*.

Not infrequently indeed an epithet accompanies an apposition which in its turn joins a noun or pronoun, but not all instances are at first sight clear, or even beyond doubt. Thus RV. 1, 44, 5 *staviṣyāmi tvām ahaṃ / viśvasyāmṛta bhojana / agne trātāram amṛtam*, translated by Geldner: "ich will dich preisen, du unsterblicher Erläuterer der ganzen (Welt), den unsterblichen Schirmer": here the term *amṛta* obviously belongs, in both cases, to the noun which it precedes or follows. In 4, 1, 2 Agni is requested to turn to his brother Varuṇa who after some other characteri-

zations is described as the “Āditya who keeps within the fixed order (and) supports the men, the king who supports men” (*ṛtāvānam ādityam carṣaṇīdhṛtam / rājānam carṣaṇīdhṛtam*). Here there can be no doubt about the existence of two units.

Although the interpretation of particular places may be a matter of opinion we may subscribe to Geldner’s view in cases such as 6, 16, 19 *āgnir agāmi bhārato / vṛtahā purucetaṇaḥ / divodāsasya satpatiḥ* “A., der Bh., ward jetzt angegangen, der vielbekannte Vṛtatöter, der wahre Gebieter¹¹ des Divodāsa”. The metrical structure of the stanza often helps us in deciding the question as to how the words belong together. Compare also: 9, 97, 46 Indra is in an appositional phrase described as a “sun-eyed chariot-driver of true impetuosity” (*svarcakṣā rathiraḥ satyaśuṣmah*); similarly, 8, 45, 21 *indrāya... / purunṛmṇāya satvane* “auf I...., auf den Krieger von vielem Mut”. In passages such as 9, 38, 4 not only the metrical structure but also the sense of the words shows how they belong together. Cf. also 4, 15, 5; 6, 46, 6; 10, 118, 6, and see 4, 38, 1. In 6, 71, 4 Geldner translates the appositions ... *dāmūnā / hiraṇyapāṇiḥ* as if they though divided by the caesura formed a unity: it would however seem preferable to take *h.* as an apposition to the verb: “there the god S., who is dear to the family, has arisen with his golden hands...” (*ud... devaḥ savitā d. / h. ... asthāt*).

Yet the question may arise if translators have always rendered these combinations adequately. Was Geldner for instance right in translating R.V. 3, 10, 9 *taṁ tvā viprā... sam indhate / havyavāham amartyam sahovṛdham* by “dich zünden... die Redekundigen an, den unsterblichen Opferfahrer, den Mehrer der Stärke”? How do we know that the poet did not mean: “... the oblation-bearer, the immortal one, who increases strength?” Are passages such as 4, 8, 1 to turn the scale: *dūtaṁ vo viśvavedasaṁ / havyavāham amartyam / yajīṣṭham ṛñjase girā* “Eurem allwissenden Boten, dem unsterblichen Opferfahrer, der am besten opfert, will ich mit dem Loblied den Vortritt lassen” (Geldner)?; cf. also 8, 102, 17.

Not infrequently however, we are led by considerations of context and syntax. Thus 3, 29, 7 *yaṁ devāsa īdyaṁ viśvavidam / havyavāham*

¹¹ The meaning of the compound *satpati-* is disputed: Geldner translates it also by “rechtmäsziger Herr” (e.g. 1, 165, 3), “wirklicher Gebieter” (1, 54, 7). The interpretation “lord of the (place of) residence” (rather than “Gildemeister”: see Wackernagel, *Altind. Gramm.*, II, 1, p. 55) is hardly supported by the use of the epithets (cf. at best 1, 130, 1; 10, 65, 2). See also Geldner, *ZDMG*, 52, p. 734; Thieme, *Der Fremdling im Rgveda* (1938), p. 21, n. 3; Renou, *E.V.P.*, IV, 71 f. See also above p. 77 f.

adadhur... no doubt means: "whom the gods appointed the praiseworthy omniscient oblation-bearer".

Sometimes the position of the adjectives in the stanza may induce the reader to regard part of them as epithets proper, part as appositions: 4, 17, 20 *evā na indro maghavā virapśī / karat satyā carṣaṇīdhṛd anarvā*; cf. 3, 51, 1. In 8, 96, 20 *carṣaṇīdhṛt-* is used predicatively. Cf. also 10, 89, 1. Translations sometimes create the impression that an apposition serves as an epithet: see e.g. Geldner's rendering of 10, 111, 5.

In particular cases the question as to how to consider an adjective or adjectival phrase may indeed be a matter of opinion. Whereas for instance the words *devī jīrā rathānām* which 1, 48, 3 apply to Uṣas are translated by Geldner: "(die Göttin wird auch jetzt aufleuchten) die Wagen in Bewegung setzend (die...)", Renou¹² recently preferred: "(elle lui-même) déesse animatrice des chars".

We now pass to appositional phrases, consisting of a proper name and a habitual epithet, which are amplified by an attribute. R̥V. 3, 56, 7 while referring to Mitra and Varuṇa runs as follows: *rājānā mitravaruṇā supāṇī* "both kings, M. and V., the dexterous-handed ones"; 6, 41, 3 *eṣa drapso vṛṣabho viśvarūpaḥ / ... somaḥ* / "dieser Tropfen, der bunte Bulle, der Soma" (Geldner). As appears from these examples the appositional group may be separated from the noun by other elements of the sentence. Subordinate nominal groups fulfilling the function of an apposition are dealt with under a separate heading: 7, 15, 4 *agnaye / divaḥ śyenāya*; 7, 102, 1 is an instance of such a group extended by a single epithet: *parjanyaṃ pra gāyata / divas putrāya mīlhuṣe*. Mention may be made here also of the type exemplified by 6, 44, 4 *indram viśvāsāham naram* "den alles bezwingenden Herrn I." (Geldner); and the structure *tvām agne ... / ... / patiṃ kṛṣṭinām*.

Special attention may be drawn to the type of apposition consisting of a nominal group (e.g. a governing noun and a dependent genitive) and an epithet accompanying the governing noun. An example of this 'dignified' structure is the above 1, 44, 5. Another very instructive example is 8, 8, 2 where the Aśvins are addressed as follows: *ā nūnam yātam aśvinā... / bhuji hiraṇyapeśasā / kavī gambhīracetasā* "do ye come, O Aśvins, ... who grant favours, who art adorned with gold, who art inspired sages of profound mind."

From the above examples and explanations it will be clear that the same word may be, in a particular context, an epithet, but in another passage, a proper name, apposition or a purely attributive adjective. The

¹² Renou, *Et. véd. et pāṇ.*, III, p. 13.

adjective *govid-* “acquiring or procuring cattle” occurs, in connection with Indra, in RV. 8, 53, 1 (Vāl. 5, 1) in a prayer among a series of epithets; 10, 103, 6 it is one of the names or titles which were used to qualify the god; in st. 5 it occurs among a number of appositions. Whereas Indra is in 2, 27, 12 said to be praised as a bestower of gifts (*vasudāvan-*), he is in 2, 6, 4 addressed as a *vasupate vasudāvan*. Thus frequent epithetical surnames may occur together with the proper name or instead of these: 1, 59, 3 *vaiśvānare... agnā*, but in 2 and 4 *v.* occurs alone. There is no need to dwell upon this point any longer and to discuss well-known instances such as *śiva-* “gracious, propitious” which while being in 10, 92, 9 applied to Rudra in the course of time superseded the old proper name of the deity:¹³ the terrible and dreaded god may by merely abstaining from inimical deeds be “friendly and propitious”, and his worshippers like to emphasize that possibility by pronouncing his ‘favourable’ epithets, by which they more or less unconsciously hope to make him refrain from evil.

Generally speaking the question may however arise whether, or how far, definite epithets assume the character of substantives and proper names. In cases such as 1, 80, 1 *saviṣṭha vajrinn ojasā pṛthivyā niḥ śasāḥ* Geldner was inclined to translate “du mächtigster Keulenträger hast...”; cf. also 10, 22, 11 *śūra vajrivah* “tapferer K.” Do these translations imply that Vajrī was equivalent to Indra? Certainly not. Or that Vajrī was the expression of an aspect of the deity which had become almost independent so as to lead an existence of its own? Not rarely, yes or perhaps, but the connection with the complex of ideas expressed by the term Indra were, if I am not mistaken, never severed, the *vajrin-* aspect or function¹⁴ being one of the most central and typical features of the god’s character: cf. 1, 32, 1 “Now I will mention Indra’s heroic exploits, the first performed by the wielder of the vajra: he slew the snake...” (and in so doing he used the *vajra-*). In 10, 55, a *sūkta* dedicated to Indra, although this name is not contained in it, he is, again in connection with the victory over the Snake-demon, referred to as Vajrī (st. 7) and the text itself makes it clear that this name belongs to this function, that Indra viewed as killer of the Vṛtra is “the wielder of the vajra”.

Sometimes a divine person is introduced to the audience by one of his well-known epithets and called by name in the subsequent stanza. In

¹³ See also Th. Bloch, *Über einige altindische Götternamen, Wörter und Sachen*, I, p. 80 ff.; A. B. Keith, *The Religion and philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads* (Harvard, 1925), p. 148 ff.

¹⁴ For the relations, nay identity, between name and aspect or function see chapter I, p. 32 f.

cases such as 4, 30, 8 f. our first impression is that the poet seizes the opportunity to express a thought twice, filling up two stanzas with variations on the same theme. On second thoughts, however, the poet may be believed to have had good reasons for inserting the double reference to Uṣas' being the daughter of the sky in describing Indra's curious conflict with her: it is indeed rather strange that it is Indra – a god elsewhere said to have generated or lighted up Uṣas (cf. e.g. 2, 12, 7) – who is so hostile to her as to shatter her wain.¹⁵ The emphasis laid on her close relationship with Indra may have been intended to throw an important feature in the myth into relief. In the stanzas 8, 47, 14–18 which constitute the second part of the hymn and contain an exorcism driving out a bad dream, the goddess Dawn – whose function it is to chase away darkness and evil – is implored to convey that evil event to Trita to whom all bad dreams seem to be sent: in st. 14 and 15 the goddess is addressed as “the daughter of heaven”, in 14 also as “bright”, but her name follows in 16.

In the above account of the use of epithets, little attention has been paid to a point which is not devoid of importance, viz. the alternation of a proper name and a frequent epithet in the same stanza. Cases are far from rare in which epithets appropriated to a definite god are preferred to a repeated mention of his name. Cf. R̥V. 9, 81, 1 *pra somasya... ūrmaya / indrasya yanti jaṭharam... / ... yad... / danāya śūram udaman-diṣuḥ sutāḥ*; 1, 63, 4 *tvam ha tyad indra codīḥ... / yad dha śūra... vi dasyūmr yonāv akṛtaḥ*; 2, 11, 2 *sṛjo mahīr indra yā apinvaḥ / pariṣṭhitā ahinā śūra pūrvīḥ*; 4, 21, 1 *ā yātv indro avasa upa na / iha stutaḥ sadhamād astu śuraḥ* “I. must come near to us in order to assist us; here the celebrated hero must be our fellow-reveller”. See also 1, 174, 9; 7, 81, 5; 8, 44, 3; 10, 14, 4; 11; cf. also 7, 79, 3. Agni is constantly regarded as a guest: in 8, 44, 1 *samidhāgniṃ duvasyata / ghṛtair bodhayatātithim*; 84, 1; 103, 12 name and epithet occur alternately. Not rarely the repeated reference to the god assumes the character of an apposition: 10, 118, 6 ... *agniṃ saparyata / adabhyam gr̥hapatim*.¹⁶

This phenomenon occurs also in a more or less complicated form. The name of two gods mentioned in the former half of a stanza may be avoided, and replaced by ‘synonymous’ epithets in the latter: R̥V. 7, 84, 4 *asme indrāvaruṇā viśvavāraṃ / rayiṃ dhattam... / pra ya ādityo anṛtā mināty / amitā śūro dayate vasūni* “supply us, O I. and V. with property consisting of all desirable things..., while the Āditya (= V.) destroys

¹⁵ For the myth see Macdonell, *Vedic mythology*, p. 48; 63.

¹⁶ For a structural peculiarity of this sūkta see Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 343.

what is contrary to truth and order, the hero (= I.) allots immense wealth”.

Whereas the position of the epithets in the stanza is, generally speaking, not subject to any limitation, they are, in a small minority of cases, it is true, but often enough to arouse our curiosity placed appositionally with the proper name which they qualify: R̥V. 10, 22, 9 *tvam na indra śūra śūraiḥ*... “thou, o heroic I., (must) with thy heroes...”; *ibid.* 12; 4, 55, 9; 5, 79, 6 and 7 *uṣo maghoni*; 3, 55, 10 *viṣṇur gopāḥ*; cf. also the appositional groups 1, 123, 3 *uṣo devi*; 6, 51, 5 (cf. 4, 1, 10) *dyaus pitah pṛthivi mātah*; AV. 19, 48, 2 *rātri mātah*. Similarly, in the ritual texts: ŚŚS. 8, 24, 1 *agnir jātavedāḥ somasya matsat*; *a. j. iha śravat*; VS. 8, 55, *viṣṇuḥ śipiviṣṭa urāv āsannaḥ*. Beside these bipartite combinations which occur also in post-Vedic literature – e.g. Mbh. 1, 16, 34 *surā devī* – there was another type exemplified by R̥V. 1, 22, 18 *viṣṇur gopā adābhyah*; 6, 37, 4 *indro maghonām tuvikūrmitamah* “I. the most powerful in working among the m.”; MS. 4, 14, 12 *indro devānām adhipah*, and the type TĀ. 3, 11, 6 *indro rājā jagato ya īše*.

The reverse order occurs also that is to say: the proper name may follow the epithet as an apposition: 1, 183, 2 *divo duhitroṣasā sacethe*; cf. also 1, 24, 7; 8; 12; 13 *rājā varuṇah*; similarly 1, 156, 4; 2, 1, 4; in 1, 91, 4 *rājan soma*. Cf. also Mbh. 3, 293, 25 *devī śrīḥ*. Referring, in general, to the discussion of the position of this type of appositions by Delbrück,¹⁷ it may be recalled that there are many parallels in the related languages: A 354 Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης like A 503 Ζεῦ πάτερ as against A 498 εὐρύοπα Κρονίδην; and for the longer phrases see A 7 Ἀτρεΐδης τε, ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν; Ξ 233; in Latin *Xerxes, rex Persarum*. In view of these facts the opinion pronounced by some scholars¹⁸ that in these word groups the epithets originally always followed the proper names – “das Epitheton... ist historisch betrachtet nichts weiter als Mechanisierung einer ursprünglich lose und in Form einer nachträglichen Verdeutlichung oder Korrektur hinzugefügten Apposition”¹⁹ seems to be open to doubt. That there existed differences in pause,²⁰ relief, emphasis etc. is on the other hand highly probable.²¹

¹⁷ B. Delbrück, *Vergleichende Syntax der indogerm. Sprachen*, III (Strassburg, 1900), p. 198 f.

¹⁸ See A. Noreen–H. W. Pollak, *Einf. in die wiss. Betrachtung der Sprache* (Halle, 1923), p. 333 ff.; cf. also Delbrück, *Altindische Syntax* (Halle/S., 1888), p. 19.

¹⁹ (M. Leumann–) J. B. Hofmann, *Lat. Grammatik* (München, 1928), p. 454.

²⁰ Cf. E. Schwyzer–A. Debrunner, *Griech. Grammatik*, II (München, 1950), p. 615, n. 2. Cf. also Schwyzer, *Zur Opposition*, *Abh. De. Akad.*, 1945/6, 3.

²¹ See Delbrück, *o.c.*, who however overshoots the mark in suggesting that the precedence of the epithet is always to keep the hearers in suspense.

Sometimes the name is immediately followed by a plurality of epithets: 3, 11, 4 *agnim sūnum sanaśrutam / sahaso jātavedasam*; see also, in the AV., 2, 27, 6 *rudro jalāṣabheṣaja / nīlaśikhaṇḍa karmakṛt* “O Rudra, thou of appeasing²² remedies, of dark crests, performer of deeds!”, which may in a way be regarded as a counterpart of the famous line E 31 Ἄρες Ἄρες βροτολοιγὲ μαιφόνε τειχεσιπλῆτα.

Elsewhere the name and the epithet are separated by other elements. They may occur at the beginning and end of the same pāda: 1, 92, 14; 8, 66, 3; cf. AV. 6, 75, 2; they occupy the final positions of two successive pādas: 1, 48, 1 *saha vāmena na uṣo / vy uchā duhitar divaḥ*; 1, 92, 15 ... *vājinīvati / ... uṣaḥ / ...* or at the beginning of two successive pādas: 3, 24, 3 *agne dyumnena jāgrve / sahasaḥ sūnur āhuta*. The proper name opens a half-stanza, which is closed by the epithet: 1, 48, 9 *uṣa ā bhāhi bhānunā / candreṇa duhitar divaḥ*; cf. 1, 92, 13. The type exemplified by RV. 6, 15, 11 is worthy of a short note. The name of the god is mentioned, in the vocative, at the beginning of the stanza, and an epithet, in the same case, follows in the second pāda: *tam agne pāsy uta tam piparṣi / yas ta ānaḥ kavaye sūra dhītim*. Epithet and name are placed on either side of the caesura: 7, 81, 3 *prati tvā duhitar diva / uṣo jīrā abhutsmaḥi*; 7, 81, 6. 1, 49, 3 *vayaś cit te patatriṇo / dvipac catuṣpad arjuni / uṣaḥ prāran...* Both terms may occupy somewhere an interior position in two successive pādas: 7, 67, 2 *aceti ketur uṣasaḥ purastāc / chriye divo duhitur jāyamānaḥ*; 6, 1, 13. Other positions: 1, 44, 4; 5, 4, 8. If there are many epithets they are often distributed over all the pādas of a stanza: 4, 55, 9 *uṣo maghony ā vaha / sūnrte vāryā puru / asmabhyam vājinīvati*.

Often the name introduces a pāda and the epithet or epithets follow further on: 1, 1, 1 *agnim īle purohitam / yajñasya devam ṛtvijam / hotāram ratnadhātamam*; cf. 3, 24, 2; 6, 75, 18.

An epithet may precede the proper name in the same sentence: RV. 4, 51, 11 *tad vo divo duhitaro vibhātīr / upa bruva uṣaso yajñaketuḥ*; 1, 143, 4 *yam erire bhṛgavo viśvavedasam / nabhā pṛthivyā ... / agnim tam gīrbhir hinuhi...* Cf. also 6, 44, 1; 7, 8, 1. These verses can hardly be said to keep the audience in suspense, the epithets being too well known, and the contexts, generally speaking, too unequivocal.²³ The name may be in another case-form than the epithet: 10, 138, 5.

Examples of this reverse order are indeed frequent. In RV. 1, 29, 1 Indra is in the first line addressed as a drinker of soma; his name is to follow in pāda c. See also 1, 132, 5; 5, 3, 9; 7, 64, 2 ... *rājānā maha*

²² For *jalāṣa-* see also K. Ammer, *WZKM*, 51, p. 135.

²³ For suspense see Delbrück, *o.c.*, p. 198.

rtasya gopā... mitrāvaruṇā. In 1, 92, 7 ab Uṣas, whose name occurs in d, is called “daughter of the sky”; similarly, 1, 113, 7; cf. also st. 5 where *maghonī* occurs in a and *uṣā* at the end of d; yet Geldner combines both words in his translation placing them at the end of the stanza. Cf. also 6, 4, 1; 13, 4 (subordinate and principal clauses); 7, 78, 4.

It would carry us too far to show in detail that the various positions of the epithets are largely due to the exigencies of versification.²⁴ However, there are other factors to be taken into account.

It has already been observed that the insertion of epithets is a means of achieving a varied diction and a well-balanced structure of the stanzas. By placing the name and the epithet in successive pādas, and combining each of them with a final dative the poet of R̥V. 1, 81, 1 succeeded in constructing a pregnant line: *indro madāya vāvṛdhe / śavase vṛtahā nṛbhiḥ* “I. feels animated by men’s doing to get drunk, the V. (has been strengthened) unto a display of heroic energy”.

In complementary pādas and ‘polar’ word groups which are distributed over two successive pādas the addition of two epithets may lead to special effects: R̥V. 8, 97, 4 *yac cakrāsi parāvati / yad arvāvati vṛtrahan ...* “whether thou, O mighty one art, in proximity or, O killer of Vṛtra, at a distance...”

Another procedure consists in combining name and epithet and placing them in the last pāda of the stanza: 1, 172, 1 *citro vo ’stu yāmaś / citra ūtī sudānavah / maruto ahibhānavah*; this position of the vocative is often indicative of kind insistence or exhortation on the part of the person speaking. Geldner too often creates the impression of a similar final verse by combining at the end of his translation of a stanza names and epithets which, in the original, are separated by other elements (see e.g. 6, 16, 36).

Although, as stated above, the custom obtaining in many hymns of distributing the names and attributes of the god over many pādas may be largely ascribed to the function of the epithets and the exigencies of versification, there is no denying that the poets could – on purpose or as the present author is rather inclined to believe, unintentionally – utilize this procedure, to which we shall have to revert further on, to achieve certain stylistic and literary effects. The type represented by R̥V. 3, 1, 18 for instance is not devoid of a certain elegance of style, as a result, not only of the well-balanced character of its structure, but also of the arrangement of the words indicating the god: there can, it is true, be no question of doubt about his identity, but the very fact that his name whilst anti-

²⁴ This point will be discussed elsewhere. The term ‘versification’ as I use it is much more comprehensive than ‘metre’.

cipated by three references to his person does not appear before the last pāda, may be said to keep the audience, in a way, in a certain suspense: *ni durone amṛto martyānām / rājā sasāda vidathāni sādhan / ghṛtapratīka urviyā vy adyauḍ / agnir viśvāni kāvyāni vidvān* “in the residence of mortal men the immortal one has settled down, as a king who renders the sacrificial sessions successful; the ghee-faced one has shone forth far and wide, Agni who is an expert in all sorts of poetical wisdom”.

As already observed a deity is often first called by name and in the subsequent part of the same stanza, and often even in the same line, sentence or pāda, by a more or less frequent epithet. See e.g. 3, 42, 1 *upanaḥ sutam ā gahi / somam indra gavāsīram*; 4, 24, 2 *sa suṣṭuta indraḥ satyarādhaḥ / sa yāmann ā maghavā... dhāt*; 6, 8, 1; 44, 10; 10, 140, 1. These frequent combinations, and even accumulations of names and epithets give, like the no less common cumulations of epithets, rise to some observations. From the stylistic point of view they are first a favourite means of introducing an element of variation and of expressing more or less parallel thoughts, for instance for the sake of emphasis: 6, 44, 17 *enā mandāno jahi śūra śatrūñ / jāmim ajāmim maghavann amitrān / abhiṣeṇāñ abhy ādediśānān / parāca indra pra mṛṇā jahī ca* “being intoxicated by that (drink), slay, O hero, the enemies, the opponents, O M., relatives or not related; those who are aiming (at us) with their weapons, crush (them) never to return and kill (them)”. As stated elsewhere²⁵ these more or less tautological parallelisms are in emotional poetry in general and in ‘archaic’ or ‘semi-primitive’ style in particular far from rare. They may however be studied also from the religious point of view. In praying and praising the god, that is: in addressing, for one’s own benefit or on behalf of the community to which the poet or eulogist belongs, the unseen, one is as by natural instinct inclined to proceed cautiously and tentatively. The divine powers have, or may have, many aspects, to which generally speaking, belong as many names and epithets. It was thought advisable to approach them as effectively as possible, that is to say to make an appeal to those sides and aspects of their character or personality, i.e. to those of their supposed functions or activities, which as matters stood, might lend the assistance or produce the result which was eagerly desired, working out the prayer’s salvation or the destruction of his enemies. Hence no doubt one of the main reasons of the frequent combination of names and epithets. As moreover one could never be completely sure which appellation was, at a given moment, most liked or agreeable to the god addressed – cf. Plato, Crat. 400 E ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς νόμος ἐστὶν

²⁵ See the present author’s book *Stylistic repetition in the Veda*.

ἡμῖν εὐχέσθαι, οἳ τινές τε καὶ ὀπόθεν χαίρουσιν ὀνομαζόμενοι –, it was a matter of tact and wisdom not to be too chary of epithets, that is to say of praise, and the commemoration of the god's deeds and functions and the resuscitation of their inherent beneficent energy.²⁶ In praying Athene to protect the town her priestess speaks, Z 305, the following words: πότνι' Ἀθηναίη, ῥυσίπτολι, δῖα θεάων in which the term ῥυσίπτολι is most appropriate to the occasion and the other words no doubt were to 'propitiate' the goddess. And according to an ancient commentary on Vergil the Roman pontifices even used to commence their prayers: "Iuppiter optime maxime, sive quo alio nomine te appellari volueris".²⁷ This is not to assert that the generally human desire to open one's heart in addressing the god and to let oneself go in emotional effusions may not have been one of the factors in the production of these stanzas.

However, there can be no doubt that these combinations of names and epithets often were an appreciated device in versification. The insertion of surnames and other appellations in different quarters of the stanza was on the one hand, like similar distributional procedures, a means of welding these quarters into a unity, and on the other hand a facility for filling up the quarters and composing verses. See e.g. 3, 32, 2. That the different functions of this distribution of epithets not rarely combined so as to form a harmonious whole may be exemplified by 1, 141, 9 *tvayā hy agne varuṇo dhṛtavrato / mitraḥ śāśadre aryamā sudānavah*; 3, 42, 7.

An interesting structure may be exemplified by 1, 2, 7 *mitram huve pūtadakṣam / varuṇam ca riṣādasam*: here two successive and parallel pādas are filled up by a name and an epithet which are separated by another word. There are many exact parallels of this in Homer, showing that the tendency to arrange two word groups which are to follow each other immediately in the above way was not foreign to the Greek poet: H 119 δηίου ἐκ πολέμοιο καὶ αἰνῆς δηιοτῆτος which, as is not rarely the case, fills a verse (cf. also the chiasmic position A 7 Ἀτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς); see also O 271 ff.²⁸

To insist unduly upon the adjectival or appositional character of the epithets would be to ignore the equally important fact that these words may also occur instead of or – taking into account what has been said on

²⁶ Cf. e.g. also H. Usener, *Götternamen* (Bonn, 1896), p. 336, and E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (Leipzig, 1913), p. 143 ff.

²⁷ Schol. Serv. Aen. 2, 351. – Cf. e.g. also Aesch. Suppl. 815; Eur. Hipp. 58.

²⁸ There are also many examples in later poets, e.g. Tyrtaeus, fr. 10, 5.

this point – completely replace the names of the persons which they help to describe or qualify.

The epithet may in a stanza be the only indication of the divinity meant by the poet. In 5, 32, 4 ... *vajreṇa ni jaghāna śuṣṇam* the word *vajrī*, though logically superfluous, no doubt a welcome paronomastic addendum to *vajreṇa*, is the subject of the sentence. In 10, 55, which consists of eight stanzas, Indra's name is, no doubt intentionally, left unmentioned. In R̥V. 10, 124, 3 Agni who is speaking refers to the sacrificial fire, his ritual aspect, as the guest among the others (who sacrifice), "guest" being a constant appellation of the god of fire (cf. 8, 74, 7; 1, 73, 1 he is compared to a guest; 1, 128, 4; 193, 8; 3, 2, 2; 4, 1, 20 etc.). Sometimes, e.g. 7, 16, 4 (cf. 8, 60, 2; 90, 2) the phrase "Son of strength" replaces the same name. The 1st stanza of 6, 5, which is dedicated to Agni, is likewise addressed to the "Son of power". The opening stanza of 7, 81, which is dedicated to Uṣas, though omitting her name, leaves the audience in no doubt whatever as to the identity of the divinity: *praty u adarśy āyaty / uchantī duhitā divaḥ / apo mahi vyayati cakṣase tamo / jyotiṣ kṛṇoti sūnarī*. See also 1, 30, 22; 92, 5; 4, 30, 8 (cf. 9); 5, 79, 2; 3; 8; 9; 80, 6; 7, 81, 1; 8, 47, 14; 15 (cf. 16); 9, 45, 3; 10, 39, 12; 127, 8. In 1, 92, 12 the adjectives *citrā subhagā* "die Farbenprächtige, Holde" (Geldner) stand for the goddess Dawn; in 1, 113, 17 she is called *maghonī*. R̥V. 8, 45, 3 *ayuddha id yudhā vṛtaṃ / śūra ājati satvabhiḥ*, refers to Indra whose name is hitherto left unmentioned. In 2, 17, 2 "the hero" (*śūrah*) refers to the same god. The epithet *vṛtrahan-* is very often the only indication of the divine person meant in a particular context: 7, 31, 6 *tvam varmāsi saprathaḥ / puroyudhas ca vṛtrahan*; 3, 31, 21; 6, 45, 5; 8, 2, 26; 62, 11; 93, 18; 10, 138, 5. In 1, 29, 2 Indra is addressed as lord of *vājas* and *śacīvas*, in 4 as *śūra*, in 1 as drinker of soma and bountiful etc., in 1, 5 and 7 his name is mentioned. Soma is 8, 79, 4 *rjīṣin* "produced from the sediment".

At times a frequent epithet comes to replace the proper name or becomes stereotyped to such an extent that it may, in its turn, assume a qualification. In R̥V. 8, 102, 17 *taṃ tvājananta mātaraḥ / kavim devāso angiraḥ / havyavāhaṃ amartyam* "the mothers gave birth to thee, the wise one, the gods, O A., (thou that) art the immortal bearer of oblations" the favourite epithet *havyavah-* is qualified by an adjective which is elsewhere, e.g. 7, 15, 10, applied to Agni himself. Similarly, 3, 10, 9. In 8, 56, 5 the same deity appears as a *havyavāṭ*... *sumadrathaḥ* "an o.-b. with a chariot"; in 3, 3, 9 it is the god himself who receives this adjective; the poet of 6, 8, 4 calls Agni a *rājānam*... *rgmiyam* "a king worthy of cele-

bration", cf. 1, 9, 9 *indram... ṛgmiyam*; 1, 62, 1. Cf. also 7, 16, 1 *dūtam amṛtam*: 3, 14, 7 *agne amṛta*. For a comparable attribute: 2, 1, 8. Curiously enough *babhru-* lit. "the reddish-brown one" is as a name for Soma, 9, 98, 7 accompanied by *hari-* "tawny". It is, however, not always easy to decide whether an adjective belongs to an epithet or plays an independent part: 1, 73, 5 *evāgnir gotamebhir ṛtāvā / viprebhir astoṣṭa jātavedāḥ*, where Geldner, translating „der rechtmässige Jātavedas", combines *ṛ.* and *j.*

Other cases do not come under the above heading. In R̥V. 6, 16, 23 and 8, 23, 6 Agni is styled *dūtas... havyvāhanah* "the oblation-bearing messenger", both words being frequently used in connection with this god: here *h.* is a qualification of *dūtaḥ*. In 4, 8, 1 the phrase *dūtam viśvavedasam* is an appellation for the same deity; in 3, 29, 7 the god is elected oblation-carrier: *yaṁ devāsaḥ... viśvavidam havyvāham adadhuh*.

From a frequency of places we are led to conclude that epithets without being purely distinctive or merely ornamental, and without playing an important rôle in the conveyance of ideas or information are nevertheless very often appropriately used. More or less conventional epithets may justify themselves on the one hand by drawing attention to a well-known and important or characteristic feature of the object under discussion, on the other hand by adding an element of vividness to the description, by calling up an image or a quality perceptible by eye or ear or by recalling to the memory of the listeners an aspect of the idea or object described which they know from their own experience. In the Homeric poems this use of stock epithets often is so successful that no praise of it is necessary. When Odysseus after having floated in the sea for two days and two nights is about to reach the shore, but despairs of landing because of the sharp crags, the sea is called "grey": ε 410 ἑκβασις οὐ πη φαίνεται ἄλδος πολιοῖο θύραζε, rightly, because the broken water near the coast is indeed grey. The epithet while serving the above purposes reminds the audience of the exact properties of the breakers; being true to nature it helps them in visualizing the scene narrated by the bard. A similar function is for instance fulfilled by the two adjectives which in R̥V. 9, 79, 5 qualify the soma draught: *evā ta indo subhvaṁ supeśasam / rasaṁ tuñjanti prathamā abhiśriyaḥ*: here the juice being pressed for the first time is described as "strong" ("of an excellent nature") and "beautiful", two properties of the beverage which were no doubt known to everyone who was familiar with it. In describing wealth the poet of 1, 48, 13 skilfully inserts the adjectives *viśvavāram supeśasam* and *sugmyam* "containing all good things", "well-provided with adornments" and "advancing well" (or rather "bei dem man gut fährt", Geldner). Uṣas,

the goddess of dawn, is 1, 49, 3 addressed as *arjunī* “white, clear”, an adjective which, as opposed to *kṛṣṇa-* “dark” denotes the light half of the natural day: 6, 9, 1: the adjective, though, as I take it, no more than a ‘reminder’ is by no means superfluous. R̥V. 1, 92, 5 it reads, in connection with the same deity, *praty arcī ruśad asyā adarśi* “the bright ray of her light has again become visible”; being neither superfluous nor indispensable the adjective evokes the most essential feature of the great matutinal phenomenon; like Richard Wagner’s *das leuchtende Licht* (Nibelungen) the phrase *arcī ruśat* gives a vivid and intensive impression of the joy with which the beginning of the new day – which dispels darkness cf. st. 92, 5b – is welcomed by the denizens of the earth. In 1, 48, 13 the goddess’ bright rays are called *bhadra-*, i.e. “auspicious, blessed, gracious and friendly”: *yasyā ruśanto arcayaḥ prati bhadrā adr̥kṣata*.

The addition of a well-chosen epithet to a single term may be a substantial help in expressing a whole thought. Thus 10, 115, 4 the poet in dwelling upon the power of fire states that “(even) the unwavering winds do not obstruct its movements”: the wind may be strong, swift, and powerful, the might of fire is greater; the epithet added to “winds” throws the might of the other element into relief. Looking back on the process of creation the author of 4, 56, 3 states that a skilful artisan must have joined together the constituent parts of the universe; by adding to the noun *rajasī* the adjectives *urvī gabhīre sumeke* “broad, deep (not to be penetrated)” and “well established” he gives his audience much assistance in appreciating this wonderful achievement. Introductory lines – which will be discussed under a special heading – are very often conspicuous by one or more well-chosen epithets which do not fail to throw much light on the character of the divine being addressed or the subject matter broached by the poet: 1, 156, 1 *bhavā mitro na śevyo ghṛtāsutir / vibhūta-dyumna evayā u saprathāḥ* “be dear like Mitra, to whom belongs the oblation of ghee, O thou that aboundeth in glory, that goeth quickly, that art extensive”.

