

VRNDĀVANA  
IN  
VAIṢṆAVA BRAJ LITERATURE

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A B S T R A C T

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to collect and examine references to Vṛndāvana in Sanskrit and Braj Hindi literature. The justification for this is that Vṛndāvana is one of the few concepts for which there is adequate and manageable documentation in the literature.

This feature recalls the fact that Vṛndāvana is one of the key concepts involved in the crystallization of modern Vaiṣṇava Hinduism, namely in the tradition both of sects that have associated themselves with the Braj geographical area and of sects that have sought their roots elsewhere. It is not, therefore, surprising that the study of this largely medieval and modern conception can be seen to have significant and potentially far-reaching implications for the development of Vaiṣṇavism in the prehistoric and classical periods.

This investigation seeks to identify a notional sequence of ideas connected with Vṛndāvana: the description of a) a mythic, fictional place; b) a symbolic, i.e. totally unreal, place; c) the geographical town as a centre of pilgrimage.

The introduction (Ch.I) discusses the chronology and sectarian affiliations of the Sanskrit and Braj Bhāṣā texts (largely medieval; more cursorily, ancient Sanskrit and modern Hindi) used in this study. It also considers the treatment of Vṛndāvana in modern secondary sources which, for the most part, concentrate on Vṛndāvana as a geographical place, ignoring its symbolic and mythic significance.

In Ch. II, the roots of both the 'mythic' and 'symbolic' approaches are sought in Vedic literature. An examination based on the concept of avatāra seeks to define the 'mythic'

approach of the Purāṇas, where the treatment of Vṛndāvana is linked with the manifest Kṛṣṇa, as opposed to the unmanifest Viṣṇu. By contrast Braj Bhāṣā and sectarian commentatorial literature obviates the need for incarnation as an event by ignoring (Braj texts) or rejecting (Sanskrit sources) the doctrine of avatāra and the orthodox hierarchy that this entails.

The concept of līlā is in Ch. III made the basis of a further distinction between the Purāṇas and sectarian literature. The latter delimits the definition of līlā to cover only Kṛṣṇa's extra-terrestrial activity, so that Vṛndāvana is envisaged as a purely divine realm, entirely separate from the cosmos. In the Purāṇas, līlā encompasses indeed all divine activity, both creation and incarnation, but it, and associated aspects of Vṛndāvana, remain wholly within the confines of the manifest world.

In Ch. IV, these various approaches to the representation of Vṛndāvana are illustrated on the basis of the imagery used in the texts.

Ch. V discusses the purely medieval preoccupation with the actual geographical Vṛndāvana and its total identification with the divine realm which it symbolizes.

It is to be hoped that this analysis can be used as a basis for essential further study of the texts and of their relative (and absolute) chronology.

# CONTENTS

	page
ABSTRACT	2
ABBREVIATIONS	7
I INTRODUCTION	9
Primary Sources	10
Secondary Sources	19
II MYTHIC VRNDĀVANA AS THE SCENE OF KṚṢṆA'S INCARNATION	25
1. Sanskrit Sources	26
a. Kṛṣṇa ∞ Viṣṇu motifs in Vedic literature	26
i) The term Kṛṣṇa as found in the <u>Rg Veda</u>	31
ii) The relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu	34
b. The Epic and Purāṇic approach to the relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu	36
i) The distinctive characteristics of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu in the <u>Mahābhārata</u>	36
ii) The relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu - <u>aṁśavatāra</u>	36
iii) Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu in the <u>Viṣṇu Purāṇa</u>	39
iv) Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu in the <u>Harivamśa</u>	40
v) Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu in the <u>Bhāgavata Purāṇa</u>	41
c. Vrṇḍāvana motifs in Vedic literature	44
d. The nature of Vrṇḍāvana - celestial and terrestrial - in the <u>Purāṇas</u>	48
i) The <u>Harivamśa</u>	48
ii) The <u>Viṣṇu Purāṇa</u>	54
iii) The <u>Bhāgavata Purāṇa</u>	56
e. The Gaudīya approach to Kṛṣṇa ∞ Viṣṇu	60
i) The nature of the divinity	60
ii) The nature of incarnation	64
iii) Manifest and unmanifest <u>līlā</u> in the context of incarnation	74
2. Kṛṣṇa ∞ Viṣṇu and the concept of <u>avatāra</u> in Braj Bhāṣā literature	78
a. The non-sectarian approach - the <u>Sūrasāgara</u>	78
b. The sectarian approach	85
i) Nandadāsa - Vallabha	85
ii) Dhruvadāsa - Rādhāvallabha	92
iii) Bihārinadāsa - Haridāsa	96
iv) Harivyāsadeva - Nimbārkiya	99

	page
III VRNDĀVANA AND ITS ROLE IN LĪLĀ	104
1. The nature of <u>līlā</u>	105
a. <u>Līlā</u> in the <u>Purāṇas</u>	106
b. <u>Līlā</u> in the sectarian philosophical texts	111
i) The Vallabha texts	111
ii) The Gauḍīya texts	116
c. The Braj Bhāṣā treatment of divine sport	118
i. Texts which describe <u>līlā</u>	118
A. Sūradāsa	118
B. Nandadāsa	120
ii. Texts which describe <u>nitya vihāra</u>	123
A. Dhruvadāsa	123
B. Bihārīnadāsa	125
2. The role of Vrndāvana in <u>līlā</u> - an aspect of the divine	126
a. In the <u>Purāṇas</u>	126
b. In the sectarian philosophical texts	127
i. Vallabha	127
ii. Gauḍīya	129
c. Vrndāvana in the Braj Bhāṣā texts	130
i. Vrndāvana in <u>līlā</u>	131
A. Sūradāsa	131
B. Nandadāsa	132
ii. Vrndāvana in <u>nitya vihāra</u>	135
A. Dhruvadāsa	135
B. Bihārīnadāsa	137
IV GEOGRAPHY AND SYMBOLISM IN THE REPRESENTATION OF VRNDĀVANA	139
i. The mythological representation	141
ii. The symbolic representation	153
iii. The geographical representation	185
V THE ROLE OF VRNDĀVANA IN DEVOTIONAL PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE	195
i. The mythological tradition	197
ii. The symbolic approach	209
CONCLUSION	221
APPENDIX A	226
BIBLIOGRAPHY	243

## A B B R E V I A T I O N S

ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Anukr.</u>	<u>Anukramanikā</u>
<u>BhP.</u>	<u>Bhāgavata Purāṇa</u>
<u>BSOAS</u>	<u>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</u>
<u>BrSam.</u>	<u>Brahma-samhitā</u>
<u>Hariv.</u>	<u>Harivamśa</u>
<u>JAOS</u>	<u>Journal of the American Oriental Society</u>
<u>KKS</u>	<u>Kapisthala-kātha-samhitā</u>
<u>MahāT.</u>	<u>Mahānirvāṇa-tantra</u>
<u>Mbh.</u>	<u>Mahābhārata</u>
<u>PadP.</u>	<u>Padma Purāṇa</u>
<u>Rasakadamba</u>	<u>Rasakadambacūdāmaṇi</u>
<u>Rāsap.</u>	<u>Rāsapanchādhyāyī</u>
<u>RV.</u>	<u>R̥g Veda</u>
<u>SBr.</u>	<u>Satapatha-brāhmaṇa</u>
<u>Siddhāntap.</u>	<u>Siddhāntapañcādhyāyī</u>
<u>TantraT.</u>	<u>Tantrarāja-tantra</u>
<u>ViP.</u>	<u>Viṣṇu Purāṇa</u>

## I

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

## INTRODUCTION

Vṛndāvana is a known geographical site -- a major centre of Kṛṣṇa worship on the banks of the Yamuna, between Delhi and Agra. Its historical development from the 16th century onwards can be gathered from documents such as land-grants. However, in the devotional Sanskrit and Braj Bhāṣā literature another dimension of Vṛndāvana dominates the picture, i.e. its role as an expression of divine space. In fact, it is arguable that Vṛndāvana is firstly a mythic and symbolic concept, and that the identification with a specific geographical spot is a later development. This thesis intends, therefore, to look at Vṛndāvana as it is presented in the literature, taking into consideration related religious and philosophical concepts.

### Primary Sources

Vṛndāvana is inseparable from Kṛṣṇa (particularly in his aspect as child and youth); consequently any medieval text mentioning Kṛṣṇa inevitably mentions Vṛndāvana. To discuss every allusion to Vṛndāvana would entail including the entire immense corpus of Kṛṣṇa literature in these languages. As a result, the main issues would be clouded and considerable repetition would be unavoidable. It has been necessary, therefore, to choose representative texts of particular interest to the relevant concepts.

It will be seen how the genre to which a particular text may belong has an important bearing on its presentation of Vṛndāvana. These genres can be roughly divided into mythological, metaphysical, commentatorial and devotional, according to their emphasis.

The extent to which certain concepts are inherent in the very nature of Vṛndāvana and its association with Kṛṣṇa can be seen from the way in which motifs suggesting a Vṛndāvana-like place are to be found in Vedic literature associated with a Kṛṣṇa-entity. The Vedic approach is primarily metaphysical, though even here in certain contexts the process of mythologisation is discernable.

In order to illustrate the way in which the metaphysical contrast between the two aspects of the divine - transcendent and immanent - is transformed into mythology, the Mahābhārata and its portrayal of incarnation have been discussed. This is important because of the way in which the Harivamśa and Viṣṇu Purāṇa follow the same basic pattern and because of the implications this has in the portrayal of Vṛndāvana in these Purāṇas.

The Harivamśa (Hariv.) and Viṣṇu Purāṇa (ViP.) contain the earliest attested portrayal of Vṛndāvana in its basic form as it was to be depicted throughout the succeeding centuries. The exact date of these two texts, as of most of the texts under consideration, is impossible to determine, most secondary sources suggesting 100 to 300 B.C.<sup>1</sup> The relative position of the two texts is equally a matter of controversy. Hazra is of the opinion that the ViP. precedes the Hariv. His conclusion is based on the presence of the concept of amśāvatāra (not found in the ViP.) in the Hariv. as well

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1. Cf. D.H.H. Ingalls, 'The Harivamśa as mahākāvya', in Mélanges d'Indianisme, Paris, 1968, p.394.

as the more explicitly erotic nature of the rāsa in the Hariy., both of which he identifies as later developments.<sup>2</sup> Neither of these arguments, however, is conclusive since the amśavatāra concept is found in the Mahābhārata itself, while the less erotic nature of the rāsa in the ViP. could well be a result of what Ingalls calls the 'pietizing' of the ViP.<sup>3</sup>

Ingalls is of the opinion that the root of the tradition is the Hariy. His argument is that in the Hariy. the motives for the adventures of Kṛṣṇa are simpler and closer to a true folklore, less brahmanical-orthodox, showing the earlier nature of the Hariy.<sup>4</sup> Ingalls' position on this matter would seem to be more in accordance with the impression afforded by the limited sections of both texts relevant to Vṛndāvana discussed in this thesis. In the Hariy. the ambiguity between Vṛndāvana as a terrestrial and an extraterrestrial place is more complete and is thus closer to the spirit of the Vedic motifs. In the ViP., on the other hand, the divinity of Kṛṣṇa is made more blatant, while at the same time the imagery used to describe Vṛndāvana loses its celestial connotations and becomes purely mundane. The greater use of alliteration in the ViP. may similarly suggest lateness.

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2. R.C. Hazra, Studies in the Purāṇic records on Hindu rites and customs, Dacca, 1940, p.23.

3. Ingalls, op.cit., p.384.

4. Ibid., p.384.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa (BhP.), dated between the 6th and 9th century A.D.,<sup>5</sup> though it incorporates the mythological framework of the Hariv. and ViP. basically belongs to a different genre. Whereas the Hariv. and ViP. have an epic approach, the focus of the BhP. is on the metaphysical implications and in this respect it reflects a re-emergence of the Vedic preoccupations. It is, however, more Upaniṣadic in its insistence on the unity of Kṛṣṇa, the immanent, and Viṣṇu, the transcendent.

The Gaudīya texts appear to form a bridge between the above Purāṇas and the Braj Bhāṣā devotional poetry. They frequently give an impression of commenting on the BhP. in terms of concepts inherent in the Braj Bhāṣā texts and and thus of formulating those concepts in theological language.

The texts of the Gosvāmīs are ascribed to the end of the 16th century A.D.<sup>6</sup> and are thus roughly contemporaneous with the traditional dates assigned to the Braj Bhāṣā poets such as Sūradāsa, Nandadāsa and Hita Harivaṃśa. This lends all the more credence to the supposition that the originality found in the Gaudīya Sanskrit texts vis-à-vis the BhP. owes a considerable debt to the vernacular tradition.

The main Gaudīya texts used in this thesis are the two so-called commentaries on the BhP. - the Laghubhāgavatāmṛta of Rūpa Gosvāmī and the Brhadbhāgavatāmṛta of Sanātana Gosvāmī.

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5. Cf. T.J. Hopkins, 'The social teaching of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa', in Krishna: myths, rites and attitudes, Honolulu, 1966, p.4.

6. S.K. De, Early history of the Vaiṣṇava faith and movement in Bengal, Calcutta, 1942, pp.119-121.

The Laṣhubhāgavatāmṛta is preoccupied with the nature of the divinity and its manifestations. For this reason it is of primary relevance to Chapter I of this thesis. The Bṛhadbhāgavatāmṛta, on the other hand, focuses on the devotee and the nature of devotion and is therefore of interest in the context of Chapter IV.

The Braj Bhāṣā texts can be divided into two basic categories: a) those which retain the mythological structure of the BhP., in particular the concept of incarnation; and b) those which reject that structure - the rasikas who proclaims the unceasing nature of the eternal sport, (nitya vihāra).

The most important example of the first category is the Sūrasāgara. J.S. Hawley has shown that the text as it is found in later manuscripts and printed editions is much larger than the oldest collections.<sup>7</sup> Until more information is made available as to exactly which padas are found in the earliest manuscripts it is only possible to speak in general terms of the Sūrasāgara as a corpus representing one particular literary tradition.

Hawley has suggested that padas showing the influence of both the BhP. and Vallabhite sectarian affiliations belong to a later stratum. As will be seen, the treatment of Vṛndāvana and related themes certainly suggests that sectarian considerations are decidedly less pronounced in the Sūrasāgara than in other Braj Bhāṣā texts.

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7. J.S. Hawley, 'The early Sūr Sāgar and the growth of the Sūr tradition', JAOS, 99.1 (1979), p.64.

The question of the role of the BhP. in the Sūrasāgara is rather more difficult. The theme of viraha, for example, which Hawley finds dominating the earliest collections<sup>8</sup> is also important in the BhP. but is totally foreign to the rasika poetry, while the Gaudīyas take an intermediate stand, emphasizing the temporary nature of viraha. Moreover Hawley mentions<sup>9</sup> that pada 622 is found in Bikaner Ms.158, one of the earliest manuscripts dated 1641 A.D. (the earliest examined by him is 1598-1628 A.D.). This particular pada follows the BhP. account of the birth of Kṛṣṇa closely, showing that the incorporation of BhP. themes began early in the history of the Sūrasāgara. It suggests that even the earliest padas of the Sūrasāgara were seen as being compatible with the BhP. so that a certain continuity of tradition was maintained even in the padas added later.

The viewpoint of the second category - the rasikas - is presented most lucidly by the writings of Dhruvadāsa, of the Rādhāvallabha sect, and Bihārinadāsa of the Haridāsaī sect. Both these poets can be regarded as essentially the first exponents of the principles of these two sects. The traditional founders - Hita Harivaṃśa of the Rādhāvallabha and Haridāsa of the sect named after him - were not only much less prolific but it is arguable that the distinctive doctrines of the sectarian viewpoint are much less pronounced in their works. The importance of living in Vṛndāvana, for example, which forms a central theme of the later Radhāvallabha poetry goes unmentioned in the Hitacaurāsaī of Harivaṃśa.

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8. Ibid., p.67.

9. Ibid., p.66.

According to Snātaka in his study of the Rādhāvallabha sect, no other poet has given so complete an account of Rādhāvallabha sectarian doctrines as Dhruvadāsa.<sup>10</sup> There are forty-two short works ascribed to this poet. These include poems devoted to a description of the eternal sport of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as well as works such as the Siddhāntavicāra līlā, which expound the principles of devotion. The two texts of most interest to this study are the Vṛndāvana sata līlā, a work of 116 verses in praise of Vṛndāvana, and the Brhadbāvanapurāṇa bhāṣā līlā. This last purports to be a translation of a Sanskrit text - the Brhadvāmana Purāṇa - which is untraceable today, though such a text is mentioned in the commentary of Jīva Gosvāmī on the Brahma-saṁhitā.<sup>11</sup> Because of the unavailability of the text it is impossible to assess the extent to which Dhruvadāsa actually made use of it. The reference by Jīva does suggest that the work was indeed concerned with the same basic story, i.e. the request by the Vedas to be born as gopīs and to see Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. This basic theme is found in a number of other source, including the Sūrasāgara.<sup>12</sup> Dhruvadāsa's treatment, however,

10. V. Snātaka, Rādhāvallabha sampradāya: siddhānta aur sāhitya, Delhi, 1958, p.426.

11. Brahma-saṁhitā, ed. Arthur Avalon, commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī, Calcutta, 1928, p.9, v.6. tathā ca śrīvrhadvāmanapurāṇe śrībhagavati śrutinām prārthanāpūrvakāṇi padyāni/ ānandarūpam iti yad vidanti hi purāvidah/ tadrūpam darśayāsmākam yadi deyo varo hi nah/ śrutvaitad darśayānāsa gokulam prakṛteḥ param/ kevalānubhavanandamātram aksaramadhyagam/ yatra vṛndāvanam nāma vanam kāmādugdhair drumair/ ityādi/ 'As also in the Vṛhadvāmana Purāṇa (are found) the prayerful verses of the Vedas: "That blissful form which the knowers of the past seek, show us that form if you wish to bestow a boon upon us." Having heard this he showed them Gokula which is beyond Nature, formed purely from bliss arising from the experience of unity, existing in the indestructible region, where the wood called Vṛndāvana, with wish-yielding cows and trees ... etc.'

12. Sūradāsa, Sūrasāgara, ed. N. Vājapeyī, Kāśī, 1953, pada 1793.

differs considerably from the others, and is completely in accord with concepts expressed in his other works. It is therefore likely that he modified the Sanskrit original substantially, even if such a source was used as a basis.

The date of Dhruvadāsa can be inferred from the colophons of a number of the works ascribed to him. Thus the Vṛndāvana sata gives the date Sam. 1686 (1629 A.D.);<sup>13</sup> the Rasānanda līlā, Sam. 1650 (1593 A.D.);<sup>14</sup> Rahasyamañjarī, Sam. 1698 (1641 A.D.).<sup>15</sup> His works thus belong to the first half of the 17th century.

Bihārinadāsa has a position in the Haridāsī sect similar to that of Dhruvadāsa in the Rādhāvallabha. He is regarded as the second of the eight ācāryas of the sect<sup>16</sup> and is without question the most prolific. Traditionally he is known as Gurudeva<sup>17</sup> - a title indicating his position as expounder of sectarian principles.

Like those of Dhruvadāsa, the poems of Bihārinadāsa can be divided into two categories - principles (siddhānta) and description of divine sport (rasa). All of his poetry consists entirely of single padas and dohās.