The harmony between an epithet and the context may – as has been shown in chapter II – also appear from special intimate relations between the former and other elements of the utterance. Sometimes the idea expressed by an epithet is repeated by the predicate of the sentence. Thus R̥V. 6, 8, 2 *vratāny agnir vratapā arakṣata* “Agni, the upholder of the fixed rules, observed the (ritual) rules”, or with Geldner: “wachte Agni über die (Opfer)regeln als ihr Hüter”. For Agni as a *vratapā* cf. 1, 31, 10; 8, 11, 1. In comparing Agni’s vital power to the reliable support and protection given by a father to his son the poet of 1, 127, 5 uses two

attributes which are in perfect harmony with the general purport of the passage: *ād asyāyur grabhaṇavad / vīlu śarma na sūnave*.

Passages such as 8, 60, 2 are likewise worth mentioning: “to thee, O son of strength, the sacrificial ladles approach during the religious ceremony; we turn to the child of vigour, whose hair is dripping with ghee, to Agni...”: Agni “whose hair is dripping with butter” is the ritual fire during the performance of the sacrifice; so the epithet is in perfect harmony with the context. The same god is 3, 14, 1 said to have spread his glow or brightness over the earth; the epithets accompanying his name, *vidyudratha*- “borne on a glittering car” and *śociṣkeśa*- “flame-haired” are very appropriate to the occasion, the latter occurring also 3, 17, 1; 27, 4 etc. to describe the god of fire.

It seems worth while expressly to dwell upon the fact that those epithets which are very rare often very appropriately employed. 6, 18, 9 Indra, being urged on to set out on a military expedition is addressed as *purudatra*- “rich in gifts”; 6, 32, 3 the same god is in a line containing a threefold paronomasia called a destroyer of strongholds: *purah purohā... ruroja*; 1, 82, 3 he is asked to go forth, his chariot-seat filled (*pūrṇavandhura*-, 1, 82, 3: “voll, weil er so viel getrunken hat oder weil er von den Opfern nach Hause bringt”).²⁹ Cf. 3, 34, 1. 1, 96, 4 Mātariśvan, described as *puruvārapuṣṭi*- “whose is much-desired well-being (a m.-d. well-nourished condition)”, is said to have ‘found’ free space for moving for the Aryan community.³⁰ Savitar is 7, 45, 4 implored to grant excellent force to those praying, Savitar, the sun, whose hands are full of wealth (*pūrṇagabhastim*). R̥V. 5, 57, 11 *purudrapsa*- “rich in drops” is among a number of appositional descriptions of the nature of the Maruts. Cf. e.g. also 1, 55, 7; 1, 127, 8; 5, 74, 7; 8, 52, 8; 9, 35, 2; 62, 26; 10, 112, 10, etc. In 8, 61, 9 the poet addresses Indra as *śatakrato prācāmanyō ahaṃsana* “O thou of hundredfold resourcefulness, that strivest to move forwards, and claimest for thyself”: these three adjectives may be regarded as mutually complementary. In comparing Soma to coursers the poet of 9, 87, 5 calls the latter *śravasyavaḥ* “willing to praise” and *pṛtanājah* “rushing to battle”, characterizations which, being applicable to almost any race-horse, may be considered epithets. Passages exhibiting a rare epithet among other epithetic attributes are, e.g. 3, 26, 4; 5, 8, 2 (*brhatketu*-); 5, 57, 8; 8, 62, 10. In 1, 109, 4 the Aśvins, being requested to stir the soma draught are called *bhadrahastā supāṇī*. Sometimes the same idea is variously expressed by rare attributes. Indra’s horses were con-

²⁹ Geldner, *o.c.*, I², p. 105.

³⁰ See Geldner, *o.c.*, I², p. 125.

spicuous by their beautiful tails, for which reason they are 3, 45, 1 called *mayūraroman-* “peacock-haired” and 8, 1, 25 *mayūraśepya-*, either compound being a ἄπαξ. Cf. also 1, 113, 2 *ruśadvatsa-* and 5, 75, 9 *ruśadpaśu-* (Uṣas). In other cases a rare epithet is chosen to express a well-known quality which is often referred to by other adjectives: Indra’s generosity is for instance in 3, 49, 3 alluded to by means of *mehanāvān* “bestowing abundantly”.

Not infrequently an epithet, though logically superfluous, is added to emphasize the general purport of the utterance by throwing light on a side or aspect of the nominal concept which in the particular context is of special interest. When, for instance, Agni is in 10, 45, 6 described as a mighty god who was even able to cleave chasms in the rocks, the impressiveness of this achievement is essentially enhanced by the addition of an adjective underlining the hardness and solidity of the rocks: *vīḷuṃ cid adrim abhinat*. Cf. also 1, 71, 2 “our ancestors have by their recitations clashed to pieces even the *u.* strongholds”; 8, 40, 1. The same adjective may occur alone to express a similar thought in a more general way: 1, 6, 5 (cf. also 1, 127, 3 *vīḷu* and *vaneva yat sthiram*; 10, 89, 6). In 5, 32, 5 Indra overpowering his great enemy is, probably to mark the contrast, called *sukṣatra-* “a good ruler”.

Epithets may have an explanatory function. They may help the poet to indicate the particular aspect of the deity which he wishes to emphasize, to throw light upon a definite side of his character, to make a special appeal to one of his abilities. In R̥V. 2, 41, 19 which forms part of a *sūkta* addressed to a variety of gods, 16–18 being a call upon Sarasvatī and 20 a prayer to heaven and earth, the poet “chooses” Agni *havyavāhana-*, i.e. Agni in his oblation-bearing aspect: that is to say he makes a special appeal to the god of fire to convey his oblations. This invocation suits the context, for a pair of other divinities³¹ is in the same stanza besought to lead the way, granting success, and heaven and earth are, in 20, implored to present the oblation, on arrival in heaven, to the gods. In 7, 13, 3 Agni is compared to a *gopā iryaḥ parijmā* “an active herdsman who is running or driving around”: the god in surveying the universe, the herdsman in surveying his animals. Cf. also 8, 41, 4. As a guardian of truth and order (*ṛtasya gopā*) Soma is 9, 73, 8 while being described as undeceivable, called *sukratu-* “resourceful”; cf. 10, 25, 7.

Thus the epithets in 3, 10, 9 may be regarded as bringing two functions of the god to the fore: *taṃ tvā viprā ... / ... sam indhate / havyavāham amartyaṃ sahovṛdham* “it is thou that the ... sages light, the immortal

³¹ See Geldner, *o.c.*, I², p. 330.

oblation-bearer, the increaser of victorious power”: cf. 1, 36, 2 “the human beings have made A. the increaser of (their) v. p.” – This rôle of the adjective is not to be mistaken for the appositional explicative function as exemplified, for instance, by R̥V. 7, 21, 3. Cf. also 1, 148, 2.

It is hardly necessary to direct special attention to a function of the epithet which might be described as indicating, more or less incidentally, what is typical of a figure or object. Thus R̥V. 10, 138, 3 *ḍṛḷhāni pipror asurasya māyina / indro vy āsyat* “I. destroyed the strongholds of the asura P. who was a wielder of māyā”. Similarly, 6, 61, 3. As is well known the important creative power māyā was often, and closely, connected with the asuras. The intoxicating drink is 1, 80, 2 called *vr̥ṣā* “bullenstark” (Geldner). The wind is R̥V. 5, 19, 5 characterized as “pulverizing”: Agni is prayed to make his influence felt while joining the p. wind (*bhasmanā vāyunā*). The miraculous chariot of the Aśvins with which they traverse the air is 4, 44, 1 called *pr̥thujraya-* “widely extended” or “breitbahnig” (Geldner). The horse used in races or battles is 6, 28, 4 *reṇukakāṭaḥ* which probably means “whose head or neck is covered with dust”. Cf. also 1, 3, 10; 7, 59, 12; 8, 59, 3; 10, 112, 10.

The manner in which a characteristic feature of a nominal idea may be elucidated or brought to the fore by an attributive adjective may be elucidated by 5, 11, 1 *janasya gopā ajaniṣṭa jāgr̥vir / agniḥ sudakṣaḥ...* “the watchful herdsman of the people...” and 6, 7, 7 where in connection with the same god Agni, it reads *adabdhō gopā amṛtasya rakṣitā* “a herdsman who is not to be deceived, a guardian of immortality”; see also 10, 128, 6 *adabdhō gopāḥ pari pāhi nas tvam*. The evil beings called *yātudhānāḥ* are 10, 120, 4 described as *durevāḥ* “malignant, criminal”.

This function of the epithet is very frequent. In 1, 44, 10 Agni is addressed as *vibhāvaso* “brilliant” and stated to be *viśvadarśataḥ* “visible to all”; 1, 50, 8 Sūrya, the sun, is *śociṣkeśa-* “flame-haired”, an epithet which is elsewhere, e.g. 1, 45, 6, applied to Agni; 1, 59, 7 Agni Vaiśvānara is *vibhāvā* “bright, brilliant”; cf. also 2, 10, 2 *agniś citrabhānuḥ*; 8, 102, 2; 1, 154, 6 the cows are called horned: “we should like to come to thine abodes where the many-horned cattle live”; 1, 157, 1 *uṣās candrā mahy āvo arcīṣā* “the shining great U. has grown bright with her ray of light”. 1, 162, 22 property (*rayim*) is called *viśvāpuṣa-* “all-sustaining”; 1, 182, 3 *viprāya... vacasyave* shows that eloquence was one of the qualities which are highly thought of in an inspired sage; 2, 13, 11 it reads in connection with Indra *jātūṣṭhirasya pra vayah sahasvataḥ* “die Kraft des Sieghaften, der von Natur standfest ist” (Geldner); 10, 78, 3 the winds are described as *dhunayaḥ* “roaring, boisterous”.

It is easy to see how this characterizing function is apt to combine with other elements so as to constitute impressive statements, e.g. 4, 42, 3 *te mahitvorvī gabhīre rajasī sumeke / tvaṣṭeva viśvā bhuvanāni vidvān...*; cf. 4, 56, 3.

Not rarely the references to typical properties expand so as to become short delineations of the character of a person or other being: 4, 11, 4 *tvad vājī vājambharo vihāyā abhiṣṭikrj jāyate*.

Elsewhere a sidelight is thrown on the esteem in which a figure is held; thus Indra is 3, 52, 4 passingly addressed as *sanaśruta* "famous of old".

An epithet may suit the character of a divine being or a phenomenon so well that it is, so to say, always appropriately used. The adjective *virapśin* "exuberant, powerful" ("strotzend von Kraft oder Fülle", Grassmann) suits the god Indra perfectly: 3, 36, 4 he is *virapśin*- during the (sacrificial) assemblies, being very strong and powerful; 6, 22, 6 when he is stated to have destroyed even what was solid and indestructible; 4, 17, 20 and 20, 2 in connection with his munificence; 8, 76, 5; 6, 32, 1; 10, 113, 6 with his strength and heroism. The same epithet is however also applied to him under other circumstances: 6, 40, 2, where he is invited to drink.

As we have seen the opposition between indispensable or distinctive attributes on the one hand and traditional epithets on the other is not absolute. However conventional, an epithet may, in a definite context, be the right word and deliberately preferred. In adding the decidedly unoriginal adjective to the name of the wealthy king Gyges the poet Archilochus (fr. 25) throws an apposition into relief and by a simple procedure brings out the meaning of the utterance: the words οὐ μοι τὰ Γύγεω τοῦ πολυχρύσου μέλει clearly intimate that it is the financial matters, i.e. the wealth of the king that are no object of care to the poet.³² According to the Vedic poets Soma was brought from heaven by an eagle;³³ the relative myth is often alluded to and most fully dealt with in 4, 26 and 27.³⁴ Its deeper sense no doubt is to explain and emphasize the divine origin of the draught. Is it therefore a mere coincidence or nothing but indulging, on the part of the poet, in the inclination to combine paronomastic terms, when 9, 87, 6 a request directed to Soma to bring delightful nourishment contains an epithet which alludes to this divine origin: *athā bhara śyenabhṛta prayāṃsi?* "Raining, bringing rain" (*vr̥ṣṭimat*-) seems to have been a frequent epithet of Parjanya, the god of rain: cf. 8, 6, 1; 10, 98, 8;

³² See also the remarks made by K. H. Meyer, *Untersuchungen zum schmückenden Beiwort in der älteren griechischen Poesie*, Thesis Münster, 1913, p. 1 ff.

³³ Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 111 f.

³⁴ Cf. e.g. R. Roth, "Der Adler mit dem Soma", *ZDMG*, 36, p. 353 ff.

yet, it is 9, 2, 9 not senseless or superfluous: addressing Soma the poet asks the divine juice “to flow clearly with the flood of sweet liquid” (*madhvaḥ pavasva dhārayā*), like the rain-bringing Parjanya: as Soma is variously connected with water, causing heaven and atmosphere to rain, and ruling over the moisture of the atmosphere, the comparison with the epithet *vṛṣṭimat-* was no doubt a deliberate and suggestive addition.

From a number of indications it seems that the attributive adjective not infrequently fulfilled a function which might perhaps be called ‘suggestive’ or ‘evocative’. In R̥V. 1, 92, 1 the red cows, the mothers, are said to come back. As the adjective *aruṣa-* “reddish (of the colour of fire or of the sun)” “évoque à lui seul la présence des Uṣas”³⁵ – cf. e.g. 1, 71, 1; 112, 19 (?); 3, 55, 11 – the red cows must be taken to be related to Dawn. The term *aruṇa-* “whitish red” likewise evokes the idea of Dawn: 4, 2, 16 *kṣāmā bhindanto aruṇīr apa vran* “den Boden spaltend sollen sie die rötlichen (Uṣas’) aufdecken” (Geldner); 10, 61, 4 the reddish cows (*goṣv aruṇīṣu*) are the dawns; when 1, 73, 7 it reads *kṛṣṇam ca varṇam aruṇam ca sam dhuḥ* we are to understand: “they have combined (the colours of) night and dawn”. The addition of the epithetic vocative in 1, 101, 8 is no doubt significant: *tvāyā haviś cakṛmā satyarādhaḥ* “for thee we have prepared the sacrificial gifts, O thou truly beneficent one”; cf. also 7, 41, 3.

When, for instance, in the beautiful hymn dedicated to Indra, R̥V. 2, 12 the great god is stated to have slain the serpent as this enemy showed his strength (st. 11 *ojāyamānaṃ yo ahiṃ jaghāna*) the participle suggests that, notwithstanding the great strength of the serpent, Indra was able to conquer him. The same expression recurs 3, 32, 11 in a more explicit context: *ahann ahiṃ pariśayānam arṇa / ojāyamānaṃ tuvijāta tavyān*. In another chapter of this book it has already been noticed that the waters are several times called “great” when the mighty god is related to free them from their captivity: how powerful Vṛtra and his conqueror must be that they could arrest the great and mightily streaming waters in their course and release them to reach the sea, cf. e.g. 6, 57, 4. When the Maruts are 8, 20, 10 invited to approach like winged falcons the addition of the attribute will no doubt be of use to have us understand that these gods are eagerly desired to come speedily. A comparable passage is 10, 78, 3 *vātāso na ye dhunayo jigatnavah* “who approach quickly like boisterous winds”, likewise with regard to the Maruts. In a successful description of Varuṇa’s power the flying birds, the steadily moving waters and those who frustrate the miraculous power of the wind are said to be inferior to this god (1, 24, 6): here the adjectives are no doubt to emphasize the

³⁵ Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, III, p. 33.

marvellous abilities of the birds and the rivers, which nevertheless are outrivalled by the god. Indra, after having partaken of the Soma draught is 1, 4, 8 called an (iron) club (*ghana-*), i.e. a destroyer, of the enemies, but 3, 49, 1 the same noun is in a similar passage accompanied by *vibhvataṣṭam*: *v. ghanam vṛtrāṇām*: “a club furnished by a skilful artificer”. Cf. also 4, 38, 1. Suggestiveness may also be supposed to be proper to stimulations such as 7, 94, 10 “Indra and Agni, do ye come to us with favour, O ye that overpower the peoples; may the malicious have no hold over us”.

The adjective *gātuvid-* “finding or opening a way, promoting welfare” is very appropriately used RV. 8, 66, 14 asking Indra to protect those speaking and to preserve them from hunger, backbiting etc.; 1, 51, 3 stating that the same god had given access to the cow-shed; 9, 46, 5 where soma being invited to become pure is called an acquirer of wealth and a giver of great gifts of affection (cf. also 9, 65, 13).

The passages may give us an idea of what was meant by the poet of 1, 105, 13 who resorts to Varuṇa as a *gātuvid-* (cf. also 9, 104, 5 and 106, 6 in connection with Soma); 9, 44, 6 Soma is implored to be a *kratuvid gātuvittamah* “a procurer of resourcefulness who is a promotor of welfare par excellence”; cf. 9, 107, 7 etc.

Extension in applicability of a word is naturally accompanied by a corresponding semantic impoverishment, that is to say: by a widening of sense.³⁶ That words expressing ideas such as magnificent, splendid, illustrious, excellent and other adjectives denoting an appreciation are apt to assume in more or less colloquial usage a wider and vaguer sense is too well known to be in need of comment. An intensive force rather than a tautological seems therefore to be inherent in epithets such as *candra-* added to *rādhas-* in 1, 135, 4 “a brilliant or signal gift of affection”, or to *hiranyā* in 9, 97, 50: “blinkende Goldsachen” (Geldner). Compounds containing these words are among the favourite terms to convey the idea of brilliancy: *candraratha-*, *candravarṇa-* etc. The adjective *dyumat-* literally meaning “light, bright, splendid” was several times applied to Indra, *vāja-*, fame, heroism etc. to denote qualities such as “brisk, energetic, eminent, excellent”. A similar function may be attributed to adjectives such as *carkṛtya-* “renowned” which 1, 64, 14 occurs together with *dyumant-* “splendid” and other epithets to qualify *śuṣma-* “courage, valour”: “give our liberal patrons renowned and excellent energy”; to *pravācya-* “praiseworthy” which in 1, 151, 3 is added to *janma* “birth”

³⁶ See e.g. J. Kuryłowicz, “Linguistique et théorie du signe”, *Journal de Psychologie*, 42 (1944), p. 172 f.; S. Ullmann, *The principles of semantics* (Glasgow, 1951), p. 204.

(cf. Mitra and Varuṇa). Other examples are 4, 5, 4 *tapiṣṭhena śociṣā*; 7, 59, 8 *tapiṣṭhena hanmanā*; 10, 89, 12 *tapiṣṭhena heṣasā*; 4, 2, 13.

Words for “black” are in a similar way well-known accompaniments of “darkness”: cf. 9, 66, 24 *kṛṣṇā tamāṃsi jaṅghanat*; 10, 127, 7; cf. 1, 35, 2; 9 *kṛṣṇena rajasā*. – However obvious the attribute “deep” may be in connection with rivers, *gabhīra-* is, in 3, 32, 16, not a mere ornament: neither the deep river nor the rocks were impediments for Indra. A similar function may be attributed to the same adjective and *bṛhat* in connection with brahma in the sense of “religious text (representing brahma)”: 5, 85, 1 *pra samrāje bṛhad arcā gabhīram / brahma...*

A certain intensiveness may also be supposed to be inherent in phrases such as 1, 48, 15 and 8, 9, 1 *pr̥thu chardiḥ* “broad secure place”, broadness being a more or less emotionally coloured term suggesting safety and absence of distress and obstruction;³⁷ 6, 15, 3 the expression is *chardir yacha saprathaḥ*. For emotional intensiveness in connection with *chardiḥ* see also 6, 46, 9 *indra tridhātu śaraṇam / trivarūtham svastimat / chardir yacha*; 6, 67, 2. The term *chardiḥ* is often accompanied by more or less intensive adjectives: *dhruva-* “lasting” 7, 74, 5; *trivarūtha-* “with threefold protection” 8, 18, 21, the interesting *avṛka-* “secure from wolves”, i.e. “inoffensive, safe” 8, 27, 4; 1, 48, 15 and 8, 9, 1 (in addition to *pr̥thu-*). Similar phrases are 1, 9, 8 *śravo bṛhat* “well-founded and lasting fame” (also 3, 37, 10); cf. also 5, 79, 7 *bṛhad yaśaḥ*; 6, 5, 7 *dyumnām... ajaram*; 6, 19, 9 and 6, 35, 2 *dyumnām svarvat*; 9, 108, 9 *dyumnām bṛhat*. 7, 82, 10 *avadhram jyotiḥ* etc.

The two final stanzas of R̥V. 7, 96 in which the divine river Sarasvatī and her male partner Sarasvat are extolled seem to be fine examples of an ‘emotional’ use of epithets: 5 *ye te sarasva ūrmayo / madhumanto ghr̥taścutaḥ / tebhīr no ’vitā bhava* “thy fresh (tasty) waves that sprinkle thee, O Sarasvat, be us a helper with them”; 6 *pīpivāṃsam sarasvata / stanam yo viśvadarśataḥ / bhakṣīmahi prajāṃ iṣam* “we should like to drink from the swollen breast of S., which is visible to all (and to obtain) children and refreshing drink”. There is no need of repeating that many epithets dealt with under other headings are also, to some degree, produced under the stress of emotions on the part of the poet.

Roughly speaking there might – with some exaggeration – seem hardly any limit to the variety of uses which can, in constructing stanzas, be made of epithets. In 8, 93, 4, which forming part of a hymn in honour of Indra makes a statement about this god, Sūrya is more or less parenthetically addressed: *yad adya kac ca vṛtrahann / udagā abhi sūrya / sarvaṃ tad*

³⁷ See “The Vedic concept of amhas”, *Indo-Iranian Journal*, I (1957), p. 33 ff.

indra te vaśe. Contrary to Geldner's opinion:³⁸ "vṛtrahan sollte eigentlich mit indra in c verbunden sein" the view could be maintained that the double apostrophe, *v.* and *i.*, marks the unity of the utterance and the identity of the person addressed in its parts preceding and following the reference to Sūrya.

The insertion of an epithet may enable the poet to supply his audience with a motive for which an action was performed, an event related, a divine being implored or invited. Thus 10, 118, 9 *taṃ tvā gīrbhir urukṣayā / havyavāhaṃ sam īdhire / yajisṭham mānuṣe jane* "the U. have kindled thee with eulogies, (thee) the bearer of oblations, who is the best worshipper among human beings": the two epithets make the motive clear for which the fire has been kindled. See also 1, 34, 3. Similar occurrences of epithets have been noticed in other literatures, e.g. in German: Hartm. v. Aue, Erec 902 *unser bloeder vehten gezimt nicht guoten knechten* ("das Beiwort begründet den Satz, in dem es steht").³⁹

The absence of any motivation of an epithet does however not always mean that it is used arbitrarily and without sense or meaning. In 3, 37, 4 Indra while being praised by means of a reference to his hundred conditions or appearances is described as "praised by many" and a "supporter of the communities of men": *puruṣṭutasya dhāmabhiḥ / śatena mahayāmasi / indrasya carṣaṇīdhṛtaḥ*.

The adjective *rathītama*- "most excellent charioteer", applied to Indra, Soma, Pūṣan, and the Aśvins, is in 6, 55, 2 in all probability used metaphorically: characterizing Pūṣan who in the preceding stanza is invited to become the charioteer of the rite (*rathīr ṛtasya*) of those praying, it occurs at the beginning of the stanza and may therefore be considered an elliptical repetition of the same thought. Compare Sāyaṇa on 1 *rathīḥ raṃhitā netā vā*; on 2 *rathītamaṃ atīśayena rathinam, yad vā atīśayena raṃhitāraṃ netāram*. Similar instances lead us to the conclusion that the use of an epithet often finds its explanation from the context itself. A curious place is 1, 176, 5 *āvo yasya dvibarhaso 'rkeṣu sānuṣag asat / ājāv indrasyendo* / "O drop (i.e. Soma) thou assistest in battle the doubly strong Indra, at whose eulogies the one who stays on the tops of the mountain (i.e. Soma) will be (present also)": the god is no doubt said to be "doubly strong" because of the close association of the soma draught and the eulogies. In 3, 48, 3 Indra, the performer of great achievements, receives the rare characterization *purudhapratīka*- "with various forces,

³⁸ Geldner, *Der Rig-veda übersetzt*, II, p. 417.

³⁹ Lotz, *o.c.*, p. 53.

appearing variously”, which is however, as stated by Geldner,⁴⁰ explained by 4b *yathāvaśaṃ tanvaṃ cakre* “he assumed (various) bodies at pleasure”: compare also Sāyaṇa’s comment: *tejoyogāt bahudhā vikṣiptāṅgaḥ san*, and the same authority on 3, 7, 3 where the compound applies to Agni: *bahudhā vikṣiptāṅgaḥ*.

The adjective *ghora-* usually translated by “terrific, dreadful” or, in connection with gods and other exalted beings, with “awful, venerable, sublime” is 7, 28, 2 applied to Indra who having taken his weapon is invincible: by his mere resourcefulness (*kratu-*) he is *ghora-*; 2, 12, 5 to the same god stated to be able to diminish the possessions of the niggard; cf. also 1, 167, 4; 169, 7 etc.; 9, 89, 4 Soma is described as a *ghora-*, *ayās-* “agile, active, indefatigable” and *ṛṣva-* “sublime” horse. In 10, 34, 14 the adjective is elliptically used in connection with the employment of spells and magic with a malevolent purpose. Thus descriptive adjectives may have an extended range of applicability.

Sometimes an epithet is explained by one of the poets: 10, 23, 2 *indro maghair maghavā vṛtrahā bhuvat*.

It is certainly no mere accident that stanzas which mainly consist of statements about the god’s character are so often to a greater or lesser extent homogeneous in contents, emphasizing particular traits or qualities. If the god is mighty and a true king, his worshippers will be duly protected and gain the victory over all enemies: ṚV. 1, 174, 1 *tvam rājendra ye ca devā / rakṣā nṛṇ pāhy asura tvam asmān / tvam satpatir maghavā nas tarutras / tvam satyo vasavānaḥ sahodāḥ*; a true king is a protector, a *maghavan-* and a conqueror may be expected to bestow superiority upon his worshippers. This homogeneity may in particular cases be a help in establishing the exact sense of an epithet, for instance of the above *satpati-* which may be supposed to be in harmony with the general tenor of the description. Unity of conception is also apparent from stanzas such as 6, 24, 2 where Indra is described as a conquering and manly hero, clever, granting extensive protection, possessor and giver of *vāja-*, supporting the singer and hearing his prayers. – Cf., in connection with soma, 2, 41, 14 *tīvro vo madhumāṃ ayam / śunahotreṣu matsarah*.

Sometimes epithets are used to refer to qualities or characteristics of a god which, it is true, are not expressed in the same stanza but are known from elsewhere. These epithets may practically speaking do duty as statements about special aspects of the god’s nature. Thus Indra after being 10, 104, 2 invited to drink soma is enjoined to increase his intoxication with it; the final term is the vocative *ukthavāhaḥ* “O thou to whom eulogies

⁴⁰ Geldner, *o.c.*, I², p. 389.

are offered”, or rather, “den das Loblied anzieht” (Geldner). The preceding stanza after commencing *asāvi somaḥ puruhūta* “soma has been pressed for thee, O thou much invoked one”, states that the eulogies of men have come to him and invites the god to drink soma. That the freshness of the epithet *ukthavāhas-* was not worn off, appears from 8, 96, 11 *ukthavāhase... manīṣaṃ... īraya*, and from the final stanza 6, 59, 10 “O Indra and Agni, who art *u.* (and) who listen to invocations, do you come by means of (our) hymns, by all (these) words of praise...”.

At times the descriptions given by the poets of the gods seem at first sight to be based on visual impression, although the outward appearances of these figures are products of their imagination, which it is true may have been fecundated by analogous traits in the appearance of princes and other leading figures among men. The Maruts are 5, 87, 1 described as a host of deities that wear rings or bracelets (*sukhādi-*), but in 1, 87, 6 they receive more attributes: they are, *inter alia*, armed with axes and arrows. These poetical descriptions are not rarely especially notable in passages dealing with female deities. Thus Sinīvālī, a goddess implored to grant offspring is 2, 32, 7 called... *subāhūḥ svaṅguriḥ / suṣūmā bahu-sūvarī*, and in 10, 86, 8 Indra addresses his wife as follows: ...*subāho svaṅgure / pṛthuṣṭho pṛthujāghane*, an accumulation of honorific epithets which may perhaps be an attempt to get on the lady’s right side. In 9, 5, 6 the hearers are reminded of the beauty of Night and Morning: *suśilpe bṛhatī mahī / ...darśate*.

As stated in the preceding chapter of this volume many R̥gvedic epithets are typical, indicating the characteristics of a class or genus rather than the individual. This is especially evident in those attributes which apply to appellative nouns. Epithets such as *purubhojas-* “feeding many people”, in 3, 34, 9 used of a cow apply to any female animal of the ox tribe, or rather to the cow in general. It is typical of the Dasyus that they do not worship the Aryan gods: they are, in general, *anyavratāḥ* “devoted to other (gods), unbelieving”: cf. 8, 70, 11; 10, 22, 8. They are also of their own nature *aśivāḥ* “unkind” or “envious”: *minantā dasyor aśivasya māyāḥ*. Eagles or falcons are characterized by swiftness: 8, 5, 7 *tūyaṃ śyenebhir āśubhiḥ*; horses often were *pṛtanājāḥ* “rushing to battle” (9, 87, 5).

The goddess Idā is among those who receive bahuvrīhi epithets, which remind us of the ‘Homeric’ type. Being, as a daughter of Manu, produced from his offerings, this goddess was, in Vedic times, the representative of the offering of milk and butter. In the R̥V. she is once called *ghṛtapadī* “the path of whose foot drops with ghee” (cf. TS. 2, 6, 7, 1; ŚatBr. 1, 8,

1, 26) (“schmalzspurig” Geldner, 10, 70, 8: “Manu and the gh. goddess I. will delight in the sacrificial gifts”), but the same epithet recurs in other texts: AV. 7, 28, 1 where she being “ghee-footed, able, soma-backed, ...” (Whitney–Lanman) is said to have approached the offerings.

Among these epithets which impress us as fixed in character and add to the dignity of the style are also: the ἄπαξ 1, 79, 10 *tigmaśocis*- “sharp-rayed” (Agni); the ἄπαξ 5, 43, 13 *tridhātuśṛṅga*- “with a tripartite horn” (the bull, Agni). The chariots of the Maruts are twice (5, 58, 6; 8, 20, 2) described as *vīlupavi*- “with strong tires (on the wheels)”, the context giving no motive for the use of this compound it may be considered to add to the impressiveness of the description.

However, attributes which at first sight may seem to be habitual epithets are often motivated by, or closely connected with, other ideas expressed in the sentence: when 3, 59, 6 Mitra’s favour is described as bringing wealth or blessings and his glory as being of most wonderful fame. Although in 1, 49, 3 the addition of *patatrin*- “winged” seems, at first sight, to be tautological it may help to oppose the birds, the inhabitants of the atmosphere, to the denizens of the earth and so to throw the thought expressed into some relief: “all creatures appear at day-break”: *vayaś cit te patatrinō / dvipac catuṣpad...* For a similar opposition see 1, 48, 5. That appearances may be deceptive is also evident from 6, 75, 7 where the ἄπαξ *vṛṣapāṇi*- “strong-hoofed” applied to the horses of the king’s chariot is, in this context, meaningful, because the horses are stated to crush the enemies by the points of their feet.

Epithets which are rather vague and general in meaning are apt to impress us as mere honorific or intensive additions. When 6, 36, 4 Indra is described as the *patir... asamo janānām* “the unequalled (*asama*-) lord of peoples” we may be inclined to put the epithet completely on a par with those English terms which may serve as translations and which as a rule are rather worn out. The next pāda: “thou art the sole king of the entire world” should however exhort us to caution. It is often difficult to steer the middle course between the Scylla of literal or etymological interpretations and the Charybdis of a complete identification with our modern terms. In 8, 62, 2 where *asama*- is used predicatively it has its full sense: *ayujo asamo nṛbhir / ekaḥ kṛṣṭīr ayāsyah*; see also 1, 54, 8; 10, 89, 3. Compare also 10, 47, 8 where the complement shows that *asama*- is to be taken literally: *kṣayam asamaṃ janānām*. The same adjective may therefore also in 2, 13, 7 and 7, 43, 1 be supposed to express its full sense. See also 8, 5, 32.

A honorific function may indeed very often be attributed to these

words: 1, 51, 15 (a closing stanza) “this hymn is homage to the bull, the self-ruler, the truly valiant one”; 5, 56, 8 in inviting the chariot of the Maruts to come near the poet calls it *śravasyu-* “willing to praise”, and Agni is 6, 1, 11 honoured as the god who has with his light penetrated heaven and earth, being a famous and conquering protector; the poet of 5, 52, 8 praises the Maruts as follows: *śardho mārutam uc chaṃsa / satyaśavasam ṛbhvasam* “extol the host of the Maruts, who are truly impetuous and skilful”. Cf. also 1, 86, 8 and 9, and 1, 186, 8 where the Maruts are called *vrddhasenāḥ* “mit verstärkter Heerschar” (Geldner). Similar indications are often furnished by the context: although *astrta-* “indestructible, invincible” may easily develop into a worn out passe-partout epithet, the combination *vanvann avāto astrtaḥ* 6, 16, 20 shows that it expressed a fuller meaning: “der unbesiegte, nie zu Fall gebrachte Sieger”; etymologically *astrta-* means “not overthrown, who cannot be laid low”. Similarly, 9, 9, 5; 27, 4; 10, 48, 11. Cf. also 8, 93, 2 (predicate); 15; 8, 1, 11; 1, 4, 4 and especially 1, 140, 8. That a person whose fame is praised by the epithets *amṛtam ajuryam* “not subject to death and old age” (3, 53, 15; cf. also 7, 81, 6) is greatly honoured, is self-evident.

Distinctions such as the above – honorific epithets, typical epithets, descriptive epithets etc. – are however of limited validity. In a considerable number of cases the adjective under consideration may be included in any of three paragraphs. The right view of them may therefore be to regard the very frequent use of logically more or less superfluous descriptive, ornamental, typical, graphic or digressive epithets, on the one hand, as the natural consequence of the poets’ emotional mental attitude, their inclination to graphicalness, their desire to express their thoughts by means of images and evocative attributes, in short by their poetic inspiration and poetic views of the events and phenomena described, and, on the other hand, as an outcome of the comparatively high degree of ‘idealism’ of archaic and semi-‘primitive’ poetry and literary art in general.⁴¹

It will therefore be convenient to deal with some passages from this point of view, and in so doing we will have occasion to reconsider some epithets which have already been discussed under other headings. The idealistic outlook of many texts seems, indeed, to be beyond any doubt. The goddess Uṣā is, quite naturally, among those divinities who drive in celestial chariots, but in 1, 113, 14 her vehicle is *suyuj-* “well yoked”: *oṣā yāti suyujā rathena* (cf. also 4, 14, 3). That the chariots of the gods are, generally speaking, well yoked, is a matter of course, but for these poets,

⁴¹ See the introductory chapter.

like their 'idealistic' colleagues in other countries, it was almost a necessity to bring this part to their hearers' notice, to remind them of the high degree of solidity and effectiveness of the vehicles and other possessions of the god. The cart with which the Aśvins came to the rescue of the son of Tugra was (1, 117, 15) not only *suyuj-*, but also *manojavas-* "swift as thought". The latter epithet is repeatedly applied to this vehicle: 5, 77, 3 where it is said to come near with a golden covering, swift as thought, as fleet as wind (*vātarañhāḥ*). The use of these expressions may have been brought about by the idealistic character of the Vedic view of the gods and their belongings, the words themselves were, though often traditional, 'poetic' in character, that is to say: marked by a certain creative and imaginative force, by graphicalness and the faculty to detect connections and felicitously to convey in language essential features and qualities. The considerable number of epithets and other adjectives beginning with *su-* "well, right, beautiful" – e.g. 6, 37, 3 *sucakra-* in connection with Indra's chariot – may be considered a significant particular.

A similar combination of naive idealism and poetical expression may be recognized in stanzas such as 1, 85, 9 where Indra's weapon is described as *sukṛtaṃ hiraṇyayaṃ sahasrabhṛṣṭim* "well-made, golden, with a thousand points"; 1, 58, 5 where Agni (fire) fanned by the wind, snorts burning-jawed, like a victorious bull, going with his (its) luminous appearances towards the undecaying space. Night and Morning rank above other phenomena by their beauty (1, 188, 6), but it does not suffice merely to state *adhi śrīyā virājataḥ*, the poet adds the adjectives *surukme hi supeśasā* "beautifully adorned, well provided with ornaments". Bṛhaspati, who occupies a position of considerable prominence in the R̥gveda, is the lord of prayers who even pronounces hymns in honour of other gods (1, 40, 5); it is therefore small wonder that he is, in an appropriately honorific stanza (7, 97, 5), called the *śucikranda- yajata-* "the adorable one of a clear voice". The poet of 7, 68 is (st. 9) a man of "good or devout thoughts" (*sumanman-*).

Not infrequently epithets are made subservient to the expression of an exuberance of feelings or of emphatic laudations. The cows mentioned in a hymn dedicated to Bṛhaspati (10, 68, 3) are of good colour and of faultless outward appearance (*suvarṇā anavadyarūpāḥ*); the product of the poet's inspiration, the hymn is (1, 144, 1) *śucipeśas-* "brightly adorned". In 1, 126, 2 a king is said to have "extended his imperishable renown into heaven". Tvaṣṭar the artisan among the gods and the maker of their implements is (6, 49, 9) "worthy and vigorous; he has good and skilful hands and is clever". Indra's horses must (6, 37, 3) draw the god's "well-

wheeled" (*sucakra-*) chariot. Even the hollow of his mouth with which he drinks soma is of excellent build and extraordinary width: *yā te kākut sukṛtā yā variṣṭā*. The soma itself is (6, 44, 1) "as to splendour most splendid" (*dyumnair dyumnavattamaḥ*). Cf. also 8, 60, 8 etc. Not rarely the same or similar adjectives are used predicatively so as to form explicit statements of the excellence and perfection of the beings and objects described: 8, 77, 11.

In studying the function of those qualifications which are often used to express an attribute of a divine person we should be aware of the habit of the Vedic poets to describe the outward appearance and the qualities of character of the gods to whom their poems are dedicated by means of the same adjectives or substantival qualifications which are, in other contexts, employed as pure epithets. It is true that these characterizations are not in the first place intended to impart new knowledge to their human or divine audience, still less to show their originality in revealing aspects of divinity hitherto unknown or hidden in a veil of mystery. These descriptions are mainly 'praise', that is: 'confirmations' of divine power, consolidations of that power, strengthening of the divine being, expression of the poet's belief in the existence and efficacy of the qualities traditionally ascribed to it. By praising the god the poet added to the latter's power, influenced his abilities for the benefit of his patrons and of mankind in general, and determined these to some result or other. The oft-recurring statements that a definite god has definite qualities are therefore no embellishment, no mere adornment, no cordial or beautiful superfluity.⁴² The formula "you divine, vast, all-hailbringing water" (*āpo devīr br̥hatīr viśvaśambhuwaḥ*) is to accompany a definite oblation (TS. 6, 1, 2, 2f.), lest the water should go 'unappeased' (*aśānta-*) to this world, doing it harm. The very praise which moreover contains, in the last word, the term *śam* "hail" controls the water.

It is however equally clear that in these utterances of more or less stereotyped praise the qualifications used by the poets do not necessarily refer to immediate or synchronous actualization. Thus a line such as RV. 2, 12, 13 cd *yaḥ somapā nicito vajrabāhur / yo vajrahastah sa janāsa indrah* "who is known as the soma-drinker, as the one who holds the bolt in his hand: he, O men, is I." is descriptive in the above sense of the word, no reference to a particular act of drinking soma, or to an invitation to a

⁴² See e.g. G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in essence and manifestation* (London, 1938), p. 430 f.; H. Lüders, *Varuṇa* (Göttingen, 1951), p. 22; J. Gonda, *Bhūṣati* (Wageningen, 1939, and reprinted in *Disp. Rh.-Tr.*, III, passim; the same, "Avestan *spānta*", in *Oriens*, 2, p. 195 ff.

soma feast. If, in 6, 22, 1 the same deity is explicitly regarded as a bull possessing manly power (*vr̥ṣabho vr̥ṣṇyāvān*), as a true warrior and a conqueror these words – and similar terms in many other places – may be considered also from this point of view: they are intended to praise the god, to strengthen the qualities denoted by these epithets, to enhance his power, and to confirm the speaker's belief in that power. Just like many other peoples who by the incessant repetition of formulas express the greatness of their gods – “great is Diana of the Ephesians”⁴³ – or of the undauntedness of their leaders – “the chief, he knows no fear”⁴⁴ – the ancient Indians by ever reciting and repeating these stanzas replete with epithets and characterizations of the divine powers whose activity and mere existence was of the highest importance for the continuance of human life and well-being contributed to the continuance of these powers and to the maintenance of their supposed salutary activity.

Crying aloud and singing set power in motion, but the most important type of profoundly emotional utterance is the song of praise, and the use of epithets is a very widespread and effective means of expressing praise. Thus the enumerations of epithets for laudatory purposes may be regarded as a primitive type of ‘poetry’. In R̥V. 1, 44, 5 this purpose is explicitly stated: *staviṣyāmi tvām ahaṃ viśvasyāmṛta bhojana / agne trātāram amṛtam miyedhya / yajīṣṭhaṃ havyavāhana* “I shall praise thee, O immortal one, that givest the whole (world) to eat, O Agni, thou that partakest of the sacrificial food, (as) the rescuer, the immortal one, the best sacrificer, O thou that bearest the oblations”. Compare also 10, 148, 1 “we praise thee, O Indra, very valiant one (*tuvinṛmṇa*); 10, 89, 1 “I will praise Indra, the most manly one, who by his greatness drives the celestial lights asunder...”; 2, 11, 6 where the god's former and recent deeds, his weapon and his steeds are praised; 5, 83, 1; 8, 13, 10 etc. etc.

To these frequent adhortations to praise the god one or more epithets and an explicit reference to one or two of his most important achievements or qualities are very often added: 1, 12, 7 “praise Agni, the inspired sage, who is true to his character or essential nature (*satyadharman-*)...”,⁴⁵ the god who drives away diseases”; “I praise you, O Aśvins, that accomplish wonderful deeds, discoverers (and disposers) of possessions, you that by your intelligence procure goods” (1, 46, 1; 2); “Salute the energetic one

⁴³ Acta Apost. 19, 28.

⁴⁴ See Van der Leeuw, *o.c.*, p. 430, and the same, *Wegen en Grenzen*² (Amsterdam, 1948), *passim*.

⁴⁵ Cf. e.g. H. Zimmer, *Philosophies of India* (New York, 1951), p. 163; S. Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu view of life* (London, 1948), p. 78; J. Gonda, “Het begrip dharma in het Indische denken”, *Tijdschrift voor Philosophie* (Leuven), 1958.

with words of praise, extol Parjanya, invite him to come here reverentially. Roaring and sprinkling abundantly the bull places his seed in the plants to be a germ" (5, 83, 1). See also 4, 21, 4; 8, 24, 19; 81, 4; 96, 6 etc. It is remarkable that praise is often immediately followed by prayer. By so combining a number of laudatory epithets with a request to extend the divine favour to those on behalf of whom he speaks the poet does not only flatter and strengthen the god, but attempts also to induce him to respond to his approaches without delay. Thus R̥V. 2, 33, 11 the words *stuhi śrutam gartasadam yuvānam...* "praise the famous youth who is seated on the seat of a war-chariot" are immediately followed by *mṛlā jaritre rudra stavānaḥ* "now that thou art praised, be gracious to the eulogist, O Rudra!" R̥V. 1, 44, 2 it reads: *juṣṭo hi dūto asi hayavāhano / agne rathīr adhvarāṇām / sajūr aśvibhyām uṣasā suvīryam / asme dhehi śravo bṛhat* "for thou art the propitious messenger, the oblation-bearer, O Agni, the charioteer of the sacrifices. Together with the two Aśvins, with Uṣas, do thou grant us manly vigour, steady fame!" The poet of 3, 32, 14 is perfectly outspoken: "I will praise Indra, that he will rescue us from distress". In 1, 16, 9 the eulogist after imploring Indra to grant his request for cows and horses, expresses his intention to extol the god. See also 1, 136, 6 etc. It is only natural that the poets themselves should have been conscious of these connections between praise and prayer: R̥V. 8, 19, 21 *īle girā manurhitam / yam devā dūtam aratiṁ nyerire / yajīṣṭham havyavāhanam*.

This combination of prayer and laudatory – and hence, strengthening – epithets is a well-known device in religious literature in general. The homeric hymn dedicated to Ares (no. 8) for instance which essentially is a prayer for strength and courage in war, for the suppressing of despondency and pusillanimity, for the annihilation of the deceitful impulses of the soul, and for strength to abide within the laws of peace, contains in 17 verses some 20 epithets, most of which extol the god's strength and warlike power: "Ares, exceeding in strength, chariot-rider, golden-helmed... mighty with the spear, O defence of Olympus... hear me, helper of men... that I may be able to drive away bitter cowardice...".

We may now turn to an application of epithets which reveals a predilection for antithetical expression which, as is well known, is of frequent occurrence in these collections of hymns: 1, 85, 4 *pracyāvayanto acyutā cid ojasā*; 10, 34, 9. Thus 7, 71, 1 it reads "Night departs for her sister Dawn. The black one yields a path to the ruddy". The adjective *purāṇī* "ancient, i.e. belonging to, or existing already in, ancient times" is attached to the name of the goddess Dawn in R̥V. 1, 92, 10 where it is

immediately preceded by *punaḥ punar jāyamānā* “born again and again”, the whole pāda bringing to the fore one of the most striking features of the phenomenon of daybreak. A similar combination occurs 3, 61, 1 where the goddess is called *purāṇī... yuvatīḥ* “young, though existing already in ancient times”.⁴⁶ Not antithetical in the strict sense of the term, but rather complementary are lines such as 10, 112, 10 *abhikhyā no maghavan nādhamānān / sakhe bodhi vasupate sakhīnām*.

An epithet may help to emphasize a contrast or opposition or to suggest that the process described is contrary to experience or expectation. “Der Begriff des Beiworts steht im Gegensatz zum Satzinhalt: zB. (Hartm. v. Aue) Erec 172 *sīne kōmen ûf dem wege / ûz sīner ougen phlege / des vil langen tages nie*”.⁴⁷ The idea expressed by the epithet may contrast with the situation described in the text in order to show how great a discrepancy exists between the latter and normal conditions. When, in the Iliad, Achilles fills the river Scamander with the corpses of the slain the river complains of this annoyance: “full are my lovely (ἐρατεινά: they are usually, normally, lovely) streams with dead men” (Φ 218).

As is well known the Vedic poets had a special predilection for combinations such as ṚV. 4, 1, 1 *amartyam yajata martyeṣu* “worship the immortal (Agni) among the mortals”; 1, 77, 1; 4, 2, 1; 5, 14, 2 etc.

There is another point to bear in mind also. The addition of an adjective for “white” to the name of milk might at first sight seem to be a truism, the particular contexts in which the syntagma *payo ruśat* occurs show that the participle is meant to bring out an opposition. Thus ṚV. 1, 62, 9 *āmāsu cid dadhiṣe pakvam antaḥ / payaḥ kṛṣṇāsu ruśad rohiṇīsu* “in die rohen (Kühe) legtest du die gekochte Milch, die weisse in die schwarzen, in die rötlichen” – the very position of *ruśat* being significant – and, in a similar way, 8, 93, 13; 6, 72, 4 when the word for ‘milk’ is elliptically omitted. Cf. also 10, 31, 11. That, however the participle was a more or less traditional epithet may appear from 9, 91, 3 where *ruśad... payo goḥ* “the white cows’ milk” is, in all probability, a figurative description of the soma juice.

Although in the first part of this book passing mention has already been made of some cases of transference of epithets some more coherent observations may be made here on this interesting phenomenon, an example of which is the participle *ruśat* “bright, white” which while not rarely qualifying *payas*- “milk” is 10, 31, 10 added to *ūdhar*- “udder”:

⁴⁶ Geldner’s translation of 1, 64, 3 (*adhrigāvah*) is very problematic.

⁴⁷ Lotz, *o.c.*, p. 53.

pra kṛṣṇāya ruśad apinvatodhaḥ “for Kṛṣṇa (the Black one) the white udder swelled.”

The question may arise whether there are, in the Veda, instances of a phenomenon which is of considerable frequency in Greek, namely that of a god receiving a title or surname appropriate, not to himself, but to those invoking him, whether regularly or on a particular occasion. Thus Ζεύς is in Aesch. Suppl. 1 called ἀφίκτωρ, which literally means “the Suppliant”, whereas he is requested to interest himself in the daughters of Danaos who make an appeal to his feelings. Now Indra is R̥V. 9, 61, 12, and the Ásvins are 10, 61, 15, called *yájyu-*, an adjective qualifying, like the few forms of the same type, a person who performs an action: *sáhyu-* “conquering”, *bhujoyú-* “enjoying, wealthy”; thus *yajyu-* means e.g. R̥V. 3, 19, 4 an equivalent of “worshipping”.⁴⁸ When applied to the above gods its sense, however, is “worthy of worship”. Does this ‘shift of meaning’ admit of a similar explication?

Sometimes a deity which is believed to grant to the denizens of the earth favours or possessions which are qualified by definite adjectives, receives this adjective himself. The term *yaśasvát-* “granting repute or distinction” may be quoted here as a case in point. R̥V. 3, 16, 6 it is added to “wealth”: *saṃ rāyā bhūyasā sr̥ja mayobhuvā / tuvidyumna yaśasvatā* “do thou (it is Agni who is addressed) endow us, O thou of powerful splendour, with no small wealth which causes delight and grants distinction” – a similar place is 8, 23, 27 –,⁴⁹ but 8, 102, 8 and 10, 20, 9 it is Agni himself who is called *yaśasvat-*. Although Geldner translates the epithet in the latter passages by “der Angesehene” or “der Geehrte” and 3, 16, 6 by “der Ansehen gibt”, there may be something to be said for the assumption that the epithet was ‘transferred’ to the god who gave wealth. Uśas who 1, 92, 8; 7, 75, 2 grants wealth that leads to distinction is 10, 11, 3 likewise called *yaśasvatī*. A similar remark applies to the adjective *yaśás-* which 1, 1, 3; 6, 8, 5 is attached to *rayim* “possessions” coming from Agni, and 8, 23, 30 to the god himself. The words *agne tvam yaśā asi* may perhaps mean “O Agni, thou art a manifestation of distinction (because the god gives it)” rather than “Agni, du bist der Angesehene” (Geldner).⁵⁰ Curiously enough the same god is 1, 60, 1 *yaśás-* as well as

⁴⁸ See e.g. J. Wackernagel–A. Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik*, II, 2 (Göttingen, 1954), p. 842.

⁴⁹ R̥V. 1, 9, 6 where Indra is implored to cause those praying to become rich, these worshippers are called *rabhasvataḥ* “zealous, impatient” and *yaśasvataḥ*: is the latter word used ‘proleptically’?, or does it imply “because we are...”?

⁵⁰ For the belief that gods are manifestations or representations of the power they

“praised like wealth”. In 7, 93, 4 it is Indra and Agni who give *rayim yaśásam pūrvabhājam*, and the former god too is repeatedly characterized as *yaśás*: 8, 90, 5; in 8, 61, 5 he is a *yaśás*-lord who “finds (wins) possessions” (*vasuvidam*). There is no need to cite further examples of this adjective.

Another epithet which is on the one hand attached to words for “wealth” or “donation” and on the other hand to gods who bring fortune and happiness is *subhaga*- which according to Monier-Williams means “possessing good fortune, prosperous, lucky, happy, charming etc.” It is however worth recalling Renou’s remark: beside “heureuse” this word may express the sense of “portant bonheur”.⁵¹ The adjective applies to *rāyaḥ* “possessions”: 5, 42, 8 (“beglückend” Geldner), to *rātim vāmasya* “die beglückende Gabe von Gut” (Geldner): 10, 140, 5, but more often to gods who are, in the same context, explicitly described as bestowers of wealth or implored to distribute possessions to their worshippers: Agni 3, 16, 6 (“hold” Geldner?); 5, 8, 3; 8, 19, 18; 19; 6, 13, 1 “from thee, A. s. comes all welfare (riches, happiness)”: *tvad viśvā subhaga sanbhagāny / agne vi yanti*. Combinations of two words deriving from the same root or containing the same stem were, it is true, very common, but one of their functions always was to bring out relations; here the implication no doubt is that a god who bestows *saubhagāni* on men must be *subhaga*- himself. In 3, 1, 4 the epithet replaces the name; in 3, 9, 1 he is called the *subhaga*-child of the waters; cf. also 1, 36, 6; 8, 19, 4. In 7, 63, 1 where the same epithet is attached to the name of the sun Geldner rightly translates: “der glückbringende” (*śobhanabhāgyaḥ suṣṭhu bhajanīyo vā*). So much is clear that 1, 92, 8 where Uṣas is implored to bring many sons who lead to renown and 1, 113, 7 where being called a mistress of wordly goods she is invited to approach – cf. 3, 61, 4; 7, 76, 6; 77, 3, and also 6, 64, 3 where she is said to dispel darkness – the epithet is very appropriate. When 1, 48, 7 it is stated that this *subhagā* Uṣas approaches men with a hundred chariots these vehicles may be supposed to bring goods to them. Otherwise: 1, 92, 12. There are other indications to make it still more likely that a god who makes mankind *subhaga*- receives this adjective himself: Rākā, a rich and bountiful goddess, is 2, 32, 5 while being praised for granting treasures and well-being likewise addressed as *subhagā*; cf. also st. 4. Sītā, the Furrow is 4, 57, 6 implored to come to those praying,

stand for see *Some observations on the relations between “gods” and “powers”* (Disp. Rh.-Tr., I).

⁵¹ Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, III, p. 22. Cf. also H. Oldenberg, *Nachr. Gött. Ges. d. Wiss.*, 1915, p. 364; Geldner, *ZDMG*, 52, p. 750.

yielding much fruit and being *subhagā*: *arvācī subhage bhava / sīte van-dāmahe tvā / yathā naḥ subhagāsasi / yathā naḥ suphalāsasi*: she is called *s.*, and ‘praised’ in order to be *s.* In 1, 89, 3 the *s.* Sarasvatī – a divine river – is asked to give delight to those speaking; cf. 7, 95, 4 and especially 8, 21, 17 where she is stated to give many goods. Similar remarks may be made with regard to 7, 95, 6 (Sarasvatī) and to 10, 75, 8 referring to the rich river Sindhu and the area through which it flows.

The “refreshing draughts or enjoyments derived from an abundance of food or drink” (*iṣaḥ*) are, in hymns addressed to Uṣas and other gods which are supposed to favour their worshippers with plenty of food, called “accompanied by cows” (*gomatīḥ*): 1, 48, 15; 5, 79, 8. The same adjective is attached to the name of Uṣas herself: 1, 92, 14 etc. In 1, 48, 13 the wealth expected from Uṣas is called *viśvavāra*- “comportant toutes choses désirables” (Renou); in 1, 113, 19; 3, 61, 1; 7, 77, 5 the goddess receives this epithet herself.

Some lines should also be devoted to an amplified type of characterization which is sometimes favoured by authors who aim at a refined and elaborate style. When a Dutch poet speaks of *tijds felle polsslag*, i.e. “time’s unremitting pulse”, his intention is to say that time runs fast; he however replaces the single adjectival idea of ‘fastness’ (in *de snelle tijd*) by a substantive-adjective group on which he makes the idea of ‘time’ to depend in a genitive relation. This procedure enables him to lay some emphasis on the idea expressed by the epithet, to lessen the abstract sense of the utterance and to add an element of graphicalness. This ‘substantial periphrasis’ deepens the relief of the passages: compare *een pracht van uitgekeurde verven* “a splendour of selected colours” to the standard expression *prachtige uitgekozen kleuren* “splendid selected colours”. Similarly, in German literature *der Hände Fleisz* = *die fleiszigen Hände*.⁵² Similar phrases were often preferred by the Greek tragedians: e.g. Soph. Ant. 795 ἐναργῆς βλεφάρων ἥμερος, where ζ. β. = βλέφαρα ἡμερόεντα. They go however in principle back to ancient times: compare Homer’s η 167 ἱερὸν μένος Ἀλκινόοιο; Π 189 κρατερὸν μένος Ἀκτορίδαο, where the attribute is added to the power which was believed to be manifest and active in a person. Imitating Homer Schiller wrote of *König Rudolfs heilige macht*. We might, *mutatis mutandis*, compare Vedic phrases such as 6, 6, 7 *candraṃ rayim puruvīram brhantam* “a brilliant and solid wealth consisting of many sons”: the adjective *puruvīram* is, here again, preferred to a dependent genitive; cf. e.g. also 3, 13, 7 *nū no rāsva sahasravat tokavat puṣṭimad vasu*.

⁵² See also Elster, *Prinz. d. Lit. wiss.*, II, p. 161.

In holding that the use of the description instead of a name helps the dignity of the style Aristotle⁵³ had many adherents. Substitutions of for instance “the blue vault of heaven” for “sky” were either preferred for the sake of sublimity and elaborateness or excused on the grounds that they have a happy effect in preventing triviality and familiarity. Although these figures have properly speaking no bearing on our subject they may be touched upon here, because the paraphrasis often contains an epithet. The poet of R̥V. 6, 62, 6 in addressing the Aśvins states that these gods conveyed Bhujyu through the air, making use of the dustless paths to another place (... *ūhathū rajobhiḥ / areṇubhir yojanebhir bhujantā*). The dustless paths are no doubt identical with the clean spaces (*śucibhiś...* *rajobhiḥ*) of st. 2, and the phrase in its entirety may be considered a sort of explicative apposition to the preceding *rajobhiḥ*. Similar instances are: 1, 32, 5 *ahan vṛtram vṛtataraṃ vyamsam / indro vajreṇa mahatā vadhena* “he killed the V., the champion of the inimical powers, the shoulderless one with his vajra, the great weapon”. Cf. also the type 1, 52, 11 *viśrutam sahaḥ*; and the structure 6, 72, 3 *ahim apaḥ pariṣṭhām* and 10, 43, 7 the periphrasis *divyena dānuna* “the gift of heaven”, i.e. rain; cf. 10, 113, 8 etc.

It seems worth recalling an interesting point. In prayers gods are often given epithets referring to their favourite abode or place of residence. When Zeus is B 412 addressed as αἰθέρι ναίων “thou that dwellest in heaven” this addition was not only to indicate the god’s dwelling-place from where his blessings and the answer of the prayer might be expected, but also to characterize the god with regard to one of his particular aspects, to refer to one of his functions or manifestations or to indicate one of the domains of his activity. Compare also Ev. Matth. 6, 9 πᾶτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. In a comparable way Viṣṇu is 1, 154, 3 called the *girikṣit*- “who lives in the mountains”:⁵⁴ *viṣṇave... girikṣite*.

Cases of ellipsis⁵⁵ being frequent in the R̥gveda it is small wonder that epithets are sometimes found instead of complete noun-attribute combinations. These attributes must have been of considerable frequency and intelligibility and, moreover, very characteristic of the nouns with which they occurred so frequently in the same attributive syntagma as to develop associative links which made the suppression of the substantive possible.

⁵³ Aristot., Rhet. 1405 B (p. 158 of Jebb’s translation): “when the winner in a mule-race offered (the poet) Simonides a small sum, he refused to write an ode, as if he thought it beneath him to write on half-asses; but when he gave him a sufficient amount, he wrote “Hail, daughters of storm-footed steeds!””

⁵⁴ See *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism* (Utrecht, 1954), p. 73 ff.

⁵⁵ To which the present author intends to revert in another publication.

RV. 10, 139, 6 the god is said to have opened the doors for those whose pen was a rock: *apāvr̥ṇod duro aśmavrajānām*: this statement must refer to the cows in the Vala myth, cf. 4, 1, 13 where the same attribute is used. The raw or uncooked cow is opposed to the boiled (*pakva-*, sc. milk): 3, 30, 14, but 1, 62, 9 the boiled milk is opposed to the uncooked ones, viz. the cows. “The spotted ones” are 1, 84, 11 the cows; cf. 8, 6, 19 etc.; “the lowing one” is another name for them (1, 38, 8 etc.; cf. also 1, 95, 6). In 8, 66, 2 Indra is stated to grant the eulogist *ukthyam* “something praiseworthy”, explained by Geldner as “preiswürdigen (Lohn)”; in 2, 23, 14 the words *āvis tat kṛṣva yad asat ta ukthyam* were translated by him “offenbare diese deine (Kraft), die eines Preisliedes würdig sein soll”. In 8, 67, 11 the water of a river or pool is indicated by the adjectives *dine gabhīre* “in the shallow (or) in the deep”.

“... in Homer ist einmal γλαυκή Beiwort des Meeres, Π 34 γλαυκή δέ σε τίκτε θάλασσα, und in der Hes. Theogonie wird dies Adj. ohne weiteres für das Meer gesetzt: 440 οἱ γλαυκὴν δυσπέμφελον ἐργάζονται. War dieser appellative Gebrauch des Wortes ohne Personifikation denkbar? Ich erwarte unter meinen Lesern keinen, der die Hesiodstelle durch Ellipse von θάλασσαν erklären möchte”.⁵⁶ A Vedic instance is the adjective *virukmat-* “bright, brilliant” (e.g. 1, 127, 3) which obviously was a frequent attribute of words for weapons and ornaments; as these combinations became almost pleonastic they were shortened: 10, 138, 4 Indra crushed his enemy *virukmatā* (*vajreṇa*, Sāyaṇa); 1, 85, 3 *tanūṣu... dadhire virukmataḥ*. This has led to a polysemy of *virukmat-*. In 1, 101, 1 Indra is stated to have expelled (the waters) contained in the black cavities of the clouds:⁵⁷ *kṛṣṇagarbhā nirahan*; in 1, 121, 12 *mandinam* “exhilarating” stands for Soma; 1, 122, 3 the wish is formulated that the *parijmā vasarhā* “the one who runs round or the omnipresent, the one who comes (?) in the morning”,⁵⁸ that is, Vāyu, will inspire those speaking. RV. 8, 26, 23 one and the same half-stanza *vahasva mahaḥ pṛthupakṣasā rathe* even contains a double ellipse “lead from the great (sky) the broad-flanked (horses)...” In 1, 167, 7 the suppressed proper noun is intimated by three epithets. Cf. also 1, 116, 2.

There is a use of the epithet which has no doubt arisen from the well-known phenomenon called enallage. When the Roman author Petronius 69, 8 wrote *omnium genera avium* he meant, from a ‘logical’ point of view

⁵⁶ Usener, “Göttliche Synonyme”, *Rhein. Mus.*, 53 (1898), p. 351 (= *Kl. Schr.*, IV, p. 280).

⁵⁷ Thus comm. on Nirukta 4, 24; Geldner otherwise (*o.c.*², p. 130).

⁵⁸ See Geldner, *o.c.*, I², p. 168.

omnia genera avium just like a German speaker in saying *eine heisse Tasse Tee* means *eine Tasse heisse Tee*. This shift may be explained from the fact that in the speaker's mind *omnia genera* and *Tasse Tee* constitute one homogenous idea – cf. also the composita *omnigenus*, *multigenus* – so that in particular cases a dependent genitive or an attributive adjective may be added to the entire phrase, not to the member to which it would 'logically' speaking belong. Very often 'gefühlsmässige Vordrängung' plays a rôle in this procedure: "der vorherrschende stärkste Eindruck wird zuerst sprachlich ausgedrückt": in literary language *la vision rouge du Cardinal*; *das braune Lachen ihrer Augen*, just like the colloquial *in baldiger Erwartung eines Lebenszeichens*.⁵⁹ A Sanskrit instance is KāthUp. 4, 2 *te mr̥tyor yanti vitatasya pāśam* i.e. "they walk into the laid snares of death". Greek examples of ἐναλλαγή ἐπιθέτων are Soph. Ai. 8 κύνος Λακκαίνης... εὐρίνος βάσις i.e. "a keen-scented hound of Spartan breed"; 860 ὦ πατρῶον ἐστίας βάθρον. Sometimes, an author postpones an adjective in order to enhance the effect of a passage: *de vuurpijl opgesnord, stierend zijn gouden vaart statiger* (Van Looy), where in a matter-of-fact style the rocket would be called golden, not its course.

That in 1, 37, 1 (and 5) the attribute *krīḍam* "playing, sporting" is congruent with the governing noun *śardhaḥ* "host, troop" is the less astonishing, as the beings constituting the troop are not expressed by a dependent genitive, but in an ancient manner, by an adjective: *krīḍam vaḥ śardho mārutam* "the sporting troop of the Maruts". It is in this connection interesting to examine the attributes added to words of the above sense: the term *gaṇa-* "troop, body of followers" which is often particularly used to denote the host of the Maruts who are in attendance on Indra or that of the minor deities accompanying Bṛhaspati, receives without governing a genitive, an attributive adjective in 1, 87, 4 where it is called "youthful" (*yuvā gaṇaḥ*); the name of the Maruts is in 5, 61, 13 added adjectivally: *yuvā sa māruto gaṇaḥ*. Cf. also 1, 64, 12 *rajasturam tavaṣam mārutam gaṇam*; 5, 53, 10; 58, 1; 2; 8, 94, 12 etc. In 5, 56, 1 we find *śardhantam... gaṇam* "the bold troop" which is at the same time described as adorned with gold; in 1, 38, 15 *vandasva mārutam gaṇam / tveṣam panasyum arkiṇam*. Passages such as 1, 40, 4 are likewise of interest *tasmā ilāṃ suvīrām ā yajāmahe / supratūrtim aneḥasam*.

Not infrequently an epithet is used in a 'proleptic' way, that is to say: the idea expressed by the adjective is presented as if it were realized at the moment of speaking, whereas it actually belongs to the future, or is only

⁵⁹ See W. Havers, *Handbuch der erklärenden Syntax* (Heidelberg, 1931), p. 91; 234; W. Kroll, *Studien zur Verständnis der römischen Literatur* (Stuttgart, 1924), p. 258.

expected. Prolepsis in the sense of chronological anticipation is indeed a frequent device in syntax and stylistics, by which the speaker or author is enabled to represent, or to refer to, future events or conditions, or certain expected results, as though they had already been realized, or had already come about.⁶⁰ In connection with R̥gvedic epithets attention may perhaps be drawn to places such as 1, 84, 1 where Indra being politely requested to approach and to partake of the soma beverage which is to exhilarate and to strengthen him is addressed as *śaviṣṭha dhr̥ṣṇo* “most heroic, bold”. Although these epithets express ideas which particularly belong to this god the supposition may be ventured that their occurrence could also express the speaker’s wish or expectation that by coming and drinking the god’s strength and valour would be restored. Cf. also 3, 52, 8; 6, 17, 1 “do thou drink the soma, so that thou, O daring one (*dhr̥ṣṇo*), wilt destroy completely all inimical demons”; 8, 45, 14 *kakuhaṃ cit tvā kave / mandanta dhr̥ṣṇav indavaḥ*.

It is indeed often difficult to decide whether an epithet may be said to be used in the above anticipatory way. In view of Soma’s being implored to be a *dyumnavardhana*- “increaser of splendour or illustriousness” and a lord of *vājas* i.e. of “manifestations of vigour”, that is to say a god who disposes of vigour and is supposed to grant it to his worshippers (9, 31, 2) the invitation addressed to the Aśvins, called *vājinā*, to drink the prayer’s soma, may perhaps intimate that they may, in accepting, have a fresh supply of *vāja*- (8, 35, 2).

The question may arise whether in cases such as R̥V. 8, 35, 19 the epithet is correctly translated: according to Grassmann *madacyut*- means in a request to listen and to drink soma “vom Somarausche erregt”, according to Geldner: “Rauscherregt”; should we not consider a translation: “who can, may be – or easily are – reeling with excitement or inspired with soma”? compare *acyuta*- “imperishable”.⁶¹

There is at first sight something surprising in the transferred use of epithets, that is to say in the application of attributes which properly belong to divine persons, to their properties or utensils. As however the gods are intimately connected with their attributes and belongings which are indispensable for them in fulfilling their duties – these objects being, generally speaking, consistent with the main features in the nature of their owners – it may be more intelligible that they were believed to participate in the peculiarities of their owners. The Aśvins possess the

⁶⁰ See “Prolepsis of the adjective in Greek and other ancient Indo-European languages”, *Mnemosyne*, 14, 11 (Leiden, 1958), p. 1 ff.