The only basis for dating Bihārinadāsa is tradition which places him towards the end of the 16th century. That

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13. Dhruvadāsa, Vṛndāvana sata līlā, in Bayālīsa līlā, Vṛndāvana, 1971, v. 115.

solaha sai dhruva chyāsiya pūnyau agahana māsa/  
yaha prabandha pūrana bhayau sunata hota agha nāsa/

'Dhruva completed this composition in 1686 in the holy month of Agahana; hearing it sins are destroyed.'

14. Dhruvadāsa, Rasānanda līlā, in Bayālīsa līlā, op.cit., v.184.

15. Dhruvadāsa, Rahasyamañjarī, in Bayālīsa līlā, op.cit., v.105.

16. P.D.Mītala, Braja ke dharma sampradāyom kā itihāsa, Mathurā, 1968, p. 466.

17. Ibid., p.466.

he preceded Dhruvadāsa can be concluded from his mention in the Bhaktanāmāvalī of Dhruva.<sup>18</sup>

Nandadāsa, whose date has been given roughly as 1530-85,<sup>19</sup> would seem to fall between the Sūrasāgara and the rasika tradition in his approach, and in this way comes closest to being a Braj Bhāṣā equivalent of the Gaudīya standpoint. In both his main works, the Rāsapañcādhyaī and the Bhramara-gīta, he uses the basic structure of the BhP. However, a close examination of both texts shows many instances in which he makes changes which put his poetry more in accord with that of Dhruvadāsa or Bihārinadāsa. There is substantial evidence that Nandadāsa was a follower of the Vallabha sect and that he adhered to the principles of the sect in his presentation of the material. That he is at the same time so close to the Gaudīya position would suggest the existence of considerable similarity between both so-called commentators on the BhP., i.e. Vallabha and the Gaudīya Gosvāmīs.

The above four poets have been primarily relied upon in this study. They are representative of the main sects in question - Rādhāvallabha, Haridāsī and Vallabha. At the same time they illustrate most clearly the trends in Braj Bhāṣā literature.

The other sect of the Vṛndāvana area, i.e. Nimbārkiya, has a much less extensive literature. One of the main poets - Harivyāsadeva -- has been discussed, both in the context of incarnation (Chapter I) and of the description of Vṛndāvana (Chapter III). Basically his views appear to be in accord

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18. Dhruvadāsa, Bhaktanāmāvalī, in Bayālīsa līlā, op.cit., vv. 39-40.

19. R.S. McGregor, introduction to Nanddas: the round dance of Krishna, London, 1973, p.34.

with those of Bihārinadāsa and Dhruvadāsa, though a more pronounced slant towards philosophy and ritual, rather than pure rasa, may be observed.

There is little scope for an examination of the concept of Vṛndāvana in the Braj Bhāṣā Gauḍīya texts. These are for the most part short poems describing the līlā of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa which do not go into doctrinal discussion. Such doctrines are covered in much greater detail by the Sanskrit texts which will be discussed in this thesis.

### Secondary Sources

The Mathurā Memoir (3rd edition 1883) by Growse<sup>20</sup> is the earliest comprehensive discussion of the Braj area. This work is mainly concerned with the geographical Mathurā and the surrounding area, including Vṛndāvana, as it was found at the time of the author - the temples, peoples, archeological remains and geographical details. It is precisely this aspect of Vṛndāvana which is ignored by the texts under consideration and hence is irrelevant to this study.

Growse also looks at the political history of the area and its rulers, beginning with the sack of Mathurā in 1071 A.D. by Mahmud of Ghazni. As with the geography such historical facts have little bearing on the texts in question and moreover concern mainly Mathurā and Vṛndāvana only peripherally.

Growse's attempted etymology of the place-name Vṛndāvana is the point probably of most relevance to this study. He<sup>21</sup> derives it from the plant name vṛndā, identified with tulasī, the holy basil plant, and thus fitting in with his theory that all of the oldest place-names of the area are derived

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20. F.S. Growse, Mathurā: a district memoir, NWP and Oudh Government Press, 1883.

21. Ibid., p. 173.

from physical features. He rejects summarily etymologies connecting it with Vṛndā as a female proper name denoting Rādhā, a goddess or a sakhī. Unfortunately for this theory, attestations of vṛndā as a synonym for tulasī are no more ancient or reliable than those of the proper name Vṛndā. This leaves vṛnda, 'group', as the most probable derivation (see Chapter I, footnote 1), a possibility unmentioned by Growse.

The next study of the Braj area after Growse is that of K.D. Vājapeyī.<sup>22</sup> As its title - Braja kā itihāsa - suggests, this is mainly intended as a historical work. For the early period Vājapeyī relies heavily on Purāṇic sources which he regards as being based on historical fact and therefore of describing a historical Braj area. Such a position ignores the mythological character of the texts in question and so the metaphysical implications involved. The discussion of the later period is, on the other hand, like Growse, primarily concerned with political history and so equally irrelevant to this study.

One interesting reference to Vṛndāvana mentioned in the above work is that of Bilhana in his Vikramāṅkadevacarita<sup>23</sup>

22. K.D. Vājapeyī, Braja kā itihāsa, Mathurā, 1955.

23. Bilhana, Vikramāṅkadevacaritam, ed. G. Bühler, 1875, 18.87. dolāloladghana jaghanayā rādhayā yatra bhagnāḥ  
kṛṣṇakṛīḍāṅganavitapino nādhunāpy ucchvasanti/  
jālpakṛīḍāmāthitamathurāsūricakrena kecit  
tasmin vṛndāvanāparisare vāsarā yena nītāḥ/87/

'Where the branches of the places of Kṛṣṇa's sport, broken by Rādhā with her heavy hips swinging in the swing, still have not recovered, in that area of Vṛndāvana he who had agitated the multitude of the scholars of Mathurā by the sport of his speech, passed some days.'

where he describes how in his travels as a Paṇḍit he came and defeated in scholastic discussion the other scholars in Mathurā and then spent some time in Vṛndāvana. Though Bilhana says nothing about Vṛndāvana being a pilgrimage centre, he certainly does associate it with the sport of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This reference suggests, therefore, that Vṛndāvana was known both as a geographical place and the mythic site of Kṛṣṇa līlā even at the time of this text. The text itself is dated with considerable certitude - c. 1080 A.D.<sup>24</sup> - only a few hundred years after the date assigned to the BhP.

Snātaka's discussion on Vṛndāvana in his study of the Rādhāvallabha sect<sup>25</sup> is more along the lines of the present study insofar as it looks at Vṛndāvana through the religious texts. The basic point which Snātaka makes is that only Rādhāvallabha texts describe the earthly Vṛndāvana, while all other works - Purāṇas, Gaudīya writings, etc. - deal with a divine Vṛndāvana.

In his discussion of non-Rādhāvallabha literature, Snātaka is extremely cursory and a closer examination reveals many distinctions which he ignores. For example, he lumps together the BhP and the Padma Purāṇa, which are, as will be shown in this thesis, very divergent in their approaches.

His exposition of the Gaudīya standpoint is also lacking in clarity. He mentions that Prabodhānanda describes both the earthly and the unearthly Vṛndāvana but fails to indicate how

24. Ibid., introduction, p.20.

25. Snātaka, op.cit., pp.226-236.

he proposes to fit this fact into his general theory.

He then goes on to quote a passage from the Caitanyacaritāmṛta in order to show how the Gauḍīyas dealt only with the divine Vṛndāvana and says nothing of their theory of two aspects of Vṛndāvana.

In his attempt to emphasize the unique nature of the Rādhāvallabha standpoint, Snātaka entirely ignores all other Braj Bhāṣā texts, particularly those of the Haridāsī sect. These are, as we shall see, in many ways similar to those of the Rādhāvallabha sect.

His analysis of the Rādhāvallabha standpoint itself is not entirely satisfactory. According to Snātaka, the Rādhāvallabha poets describe Vṛndāvana as it is on earth with all its physical features - trees, creepers, etc. However, the descriptions of Vṛndāvana are in fact singularly free from any features which would connect it with the geographical Vṛndāvana. It is only in the injunctions to make one's residence in Vṛndāvana that the connection with the earthly Vṛndāvana emerges. There is thus an identification between the divine Vṛndāvana which is described as the scene for the sport of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the rasa verses and the physical Vṛndāvana where one is told by the siddhānta verses to live.

It is the identification between the divine Vṛndāvana and the physical Vṛndāvana as a symbol of the divine which Snātaka fails to explain satisfactorily. He says, for example, that a long passage from Dhruvadāsa which describes the importance of living in Vṛndāvana shows evidence of Rādhāvallabha sectarian considerations. He then quotes a further passage describing the divine nature of Vṛndāvana, and says that this

shows how Dhruvadāsa also had in his imagination the eternal Vṛndāvana. Snātaka does not discuss how these two aspects are connected. He suggests, in fact, that they have their basis in two distinct influences - the sectarian and the traditional Purāṇic. Thus while there is a degree of truth in his statement regarding the importance of the physical Vṛndāvana in Rādhāvallabha doctrine, Snātaka is over-simplistic in his enunciation of its significance.

The major work on the Braj area after Growse is that of P.D. Mītala in three volumes - Vol. 1 on the cultural history of the area,<sup>26</sup> Vol.2 on the history of the religious sects,<sup>27</sup> and Vol.3 on the history of the arts.<sup>28</sup> In his volume on the cultural history, Mītala postulates five definitions for the Braj area:<sup>29</sup> 1) Political Braj which he identifies with the ancient Sūrasena, and which only became known as Braj under the Jāts in the 18th century. 2) Linguistic Braj, i.e. that area in which Braj Bhāṣā is spoken. 3) Cultural Braj which Mītala defines as being the results of the re-discovery by Rūpa and Sanātana. The borders of this area are based on the statements of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa in his Brajabhaktivilāsa. 4) Religious Braj which is again divided into two: a) Sectarian Braj, i.e. the route of the banayātrā or brajāyātrā. This yātrā begins and ends in Mathurā, but Mathurā is not situated in the centre of the area and neither is the area circular in

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26. P.D. Mītala, Braja kā sāṃskṛtika itihāsa, Delhi, 1966.

27. P.D. Mītala, Braja ke dharma-sampradāyom kā itihāsa, Delhi, 1968.

28. P.D. Mītala, Braja kī kalāom kā itihāsa, Mathurā, 1975.

29. P.D. Mītala, Braja kā sāṃskṛtika itihāsa, op.cit., pp.7-9.

in shape. b) Spiritual Braj - the imaginary spiritual form of Braj for worship and mental meditation. Mītala sees this form of Braj as being a symbol - pratīka -- of Goloka. Here it is envisaged as a circular area with Mathurā in the centre.

Mītala's categories of sectarian and spiritual are to some extent in accordance with the findings of this thesis - i.e. the division into a geographical and symbolic portrayal of Vṛndāvana. However Mītala has only mentioned these two aspects in passing and has not considered their full significance.

Ch. Vaudeville in her article 'Braj, lost and found'<sup>30</sup> has discussed the rediscovery of Vṛndāvana and has attempted to find lying behind many of the present Kṛṣṇite religious sites a basis of primitive nature and goddess worship. She has therefore not looked at the concept of Vṛndāvana as it appears in the Sanskrit and Braj Bhāṣā texts themselves.

From this discussion of secondary sources dealing with Vṛndāvana it becomes apparent that Vṛndāvana has been dealt with primarily as a geographical and historical place. The concentration upon this aspect of Vṛndāvana, and the refusal to acknowledge the mythic and symbolic nature of Vṛndāvana has at times led to a misunderstanding of the nature of the texts in question. Where Vṛndāvana as a divine realm has been examined, it has been in insufficient depth and so has failed to elucidate the fundamental differences in approach between the classical and medieval texts. It is upon the nature of these differences that the present work intends to throw light.

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30. Ch. Vaudeville, 'Braj, lost and found', Indo-Iranian Journal, 18 (1976), pp.195-213.

II  
MYTHIC VRNDĀVANA  
AS THE  
SCENE OF KRṢṆA'S INCARNATION

MYTHIC VRNDĀVANA AS THE SCENE OF KṚṢṆA'S INCARNATION

The prominence of mythic elements in depicting Vṛndāvana goes hand in hand with the mythological enunciation of the relationship between the two aspects of the divine - the unmanifest (Viṣṇu) and the manifest (Kṛṣṇa) - in terms of an event in the primordial past, i.e. incarnation. Vṛndāvana forms the mythic location for this event.

1. Sanskrit Sourcesa. Kṛṣṇa & Viṣṇu motifs in Vedic literature

Ostensibly, Vṛndāvana is a relatively late idea, and a contrast between a Kṛṣṇadhāman, Vṛndāvana, and a Viṣṇudhāman, Vaikunṭha, would seem to have been formed on the analogy of the fully developed relationship between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu, e.g. as found in the Purāṇas. There may be a danger that, in arriving at this conclusion, too much reliance is being placed on the alleged chronology of ancient Indian literature. As a result too little allowance is made for the occasional substitution, throughout the history of the Indo-aryan language, of a different term for the same or similar concept. It is, in fact, feasible to suggest that a Vṛndāvana/Vaikunṭha prototype emerges simultaneously with the earliest attestations of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu.

Even if the terms Vṛndāvana and Vaikunṭha do not appear in the most ancient literature, they must have an ancient

etymology.<sup>1</sup> The fact that it is lost in the extant literature may indicate the limitations of the literary sources rather than be a proof of relative lateness.

Besides, there is no question but that the trīṇi padāni of Viṣṇu are one of the oldest concepts attested; and it is evident that the paramā or highest of these is regarded as the abode of Viṣṇu,<sup>2</sup> in other words a prototype of 'Vaiṣṇava'. It is the immediate purpose of this section to show that Rg Vedic mention both of the concrete, personified Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇah) and of the abstract, impersonal power (kṛṣṇām), does exist; and it is found in association with imagery suggesting a 'Vṛndāvana' prototype.

1. The formation of the word Vṛndāvana is unclear. A plant name as first member could be expected, but there is no attested support for the modern explanation vṛndā = tulasī. Equally, Vṛndā used as a name for Rādhā, a śakṣī or a goddess (Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, Nārada Pañcarātra, etc.) lacks independent confirmation. It seems not improbable that the word is pre-classical: lengthening of vṛnda- in vṛndāvana would be comparable with Vedic vowel-lengthening in compound junctive (e.g. RV. gāta-ruh = gātāruh). One might suppose equally a connexion with vṛndāraka 'chief', vṛndistha 'best', which seem to be related to the common formations vṛndavṛndaiḥ, etc. 'in groups'. In that case, the popular etymology, envisaging vṛndā, would be of no importance, and the word would be derived from vṛnda 'multitude, assembly'. Given the attestation of yativṛnda 'assembly of ascetics' (P. Olivelle, Vāsudevāsrama: Yatidharmaprakāśa, Vienna, 1976, I, 37), Vṛndāvana may be a synonym of tapovana.

Vaiṣṇava is attested in Vedic material as Indra Vaiṣṇava, the traditional Anukramanikā author of RV. 10.48-50. This name is, on the face of it then likely to be a patronymic; implausibly, the Anukr. sees Vaiṣṇava as a metronymic from Asurī Vikunṭhā. Its use as a place-name is therefore secondary (following Vṛndāvana). Such a conclusion is supported by its use even in the Mbh. for Viṣṇu rather than for Viṣṇudhāman. Such evidence as there is suggests something in the context of Vāmana, i.e. related to a physical defect. Vaiṣṇava is probably derived from vikunṭha meaning 'blunt, dull' which is also connected with kunṭha 'crippled, lame' and kunṭhati 'maims'.

2. Rg Veda, Die Hymnen des Rigveda, ed. Th. Aufrecht, Berlin, 1861, i.154.5-6.

Preoccupation with the epic view of Kṛṣṇa's origins has led to the relevance of the Rg Veda (RV.) attestations being disregarded. The current standard view regarding the origins of Kṛṣṇa adopted in the secondary literature has been succinctly put by Gonda, who sees the development as that of a divinization of a historical Kṛṣṇa. He argues that Kṛṣṇa was a popular hero elevated to the status of a god; and that it can be supposed that this legendary person preached or reformed a religion, and then himself gradually received divine honours.<sup>3</sup> Because of this point of view, Gonda rigidly distinguishes the developed Kṛṣṇa figure from the Vedic Kṛṣṇa.

Regarding the connexion between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu, Gonda finds certain characteristics in the ancient Vedic Viṣṇu, such as his association with protection in his role as king, which would facilitate the assimilation of what he sees as basically later cult figures, such as Kṛṣṇa.<sup>4</sup> According to Gonda, this assimilation of Kṛṣṇa by Viṣṇu must have taken place in the interval which separated the Bhagavadgītā, where Kṛṣṇa is not yet an avatāra of Viṣṇu, and the redaction of Mbh. 14,53. where he appears as being this god.<sup>5</sup> In this way, Gonda sees the relation of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu as a purely post-Vedic development, effecting an elevation

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3. J. Gonda, Die Religionen Indiens, Vol.I, Stuttgart, 1960, pp. 238-239.

4. Ibid., p.242.

5. Ibid., p.243.

in the status of Kṛṣṇa as a divinity, instead of being inherent in the basic functions of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu even in the Vedic context.

A closer study of the RV. hymns, in fact, shows evidence that the metaphysical and mythic concepts embodied in the Purāṇic Kṛṣṇa do have counterparts in the RV. For example, Kṛṣṇa as the child demon-killer is reminiscent of Indra who performs heroic deeds as soon as he is born (Cf. 8.96.16 discussed below at p. 140). Kṛṣṇa, the child in whom the divine becomes accessible to human beings, resembles Agni, whose birth is a major motif of the Vedic hymns, a fact which finds expression in the common epithet yáviṣṭha, 'youngest'.<sup>6</sup> Like Kṛṣṇa, Agni takes birth among mortals. He is born as the protector, gopāh, of the people.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the hymns frequently address Agni as a relative,<sup>8</sup> denoting his accessibility, illustrated in the case of Kṛṣṇa by his relations with the people of Braj.

The concept of incarnation is similarly revealed in the Vedic myth of Purūravas. The essence of this myth lies in the relation between Purūravas and Urvaśi. Reference is made to the birth of a child in circumstances somewhat

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6. RV., op.cit., i.26.2; 1.44.6.

7. Ibid., v.11.1. jánasya gopā ajanīṣṭa jāgrvir agnīḥ  
sudáksaḥ suvitāya nāvyaṣe/  
'Born recently for easy access as the watchful protector  
of the people, Agni, the capable one.'

8. Ibid., i.1.9. sá nah pitéva sūnáve ágne sūpāyanó bhava/  
sácasvā nah svastāye/  
'Like a father to his son, Agni, become accessible to us.  
Associate with us for our wellbeing.'

similar to Drapsá Kṛṣṇá (see below p.33), who is called nārya<sup>9</sup> (which may be taken to be an archaic version of nārāyana). The distinction between father and son is never made explicit, thereby suggesting a process of incarnation.

Furthermore, the Purūravas myth contains two basic Kṛṣṇa motifs - birth in association with cow-women. In the RV. hymn, the child is said to be born specifically as a herdsman (jaḥṇisá itthā gopīthyāya).<sup>10</sup> Divine women (gnā), identified as rivers (nadyāh), are said to have reared him<sup>11</sup> - a motif showing a marked likeness to the relation of Kṛṣṇa with the gopīs. The resemblance is further strengthened by the comparison of the water-women with cows (gāvo ... dhenāvo)<sup>12</sup> while the image of Purūravas (or his son) drawing near them as they lay off their mantles - jāhatīsv átkam<sup>13</sup> - is reminiscent of Kṛṣṇa stealing the clothes of the gopīs as they bathe.