⁶¹ See Wackernagel–Debrunner, *Altind. Grammatik*, II, 2, p. 578 f.

life-restoring honey and are therefore called *mādhvī*. In R̥V. 10, 41, 2 it is their chariot which is justly referred to as *madhuvāhana-* “bringing honey” (cf. e.g. also 1, 157, 3). The same gods are often described as, or compared to, bulls. This name is also transferred to their vehicle: 1, 157, 2 *yad yuñjāthe vṛṣaṇam aśvinā ratham*; also 5, 75, 1 ... *priyatamaṁ ratham vṛṣaṇam vasuvāhanam*. In 8, 22, 1 their chariot receives the epithet *daṁsiṣṭha-* “pre-eminently able to achieve marvellous deeds” which is e.g. 1, 182, 2 applied to its owners.⁶²

The idea expressed by the epithet may, as a consequence of the contents or the purport of the work in which it occurs, or in accordance with the aims and views of the author, be intimately connected with the noun to which it belongs. Examples are furnished by the ancient German poet Hartmann von Aue who, Erec 2784, writes: *der tugenthafte Erec* and ibid. 8086 *herre, rīcher got, war umbe geschuof dīn gebot*. Such intimate connections existed between Indra and *ugra-*, *maghavan-* etc., between Agni and *sūnuḥ sahasaḥ*, and other names and epithets which were studied in the preceding part of this volume.

An adjective may also in other phrases unite with a noun so intimately as to form an indispensable complement to the idea expressed by the latter. When, in R̥V. 1, 65, 5 some comparisons are added to the adjective *raṇvā* “agreeable, delightful” it is, quite intelligibly, “a broad or spacious habitation” (*kṣitir na pṛthvī*) to which it is compared, not an ordinary habitation.

Often the adjective while joining nouns to express, figuratively, a single concept, is not an epithet in the proper sense of the term. “The intoxicating juice(s)” is not rarely used to denote the soma: 9, 85, 7 the *madhirā indavaḥ* are said to enter Indra. Similarly, the *madhira- amśu-*: 8, 53, 4. R̥V. 6, 69, 7 *m. andhasaḥ* likewise refers to the soma; similarly 4, 16, 1 *andhaḥ sudakṣam*; 7, 21, 1 *devaṁ goṛjīkam andhaḥ*. The “hotar who is free from malice”, i.e. the benevolent hotar is 6, 62, 4 Agni (cf. 6, 11, 2); cf. 8, 44, 10. The same adjective *adruh-* joining “people” (*jana-*) may perhaps in 9, 9, 2 help to form a phrase for “the gods”. The *adruh-* father is, 1, 159, 2 heaven.

Instances such as 2, 14, 1 where *madhyam andhaḥ* is an apposition to *somam* will not be discussed here.

The R̥gvedic ἄπᾱξ *daśaśākha-* represents a remarkable type of epithet. Literally meaning “having ten branches” it is 10, 137, 7 used to describe

⁶² For the importance of a thorough knowledge of a god’s attributes see *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 96 ff.

hasta- “hand” and must therefore be taken to refer to the ten fingers: *hastābhyām daśaśākhābhyām*.

The rain shed by the Maruts is sometimes figuratively referred to as milk or ghee; or these gods are stated to wet the earth with honey. Now, 1, 87, 2 they are implored to sprinkle honey-coloured ghee for him who sings their praise: *ghṛtam ukṣatā madhuvarṇam arcate*. Here the addition of the adjective may perhaps be explained in the first place from emotional motives, honey, like ghee, being a highly valued nutritive substance (cf. e.g. also 1, 157, 2; 4, 57, 2). As, however, 2, 35, 11 ghee of golden colour (*hiranyavarṇam*) is said to be the food of Apām Napāt – who is identified with Agni –, for whose relations with the idea of gold see e.g. st. 10, the association of gold and ghee in 1, 87, 2 may perhaps also have come about under the influence of other passages in which *ghṛtam* has its own meaning.

Among the more or less fixed combinations the phrase *ṛtam br̥hat* is worthy of special attention. *Br̥hat* expressing such ideas as “solid, massive, firm”⁶³ it is especially suitable to accompany nouns denoting important ideas: *amṛtatvam*, *indriyam*, *śravas*, *suvīryam* etc. In R̥V. 1, 151, 4 Mitra and Varuṇa are stated to proclaim the *ṛ. b*.

It is not surprising to find in the ancient Germanic literatures, for instance in English ballads, a considerable number of alliterative epithets: *the merry month of May, the forest fresh and gay, a fair forest, a bonny bird, the bonnie, bonnie bird*; the Virgin was *Mary, that myckel maye*; *ghosts were griesly, grimly, grieved or gurious*,⁶⁴ *daughters* were usually *dear, brothers*, besides being *dear*, sometimes *bold*, *sisters sweet* or *silly*, *barons brave* or *bold*. As is well known one of the functions of alliteration is to bring out similarity or partial identity, to emphasize or to intimate a close connection or essential identity. Thus we find in the R̥gveda: 1, 29, 1 *satya somapā* “du bewährter Somatrinker” (Geldner); also 6, 45, 10 etc.; 5, 82, 7 *satyasavaṃ savitāram*; 4, 21, 10 *vasva indraḥ satyaḥ samrāt*; cf. also 1, 7, 8 *vṛṣā yūtheva vaṃsagaḥ*; Indra is 6, 22, 1 not only paronomastically called *vṛṣabho vṛṣṇyāvān*, but also, by way of alliteration, *satyaḥ satvā* “a true warrior”. Cf. also 8, 45, 8; 10, 96, 6. The rôle played by alliteration in the Veda is however, quite intelligibly, less than that of the same phenomenon in the ancient German idioms. There are also instances of epithets connected by alliteration, e.g. the phrase *tavase turāye* “to the strong, the energetic”: 1, 61, 1; 63, 4; 6, 32, 1; cf. 4; 3, 61, 4 *subhagā sudamṣā*; 7, 49, 1; 8, 6, 40; 69, 4.

⁶³ See *Notes on brahman* (Utrecht, 1950), p. 31 ff.

⁶⁴ Borregaard, *The epithet in English ... ballads*, p. 17. Cf. also, in German: *mit der glimmende gluot* etc. (Tristan).

It seems worth while to return to an important point which has already attracted our attention in discussing the peculiarities of sundry epithets. The question may perhaps arise whether the desire to produce alliterative or paronomastic word combinations⁶⁵ has not often induced the ancient poets to insert one or more epithets in the stanzas of the hymns which they composed. The answer seems to be that this may, indeed, have often been the case, that is to say that the occurrence of definite words which are etymologically related to favourite epithets or characterizations opened up an opportunity to add, in their immediate proximity, such a paronomastic term. But in these cases the epithet is, as a rule, well adapted to the context, and very often it participates in the peculiarities of other components of paronomastic groups. In R̥V. 10, 47, 1 *jagṛbhmā te dakṣiṇam indra hastam / vasūyavo vasupate vasūnām* “we have seized thy right hand, O I., desiring wealth, O lord of wealth” the emphatical character of this word repetition – which is a well-known type of ‘Ausdrucksverstärkung’⁶⁶ – is an excellent means of voicing the impulse and insistence with which the wish is formulated.

There is indeed no denying that e.g. R̥V. 8, 17, 9 *indra prehi... / vṛtrāṇi vṛtrahañ jahi* “I. go on, kill, O V., the vṛtras” is a forceful injunction. Similarly, 6, 8, 2 *vratāny agnir vratapā arakṣata*; 3, 30, 2; 5, 73, 2; 6, 45, 18. In 2, 30, 10 *asmākebhiḥ satvabhiḥ sūra sūrair / vīryā kṛdhi* “together with our heroic warriors, O hero, perform courageous deeds” the epithet may help to emphasize that on the one hand the god would, if he could comply with the speaker’s desire, be in good company, worthy of his assistance, on the other hand that a hero like himself might be expected not to abandon those who are, so to say, his equals. Thus 1, 134, 2 *mandantu tvā mandino vāyav indavaḥ* the process denoted by the verb was no doubt believed to be more successful by the addition of the adjective. Cf. also 2, 11, 11. In 6, 5, 4 the paronomasia is fourfold: *tapā tapiṣṭha tapasā / tapasvān*, no doubt also to insist on the idea expressed and to enhance the suggestive force of the sentence. In 4, 16, 16 *tam id va indram suhavam huvema* “we will invoke, on your behalf, that I. who is easily invoked” the epithet, though satisfying the poet’s desire for sound repetitions helps to suggest the willingness of the god to comply with the prayer. Compare 6, 47, 11 where both tendencies are still more in evidence: *trātāram indram avitāram indram / have-have suhavam sūram indram / hvayāmi...*; cf. also 6, 52, 16 *asmin have suhavā*; 7, 44, 2; 82, 4; 93, 1; 10, 39, 1; 141, 4.

⁶⁵ See the present author’s *Stylistic repetition in the Veda*, ch. VIII and XI.

⁶⁶ For this term see E. Hofmann, *Ausdrucksverstärkung* (Göttingen, 1930).

That this assonance or paronomasia not rarely was a deliberate device intended to achieve a special effect and to lay emphasis upon the most prominent elements of the sentence – compare e.g. also the type 6, 22, 5 *tuvigrābham tuvikūrmim* “seizing powerfully, acting powerfully” (of Indra) – appears for instance also from R̥V. 6, 19, 6 *śaviṣṭham na ābhara śūra śava / ojiṣṭham ojo abhibhūta ugram* “bring us, O hero, the most heroic prowess, the most powerful, powerful (vital) power, O superior one”, the underlying thought being somewhat as follows: prowess given by a deity who is a hero par excellence must be of special importance and intrinsic value. Cf. also 6, 37, 5 *indro gīrbhir vardhatām vṛddhamahāḥ*; 1, 54, 3 *yasya dhr̥ṣato dhr̥ṣan manah*; 3, 30, 2. When, in addressing Indra and Agni, the author of 6, 60, 3 inserts their common epithet *vṛtrahanā* before the words *vṛtrahabhiḥ śuṣmaiḥ*, their valour and energy enabling them to kill V., the effect of his words is no doubt enhanced: the divine personalities as well as the powers which they have at their command are such as to finish the enemy off.

This “Ausdrucksverstärkung” emphasizes the idea expressed also in cases such as the opening words of 3, 61 *uṣo vājena vājini* means hardly more than “O U., thou that art very rich in vāja”; 6, 63, 5 *pra māyābhir māyinā bhūtam*. 6, 11, 3 has a well-known type of Ausdrucksverstärkung *vepiṣṭho ... viprah*.

Sometimes the same god receives two epithets which have an element in common: 3, 3, 5 *candram agniṃ candraratham*. At the end of a stanza, and especially at the end of a hymn sound repetition may be uncommonly impressive: 1, 48, 16 ... *saṃ vājair vājiniṃvati*. Sometimes however the poet overdoes it: 6, 6, 7. – Compare also the above type 6, 22, 5 and 2, 40, 4 *puruvāram purukṣum rāyas poṣam* where the first adjective is an epithet, the second (“rich in cattle”) explains the exact meaning of the substantive.

Paronomastic repetition may be utilized for various other reasons. For instance, to indicate reciprocity of action or community of interests or of characteristics. As the enemies of the gods have, in many cases, the same weapons and expedients at their disposal as the gods themselves, both parties sometimes fight each other with their own weapons. Thus Indra is, R̥V. 1, 11, 7, stated to have conquered the wicked Suṣṇa, both of them applying māyā; in connection with the fiend the adjective is used (1, 56, 3), with the god the substantive: *māyābhir indra māyinam / svaṃ śuṣṇam avātirah*. Similarly, 1, 58, 9; 80, 7; 2, 11, 10; 4, 16, 19; 5, 30, 6; 9, 97, 55; 10, 147, 2 and 1, 32, 4 *ān māyinām amināḥ prota māyāḥ*; and elliptically, 3, 34, 3. This juxtaposition relating how a cunning enemy is scored off

by a champion of the distressed of superior power and ability was to all appearance much enjoyed by the audience. In 1, 9, 2 Indra and his favourite drink are twice given the same attributes: *em enam sṛjatā sute / mandim indrāya mandine / cakrim viśvāni cakraye* “lasset ihn los auf den Presztrank, (lasset) den berausenden für den rauschliebenden Indra (strömen), den wirksamen für den alles Wirkenden” (Geldner). The do ut possis dare principle which so outspokenly prevails as a common practice in addressing the gods is given emphasis in juxtapositions such as 5, 79, 4 *maghair maghoni* “(the sacrificers will present thee) O benevolent one (Uṣas) with their benefit”. A favourite type of sentence is 1, 58, 9 *bhavā maghavan maghavadbhyaḥ śarma* “be a shelter (refuge), O beneficent one, to those who are beneficent”. Cf. also 1, 174, 9; 2, 30, 10; 7, 90, 2; 8, 20, 10.

A contrast is emphasized by a paronomasia such as 6, 18, 4 *aradhrasya radhraturah* “of him who is not obedient (and) encourages the obedient”.

Paronomastic juxtaposition was also utilized to intimate that two persons or objects belong together, or that they, at least, belong to the same class: 1, 123, 10 *eṣi devi devam iyakṣamāṇam* the vocative after the finite verb is very common and actual, but this does not alter the fact that the unity of the couple Uṣas (*devi*) and Sūrya (*devam*) and the self-evident happening described in this verse “thou goest, O goddess, to the god who longs for thee” are thrown into relief by the insertion of the paronomastic epithet. In the line 1, 13, 11 addressed to the sacrificial post *ava sṛjā vanaspate / deva devebhyo haviḥ* the paronomastic epithet may with some exaggeration be said to serve also to suggest the idea of fellowship or co-operation of divine powers. The poet of 3, 36, 2 attributes to the soma draught as well as the priests ‘shaking’ it, manly strength or the strength of a bull: *piba vṛṣadhūtasya vṛṣṇaḥ*; cf. 1, 181, 8. The words 10, 16, 14 *śītike śītikāvati hlādike hlādikāvati* “thou cool one, possessor of coolness (of cool ones) refreshing one who art rich in refreshments” (see AV. 18, 3, 60) were explained variously.⁶⁷

It should however be borne in mind that the ancient poets had, no doubt in harmony with stylistic tendencies proper to the spoken language of their ancestors and contemporaries, a predilection for paronomastic constructions where modern usage would avoid these. When we would say that we have prepared food for the owner and his horses, the poet of R̥V. 3, 52, 7 preferred to express himself as follows: *cakrimā... / harivate haryaśvāya dhānāḥ* “we have prepared fried grain for the possessor of bay horses who brings his bay horses with him”. Sometimes the tendency

⁶⁷ See Whitney-Lanman, *Atharva-veda Saṃhitā*, p. 865; Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 149.

to combine paronomastic terms is so obvious that it is no use going into other reasons for the occurrence of a special epithet: 6, 44, 1 *yo rayivo rayim̐tamo / yo dyumnair dyumnavattamaḥ / somaḥ sūtaḥ*... Cf. also 6, 32, 3 although the words *puraḥ purohā*... *ruroja* express an apposition between the indestructible strongholds and the god who succeeds in destroying them; 1, 10, 12.

An easy device by which to express unity, solidarity, or community of interests is to apply the same attributes to the names of two persons or objects which are, in a communication, said to enter into certain relations with one another: R.V. 2, 35, 3 *tam ū śuciṃ śucayo dīdivāṃsam / apāṃ napātam pari tasthur āpaḥ*. See also st. 4. If a poet likes to emphasize something impossible he may resort to the construction exemplified by 7, 104, 20 *dipsanti dipsavo 'dābhyam* "der vor Schädigung sicherer (Indra) suchen die Schadensüchtigen zu schädigen".

It is noteworthy that, in part of the paronomastic combinations, the special predilection for pairs of compounds the former members of which are identical is also manifest⁶⁸ if the elements involved are epithets. Compare, in Homer, K 315 Δόλων... πολύχρυσος πολύχαλκος. Thus in 8, 93, 17 the second pāda is filled up by the two vocatives *puruṇāman puruṣṭuta* "O thou that hast many names, that art much praised"; cf. also 6, 34, 2 *puruhūto yaḥ purugūrta ṛbhvān* "who is the clever one, invoked by many, welcome to many"; 10, 86, 8 *subāho svaṅgure prthuṣṭo prthujāghane*. Cf. also 2, 21, 3 *satrāsāho janabhakṣo janaṃsahaḥ* "conquering in all respects, devouring men, subduing men". Other forms of sound repetition are not avoided: 7, 2, 4 *ghṛtapṛṣṭham priṣadvat*.

It seems interesting to remember also the well-known habit of ancient Indo-European authors⁶⁹ to add an adjective to so-called etymological word groups: in Greek, γ 87 ἀπώλετο λυγρῶ ὀλέθρῳ; Hdt. 6, 12 ἡμέας λυμáινεται λύμησι νηκέστοισι etc. Sometimes these adjectives impress us as typical epithets: 1, 167, 9 *te dhṛṣṇunā śavasā śūśuvāṃsaḥ* "being superior by bold prowess".

An epithet may be used as a separate word as well as a member of a compound. The adjective *vīlu-* "firm, sturdy" being used to qualify a variety of nominal concepts is applied to the axle of a chariot: 3, 53, 19 (appositional attribute; cf. 17); to weapons: 1, 39, 2 (predicatively); in 8, 88, 3 it typifies, together with *br̥hat-* "massive, firm, solid", the rocks (*adrayaḥ*; cf. 10, 45, 6 *vīluṃ cid adrim abhinat*). In a more general and substantivated sense: 10, 89, 6 etc. This adjective may also assume a

⁶⁸ See *Stylistic repetition in the Veda*, p. 266 f.

⁶⁹ See *Stylistic repetition in the Veda*, p. 265.

‘metaphorical’ sense: 4, 3, 14 “destroy the v. distress”; 8, 77, 9. In 8, 44, 27 Agni is *tigmajambha-* and *vīlu-* “characterized by sharp teeth and sturdy”; but 3, 29, 13 the same deity is “strong-jawed” (*vīlujambha-*, ἄπαξ).

Sometimes an epithet may assume another word so as to constitute a nominal phrase of the type exemplified by R̥V. 3, 9, 6 *taṃ tvā martā agr̥bh̥nata / devebhyo hav̥yavāhana* “the mortal beings kept thee back, who bears the oblations to the gods”; similarly, 10, 188, 3. Whereas *viśvavid-* “omniscient” is e.g. 9, 64, 7 an attribute of Soma, the same deity is 9, 28, 5 described as *viśvā dhāmāni viśvavit* “knowing all forms (conditions etc.) completely”. The same phenomenon may occur when the adjective is used predicatively. Agni who is 1, 76, 2 asked to be *adabdhaḥ puraetṛ-* “leader” of men, appears 3, 11, 5 as the *adābhyaḥ puraetā viśām*.

This possibility to amplify more or less conventional epithets enabled the poets also to vary the combinations in which they occur. Thus Soma is 9, 11, 8 called *manaścin manasas patiḥ* “knower of (hearts), lord of the mind” and 9, 28, 1 *viśvavin manasas patiḥ* “the all-knowing l. of the m.” Agni who is often spoken of as “domestic, belonging to the house, lord of the house” (*damūnas-*) is 7, 9, 2 and 10, 46, 6 called *viśām damūnāḥ* i.e. “lord of the clans”. Elsewhere this “son of strength” receives the epithet “the youngest”: 8, 75, 3 *yaviṣṭhya sahasaḥ sūno*; 6, 16, 6 he is a *dūto amartyaḥ*, elsewhere (e.g. 1, 74, 4) simply a *dūtaḥ*. Viṣṇu who is 3, 55, 10 described as a *gopāḥ* is 1, 22, 18 a *gopā adābhyaḥ* “a herdsman who is not to be deceived”. Soma is in a similar way in 9, 26, 4 styled *patiṃ vāco adābhyam* whereas he is 9, 101, 5 a “master of speech” (*p. v.*) without a qualification. In 10, 45, 5 which consists of a string of epithets among which the well-known phrase “son of power” may be regarded as representing the god’s name, the words *sūnuḥ sahasaḥ* are preceded, and no doubt qualified, by *vasuḥ* “bright” or “excellent”. The same phrase is 6, 5, 1 immediately followed by the noun *yuvānam* “the young (one)”.

Not infrequently a word which is in common usage as an epithet appears as the main element of a simile; that is to say: the idea expressed by it is ‘dressed up’ in the form of an image and clad in the form of a short and typical simile, taken from every-day life and bringing about a connection with familiar facts. A frequent use of fixed and appropriate epithets easily induces a poet to expand them into short similes which, in primitive tales, popular songs, epic narrations and religious hymns all over the world, are just as well means of underlining the important details, striking aspects or qualities of the persons, objects or occurrences de-

scribed, and of throwing into relief “das sinnlich Eindrucksvolle”.⁷⁰ “In den mehr höfischen Epen, wie Nibelungen, Gudrun... sind die Helden höchstens grôz oder wît zen brusten..., im späteren deutschen Volksepos zeigt sich ein ganz anderes Bild: ... ihre Arme (sind) dick wie ein Stamm und hart wie ein Stein, Schenkel und Füße wie die eines Riesen...; als ein want ist ein Schild oder armdick..., schnell wie der Wind sind die Pferde”.⁷¹ Thus *bold* is amplified into *as bold as a lion*, *brave* into *as brave as a prince*. These short similes are, moreover, as a rule, more expressive and vigorous, though often at the same time more popular and familiar, than logically equivalent adverbial phrases: compare *he is as deaf as a post*, or *he is as blind as a bat*, to *he hears with great difficulty* or *he is very blind*. Although many of these expressions have assumed the character of fixed phrases and traditional sayings they originally were similes, having their root in the concrete way of thinking and speaking of the masses. In ancient literature it is often impossible to know whether particular instances still appealed to the feelings of the authors and their audiences as real similes, or if they had more or less been stereotyped.

These close relations between epithets and similes are not foreign to other ancient literatures. In ancient Frisian laws gold is often characterized as “red” or “fire-red”. These adjectives imply comparisons: “fire-red gold” means gold that is as red as fire, and even red gold is an embryonic simile. “Die Worte “rotes” Gold liefern das vollständige Material zu einem Vergleiche; man bracht nur ein “wie” dazwischenschieben und man hat die beliebten Vergleichen des Volksliedes: rot wie Blut, weisz wie Schnee, grün wie Klee und schwarz wie die Nacht”.⁷² Remarkably enough, these law-texts do not contain complete similes of this type.

Thus the poet of R.V. 9, 3, 4 in describing soma pressed out and strained, fancies it as a conqueror of valuable things, “like a hero with his soldiers”: *eṣa viśvāni vāryā / śūro yann iva satvabhiḥ / pavamānaḥ śiṣāsati*. Other instances are 1, 158, 3; 9, 16, 6; 89, 3. Not infrequently the simile is as short as possible; that is to say: the epithet is accompanied by one of the particles *na* or *iva* alone: 9, 76, 2 *śūro na dhatta āyudhā*

⁷⁰ See also *Remarks on similes in Sanskrit literature* (Leiden, 1949), p. 21 ff.

⁷¹ L. Wolf, “Der groteske und hyperbolische Stil des Mittelhochdeutschen Volksepos”, *Palaestra*, 25 (1903), p. 20 ff.; cf. also R. Petsch, “Volksdichtung und volkstümliches Denken”, *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde*, II (1903), p. 208; R. van der Meulen, *Die Naturvergleiche in den Liedern und Totenklagen der Litauer*, Thesis Leiden, 1907, p. 6 ff.; C. G. N. de Vooy, “Vergelijkingen in de taal”, in *Verzamelde Taalkundige Opstellen* (1925), p. 184 ff.

⁷² Borchling, *Poesie und Humor im friesischen Recht*, p. 22.

gabhastyoḥ “like a hero he takes the weapons in his hands”; 10, 69, 5; cf. also the type 70, 10 *śūro na yudhyann ava no nida spaḥ*. Or the simile consists of a noun, a particle and an adjective: 9, 87, 7 *śūro na satvā*; 94, 3.

The Aśvins who are often called bulls are 8, 87, 2 and 4 compared to buffalos (*gaura-*): “drink (come) like buffalos”. Cf. also 1, 119, 10.

Thus the noun *atithi-* “guest” which is a constant epithet of Agni is as a rule a member of a phrase: “guest of the homesteads”, “dear guest” etc. In a few cases it is used alone. In 1, 73, 1 it is, accompanied by an adjective, an element of a simile: *syonāśīr atithir na prīṇānaḥ* “... sich wohl fühlt wie der behaglich ruhende Gast”; 8, 19, 8 Agni is praised like an intimate guest. Varuṇa repeatedly receives the epithet *māyin-*, but 10, 99, 10; 147, 5 it reads, in a description of Indra: *varuṇo na māyī* “(I. is) endowed with the power to achieve the marvellous like V.”: here Varuṇa is obviously regarded as the approved model of those possessing *māyā*. – The goddess Dawn is 1, 113, 2 described as *ruśatī śvetyā* “brilliant and white”, whereas the stanza 6, 64, 1 compares her to glistening waves: *apām normayo ruśantaḥ*.

These similes may occur in groups: 6, 48, 14 *taṃ va indraṃ na sukratum / varuṇam iva māyinaṃ / aryamaṇaṃ na mandraṃ sṛprabhojasam / viṣṇum na stuṣa ādiśe* (cf. also 8, 1, 2).

Among the gods who at times receive the epithet *taraṇi-* “moving forwards, persevering, efficient, energetic” is Indra: 1, 121, 6, who is on the other hand not rarely regarded as *havya-* “to be invoked”: 1, 100, 1; 101, 6; 4, 24, 2; moreover, he is in 5, 33, 5 described as *prabhṛtheṣu cāruḥ* “agreeable, esteemed, welcome to ritual performances”. In 3, 49, 3 the same motifs recur, but they are amplified into similes: *sahāvā pṛtsu taraṇir nārvā / ... / bhago na kāre havyo matīnām / piteva cāruḥ suhevo vayodhāḥ* “of overwhelming power in battles, like an unremitting courser... to be invoked by prayers like Bhaga in a combat,⁷³ esteemed like a father, easy to be invoked, giver of youthful strength”. One might compare also 5, 33, 5 where a warrior is described as *bhago na havyaḥ prabhṛtheṣu cāruḥ*, and 6, 52, 6 stating, with reference to Agni, that this god is *suhavaḥ piteva*. Some other quotations may follow to illustrate the ease with which single epithets are amplified into similes in a variety of combinations: 6, 44, 3 *turo na svābhir ūtibhiḥ*; 1, 79, 1; 10, 78, 3. Similes may be added also to other adjectives, e.g. to those determining a verb: 9, 10, 1.

When in the concluding stanza of 1, 144 (st. 7) Agni is with regard to his

⁷³ For *kāra-* see Geldner, in R. Pischel and K. F. Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, I (1889), p. 119 ff.

loveliness compared to a *pitumān kṣayaḥ* “a dwelling abounding in meat and drink”, there is no reason to speak of an epithetic function of the adjective, although the entire expression is, as to its function, related to an epithet. The expression seems to have been proverbial: see also 10, 64, 11.

Attributive adjectives forming part of a simile may essentially help to bring out the *tertium comparationis* or to specify the sensuous impressions produced by the movements or activities which the two happenings have in common: R̥V. 3, 5, 8 Agni is stated to go in search of room in the sticks in which he was produced like the bright (or flashing) waters which flow downward: the fire in taking possession of the wood increases in brightness.

Cases such as 2, 4, 7 cannot be said to contain epithets in the proper sense of the term: *paśur naiti svayur agopāḥ* “he (Agni) goes like a head of cattle left to itself (so as to find his way without the help of men), and without a herdsman.” The addition of *agopāḥ* is explicative: only when there is no cowherd the animal may be considered *svayu-*.

It is worth while to study also passages such as 5, 56, 3 *ṛkṣo na vo marutaḥ śimīvāṃ / amo dudhro gaur iva bhīmayuḥ* “euer Andrang, O M., ist wütig wie ein Bär, furchtbar wie ein störriger Stier” (Geldner): here the second comparison contains an epithet.

A point of no mean interest concerns the frequent characterization of a person or object by giving its name a place in a simile. It may for instance be inferred from 10, 76, 5 that the god of wind who was the first to receive, in the early morning, an oblation of Soma, was for that reason considered fond of that divine beverage. In that stanza the pressing stones are described as follows: *divaś cid ā vo 'mavattarebhyo / vibhvanā cid āśvapastarebhyaḥ / vāyoś cid ā somarabhastarebhyo / agneś cid arca pitukṛttarebhyaḥ* “... who are even stronger than the firmament, acting even more quickly than V., who desire soma more vehemently than Vāyu, who prepare more nourishment than Agni”.

It is remarkable how rarely epithets are, comparatively speaking, added to nouns which would induce poets of other epochs and other cultural milieus to use flowery and expressive adjectives. Most occurrences of the word *vāta-* “wind” are, for instance, left unqualified, and the epithets which do accompany it are in the majority of cases given a place in a simile. Thus 2, 39, 5 it reads *vātevājuryā* “like the wind, not subject to old age”. That the wind was, quite naturally, regarded as “moving swiftly and boisterously” may appear from 1, 79, 1 where Agni, probably as lightning, is said to be *ahir dhunir vāta iva dhrajīmān* “a noisy serpent

like the boisterously impetuous⁷⁴ wind”, and 1, 163, 11 where the mind of a horse is compared to the wind, both being *dhrajīmat-*: *cittam vāta iva dhrajīmān*. The boisterous noise of the wind was no doubt characterized by the adjective *dhuni-*. In 10, 22, 4 Vāta’s horses receive that epithet, and 10, 78, 3 it accompanies, in a simile, the name of the Maruts, gods of wind and storm: *vātāso na ye dhunayo jigatnavah* “those who boisterous like the winds go quickly”. That the wind was considered a pattern of haste and speed appears from 9, 97, 52 where a horse is said to be swift like the wind (*vāto na jūtaḥ*, cf. 4, 17, 12), and 10, 95, 2 *durāpanā vāta ivāham asmi* “difficult to be caught I am like the wind”. Indra’s horses are 8, 49, 8 (Vāl. 1) credited with the attribute of powerfulness: *vātā iva prasakṣiṇaḥ* “overwhelming like the wind”. Curiously enough the Maruts are also 10, 78, 2 compared to the wind: *vātāso na svayujaḥ*: it is indeed a striking characteristic of the wind that it yokes itself. Passages such as 1, 187, 4 though showing that the wind was viewed as spreading in space, do not lie within the scope of this inquiry; cf. also 4, 38, 3.

The wind is, on the other hand, whilst occurring in a simile accompanied by an epithet in 4, 17, 12 *yo asya śuṣmam nuhukair iyarti / vāto na jūta stanayadbhir abhraiḥ* “who incessantly excites his impetuosity like the wind hurried by the thundering clouds” (cf. the above-quoted 9, 97, 52). Similes of the type 10, 125, 8 *aham eva vāta iva pra vāmy / ārabhamāṇā bhuvanāni viśvā*, however instructive from other points of view, must be left out of consideration here. Subjoining, for the sake of completeness, those occurrences of *vāta-* and an epithet which do not occur in comparisons, the following passages can be mentioned: 7, 35, 4 *iṣira-* “quick, vigorous” (inserted for the sake of versification); 40, 6 *vṛṣṭim parijmā vāto dadātu* “the omnipresent wind must bring rain” (conventional epithet); 10, 115, 4 fire is not impeded by the *vātāḥ... acyutāḥ* “the unwavering winds”. Cf. also 4, 7, 11; 10, 169, 1 (semi-predicative). In 5, 46, 4 Viṣṇu and Vāta are characterized as *asridhaḥ* which is usually translated by “not erring, not failing”, but then there are no indications in the context why this epithet should be applied to them. Nor does Geldner’s “die keinen Unfall erleiden” help us much further. I would therefore translate the epithet by “who have no hostility (towards us)” i.e. “who are friendly (to us)”, because these gods are said to bring pleasure and delight. R̥V. 1, 25, 9 the air when set in motion is described as *uru- ṛṣva- br̥hat-* “wide, high, firm”.

In order to gain a deeper insight into the relation between epithets and comparisons a digression may be made here on those similes in which

⁷⁴ : *vegavān*, Mādhava.

the object with which entities mentioned in the text are compared is a horse. In a considerable number of cases the name of the animal is left unqualified: 3, 27, 14 Agni conveys the gods like a horse (*aśvo na deva-vāhanah*); 4, 10, 1 the sacrifice should be made successful with words of praise like a horse; 8, 2, 2 soma is said to be cleansed in water like a horse; 9, 71, 6 *aśvo na devām apy eti yajñiyah*: “Sāyaṇa sieht in dem Vergleich nur die Eile als Tert. comp. Oder wie das Rosz ans Ziel. Auch könnte auf das Roszopfer angespielt werden. Vgl. bes. 1, 162, 21 b”.⁷⁵ Also 10, 75, 7. These similes are not only to elucidate properties of the object compared, but also to throw light upon the way in which a process is executed: 8, 49, 5 “(come) quickly, impelled like a horse by those pressing the soma”. In other cases the substantive expressing the object with which something is compared is accompanied by an attribute. R.V. 4, 2, 8 Agni is besought to help him who is disposed to give like an *aśvah... hemyāvān* “with golden trappings” (?);⁷⁶ 6, 3, 4 the same deity is compared to a horse that is bridled. Two of these similes are sometimes joined together: 9, 109, 10 ... *aśvo na nikto vājī dhanāya*. Part of the attributes used in this way may be considered to come under the heading epithets. In 7, 7, 1 Agni is incited like a *aśva- vājīn-* “a vāja-winning steed”; 7, 70, 1 the seat (?) of the Aśvins is said to be like such an animal, “which carries success on its back” (?: *śunapṛṣṭha-*).⁷⁷

In other passages the appearance of an epithet, without being expanded into a regular simile, gives occasion to a so-called ‘figurative’ use or rather to an equalization or identification: R.V. 9, 15, 1 *eṣa dhiyā yāty anvyā śūro rathebhīr āśubhiḥ* “this one (soma being purified) with proficiency, marches out, through the fine(strainer), a hero with swift chariots”; 9, 96, 1 *pra senānīḥ śūro... gavyann eti*. The term metaphor is, in my opinion, not applicable as long as an equalization of this type is the expression of something that is believed to be an objective fact. This belief varies according to cultural and other circumstances. If stars are really considered to be the light of the virtuous who go to the heavenly worlds, a statement to this effect should not be called a ‘metaphor’.⁷⁸ This type of expression is very popular and belongs to ordinary speech

⁷⁵ Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, III, p. 64.

⁷⁶ “with a golden girth” (Sāyaṇa), “impetuous” (Mādhava).

⁷⁷ i.e. *sukhapṛṣṭhaḥ* (Mādhava), and *atyantavipulatvāvārūḍhānām sukhakarapṛṣṭha-bhāga ity arthaḥ* (Sāyaṇa).

⁷⁸ Cf. H. Weller, “Zu einigen Metaphern des Rig-Veda”, *Zs. für Indol. u. Iran.*, 5, p. 178; the same, “Über Vergleichen im Rig-Veda”, *Festgabe-Garbe* (Leipzig, 1927), p. 54 ff.; G. S. Overdiep, *Stilistische grammatica van het moderne Nederlandsch* (Zwolle, 1937), p. 175 ff.

in many languages, often so as to be really metaphorical in nature and functions. “La langue populaire abonde en transpositions de cette espèce. Chaque jour ce sont de nouvelles trouvailles. Un homme volage est un papillon; étourdi, une girouette; grand, un asperge... Les manières d’être de l’homme sont si fréquemment exprimées de cette façon qu’on remarque à peine les images auxquelles elles ont donné lieu: Corn., Pol. 1442 et lions au combat, ils meurent en agneaux...”⁷⁹ Although we often use similes to translate the more or less metaphorical expressions under consideration – thus “we walk like inflated bags” is an equivalent of the Latin Petr. 42, 2 *utres inflati ambulamus*⁸⁰ – it is, neither from the psychological nor from the historical point of view, correct to regard these as abridged similes.⁸¹ This is not to deny that a poet sometimes passes from comparison to metaphor or the reverse: R̥V. 2, 3, 6 “night and day ... like two gay weavers... two good milk-cows, rich in milk”; 10, 69, 6 *śūra iva dhr̥ṣṇuś cyavano janānām*.

Whereas it may fairly be assumed that modern writers want to be consistent and attempt to use only adjectives which are directly appropriate to the objects described, it must now be considered an established fact that ancient poets expressing themselves in a traditional style and drawing on a rich store of conventional phrases in meaning appropriate to the subjects with which they proposed to deal and in form adapted to the needs of their verses, did not necessarily proceed along the same lines: their descriptions were not always in accordance with real facts. Moving in traditional circles and onesidedly intent on magico-religious conceptions and considering a world to be governed by unseen powers and inhabited by mythical beings these poets attributed human and earthly qualities to potencies and divinities, superhuman characteristics to men, effacing the boundary lines between the normal and the abnormal, between the natural and the supernatural. Hence also the large number of metaphors: Agni the god of fire, or fire in its different aspects has glowing hairs (*śociṣkeśa-*) and sharp or burning jaws (1, 58, 5 *tapurjambha-*), he is beautifully-tongued (1, 14, 7 *sujihva-*), and has a tawny beard (5, 7, 7 *hiriśmaśru-*), but elsewhere he is described as footless and headless (4, 1, 11). Sometimes he is said to have three tongues (3, 20, 2), sometimes he has seven of them (VS. 17, 79); his eyes are one (3, 26, 7), four (1, 31, 13), or a

⁷⁹ F. Brunot, *La pensée et la langue* (Paris, 1936), p. 77 f.; see also K. Paul, *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte*⁶ (Halle/S., 1920), par. 68 ff.

⁸⁰ Cf. J. B. Hofmann, *Lateinische Umgangssprache*² (Heidelberg, 1936), p. 158.

⁸¹ For details see *Remarks on similes*, p. 113 f.; A. H. Gardiner, *The theory of speech and language* (Oxford, 1932), p. 167.

thousand (1, 79, 12) in number. Being often likened to various animals he is frequently considered a bull (e.g. 1, 58, 5), but elsewhere he is alluded to as a steed (e.g. 6, 12, 6), or as a bird, the eagle of the sky (7, 15, 4), and as dwelling in the waters he resembles the aquatic bird the goose (*haṁsa-*: 1, 65, 9). It is true that in most cases it is the god's functions rather than his outward appearance that is indicated by these images and metaphors.⁸² Agni's spears, that is to say his tongues or flames, are 10, 87, 23 called *tapuragra-*, i.e. "burning-pointed". This god himself is 1, 79, 2 meant by the expression *kṛṣṇo... vṛṣabhaḥ* "the black bull". "The black horror" (*kṛṣṇam abhvam*) is 1, 92, 5 a designation of night and darkness, 1, 140, 5 of smoke, which in 1, 164, 47 is called *kṛṣṇam niyānam* "the black path".

The soma juice after having flowed into the tub is sometimes called a sea, but the word *samudra-* receives in 9, 29, 3 and 9, 61, 15 the attribute *ukthya-* "worthy of praise": *vardhā samudram ukthyam*. The earth is 1, 160, 3 described as the *dhenum...* *prśnim* "the spotted milch-cow". In 9, 29, 2 Soma is said to have been born as *jyotiḥ...* *ukthyam* "praise-worthy light"; in 1, 121, 8 it is called *harim...* *mandinam* "the inspiring yellow-coloured (drink)". In connection with the flowing Soma the words *drapsa-* "drop" and *ūrmi-* "wave" sometimes receive the epithet "sweet, tasteful": cf. e.g. 9, 85, 10; 86, 2 *madhumanta ūrmayaḥ*. In 3, 7, 1 *parikṣitā pitarā* "the surrounding parents" stands for "heaven and earth". The bay steeds of the chariot of the sun (1, 50, 8) are (st. 9) called "the seven pure or bright (*śundhyu-*) daughters of the chariot".

In a similar way rain is 10, 12, 3 called *divyam ghṛtam* "ghee coming from heavens", but this expression is followed by the more or less explicative *vāḥ* "water". – Indra is 1, 177, 1 introduced as *carṣanīprā vṛṣabho janānām* "the bull of men who satisfies men (with possessions)". In 1, 186, 6 the same compound qualifies him appositionally; cf. also 3, 34, 7; 6, 19, 1 (predicatively). Cf. also 4, 1, 12. – Whereas 10, 73, 11 suppliants approaching the god Indra are called *vayaḥ suparṇāḥ* "birds with beautiful wings" they are compared to these animals in 8, 21, 5 (*vayo yathā...*).

This use of epithets is indeed a great help in making the sense of figurative expressions intelligible to the audience. When, in 6, 71, 5, Savitar, the Sun, is said to have lifted up his golden arms, which are of beautiful appearance (i.e. lovely), it is obvious that his rays are meant. Savitar, indeed, raises aloft his strong golden 'arms' with which he diffuses splendour, blesses and arouses all beings, and which extend to the ends of

⁸² For particulars see also Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 88 f.

the earth: 6, 71, 1 “there god S. has raised his golden arms in order to give his directions (i.e. in order to impel all beings and all things)”; 7, 45, 2. R̥V. 2, 38, 2; 4, 53, 3; 4 no epithets are added. The same adjective *supratīka-* “of beautiful appearance” is 3, 29, 5 applied to the clever and inspired sage who is to be kindled by friction: these attributes leave no doubt whatever that Agni is meant who is e.g. 1, 94, 7 and 7, 10, 3 described as *supratīka-*. Cf. also 1, 140, 10 *śvasīvān vṛṣabhaḥ* “snorting bull” with reference to Agni; 1, 151, 5; 2, 32, 3; 6, 48, 11; 9, 101, 13 *apa śvānam arādhasam* (i.e. the miser) *hata*. R̥V. 2, 27, 11 and 14 the *abhayaṃ jyotiḥ* does not refer to ordinary light but to the light of salvation and life eternal, which of course admits of the modification “safe, free from any danger”.

‘Linguistic superstition’ makes comparatively ‘primitive’ men of all times and nations avoid the use of certain words under certain circumstances – during war, when out hunting or fishing, during the performance of rites etc. – because they fear the anger of the gods or demons if they do not scrupulously observe the rules regulating the use of words. Terms for a great variety of ideas placed under tabu, such as death, certain limbs or parts of the body, powerful beings etc. etc. were often avoided or replaced by other expressions, circumlocutions etc.: thus the grave is 7, 89, 1 called “the house made of earth or clay” (*mṛṇmayam grham*). If, in expressions of this type, the adjective is not distinctive, but denotative of a well-known aspect or property of the nominal idea it may be included in this chapter. It is however very difficult to decide whether in a particular passage the paraphrasis is due to tabu or to a purely traditional tendency to replace single nouns by circumlocutions in order to emphasize some outstanding characteristics of the concept under discussion. In 6, 46, 11 *parṇino didyavaḥ*, lit. “the winged missiles” is a more or less circumlocutional expression for “arrows”. “The sweet drop” *madhumān drapsaḥ* is another name for the soma beverage: 9, 69, 2. Soma is in 9, 101, 1 meant by the expression *sutāya mādayitnave* “the intoxicating pressed drink”. Agni is 4, 1, 8 called “the hotā with the golden chariot and the delightful tongue”, and the Maruts 5, 54, 3 “men illustrious by lightning”. In 2, 23, 15 *draviṇam citram*, lit. “the excellent or wonderful property” refers to the treasure of wisdom by which the inspired poets and eulogists are famous. The identity of the divine being indicated by a generic name and an attribute is not always evident or beyond doubt. According to Sāyaṇa the *asuro mayobhuḥ* “the asura who causes pleasure” of 5, 42, 1 is Vāyu, according to Geldner⁸³ Aryaman.

⁸³ Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 42.

At times an epithet that is very common in connection with a definite god is incidentally applied to one or more of his colleagues. Thus the adjective γαῖόχορ “earth-carrying”, a well-known epithet of Poseidon, is incidentally added to the name of Zeus (Aesch. Suppl. 816) or of the goddess Artemis (Soph. O.R. 161). The epithet *śociṣkeśa-* “flame-haired” though usually belonging to the god of fire is 1, 50, 8 quite intelligibly added to the name of the divine Sun, Sūrya. Thus *pāvaka-* “pure, purifying” is so often used to characterize the god of fire that it may replace his name (e.g. 3, 21, 2). In 1, 13, 1 the god, being addressed as a purifying hotar, is requested to perform the sacrificial rites (cf. 5, 26, 1; 3, 17, 1; 6, 15, 7); in 1, 95, 11 and 2, 7, 4 to shine (cf. 6, 48, 7); in 3, 10, 8 to grant by shining brilliant heroism; in 5, 4, 7 he is called the *p.* of auspicious radiance (*bhadraśoce*); in 8, 44, 28 he is asked to be gracious. Still more than these passages 5, 23, 4 shows that the quality expressed by the word *pāvaka-* is beneficent: Agni who disposes of the strength which conquers enemies is implored to shine abundantly in the houses of those speaking. Agni, the immortal one with bright rays, the radiant and *p.* one, the author of 7, 15, 10 states, scares the evil powers away. In 8, 60, 11 he is asked for wealth that increases the energy. Cf. also 7, 3, 9 f. “bring us felicity”. Sometimes the adjective is added in a passage dealing with Agni’s visibility at night (5, 7, 4; 6, 10, 4). Elsewhere, e.g. 1, 60, 2; 142, 3; 194, 1 the epithet seems to have assumed a fixed character. The same epithet is however 4, 51, 2 applied to the brilliant and beneficent Dawns, where the *śuṣayah pāvakāḥ* i.e. the bright and pure or purifying ones while beginning to shine have opened the doors of darkness’ enclosure. From Dawn the epithet has, 6, 49, 3, been transferred to Night, when mentioned together with her partner. It is more difficult to say why Sarasvatī in a stanza (1, 3, 10) that does not refer to her character as a river goddess should be called *pāvakā*. Probably the adjective may have developed into a general honorific intimating the absence of evil, darkness and uncleanness: cf. also 1, 50, 6; 142, 6, etc.

An attribute almost peculiar to Savitar is *agohya-* “unconcealable”:⁸⁴ in 1, 110, 3 he confers immortality upon the R̥bhus, who (1, 116, 11; 13, 4, 33, 7) slept in his house. The word seems to have been largely stereotyped and is practically a proper name, or a conventional substitute for it. In 8, 98, 4 it is attached to Indra’s name, and 10, 64, 3, in all probability, to Pūṣan’s (no indications in the context).

We now come to some questions concerning the position, the number,

⁸⁴ According to Geldner Agohya was a mythical figure and the subject of a ‘Sage’, but identified with Savitar; see *Rig-veda übersetzt*, I², p. 142; 221; 463; III, p. 235.

and the distribution of epithets. In a considerable frequency of cases epithets are, in the Ṛgveda, not alone, but accompanied, in the same stanza, by other words of the same class and function. These pairs and multitudes and the various combinations ensuing from them are worth considering.

Some fine examples of a well-balanced distribution of the epithets over the pādas of the stanza may be mentioned first: 6, 48, 7 *brhadbhir agne arcibhiḥ / śukreṇa deva śociṣā / bharadvāje samidhāno yaviṣṭhya / revan naḥ śukra dīdihi / dyumat pāvaka dīdihi*; 8, 24, 9 *indra yathā hy asti te / aparītaṃ nṛto śavaḥ / amṛkta ratiḥ puruhūta dāśuṣe*. Cf. also 6, 44, 1; 53, 1. Similar facts may be ascertained with regard to stanzas consisting of more than one sentence: 10, 7, 1 *svasti no divo agne pṛthivyā / viśvāyur dhehi yajathāya deva / sacemahi tava dasma praketair / uruṣya na urubhir deva śamsaiḥ*. This renewal of the contact between the eulogist and the god is, in these cases, easily intelligible. In other stanzas containing a plurality of these words the distribution of the epithets is not characterized by the same concinnity; cf. e.g. 1, 48, 1.

A study of the distribution of the epithets over the stanza presents us indeed with a complicated picture. There is to begin with the sentence type exemplified by ṚV. 1, 16, 8 *viśvam it savanaṃ sutam / indro madāya gachati / vṛtrahā somapītaye*, adequately translated by Geldner: “zu jeder ausgepreszten Trankspende kommt I., um sich zu berauschen, der Vṛta-töter zum Somatrunk”. Here the words *i. m.* are so to say duplicated by *v. s.* Double expression of ‘the same thought’ is not rare in these texts. It is not only a device in constructing well-balanced stanzas, but also a favourite means of dwelling upon different aspects of an event. In qualifying Indra as the killer of Vṛtra and adding the name of the soma the poet finds an opportunity to specify the true character of this intoxication (*mada-*). The stanza 8, 101, 5 may be quoted to show that a recapitulative pāda was sometimes added to an analytic expression of a thought, the elements of which were more or less harmoniously distributed over two pādas: *pra mitrāya prāryamṇe / sacathyam ṛtāvaso / varūthyam varuṇe chandyaṃ vaca / stotraṃ rājasu gāyata*.

An attempt to survey all types of distribution would carry us too far. It may suffice to draw attention to some interesting types. In 8, 37, 1 *predam brahma vṛtratūryeṣv āvitha / pra sunvataḥ śacīpata / indra viśvābhir ūtibhiḥ* the preverb belonging to *āvitha* is anaphorically repeated, the adjunct *v. ā.*, amplifying the verb is placed at the end of the second part of the structure, and the proper name preceded by the epithet, but separated from it by a caesura forms a sort of counterbalance to the

verbal group. There can be hardly any doubt that this distribution of the elements of the sentence was largely determined by the exigencies of versification. In 8, 43, 1 the proper name preceded and followed by epithets has been intercalated between the attributive pronoun and the noun which is the subject of the sentence: *ime viprasya vedhaso / 'gner aṣṭṭayajvanah / gira stomāsa īrate*. Stanza 16 of the same sūkta may exemplify the tendency to place name and epithets together so as to fill up one or two quarters: *agne bhrātaḥ sahasṛta / rodidaśva śucivrata / imam stomam juṣasva me*. See also 3, 5, 7c; 6, 17, 13b; 7, 1, 8b which consist entirely of epithets. R.V. 8, 44, 10 is an example of a stanza which consists almost completely of epithetical characterizations: *vipram hotāram adruham / dhūmaketum vibhāvasum / yajñānām ketum īmahe*. Cf. 8, 97, 10; 10, 103, 5; 152, 2. In 5, 26, 1 the name and one epithet open the stanza, another epithet follows in the second pāda, two instrumental adjuncts are distributed over two successive pādas, the verb group fills up the last quarter: *agne pāvaka rociṣā / mandrayā deva jihvayā / ā devān vakṣi yakṣi ca*.

To turn now to another important point already mentioned in passing, namely the very frequent occurrence of a plurality of epithets in one and the same stanza, a random example of which is R.V. 8, 24, 8 *vayam te asya vṛtrahan / vidyāma śūra navyasaḥ / vaso spārhasya puruhūta rādhasaḥ*. In accordance with a frequent procedure⁸⁵ the main elements of the sentence are, in this stanza and often elsewhere, distributed over all the pādas, each of them being filled up by words which are, for a complete understanding of the thought alone, of minor importance. As is shown in another section of this publication the epithets, classed with the terms of lesser importance, are far from being always expletive. The question may however arise whether they should, in particular cases, be viewed as single items, distributed, one by one, over the stanza, or regarded as forming a unity, as constituting one composite group of attributes and qualifications which was, like the other words of the sentence, distributed over the pādas. For translators this question – whichever way the answer goes in particular cases – is of practical interest. Was, for instance, Geldner right in placing together at the end of the sentence all three epithets contained in the above stanza: “wir möchten diese deine neueste gütige begehrenswerte Freigebigkeit kennen lernen, tapferer V., Vielgerufener”? He does not, for the rest, always proceed according to the same principle, for he translates for instance 5, 4, 8 *asmākam agne adhvaram / juṣasva sahasaḥ*

⁸⁵ For which see a book on the relations between syntax and versification, which is in course of preparation.

sūno / triṣadhasṭha havyam by “nimm, Agni, mit unserem Opfer für lieb, Sohn der Kraft, mit unserer Spende, der du drei Stätten hast!”, although the distribution of the appellations runs parallel with that of the elements of the framework of the sentence, one of which is doubled (*adhvaram: havyam*). There seems to be sound grounds for contending that the distribution of names and epithets over the stanza cannot be completely identified with similar structural tendencies obtaining with regard to the elements of the sentence structure, i.e. of the frame-work of the sentence. The latter constitute a whole, no part of which can, generally speaking, be left out; the names and epithets may from an intellectual point of view be dispensed with. Being not in the last place a means of establishing or re-establishing the contact between the speaker and the divine person addressed or a means of recalling the addressee to the audience, their appearance at different places of the stanza is not only intelligible but almost a necessity.

In reading the long eulogies in which many sūktas of the Ṛgveda abound one can hardly prevent oneself from becoming convinced that these poets not rarely endeavoured to collect a number of epithets representing various sides of a god's character so as to sketch his personality – or rather: his functions – in a few vivid and pregnant words, that is to say: so as to revivify the power present in these terms and to stimulate the divine being into a display of the very qualities indicated by the descriptive nouns and adjectives. Some examples are: 1, 44, 5 *staviṣyāmi tvām ahaṃ / viśvasyāmṛta bhojana agne trātāram amṛtam / miyedhya yajīṣṭhaṃ havyavāhana*; 2, 21, 4 Indra's character is described as follows: “the obstinate bull, death for the impetuous, not capable of being understood, sublime of unattainable wisdom, encouraging the weak, piercing, strengthened, broad...”; 1, 117, 9 gives us a picture of a remarkable horse: “... swift, winning thousands, gaining *vāja*-, irresistible, killing serpents, renowned, conquering”. In an enumeration of the qualities of the artisan of the gods, Tvaṣṭar, his hands, arms and skill are not forgotten. Agni is 1, 141, 7 depicted as “burning, black-winged, of pure birth, going without ways”, 1, 144, 7 as “charming, true to his own inherent condition, born at the proper time, resourceful, turning to all sides, conspicuous, pleasant...” and 5, 4, 3 as “the wise lord of the communities of men,⁸⁶ the pure, clear, whose back is brilliant with ghee, the omniscient...”. Cf. e.g. also 1, 175, 2; 5, 8, 6; 6, 51, 4; 8, 2, 38; 10, 3, 5. Sometimes all

⁸⁶ As the ancient Indo-European languages often preferred an adjective where we would use a nominal group consisting of two substantives Geldner's translation “der menschlichen” is less adequate.

epithets point to the same side of a god's character: 5, 54, 3 it reads, in connection with the Maruts: "men rejoicing in lightning, whose weapons are thunderbolts, impetuous as wind, shaking mountains..., having a roaring onset, fierce, exceedingly creative"; 8, 24, 1 Indra is "most manly, courageous" (*nṛtamāya dhr̥ṣṇave*); 10, 103, 2 "victorious, fighting, difficult to be felled, courageous" (*jīṣṇunā yutkāreṇa duścyavanena dhr̥ṣṇunā*). Elsewhere some of the main characteristics of a divine figure are brought to the fore: 8, 21, 10 (Indra) *haryaśvaṃ satpatiṃ carṣaṇīśaḥ*...; 5, 35, 1 *carṣaṇīśaḥ sasnīm vājeṣu duṣṭaram*; 9, 62, 29; cf. also such combinations of appositions and epithets as, e.g., 8, 53, 1.

It cannot be doubted that the main function of a string of epithets of similar sense and purport is, in the R̥gveda, the confirmation of the qualities conveyed by these, that they were inserted in the hymns in order to strengthen the god, to enhance his power, to express the belief of the speaker and his audience in the reality of the divine being's might, valour, fighting spirit, generosity etc., to inspire confidence in his helpfulness and readiness to reward those who worship him. This character of a more or less extended chain of epithets is especially obvious in dedications and opening stanzas in which no special exploit or activity of the god is commemorated, no particular wish formulated. Compare e.g. 1, 61, 1 *asmā id u pra tavase turāya / prayo na harmi stomam māhināya / ṛcīṣamāyādhriḡava oham / indrāya brahmāṇi rātātāma* "to him, the strong, the energetic, I stretch out the eulogy like an object of delight, to him the powerful one..."; 6, 32, 1 *apūrvyā purutamāny asmai / mahe vīrāya tavase turāya / virapśīne vajriṇe śaṃtamāni / vacāṃsy āsa sthavīrāya takṣam*, but also in other stanzas: 6, 49, 12. A very significant expression of belief in the god's power is also 6, 18, 4 *sad id dhi te tuvijātasya manye / sahaḥ sahiṣṭha turatas turasya / ugram ugrasya tavaśas tavīyo / 'radhrasya radhraturo babhūva* "for I believe that thy overwhelming power is real, O thou of energetic nature, conquering one, strong and overpowering one; a mighty creative power belongs to the mighty, stronger than strong, to him who while not being pliable himself furthers the pliable".

The effect of the formulas desired by the Aryan community, the purposes and intentions of the poets with a view to which they compose and recite these stanzas are not infrequently brought forward with perfect frankness: 1, 61, 13 *asyed y pra brūhi pūrvyāṇi / turasya karmāṇi navya ukthaiḥ / yudhe yad iṣṇāna āyudhāny / ṛghāyamāṇo niriṇāti śatrūn* i.e. "declare afresh his former deeds by eulogies, that he will smite the enemy". New songs are, because of an inherent freshness and vigour, especially

suitable to attain one's object.⁸⁷ Hence also such laudatory effusions as 7, 22, 5 *na te giro api mṛṣye turasya / na suṣṭutim asuryasya vidvān / sadā te nāma svayaśo vivakmi*.

It may safely be contended that these accumulations of attributes were also utilized to characterize lifeless objects or more or less 'abstract' ideas. In 6, 49, 15 the author implores the gods to give wealth (*rayim*) which is *rathyaṃ carṣaṇiprām puruvīram maha ṛtasya gopām / kṣayaṃ dātājaram*... "(enabling its possessor to driving) chariots, which satisfies men, is accompanied by male offspring, the guardian of great truth-and-order, an undecaying dwelling-place...".

In a description of the Paṇis, the envious and demoniac niggards, it reads, 7, 6, 3 *ny akraṭūn grathino mṛdhravācaḥ / paṇīmṛ aśraddhām avṛdhām ayajñān* "du hast die unverständigen, zugeknüpften (?), miszredenden Paṇi's nieder(geworfen), die ohne Glauben, ohne Segen, ohne Opfer waren" (Geldner).

The flying horses of the Aśvins are 7, 69, 7 described as follows: *asridhānaiḥ / patatribhir aśramair avyathibhiḥ* "with your winged (horses) which do not err, which are indefatigable and sure-footed": all adjectives – two of which occur in the R̥gveda only here – are very well chosen.⁸⁸

These cumulations of epithets are of special frequency and interest in a number of hymns dedicated to that god of ambiguous fame, Rudra. Their main function is, if appearances are not deceptive, obvious. The stanza 1, 43, 1 leaves no doubt: *kad rudrāya pracetase / mīlhuṣṭamāya tavyase / vocema śaṃtamam hr̥de* "what are we to say to R., the attentive-and-clever one, the most kind and liberal one, the uncommonly strong, that makes his heart as happy as possible?": cf. st. (2 etc.); 6 "let him be beneficent to man and kine". This stanza is an undisguised *captatio benevolentiae*. In the first strophe of 7, 46, 1 the god is supplicated for compliance: Rudra with the strong bow and the swift arrows, the god who is true to his own rules (i.e. autonomous) is praised, the conqueror who is not conquered himself, the disposer with the sharp weapons. As is well known the verbs *ava-dā-* and *nir-ava-dā-* are often used in connection with Rudra and similar gods: "to give him his share so as to appease or satisfy him and make him go away".⁸⁹ The poet of 2, 33, 5, apparently afraid that Rudra considers him guilty of this practice, deprecates his wrath by calling him the god "of soft inner nature – if this is the sense of

⁸⁷ See the author's article "Ein neues Lied", *Wiener Zs. Kunde d. Morgenl.*, 48, p. 275 ff.

⁸⁸ The reader may also be referred to Guérinot, *De rhetorica vedica*, ch. VII (p. 83 ff.).

⁸⁹ See H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda* (Stuttgart, 1923), p. 217; 308.

rdūdara-⁹⁰ – who is easily invoked, the brown one with the fair lips”. Combinations of adjectives praising his power and epithets describing his outward appearance are 1, 114, 1; 4; 5; the poet does not wish to leave the god in doubt that he knows him very well, that is to say: that he is able to exert influence on him – the adjectives *babhru*- “brown” and *kapardin*- “wearing braided (shell-shaped) hair” suffice to identify him – and willing to recognize his power and authority – the god is strong, a lord of men etc. –, praying in the meantime that the god will protect, not punish himself and his relatives. Compare also the captations 6, 49, 10; 10, 92, 9.

Not infrequently the accumulation of epithets, like that of attributive adjectives in general, is a means of achieving greater intensity of expression. In 1, 54, 11 the supremacy besought is called *janāṣāḥ... tavyam* “subduing men and strong”; strictly speaking the power of princes and nobility was per se characterized by force and the domination of others. This tendency is sometimes only too evident, especially in stanzas which, like 8, 46, 20, exhibit a cumulation of ‘ausdruckverstärkende’ devices: *sanitaḥ susanitar ugra / citra cetiṣṭha sūnṛta / prāsahā samrāṭ sahurim sahintam / bhujiyūṃ vājeṣu pūrvyam* “O thou (Indra) who wins, who wins well, potent one, distinguished one, most distinguished one, youthfully vital one, victorious one, universal ruler, conquering one, overpowering one, possessor of enjoyments, the first in winning *vāja*-”.

If a poet is not hampered by the limitations of versification he may sometimes by stringing some attributive adjectives together achieve a remarkable aesthetic effect, or throw light on associations hidden in the context. *Vṛtra*, being defeated, lied buried in the courses of the water (1, 32, 10): the picture by itself is striking: the very waters which are obstructed and prevented, by the great enemy, from flowing, had become his grave; but now the beds of the rivers are in the original Sanskrit text called “race-grounds, places for running” (*kāṣṭhānām*); fortuitously or on purpose, in order to accentuate the victorious flowing away of the masses of water? Anyhow the two long attributes added to *kāṣṭhānām*, viz. *atiṣṭhantīnām aniveśanānām* can hardly be the result of thoughtlessness on the part of the author: these waters were not stagnant, i.e. they flowed on continuously, they did not rest; are we to read between the lines: as contrasted with the enemy who was killed?

To what extent the ancient poets might indulge in profusions of epithets may appear for instance from the above quoted R.V. 6, 18, 4 – which, studied and artificial though it is, shows at least the vast im-

⁹⁰ Cf. W. Neisser, *Zum Wörterbuch des Rigveda*, I (Leipzig, 1924), p. 191 f.

portance this class of words often had in early versification –, and from 2, 21, 2 and 3; 7, 1, 8. Stanzas which are half filled with epithets are, as already observed, not rare: 3, 46, 4 *urum gabhīram januṣābhy ugram / viśvavyacasam avatam matīnām / indram...*

Of special interest are also the cumulations of laudatory vocatives occurring in addresses: 1, 53, 3 *śacīva indra purukṛd dyumattama* “machtvoller, tatenreicher, glanzvollster Indra!” (Geldner); the first pāda of this strophe is filled up by the name and three epithets, which are arranged according to the tendency to increasing magnitude. See also 7, 1, 8.

Places are not rare in the R̥gveda where divine beings are exclusively addressed or identified by a string of appropriate epithets. Thus 8, 44, 10 *vipram hotāram adruham / dhūmaketuṃ vibhāvasum / yajñānām ketum īmahe* cannot refer to any power other than Fire: “to the inspired hotar, free from malice, the smoke-bannered one who abounds in light, the banner of the sacrifices we approach”. In 6, 5, 1 Agni is addressed: “I invoke by means of my prayers, on your behalf, the young son of overwhelming power, whose words are free from malice, the youngest, who... grants many riches, who is free from treachery”. The combination “youngest” and son of *sahas-* do not leave any doubt about the identity of the god. Cf. e.g. also 5, 58, 2; 5, 73, 2.

It will be shown further on that this device is not rarely applied in the beginning of hymns, a number of well-known epithets and other descriptions giving us information about the identity of the god to whom the text is dedicated. Thus in 4, 8 the proper name Agni does not occur before st. 5, the first stanza running as follows: *dūtam vo viśvavedasam / havyvāham amartyam / yajīṣṭham ṛñjase girā*.

There is no need to cite further examples: this cumulation of epithets will be found many times on every page. Vedic poetry shares this characteristic with the ancient metrical works of other peoples. In the Homeric poems two, or even three or four, adjectives are not rarely used in connection with one and the same noun. This device enabled the Greek poets too to direct the hearers’ attention to various aspects of the thing or person described. In M 294 ff. αὐτίκα δ’ ἀσπίδα μὲν πρόσθ’ ἔσχετο παντός’ ἔισην / καλὴν χαλκείην ἐξήλατον the outward appearance, the matter and the process of making are brought to the fore, καλός giving a general description of the visual impression made by the shield: “forthwith he held before him his shield that was well balanced upon every side, a fair (shield) of bronze, hammered...”. This phenomenon has a special interest for us because it is not rarely proper to the language of prayers. “Man sucht nach dem treffenden Beinamen, und weil die

religiöse Vorstellung durch Ausbildung des persönlichen Gottes in unsicheres Schwanken zwischen Person und Begriff geraten ist, häuft man die Beinamen und tut darin lieber des Guten zuviel, als dasz man sich der Gefahr aussetzt, das entscheidende Wort zu übersehen".⁹¹ Thus Zeus is, in prayers, often addressed as Ζεῦ πάτερ "Ἰδηθεν μεδέων κύδιστε μέγιστε: Γ 276; 320; Η 202; Ω 308.⁹²

Combinations of laudatory appositions are indeed often indicative of the earnest desire to win over the god addressed to one's side, and in formulating their prayers the poets have not infrequently remarkably succeeded in finding the right mode of address. RV. 8, 26, 7 *upa no yātām aśvinā / rāyā viśvapuṣā saha / maghavānā suvīrāv anapacyutā* "do ye come to us, O Aśvins, together with wealth that nourishes all (of us), O liberal ones, that are of manly character, that are faithful for ever".

So far as these appreciative noun-adjective phrases are concerned, it is remarkable that they sometimes occur in pairs so as to fill, together with another element of the sentence, a pāda: 3, 36, 4 *ugram śavaḥ patyate dhṛṣṇv ojaḥ* "... besitzt er gewaltige Stärke, kühne Kraft" (Geldner). Agni is 10, 91, 8 described as follows: *medhākāraṃ vidathasya pra-sādhanam / agnim hotāram paribhūtām matim*. Other combinations occur also: 1, 38, 15b is filled up by three epithets: *vandasva mārutaṃ gaṇam / tveṣam panasyum arkiṇam*.

In examining these combinations of epithets we should remember that the adjective, as compared to the substantive, is semantically one-sided. A house may be *old, new, big, small, ugly, dilapidated*, etc., but the phrase *an old house* diverts our attention from all properties of the building other than its age. It follows that adjectives are often in need of supplementations: *old* may be explained or supplemented by *dilapidated*, or *the old house* may be defined as *the big old house* or described as an *old, but solid house*. In connection with dasyus and other dreaded or inimical beings *māyā* "the supranormal power to achieve something uncommon or miraculous" denotes "evil or deceptive power, trick, cunning etc.":⁹³ the ἄπαξ *māyāvat* combines 4, 16, 9 in an imprecation with *abrahma*. (The synonym *māyāvin-* is 2, 11, 9 used to characterize Vṛtra who prevents the river from flowing). Indra who frees the herds of the cows is 3, 39, 4

⁹¹ H. Usener, *Götternamen* (Bonn, 1896), p. 336; cf. also E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (Leipzig, 1913), p. 143 ff.

⁹² See also K. H. Meyer, *Untersuchungen zum schmückenden Beiwort in der älteren griechischen Poesie*, Thesis Münster, 1913, p. 75 who however adds (p. 78) "Im Gebete haben also die Beiwörter nur zum Teil Beziehung auf die Situation".

⁹³ See the present author's relative paper in *Four studies in the language of the Veda* (Disp. Rh.-Traj., III).

māhināvān “mighty” and *daṃsanāvān* “able to achieve supranormal or wonderful deeds”. – Not infrequently the animals accompanying a god or drawing his vehicle are elaborately described by a long string of epithets which inform us about their physical and psychical characteristics. Thus 1, 181, 2 the horses of the Aśvins are said to be “radiant (or virtuous), drinking milk, fleet as wind, celestial coursers, swift as thought, bulls, straight-backed, self-rulers (autonomous)”: *ā vām aśvāsaḥ śucayaḥ payaspā / vātaraṃhaso divyāso atyāḥ / manojuvo vṛṣaṇo vītapṛṣṭhā / eha svarājo aśvinā vahantu*. – Cf. also 7, 57, 5.