In view of the connexion between Agni and the concepts embodied by Kṛṣṇa (discussed above), it is interesting to note that in the Kapīṣṭhala-katha-saṁhitā<sup>14</sup> and

9. Ibid., x.95.10. For a discussion of this hymn see J.C. Wright, 'Purūravas and Urvaśī' BSOAS XXX (1967), pp. 526-547.

10. Ibid., x.95.11.

11. Ibid., x.95.7.

12. Ibid., x.95.6.

13. Ibid., x.95.8.

14. Kapīṣṭhala-katha-saṁhitā, ed. Raghu Vira, Delhi, 1968, 7.6.

Satapatha-brāhmaṇa<sup>15</sup> versions Purūravas receives fire together with a son. Significantly the son is called Ayu or Kumāra, epithets also of Agni. Thus once again the motifs of a new-born child and of Agni are linked.

i) The term Kṛṣṇa as found in the Rg Veda

The actual term Kṛṣṇa appears in the RV. in two forms - the neuter kṛṣṇám and the masculine kṛṣṇah; as does árjuna with the accent unchanged. Similar pairs are not uncommon in the RV., as, in particular, mitrám and mitráh, indriyám and indrāh, vrtrám and vrtráh. The concepts of kṛṣṇám and árjunam represent basic mythic, metaphysical ideas, while the figures kṛṣṇah and árjunah both occur as characters in an epic context, and appear to stem from 'personifications' which have lost much of their original significance.

The attestation of kṛṣṇám áhar and árjunam áhar, i.e. 'night' and 'day', at RV. vi.9.1-3 (for a further discussion of this hymn see Appendix A.1) conforms to the pattern of other fundamental dualities such as Heaven and Earth, Mitra and Varuna, Iranian Good Mind and Bad Mind, etc. The alternation recurs in later Vaiṣṇava texts as the concept of cosmic day and cosmic night. The idea, for example, is found of the day of Brahmā when creation is manifest and the night of Brahmā, which is the period

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15. Satapatha-brāhmaṇa, Ajmere, 1902, XI.5.1.

following dissolution when creation remains unmanifest.<sup>16</sup>

Analogous with this is the concept of creation latent in the sleeping Viṣṇu which becomes manifest on his awakening.<sup>17</sup> As in the Vedic texts these periods of manifestation and of dissolution follow one another in a cycle.

The 'personified' Ṛṣi Kṛṣṇa Āṅgīrasa, father of Viśvaka Kārṣṇī, is postulated in RV. Anukr. as author of viii.85 ff. (further discussion at Appendix A.2). This is evidently on the basis of an occurrence in this hymn of two characters (jaritṛ) Kṛṣṇa and Viśvaka.

The same Ṛṣi is listed also for x.42-44, which follows some material preoccupied with the ideas 'night' and 'day' (as āhar, though not explicitly kṛṣṇā or ārjuna) and precedes some epic material ascribed in the Anukr. to Indra Vaikunṭha. If the Anukr.'s identification of the god as Vaikunṭha is a genuine key to the hymn, the point could perhaps lie in some inauspicious physical defect of the Indra in question. The epithet might have made its way to Viṣṇu (cf. Vāmana, etc.) at the same time as adjacent kṛṣṇām āhar material was becoming associated with Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa.

It does not seem possible to believe that mere juxtaposition has brought x.42-44 (further discussion at Appendix A.4 b-c) into association with the Ṛṣi Kṛṣṇa Āṅgīrasa. In fact, the refrain of these three hymns (in each case vv. 10-11) does seem to include features with Kṛṣṇa connotations.

16. Ahīrbudhnyā-saṁhitā, ed. M.D. Rāmānujācārya, Adyar, 1916, Vol.I. I.7.38-41.

17. Viṣṇu Purāṇa, ed. Jīvaṇanda Vidyāsāgara, Calcutta, 1882, I.3.1924.

V.10 opens with góbhiḥ and yāvena, thus incorporating the familiar cow motif, as well as the concept of plenty (cf. the green pastures of Vṛndāvana in the Purāṇas); and v.11 ends with the theme of making space for the allies - sākhā sākhibhyo vārivah kṛnotu. It is possible that the reference to male sākhis was seen as link with Kṛṣṇa, whose association in other contexts with female sakhīs was perhaps already developing. In any case the basic topic of the refrain is evidently the establishment of an earthly 'Vṛndāvana' and a heavenly 'Goloka'.

A further link in the chain of reasoning represented in the Anukr. is the linking of the name rājno duhitā Ghóṣā with Vīśvaka Kṛṣṇiyā at i.117.7 and with Arjuna at i.122.5 (for a discussion of the hymns attributed to Ghóṣā see Appendix A.3 a-c). In this way a connexion is maintained at the 'personified' level as well as at the metaphysical āhar level between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna.

A figure Kṛṣṇā Drapsā is the subject of the passage viii.96.13-15 (further discussion at Appendix A.5) describing an exploit of Indra. The position of the accent distinguishes this character from the Kṛṣṇa of viii.85, who is connected with Vīśvaka at i.117, and associates it more closely with the kṛṣṇām āhar and ārjunam āhar of vi.9. It seems reasonable to infer that Kṛṣṇā Drapsā, a distinctly mythic notion of a 'black seed' which is to spring brilliantly to life in the waters of Amśumatī, belongs with kṛṣṇām āhar, the night that alternates with (and begets) day, as the basic conception, while the 'heroes' Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are secondary, 'literary' constructions.

Three stages can, in fact, be postulated in the development of Kṛṣṇa as an entity:

- 1) The first would be the basic unpersonified kṛṣṇám concept, quite possibly older in its origins than the RV. itself, which finds its expression in the kṛṣṇám áhar and kṛṣṇáh drapsáh
- 2) The second would be the transformation of this abstract concept into the deity Kṛṣṇa which finds its ultimate development in the Purāṇas; but which may be seen reflected to some extent even in the kṛṣṇá drapsá theme.
- 3) The third would be the Kṛṣṇa Āṅgīrasa Ṛṣi, connected with the compilation of the Śrauta texts and the increasing emphasis on elaborate sacrificial rules.

Presumably the second two stages were roughly parallel for a time; and epic and Purāṇic formations took shape while the Vedic material was gradually accumulating.

#### ii) The relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu

The other frequent assumption, i.e. that the relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu is a late feature designed either to integrate two cults or to legitimize the late Kṛṣṇa cult, seems equally misplaced. The Kṛṣṇa ∞ Viṣṇu dichotomy, in fact, appears basic to Vedic metaphysics. It can be seen basically as an expression of important motifs such as those of lower versus higher, dark versus light, immanent versus transcendent, manifest versus unmanifest.

In the RV. Agni and Viṣṇu form a pair similar in many respects to that of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu found in the Purāṇas. The emphasis on the accessibility of Agni has already been discussed (see above p.29). This is in contrast to Viṣṇu, who, in both Vedic and Purāṇic texts, remains on a much more purely celestial level. The contrast between

the two roles is exemplified in the first verse of the

Aitareya-brāhmaṇa which states:

agnir vai devānām avamo viṣṇuh paramas  
tadantareṇa sarvā anyā devatāh/<sup>18</sup>

In other words, among expression of the divine, Agni is avama, i.e. the divine immanent, while Viṣṇu is parama, transcendent.

The dichotomy between 'higher' (para) and 'lower' (avara), as well as between light and darkness, is evident in vv. 2-3 of vi.9, the kṛṣṇām āhar hymn. In fact, kṛṣṇām āhar versus ārjunam āhar may be seen as forming a pair comparable to that of Viṣṇu ∞ Kṛṣṇa.

A link between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu is reflected in viii.96, the kṛṣṇā drapsā hymn, in the form of two 'etymologies' of the name Viṣṇu, viz., vividhī (from the root viṣ-) and viṣṇu. These are such as would be likely to accrue in any RV. hymn in association with the mention of a specific name (cf. 1.154 addressed to Viṣṇu which consists largely of 'etymology' - especially vi- but also vīryā and vīśan).

It seems likely, therefore, that the RV. material already has in view a special relationship between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu, and that the Purāṇic Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa had a parallel development.

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18. Aitareya brāhmaṇa, ed. Kāśīnātha Sāstrī Agāśe, Ananda Āśrāma, 1896, Vol.I, I.1.  
'Agni is the lowest of the gods, Viṣṇu is the highest; between them are all the other gods.'

- b. The Epic and Purāṇic approach to the relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu
- i. The distinctive characteristics of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu in the Mahābhārata

Basically, in the Mahābhārata (Mbh.) Kṛṣṇa is represented as a hero on earth (immanent), while Viṣṇu is a divinity in heaven (transcendent). Apart from this difference their roles are similar, and earth is taken to be the scene for a re-enactment of the divine struggle between gods and demons.

There is an emphasis in the Mbh. on divine pairs showing a continuity with the kṛṣṇām āhar ∞ ārjunam āhar of the RV. In the heavenly struggle it is Nara and Nārāyaṇa who lead the gods.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, in the earthly struggle Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, who are often identified with Nara and Nārāyaṇa, lead the Pāṇḍavas. Their power as a pair is expressed in the final verse of the Bhagavadgītā:

yatra yogeśvarah kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharah/  
tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama/<sup>20</sup>

- ii. The relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu - amśāvatāra

In the Mbh. the connexion between Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa is expressed in terms of Kṛṣṇa as an incarnation in part (amśāvatāra) of Viṣṇu, i.e. Kṛṣṇa is subordinated to Viṣṇu. It is often alleged that the concept of amśāvatāra is a secondary interpolation, reflecting the incorporation of a Kṛṣṇa cult into Vaiṣṇava religion. This suggestion is, of course,

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19. Mahābhārata, ed. V.S. Sukthankar, Poona, 1936, I.17.18-19  
evam sutumule yuddhe vartamāne bhayāvahe/  
naranārāyaṇau devau samājagmatuḥ āhayaḥ/<sup>18/</sup>  
tatra divyaṃ dhanuḥ dr̥ṣṭvā narasya bhagavān api/  
cintayāmāsa vai cakram viṣṇuḥ dānavasūdanam/<sup>19/</sup>

'Thus, when the clamorous, terrible battle was raging, Nara and Nārāyaṇa, the two divinities, entered the fray. There seeing the divine bow of Nara, Lord Viṣṇu also thought of his discus, the destroyer of demons.'

20. Bhagavadgītā, ed. W.D.P. Hill, London, 1928, 18.78. 'Where Kṛṣṇa, lord of Yoga, and Pārtha, the bow-man, remain, there prosperity, victory, right conduct and well-being are firm; this is my opinion.'

inevitable as the Vedic conception of Viṣṇu transcendent in paramā vyōman and Agni immanent in the nābhi pṛthivyāḥ yields to the historicizing tendency of the epic, where concepts must be expressed in terms of a sequence of events.

The process of partial incarnation is described in the Mbh. in terms which hardly depart in any essential respect from the preoccupations of the RV. Particularly striking is the imagery of the black and white hair which brings to mind the kṛṣṇām āhar and ārjunam āhar of the RV. In this case the bright aspect is identified not with Arjuna but with Balarāma who takes the place of Arjuna as the companion of Kṛṣṇa in the Purāṇic descriptions of the youth of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are identified respectively with a black and a white hair of Viṣṇu, the context being that of the story of the five Indras who are born as the five Paṇḍavas:

sa cāpi keśau harir udbabarha śulkaṁ ekam aparaṁ cāpi kṛṣṇam/  
tau cāpi keśau viśatām yadūnām kule striyau rohinīm devakīm ca/  
tayor eko baladevo babhūva kṛṣṇo dvitīyaḥ keśavaḥ sambabhūva/31/<sup>21</sup>

The main description of the process of partial incarnation occurs in the Adi Parvan of the Mbh. An explanation for the parallel noted above between the earthly and the divine struggle emerges in this account of the descent of Viṣṇu as Kṛṣṇa. It is said that the demons who had been conquered in battle

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21. Ibid., I.189.31. 'And Hari plucked out two hairs, one white the other black. Those two hairs would enter two women in the family of the Yadus - Rohinī and Devakī. Of them one became Baladeva, the second dark one became Keśava.'

by the gods then took birth on earth:

ādityair hi tadā daityā bahuśo nirjitā yudhi/  
aiśvaryād bhramśitās cāpi sambabhūvuh ksitau iha/<sup>22</sup>

The earth, burdened by these demons, seeks refuge with Brahmā, who orders the gods to be born in part;<sup>23</sup> whereupon the gods approach Nārāyaṇa. Indra requests Nārāyaṇa to descend in part and Nārāyaṇa agrees to this:

tam bhuvah śodhanāyendra uvāca puruṣottamam/  
amśenāvatarasveti tathety āha ca tam harih/<sup>24</sup>

All of the gods are then said to descend from heaven to earth. Further on each of the characters in the Mbh. is identified with a god or demon, of whom he is an amśa (part), and Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa is identified as the amśa of Nārāyaṇa as he exists among men:

yas tu nārāyaṇo nāma devadevah sanātanaḥ/  
tasyāṁśo mānuseṣv āsīd vāsudevah pratāpavān/<sup>90/25</sup>

This process of amśāvatāra is remarkably similar to the account of creation as depicted in the RV. Puruṣasukta.<sup>26</sup> In both there is a transformation of a portion of the divine, leaving the rest unchanged. In one case this leads to incarnation within the phenomenal universe; in the other to the creation of that universe itself.

22. Mbh., op.cit., I.58.26. 'Then the demons who had been defeated often by the gods in battle and who had lost their supremacy, arose here on earth.'

23. Ibid., I.58.46. 'asyā bhūmer nirasitum bhāram bhāgaḥ prthakprthak/  
asyām eva prasūyadhvam virodhāyeti cābravit/  
'He said, "In order to remove the burden of this earth, let each one separately, in part, be born there, for the sake of opposing (the demons)."'

24. Ibid., I.58.51. 'For the sake of purifying the earth, Indra said to Puruṣottama, "Descend in part" and Hari agreed.'

25. Ibid., I.61.90. 'He who is called Nārāyaṇa, eternal god of gods, his part among men was the powerful Vāsudeva.'

26. RV., op.cit., x.90.

iii. Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa

With regard to the relation of Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu as aṁśāvatāra, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (ViP.) follows the Mbh. extremely closely, revealing the same process of historization. The Mbh. story of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as respectively a black and white hair of Viṣṇu is repeated in this text.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, in the first four verses of the fifth part of this Purāṇa in which the story of Kṛṣṇa is narrated, the concept of the descent in part of Viṣṇu is expressed three times. Maitreya desires to hear at length about the incarnation in part, aṁśāvatāra, of Viṣṇu.<sup>28</sup> He then asks the sage to relate the deeds which the Lord performed having descended on earth through various parts aṁśāṁśenāvatīrya.<sup>29</sup> Finally Parāśara replies with an admonition to listen to the account of the birth of the portion of a part of Viṣṇu:

maitreya śrūyatām etad yat prsto 'ham idam tvayā/  
viṣṇor aṁśāṁśasambhūticaritam jagato hitam/4/<sup>30</sup>

The position of these verses in the beginning of this part of the Purāṇa indicates an attempt to place the account of Kṛṣṇa which follows in a relation to Viṣṇu.

27. Viṣṇu Purāṇa, op. cit., V.1.59-60.

ujjahārātmanah keśau śītakṛṣṇau mahāmune/59/  
uvāca ca surāṇ etau matkeśau vasudhātale/  
avatīrya bhuvo bhāraḥkleśahāniṁ kariṣyatah/60/

'(Viṣṇu) took out two of his hairs, one black and one white, and said to the gods, "These two hairs of mine will descend to the earth and will remove the distress (caused by) the burden (which has encumbered) the earth."'

28. Ibid., V.1.2. aṁśāvatāro brahmarse yo 'yam yadukulodbhavaḥ/  
viṣṇos tam vistarenāham śrotum icchāmy aśeṣatah/2/

'I wish to hear of the partial incarnation of Viṣṇu who was born in the Yadu family, completely and at length.'

29. Ibid., V.1.3. caḥāra jñāni karmāṇi bhagavān puruṣottamaḥ/  
aṁśāṁśenāvatīryorvyām tatra tāni mune vada/3/

'Those deeds which Lord Puruṣottama performed when he descended to earth through various parts, relate, O sage.'

30. Ibid., V.1.4. 'Maitreya, listen to that about which you have asked - Viṣṇu's performance of birth by various parts for the welfare of the world.'

iv)

Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu in the Harivamśa

Though the Harivamśa (Hariv.) attempts to establish a link with the Mbh. tradition, presenting itself as no more than an expansion of the account of the Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas only touched upon in the Mbh. itself,<sup>31</sup> its attitude to avatāra is different and arguably as archaic. As in the Mbh., the process of historization is discernible in accordance with its claim to be an historical genealogy. However, if the Mbh.-ViP. idea of aṁśāvatāra can be seen as basically related to the Vedic Puruṣa concept, the Hariv. seems closer to the Purūravas and Drapsa concept wherein, through a process of incarnation one aspect of the divine is transformed into another - the father becomes the son.

As in the Mbh. the relation between Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa is explained by describing Kṛṣṇa as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. However, it may be noticed that the concept of aṁśa with regard to Kṛṣṇa is apparently disregarded. Though the other gods who descend with Viṣṇu are said to become incarnate in part,<sup>32</sup> such terms are not used with reference to Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa. The story of the black and white hair is omitted, and a statement regarding the incarnation of Viṣṇu simply

31. Harivamśa, ed. P.L. Vaidya, Poona, 1969, 1.5.  
tatra janma kurūnām vai tvayoktam lomaharsane/  
na tu vṛṣṇyandhakānām vai tad bhavān prabravītu me/  
 'There you have related the origin of the Kurus, O Lomaharṣana, but not that of the Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas. Please relate that to me.'

32. Ibid., 43.62.  
aṁśāvatāranam sarve surāḥ kuruta mā ciraṁ/  
 'Let all you gods become incarnate in part without delay.'

says that Viṣṇu descended to earth and was born in the family of Vasudeva:

bhūyah śrṇu yathā viṣṇur avatīrno mahītaṁ/  
prajānāṁ vai hitārthāya prabhuh prāṇadhaneśvarah/  
yayātivamśajasyātha vasudevasya dhīmatah/  
kule pūjye yaśaskāmo jajñe nārāyaṇah prabhuh/<sup>33</sup>

Similarly in the words of Brahmā, Viṣṇu is asked to take incarnation not through his part(amśā), but instead through himself (ātmanā):

ātmānam ātmanā hi tvam avatārya mahītaṁ/  
devakīm rohinīm caiva garbhābhyāṁ paritosaya/<sup>34</sup>

Here instead of Kṛṣṇa being that part of Viṣṇu which performs certain actions, Viṣṇu becomes Kṛṣṇa in order to perform these actions.

v)

#### Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

Though the basic story as told in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (BhP.) is very similar to that of the two Purāṇas discussed above, there is a distinct difference in the nature of this work. That is to say, unlike the other two texts, it does not aim to present a series of historical events, but takes place in a medium without reference to time or space; in this respect it resembles the RV.

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33. Ibid., 43.76-77. 'Hear further how Viṣṇu descended to the earth for the sake of the people, the Lord, Master of life. Then Lord Nārāyaṇa, desirous of fame, was born in the renowned family of wise Vasudeva, born of the lineage of Yayāti.'

34. Ibid., 45.38. 'Having caused yourself to descend to earth by means of yourself, gladden the wombs of Devakī and Rohiṇī.'