Sometimes a favourite epithet is accompanied by a noun or adjective denoting a quality or attribute which elsewhere accompanies the proper name itself or is employed as an independent additional name, title, or qualificatory term. In 8, 46, 13 there is an alternative for Geldner’s interpretation “... der gabenreiche Vṛtratöter”, the sense of the stanza *sa no vājeṣv avitā / purūvasaḥ purasthātā / maghavā vṛtrahā bhuvāt* probably being “he (i.e. I., cf. 12) will (must) be our helper in the conquest of *vāja*-, a leader abounding in goods, the bounteous one, killer of V.” In 5, 4, 8 it reads ... *agne...* / *sahasā sūno trisadhastha...*

Sometimes an attributive phrase assumes the character of a repeated quarter of a stanza. Thus R.V. 1, 92, 12 *aminatī daivyāni vratāni* (subject: Uṣas) recurs, followed by *praminatī manuṣyā yugāni* 1, 124, 2 in a hymn dedicated to the same goddess.⁹⁴ An appositional or epithetical word group may therefore also arise by a process of partial repetition: 5, 38, 3 *indra syāma sugopāḥ / śūra syāma sugopāḥ*; the prayer is repeated, but the name replaced by an epithet; 1, 139, 7 ... *devebhyo bravasi yajñiyebyo / rajabhyo yajñiyebyaḥ* constitutes a remarkable type of variation, an epithet or apposition repeating the idea expressed by the noun and both words being accompanied by the same attribute. In 1, 136, 4 *tathā rājānā karatho yad īmaha / ṛtāvānā yad imahe* “act thus, O kings, for which we ask, O ye truthful ones, for which we ask” the epithetical element is, in the repetition, likewise modified. For this repetition in general compare lines such as 5, 39, 5 *giro vardhanty atrayo / girāḥ śumbhanty atrayaḥ*.

An epithet may occupy the first position in a succeeding pāda, the proper name itself having opened the stanza: R.V. 9, 98, 10 *indrāya soma pātave / vṛtraghne pari śicyase*. lit. “for I., O S. to drink, for the V. thou art poured out”. This ‘epanaleptic’ insertion of the additional name affords the poet an opportunity to aim at a certain balance as well as to bring to the fore a special aspect of the god.

The stanzas 1 and 2 of 4, 2 may be quoted to exemplify a procedure

⁹⁴ For the verb see P. Thieme, *ZDMG*, 95, p. 82 ff.

which is not without literary merits: after a description of some salient features in the god's character – Agni is the immortal among mortal men, he keeps the fixed order, he is as a hotar a preeminently competent worshipper etc. – the poet continues: (2) *iha tvaṃ sūno sahaso no adya jāto... / dūta īyase* “thou, O s. o. p., being born here, movest as our messenger...”.

It is by no means a new observation that there is a considerable element of conscious art in the style and the composition of these hymns. Is it therefore too bold an assumption to regard the occurrence of the epithet *śatakratu-* in 8, 77, 1 where Indra, whose name is left unmentioned, asks his mother the names of his enemies, and that of *vrtrahan* in 3 where he is stated to annihilate them, as intended?

When there is no indication in the text from which to conclude the appropriateness of the epithets, these elements may however be in harmony with one another. Thus 1, 37, 4 *pra vaḥ śardhāya ghr̥ṣvaye / tveṣadyumnāya śuṣmiṇe / devattam brahma gāyata* “singet euer gott-eingegebenes Erbauungswort der ungeduligen, ungestümen Heerschar von funkelndem Glanze!” (Geldner); 1, 3, 7 *omāsaś carṣaṇīdhṛto viśve devāsa ā gata...* Elsewhere a group of epithets qualifying the same substantive are complementary in character: 1, 50, 4 *taraṇir viśvadarśato / jyotiṣkṛd asi sūrya* “moving quickly and energetically forwards, visible to all, creating light art thou, O Sun”, and the last pāda of this stanza is in tune with this thought: *viśvam ā bhāsi rocanam* “thou illuminateth the whole firmament”; 7, 57, 5. Such combinations of mutually complementary or otherwise related epithets are far from rare. Their frequency shows that they were, at least in many cases, not chosen at random. Often they constitute an essential element in the communication: e.g. 1, 109, 8 where Indra and Agni are addressed as follows: *puramdarā śikṣatam vajrahastā / asmām indrāgnī avatam bhareṣu* “ye destroyers of strongholds, thunderbolt-handed ones, exert yourselves, assist (us) in the battles, O I. and A.”. In 6, 22, 5, “ein einheitliches Bild des seinen Weg zu Indra erfragenden Liedes”,⁹⁵ the importance of the eulogy is reflected by the alliterative pair of epithets *vepī vakvarī* “schwungvoll, beflügelt” (Geldner)⁹⁶ and the god (Indra) himself is *tuvigrābham tuvikūrmim rabhodām*. The oft referred to connection between Indra's fondness of soma and his heroic activity is also obvious in 2, 12, 13 *yaḥ somapā nicito vajrabāhur / yo vajrahastah* and similar stanzas; cf. also 8, 6, 40; 33, 4 the long chain of attributes in 5, 40, 4. In 8, 49, 6 the two notionally related epithets are in

⁹⁵ Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 121.

⁹⁶ See also Geldner, *l.c.*

harmony with a simile: *ugraṃ na vīraṃ namasopa sedima / vibhūtim akṣitāvasum* “wie einem gewaltigen Herrn sind wir dir unter Verbeugung genaht, dem Mächtigen von unerschöpflichen Reichtum” (Geldner).

Another procedure consists in repeating the same epithet: thus *vṛṣan-* occurs, either as an independent word or as a first member of a compound, five times in 6, 44, 19; four times in st. 20 and three times in st. 21, which moreover contains three occurrences of the related noun *vṛṣabha-*. These repetitions are more than a mere ‘Spielerei’:⁹⁷ they were no doubt first and foremost to emphasize the ideas expressed and, *in casu*, to strengthen the manly and powerful nature of the god and his belongings: “the manly-and-mighty bay steeds..., the coursers with the mighty car and mighty reins, the mighty ones... must bring thee towards us in order to (enjoy) a mighty intoxication”.

It has been observed by classical scholars writing on the style and composition of the Homeric poems that not infrequently when a person is introduced to the audience for the first time a number of epithets and other descriptive words are added to his name, obviously to characterize him and to give the hearers an idea of his origin, age, function, abilities etc.:⁹⁸ Δ 473 ἐνθ’ ἔβαλ’ Ἀνθεμίωνος υἷον Τελαμώνιος Αἴας, / ἦϊθεον θαλερόν Σιμοείσιον, ὃν ποτε μήτηρ / ... παρ’ ὄχθησιν Σιμόεντος / γείνατο... “then T. A. smote A.’s son, the lusty youth S. – who only occurs in this passage –, whom on a time his mother had born beside the banks of S. ...”; E 9 f. ἦν δέ τις ἐν Τρώεσσι Δαρῆς, ἀφνειὸς ἀμύμων / ἱερεὺς Ἡφαίστοιο “now there was among the T. one D., a rich man and blameless, a priest of H.”; K 314 etc. Similar accumulations of nouns and adjectives denoting qualities or attributes or describing the nature of the god who is to be the subject of the hymn, are in the R̥gveda often found in the introductory stanza or stanzas.

Various devices of narrative, which are in the first place indispensable to telling a story, relating facts, formulating prayers, referring to a god’s deeds and achievements, are apt to develop their own individuality and appeal. The audience is aware of their existence, expects them to be used and greets them as old acquaintances. The poets who use them expertly are applauded. Among the elements worth considering is the opening of a new chapter, or in the case of the R̥gveda, *sūkta* (‘hymn’). This too is often more or less stereotyped and part of the inherited technique. Many *sūktas* start in a familiar way, and the main reason for this is that,

⁹⁷ Thus Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 139. For the inherent power of eulogies see e.g. R̥V. 3, 32, 3.

⁹⁸ See e.g. Meister, *o.c.*, p. 80.

just as the audiences and the poets themselves like, for a variety of causes, formulae, repetitions, epithets etc. in the body of the hymns, so too they like stock openings. The uncertain attention of the hearers is caught by the familiarity of the theme, and they will readily listen to see how it is developed.

Thus R̥V. 10, 73, 1 *janiṣṭhā ugraḥ sahasa turāya / mandra ojiṣṭho bahulābhimānaḥ* Indra is characterized as being born in order to perform deeds of powerful (“prompt”) domination, energetically vital and creatively powerful, charming, highly-conceited...; the first term “thou art born” is continued in 1 cd; the Maruts caused him to thrive when his mother guided his first steps. Before mentioning Agni’s name the poet of 2, 9, 1 refers to the god of fire by a series of apposite epithets: *hotā... tveṣo dīdivāṃ... sudakṣaḥ...*; R̥V. 7, 20, 1 *ugro jajñe vīryāya svadhāvāñ / cakrir apo naryo yat kariṣyan... / trātā na indra enaso mahaś cit* “the energetically powerful one has been born in order to perform acts of heroism, the spontaneously mighty one, the manly performer of the work which he wants to achieve...; I. is our protector even from great sin”.

Other interesting types of openings are, for instance, 8, 74, 1 “attempting to gain *vāja*- I will praise the guest in every settlement, the much-beloved one, Agni who belongs to the house...”; 8, 76, 1 “I invoke now this Indra, the possessor of *māyā* (power to achieve the miraculous), who is potent by his creative power, who is accompanied by the Maruts, in order to win him, so to say, over to my side”; 5, 48, 1 (to the gods in general) “which thoughts shall we formulate in honour of the dear host, the independent, the illustrious through their own acts, the great...?”; 1, 156, 1; 6, 32, 1.

The opening stanza sometimes indicates what is the theme of the succeeding stanzas. Thus 10, 23, 1 “we revere Indra, the bearer of the vajra, the driver of the bay steeds” introduces the statement, in 2, “his are the bay steeds” and the communication made in 3 “when he takes his golden vajra he mounts his chariot which is drawn by his bay horses”, see also 1, 119, 1.

Sometimes the exordium exceeds the limits of a stanza: 8, 70, 1-2 “who is the king of the peoples, the irresistible one⁹⁹ who goes in chariots, the conqueror in all battles, who is glorified as the pre-eminent killer of Vṛtra, magnify that Indra, O Puruḥman¹⁰⁰...”; 5, 58, 1-2 “Now I will extoll the strong host of those Maruts, of those newly appearing

⁹⁹ Cf. also M. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgef. etym. Wörterb. des Altind.*, I (Heidelberg, 1953), p. 31.

¹⁰⁰ The poet.

ones, who are roaming about impetuously with swift horses and who being self-rulers are in the possession of 'immortality'; the vehement host, the strong, who have the hands ornamented with bracelets, are roaring habitually, possessors of *māyā*, and like to fulfil wishes..." The opening words of 3, 46, 1 and 2 are, in the main, similar in tenor, but whereas st. 1 consists almost entirely of epithets, st. 2 passes into a prayer and an adhortation to guide those speaking.

In particular cases the proem extends over even more than two stanzas: in 2, 21, which consists of six strophes the first three constitute one long exordium. In each stanza three quarters are filled up with epithets in the dative (st. 1 and 2), or nominative (st. 3), the fourth expressing, in various wordings, the poet's intention to glorify the god. Stanza 4 occupies a transitional position: the quarters 1-3 are made up by epithets in the nominative, and *pāda* 4 commemorates one of Indra's heroic exploits. Stanza 5 which does not contain any epithet is a reference to the myth of the *Uśij* and *Vala*. The last strophe is a prayer for a variety of desirable things: wealth, intelligence, popularity, happiness etc. In the long hymn dedicated to the *Aśvins* 8, 8, the stanzas 1-5 form unity, each of them beginning with *ā... gachatam* or *ā (...) yātam* "come". Interestingly enough, the stanzas 1 and 2, and in addition, the last one contain epithets praising the gods whose visit is eagerly awaited: 1 "come with all aids to us, O marvellously skilful ones (*dasrā*), with golden felloes"; 2 "come..., ye granters of enjoyments, who art adorned with gold, wise men of profound minds" (*bhujī hiraṇyapeśasā / kavī gambhīracetasā*: notice the symmetrical structure of the half-stanza).

RV. 6, 17, 1, 2 and 3 beginning with *pibā somam...*, *sa im pāhi...* and *evā pāhi...*, i.e. with a repeated adhortation to partake of the divine draught contain, in the two former stanzas, a number of laudatory epithets emphasizing the god's power and valour, and referring to his great deeds and abilities, and in the third the expression of the firm belief that the soma will intoxicate him so that he will be able to achieve new deeds.

Not infrequently a *sūkta* begins with an adhortation, or the expression of the desire, to praise and extol a god, expanded by a number of characterizations. Thus 6, 18, 1 *tam u ṣṭuhi yo abhibhūtyojā / vanvann avātaḥ puruhūta indraḥ / aśālham ugram sahamānam ābhir / gīrbhir vardha vṛṣabham carṣaṇīnām* "praise him who is of superior power, the unconquerable conqueror, the much invoked I.; make the invincible, powerful, prevailing with these words of praise, him (that is) the bull of the peoples". Cf. also the type exemplified by 5, 34, 1 *puruṣtutāya prataram dadhātana* "place still more at the disposal of the much-praised one".

Antithesis being, like paronomasia, a favourite stylistic device¹⁰¹ an exordium of the type 5, 33, 1 has nothing to surprise us: *mahi mahe tavase dīdhye nṛṇ / indrāyetthā tavase atavyān* ... “ein groszes (Lied) ersinne ich auf den Groszen, Starken unter den Männern, auf I., ich der Schwächere...”.

In a frequency of other cases the god himself is exhorted to perform his characteristic functions, or to do what he is expected to do. Cf. e.g. 9, 67, 9 “flow clearly off, distributing riches” (Soma is addressed); 9, 49, 1; 52, 1; 53, 1; 55, 1. Such an appeal is not rarely accompanied by one or more epithets: 9, 6, 1 “flow clearly off, thou bull who art devoted to the gods”; 66, 1 *pavasva viśvacarṣaṇe*; 6, 20, 1 “give us that wealth that carries off a thousand..., overcomes the inimical powers, O son of strength”. Elsewhere the epithets are replaced by, or rather given the syntactic form of, a predication: 9, 67, 1 “Thou, O Soma, art the streaming one, the charming, the most creatively powerful one...”. Cf. also 9, 53, 1.

In the last stanza or stanzas of a hymn the main ideas expressed or terms used in the preceding stanzas are not rarely repeated or so to say summarized. This procedure may involve the use of a special epithet. Whereas for instance the goddess of dawn is, in 1, 48, constantly addressed by her mere name Uṣas, she is in the final stanza (16) called “great U.”. Cf. 1, 56, 6.

Sometimes the final stanza or stanzas have the character of a conclusion, a recapitulative prayer or a statement of the poet’s aim in invoking the god: 1, 54, 11; 3, 45, 5; 5, 3, 12; 5, 10, 6 and 7. Cf. also 6, 19, 13; 5, 15, 5 and 10, 64, 16 in connection with st. 4. Not all final stanzas of these types contain epithets: see e.g. 5, 16, 5.

Elsewhere a single adjective occurring in one of the other stanzas is, as an epithet, repeated in the final verse. Thus 1, 124, 7 Uṣas is described as a willing (*uśatī-*) wife: *jāyeva patya uśatī*, and st. 13 the dawns in general are characterized as *uśatīḥ*: *avīṛdhadhvam uśatīr uṣāḥ*.¹⁰² In 1, 92, 15 *yukṣvā hi vājīnīvaty / aśvām adyāruṇām uṣāḥ*, *vāj.* and *ar.* are repetitions: cf. 13 (voc.) and 2.

The same epithet sometimes occurs in the first and last stanza of a hymn: 10, 26, 1; 9: “forward on their way go our prayers, i.e. the desirable teams; let mighty (*māhinaḥ*) Pūṣan ... assist (us)”: “let mighty P. advance our chariot (hymn) by his might...”. Cf. e.g. also 1, 190, 1

¹⁰¹ See V. Henry, “L’antithèse védique et les ressources qu’elle offre à l’exégète moderne pour l’interprétation du Veda”, *Revue Ling.*, 31, p. 81 ff.

¹⁰² “U. amené aux fins d’allitération et rappelant en outre 7 c (rappel de mots typiques en fin d’hymne)”.(Renou, *Et. véd. et pāṇ.*, III, p. 66).

and 8: *anarvāṇaṃ vṛṣabham mandrajihvam bṛhaspatim: evā mahas tuvijātas tuviṣmān bṛhaspatir vṛṣabho...*

It seems interesting to observe that final stanzas may contain a comparatively large number of epithets so as to constitute a ponderous, and sometimes at the same time recapitulative epilogue. Thus 1, 190, 8 “thus the great, mighty Bṛhaspati, of powerful nature, the bull, was made god”. In contradistinction to the seven preceding stanzas in which epithets in the proper sense of the term are rare, 5, 57, 8 contains an abundance of them: *haye naro maruto mṛḷatā nas / tuvīmaghāso amṛtā ṛtajñāḥ*. Whereas the stanzas 1 and 2 of 5, 24 which is addressed to Agni contain some honourable statements about the god’s functions and qualities, the latter part of this sūkta is to implore him to answer the prayer: in st. 3 no epithets are inserted, but in st. 4 the god is called *śociṣṭha dīdivaḥ* “most brilliant and shining”. The same remark may apply to the final stanza of a triplet addressed to the same deity: 3, 62, 6 “(worship) the bull of the peoples, Bṛhaspati the omniform one, who is not to be deceived, the desirable (excellent one)”.

Ponderous final stanzas, containing an abundance of epithets and invocations sometimes occur in several sūktas; thus 3, 30, 22 = 31, 22; 32, 17; 38, 10; 39, 9 etc.

This preference for ponderous and impressive final stanzas is also apparent from the tendency to illustrate the thought expressed in the last stanza of a hymn by a simile.¹⁰³

We have now to give some particulars with regard to the position of the epithet in a verse or sentence. Generally speaking, an epithet may be placed anywhere. It may follow the framework proper of the sentence; a very uncomplicated example is 7, 75, 1 *vy uṣā āvo divija ṛtena*. Accumulations of epithets belonging to the same person are not rarely placed together so as to precede his name: 6, 70, 1 *ghṛtavatī bhuvanānām abhiśriya / urvī pṛthvī madhudughe supeśasā / dyāvāpṛthivī...* Like proper names, epithets are often added to personal pronouns: 7, 81, 3 *prati tvā duhitar diva / uṣo jīrā abhutsmaḥi*; 7, 83, 1 *yuvāṃ narā paśyamānāsaḥ*.

In addressing a deity the pronoun *tvam* is very often used to attract his attention. This word is not rarely followed by the vocative of the proper name: *tvam agne*; *tvam hy agne*; *tvam naḥ soma*; *tvam tam indra*; *tvam pāhīndra* etc.¹⁰⁴ The proper name may, here also, be replaced by an epithet: 6, 16, 6 *tvam dūto amartya / ā vahā daivyaṃ janam*, bringing the gods being part of the task of the fire-god as a messenger; 1, 91, 8 *tvam*

¹⁰³ See the author’s *Remarks on similes in Sanskrit literature* (Leiden, 1949), p. 59 f.

¹⁰⁴ For details see M. Bloomfield, *A Vedic concordance* (Harvard, 1906), p. 453 ff.

naḥ soma viśvato / rakṣā rājann aghāyataḥ; 8, 93, 33 *tvam hi vṛtrahan...* Nor are examples wanting of strings of epithets added to a demonstrative pronoun, see e.g. 6, 62, 5. Cases of another position are however not rare: 7, 32, 6 ... / *yas te gabhīrā savanāni vṛtrahan / sunoti...*; 7, 32, 17. It is also important to observe that epithets, like proper names, often accompany imperatives or other verb forms expressing a request or injunction. See e.g. 1, 64, 8 *rodasī ā vadatā... sūrāḥ*; 1, 93, 23; 92, 14; 3, 30, 21 *ā no gotrā dardṛhi gopate gāḥ*. The epithet may precede the proper name, occupying, in a pāda, the initial position: 1, 76, 1 ... *viśvajanyam / viśvānaraḥ savitā devo...* Epithet and proper name are sometimes placed on either side of a caesura: 7, 81, 3 *prati tvā duhitar diva / uṣo jīrā abhuts-mahi*. Otherwise: 7, 32, 17 *tavāyam viśvaḥ paruhūta pārthivaḥ*; 27.

Sometimes an epithet has the character of an addition placed at the very end of a stanza or sentence, the proper name being mentioned previously. Cf. e.g. 8, 4, 11 ... *indraḥ pipāsati / upa nūnam yuyuje vṛṣaṇā harī / ā ca jagāma vṛtrahā*. In cases such as 8, 92, 24 the proper name precedes in the same sentence: *aram ta indra kukṣaye / somo bhavatu vṛtrahan*. Two epithets, filling up the last pāda are added to two similar references to the same god occurring in the framework of the sentence in 8, 6, 40 *vāvṛdhāna upa dyavi / vṛṣā vajry aroravīt / vṛtrahā soma-pātamaḥ*.

Now and then the position of the epithet or the order of words is peculiar. In 7, 7, 7 the frequent epithet *sūno sahasaḥ* interrupts a nominal word group: *īśānam sūno sahaso vasūnām* “the lord of possessions, the s. of p.”.

Cases in which the tendency to join rhyming or alliterating words together is evident are also noteworthy: 8, 45, 8 / *vajrin viśvag yathā vṛha*; 4, 30, 7. Thus the possibility of paronomasia (*śacībhiḥ śakra*) in 10, 134, 3 does not seem to be foreign to the position of the epithet.

It may be of interest to mention also the type exemplified by 1, 60, 2 *divas cit pūrvo ny asādi hotā / āprchyo viśpatir vikṣu vedhāḥ* “even before daybreak the hotar was established, the lord of settlers, the disposer in the settlements who is to be saluted respectfully”: that is to say, the noun *viśpati-* which is a frequent attribute of the god of fire in his domestic aspect is, whilst being amplified by another phrase, placed in the last quarter of a stanza after the sentence proper has been brought to a close.

In accordance with a wide-spread tendency – that to increasing magni-

¹⁰⁵ For *vedhas-* see H. Oldenberg, *R̥gveda, Textkrit. u. exeg. Noten*, II (Berlin, 1912), p. 196; A. Ludwig, *ZDMG*, 40, p. 715; E. W. Fay, *JAOS*, 27, p. 402.

tude, the so-called ‘Gesetz der wachsenden Glieder’¹⁰⁶ – the last member of a group of co-ordinated homogeneous terms is often longer, more ponderous, or extended by another element: 5, 10, 2 *kratvā dakṣasya mañhanā*; 7, 10, 3 *giro matayo devayantīḥ*; 4, 11, 3 *tvad agne kāvyā tvan manīṣās / tvad ukthā jāyante rādhyāni* “von dir, A., stammen die Sehergaben, von dir die Gedanken, von dir die trefflichen Gedichte”; 5, 41, 11 *āpa oṣadhīr uta no ’vantu / dyaur vanā girayo vṛkṣakeśaḥ* “the waters must help us... and mountains the hairs of which are trees” (or “three-haired m.”); 8, 60, 20. Compare, in ancient Greek, α 93 πέμψω δ’ ἐς Σπάρτην τε καὶ ἐς Πύλον ἡμαθόεντα; in Latin, Plaut. M. G. 378 *neque solariumst apud nos neque hortus ullus*; and in a ‘systematized’ form the versus rhopalicus, an ancient example of which is Γ 182 ὦ μάκαρ Ἀτρεΐδῃ, μοιρηγενές, ὀλβιόδαιμον. The same principle underlies structures such as R̥V. 4, 39, 4 *svastaye varuṇam mitram agniṃ / havāmahe indram vajrabāhum*, which is a counterpart of Homeric lines such as B 497 Σχοῖνόν τε Σικῶλόν τε πολύκνημόν τ’ Ἑτewνόν; cf. 1, 129, 3; 3, 54, 19 *sūryo nakṣatrair urv antarikṣam*; 7, 66, 7 *mitram... varuṇam / aryamaṇam riśādasam*; 8, 1, 18. A somewhat complicated sequence is 8, 97, 10 *utogram ojiṣṭham tavaṣam tarasvinam* (*u.* and *o.* are etymologically related, *t.* and *t.* alliterative); see also 6, 75, 2 *dhanvanā gā dhanvanājiṃ jayema / dhanvanā tīvrāḥ samado jayema*; and 3, 34, 9 *sasānātyāṃ uta sūryam sasāna / indrah sasāna purubhojasam gām*; cf. 7, 35, 2. More complicated cases are: 5, 54, 9 *pravatvatīyam pṛthivī marudbhyaḥ / pravatvatī dyaur bhavati prayad-bhyaḥ / pravatvatīḥ pathyā antarikṣyāḥ / pravatvantaḥ parvatā jīradānavaḥ* where the last noun is accompanied by an epithet; 8, 25, 10. Exceptions may, under the influence of other structural tendencies, however occur also: 1, 89, 6; 6, 46, 3; 8, 69, 4.

A special type of this rhythmic sequence¹⁰⁷ may be exemplified by 5, 35, 1 ... *carṣaṇīsaḥam sasniṃ vājeṣu duṣṭaram* “... ruling over men, winning, unconquerable in the contests for gaining vāja”: in this tripartite series of nouns the shortest occupies the middle, the longest the final position. See also 1, 129, 10; 5, 8, 1 c and compare the type 6, 50, 2 *suarvanto yajatā agnijihvāḥ*; and the type 5, 8, 3 *tuviṣvaṇasam suyajam ghr̥taśriyam*.

Passages such as 8, 43, 31 *agnim mandram purupriyam / śīram pāvaka-śociṣam* may be quoted to exemplify that the tendency to alternate longer with shorter words, so as to give precedence to the latter was deeply

¹⁰⁶ See e.g. O. Behaghel, *I. F.*, 31, p. 377 ff.; Havers, *Handbuch*, p. 178; W. Caland, *Acta Or.*, 9, p. 59 ff.

¹⁰⁷ See the author’s *Repetition in the Veda*, ch. III etc.

rooted in Vedic soil, Geldner's translation being in all probability right: "Agni, dem Erfreulichen, Viellieben, dem Scharfen mit lauterer Flamme". Cf. also 8, 46, 1 where an epithetical group of two words is placed at the end of the stanza, two monorhemes occurring in the pādas a and b: *tvāvataḥ purūvaso / vayam indra praṇetaḥ / smasi sthātar harīṇām*.

The choice of the epithets and their position can therefore, in 6, 51, 13, hardly be fortuitous: *apa tyam vṛjinam ripum / stenam agne durādhyam / ... asya* "drive away, O Agni, the deceitful rogue, the thief who meditates evil...".

Sometimes this tendency is, for obvious reasons, realized to a certain extent: 5, 12, 1 *prāgnaye / br̥hate yajñiyāya / ṛtasya vṛṣṇe asurāya manma / ... bhare*.

Before passing to another point some more passages may be quoted in which the tendency under discussion seems to be evident: in 5, 4, 3 the name of Agni is preceded by three epithets consisting of 2, 3, and 4 syllables: *śucim pāvakaṃ ghṛtapṛṣṭham agnim* (cf., in Greek, B 412); 5, 15, 1 *pra vedhase kavaye vedyāya / giram bhare yaśase pūrvyāya* (notice the rhyme); 7, 10, 3 *susaṃdṛśaṃ supratīkaṃ suañcam / havyavāham aratim mānuṣāṇām*.

This tendency is so widely spread in spoken languages and prose texts of various peoples and periods that it does not seem warranted to regard, in general, the exigencies of the metrical structure of the hymns as the primary factor that contributed to bring about this frequent arrangement of words which was, in certain cases, even formulated as a rule by Pāṇini (2, 2, 34): when a dvandva consists of two words of an unequal number of syllables, the shorter word precedes.

There are on the other hand remarkable examples of isosyllabism: 5, 8, 2 *br̥hatketum pururūpaṃ dhanaspṛtaṃ / suśarmāṇaṃ suavaśaṃ jaradviṣam*.

As may appear from incidental remarks in the preceding section of this volume some combinations of epithets and similar characterizing terms seem to have been favoured by the ancient poets. Thus *mah-* "great" and *ugra-* "possessed of vital power and energy" are found together, e.g. R̥V. 7, 24, 5 *maha ugrāya*; 8, 52, 5 *mahām ugra īśānakṛt*; cf. also 3, 36, 5 and 8, 1, 27 and for the sense of *ugra-* also ŚatB. 14, 7, 1, 43 f. This combination is 8, 96, 10 expanded into *maha ugrāya tavase*.

Passing mention has already been made of the fact that sometimes two epithets may be regarded as being more intimately connected with one another than with the other epithets which belong to the same sequence. Epithets may indeed be distributed over a line in such a way that they

belong together two and two: 8, 32, 27 *pra va ugrāya niṣṭhure / aṣāl̥hāya prasakṣiṇe / ... gāyata* “singet auf den gewaltigen Niederstrecker, auf den unbezwungenen Bezwinger...” (Geldner).

In deciding the question as to how a succession of two or more attributes should be understood and translated their distribution over the stanza often supplies us with valuable indications. As set forth elsewhere¹⁰⁸ the caesuras often are syntactic boundary-lines, syntactic groups coinciding in a considerable frequency of cases with metrical units. It is a plausible assumption to consider, in translating, the words *dasra mantumaḥ* in 6, 56, 4 as more closely connected: *yad adya tvā puruṣtuta bravāma d. m.* Cf. also the above 8, 32, 27. There may therefore be something said in favour of Geldner’s interpretation and translation in cases such as 3, 46, 1 *yudhmasya te vṛṣabhasya svarāja / ugrasya yūna sthavirasya ghr̥ṣveḥ / ajūryato vajriṇo vīryāṇīndra śrutasya mahato mahāni*: “grosz sind die Kräfte von dir, I., dem streitbaren Bullen, dem Selbstherrn, dem... nicht alternden Keulenträger, dem berühmten, groszen”. Similarly, in connection with the same deity, 6, 34, 2 *puruhūto yaḥ purugūrta ṛbhvā / ...* Cf. e.g. also 6, 46, 2 “der der vielgerufene, vielgelobte Meister...”. As already observed it is however doubtful whether “gewaltiger Indra” is the correct rendering of ... *ugra / indra*... in 6, 37, 1; cf. also 6, 41, 1; 44, 10 etc.

It is not always easy to decide whether a co-ordinate combination of two epithets forms a unity. Not infrequently considerations based on the order of words or the structure of the verse may be of some use in making up one’s mind about this difficulty; in other cases the general meaning of the passage may lead us to a decision. 4, 17, 6 *janīyanto janidām akṣitotim / ā cyāvayāmo ’vate na kośam* was rightly translated: “Weiber begehrend ziehen wir den Weiberschenker von unversieglichen Gnaden wie den Schöpfeimer im Brunnen heran” (Geldner).

There can indeed be no doubt about the possibility of assuming a substantival character in the case of certain words which are in frequent use as attributive adjectives and epithets. Thus 6, 29, 3 *dhṛṣṇur vajrī śavasā dakṣiṇāvān* may certainly be translated, with Geldner: “der mutige Keulenträger ist...”; cf. 6, 32, 1 *virap̥sine vajriṇe*. Superfluous to say that *vajrin-* is often used substantivally without being accompanied by an attribute; see e.g. 8, 1, 8; 6, 15; 7, 10; 99, 2.

There is a sort of cumulation of epithets which is typical of the idealistic style of archaic periods, namely the addition of a suitable descriptive

¹⁰⁸ See the author’s book on the relations between syntactic structure and versification, which is in course of preparation.

adjective to every – or at least to more than one – noun of the same sentence. Examples which could easily be multiplied are: 3, 58, 3 *suyugbhir aśvaiḥ suvṛtā rathena / dasrāv imaṃ śṛṇutaṃ ślokaṃ adreḥ* “(driving) with well-yoked horses on a chariot that runs well, listen, O ye performers of wonderful deeds, to this sound of the pressing (stone)”; 7, 10, 4 / *rudram ... bṛhantam / ... aditiṃ viśvajanyām / bṛhaspatim ... viśvavāram*; 4, 3, 7. In 3, 61, 2 Uṣas is stated to shine on a brilliant vehicle, drawn by tractable horses (*suyamāso aśvāḥ*) of “broad firmness” (*pr̥thupājasah*). Indra controls both parts of the universe as the manly bull by his undaunted heroic power (1, 54, 2). Uṣas is described as the most eminent, lovely or salutary (*śreṣṭha-*) light of lights, the matutinal sacrificial fire as a splendid appearance (1, 113, 1). Cf. also 1, 2, 9 *kavī no mitrāvaruṇā / tuvijātā urukṣayā / dakṣaṃ dadhāte apasam*; 3, 59, 4 *ayam mitro namasyaḥ suśevo / rājā sukṣatro ajaniṣṭa vedhāḥ / tasya vāyam ... bhadre saumanase syāma*: the god Mitra is somewhat redundantly described as “friendly” and “worthy of reverence”, he rules well, and his benevolence is auspicious. In a similar way is Indra’s bellicose fury or “Kampfwut” (*manyu-*) in 1, 101, 2 excited (*jāhṛṣāṇa-*), his manly valour in 3 great, he is in 4 described as a mighty (*vaśin-*) lord of horses and cows.

There are no doubt many conspicuous cases of words which, being often or generally used as epithets, may also occur substantively without any proper name or further indication of a person. Thus e.g. R̥V. 3, 38, 9 *viśve paśyanti māyinaḥ kṛtāni* “all beings see the decay of the marvellously powerful”, the term *māyinaḥ* referring to an asura, divine being, mentioned in st. 4, which according to Sāyaṇa is Indra, to Geldner¹⁰⁹ the sun or the sky. In st. 7 of the same hymn, it reads: *ni māyino mamire rūpam asmin*; cf. also 1, 159, 4 *te māyino mamire supracetaso / jāmī...*; 3, 34, 4; 5, 48, 3; 7, 82, 3. After being named in 9, 4, 1 “Soma which flows off clearly”: *sanā ca soma jeṣi ca / pavamāna nahi śravaḥ* (cf. e.g. also 9, 11, 9 *pavamāna ... soma*) the divine draught is in st. 9 spoken to by the attribute *pavamāna* alone, a mode of address which recurs e.g. 9, 5, 10; 9, 9, etc. Other instances – e.g. *maghavan-*, *jātavedas-* – are mentioned, and in part amply discussed, in other sections of this book.

Alternations between an address in the second person and statements about the same god in the third person are far from rare. In stanzas composed according to this principle a vocative of a substantive or adjective denoting some quality or attribute of the god referred to may, in a way, be considered to counterbalance the name in another case form

¹⁰⁹ Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, I², p. 380.

in the complementary part of the stanza. Examples are: ṚV. 1, 136, 4 where *mitrāya varuṇāya* in pāda a is followed by *rājānā* in c and *ṛtāvānā* in d; 6, 17, 8 *adha tvā viśve pura indra devā / ekaṃ tava saṃ dadhire bharāya adevo yad abhy auhiṣṭa devān / svarṣātā vṛṇata indram atra*; cf. also 6, 15, 8 *tvāṃ dūtā agne amṛtam: jāgrvim*.

The interest of a systematic comparison between more or less fixed epithets on the one hand and more or less casual analytic expressions of the same thought in descriptive or narrative passages needs no description. A full treatment of this point would however go beyond the scope of the present work. The following instances may therefore suffice here. Whereas Uṣas is 3, 61, 2 and 6, 65, 2 called *candraratha*- “with a brilliant carriage” the poet of 1, 123, 7 says: *adyaud uṣāḥ śośucatā rathena*; beside the compound *dhṛṣṇuojas* “endowed with courageous energy-and-creative power” (of Indra and the Maruts: 8, 70, 3; 2, 34, 1) we find (3, 36, 4) the statement that Indra possesses *dhṛṣṇv ojaḥ*; beside *dhūmaketu*- “smoke-bannered” (e.g. 10, 4, 5) the passage 5, 11, 3 *dhūmas te ketur abhavat* “smoke has become thy banner.”

Another idiom which though likewise worth mentioning, does, however, not come under this heading occurs 10, 80, 1 *agnir* (sc. *dadāti*) *nārīm vīrakukṣim puramdhim*, translated by Geldner: “A. (schenkt) eine gesegnete Frau, die mit einem Sohne schwanger geht”: here the epithet or apposition *puramdhi*- “receptacle of plenitude”¹¹⁰ seems to have been explained by *vīrakukṣi*-.

No reader of Homer can fail to notice that his poems abound in fixed combinations of proper name or appellative and epithet: Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη, νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς, χθονὶ πούλυβοτείρη, νηὶ μελαίνῃ etc. Many Homeric epithets have indeed entered into traditional combinations with the nouns to which they belong.¹¹¹ In particular cases the original sense of the attribute was already forgotten in the times of the poets themselves. It may safely be assumed that part of these phrases were borrowed either from the cult of the gods or from the prehistoric bards who in their turn may have followed, imitated or stylized colloquial usage.¹¹² The religious vocabulary of the ancient Greeks and Romans contained a considerable

¹¹⁰ See especially Renou, *Etudes véd. et pāṇ.*, III, p. 58 (with bibliographical references) and IV (Paris, 1958), p. 42.

¹¹¹ According to Alb. Schuster, “Untersuchungen über die homerischen Beiwörter, I”, *Progr. Stade*, 1866, p. 6 ff. 97 of the 286 epithets examined are exclusively added to one and the same noun. See also H. Meylan-Faure, *Les épithètes dans Homère*, Thesis Lausanne, 1899, p. 129 and passim.

¹¹² Cf. e.g. A. Filipzky, “Das stehende Beiwort im Volksepos”, *Progr. Villach*, 1886, p. 9 ff. (dealing especially with Yugo-Slavia).

number of binary phrases such as *Iuppiter Tonans* "I. the Thunderer"; *Iuppiter Stator* "I. who causes any thing (and especially the Roman army) to stand or stay"; *Mars Ultor* "M. the Avenger",¹¹³ each of them referring to particular aspects of a divinity.

"Zeiten sinnlicher Religiosität sehen vor den siegreichen Scharen übermenschlich grosse lichte. Gestalten Tod und Flucht in die Reihen der Gegner tragen; bald schreibt man Göttern, bald Landesheroen... den Sieg zu".¹¹⁴ Homer for instance ascribes Sarpedon's death to Ares, who used Patrocles as his instrument: Π 544 τὸν δ' ὑπὸ Πατρόπλῳ δάμασ' ἔγχεϊ χάλκεος Ἄρης. Before the battle the aid of the gods was invoked and during the battle they were believed to be present and to assist their worshippers.¹¹⁵ Hence the "Kultusbegriffen" Ζεὺς στρατίος, Ζεὺς στρατηγός, Ζεὺς τροπαῖος etc. According to Xen. Resp. Lac. 13, 2 and other authorities the Spartans worshipped Ζεὺς Ἀγῆτωρ "Zeus the Leader" whose aid was of special importance for the army when marching out.

Although authors of the handbooks on the history of Vedic religion have neglected to throw upon this fact the light which it deserves there exist to a certain extent, it is true, Vedic counterparts of these phrases.

Some occurrences of epithets are indeed from the point of view of the history of ancient Indian religion of special interest in that the epithet is coupled with the name of the god: R̥V. 1, 80, 11 *yad indra vajrinn ojasā vṛtram marutvāṃ avadhīḥ* "als du, Keulenträger Indra, ... den V. erschlagen hast" (Geldner); 4, 19, 1 *evā tvām indra vajrinn* ("I. mit der Keule", G.) *atra / ... / nir ekam id vṛṇate vṛtrahatye*. Similarly 8, 24, 1 *sakhāya ā śiṣāmahi / brahmendrāya vajriṇe*; 1, 52, 5 *indro yad vajrī... bhinad valasya paridhīn*, etc. This combination is indeed of considerable frequency: 7, 97, 9 *brahmendrāya vajriṇe akāri*: here the brahma inherent in the hymn is no doubt set in motion with a view to strengthening Indra in his warlike exploits. Cf. also 1, 7, 7; 3, 53, 13; 8, 6, 2; 9, 51, 2; 63, 15. In 7, 32, 8 it reads: "press the soma out for I. who bears the vajra": the drink and the weapon enable the god to conquer his great enemy. The variation *indro yā vajrī vṛṣabho* in 7, 49, 1 is worth mentioning.

¹¹³ In the index added to G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer* (München, 1912), there are over 70 phrases with Jupiter, over 20 with Juno.

¹¹⁴ H. Usener, "Der Stoff des griechischen Epos", *Sitz. Ber. Akad. Wien, Ph.-hist. Cl.*, 137 (1897), p. 14 (= *Kl. Schr.*, IV, p. 212).

¹¹⁵ Cf., for the ancient Greeks, Ad. Wilhelm, *Archäologisch-epigraphische Mitteilungen*, 20 (1897), p. 87. Usener, *o.c.*, p. 15 draws attention to Plut. *De facie in orb. lunae* 30, p. 944 οὐκ αἰεὶ δὲ διατρίβουσιν ἐπ' αὐτῇ (sc. σελήνῃ) οἱ δαίμονες (h. l. the divine ancestors are meant) ἀλλὰ... καὶ σωτῆρες ἐν τε πολέμοις καὶ κατὰ θάλατταν ἀναλάμπουσιν.

Some other word groups consisting of a proper name and a favourite epithet which sometimes impress us as forming a unity, may find a place here. In R̥V. 3, 34, 1 *indraḥ pūrbhid ātirad dāsam arkaiḥ* – which can hardly be translated otherwise than, with Geldner: “I., der Burgenbrecher hat den Dāsa mit Zaubergesängen überwunden” – both words are, to all appearance, intimately associated: *pūrbhid-* “the destroyer of strongholds” is indeed a well-known aspect of the great warrior god, the epithet being peculiar to him.¹¹⁶ The combination *indra- vṛtrahan-* occurs 10, 152, 3, *indra- śakra-* – as is well-known Śakra was to become another name of the god – 1, 62, 4 (notice also, in 8, 2, 23 ...*indrāya / somaṃ vīrāya śakrāya*).

Instances of similar combinations are: 1, 10, 3 *indra somapā* “du Somatrinker I.” (Geldner); 10, 103, 9 *indrasya vṛṣṇaḥ* “of Indra, the bull or the manly one”; 9, 74, 7; 97, 39; 107, 7 *somo mīdhvān* “S. the bountiful (the correctness of Geldner’s translations 9, 74, 7 *s. m. asuraḥ* “S., der belohnende Asura” and 9, 97, 39 ... *pūyamānaḥ / somo mīdhvān* ... “der geläuterde S. Der Belohnende” is doubtful: rather “..., der g. S., der B. ...”); 7, 13, 2 *vaiśvānara jātavedas* (cf. 1, 59, 5) “O thou who belongest to all men, J.”; cf. also 6, 8, 7 ... *agne / vaiśvānara* ... with regard to AV. 13, 3, 5; ŚŚ. 8, 22, 1; MG. 2, 8, 6 etc. *agnir vaiśvānaraḥ*; for *agnir jātavedaḥ* see e.g. ŚŚ. 8, 24, 1; perhaps also R̥V. 1, 48, 7 *subhagoṣā* “Uṣas who possesses, or brings, good fortune”. It is interesting to compare R̥V. 6, 15, 13; 10, 122, 1 *agnir hotā gr̥hapatīḥ* to TS. 2, 4, 5, 2; MŚ. 1, 4, 3, 1 *agnir gr̥hapatīḥ* “A. the lord of the house”.¹¹⁷

Elsewhere however proper name and epithet, though occurring in the same stanza, are separated by other words: R̥V. 1, 131, 6 *yad indra hantave mṛdho / vṛṣā vajriṇ ciketasi*; 10, 134, 3 *śacībhiḥ śakra dhūnuhīndra* (notice the paronomasia); 8, 66, 3 *indro... vṛtrahā*. 5, 27, 1 ... *agne... / vaiśvānara*; 2 *v... / a...*; 6, 8, 6; 9, 1; 7, 5, 3; 4; 8; 9. Compare also instances such as 10, 162, 1 *agniḥ... rakṣohā* (see 7, 8, 6): R̥V. 1, 79, 12; 7, 15, 10; AV. 8, 3, 26 etc. *agnī rakṣāṃsi sedhati*; AV. 12, 3, 43, etc.; 1, 90, 7 *madhu dyaur astu naḥ pitā*. The conclusion must therefore be that the above combinations were far from being fixed. In that they are similar

¹¹⁶ See Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 60.

¹¹⁷ For Rudra Bhūtapati see Arbman, *Rudra*, ch. VI. – For the considerable number of Indra epithets used in Vedic ritual see A. Hillebrandt, *Ved. Mythologie*², II (Breslau, 1929), p. 204 f., who is right in observing that “Indra durch eine Reihe einzelner Epitheta (*indra- am̐homuc-*, etc.) gekennzeichnet und dann mit besonderen Opfern verehrt wird; ... fast jeder dieser Spezialindra’s wird aus einem besonderen Grunde angerufen. *Indra- putrin-* z. B. opfert man mit dem Wunsche nach Nachkommenschaft”. See also Heesterman, *The Anc. Ind. Royal Consecration*, p. 52.

to the appositional phrases of the *soma rājan* type, which are likewise far from being inseparable.

Soma, being called a king, is often addressed as *soma rājan* (8, 48, 7; 8; 10, 141, 3) or *rājan soma* (1, 91, 4), but 10, 97, 22 it reads *somena saha rājñā*, and 1, 91, 8 we come across *tvam naḥ soma viśvato rakṣā rājann aghāyataḥ*; 8, 66, 11 *vayam ghā te... / indra brahmāṇi vṛtrahan / ... pra bharāmasi*. Similarly, 5, 75, 6 *narā... aśvinā*, etc. It may be observed that the order of the components is not always the same: 2, 20, 7; 10, 74, 6 *vṛtrahendraḥ*, but 8, 66, 3 *indro... vṛtrahā*; 7, 93, 4 *indrāgnī vṛtrahaṇā*.

As stated before the same names and epithets occur in other contexts alternately: 1, 8, 5 *indraḥ... / ... vajriṇe*; 8, 1, 19; 49, 3; 10, 22, 2 etc. etc.

It remains to discuss those epithets which as to their outward form are phrases. Among these nominal phrases one member of which is a genitive depending on the other rank first. In 1, 96, 4 Agni, being identified with Mātariśvan, is *inter alia* described as *viśam gopā* and *janitā rodasyoḥ* “herdsman of the communities of settlers and generator of heaven and earth”. The latter expression is 9, 90, 1 applied to Soma. In neither passage has it much to do with the general thought expressed by the other elements of the sentence. Indra is 3, 49, 4 called *dhartā divo rajasaḥ* “the supporter of sky and space”; *kṣapām vastā* “the light-bringer in the nights” and *janitā sūryasya* “the generator of the sun”: these expressions form part of a series of descriptive adjectives.

The epithetical nature of these combinations is sometimes doubtful: 5, 2, 6 the poet describes Agni as *vasam rājānam vasatiṃ janānām* “the king of dwellings, the residence of men”.

The goddess Uṣas is R.V. 7, 75, 1 stated to have been born in the sky: *divijā*, but the indication of the place of her birth by this compound is limited to this passage. Elsewhere she is called “the daughter of heaven”: 1, 30, 22 (which may be regarded as an explicit reference to the heavens as the great source of blessing) *tvam tyebhir ā gahi / vājebhir duhitar divaḥ / asme rayiṃ ni dhāraya* – a variant is 6, 65, 1 *duhitā divojāḥ* “the daughter born in the sky” (who is described as having awakened by her light the communities of men) –; or (1, 124, 5) “the mother of the cows”: *gavam janitrī*.

We need not dwell on the comparatively frequent phrases 1, 58, 8 *sūno sahasaḥ* “son of overwhelming strength” (“extend, O son of strength, uninterrupted protection to us, who praise (Thee)”; 1, 58, 8 *ūrjo napāt* “descendant of vigour”; 1, 37, 11 *miho napātam* “descendant of the downpour of water”; 1, 23, 3 *dhiyas patī* “lords of thought” etc., which

were studied elsewhere.¹¹⁸ These too are not always inseparable: 3, 11, 4 *agnim sūnum sanaśrutam / sahaso jātavedasam / vahniṃ devā akr̥ṇvata*; cf. also 1, 9, 9 *vasor indram vasupatim*.¹¹⁹

The appositional phrases of the (10, 104, 8) *āpo devīḥ* “the divine waters” type (cf. also 10, 70, 9 *deva tvaṣṭar*) have already attracted our attention.

The skilful artisan among the gods, Tvaṣṭar, receives some appropriate epithetic phrases: 10, 53, 9 *apasām apastamaḥ* “the most industrious of the industrious (artisans)”, the stanza referring to his bringing the vessels, made by himself, out of which the gods drink; 1, 188, 9 T. *rupāṇi hi prabhuḥ* “lord of the forms” has prepared all animals; 2, 31, 4 he is *bhuvanasya sakṣaṇiḥ* “the vanquisher¹²⁰ of the world”, and implored to favour, together with the celestial females, the hymns of praise: is this title due to his creative activity; has he power over the created objects because he produces all forms?

It cannot be part of our task to study here constructions such as 10, 70, 9 *deva tvaṣṭar yad dha cārutvam ānaḍ / ...*, in which a causal *yad*-clause expresses a thought which might have been given the outward form of an epithet.

A god who receives a considerable number of two or three word attributes is Pūṣan. He is 10, 26, 5 (in an enumeration of functions and traits of character) called an *aśvahayo rathānām* “driver of chariot-steeds”; st. 7 an *inaḥ puṣṭinām sakḥā* “mighty friend of nurture”, after *ino vājānām patiḥ* “mighty lord of goods”; 6, 58, 4 an *iḷas patiḥ* “lord of nourishment”, that is a distributor of it; the next word is the well-known epithet *maghavā*; 6, 55, 2 in a similar way an *īsānam rādhaso mahaḥ* “a lord of great munificence” (“seeking wealth we come to our friend, who is...”); 54, 8 *īsānam rāyaḥ* (“we come as suppliants to P..., whose property is never lost, who is...”); 8, 31, 11 *urur adhvā svastaye* “a wide path to well-being” (“let P. come hither with well-being...”); 10, 26, 5 *ṛṣiḥ... manurhitaḥ* “an ṛṣi friendly to men” (“... and is the protecting friend of the sage”); 6, 55, 3 *rāyo dhārā* “a stream of wealth”, *vaso rāṣiḥ* “an abundance of goods” and *dhīvato dhīvataḥ sakḥā* “friend of every devout man”; 1, 89, 5 *pāyur adabdhah* “an undeceived or infallible guardian” (“a protector for the increase of our possessions”); 10, 26, 5 *pratyardhir yajñānām* “sharing equally in sacrifices” (“an ṛṣi friendly to men and a

¹¹⁸ Some observations on the relations between “gods” and “powers” in the Veda... (The Hague, 1957).

¹¹⁹ Havers’ view of these phrases (*Handbuch*, p. 179) is not completely satisfactory. See also *Stylistic repetition in the Veda*, p. 260.

¹²⁰ See Geldner, *Rig-veda übersetzt*, I², p. 315.

protector"); 10, 17, 3 *bhuvanasya gopāḥ* "herdsman of creation" ("whose herd is never lost, ... may he deliver thee..."); 6, 55, 5 *bhrātendrasya* "brother of Indra"; 10, 26, 4 *matīnām sādhanam / viprāṇām cādhavam* ("we would like to think of thee, god P.,) as one who furthers our prayers and as one who inspires the bards"; 6, 55, 5 *mātur didhiṣum* "suitor of his mother";¹²¹ 10, 139, 3 *rāyo budhnaḥ* "foundation of wealth" and *saṃgamano vasūnām* "a collector of goods"; 10, 26, 9 *vājānām vṛdhaḥ* "augmentor of things representing vāja" ("may he hearken to our invocation"); st. 6 *vāsovāyo 'vīnām* "weaver of the raiment of sheep" (followed, by way of association, by *ā vāsāṃsi marmṛjat* "he who makes their (? , or the) raiment clean"); st. 5 *viprasya yāvayatsakhaḥ* "protecting the friend of the bard"¹²² ("showing equally (with other gods) in the sacrifices"; 6, 58, 2 *saṃcakṣāṇo bhuvanā* "beholding all creatures" (forming part of a series); st. 4 *subandhur diva ā prthivyāḥ* "a close relative to Heaven and Earth"; 5, 43, 9 P. and Vāyu are called *coditārā matīnām* "stimulators of prayers" (and "dispensers of property", to whom the poet expresses his veneration).

Even in those cases in which an epithet or an apposition and a name have fused into a more or less stereotype phrase variations and extensions are apt to turn up. Thus we find, beside the frequent *rājā varuṇaḥ* (e.g. R.V. 1, 24, 7): 7, 64, 1 *rājā sukṣatro varuṇaḥ* "king V., who rules well (or: of good dominion)". Elsewhere the same phrase is extended: 2, 1, 4 *r. v. dhṛtavrataḥ*, the compound being a frequent epithet of Varuṇa.

Beside the frequent *sūnuḥ sahasaḥ* R.V. 1, 27, 2 has *sūnuḥ śavasā* (with an instrumental). In 3, 61, 1 Uṣas is addressed as "possessing (distributing) vāja by means of vāja": *uṣo vājena vājini*: as the adjective is sometimes applied to gods (e.g. 2, 24, 10: Brahmanaspati) this phrase may be due to the tendency to 'abundant' expression. 6, 61, 6 Sarasvatī is called *vājeṣu vājini*; 2, 34, 8 the Maruts, *bhaga ā sudānavah*. Cf. also 1, 60, 2; 2, 27, 5; 6, 15, 8.

Sometimes an appositional phrase is added to an epithet. R.V. 3, 35, 2 *upājirā... saptī / harī rathasya dhūrṣv ā yunajmi* "Ich schirre... das rasche Gespann, das Falbenpaar an die Joche des Wagens" (Geldner).

Sometimes two phrases each of which is an epithet are united so as to form an unlaboured combination or a varied structure. R.V. 6, 46, 6 *tvām ugram avase carṣaṇīsaḥam / rājan deveṣu hūmahe* "we call upon thee, the energetic ruler of men, O king among the gods".

Geldner may be right in taking 5, 4, 2 *havyavāḥ agnir ajaraḥ* to mean

¹²¹ For the interpretations proposed for this place see Atkins, *o.c.*, p. 66.

¹²² Compare Sāyaṇa: *śatrūṇām prthakkartā sakḥā bhavati*.

“A., der alterlose Opferfahrer” (cf. e.g. 1, 44, 8; 3, 17, 4; 5, 28, 5 etc. where *havyavah-* is used alone), but his own translation of the same words in 3, 2, 2 “A. ist der O., nicht alternd” shows that another interpretation is possible also; cf. however also 3, 11, 2 *sa havyavāḥ amartyaḥ*. The word group 3, 27, 5 *agnir yajñasya havyavāḥ* “A. ist der Spendenfahrer des Opfers” is on the other hand without doubt an extension of *a. h.*

Some of these bipartite formulae give rise to special remarks. Part of them are in most cases closely united combinations. Thus *duhitar divaḥ* used in connection with Uṣas. The ‘tmesis’ *diva stave duhitā* is (1, 92, 7) an exception.

One of the members of a frequent bipartite formula may be absent: R̥V. 3, 61, 6 it reads *ṛtāvarī divaḥ* which though literally meaning “the regular (i.e. who keeps within the fixed order) of the sky” obviously stands for “the r. daughter of the sky”. Similarly, 1, 46, 1 *priyā divaḥ*. R̥V. 9, 97, 47 on the other hand has *duhituḥ* alone to indicate the goddess. Renou¹²³ rightly draws attention to 5, 52, 5 where *divaḥ* is an ellipsis instead of *d. naraḥ*, i.e. “the men of the sky (of heaven)”, i.e. the Maruts and to *sūnu-*, *putra-*, *yahu-* “son” with the omission of *sahasah*.¹²⁴

An interesting phenomenon that does not appear to have received the attention which it deserves is the characterization of a pair of gods by an epithet which is as a rule applied to one of them. We should however be on our guard against generalizations and rash conclusions. Two gods may be actually concerned with the same or similar phenomena. The wide-striding Viṣṇu and the serpent-killing Indra, for instance, have some features in common, which may be satisfactorily explained as mainly conditioned by the community of their interests and their co-operation. Representing related powers and processes they naturally co-operate.¹²⁵ This association and co-operation must have induced the ancient poets to apply the same characterizations to both gods. Thus though *urukrama-* “widely striding” is in other parts of the R̥gveda exclusively appropriated to Viṣṇu it is 7, 99, 6 applied to this deity and Indra: *iyam manīṣā bṛhatī bṛhantorukramā tavasā vardhayantī*. Although it is true that Indra alone is 10, 29, 4 addressed as *urugāya-* – an epithet essentially belonging to his companion –, the phrase *uru kramiṣṭa jīvase* is, as Hopkins¹²⁶ correctly observed, used of both gods: 1, 155, 4 of Viṣṇu; 8, 63, 9 and 6, 69, 5

¹²³ Renou, *Etudes védiques et pāṇinéennes*, III, p. 15. For these elliptical phrases see also my treatise *Ellipsis and brachylogy in the R̥gveda* which is in course of preparation.

¹²⁴ See “*Gods*” and “*powers*”, passim.

¹²⁵ See the present author’s *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 31.

¹²⁶ E. W. Hopkins, *J.A.O.S.*, 36, p. 264, n. 21.

of both of them conjointly making the atmosphere broader and extending the worlds, for man to live. The epithet *śucipā* “drinking the clear (soma draught)” is characteristic of Vāyu; as however the unmixed soma is offered almost exclusively to this god and Indra, it is not surprising to find this epithet once applied to both gods: 7, 91, 4 *śucim somaṃ śucipā pātam*. As stated before some other gods among whom is Agni share with Indra the title *vr̥trahan-*; it is therefore easily intelligible that the dual *vr̥trahanā* sometimes (e.g. 1, 108, 3) belongs to Indra and Agni. What is also interesting is that *suvaṇṇa-* “well provided with the vajra”, which is exclusively Indra’s, is 7, 93, 4 after *vr̥trahanā* used in connection with the same two gods conjointly. Although Mitra is 3, 59, 4 said to have been born as a king, this title which is often applied to his nearest colleague Varuṇa is not added to his name as an epithet or apposition. The dual compound *mitrāvaruṇā* is however often accompanied by the dual *rājānau*, and the plural form *rājānaḥ* occurs several times in connection with these gods and Aryaman, who often keeps them company.

Words accompanied by another term, e.g. a dependent genitive, are as a rule left without any epithet. Although, for instance, the fountain of honey in Viṣṇu’s highest footstep is of the utmost importance for man and universe no epithet is 1, 154, 5 added to the word group *viṣṇoḥ pade parame madhva utsaḥ*. Compare 9, 97, 44 *vasva utsam*; 5, 57, 1 *diva utsāḥ*, but 3, 26, 9 it reads: *śatadhāram utsam akṣīyamāṇam*. The word *upastha-* “womb” which is usually accompanied by a genitive – e.g. 1, 35, 5 “all worlds rest in the womb of the divine Savitar”; 95, 5; 109, 3; 115, 5; 117, 5; 3, 5, 8; 7, 6, 6; 104, 9 – is in these phrases never modified by an epithet; 10, 70, 6 however we encounter ... *vām... urau... upasthe*. Although it reads 2, 16, 5 *madhva ūrmir...* and 9, 80, 5 *sindhor ivormiḥ...*, we also find 8, 14, 10 *apām ūrmir madann iva* “wie die lustige Wasserwelle” (Geldner), and the poet of 1, 168, 2 speaks of *sahasriyāso apām normayaḥ*; 9, 81, 1 *somasya pavamānasyormayaḥ* cannot be considered an example. Ghee as soma is 4, 58, 1 called a “sweet wave” *ūrmir madhumān*. In passages such as 1, 164, 21 *ino viśvasya bhuvanasya gopāḥ* “the powerful herdsman of the entire world” the addition of the attribute is not in need of comment.

Habitual absence of epithets is however not limited to words which form part of phrases or word groups. There are also other nouns that are rarely accompanied by epithets. The noun *āyus-* “a full life-time (of a hundred years)” often occurs in prayers for a long life. No attribute is added if a mere wish is expressed, or the statement made, with regard to continuation of life, e.g. 1, 157, 4 *prāyus tāriṣṭham* (the Aśvins are address-

ed). If the idea of completeness of life-time or of its length is to be emphasized an adjective – which cannot be called an epithet – is in a minority of cases added: 1, 37, 15 *viśvaṃ cid āyur jīvase* “(in order) to live a complete life-time” though impressing us as somewhat tautological is no doubt an emotionally perfectly intelligible mode of expression. Similarly 1, 73, 5; 93, 3; 6, 16, 27; cf. also 6, 52, 15 “the gods must concede us *viśvam āyuh* in order to enjoy it always”; 7, 90, 6; 8, 31, 8; 10, 85, 42; R̥V. 1, 96, 8 those praying desire to live a *dīrgham āyuh* “a long life-time”; also 1, 116, 25; 10, 14, 14; 18, 6; 36, 14. Nor should we use the term epithet in cases such as: R̥V. 1, 89, 8 the wish is expressed to attain the *devahitam āyuh* “the length of life appointed by the gods”; 1, 113, 17 *āyuh prajāvat* “rich in children”; cf. 1, 116, 19; 10, 45, 8 *durmarṣam āyuh śriye rucānaḥ*; 10, 170, 1 etc.

The adjectives which sporadically accompany nouns such as *dakṣa*- “ability, energy”, for instance *apās*- “skilful, active”, *ābhū*- “helpful, assisting”; *iṣira*- “active, vigorous”; *dyumat*- “brilliant, excellent”; *bhadra*- “auspicious, fair”; *mayobhū*- “delightful”, are distinctive rather than epithetic.

It might a priori be expected that an idea like that expressed by the above *utsa*- “spring, fountain” strongly appealed to the minds of people inhabiting a southern region and that therefore their phantasy would apply a variety of laudatory epithets to it. Yet 5, 32, 1; 7; 9, 89, 6; 10, 30, 8; 143, 6, the word is left without qualification; likewise 1, 85, 11; 2, 16, 7; 5, 45, 8; 52, 12; 10, 45, 2 etc. where it is used metaphorically. Elsewhere the adjective accompanying this word should not be considered an epithet: 8, 61, 6; 9, 107, 4 an *utso hiraṇyayaḥ* “a golden fountain” is “a fountain of gold”. However, the rain-cloud is 1, 64, 6 called *utsam... stanayantam akṣitam* “a thundering undecaying fountain”; 8, 7, 16 *utsam... akṣitam*; in connection with the soma draught it reads 9, 110, 5 *u... janapānam akṣitam*, the latter epithet being very suitable to praise or qualify a fountain; the poet of 1, 121, 8 calls Soma *dyumnāsāham utsam* “den an Glanz überlegenen Quell” (Geldner); cf. also 10, 30, 9. Another exception is 3, 26, 9 where in connection with the poet, it reads: *śata-dhāram utsam akṣīyamāṇam*.

With regard to the more or less fixed attributes occurring in connection with the words for “cow, bull etc.” there is room for the observation that passages such as 2, 4, 7 *paśur naiti svayur agopāḥ* cannot be said to contain epithets proper. As stated elsewhere the addition of *agopāḥ* is essential: a head of cattle finds its way being left to itself, only when there is no herdsman to guide it. However the combination seems to have been of

some frequency: cf. 3, 57, 1 *dhenum carantīm prayutām agopām* “eine Milchkuh... die hirtelos sich selbst überlassen weidet” (cf. also 3, 45, 3). Without being tautological the expression may be considered an instance of ‘Abundanz’¹²⁷ (cf. also 7, 18, 10). The same animal is 3, 34, 9 spoken of in terms of praise: *purubhojas-* “feeding many people”. Her affection for her calf is well known and is made an element in a simile in 1, 32, 4. As occurrences such as 1, 32, 2; 3, 1, 7, or 3, 34, 9 cannot be said to come under this heading, the oft-mentioned cow is strikingly poor in epithetical attributes. Some of the epithets used in connection with these useful and much-beloved animals point in the direction of their inviolability, which as is well known, was to assume a more pronounced character in post-Vedic times.¹²⁸ Though used figuratively the words *gāvo dhenavaḥ* receive in 1, 173, 1 the attribute *adabdha-* “not (to be) deceived”. Elsewhere a physical detail is emphasized: 3, 31, 11 *urūcī* “broad”, cf. the Homeric εὐρυμέτωπος; 5, 34, 8 *goṣu śubhriṣu* “beautiful (white) cows”. This striking poverty in epithetical description and absence of attribution of characteristic qualities may to a certain extent be explained from the fact that the cow, whatever her economic significance and whatever the rôle she played in Vedic life, literature and mythopoeic thought¹²⁹ – she is very often mentioned, for instance in similes and references to her great utility –, was not put on a par with the divine powers which were to be propitiated by hymns and formulas couched in measured language and composed in accordance with traditional stylistic patterns. If however the etymology repeatedly proposed for *aghnya-* “bull”, fem. “cow” (cf. Av. *aganyā* “milch-cow”) happens to be right: ¹³⁰ “he, she, that is not to be slain”, a very ancient epithet must have replaced a common noun for this animal.

Whatever the importance of epithets in the R̥gvedic mantras, whatever the preference of the poets for descriptive and characteristic attributes they are not the only devices to emphasize certain aspects of a nominal concept, to focus attention on special qualities of a divine person or an important idea, to shed light on definite connotations inherent in the main concept expressed by the noun. A favourite means of achieving a similar effect is the well-known ‘figure’ usually called hendiadys, a device by which an idea ordinarily conveyed by a noun and an attributive adjective

¹²⁷ We shall have to revert to this phenomenon further on.

¹²⁸ See M. A. Muusses, *Koekultus bij de Hindoes*, Thesis Utrecht, 1920.

¹²⁹ Cf. e.g. Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 150 f.

¹³⁰ See esp. W. Schulze, *Kleine Schriften* (Göttingen, 1933), p. 207. – This sense cannot be attributed to *aghnya-* in the R̥gveda, nor do the contexts in which it occurs point to it.

or epithet is expressed by two coordinated nouns.¹³¹ Verg. Georg. 2, 192 *pateris libamus et auro* (= *pateris aureis*); Tac. Ann. 12, 27 *veteranos coloniamque deduci* “to bring a colony of veterans to...”. “Es handelt sich beim wirklichen Hendiadyoin darum, dasz... eine Ergänzungsgruppe statt einer logisch geforderten Bestimmungsgruppe gesetzt ist”.¹³² There are places in the Ṛgveda where a coordinated nominal group might as far as its logical sense is concerned be put on a par with an epithetical word group. Thus 7, 34, 25 *śarman syāma marutām upasthe* “we should like to be under the protection, in the lap of the Maruts” might be logically equivalent to something like: “we should like to be under the safe protection of the M.”. The preference for the coordinated word-groups is especially apparent from tripartite combinations such as 1, 114, 5 *śarma varma chardir asmabhyam yaṁsat*; 2, 10, 6 *juhvā vacasyā* “with an eloquent tongue”. Compare 1, 151, 2 *adha kratum vidatam gātum arcate*; 9, 4, 3 *sanā dakṣam uta kratum*, and notice also the cumulative forces of expressions such as 7, 28, 3 *mahe kṣatrāya śavase*. This predilection for coordinative structures is also at the root of variations of the types 5, 39, 5 *asmā it kāvyaṁ vaca / uktham indrāya śaṁsyam*; 8, 67, 6 *yad... / varūtham ... yac chardiḥ*; 8, 95, 6.

Little or no space should be devoted to the record of passages which are to be supplemented by a term occurring in the context. Sometimes a descriptive or attributive epithet may supply us with the missing element. Thus in RV. 7, 32, 24 *abhī śatas tad ā bhara / indra jyāyaḥ kanīyasaḥ / purūvasur hi ... sanād asi / ...*, *tad* should – as suggested already by ancient commentators – be understood as referring to the idea of *vasu-* contained in *purūvasuḥ*.

It is often rather difficult, not to translate an epithet by itself into English, but to render the entire sentence or word group in which it occurs in such a way that all the implications of the original Sanskrit appear to full advantage. Is Geldner for instance right in translating 7, 8, 2 ... *kṛṣṇapavir oṣadhībhir vavakṣe* by “er ist durch die Pflanzen groß geworden, der eine schwarze Radspur hat”? Are the black tracks of fire and its greatness at the cost of vegetable life not two sides of the same phenomenon? Compare also 6, 6, 1 which calls the same god *vṛścadvanam kṛṣṇayāmam* “a cutter of trees with a black path”, and 2, 4, 7. As repeatedly observed in the foregoing pages epithets often render yeoman

¹³¹ See e.g. Havers, *Handbuch*, p. 46 and 220; Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax*, I² (Basel, 1926), p. 62; M. Leumann (–J. B. Hofmann), *Lat. Grammatik* (München, 1928), p. 823 f.; E. Nachmanson, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der altgriechischen Volkssprache* (Uppsala, 1910), p. 69 f.