The BhP. appears to be trying to demonstrate the essential identity of the divinity as immanent and transcendent. In other words, kṛṣṇa and arjuna, the manifest and the unmanifest, are essentially the same. It seeks to demonstrate how in actuality, there is no difference between Viṣṇu parama and Agni avama.

With regard to the relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu, it begins the Tenth book describing the life of Kṛṣṇa with words very similar to those of the ViP.:

tatrāṁśenāvatīrnasya viṣṇor vīryāni śamsa nah/<sup>35</sup>

Here the deeds of Kṛṣṇa are described as the heroic deeds of Viṣṇu when he became incarnate in part.

The concept of Kṛṣṇa as the expression of a part only of Viṣṇu is contradicted by a verse in the third chapter of Book I of this text. This particular chapter, coming as it does so near the beginning of the text, might be regarded as forming the foundation for the rest of the text. It starts with a description of how in the beginning the Lord assumes the Puruṣa form (elsewhere in the text identified with Viṣṇu) out of desire to create the world:

jaḡrhe pauruṣaṁ rūpaṁ bhagavān mahadādibhih/  
sambhūtaṁ sodaśakalam ādau lokasirksayā/1/<sup>36</sup>

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35. Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Tenth Canto, Bombay, 1867, X.1.2.  
'Describe to us the heroic deeds of Viṣṇu when he became incarnate in part.'

36. BhP., Bombay, 1905, I.3.1. 'In the beginning the Lord assumed the form of Puruṣa, which arises from those principles commencing with Intellect, and which has sixteen parts, out of desire to create the world.'

This Puruṣa is said to be the source of various incarnations - nānāvātārānām nidhānam - and gods, men and animals are created through its various parts - amśāmsena.<sup>37</sup> This is followed by an account of the various incarnations amongst which Kṛṣṇa is included. However, the account concludes by saying that while these are all portions and fractions of Puruṣa, Kṛṣṇa is the Lord himself:

ete cāmśakalāḥ pumsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam/<sup>38</sup>

Here a distinction is drawn between the parts of the divine (amśakalāḥ) and the divinity itself (bhagavān svayam), and Kṛṣṇa is identified with the divinity itself. In other words Kṛṣṇa equals Viṣṇu. The attempt to historicize and portray Kṛṣṇa in terms of an epic hero is disregarded and instead the metaphysical dimension is developed.

From the above discussion of avatāra and the relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu, it seems possible to deduce three distinct approaches. In the first, that of the Mbh. and ViP., the basic concept is that of the Puruṣasūkta. Parts of the deity perform certain functions and so constitute the immanent, while the deity as a whole remains transcendent. Kṛṣṇa is a portion Viṣṇu as Agni is a portion of Puruṣa. Whereas in the RV. this is discussed in mythic terms, in the Mbh. and ViP. it is placed in an epic context.

37. Ibid., I.3.5. etan nānāvātārānām nidhānam bījam avyayam/  
yasyāmśāmsena srjyante devatiryaṇnarādayaḥ/

'This is the storehouse of various incarnations, the indestructible seed, by its various parts are created gods, animals, men and so forth.'

38. Ibid., I.3.28. 'These are all parts of fractions of the Pums, but Kṛṣṇa is the Lord himself.'

The second, as evinced in the Hariv. is nearer to the concept represented by the Vedic myths of Purūravas and Drapsá. Here the transcendent becomes the immanent; the deity assumes a particular form in order to perform these functions. Viṣṇu becomes Kṛṣṇa. In the Hariv., again as in the Mbh. and ViP., the essential metaphysical concept is historized.

The third, illustrated by the BhP., is closest to the kṛṣṇám áhar áṛjunam áhar concept of the RV. insofar as the metaphysical, cosmological dimension is retained, unclouded by historical preoccupations. There is no need for a subordination of the immanent to the transcendent, of Kṛṣṇa to Viṣṇu, because they are basically identical. Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu are one entity.

c) Vṛndāvana motifs in Vedic literature

Not only does a similarity exist between the Purāṇic Kṛṣṇa and certain Vedic myths and concepts, but the mythological locations for these events involve some of the features found in the Purāṇic Vṛndāvana.

The Kṛṣṇá Drapsá myth, for example, takes place in the lap of a river. Moreover, this river is called Amśumatī, i.e. full of Soma plants; in this way the two motifs of plant and water are included. Such a juxtaposition of river and tree seems to be a basic environment for such birth myths. (cf. the myth of Kārtikeya and the Kṛttikās<sup>39</sup>).

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39. The epic form of this myth can be found in Mbh., op.cit., I.60.22-23 and IX.43.10-11. Especially interesting is the fact that the seed bearing Kārtikeya is first thrown in a river and that the child himself is found in a thicket of reeds.

The Purūravas myth incorporates similar elements in its account of the place in which the dialogue between Purūravas and Urvaśī occurs. The location and characteristics of this place are portrayed in most detail in the ŚBr. version. It is described as anyatahplakseti bisavatī,<sup>40</sup> that is, a lotus-lake with trees on one side. This imagery of water and tree is one which is equally an essential characteristic of Vṛndāvana. The nature of Vṛndāvana as a vana or forest in itself associates it with trees. Moreover, the Bhāṇḍīra tree on the bank of the Yamunā river, together with the Govardhana mountain, are the main recurrent elements in all descriptions of Vṛndāvana. In the Hariv., for example, the description of the Bhāṇḍīra, Yamunā and Govardhana forms the basis for the account of Vṛndāvana which will be examined later. Similarly in the BhP. Vṛndāvana, Govardhana and Yamunā are conspicuously grouped together, as in a verse describing how Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are exceedingly pleased to see Vṛndāvana, Govardhana and the banks of the Yamunā:

vṛndāvanam govardhanam yamunāpulināni ca/  
vīkṣyāsīd uttamā prītiṁ rāmamādhavayor nrpa/36/<sup>41</sup>

Such an imagery of water and tree would appear to have both cosmological and paradisaal connotations, insofar as a

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40. ŚBr., op.cit., 11.5.1.4.

41. BhP., Tenth Canto, op.cit., X.11.35.  
'Seeing Vṛndāvana, Govardhana and the banks of the Yamunā, Rāma and Mādhava had the highest joy, O king.'

distinction can be drawn between these two aspects. In the cosmological sense, water can be understood as the water of creation, the source of existence, and the principle of that which is formless and potential. It is the source of life, the primeval waters, the watery chaos.<sup>42</sup> By paradisaal is meant the concept of the 'living waters' which is often said to exist in the heavenly region.<sup>43</sup>

Similarly in the case of the tree, the concept of the cosmic tree is found in which the tree is an image of the cosmos.<sup>44</sup> Unlike the waters which represent the unformed chaotic source of the cosmos, the cosmic tree expresses the manifestation of the cosmos, the appearance of form. On another level, the tree can be seen as the tree of life, which like the waters of life, stands in paradise.<sup>45</sup>

The association of the two, water and tree, is not uncommon.<sup>46</sup> In the Kausītaki-upanīśad, for example, a passage describes how the path of the gods (devayānam panthānam) passes through the spheres of Agni, Vāyu, etc. and at last reaches the region of Brahma which is described as containing the river Vijarā and the tree Ilya.<sup>47</sup> The name of the river, vijarā, means 'not growing old'<sup>48</sup> and at the

42. For a discussion of this concept of cosmic water in the myths of other cultures, cf. M. Eliade, Patterns in comparative religions, London, 1958, pp.188-193.

43. cf. M. Eliade, Ibid., pp. 193-194.

44. Ibid., pp.273-378.

45. Ibid., pp.287-293.

46. Ibid., pp. 282-283.

47. Kausītaki-upanīśad, in Astādāśa-Upanīśadah, ed. V.P. Limaye and R.D. Vādekara, Vol.I, Poona, 1958, 1.3. vijarā nadī/ ilyo vrksah/ 'The river Vijarā, the tree Ilya'

48. M. Monier Williams, A Sanskrit English dictionary, Oxford, 1899, p.950, col.2.

end of the verse comes the statement, 'He has reached the river Vijarā; he will not grow old'.<sup>49</sup> thus showing a connexion with the river of life. The etymology of ilya, the name of the tree is more difficult to establish. A commentator, Śankarānanda, has glossed it as:

ilā prthivī tadrūpatvena ilya iti nāma taruh/<sup>50</sup>

That is to say: ilā is a term for the earth; because it has the same form (as the earth), the tree is called ilya.

If such an etymology were correct it would connect this tree with the cosmic tree, though a more probable derivation is irā, 'fluid'.

In the KKS<sup>51</sup> and SBr.<sup>52</sup> account of the Purūravas myth there is an apparent opposition between the Vṛndāvana-like forest place and the inhabited grāma. A similar opposition can be found in the Purāṇas between the forest Vṛndāvana, where the cows are taken to graze, and the vraja (gokula, goṣṭha, etc.), the cowherd dwelling place.

Apparently, though Vṛndāvana derives from the idea of manifest creation or cosmos as opposed to unmanifest chaos, it is still not the material world of the grāma or vraja. Vṛndāvana, in fact, would seem to incorporate two aspects which are not differentiated in the Vedic texts, but are in

49. Kausītaki-upanīṣad, op.cit., 1.3.  
vijarām vā ayam nadīm prāpat/ na vā ayam jarayisyatīti/

50. The principle Upanīṣads, ed. S. Radhakrishnan, London, 1953, p.756.

51. KKS., op.cit., 7.6.

52. SBr. . op.cit., 11.5.1.13.

quasi-historical Epic-Purāṇic literature. The first aspect is that of Eden -- the cosmos immediately after or during creation, which has not yet evolved into an entirely material condition. This would fit in with the concept of the cosmic tree and cosmic water. The second is that of heaven, the divine realm; which would be supported by its apparent connection with the Devas in KKS and the Gandarvas in SBr. In this case the tree and water would represent the tree of life and the water of life. In the Vedic texts, the first stage of creation is identical with the divine realm, i.e. Eden is identical with Devaloka.

d) The nature of Vṛndāvana - celestial and terrestrial - in the Purāṇas

i) The Harivamśa

In the portrayal of Vṛndāvana as found in the Hariv., the basic concept of a divine region has been transferred to a historical-geographical setting. This can be compared with the treatment of Kṛṣṇa as an epic hero, while the cosmogonic-mythic concept of Kṛṣṇa was retained unchanged. It can best be illustrated by a study of a few passages from the text describing Vṛndāvana.

The first passage from the Hariv. - 53.32-34 - illustrates the main motifs characterizing Vṛndāvana. These motifs are mythic and indicate basically a divine realm, but can also be interpreted in historico-geographical terms.

In the first verse of this passage a connexion is established between Kṛṣṇa tending cows and Vṛndāvana:

pūrvam eva tu kṛṣṇena gavām vai hitakāriṇā<sup>a</sup>/  
śivena manasā dr̥ṣṭam tad vanam vanacāriṇā/32/53

The relation between a Kṛṣṇa-like entity and cows, or cow-maidens, in a 'Vṛndāvana' has already been shown to be a fundamental one (see above); therefore the picture conjured up here is compatible with that of a divine realm or Eden.

At the same time, the concept of the descent of a deity into the material world, i.e. avatāra, is also implied in this passage. This emerges from the use of the term hitakārin, which has connotations of 'furthering the interests of'<sup>54</sup> since the welfare (hita) of living beings is frequently given as one of the chief motives for incarnation.

The ambiguity between the extraterrestrial and the mundane is maintained in the second verse which introduces the motif of Vṛndāvana as an ever-green pasture:

paścime tu tato rūkṣe gharṁ māsē<sup>a</sup> nirāmāye/  
varsatīvāmṛtam deve trṇam tatra vyavardhata/33/55

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53. Harivamśa, this reading is from the R. Kimjavadēkara, Poona, 1936 edition, II.9.32. 'First Kṛṣṇa looked favourably upon that grove as he was wandering through various groves tending the cows.'  
 Poona, 1969 edition (53.32) variant reading:  
 a. satkāra-kāriṇā

54. M. Monier Williams, op.cit., p.1298, col.2.

55. Hariv., op.cit., II.9.33 'Then in the last dry hot month (called) "healthy" grass sprang up there, as in the rains.'  
 variant reading (53.33): a. tataḥ pakṣe gharṁ māsē  
 The term nirāmāya means literally 'free from disease' which in this context does not seem particularly appropriate. However it is used in the Mbh. as well in conjunction with gharṁ māsē (Mbh., I.3545, cf. O.Böhtlingk, Sanskrit Wörterbuch, p.179, col.2). This might indicate that it was, in fact, the name of a particular month in the hot season.

Here Vṛndāvana is envisaged as a place having supernatural attributes - grass grows even in the hottest months - which identify it with a heavenly pasture. The extra-terrestrial impression is reinforced by the use of the terms amṛtam and deve, both words with divine connotations.

However, the phrase varṣatīvāmṛtam deve can also be understood in a purely mundane sense of 'as in the rains'. Furthermore, the unseasonable growth of grass is presented as part of a sequence. Kṛṣṇa looks favourably on the wood and as a result the grass grows. It is an event, not a continuous state. This, again, is in accord with the avatāra theory; the earth flourishes through the grace of Kṛṣṇa.

The third, and final, verse sums up and expresses more explicitly the ideas inherent in the two previous verses. The broader implications of the cow imagery is indicated here by the inclusion with cows of 'other people', i.e. all living beings, who are benefited by the presence of Kṛṣṇa:

na tatra vatsāḥ sīdanti na gāvo netare janāḥ/  
yatra tiṣṭhati lokānām bhavāya madhusūdanah/34/<sup>56</sup>

The ambiguity in this passage hinges on the term bhava. Bhava, derived from bhū-, 'to become', can have the sense 'being, existence', and be used as a term for the world itself.<sup>57</sup>

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56. Ibid., II.9.34. 'Where Madhusūdana remains for the salvation of the worlds, there calves, cattle and other people do not perish.'

57. M. Monier Williams, op.cit., p.748, col.3 - p.749, col.1.

Used in this sense, the verse would mean 'where Madhusūdana remains for the existence of the worlds'. This interpretation evokes the idea of the descent of the divine for the preservation of the material universe.

On the other hand, bhava can be understood as heavenly existence and so salvation. According to this definition the presence of Kṛṣṇa ensures the salvation of the worlds; and the three verses are not about Kṛṣṇa's activity within the material world but on an extraterrestrial plane.

Leading up to these three verses, the Hariv. contains another longer passage in which the historico-geographical setting is even more pronounced. It can be seen as forming a commentary or elaboration on the above verses. The context of a pastoral community is made clear when Kṛṣṇa tells Balarāma that as the present wood is exhausted and no grass is left, they should move on to another wood, Vṛndāvana:

ārya nāsmīn vane śakyaṁ gopālāḥ saha krīḍitum/8/  
avagītam idam sarvaṁ āvābhyām bhuktakānanam<sup>a</sup>/  
praksiṇatṛṇakāsthā ca gopair mathitapādapam/8/58

The account of the settlement of the cowherds in Vṛndāvana with details regarding their building of enclosures etc.,<sup>59</sup> reinforces this impression of historicity.

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58. Hariv., op.cit., II.8.8-9. 'O noble one, it is not possible to disport in this wood with the cowherd boys. This entire wood has been enjoyed by us and is worn out. Its grass and timber has been exhausted and the plants agitated by the cowherd boys.'  
 variant reading (52.8-9) a. bhuktabhojanam

59. Ibid., II.9.27-30.

The description of Vṛndāvana in the words of Kṛṣṇa contains many elements already familiar from the verses discussed above, interspersed with conventional poetic imagery more or less applicable to any wood. Vṛndāvana is, for example, said to be covered with abundant grass:

śrūyate hi vanam ramyam paryāptatṛṇasamstaram/60

This is an image which fits in with the picture of Vṛndāvana as an ever-green pasture found in the verses discussed above. Vṛndāvana is also said to be the abode of all seasons:

snigdhaśītānilavanam sarvartunilayam śubham/61

Presumably this means that all the seasons exist at once, and this resembles the already mentioned concept of a hot summer season having the qualities of the rainy season.

Reference is made to Govardhana mountain, which is compared with the heavenly mountain, Mandara:

tatra govardhano nāma nātidūre girir mahān/  
bhrājate dīrghaśikharo mandanasyeva mandarah/62

The motif of Govardhana is apparently again related to the cow theme. The term itself appears to be derived from go + vardhana, or 'causing the cow to increase, strengthening the cow',<sup>63</sup> and in the Hariv. and BhP. account of the Govardhana

60. Ibid., II.8.22. 'It is said that there is a beautiful wood covered with abundant grass.'

61. Ibid., II.8.24. 'A wood having a moist cool breeze, the abode of all the seasons, auspicious.'

62. Ibid., II.8.25 'There, not very far away, the great mountain named Govardhana shines, having a high peak, like the Mandara of Nandana.'

63. M. Monier Williams, op.cit., p.926, col.1.

story it is linked with Goloka.<sup>64</sup> The comparison here with Mandara can be seen primarily as a conventional poetic simile but might also be intended as an echo of the celestial nature of the place.

The imagery of water and tree is pronounced in this passage. Vṛndāvana is said to have many Kadamba trees and to be situated on the bank of the Yamunā:

kadambapādapaprāyaṃ yamunātīrasaṃśritam/<sup>65</sup>

Further on, an immense Nyagrodha tree called Bhāṇḍīra is described as standing in the middle of Vṛndāvana:

madhye cāśya mahāśākho nyagrodho yojanocchritah/  
bhāṇḍīro nāma śuśuṭīlamegha ivāmbare/<sup>26/66</sup><sup>66</sup>

Yamunā is mentioned yet again as dividing Vṛndāvana and is compared to the celestial Nalinī of Nandana, just as Govardhana was to the Mandara:

madhyena cāśya kālindī śīmantam iva kurvatī/  
prayātā nandanasyeva nalinī saritām varā/<sup>27/67</sup><sup>67</sup>

In the final verse the tree, mountain and river are all brought together as the essential features of Vṛndāvana:

tatra govardhanam caiva bhāṇḍīram ca vanaspatim/  
kālindīm ca nadīm raṃyām drakṣyāvaś caratah/<sup>28/68</sup><sup>68</sup>

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64. Hariv. ., II.19.30.

65. Hariv., op.cit., II.8.23. '... which has many Kadamba trees and is situated on the bank of the Yamunā.'

66. Ibid., II.8.26. 'And in the middle of this a Nyagrodha tree, having great branches, a yojana high, named Bhāṇḍīra, looks beautiful like a dark cloud in the sky.'

67. Ibid., II.8.27. 'And through it, Kālindī has wended its way as if making a parting, like the Nalinī of Nandana, the best of rivers.'

68. Ibid., II.8.28. 'And there we two will see Govardhana and the tree Bhāṇḍīra, and the beautiful river Kālindī, pleasant for the traveller.'

ii) The Viṣṇu Purāṇa

The ViP. contains a passage, V.6.29-30, describing Vṛndāvana in remarkably similar terms to those used in II.9.32-33 of the Hariv., though verse 34 is entirely omitted.