¹³² Wackernagel, *l.c.*

service in intimating what is left unmentioned by subject, object, verb and, if such occur, by the other elements of the sentence. However general the sense of the noun *śarman-* “shelter, protection, refuge, safety” in 8, 47, 10 is it no doubt refers to the gods’ ability to protect the petitioners against illness and similar adversities: *yad devāḥ śarma śaraṇam / yad bhadram yad anāturam* “den schützenden Schirm, O Götter, den heilsamen, gesundmachenden” (Geldner). Elsewhere however the same noun is accompanied by the adj. *durādhara-* “difficult to be attacked, invincible”: 6, 49, 7; or by *duṣparihantu-* “difficult to be destroyed or averted” or other words focussing attention on other aspects of the noun. A close investigation into all epithets which are in a certain period applied to a noun may therefore often be a substantial help in determining the exact sense and range of connotations of that noun.¹³³

It seems in this connection worth while to examine the occurrences of the adjective *dhṛṣṇu-* the applicability of which may be elucidated by a study of the contexts in which it appears as an epithet. Deriving from the root *dhṛṣ-* “to be bold, courageous, confident, to dare, venture, to dare to attack, to treat with indignity etc.” it expresses, generally speaking, the same ideas adjectivally.¹³⁴ It often applies to Indra: 1, 84, 1 he is invited to drink soma so that the ‘Indra energy’ (*indriyam rajah*) will permeate him; 3, 52, 8 likewise refers to the enhancing of the god’s power; 6, 17, 1 is very clear: “drink soma, O I., so that thou, O bold one, wilt kill the inimical *vṛtras*”; cf. 8, 45, 14; 73, 18. Cf. also 8, 24, 1. Elsewhere the god is requested to destroy or chase away enemies: 6, 21, 7; 10, 120, 4; 7, 19, 3 and 10, 111, 6 remind him of former acts of assistance; 1, 63, 3 states that Indra is the conqueror of the opponents. 1, 30, 14 Indra is requested to insert the axle in the wheels of the chariot. In 4, 16, 7; 22, 5 the adjective combines with *śūra-*: *śūra dhṛṣṇo*; in 6, 29, 3 with *vajrin-*; 7, 20, 5 with *gaveṣaṇa-*. The connection between heroic exploits and ability to distribute wealth is obvious in 6, 37, 4. Other more or less significant passages are 8, 24, 4; 33, 3 “be munificent”; 78, 3 “bring us objects of value”; 81, 7 (“bring us the possessions of the niggard”).

Similar passages occur in connection with other powers or powerful beings: 2, 37, 3; 10, 16, 7 (Agni); 6, 67, 11 (a bull); 2, 16, 4 (the bull Indra). R.V. 9, 108, 6 is particularly significant: *varmīva dhṛṣṇav ā ruja* “wobei das Bild des in die Hürde einbrechenden Kriegers festgehalten

¹³³ See e.g. the interesting observation made by A. Lesky, *Thalatta* (Wien, 1947), p. 12 ff. on the semantic difference between *πόντος* and *θάλασσα* in Greek, which is largely based on the epithets accompanying these substantives.

¹³⁴ For this word see also Meid, *I.F.*, 63, 11 and n. 13.

wird” (Geldner).¹³⁵ That *dhṛṣṇu-* is one of the striking features of a hero or valiant warrior may appear from 10, 69, 5 and 6. Hence also the combination *dhṛṣṇunā śavasā*: 1, 54, 2; 56, 4; 167, 9 where the attributive adjective emphasizes the most important aspect of the idea expressed by the noun.

As this book is not concerned with etymological problems in connection with epithets no special study shall be undertaken here of those inherited attributes the sense of which had already become obliterated at an early period. Some of them, e.g. *āghṛṇin-*, *jātavedas-*, *sumakha-*, *riśādas-* are, however, discussed in other sections. Their very occurrence shows, in addition to a number of other facts, the traditional character of the literary art of the Vedic poets.

Not rarely it is the emotional value (‘Gefühlswert’)¹³⁶ conveyed by a noun in a given passage which is brought out by the attribute. When, in 1, 126, 2 king Kakṣivat is said to have extended his undecaying fame to the sky (*divi śravo ajaram ā tatāna*) the adjective implies a value difficult to translate, but not unknown to men of other times and other countries. The epithet *ajasram* lit. “not to expire, inexhaustible”, i.e. “perpetual”, applied in 9, 113, 7 to the light of heaven and 10, 139, 1 to the light of the sun, must have made a special appeal to the feelings of the ancient hearers; 10, 185, 3 it stands for the eternal light of life. Light (*jyotiḥ*) belonging to those concepts which roused strong emotions, some of its epithets deserve to be included among the examples: 8, 101, 12 Sūrya, the sun, is called *vibhu jyotir adābhyam* “the omnipresent (all-pervading), indestructible light”, likewise expressing the hope and the belief that the source of light will be secure from destruction; *uru* “broad” (connotative of spaciousness and freedom from obstruction)¹³⁷ *jyotiḥ* occurs 1, 117, 21; 2, 27, 14 etc. Cf. also *abhayaṃ jyotiḥ avṛkaṃ jyotiḥ* (10, 36, 2) etc. The frequent addition of *madin-* “intoxicating” etc. to *soma-* (1, 91, 17; 9, 25, 6 etc.), though sometimes (e.g. 9, 50, 5; 74, 9; 80, 3) motivated, seems to have aroused certain emotions. Similarly, 1, 47, 9 *madhvaḥ somasya pītaye*; 9, 72, 8 *rayim piśaṅgam bahulaṃ vasīmahi*.

An epithet may be expressive by its rarity or by the very fact that the

¹³⁵ Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 113.

¹³⁶ See e.g. K. O. Erdmann, *Die Bedeutung des Wortes*³ (Leipzig, 1922), p. 103 ff.; W. L. Graff, *Language and languages* (New York, 1932), p. 311 ff. – Some European authors had a preference for epithets “die seelische Vorgänge, subjektives Gefühl und Verwandtes bezeichnen” (P. R. Pope, *Die Anwendung der Epitheta im Tristan Gottfrieds v. Straszburg*, Thesis Leipzig, 1903, p. 4).

¹³⁷ See *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 57; 62; 68 ff.; “The Vedic concept of *aṃhas*”, *IJJ*, I, p. 33 ff.

noun which it qualifies is as a rule left without descriptive adjectives. The word *ūrmi-* “wave” is often left alone, but 6, 61, 2 it is very appositely accompanied by *taviṣa-* “strong, energetic”: *iyam śuṣmehhir bisakhā ivārujat / sānu girīṇām taviṣebhir ūrmibhiḥ* “sie brach mit Ungestüm gleich einem Wurzelgräber den Rücken der Berge mit den gewaltigen Wogen auf” (Geldner).

“Die Dinge an sich vermag der menschliche Geist so wenig zu erkennen, dasz die Frage aufgeworfen werden konnte, ob sie überhaupt ein anderes Dasein als in der Vorstellung des Menschen haben. Was wir von ihnen erfassen, das sind ihre wahrnehmbaren Eigenschaften und Erscheinungsformen, und diese drängen in dem Maße zu sprachlicher Benennung, als sie unsere Sinne beeindrucken. Die Folge ist, dasz die Sprache so viele besondere Benennungen desselben Dings versucht als Besonderheiten desselben sich bemerkbar machen”.¹³⁸ More or less fixed attributes are, as stated in the introductory chapter, a widespread and favourite attempt to remedy the vagueness of many substantives. Thus the above *śarma anāturam* referring to a special ‘Erscheinungsform’ of protection may be considered an equivalent of “care for (the continuance of) good health”.

The appropriateness of an epithet or surname is not always obvious at first sight. In reading, for instance, 1, 58, 9 *bhavā varūtham gr̥ṇate vibhāvah* “be, O bright one (i.e. Agni), a shelter for the singer” we may however suppose the poet to have been induced to use this mode of address because light and brilliance were widely believed to grant protection against evil. That the earth was considered to be *viśvadhāyas-* “all-sustaining or all-nourishing” is perfectly intelligible (2, 17, 5), but in connection with Manyu “Fury, Kampfzorn” the same epithet looks rather strange: 10, 83, 6; yet a closer examination of the passage and the purpose of the hymn – which is to regain the ‘fury’ and warlike spirit of a warrior who had been defeated in battle – shows that Manyu may have been addressed as *sahure* “victorious” and *viśvadhāyah* because sustaining or strengthening all men or all warriors he made them victorious. The AV. version of this verse has, however, *viśvadāvan* “all-giving one”.

Another remarkable locution consists in the noun *nāman-* “name” accompanied by two adjectives one of which is distinctive and the other epithetic in character. As a case in point 6, 66, 5b may be quoted in full: *ā nāma dhṛṣṇu mārutam dadhānaḥ* lit. “assuring their bold name of Maruts”: as is well known the ancient Indo-European languages often prefer adjectives where we would have subordinate constructions; cf. e.g.

¹³⁸ H. Usener, “Göttliche Synonyme”, *Rhein. Mus.*, 53 (1898), p. 329 = *Kleine Schriften*, IV (Leipzig-Berlin, 1913), p. 259 f.

BhagG. 16, 19 *kṣipāmy... aśubhān / āsurīṣv eva yoniṣu* “I hurl... these evil-doers into the womb of asuras”. Cf. 7, 57, 1. Other more or less epithetical additions to *nāman-* are e.g. 1, 24, 1; 2; 9, 109, 14 *cāru-* “dear”; 1, 103, 4 *kīrtanya-* “deserving to be praised” (cf. ι 364 ὄνομα κλυτόν); 2, 33, 8 *tveṣaṃ rudrasya nāma*.

There are also curious instances of rare epithets occurring in heterogeneous contexts. In 8, 46, 19 Indra while being asked for wealth which crushes those of bad disposition of mind is not only addressed as *śaviṣṭha* “most heroically powerful one”, but also as *codayanmate* “promoter of (right) thought”; this place being alone in attributing this compound to him. Sāyaṇa in explaining the compound ungrammatically:¹³⁹ *codayantī dhanam prerayantī matir yasya sa tathoktaḥ* may have felt this difficulty.

In most passages exhibiting *uttara-* in the generally laudatory sense of “excellent” it is rather difficult to judge the exact implications of this word. In 1, 50, 10 the *u. jyotiḥ* being opposed to *tamaḥ* “darkness” may, if not with Grassmann “herrlicher” (or rather: “herrlich”), mean “the light from above” (cf. Geldner: “das höhere Licht”). That *Manyu* (“Kampfwut”) being addressed as “invoked by many” is, 10, 84, 6, said to possess *sahaḥ... uttaram* “(high, mighty) overwhelming power” is not surprising.

There is another thing to note before leaving this subject. In defending the derivation of *adri-* “stone, rock” from *dr-* “to (cause to) burst, tear”¹⁴⁰ – with which it has, historically speaking, nothing to do¹⁴¹ – Grassmann argued that the word means “der feste Fels, der nicht zerfallende, harte Stein... Der Begriff des Harten, Festen zeigt sich auch in den Beiwörtern *dr̥dha-*, *vīdu-*, *adhr̥ṣṭa-*, *babr̥hāṇa-*. Auch im einzelnen tritt dieser Begriff hervor; so wird *adri-* vom Schleudersteine gebraucht, von den harten Steinen, die die Somapflanze zerschlagen, und von den Felsen, in denen die Kühe eingeschlossen sind, die Indra durch Zerspalten des Felsens mit dem Blitze befreit...”. This explication which is already given in the Nirukta 9, 9: *adrayaḥ parvatā adaraṇīyāḥ* may be considered an instance of popular etymology. The frequent addition of attributes pointing to a well-defined general or fundamental sense may indeed, to a greater or lesser degree of plausibility, show that at a certain period a word was, correctly or mistakenly, connected with a definite root. R̥V. 8, 88, 3 the *adrayaḥ* are described not only as *br̥hantaḥ* “firm, solid” but

¹³⁹ See e.g. Renou, *Grammaire védique*, p. 139.

¹⁴⁰ Grassmann, *Wörterbuch zum Rig-veda*, 39.

¹⁴¹ Cf. M. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefasstes etymol. Wörterbuch des Altindischen*, I (Heidelberg, 1953 etc.), p. 31.

also as *vīlavah* “strong, firmly fixed”; in 5, 87, 2 as *adhṛṣṭāsaḥ* “irresistible”. Cf. 5, 41, 12 and perhaps also 7, 79, 4 *dr̥lhasya ... adreḥ*.

Although the idea underlying R̥V. 7, 40, 6 *vr̥ṣṭim pariḥmā vāto dadātu* “the wind which runs round, or the omnipresent wind, must bring rain” may be that the wind while visiting every country and district will not forget to bring rain in the region of those praying, the epithet in itself does not seem to have any connection with the process of raining. The conclusion may therefore be warranted that the epithet is, in this phrase, more or less fixed or stereotyped: cf. 5, 41, 12 *śṛṇotu na ūrjām patir girāḥ saḥ* / ... *iṣirāḥ pariḥmā* (*saḥ*: Vāyuh, Mādhava; Sāyana). The adjective *iṣirāḥ* “quick, active, vigorous” seems in connection with the wind to be also more or less conventional, cf. 7, 35, 4. These epithets – cf. e.g. also 7, 37, 1 *tripṛṣṭha-* “with three backs” in connection with soma – lend a typical, traditionally determined colour to the text,¹⁴² which in cases like the one under discussion may be rooted in a colloquial idiom.

There can however be no denying that adjectives belonging to certain semantic classes soon tend to assume a fixed character. As already observed words such as *candra-* “shining, splendid” while losing their original sense easily assume a generally honorific or appreciative meaning. When used in their primary sense they may impress us as ornaments or tautological additions: thus *candra-* in connection with the light of day-break (1, 48, 9), or with Agni (5, 10, 4). In point of fact they also emphasize an important aspect of the nominal idea: 3, 3, 5; 5, 10, 4; 6, 6, 4 (Agni); 1, 48, 9 *bhānu* “(ray of) light”, etc.

At times we encounter attributes which are, or seem to be, ‘tautologically’ employed. Sometimes the more or less tautological expression seems to have been inspired in the poet by the rather common inclination to paronomastic combinations: 10, 122, 6 *yajñapriye yajamānāya*. Sometimes however, appearances are deceptive. Thus R̥V. 8, 39, 10 *tvām āpaḥ parisrutāḥ pari yanti* “dich umkreisen die umfließenden Gewässer” (Geldner). The passage in all probability refers to the ritual act described in Kāty.ŚrS. 4, 13, 16 and Gobh. GS. 1, 3, 1 ff., i.e. the pouring out of water round about the fire-place (Gobh.: *agnim upasamādhāya parisamuhya dakṣiṇajānvakto dakṣiṇenāgnim adite anumanyasvety udakāñjalim prasiñcet* etc.). As the adjective impresses us to be more or less technically stereotyped the passage cannot properly be called tautological. – For another instance of ‘Abundanz’ see 7, 18, 10 which is discussed elsewhere.

¹⁴² One might turn up G. Finsler, *Die Homerische Dichtung* (Leipzig, 1915), p. 77; E. Drerup, *Homerische Poetik* (Würzburg, 1921), I, p. 93; 460 f. – For *tripṛṣṭha-* see Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 219.

Not tautological in the proper sense of the term, but 'abundant' are passages such as 3, 57, 1 *dhenum carantīm prayatām agopām* "a milch-cow roaming about left to itself, without a herdsman" (cf. 2, 4, 7).¹⁴³ Thus the addition of *vṛttam* in 4, 31, 4 may be explained from the tendency to be clear: *abhī na ā vavṛtsva cakram na vṛttam arvataḥ*; cf. also 5, 36, 3 and 10, 61, 16, and see e.g. 1, 53, 11 Indra's *devagopāḥ sakhāyaḥ*.

It is therefore impossible to deny that epithets often were a good help to the poets in constructing their verses, but it is much more difficult to decide whether they ever were exclusively or predominantly expletive. It would appear to me that we may consider the matter as follows. The use of epithets was one of the means regularly employed by these poets to fill up an incomplete pāda, or to maintain a group of pādas in a state of balance. At times such a descriptive adjective may have crept into a stanza under the influence of a syntactic group occurring elsewhere and present to the poet's mind: thus 10, 135, 1 *yasmin vṛkṣe supalāṣe* (in a description of the comfortable abode of the gods) may have been the 'model' for 10, 43, 4 *vayo na vṛkṣam supalāṣam*. This does not however mean that these words passed unnoticed or hardly arrested attention, that there was no intellectual force, no sense, and especially, that there was no emotive force in their use. When a poet says, R.V. 10, 131, 1 *apa prāca indra viśvām amitrān / apāpāco abhibhūte nudasva / apodīco apa sūrādharāca / urau yathā tava śarman madema*, the first epithet, though counterbalancing the apostrophe, Indra, in pāda a, is very suited to the context and the author's intentions; in pāda c another qualification emphasizing the god's prowess is, from the psychological point of view, no superfluity: "drive away, O I. all enemies in the east, O overpowering one, those in the west, O hero, those in the north, in the south, that we may be cheerful under your broad protection, O hero". The cool intellectuality of a modern reader might in other passages rashly conclude to tautology where the imagination of the poet and the fervent emotions of the ancient worshipper would enjoy almost any new reference to the god's might and power. In any case the occurrence of an epithet, though from the merely intellectual point of view superfluous, is far from meaningless in 1, 165, 8 where Indra prides himself having made the *viśvaścandrāḥ* waters flow and easy to traverse: it is clear that the quality "all-glittering" applies to the freed and flowing waters.

As the aim of the present essay is to throw some light on the way in which the poets of the Veda utilized those elements of a sentence which

¹⁴³ For 'Abundanz' see e.g. Havers, *Handbuch der erklärenden Syntax*, p. 161 and elsewhere; J. B. Hofmann, *Lateinische Umgangssprache* (Heidelberg, 1936), p. 92 f.

are commonly called epithets, some words must finally be added on this point, viz. their use – that is in the first place on their very occurrence and the choice made of them¹⁴⁴ – in connection with the exigencies of versification. When, in a highly monotonous sūкта R̥V. 7, 35, all (triṣṭubh) stanzas of which – with the exception of the last two – are similar in structure – each pāda beginning with *śam* (*naḥ*) one or two divine names – epithets alternate, in the last parts of the successive pādas, with verbal forms such as *astu*, *bhavatām*, etc. and nouns such as *avobhiḥ*, *vājasātau* indicating local or instrumental complements, it does not appear to be an unwarranted conclusion that the epithets are largely due to the necessity to fill up the verses, the less so as the structure achieved by inserting, at irregular intervals, a logically superfluous epithet is in harmony with the tendency to increasing magnitude. Thus Indra and Varuṇa receive, in st. 1, the attribute *rātahavya*- “to whom the offering is presented”, Aryaman in 2 *purujāta*- “with many descendants” (?), Agni in 4 *jyoti-ranīka*- “having a shining face”, the wind *iṣira*- “quick, active”, the lord of space in 5 *jīṣṇu*- “triumphant”, Varuṇa in 6 *suśamṣa*- “blessing” and Rudra *jalāṣa*- “appeasing”; the sun in 8 *urucakṣas*- “far seeing” and the mountains *dhruvi*- “firm(ly fixed)” etc.; as a rule the epithets are placed in the latter part of the pāda of which they form part.

Sometimes a string of epithets is an expedient to fill a stanza up. Thus the words *tuvigrābham tuvikūrmim rabhodām* constitute the third pāda of 6, 22, 5, the main structure of which is very uncomplicated: *tam prchantī... gātum iṣe*; *tam* is accompanied by two epithets *vajrahastam ratheṣṭhām* (a) and continued by *indram* (b), to which a relative clause is added and pāda d is completed by a short additional clause. This device may enable the poet to expatiate upon a quality of the divine person addressed: 8, 50, 6 *pra vīram ugram vivicim dhanasprtam / vibhūtim rādhaso mahaḥ / ...*; 8, 49, 6. In 6, 70, 1 the two initial pādas consist exclusively of epithets, which though far from being senseless or devoid of a literary and religious function, may have facilitated the poet in the composition of the opening stanza. Cf. e.g. also 1, 15, 11 b.

What is further clear is that a variation in one of the other words of a metrical unit may carry along a variation in the mode of address or in the indication of the divine power to which the hymn is directed: 7, 28, 2 c *ā yad vajram dadhiṣe hasta ugra*, but 8, 96, 5a *ā yad vajram bāhvor indra dhatse*.

It is extremely difficult and in many cases impossible to state how far

¹⁴⁴ Remarks on the position of epithets in verses and stanzas have already been made in one of the preceding sections of this chapter.

the exigencies of versification have been a factor of importance in the choice of epithets. If the attribute or descriptive name has no function whatever in the context it is likely that this factor has exerted considerable influence. But places are very few where no motive whatever can be discovered for the occurrence of an epithet or a similar expression. From the matter-of-fact point of view *narā* in 1, 2, 6 *ā yātam ... / makṣv itthā dhiyā narā* is of course superfluous, but it is well known that a vocative of a proper name or an honorific is often added to an imperative for the sake of friendly insistence. Even instances of the type 6, 49, 1 *stuṣe... / gīrbhir mitrāvaruṇā sumnayantā* "I praise with eulogies M. and V., the benevolent ones" do not belong under such a heading because the participle is a sort of *captatio benevolentiae*.

In many cases the right view of these metrically convenient elements seems to be to consider them as conditioned by sense and versification at the same time: in 10, 111, 4 *indro mahnā mahato arṇavasya / vratāminād ...* the epithet *mahataḥ* though at first sight a metrical makeshift helps to contrast the god and his enemy.

There is no doubt a considerable element of truth in the observations made by Milman Parry with regard to the traditional oral epic style of the Homeric poems,¹⁴⁵ and some of them may, in a modified form, be repeated here as they seem to apply to the poets of the Veda as well. The schematization of the diction itself and the number of devices of verse-making which make up this schematization, are by themselves a direct proof that the style of these documents is traditional. The epithets and metaphorical expressions, the fixed phrases and their groupings within the order of words and the combinations of the verse-quarters, all this is many times beyond whatever supreme creative genius for words one could imagine for the poets whose products we possess. Without being the servants of their diction, because they could put their phrases and formulas together in an almost endless number of ways, these oral poets were neither free in their choice of words nor original in their invention: these very formulas and fixed expressions set them bounds and forbade them the search for an individual style. Expressing only ideas for which they had fixed means of expression they simply had inherited, *inter alia*, the habit of conveying certain connotations and connections by means of epithets or sound repetition couched in syntagmata which in the course of time developed into metrical units or came to combine so as to form stanzas. It should on the other hand be borne in mind that the number of

¹⁴⁵ M. Parry, "Studies in the epic technique of oral verse-making", *Harvard studies in Classical Philology*, 41 (1930), p. 134 ff. and elsewhere.

situations dealt with in the Ṛgvedic corpus is limited, that the cultural environment of the poets and their mental attitude were homogeneous, that the same lines of thought recurred at every turn: every felicitous word or phrase which supplied a want and could be attached to substantival and adjectival concepts was apt to be repeated as soon as the concepts themselves presented themselves for mention or consideration.

In 1, 2, 8 *ṛtena mītrāvaruṇāv / ṛtāvṛdhāv ṛtasprśā / kratum brhantam āśāthe* “by truth, O M. and V., ye have attained, ye increasers of truth, ye that are engaged with truth, to firm mental power-and-inventiveness” thought, style, syntax, versification are, so to say, inseparable, the idiom being typical of the Vedic way of expressing thoughts to such an extent that any attempt to decide whether it was the traditional preference for sound repetition, paronomasia and repetition of the same ideas, the desire to throw light upon the definite aspects of the character of important divine beings, the tendency to emphasize the interrelations between the important elements of the sentence or of the thought expressed or of mere metrical convenience that turned the scale and led the poet to insert the two epithets which, it is true, by filling up the second pāda were a considerable help in composing the stanza. That is to say: if a Vedic poet, relying on an age-long tradition and trained by skilled and competent predecessors, wanted to express the thought: “M. and V. have, by means of truth, attained to resourcefulness” and if he were to put this thought into the outward form of a gāyatrī stanza – the rhythm of which was familiar to him from thousands of examples which he had memorized and could recite by heart – he must have done what all traditional poets and bards of all times did: he drew on his memory and guided by his intuition and inspiration couched the thought in the style of the tradition to which he belonged. The thought simply was to be expressed in the form of three verses and the use of paronomastic devices and epithetical or appositional elements to mark relation or to emphasize points not sufficiently brought out by the other elements of the sentence was highly conventional. In the ‘classical period’ of Vedic poetry form and contents constituted, in the good and successful specimina of this literary act, unities to such a degree that any theory defending the expletive and merely versificatory character of the epithets is a priori improbable.

This is not to hold that epithets never were a great help if one or two places in an otherwise complete stanza remained open. It seems in this connection worth while to study instances such as 1, 3, 4–6: each of these three stanzas which belong intimately together, begins with *indrā yāhi* “O Indra, do thou approach”, but whereas, in 5 and 6, these words

introduce a long sentence, they constitute, in st. 4, a sentence by itself. The place filled in 5 and 6 by a verbal adjective or a participle connecting the invitation and the other elements of the sentence is, in 4, occupied by the epithet *citrabhāno*, which has, as far as I am able to see, no special other function. It may be observed that like Homer the Vedic poets had, in choosing their formulas, variants at their disposal so as to be able to connect them with a great variety of other words: in 1, 9, 1 the thought “O I., do thou approach” while being followed by *matsy andhasaḥ* “indulge freely in (drinking the) soma juice” is expressed by the shorter formula *indrehi*. The frequent use of those epithets which – if appearances are not deceptive – could be used in any context, e.g. the well-known *jātavedas-*, may also to a certain extent be explained from metrical considerations.

Nor should we deny that the choice between two or more more or less synonymous or interchangeable epithets could be determined by metrical considerations. R̥V. 6, 48, 7 d and e *revan naḥ śukra dīdihi / dyumat pāvaka dīdihi* express in a favourite way the same thought with variation in particulars; as *naḥ* is to occupy – in accordance with Wackernagel’s rule¹⁴⁶ – the second place a dissyllabic epithet was needed in pāda d.

That in arranging the elements of verses such as 6, 49, 10 and in choosing these elements the metre often made its influence felt goes without saying: “(we invoke Indra)” *br̥hantam ṛṣvam ajaram suṣumnam*; and we might easily imagine that the poets often were unconsciously guided by the rhythmical schemata of the metre which they had adopted.

Important as offering opportunities for the use of an epithet for the reasons of versification are also the repetitions of thoughts or partial repetitions of verses and lines. In 6, 53, 5 Pūṣan in being requested to pierce the hearts of the niggards is addressed as “wise” or “a seer”, in all probability because only a wise person, gifted with supranormal faculties, can find out who is, among men, a niggard and who is not: *pari tṛndhi paṇinām / ārayā hṛdayā kave...* In st. 6 *ā rikha kikirā kṛṇu / paṇinām hṛdayā kave* the repetition of the vocative *kave* is strictly speaking superfluous; it impresses us as a more or less automatic accompaniment to the preceding words and to the injunction in general.

It is not difficult to discover that the metre has been the decisive factor in more or less parallel passages such as: 1, 182, 8 *tad vām narā nāsatyāv anu ṣyāt*; 1, 116, 11 *tad vām narā śaṃsyam rādhyam ca*, the addition of the proper name in the former verse being possible.

¹⁴⁶ J. Wackernagel, “Über ein Gesetz der indogerm. Wortstellung”, *I. F.*, 1 (1892), p. 333 ff. (= *Kleine Schriften*, Göttingen, 1953, I, p. 1 ff.); Havers, *o.c.*, p. 179.

If a particular sequence of epithets or order of words in general deviates from a prevalent tendency but is in conformity with metrical 'rules' or tendencies, the changes are that the latter have influenced the arrangement of the vocables. The regular rhythm of the cadence in jagatī verses being — — — — —¹⁴⁷ the verse R̥V. 5, 8, 6 *urujrayasaṃ ghṛtayo-nim āhutam* which runs contrary to the tendency to increasing magnitude may be quoted as a case in point.

That the occurrence of an epithet or the choice between two epithets was, indeed, not infrequently largely dependent on the metre used may also appear from a comparison of otherwise identical pādas occurring in stanzas of different metre. Cf. e.g. 8, 71, 8 c (gāyatrī stanza consisting of 3 units of 8 syllables) *tvam īśiṣe vasūnām* "thou (O Agni) art lord of the possessions" as against 1, 170, 5 a (triṣṭubh: 11 syllables) *tvam īśiṣe vasupate vasūnām*; 9, 86, 10 b (jagatī metre consisting of units of 12 syllables each) *pitā devānām janitā vibhūvasuḥ* "the father and generator of the gods, who possesses mighty treasures": 9, 87, 2 b (triṣṭubh) *pitā devānām janitā sudakṣaḥ* "the f. and the skilful g. of the gods"), the meaning of the adjectives being, in these contexts, a matter of indifference. Beside, 1, 7, 2 c (gāyatrī) *indro vajrī hiraṇyayaḥ* 7, 34, 4 b (units of a greater extent) *indro na vajrī hiraṇyabāhuḥ*; beside 6, 37, 5 a *indro vājasya sthavirasya dātā*: 10, 23, 3 d *indro vājasya dīrghaśravasas patiḥ*. 3, 3, 11 d (jagatī metre) *ubhā pitarā mahayann ajāyata / agnir dyāvāpr̥thivī bhūriretasā* "A. was born magnifying both parents, Heaven and Earth, which abound in seed" (where the epithet is, if appearances are not deceptive, well adapted to the context)¹⁴⁸ and 3, 25, 3 (virāj strophe, consisting of three triṣṭubh verses of 11 syllables each) *agnir dyāvāpr̥thivī viśvajanye / ā bhāti devī amṛte amūraḥ* "A. illumines H. and E., which belong to all peoples, the immortal goddesses, (himself being) intelligent" (far from being senseless the adjective *viśvajanye* suggests that the fact that heaven and earth are not wrapped up in darkness is for the benefit of all men).

It is a matter of common knowledge among Vedists that there is in the repeated mantras of the Vedic tradition a considerable number of variant readings ranging from change of a single sound in a single word to radical rearrangements of the whole text.¹⁴⁹ Although it cannot be part of our task to study here those mantras or forms of mantras which occur

¹⁴⁷ E. V. Arnold, *Vedic metre* (Cambridge), p. 185.

¹⁴⁸ See Geldner, *o.c.*, I², p. 338.

¹⁴⁹ See M. Bloomfield and F. Edgerton, *Vedic variants*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1930–1934).

in corpora other than the R̥gveda the fact may be signalized that the epithets have not escaped the general tendency to vary a definite form of a mantra, or to express it more generally and more cautiously, that the variations and interchanges also concern this class of words. Thus beside AV. 2, 13, 1 *ghṛtapratīko ghṛtapṛṣṭho agne* AŚ. 5, 19, 3 has *ghṛtahavano ghṛtapṛṣṭho agne* and KS. 11, 13 *ghṛtaṃ vasāno ghṛtapṛṣṭho agne*. From the frequent occurrence of similar variations it may be seen how easily the ancient poets could adapt a traditional or current verse to another context. In the process of adaptation the variability of the epithets must have been an important factor.

Bloomfield and Edgerton¹⁵⁰ at the time gave a survey of a number of phenomena described by them as 'transfer of epithet' from one person or object to another, involving change of case form and also, often, of gender or number. In contradistinction to AV. 7, 20, 4 *rayim no dhehi subhage suvīram* "grant us wealth with good sons, O auspicious one" MŚ. 6, 2, 3 reads *r. n. dh. s. suvīre* "g. u. w., O a. o. of good sons": "there is little real difference in the sense; the possession of good sons by the deity addressed implies the granting of them to the petitioner". Whereas in R̥V. 4, 37, 5 *ṛbhum ṛbhukṣaṇo rayim* the second word is an 'elliptic' plural: "O R̥bhukṣan and the two other R̥bhus", it is in 8, 93, 34 *ṛbhukṣaṇam ṛbhum rayim* an epithet of *rayim*.¹⁵¹ In AV. 4, 30, 2 cd the line R̥V. 10, 125, 3 cd is repeated, but instead of *tām mā devā vy adadhuh purutrā / bhūristhātrām bhūry āveśayantīm* "the gods distributed me here variously, (me) of many stations, assuming many (forms)" it reads: ... *aveśayantaḥ*; agreeing with the subject this participle means "installing me", together with *bhūri*: "making me enter into many things". Substituting by this alteration a nominative for an accusative, a plural for a singular, and a masculine for a feminine, the redactor of the AV. succeeded in achieving an at first sight more intelligible text. He eliminated, however, the epithetic participial group *bhūry aveśayantīm* which was (TS. 3, 5, 1, 1) explained by *viśvā rupāṇi vasūny āveśayantīm*.

Among the instances of epithets instead of proper names there are of course many in which the versification may have made its influence felt: in 8, 2, 17 / *vajrinn apaso...* cannot be changed into *indra apaso...*; similarly 8, 92, 13. The same circumstance was on the other hand a serious impediment to their assuming a merely decorative character.

Elsewhere, however, things are not so simple. In 1, 55, 6 a and b the

¹⁵⁰ Bloomfield and Edgerton, *o.c.*, III, p. 20 f.; 143 ff., where other examples may be found.

¹⁵¹ See also Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 468, and II, p. 419.

only nominal indication of the god who is the subject of the sentence, Indra, is *śravasyu-* “desirous of praise or glory”, but this adjective is preceded by *sa* and therefore rather to be considered an apposition or explicative addition, expressing motivation (not “der Ruhmbegierige”, Geldner). Similarly 5, 52, 9; 87, 4 (*sa... urukramah*, not with Geldner: “der Weitschreitende”, but rather as a ‘Verbalapposition’: “he ... with wide strides”).

The conclusion to be drawn from these brief remarks on the influence of metre and versification and the use, choice, and position of epithets and similar words may therefore be, that however difficult, nay impossible, it may be to state exactly the extent of that influence, any theory asserting its dominant and fundamental character should be judged with great caution and criticism. The occurrence of the R̥gvedic epithets is, generally speaking, motivated or explicable in so many cases, these words are so often and so evidently functional, that any contention that they are inserted, first and foremost, for the sake of versification, or serve mainly as verse-filling formulas, is a priori highly improbable.

It is on the other hand not my contention that all those occurrences of epithets and surnames which are in harmony with the context are deliberate, that wherever an epithet is used the meaning of which may anyway be conceived as being in tune with the events described or ideas expressed, the poets have chosen it consciously and purposely.

Agelong tradition and a lifelong practice enabled those poets and redactors to whom we owe the hymns of the R̥gveda in their present form to compose these stanzas and collections of stanzas, drawing on their memory, guided by their skill and inspiration and utilizing the innumerable formulas and a very comprehensive vocabulary left by their predecessors. Cultivating a natural tendency to use in connection with persons or objects adjectives denoting striking attributes or characteristic qualities and to resort in addressing mighty beings to descriptive and honorific epithets, they succeeded in inserting these words in their verses so as to comply with, on the one hand, the function and character of these texts and the exigencies of the religious practice and on the other hand the rules and traditions of versification.

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