As in that passage the first verse connects Vṛndāvana with cow-imagery by saying that Kṛṣṇa chose Vṛndāvana so that he might nourish the cattle:

vṛndāvanam bhagavatā kṛṣṇenākliṣṭakarmanā/  
śubhena manasā dhyātam gavām vṛddhim abhīpsatā/29/<sup>69</sup>

The similarity between this verse and that from the Hariv. can best be seen if the corresponding phrases are set side by side:

<u>Hariv.</u>	<u>ViP.</u>
<u>kṛṣṇena</u>	<u>kṛṣṇena</u>
<u>gavām vai hitakārinā</u>	<u>gavām vṛddhim abhīpsatā</u>
<u>vanacārinā</u>	<u>akliṣṭakarmanā</u>
<u>śivena manasā dr̥ṣṭam</u>	<u>śubhena manasā dhyātam</u>
<u>tad vanam</u>	<u>vṛndāvanam</u>
<u>pūrvam eva</u>	<u>bhagavatā</u>

The analysis shows that only the phrases pūrvam eva and bhagavatā are totally different in meaning.

The general trend of the differences in vocabulary is a more heavy emphasis on the divinity of Kṛṣṇa. This can be

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69. ViP., op.cit., V.6.29. 'The Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose actions cannot be frustrated fixed his mind favourably on Vṛndāvana, so that he might nourish the cattle.'

The term akliṣṭakarman can have two meanings:

1) He who brings about his aims easily, who can do anything; 2) He who is tireless in performing Vedic rites (cf. M. Monier Williams, op.cit., p.3, col.1). In the context of Kṛṣṇa the first interpretation would seem to be more appropriate.

seen in the application of the adjective bhagavatā, which has no duplicate in the Hariv. verses. Similarly, though the terms aklistakarmanā and vanacārinā have the same connotations of acting freely, the former is much more overtly divine in its connotations and does not fit in as well with the general imagery of cows and woods as the latter. This emphasis would seem to be, however, more on the divinity of Kṛṣṇa as an avatāra on earth than on the cosmological concept of Kṛṣṇa in a divine realm.

The similarity with the Hariv. continues in verse 30 where the same imagery of grass growing in the hottest driest season and the comparison with the rainy season is used:

tatas tatrātīrūkṣe 'pi gharmakāle dvijottama/  
prāvṛtkāla ivodbhūtam navam śasyam samantatah/<sup>70</sup>

This can be compared with the Hariv. verse:

<u>Hariv.</u>	<u>ViP.</u>
<u>tato</u>	<u>tatas</u>
<u>rūkṣe</u>	<u>atīrūkṣe</u>
<u>gharme māse</u>	<u>gharmakāle</u>
<u>varsatīvāmṛtam deve</u>	<u>prāvṛtkāla iva</u>
<u>vyavardhata</u>	<u>udbhūtam</u>
<u>trṇam</u>	<u>śasyam</u>
<u>nirāmaye</u>	<u>dvijottama</u>

Here nirāmaye and dvijottama are the only phrases totally different in meaning.

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70. Ibid., V.6.30. 'And so there even in that most arid hot season, O best of the twice-born, new grass grows as in the rainy season.'

Here, if anything, extraterrestrial overtones are less evident than in the Hariṣ. Prāvṛṭkāla iva, which takes the place of varṣatīvānṛtam deve, has no connotations beyond an unequivocally earthly rainy season. Thus while in the ViP. the divinity of Kṛṣṇa is stressed, the underlying cosmogonic nature of the whole scene is lost.

iii) The Bhāgavata Purāṇa

The basic Vṛndāvana motifs discussed above do exist in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa as well, though not so immediately apparent.

The concept, for example, of an unpleasant, hot, summer season assuming the qualities of a pleasant season can be found at X.18.2., though here spring has taken the place of the rainy season:

vraje vikṛīdator evaṃ gopālacchadmamāyayā/  
grīsmo nāmartur abhavan nātipreyān śarīrinām/2/  
sa ca vṛndāvanaguṇair vasanta iva lakṣitaḥ/  
yatrāste bhagavān sāksād rāmena saha keśavaḥ/3/71

That this quality of Vṛndāvana is connected with the presence of Kṛṣṇa is brought out by the last line yatrāste bhagavān... which can be compared with the yatra tiṣṭhati ... madhusūdanah in both concept and phraseology.

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71. BhāP., op.cit., X.18.2-3. 'While the two of them played thus in the vraja in the guise of cowherd boys through their pretence, the summer season started which is not dear to embodied beings, but through the qualities of Vṛndāvana, where Lord Keśava remained in person with Rāma, it appeared like spring.'

The elaboration of the metaphysical dimension may be seen in the use of the term māyā. That such a connotation is intended finds confirmation through the inclusion of the terms lakṣitaḥ and guṇa, both of which have philosophical overtones as well.

Such metaphysical tendencies are even more pronounced in a description of Vṛndāvana occurring in the context of Brahmā's carrying away of the calves and cowherd boys. This in itself is an incident not found in either the Hariv. or ViP.

This episode seems to aim at illustrating the identical nature of the manifest Kṛṣṇa and the unmanifest Viṣṇu and so to negate the concept of avatāra. That the activity of Kṛṣṇa is fundamentally on a divine level finds expression in the fact that the calves and cowherd boys are all described as being part of himself and his sports are therefore ātmavihāra:

svayamātmātmagovatsān prativāryātmavatsapaih/  
kṛīḍann ātmavihāraiś ca sarvātmā prāviśad vrajam/20/72

The concept of the cowherds as incarnations of gods - a reference, possibly, to the Mbh. account of the incarnation of the gods with Kṛṣṇa - is specifically denied. They are, instead said to be Kṛṣṇa himself appearing in different ways:

naite sureśā ṛsayo na caite tvam eva bhāṣīṣa bhidāśraye 'pi/73

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72. Ibid., X.13.20. 'He who is independent, restraining the calves who were himself by means of the cowherd boys who were himself, and disporting through self-sports, the universal soul entered the vraja.'

73. Ibid., X.13.39. 'These are neither gods nor sages; you alone, Lord, shine through separate receptacles.'

The description of Vṛndāvana thus occurs in this context of the identity of the manifest and the unmanifest, the terrestrial and the celestial. It may be noted that Brahmā is said to see Vṛndāvana after Kṛṣṇa spreads the curtain of Nature:

anīśe 'pi draṣṭum kim idam iti vā muhyati sati/  
cachādājo jñātvā sapadi paramo 'jājavanikām/<sup>74</sup>

This curtain of Nature can be seen as related to the gopālacchadmamāyayā of the previous passage, X.18.2-3. Vṛndāvana is thus seen as part of the whole process of self-manifestation accomplished through the divine power.

Echoes of the imagery found in the Hariv. and ViP. do persist, especially in the first verse, though in a much modified form. The first verse describes Vṛndāvana as being filled with trees providing a livelihood for the people and as being pleasant throughout the year:

sapady evābhitāḥ paśyan diśo 'paśyat purahsthitam/  
vṛndāvanam janājīvyadrumākīrnam samāpriyam/<sup>59/75</sup>

The term janājīvyadrumākīrnam 'filled with trees providing a livelihood for the people' can be seen as related to the abundant grass of the Hariv. and ViP., though the pastoral image has been more or less lost - people have replaced cows. The second term, samāpriyam, 'pleasant throughout the year', echoes the concept of summer having the qualities of the

74. Ibid., X.13.57. 'Knowing (Brahmā) to be unable to see and bewildered, wondering what all this was, the Supreme Unborn immediately spread the curtain of Nature.'  
cf. Svetāśvataropaniṣat, I.9. in Aṣṭādaśa-Upaniṣadaḥ, op.cit., for ajā in the sense of Prakṛti or Nature.

75. Ibid., X.13.59. 'Suddenly looking on all sides, he saw before him Vṛndāvana filled with trees providing a livelihood for the people, pleasant throughout the year.'

rainy season found in the ViP., and Hariv., as well as that of summer having the qualities of spring found in previous passage from the BhP.

However, the imagery in the second verse - that of human beings and animals that have natural enmity towards each other living together as friends - is unique to this passage:

yatra naisargadurvairāḥ sahāsan nrmrgādayah/  
mitrāṇivājitāvāsadrutaruttarsakādikan/60/76

This imagery is very paradisaical in appearance; it is reminiscent of the concept of the lion lying down with the lamb found elsewhere in descriptions of Paradise or Eden.

The next line continues this imagery by describing how this paradisaical state exists because anger, desire and so forth have fled the place where Viṣṇu dwells. This description of a condition resulting from the presence of the divine can be compared with both the other passage from the BhP. (yatrāste bhagavān ...) and that of the Hariv. (yatra tiṣṭhati ... madhusūdanah). The difference lies in the perception of the result of the divine presence being expressed here in terms of moral qualities - absence of anger and desire - whereas in the other passages it was expressed in terms of physical well-being - abundant grass, pleasant weather. Going back to the bhava concept of the Hariv. passage, we could say that in this case the salvation aspect of bhava is emphasized to the exclusion of the material aspect.

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76. Ibid., X.13.60. '... where human beings and animals that have natural enmity towards each other were living together as friends, anger, desire and so forth having fled the place where Ajita dwells.'

e) The Gaudīya approach to Kṛṣṇa ∞ Viṣṇu.

i) The nature of the divinity

The first point which may be remarked is that whereas in the texts discussed above Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu are portrayed as two equal aspects of one divine reality, in the Gaudīya text to be examined here, the Laghubhāgavatāmṛta, Viṣṇu is unmistakably demoted to an inferior position. Kṛṣṇa is envisaged as the most complete expression of the divine, while Viṣṇu represents an aspect of Kṛṣṇa.

The relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu forms a major topic in the first part of the main body of the text, which is preoccupied with the question of the relation of various aspects of the divine with each other and with the question of their relative positions. This part of the text begins with a verse establishing the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa among all objects of worship, as well as making it clear that all aspects of the divine subsequently discussed are, in fact, forms of Kṛṣṇa:

athopāśyeṣu mukhyatvaṃ vaktum utkaraṣabhūmataḥ/  
kṛṣṇasya tatsvarūpāni nirūpyante kramād iha/10/77

In this way, the text from the beginning postulates the Kṛṣṇa aspect as the primary divine source.

As a means of distinguishing between Kṛṣṇa himself and the other aspects of Kṛṣṇa, the divinity is described as

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77. Rūpa Gosvāmī, Laghubhāgavatāmṛta, ed. Jvālāprasāda Miśra, Bombay, 1902, p.8, v.10. 'Now in order to declare the superiority of Kṛṣṇa because of (his) abundance of excellence, his forms will be examined in succession here.'

manifesting itself in the extraterrestrial realm in three ways:

svayamrūpas tadekātmārūpa āveśanāmakah/  
ity asau trividham bhāti prapañcātītadhāmasu/11/<sup>78</sup>

Among these, the first, the 'one who has independent form', is defined as not being dependent upon any other; in other words, it exists in itself and is not derived from any other source, it is self-formed and spontaneous:

ananyāpekṣi yadrūpam svayamrūpah sa ucyate/12/<sup>79</sup>

It is with this independent form that Kṛṣṇa is identified through a quotation from the Bṛhadbrahmasamhitā:

Īśvarah paramah kṛṣṇah saccidānandavigrahaḥ/  
anādir ādir govindah sarvakāranakāraṇam/13/<sup>80</sup>

It is thus clear that Rūpa sees Kṛṣṇa-Govinda and the original source as one and the same.

Both the other forms are apparently derivative. They have as their source the independent form, Kṛṣṇa, and are thus subordinate to the Kṛṣṇa aspect. Among these, Viṣṇu is assigned to the category termed 'having a form identical with that'. The definition given of this form is that

78. Ibid., p.9, v.11. 'As one who has independent form, as one identical with that, and as the possessed one, thus he appears triply in the abodes beyond the phenomenal universe.'

79. Ibid., p.9, v.12. 'That form which depends on no other is called "the one having independent form".'

80. Ibid., p.10, v.13. 'The supreme lord, Kṛṣṇa, having a form of existence, consciousness and bliss, without beginning, the very beginning, Govinda, the cause of all causes.'

though in configuration it appears different from the independent form, Kṛṣṇa, it is the same in essence:

yad rūpam tadabhedena svarūpena virājate/  
ākṛtyādibhir anyādrk sa tadekātmarūpakah/14/<sup>81</sup>

Thus it is not the original form itself, but one of the modes of expression through which that form reveals itself.

The 'identical form' is further divided into two aspects, basically corresponding to extraterrestrial manifestation and manifestation through incarnation. The first, to which Viṣṇu is said to belong, is called a sportive manifestation (vilāsa). Its main characteristic is that it is assumed for the sake of diversion and is for the most part equal in power to the original form, though it appears to have a different shape:

svaṛūpam anyākāram yat tasya bhāti vilāsatah/  
prāyenātmasamam śaktyā sa vilāso nigadyate/<sup>82</sup>

The verse identifying Viṣṇu as a sportive manifestation says that Viṣṇu is a sportive manifestation of Kṛṣṇa and Vāsudeva is a sportive manifestation of Viṣṇu:

paramavyomanāthas tu govindasya yathā smṛtaḥ/  
paramavyomanāthasya vāsudevaś ca yādrśaḥ/15/<sup>83</sup>

81. Ibid., p.11, v.14. 'That form which is as if in its own form not different from that and owing to factors such as shape appears different; belongs to (the category) of "form identical with that".'
82. Ibid., p.11, v.15. 'That form of him which, out of sport, appears to have a different shape, for the most part equal to himself in power, is to be termed "diversion form".'
83. Ibid., p.11, v.15. 'As the Lord of the supreme heaven is declared (to be) of Govinda, and as Vāsudeva is of the Lord of the supreme heaven.'

If Vāsudeva is taken as an epithet of Kṛṣṇa, as is frequently the case, this statement would amount to saying that Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu were vilāsas of one another; in other words, that Kṛṣṇa equals Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu equals Kṛṣṇa - a viewpoint basically in accord with the statement of the BhP.

However, in subsequent portions of the text, Vāsudeva, the vilāsa of Viṣṇu and first of the vyūhas is clearly differentiated from Kṛṣṇa, son of Devakī. This is made clear during the discussion of the possibility of Kṛṣṇa being an incarnation of Vāsudeva, showing an identification of Vāsudeva with Viṣṇu. The final conclusion reached is that Kṛṣṇa is superior even to the first of the vyūhas:

ādyavyūhād api śreṣṭhah kathyate devakīsutah<sup>84</sup>

A gradation is thus made between Kṛṣṇa, his manifestation Viṣṇu and finally Vāsudeva, the manifestation of Viṣṇu. Evidently, therefore, the Viṣṇu aspect is seen as an expression of the independent Kṛṣṇa, for the sake of sport and diversity, almost but not quite equal in power to Kṛṣṇa himself and thus subordinate.

Divine power (śakti) plays an important role in this process of manifestation. This emerges from the fact that the main difference between the two divisions of 'identical form' is that whereas vilāsa is said to possess this śakti to a more or less equal extent as the independent form, the partial manifestation (svāmśa) of the divinity displays

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84. Ibid., p.153, v.87. 'The son of Devakī is said to be superior to even the first of the vyūhas.'

progressively diminished power:

tādrśo nyūnaśaktīm yo vyanakti svāṁśa īritah<sup>85</sup>

It may be noted that later in the text as well, to the question of how a hierarchy can exist between different forms of the divine, the answer given is that there is not manifestation of all the powers in all of them. The difference between the state of being a part (aṁśatva) and that of being full (pūrnatva) or the possessor of parts (aṁśitā)<sup>86</sup> is that in the first only a small proportion of the powers are manifest, whereas in the second all of the powers are present and can be made manifest according to the divine will:

aṁśatvam nāma śaktīnām sadālpāṁśaparakāśitā/  
pūrnatvañ ca svecchayaiva nānāśaktiparakāśitā/46<sup>87</sup>

Apparently therefore the cause of gradation is expression or non-expression of śakti.

## ii) The nature of incarnation

The Laghubhāgavatāmṛta differs from the Purāṇas discussed above not only in that Viṣṇu is subordinated to Kṛṣṇa but also in the nature of the relationship portrayed --

85. Ibid., p.12, v.16. 'In the same way that which displays progressively diminished power is termed "a partial manifestation of himself".'

86. The terms aṁśatva and aṁśitā are contrasted in a later verse; Ibid., p.124, v.50: ekatvañ ca prthaktvañ ca tathāṁśatvam utāṁśitā/ 'Oneness and manifoldness, and being a part and being possessor of parts.'

87. Ibid., p.122, v.46. 'The state of being a portion is that in which always a portion of the powers are manifest; completeness is when many powers are manifest in accordance with his will.'

namely, the substitution of a concept of manifestation for that of incarnation. The relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu is described in non-historical terms. There is no question of a sequence of events within time and space. This is made evident through the stress laid on the extraterrestrial nature of the basic manifestations. Almost at the very beginning of this section comes the statement that all three types of divine form dwell in abodes beyond the material universe (see above p. 61), a statement which is more or less repeated at the end of the section:

prapañcātītadhāmatvam eṣāṃ śāstre prthagvidhe/  
pādmīyottarakhaṇḍāu vyaktam eva virājate/20<sup>88</sup>

A result of perceiving the process in these terms is that, unlike the Purāṇic conception of incarnation where Viṣṇu becomes Kṛṣṇa, here Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu are envisaged as co-existent, each is dwelling in his own divine abode at the same time.

Nevertheless it is clear from the next section of the text that the term incarnation is still applied to Kṛṣṇa, though the concepts associated with this term are somewhat different from those of the Purāṇas. As in the beginning of the previous section Kṛṣṇa was described as pre-eminent among objects of worship, so the first verse of this section states that Kṛṣṇa is perfect among incarnations:

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88. Ibid., p.15, v.20. 'Of these the state of having an abode beyond the material universe is clearly apparent in a separate Śāstra such as the last canto of the Pādmīya.'

athāvatārāḥ kathyante kṛṣṇo yeṣu ca puṣkalah/<sup>89</sup>

The atha used in the beginning of both these verses indicates the start of a new section, the one dealing with Kṛṣṇa as a svarūpa in the extraterrestrial realm, the other with Kṛṣṇa as an avatāra in the material universe.

The connexion of incarnations with the physical universe is quite plain in the definition which follows:

pūrvoktā viśvakāryārtham apūrvā iva cet svayam/  
dvārāntareṇa vāvir syur avatārās tadā smṛtāḥ/<sup>90</sup>

According to this verse the divine forms discussed above become manifest for the sake of effects in the world (like a transcendental causal link), either by themselves or through a medium: the importance of the material universe in this context is apparent from the phrase viśvakāryārtham. From the śloka it would follow that any activity on the part of the divine pertaining to the universe involves incarnation. Such activity would include creation as well as the entrance of the divine into the phenomenal world after creation.

It may be noted that the word apūrvā is a technical term used in Mīmāṃsā to describe the unseen efficacy which brings results (kārya) not immediately connected with the cause (kāraṇa),<sup>91</sup> the intermediary between an act and its effect; for example the link between the performance of a

89. Ibid., p.16, v.1. 'Now the incarnations are described amongst whom Kṛṣṇa is perfect.'

90. Ibid., p.16, v.1. 'If the aforesaid appear for the sake of effects in the world, like a causal link, either by themselves or through some means, then they are declared by the Smṛtis to be incarnations.'

91. M. Monier Williams, op.cit., p.56, col. 2.

sacrifice and the attainment of heaven. In this context it would indicate the way in which the incarnations constitute a link between the effects displayed in the world and the original divine cause.

Another point which may be made is that the verb used for their appearance āvir bhū may be seen as indicating a physical appearance as well as an event within time. This is in contrast with the verbs bhā and virāj used to describe the divine forms in the previous section, both of which appear to have connotations of a continuous state of being rather than an event, and also to convey a shining forth more than an appearance as opposed to disappearance.

That in this text, as in the Purāṇas, Viṣṇu, unlike Kṛṣṇa, is not envisaged as an incarnation but instead as a source of incarnations becomes clear in the following verse where mediums through which an incarnation can take place are discussed. According to this verse the means of incarnation can be divided into two types - one being tadekātmārūpa and the other tadbhakta, i.e. adherents of him, apparently more or less the same as the āveśa of the previous section:

tat tac ca dvāraṁ tadekātmārūpas tadbhakta eva ca/  
śeṣasāyādiko yadvad vasudevādiko 'pi ca/2/92

Viṣṇu, here identified as the one who sleeps on Śeṣa, is said to belong to the tadekātmārūpa category, which is consistent with the previous discussion of Viṣṇu, where he is called a

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92. Laghubhāgavatāmṛta, op.cit., p.17, v.2.

And each intermediary form is either the one who is identical with him or a follower of him; as for example (the Viṣṇu) who lies on Śeṣa and Vasudeva.'

a vilāsa, i.e. one division of tadekātmārūpa. The reference to Viṣṇu as a means through which incarnation takes place may be seen as in accordance with statements from the BhP. quoted later in this text where Puruṣa, identified with Viṣṇu, is called the storehouse of incarnations<sup>93</sup> which is glossed in the text as being the place of origin of various incarnations:

etad rūpaṁ tu nānāvatārānāṁ udayāspadam/68/<sup>94</sup>

Thus the role of Viṣṇu in incarnation remains to a large extent similar in nature to that portrayed in the Purāṇas; it is through Viṣṇu that incarnation takes place and yet he is not himself an incarnation.

The Kṛṣṇa incarnation, however, is seen as unique and does not involve Viṣṇu as a medium. This becomes clear in a further verse which, referring back to the various forms of divine expression, categorizes incarnations as being for the most part either svāṁśa or āveśa, while only one incarnation is svayamrūpa, the identity of which is to be revealed later in the text:

prāyaḥ svāṁśas tathāveśā avatārā bhavanty amī/  
atra yaḥ syāt svayamrūpāḥ so 'gre vyaktībhaviṣyati/3/<sup>95</sup>

The identity of this svayamrūpa incarnation as Kṛṣṇa becomes

93. Ibid., p.136, v.67. (BhP., op.cit., 3.1.5.) 'This one is the storehouse of various incarnations, the indestructible seed.'

94. Ibid., p.138, v.68. 'This form is the seat of the appearance of various incarnations.'

95. Ibid., p.17, v.3. 'These incarnations are for the most part "partial manifestations of himself" and "possessed", and the one who is "independent" will be revealed subsequently.'

clear later in the text, where after rejecting various theories about the source of the Kṛṣṇa incarnation, the conclusion is reached that, in fact, it has no source. It is self-manifest and independent.

The verse indicating the nature of Kṛṣṇa as the independent incarnation states that from the term svayam used in the texts such as the BhP. it has been revealed that Kṛṣṇa is svayamrūpa:

ataḥ svayampadādibhyo bhagavān kṛṣṇa eva hi/  
svayamrūpa iti vyaktam śrīmadbhāgavatādiṣu<sup>96</sup>

This is presumably a reference to BhP. I.3.28 (discussed above p. 43).

It may be noted that whereas in the BhP. the svayam is used to show the identity of Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu, Rupa is trying to draw a distinction between Kṛṣṇa who is the Lord himself, and Puruṣa who is the source of incarnations. This is thus an example of the use of the words of the BhP. re-interpreted so as to express a meaning different from the original.

The verb vyaktam in the above verse is an indicator of the fact that it is intended as a direct sequel of the previous verse discussed above. While that verse said that the identity of the independent incarnation would be revealed subsequently - agre vyaktībhavisyati - here the same verb is used in the past tense - its identity has now been revealed; in other words Kṛṣṇa is the independent incarnation.

In a verse previous to this an apparently conscious use of vocabulary very nearly identical with that employed in the account of Kṛṣṇa as svayamrūpa (in the first section of this text) has the effect of forming a distinct link between the two statements. The verse in question says that the account of

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96. Ibid., p.207, v.132. 'Therefore through terms such as "himself", it has been revealed in texts such as the BhP. that Lord Kṛṣṇa is indeed the independent form.'

of Kṛṣṇa's superiority to all of his forms shows that he must be greater than Paramavyomanātha Viṣṇu, while through the use of the term 'himself' (svayam) his independence is proclaimed:

sarvebhyas tatsvarūpebhyah kṛṣṇotkarṣanirūpanāt/  
ādhikyam paramavyomanāthād apy asya darśitam/  
svayampadena cāsyānyanairapeksyam udīritam/121/ <sup>97</sup>

The three terms of particular interest here are svayam, utkarṣa and nairapeksyam. The term svayam needs little explanation since it evidently refers back to the term svayamrūpa. It may be remembered that v.10 of the first section spoke of Kṛṣṇa's superiority (utkarṣa) among objects of worship while here the same term is used to describe his superiority to all his other forms. Furthermore the definition of svayamrūpa was that it was dependent on no other (ananyāpekṣin) and similarly here the Kṛṣṇa incarnation is said to have independence (nairapeksyam). This shows that just as Kṛṣṇa is considered svayamrūpa among the svarūpas, he is also svayamrūpa among the incarnations. Unlike other incarnations the Kṛṣṇa incarnation does not have its basis in any other entity.

Rūpa takes the different characteristics which in the Purāṇas all belong to one Viṣṇu entity and attributes them to separate entities who are seen as aspects of Viṣṇu. They are then placed in a hierarchy apparently based on their degree of involvement in creation. The relative gradation of the four main aspects is stated in a verse which says that Viṣṇu, the lowest, is

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97. Ibid., p.190, v.121. 'Through the description of Kṛṣṇa's superiority to all of his forms, the fact that he is greater than Paramavyomanātha is shown, and through the term "himself" his independence is described.'

said to be an incarnation of Puruṣa, indicating the superiority of Puruṣa; greater than Puruṣa is Vāsudeva and greatest of all is Mahāvaikunṭhanāyaka:

trisu punso 'vatāreṣu rudrāt padmabhavāt tathā/  
bhṛgvādikṛtanirddhārād viṣṇur eva mahattamah/  
kim punah puruṣas tatra vāsudevo 'tra kintarām/  
tatrāpi kintamām so 'yam mahāvaikunṭhanāyakah/<sup>98</sup>

In this sequence Viṣṇu, here seen as the embodiment of sattva guṇa, is the effective cause of the material universe and so involved in the grossest level of creation. Puruṣa, on the other hand, is the primal cause of creation, and so though unmistakably a cosmic entity, on a higher plane. Vāsudeva, as the first vyūha, may be seen as involved in what is called in Pañcarātra terms pure creation.<sup>99</sup> He is thus on the transcendental level, but in the process of evolving towards the cosmic level. Finally, Mahāvaikunṭhanāyaka, the Lord of the celestial realm, is utterly transcendent and totally uninvolved in cosmic activity. Arguments offering these aspects of Viṣṇu as sources for Kṛṣṇa are demolished one by one in the course of the text, starting on the lower end of the scale with Puruṣa and Viṣṇu.

Whereas the cosmic aspects, Viṣṇu and Puruṣa are treated as incarnations, the transcendent Vaikunṭhanāyaka and Vāsudeva are termed vilāsas. Two of the three types of incarnation

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98. Ibid., p.188, v.118. 'Among the three incarnation of Pums, Viṣṇu is the greatest, (greater) than Brahmā and Rudra, as has been established by Bhṛgu, etc. What to speak then of Puruṣa himself, and how much more is Vāsudeva, while greatest of all is Mahāvaikunṭhanāyaka.'

99. Cf. discussion of śuddhasṛṣṭi in F.O. Schrader, Introduction to the Pañcarātra, Adyar 1916, pp.31-38.

are described as puruṣa and guṇa, the category to which Viṣṇu is assigned, the third type being the non-cosmic līlā incarnation of which Kṛṣṇa is one, again showing his non-cosmic nature:

puruṣākhyaṁ guṇātmāno līlātmānaś ca te tridhā/<sup>100</sup>

With reference to the BhP., Puruṣa is called the first incarnation:

ādya 'vatārah puruṣaḥ parasya/<sup>101</sup>

and as such is the source of all other incarnations - an aspect of the Viṣṇu entity discussed above. Paramavaikunṭhanātha and Vāsudeva, on the other hand, are consistently referred to as vilāsas. Some examples have already been seen above and others can be found. For example, at p.149 Vāsudeva is termed a vilāsa of Mahāvaikunṭhanāyaka:

mahāvaikunṭhanāthasya vilāsatvena viśrutah/<sup>102</sup>

A further reference to Mahāvaikunṭhanāyaka as a vilāsa of Kṛṣṇa can be found at p.207:

tasmāt paramavaikunṭhanātho 'py asya vilāsakah/133/<sup>103</sup>

The difference between vilāsa and incarnation is indicated in a verse which is actually giving the viewpoint of the opponent in the argument (the pūrvapakṣa). Here it is said that though, because of his manifestation of līlās such as birth, Kṛṣṇa is an incarnation of Mahāvaikunṭhanāyaka, because of the

100. Laghubhāgavatāmṛta, op.cit., p.17, v.3. 'They (the avatāras) are threefold as:- that called Puruṣa, those that have the nature of guṇas, and those embodied for līlā.'

101. Ibid., p.18, v.4. (BhP., op.cit., II.6.40) 'Puruṣa is the first incarnation of the Supreme.'

102. Ibid., p.149, v.79. 'He is famed through being a vilāsa of Mahāvaikunṭhanātha.'

103. Ibid., p.207, v.133. 'Therefore Paramavaikunṭhanātha also has the nature of being his vilāsa.'

abundance of his excellence he is called a vilāsa:

janmādililāprākātyād avatāratayāpy asau/  
prokto vilāsa eva syāt sarvotkarṣātibhūmatah/<sup>104</sup>

Though the argument as applied to Kṛṣṇa is refuted in the text, the basic distinction between the two aspects appears to hold good. This means that the vilāsa, unlike the incarnation, does not get born; in other words, it does not become manifest within the phenomenal universe. Moreover, the vilāsa is apparently a more complete expression of the divine than the incarnation, a conclusion which agrees with the hierarchy discussed above.

It may be observed that the treatment of the formless Brahman appears more or less to correspond to that of Viṣṇu. In the BhP. the contrast between Kṛṣṇa and Brahman is made in the same way as the contrast between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu, suggesting that the Brahman aspect and Viṣṇu aspect are deemed identical. If Kṛṣṇa is Viṣṇu with form, he is equally Brahman with form. Thus Viṣṇu-Brahman represent together the transcendent, formless, impersonal, cosmic aspect with Kṛṣṇa as the immanent personal aspect with form. In the Laṅghubhāgavatāmṛta, the formless Brahman is subordinated to Kṛṣṇa, just as is Viṣṇu. The relation of Brahman with Kṛṣṇa is compared to that of the sun and its rays:

brahma nirdharmakam vastu nirviśeṣam amūrtikam/  
iti sūryopamasyāsyā kathyate tatprabhopamam/<sup>105</sup>

104. Ibid., p.169, v.103. 'Though through the manifestations of līlās such as birth, he is known as an incarnation, through the abundance of all his excellence he is a vilāsa.'

105. Ibid., p.164, v.99. 'Brahman, which is a thing without qualities, without distinctions, without form, can be compared to the light if Kṛṣṇa is compared to the sun.'

The two are essentially identical but the rays are dependent upon and so subordinate to the sun, which is the source.

It is clear from the above account that in many ways the basic characteristics of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa have remained the same as in the Purāṇas. Viṣṇu here as well incorporates the transcendent and cosmic elements of the divine nature while Kṛṣṇa represents the personal, theistic aspect. The difference lies in the subordination of the Viṣṇu aspect to the Kṛṣṇa aspect which leads to a difference in the conception of the incarnation process. Viṣṇu does not become Kṛṣṇa, instead Kṛṣṇa himself takes incarnation. It is thus more a manifestation than an actual incarnation. There is no question of a transformation of one entity into another through the process of becoming incarnate. Here Kṛṣṇa appears as Kṛṣṇa within the phenomenal world.

iii) Manifest and unmanifest līlā in the context of incarnation

The difference between Kṛṣṇa as an incarnation and Kṛṣṇa as a svarūpa is explained in terms of manifest (prakāṭa) and unmanifest (aprakāṭa) līlā. According to the text Kṛṣṇa eternally performs his līlā through innumerable appearances (prakāśa), and sometimes through one appearance he manifests his activities such as birth within the phenomenal world:

prakatāprakatā ceti līlā seyam dvidhocyate/  
tathāhi  
sadānantaiḥ prakāśaiḥ svair līlābhiś ca sa dīvyati/  
tatraikena prakāśena kadācij jagadantare/  
sahaiva svaparivārair janmādi kurute hariḥ/<sup>106</sup>

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106. Ibid., p.230, v.156. 'The līlā is said to be twofold as manifest and unmanifest. Moreover he always sports through his endless appearances and līlās and sometimes through one appearance in the world he takes birth etc., together with his attendants.'

The term prakāśa is discussed earlier in the section on svarūpa where it is described as the manifestation of one form at the same time and in which there is no difference of any sort between the different forms:

anekatra prakatatā rūpasyaikasya yaikadā/  
sarvathā tatsvarūpaiva sa prakāśa itīryate/<sup>106</sup>

This means that in the unmanifest līlā, each of the līlās is taking place simultaneously - Kṛṣṇa is being born at the same time as he is performing rāsa with the gopīs. There is thus no sequence of events, all of these līlās take place outside of time and place. During incarnation, however, the līlās are manifest within time and place and so appear to occur one after the other.

The difference between the manifest and the unmanifest is illustrated again when the text says that Kṛṣṇa eternally exists as the son of Yaśodā (that is in the unmanifest līlā) while in the manifest līlā she serves as a means through which he enters into the material universe:

so 'yam nityasutatvena tasyā rājatya anāditah/  
kṛṣṇah prakatā līlāyām taddvārenāpy abhūt tathā/163/<sup>107</sup>

The identification of Yaśodā as a medium through which the avatāra takes place may be compared with the earlier statement about the tadbhakta category of mediums such as Vasudeva. The text goes on to say that Kṛṣṇa having become manifest then goes on to manifest in sequence līlās such as those of childhood, which

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106. Ibid., p.16, v.18. 'That manifestation of one form at the same time, altogether having the same nature as that (independent form), is called "appearance".'

107. Ibid., p.235, v.163. 'Kṛṣṇa remains without beginning as her eternal son and in manifest līlā he comes through means of her.'

he also performs in thousands of unmanifest appearances:

atha prakatatām labdhe vrajejendravihite mahe/  
tatra prakatayaty esa līlā bēlyādikāḥ kramāt/  
karoti yāḥ prakāśu koṭīśo 'prakatesv api/<sup>108</sup>

The contrast here between the manifest historical sequence and the unmanifest eternally simultaneous existence is made clear.

The question of the historical nature of the incarnation is also raised in another verse where the opponent is made to argue that Kṛṣṇa, the offspring of the Yadus, became manifest at the end of the Dvāpara age, therefore Mahāvaikunṭhanāyaka, who is eternal, cannot be his sportive manifestation:

nanv esa dvāparasyānte prādurbhūto yadūdvaḥ/  
sa vaikunṭheśvaro 'nādis tadvilāsaḥ katham bhavet/<sup>109</sup>

This statement clearly puts forward the historicizing point of view - i.e. the concept that Kṛṣṇa is an event indicated by texts such as the Vip. and the Hariv. This is refuted by the present text which maintains that the birth līlā of Kṛṣṇa who is without beginning is also beginningless:

maivam asyādisūnyasya janmalīlāpy anādikā/  
svacchandato mukundena prakatvam nīyate muhuh/<sup>110</sup>

This again affirms the fact that existence of Kṛṣṇa is a theological principle and not a historical event.

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108. Ibid., p.236, v.164. 'Then having become manifest in the festival arranged by the lord of Vraj, there he manifests the līlās such as those of childhood in sequence, which he performs in thousands of unmanifest appearances also.'

109. Ibid., p.208, v.135. 'Surely this offspring of the Yadus appeared at the end of Dvāpara. How then can the Lord of Vaikunṭha who is without beginning be his manifestation.'

110. Ibid., p.208, v.135. 'Not so, the līlā of this one who is without beginning is also beginningless. Out of his own free will it is manifest by Mukunda from time to time.'

It may also be noticed that in the above verse the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa within the material universe is said to happen again and again. This is expressed in another place through comparing the incarnation with the manifestation on fire, which is latent in various places but only appears through the striking together of certain objects:

tatra tatra yathā vahnīs tejorūpeṇa sann api/  
jāyate maṇikāṣṭhāder hetuṁ kañ cid avāpya sah//  
anādim eva janmādilīlām eva tathādbhutām/  
hetunā kena cit kṛṣṇaḥ prāduskurvyāt kadācana/140/<sup>110</sup>

In the same way Kṛṣṇa is said to manifest his līlās such as birth from time to time. Thus the incarnation itself is not an event which takes place once and for all and never again. Since it is going on eternally it can take place at any time, given the appropriate circumstances.

While a degree of continuity with Purāṇic representations of the character of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu is thus maintained, the Gauḍīya perception of the relationship between the two shows considerable reinterpretation. The difference involves a rejection of the mythic approach and apparently an attempt to re-state the original nature of these two entities as symbolizing metaphysical concepts. Such a tendency is in line with the outlook of the Braj Bhāṣā texts to be examined in the following section.

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110. Ibid., p.214, v.140. 'Just as though fire exists in various places in the form of heat, it is produced through flint, wood, etc., having got a cause; in the same way, Kṛṣṇa sometimes for some reason manifests his beginningless, marvellous līlā of birth etc.'

## 2. Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu and the concept of avatāra in Braj Bhāṣā literature

Braj Bhāṣā texts can be divided into those which accept the mythological structure of the Purāṇas and those which do not. In the first, represented by the apparently non-sectarian Sūrasāgara, Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu have the same characteristics of being two essentially identical and equal aspects of one divine entity as was seen in the BhP. In the second, found with certain modifications in all the sectarian poetry discussed, the gradation between Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa, subordinating Viṣṇu, expressed in the Gaudīya literature, is maintained.

### a) The non-sectarian approach - the Sūrasāgara

In the Sūrasāgara the contrast between a 'parama Viṣṇu' and an 'avama' Kṛṣṇa is frequently stressed, the first being transcendent, inaccessible and cosmic; the second immanent, accessible and theistic. At the same time the basic identity of these two modes of expression is equally emphasized.

It may be noted that the epithet 'Viṣṇu' is never in fact applied by the Sūrasāgara to the transcendent aspect, though references to such well-known attributes as being the husband of Rāmā, lying on Sesa and taking the three steps are sufficient to warrant an identification with the Viṣṇu entity of the Purāṇic texts. That a distinct epithet 'Viṣṇu' is not in fact employed, while the epithet 'Hari' is used indiscriminately for both aspects indicates the emphasis on the identity of the two aspects.

The contrast and identity are exemplified in pada 621 which consists of a series of relative clauses which first describe the transcendent aspect and then proceed to simultaneously contrast and identify it with the immanent aspect,

the two being connected by the pronouns tāhi, soi, so, i.e.

'he, that one'. The first three verses run:

ādi sanātana hari abināsi/ sadā nirantara ghata ghata bāsi/  
pūrāna brahma purāna bakhānaim/ caturānana siva anta na jānaim/  
gunagana agama nigama nahim pāvai/ tāhi jasodā goda khilavai/<sup>112</sup>

The first two and a half verses describe the first aspect which is given the epithet Hari and is identified with Brahman. Its transcendent and inaccessible nature is indicated by the statement that Brahmā and Siva know not his limit, and that the scriptures cannot reach him. The final half verse, 'Him Jasodā has play in her lap', provides a total contrast, presenting an image of utter accessibility. At the same time an identification is made between the inaccessible Brahman and the child in the lap. In other words the child Kṛṣṇa aspect is at the same time the transcendent Viṣṇu.

The rest of the pada similarly consists of a series of contrasting statements. The characteristics of the first aspect are given as: a) cosmic - he is called viśvambhara, sustainer of the universe.<sup>113</sup> He is the creator of the universe and also its destroyer.<sup>114</sup>

b) Transcendent - he has no sense organs or limbs:

locana srabana na rasanā nāsā/  
binu pada pāni karai paragāsā/<sup>115</sup>

112. Sūradāsa, Sūrasāgara, ed. Nandadulāre Vājapeyi, Vol. 1, Kāśī, 1953, pada 621. 'Hari, who is primeval, eternal and indestructible, who dwells ever in each body, whom the Purāṇas describe as the fullest Brahman, whose limits Siva and Brahmā know not, whose virtues are unapproachable even to the scriptures; that one Jaśodā has play in her lap.'

113. Ibid., v.7. viśvambhara nija nāma kahāvai/ 'He is called the sustainer of the universe.'

114. Ibid., v.16. loka racai rākhai aru mārāi/ 'He creates, sustains and destroys the world.'

115. Ibid., v. 6, 'He has neither eyes, nor ears, nor tongue nor nose; without hands and feet he manifests himself.'

He is uninvolved in birth and death, and has no human relationships.<sup>116</sup>

c) Identification with Viṣṇu attributes. He lies on the waters: acyuta rahai sadā jalasāi/<sup>117</sup>

His relations with Lakṣmī is also mentioned - she eternally rubs his feet: carana kamala nita ramā palovai/<sup>118</sup>

These attributes are contrasted with the activities of Kṛṣṇa, which are:

a) Personal rather than cosmic; accessible instead of transcendent. They involve a personal relationship with the devotees, as, for example when Kṛṣṇa is bound to the churning rod by his mother:

so ūkhala bāmdhyau mahatārī/<sup>119</sup>

b) Instead of Lakṣmī he is associated with the gopīs and Rādhā, and whereas Lakṣmī is portrayed as serving him, he is under the control of Rādhā:

so rādhā basa kumja bihārī/<sup>120</sup>

c) The same connexion with cows seen in the Purāṇas is observable here. He runs after the calves<sup>121</sup> and takes the cows to graze:

soi gopa kī gāi carāvai/<sup>122</sup>

A frequent device used to convey the contrast between these two aspects in other paḍas is to compare Viṣṇu's triple vikramaṇa which encompasses the entire universe with the child-like act of Kṛṣṇa being unable to cross the threshold of

116. Ibid., v.10. 'He is devoid of old age and death, without illusion; (he has) no father or mother, no son or relative, no wife.'

117. Ibid., v.15. 'He is Acyuta, ever reclining upon the waters.'

118. Ibid., v. 22. 'Ramā always rubs his feet.'

119. Ibid., v.17. 'That one is bound by his mother to the churning-rod.'

120. Ibid., v.23. 'That one sports in the bower under the control of Rādhā.'

121. Ibid., v.11. so bacharani ke pāchaim dolai/ 'He runs after the calves.'

122. Ibid., v.14. 'He takes the cows of the cow-herd boys to graze.'

the house. This can be seen in pada 731, for example, which describes how it has become difficult even to cross the threshold for the one who was not fatigued measuring the earth in three steps:

basudhā tripada karata nahim ālasa tinahim kathina bhayau  
dehari ulamghana<sup>123</sup>

The taking of three steps is, of course, one of the most characteristic activities of Viṣṇu as far back as the Rg Veda, where it can be seen as a creation myth - through measuring out the universe Viṣṇu in fact creates it. It is probable that the notion of creation is implicit in the use of this image in the Sūrasāgara; the most explicit connotation is, however, that of transcendence - the entire earth is not sufficient for his three steps. The image thus incorporates both the cosmic and the transcendent quality of Viṣṇu, while the inability to cross the threshold equally epitomizes the characteristics of the second aspect.

The myth of the churning of the ocean is made use of to a similar end, contrasted here with Kṛṣṇa churning the butter. Pada 761 describes how when Kṛṣṇa takes hold of the churning rod<sup>124</sup> all of the participants involved in the churning of the ocean react as if this episode were about to be repeated. Vāsuki, the serpent who was used as a rope, and the Asuras are afraid.<sup>125</sup> The sea, apprehensive of another churning, shrinks, while Śiva

123. Ibid., pada 762. 'He who was not fatigued measuring the earth in three steps, finds it difficult to cross the threshold.'

124. Ibid., pada 761. jaba dadhiripu hari hātha liyau/  
'When Hari took in his hand the churning rod.'

125. Ibid. khagapati-ari dara asurani samkā bāsarapati ānanda kiyau/  
'The enemy of Garuḍa was afraid, the demons were alarmed, the sun was happy.'

is anxious as to how he will be able to drink the poison which emerges.<sup>126</sup> Lakṣmī, on the other hand, is overwhelmed with love and joy at the thought of being married to Viṣṇu.<sup>127</sup> The churning of the ocean is a celestial and cosmic activity involving gods, demons, the birth of Lakṣmī and so forth. The churning of milk, on the other hand is terrestrial. It is also purely play; it has no creative function. Despite this difference, the reactions portrayed to this Kṛṣṇa activity show that he is in fact identical with Viṣṇu who performed the cosmic act. Thus once again a Viṣṇu myth is contrasted with a Kṛṣṇa activity so as to bring out the difference and similarity simultaneously.

In the Sūrasāgara the relation between the two aspects is described in terms of incarnation. The transcendent Brahman is said to have taken incarnation as Kṛṣṇa:

brahma liyau avatāra dusta ke dāvana re/<sup>128</sup>

Other terms used for this process include janama liyau,<sup>129</sup> 'took birth'; as well as deha dhari<sup>130</sup> 'assumed a body', and rūpa dhari<sup>131</sup> 'assumed a form'; and finally pragate<sup>132</sup> 'manifested'.

126. Ibid. bidukhi simdhu sakucata siva socata garalādika kimi jāta piyau/ 'The sea shrunk back in pain; Śiva pondered how he would drink the poison.'

127. Ibid. ati anurāga saṅga kamalā tana praphulita aṅga na samāta hiyau/ 'Kamalā was overjoyed and could not contain her love.'

128. Ibid., pada 646. 'Brahman has taken incarnation as destroyer of the wicked.'

129. Ibid., pada 886. gokula janama liyau sukhakārana/ 'The source of happiness has taken birth in Gokula.'

130. Ibid., pada 1011. bhakti ke basa syāma suṁdara deha dhare āvaim/ 'Through the force of devotion, Śyāma has come, assuming a beautiful body.'

131. Ibid., pada 1004. nirguṇa saguṇa rūpa dhari āe/ 'The attributeless one has assumed a form with attributes.'

132. Ibid., pada 2220. dhani gokula pragate banavārī/ 'Blessed is Gokula where Banavārī has manifested.'

All of these terms imply a degree of involvement in time and place, similar to that evinced in the Purāṇas discussed above. To that extent Kṛṣṇa is portrayed in a mythological rather than purely metaphysical contest.

That the relation between the two -- Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu -- is basically a metaphysical one, though expressed in mythological terms, is indicated by a number of references to the Kṛṣṇa incarnation itself taking place again and again. Obviously, therefore, the incarnation is not an event which occurred once at a particular point in history and never again. Pada 1569 follows the expected statement that Kṛṣṇa took birth in Braj with the information that he always sports in Braj because he likes this līlā. The explanation as to how this is possible is that he takes body again and again:

braja janma liyau/  
brajahī maim nita karana bihārana/ ...  
yaha līlā inakaum ati bhāvai/  
deha dharata puni puni pragatāvai/<sup>133</sup>

This same idea emerges in pada 1115, which says that Kṛṣṇa takes incarnation from age to age in Braj, and he never leaves the gopīs, cowherd-boys, Vṛndāvana, Yamunā and all the other components of his līlā there:

juga juga braja avatāra leta prabhu/...  
yei gopī yeī gvāla yahai sukha yaha līlā kahum tajata na sātha/  
yahai bihāra karata nisi bāsara yeī haim jana ke pratipāla/<sup>134</sup>

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133. Ibid., pada 1569. 'He has taken birth in Braj. In Braj he always disports himself. This līlā he likes exceedingly; he assumes a body again and again and so manifests himself.'

134. Ibid., pada 1115. 'From age to age the Lord takes incarnation in Braj. These gopīs, these cowherd boys, this happiness, this līlā, he never abandons. Night and day he performs this sport; he is the protector of the people.'

The term avatāra as applied to Kṛṣṇa in the Sūrasāgara, in fact, appears to designate a state of having a form as opposed to being formless, being manifest as opposed to being unmanifest.

The problem of the relation between Kṛṣṇa and 'Viṣṇu' is further complicated by the fact that the only attestations of the epithet Nārāyaṇa represent this Nārāyaṇa as existing simultaneously with Kṛṣṇa. Pada 1682 describes how the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute reached Vaikuṇṭha and hearing it, Nārāyaṇa and Lakṣmī were overjoyed:

muralī dhuni baikunṭha gaī/  
nārāyaṇa kamalā suni dāmpati ati ruci hṛdaya bhaī<sup>135</sup>

Nārāyaṇa further expresses his sense of inferiority by saying that the rāsa which Kṛṣṇa performs is far beyond him:

rāsa bilāsa karata nandanandana so hamataim ati dūrī<sup>136</sup>

This concept of a Nārāyaṇa who exists at the same time as Kṛṣṇa and who longs to participate in his sport but is unqualified to do so is found in the other Braj Bhāṣā texts, as will be seen below.

Despite, therefore, the Sūrasāgara being generally more or less in accord with the BhP. in its approach, it does succeed in incorporating features which are closer to the sectarian viewpoint. This leads to the impression that while the work is in the BhP. tradition, it has made an attempt to adapt that tradition to prevalent beliefs of the time.

135. Ibid., 1682. 'The sound of the flute reached Vaikuṇṭha. On hearing it, the couple, Nārāyaṇa and Kamalā felt pleasure in their hearts.'

136. Ibid. 'That rāsa sport which Kṛṣṇa performs is far from us.'

b) The sectarian approach

i. Nandadāsa - Vallabha

Though Nandadāsa in his themes and style appears, like Sūradāsa and unlike poets such as Dhruvadāsa, to be close to the Purāṇic tradition, a closer examination shows more radical differences than might at first be expected. This emerges in his treatment of the relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu, where he seems to adhere to the approach wherein Viṣṇu is envisaged as a less complete manifestation of Kṛṣṇa rather than the two being identical and equal.

Relevant to this discussion is the passage I.34-37 of the Rāsapañcādhyaī in which verse 34 describes the relation between Kṛṣṇa with form and the formless Brahman. The all-pervasive Brahman is defined as being the light shining from the body of Kṛṣṇa:

mohana adbhuta rūpa kahi na āvati chabi tāki/  
akhila-anda-vyāpī ju brahma ābhā hai jāki/34/<sup>137</sup>

The divergence of this approach from that of Sūradāsa is marked. Whereas in the Sūrasāgara, as in the BhP., Brahman became Kṛṣṇa, here the unmanifest Brahman is reduced to being the radiance shining from the Kṛṣṇa-form. According to this point of view the divine in reality has only one aspect - the manifest Kṛṣṇa. That which is seen as unmanifest is due to an incomplete perception. This is very similar to the concept found above in the Gaudīya texts.

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137. Nandadāsa, Rāsapañcādhyaī, in Nandadāsagranthāvalī, Kāśī, 1949, I.34.  
'The beauty of Mohana's marvellous form cannot be described;  
its glow is Brahman who pervades the entire universe.'

The next two verses proceed to delineate the relation between Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa in such a way as to imply that Kṛṣṇa is the divinity in its entirety and perfection while Nārāyaṇa is a partial aspect. This is expressed through the use of the terms dharmī and dharmā in the sense of 'possessor of qualities' and 'qualities'. The youthful (kiśora) Kṛṣṇa is described as the dharmī whereas it is through these qualities (dharmā kari) that he is Nārāyaṇa:

paramātama parabrahma sabana ke am̐tara-jāmī/  
nārāyaṇa bhagavāna dharmā kari saba ke svāmī/<sup>35/</sup>  
bāla kumāra puṇḍra dharmā āsakta ju lalita tana/  
dharmī nitya kiśora kāṇha mohata saba ko mana/<sup>36/</sup><sup>138</sup>

The use of the terms dharmī and dharmā in this way can be compared with the use in Braj Bhāṣā of avatārī as the origin of the incarnation and avatāra as the incarnation itself; similarly am̐śī as the possessor of parts or the whole, and am̐śa as the part.<sup>139</sup> In this way Nārāyaṇa is depicted as an expression of certain attributes of Kṛṣṇa and so as less complete.

The relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu is discussed in similar terms in the Siddhāntapañcādhyaī:

ṣaṭaṅga aru avatāra dharana nārāyaṇa joi/  
sabakaum āśraya avadhibhūta namdanamdana soi/<sup>7/</sup><sup>140</sup>

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138. Ibid, I.35-36. 'The supreme soul, supreme Brahman, inner conscience of all, through his attributes is Lord Nārāyaṇa, master of all. That charming body is endowed with the attributes of infancy, childhood and boyhood; the possessor of these attributes is the eternal youth Kāṇha, who amazes the heart of all.'
139. This does not seem to be entirely in accord with classical Sanskrit usage. Cf. M. Monier Williams, op.cit., where avatārī is the one who has taken incarnation (p.90, col.1) and am̐śin is the one who has a part or share (p.1, col.1.)
140. Nandadāsa, Siddhāntapañcādhyaī, in Nandadāsa-gramthāvalī, op.cit., v.7. 'He who is Nārāyaṇa for the sake of taking incarnation and (possessing) the six (divine) qualities is Nandanandana, the resort and limit of all.'

In this verse Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa are on the one hand identified with each other - he who is Nārāyaṇa is Kṛṣṇa. at the same time, in the description of the characteristics of each, a gradation between the two seems intended. To Kṛṣṇa are ascribed the qualities of being the support of all, of encompassing all. Nārāyaṇa, on the other hand, is the one who takes incarnation, a more limited function.

The fact of Kṛṣṇa being Viṣṇu and at the same time more than Viṣṇu is reflected in a number of passages where Lakṣmī and the gopīs are compared. The Rāsapañcādhyaī says that though Lakṣmī always serves his (Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa's) lotus feet, she cannot obtain this rasa, i.e. of the dust of Vṛndāvana:

jadapi padakamala kamalā amalā sevata nisidina/  
yaha rasa apanai sapanai kabahūṃ nahim pāyau tina/33/  
binu adhikārī bhae nahina vṛndāvana sūjhai/  
renu kahām tem sūjhai jaba laum bastu na būjhai/34/ 141

Here Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa are identified through the connexion of Lakṣmī with Nārāyaṇa's feet. At the same time the supremacy of the Kṛṣṇa aspect is demonstrated by the fact of the dust of Vṛndāvana, the Kṛṣṇadhāman, being unobtainable to Lakṣmī.

A similar image is used in the Siddhāntapañcādhyaī according to which Lakṣmī cannot get the same rasa as the women of Braj, though she disports herself on his (again Kṛṣṇa-Viṣṇu's ) bosom:

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141. Nandadāsa, Rāsap., op.cit., v.33. 'Though the pure Kamalā serves his lotus feet night and day, she cannot even dream of experiencing that rasa. Unless one is qualified no-one can perceive Vṛndāvana. How can you see the dust as long as you have not understood the matter.'

jadapi bachasthala ramati ramā ramani vara kāmīni/  
tadapi na yaha rasa pāyo pāyo jo braja bhāminī/118/<sup>142</sup>

In verse 7 from the Siddhāntapañcādyāyī discussed above, not only is Viṣṇu made subordinate to Kṛṣṇa, in addition Kṛṣṇa is dissociated to some extent from the incarnation process. This appears to be inevitable if Kṛṣṇa is to be regarded, not as one of two aspects of the divine, but as the supreme divine form. Any question of the divinity taking form, i.e. Viṣṇu becoming Kṛṣṇa, is then irrelevant. Accordingly, the need to present the appearance of Kṛṣṇa as an event is also lost. Kṛṣṇa eternally exists as Kṛṣṇa.

Some indication of the rejection of the theory of incarnation as applied to Kṛṣṇa can be found in the Bhramara-gītā where Uddhava uses this theory as one of his arguments against the gopīs. According to Uddhava, Kṛṣṇa has assumed a body by becoming incarnate for the sake of sport, but only through yoga can the abode of the supreme Brahman be obtained:

līlā ko avatāra lai dhari āe tana syāma/  
joga juguta hī pāiyai pārabrahma-pada-dhāma//<sup>143</sup>

In other words, the Kṛṣṇa form is only a temporary manifestation of the divine which in its supreme state is formless and unmanifest.

The gopīs and through them Nandadāsa reject this proposition and insist on the supreme nature of the Kṛṣṇa form as of the activities associated with Kṛṣṇa. They, in fact, propound a

142. Nandadāsa, Siddhāntap., op.cit., v.118. 'Though the beautiful Ramā, best of women, sports upon his breast, still she cannot obtain that rasa, which the women of Braj obtained.'

143. Nandadāsa, Bhramara-gītā in Nandadāsa-granthāvalī, op.cit., v. 11. 'Syāma has taken incarnation and assumed a body for the sake of sport; only through the way of yoga can the abode of the supreme Brahman be obtained.'

a relation between Kṛṣṇa with form and the formless Brahman in terms corresponding to those found in I.34 from the Rāsapañcādhyāyī discussed above. The gopīs compare Kṛṣṇa to the form of the sun which is hidden in its own light; both can be seen only by those with the gift of divine sight:

tarani akāsa prakāsa jāhi mem rahyau durāī/  
divya dr̥ṣṭi binu kahau kauna pe dekhyau jāī//<sup>144</sup>

A similar image is used in another verse of the same text which says that people know not the real form; they reject the manifest sun to grasp at reflected rays:

nāstika hai je loga kahā jānaim ni ja rūpai/  
pragata bhāru kom chāṁdi gahata parachāīm dhūpai/<sup>145</sup>

Here again Brahman is regarded as no more than the brilliance emitted from the divine form.

As in the Gaudīya texts, though the theory of Kṛṣṇa being no more than an incarnation is refuted, the process of incarnation is still recognized as an aspect of Kṛṣṇa. According to the Siddhāntapañcādhyāyī, the gopīs, through their re-enactment of the Kṛṣṇa līlās, illustrated to devotees the essential unity of Kṛṣṇa as infant, child and youth, and showed how he incorporated within himself the avatārī, the avatāras and all the manifestations (vibhūtis) :

144. Ibid., v.24.

'The sun in the sky is hidden in its light, without divine sight who can see it.'

145. Ibid., v.28.

'How can those who are atheists know his real form. Leaving aside the manifest sun, they grasp at reflected rays.'

aru je āhim upāsaka tinahim abheda batāyau/  
sisu kumāra paugamda kānha ekai dikharāyo/78/  
avatārī avatāra dharana aru jitaka bibhūtī/  
iha saba āśraya ke adhāra jaga jihi kī ūtī/79/146

This reflects a position close to that of the Gaudīyā portrayal of Kṛṣṇa as both the one who takes incarnation and the incarnation itself - i.e., Kṛṣṇa manifests himself in the world as Kṛṣṇa.

It is presumably this approach which enables Nandadāsa to include in the Rāsapañcādhyaī verses based closely on the BhP. which speak of the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa as an event. The gopīs are quoted as saying that since Kṛṣṇa manifested in Braj, it has been adorned by Lakṣmī:

kahana lagīm aho kumara kānha braja pragate jaba te/  
avadhibhūta imdirā alamkṛta hvai rahī taba tem/147

This can be compared with a verse from the BhP. where the gopīs similarly describe how the vraja prospers more because of the birth of Kṛṣṇa, since Lakṣmī resides there permanently:

jayati te 'dhikam janmanā vrajaḥ śrayata indirā  
śāśvad atra hi/148

This can equally be seen as the explanation for the acceptance of the term avatāra as applied to Kṛṣṇa in the Bhāṣā daśama skandha of Nandadāsa, which purports to be no more than a translation of the BhP. and so could be expected to

146. Nandadāsa, Siddhāntap., op.cit., vv. 78-79. 'And to the worshippers they showed the unity; they displayed the oneness of Kānha as infant, child and boy. The one who takes incarnation, the taking of incarnation, and all the manifestations, he is the basis of all these, the sustenance of the world.'

147. Nandadāsa, Rāsap., op.cit., III.1. 'And they said, "Since the youthful Kṛṣṇa manifested in Braj, Indirā, the limit of all has adorned the place.'

148. BhP., op.cit., X.31.1. 'Victory to you through whose birth the vraja prospers more, (since) Indirā is permanently here.'

adhere most closely to the BhP. terminology. The typical avatāra theory is, for example, put in the words of Kāṁsa who says that Viṣṇu will take incarnation through Devakī in order to kill him:

devakī viṣai viṣṇu avatarihaim/  
mere vadha kau uddima karihaim/<sup>149</sup>

Nevertheless, even in this text, changes are made which, though apparently slight, alter the total import considerably and once again raise Kṛṣṇa above Viṣṇu. For example, the BhP. has a passage where Garga tells Nanda that Kṛṣṇa has all of the qualities of Nārāyaṇa:

tasman nandakumāro 'yam nārāyaṇasamogunaiḥ/  
śriyā kīrtiā 'nubhāvena tatkarṁasu na vismayah/<sup>22/150</sup>

Nandadāsa repeats this statement but adds that Kṛṣṇa has these qualities to an even greater extent than Nārāyaṇa:

nārāina madhi guṇa haim jite/  
tere suta mem jhalakata tite/  
śrī kīrti sampati rasamāi/  
nārāina hū tem adhikāi/<sup>151</sup>

In this way the meaning of the passage is changed utterly; instead of being equal to Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa is a more complete expression of the divine.

149. Nandadāsa, Bhāṣā daśama skandha, in Nandadāsa-granthāvali, op.cit., I., p.223. 'Viṣṇu will become incarnate through Devakī; he will be intent upon my death.'

150. BhP., op.cit., X.8.19. 'Therefore, because Nandakumāra has the same qualities as Nārāyaṇa - in fortune, fame and experience - there should be no astonishment at his deeds.'

151. Nandadāsa, Bhāṣā daśama skandha, op.cit., VIII, p. 244. 'All the qualities which are in Nārāyaṇa shine in your son. Fortune, fame, riches and rasa (are in him) even greater in quantity than in Nārāyaṇa.'

If Sūradāsa can be said to introduce sectarian elements while retaining the fundamental concepts of the BhP., Nandadāsa retains the structure of the BhP. but changes the basic perception of the relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu. Essentially he expresses a viewpoint similar to that of the Gaudīya texts and performs a similar function, i.e., that of giving credibility to sectarian concepts through affiliating them with a text of traditional authority.

ii. Dhruvadāsa - Rādhāvallabha

The poetry of Dhruvadāsa is far more unequivocal than that of Nandadāsa in its repudiation of any attempt to depict Kṛṣṇa in a mythological context. Kṛṣṇa is throughout depicted as an eternal principle uninvolved in either creation or incarnation.

The term avatāra itself is used in the sense of a minor deity, rather than as the action performed by a deity. It is nowhere applied to Kṛṣṇa himself, and the avatāras are depicted as co-existent with him. In a verse from the Vṛndāvana sata the partial incarnations (aṁśa and kalāvatāras):

vṛndāvana rasa sabana tem rākhyo dūri durāi/42/  
aṁśa kalā autāra je te sevata haim tāhi/  
aise brṁdā vipina kaum mana baca kai avagāhi/43/<sup>152</sup>

Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā are the source of the rasa, so the distinction between Kṛṣṇa and the avatāras, as well as their co-existence, is evident.

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152. Dhruvadāsa, Vṛndāvana sata līlā, in Bayālīsa līlā, op.cit., vv. 42-43. 'The rasa of Vṛndāvana is far from all. The incarnations, both portions and parts, serve it. Let your mind and speech be immersed in such a Vṛndā forest.'

In the poetry of Dhruvadāsa, Viṣṇu retains his cosmic attributes found in all the texts examined so far. As in the Gaudīya texts, Kṛṣṇa is, on the other hand, eternally involved in the divine sport (vihāra) which is outside of creation.

The function of Viṣṇu as creator is described in the Brhadbāvana Purāṇa. The eternal sakhī is said to appear before the Vedas, who wish to know about the nature of the eternal rasa of the divine sport, and tells them that she first must carry out the command of the Lord:

prabhu ājñā ika bhaī hai so pahile kari laimhu/  
tā pāchai jo pūchi hau tākau utara daimhu/6/<sup>153</sup>

She thinks of Śrīpati, i.e. Viṣṇu, who appears and is ordered to create the universe:

sakhī kiyo jaba cimtavana śrīpati pragate āi/  
prabhu ājñā tinasom bhaī srsti racāvahu jāi/62/<sup>154</sup>

After she has communicated the commands of the Lord, the sakhī explains to the Vedas that Kṛṣṇa is eternally engrossed in the divine sport which is unaffected by creation and destruction. The Vedas realize that the bewildering process of creation is nothing but a manifestation of a portion of the divine, represented by Nārāyaṇa and the avatāras, whereas Kṛṣṇa as he appears engaged in the eternal sport is complete:

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153. Dhruvadāsa, Brhadbāvana purāṇa bhāṣā līlā, in Bayālīsa līlā, op.cit., v.6. 'There is a command of the Lord which I will first carry out. After that I will give the reply to the question you have asked.'

154. Ibid., v.62. . 'When the sakhī contemplated, the Lord of Śrī appeared manifest. The Lord's command to him was, "Let the world be created."'

vedahu jāne aṁśa saba miṭyau bharama tehi kāla/  
samujhe pūrana sabani para nitya bihārī lāla/<sup>155</sup>

Creation is then initiated when Viṣṇu directs his thoughts towards Puruṣa and Prakṛti and arouses in them the desire for sport:

śrīpati citayau hai jabahim puruṣa prakṛti kī koda/  
tihi china upajī hīya mem kījai kachuka binoda/<sup>71/156</sup>

In this way the involvement of Viṣṇu in creation is clearly stated, as well as his inferior position with respect to Kṛṣṇa, all of which is fully in accord with the Gaudīya outlook.

Where Dhruvadāsa differs most radically from the Gaudīya approach is with regard to the question of Kṛṣṇa becoming manifest. Dhruvadāsa draws a distinction between Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa in Braj, and it is only in the context of Braj that manifestation is regarded as a possibility. A work called Braja līlā describes how the divine couple, Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, manifest themselves for the sake of the devotees:

nandalāla vṛṣabhāna kiśorī rasikani hita pragatī yaha jōrī/<sup>3/157</sup>

The use here of the epithets 'Son of Nanda' and 'Daughter of Vṛṣabhāna' may be noted. Neither is commonly used by Dhruvadāsa,

155. Ibid., v.69. 'Then the Vedas recognised all as parts and their confusion was removed. They understood Bihārīlāla to be complete, above all and eternal.'

156. Ibid., v.71. 'When the Lord of Śrī thought in the direction of Puruṣa and Prakṛti, at that moment arose in their heart the desire for sport.'

157. Dhruvadāsa, Braja līlā, in Bayālīsa līlā, op. cit., v.3. 'The son of Nanda and the daughter of Vṛṣabhāna, for the sake of devotees this couple manifests itself.'

and through their reference to the parents of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, they evoke connotations of birth. The connexion of the manifestation with Braj is made clear in two verses where it is described as having taken place in Braj, in both cases for the sake of devotees (rasikas). The first says that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa made manifest in Braj the līlā which is a treasure of rasa and gives happiness to the devotees:

rasa nidhi līlā braja pragatāi rasika janani kau  
ati sukhadāi/5/<sup>158</sup>

The second similarly describes how the youthful couple became manifest in Braj for the sake of devotees:

rasikani hita vivi kumvara bara bhaye pragata braja āmni/<sup>159</sup>

Even in the above verses terms such as taking birth or becoming incarnate are avoided. It is a manifestation, as in the Gaudīya texts, not an incarnation. It is a revelation of the divine sport to devotees. It is not, however, on the same level as the nitya vihāra in Vṛndāvana in which only the sakhīs can participate, and in this respect Dhruvadāsa differs from the Gaudīya approach.

The distinction between Kṛṣṇa in Braj, where he performs rāsa with the gopīs, and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, where the eternal sport of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa occurs, is also indicated in the Brhadbāvana Purāṇa. Kṛṣṇa tells the Vedas, who want to sport with him, to become manifest in Braj, where he will also

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158. Ibid., v.5. 'They made manifest in Braja the līlā which is treasure of rasa, and gives happiness to the devotees.'

159. Ibid., v.9. 'For the sake of devotees the youthful couple became manifest in Braj.'

manifest himself:

tina prati taba vāṇī bhaī yaha prabhu tinhīm māni/  
pragata hohu braja jāya tuma hamahūm pragataim āni/57/<sup>159</sup>

Once again the concept of manifestation is used with regard to Kṛṣṇa in Braj alone and this is differentiated from the nitya vihāra in Vṛndāvana.

In this way Dhruvadāsa rejects the mythological structure of the BhP, much more totally than either Nandadāsa or the Gauḍīya texts. The divine sport as an ever-present symbolic expression of the essential nature of the divinity is alone stressed.

### iii. Bihārinadāsa - Haridāśī

With regard to the relation of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu, Bihārinadāsa differs very little from Dhruvadāsa. Once again the Viṣṇu aspect is distinctly subordinated and there is no question of Kṛṣṇa being an incarnation of Viṣṇu.

The distinction between Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa and Braj Kṛṣṇa is even more marked in the poetry of Bihārinadāsa than in that of Dhruvadāsa. Here Braj Kṛṣṇa is relegated to roughly the same category as Viṣṇu. This gradation is made very explicit in a verse which says that neither Lakṣmīpati (Viṣṇu) nor Rāmakṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma) are unable to participate in the bihāra - the sport of Rādhā and Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa:

śrībihāridāsa bihāra kaum lachamīpati lalacāi/  
e deva pitara līnem phirai hyām rāmakṛṣṇa na samāi/<sup>160</sup>

159. Ibid., v.57. 'Then they heard a voice which said that the Lord had agreed to this - "You become manifest in Braj; I will also become manifest."'

160. Bihārinadāsa, in Sarvopari-nityavihārī-rasa sāgara, Vṛndāvana, 1969. 'Bihārinadāsa says that even Lakṣmīpati longs for this sport; let alone gods and forefathers, even Rāma and Kṛṣṇa cannot enter it.'

The same sentiment is echoed in another verse which says that the rasa is unobtainable even to the women of Braj; Nārāyaṇa longs for it and the jewel of Braj, i.e. Braj Kṛṣṇa, falls at the feet of the sakhīs overcome by desire for this rasa:

kyom pāvem rasarīti prīti bina durllabha niḥu braja-jāyana/  
vā rasa kom lalacāta lajāte lachimīpati nārāyana//  
ihi rasa vivasa bhayau vrajabhūṣana lataki lagyau paripāmyana/<sup>161</sup>

The fact that Bihārinadāsa makes a distinction between Braj Kṛṣṇa and Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa is pertinent to the problem of incarnation, for, like Dhruvadāsa, he associates the process of avatāra exclusively with Braj Kṛṣṇa -- Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa is totally detached from it. This can be seen in a verse which describes Lakṣmīpati and Brajapati as both being the supreme source of all incarnations, who assume bodies for the sake of līlā according to their wish. The eternal youth, Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa, who eternally sports is inaccessible even to these than whom no-one could be more qualified to experience him:

ichyā vighraha dhari līlā vapu saba avatārani para avatārī/  
lachamīpati brajapati kaum dullabha inataim kauna baḍau  
adhiḥkāṛī/  
nitya kisora niramata biharata sevata sṛīharidāsa dulārī/<sup>162</sup>

161. Ibid., p.449, pada 148. 'How can this way of rasa be achieved without love? It is impossible even for the women of Braj to obtain. Longing for this rasa, even Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Lakṣmī, feels ashamed (of his own lowliness). Overcome by this rasa, the jewel of Braj, falls at the feet (of the sakhīs).'

162. Ibid., p.290, v.28. 'To them who assume a form at will, a body for the sake of līlā, the supreme source of all the incarnations, even to that Lakṣmīpati and Brajapati than whom no-one has greater authority, it is unobtainable. The eternal youth sports forever and Haridāsa serves him with affection.'

Whereas in the poetry of Nandadāsa, Kṛṣṇa was said to be both avatārī and avatāra, here in his essential form he is neither; he is dissociated from the entire process, which is all on a lower plane than the eternal vihāra.

Elsewhere in the poetry of Bihārinadāsa the contrast between Braj Kṛṣṇa and Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa is described in terms of the distinction between the eternal (nitya) and that which has a particular purpose (nimitta). Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa represents the nitya, while Braj Kṛṣṇa expresses the nimitta, an event which has a purpose and so a beginning and an end. In pada 150 Bihārinadāsa emphasizes the inappropriateness of the concept of time in the context of the eternal vihāra:

sarvopari nityavihāra su nyārau/  
barasa māsa aru pakṣa pahara pala kāhe kom gani dina dhārau//<sup>163</sup>

This would appear to be a direct reference to the mythological depiction of Kṛṣṇa in the Purāṇas where the līlā is expressed in terms of time. That this is what he has in mind is born out by the next line where he distinguishes the participants in this eternal vihāra from Kṛṣṇa as son of Nanda and Rādhā as daughter of Vṛṣabhānu who experience birth and action:

janama karama vṛṣabhānusuta namdanamdana sistācārau/<sup>164</sup>

He finally expresses this difference as that between the nitya and the nimitta, which must be understood in order have a true comprehension of the nature of the vihāra:

nitta nimitta samdhi sama.jhe binu sodina svāda bigārau/<sup>165</sup>

163. Ibid., p.452, pada 150. 'That eternal sport is above all and distinct; why pass your days counting the years, months and hours, moments and minutes.'

164. Ibid., p.452, pada 150. 'The daughter of Vṛṣabhānu and the son of Nanda have birth and action; they behave in accordance with human codes of conduct.'

165. Ibid., p.452, pada 150. 'Without understanding the nature of the relation between the eternal and that which has a purpose, the taster spoils the taste.'

There is thus very little difference between the approaches of Bihārinadāsa and Dhruvadāsa, both in their apprehension of the relative position of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu and in their presentation of Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa as being totally uninvolved in the process of incarnation. If any thing, Bihārinadāsa is more explicit in the distinction he draws between Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa and Braj Kṛṣṇa.

#### Harivyāsadeva - Nimbārkiya

Harivyāsadeva expresses essentially the same concepts as those found in the poetry of Dhruvadāsa and Bihārinadāsa. It is only in his much more extensive use of philosophical terminology that he differs from them and resembles more closely a poet such as Nandadāsa.

That the resemblance to Nandadāsa is more than purely accidental is suggested by the fact that one of the padas which discusses the relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu is close in its wording to the passage from Nandadāsa (I.34-37, discussed above p. 85 ). It begins with a description of the formless Brahman which is almost a word for word repetition of the Nandadāsa verse, apart from the fact that Brahman is said to be the glow from the toe-nail of Kṛṣṇa rather than of his body:

akhila brahmāṇḍa brahma vyāpaka hai joī/  
tihāre carana nakha ābhā hai soī//<sup>166</sup>

This means that Brahman's position relative to Kṛṣṇa is even

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166. Harivyāsadeva, Mahāvāṇī, ed. Kuñjabihārīśaraṇa, Vṛndāvana, 1976, Siddhānta sukha, 33.1, p. 10 'That Brahman who pervades the entire universe is the brilliance shining from your toe-nail.'

further reduced. The next line states that Paramātmā, whose body is the universe, and who is Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu, is the attribute (dharma) of Kṛṣṇa, who is the possessor of these attributes (dharmī):

paramātama viśvakāya nārāyaṇa viṣṇu/  
dharma haim tihāre tuma dharmī jaga jiṣṇu/<sup>167</sup>

The implications of the statement by Nandadāsa are here made explicit and unequivocal. Whereas Nandadāsa was attempting to bridge the difference between the BhP. and sectarian concepts, Harivyāsadeva is expressing the sectarian viewpoint in philosophical terms. This greater sectarian emphasis suggests that the verse of Nandadāsa is the earlier upon which Harivyāsadeva has based his statement.

The cosmic role of Viṣṇu is found described in the poetry of Harivyāsadeva as well. In a number of places Paramātmā, who in the above verse is synonymous with Viṣṇu, is called a portion (aṁśa) of Kṛṣṇa, and is depicted as being involved in creative activity. Pada 16 says that Paramātmā, who is Lord of Prakṛti and Puruṣa (cf. Dhruvadāsa describes how Śrīpati directs his thoughts towards Prakṛti and Puruṣa in the beginning of creation) and lord of the world, is a portion of Kṛṣṇa:

jāko aṁsa paramātamā prakṛti puruṣa ko īsa/  
para icchā ādhīna hvai jagamaṁgāta jagadīsa/<sup>2/168</sup>

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167. Ibid., 33.2, p.130.

'Paramātmā, whose body is the universe, who is Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu, is your attribute and you are the possessor of attributes, Oh Lord of the world.'

168. Ibid., 16.2, p.100.

'He (Kṛṣṇa) whose portion is Paramātmā, Lord of Puruṣa and Prakṛti, who is dependent upon the Supreme Will, and who shines forth as Lord of the world.'

The dependence of Paramātmā upon icchā described in this verse is significant in view of the identification of icchā with the sakhī in a further verse:

priyā śakti ahalādinī piya ānanda svarūpa/  
tana vṛndāvana jagamagaim icchā sakhī anūpa/9/<sup>169</sup>

In this verse not only is icchā identified with the sakhī, but Rādhā with hlādinī-śakti and Kṛṣṇa with the svarūpa of bliss, very much along Gaudīya lines. Referring back to the dependence of Paramātmā upon icchā, it would seem that this could be compared with the role of the sakhī in the Bṛhadbāvana Purāṇa where it is she who conveys the order of the Lord to Viṣṇu (see above p. 93).

The cosmic role of Viṣṇu Paramātmā is also described in a further pada according to which Paramātmā was created by Kṛṣṇa for the sake of creating the universe:

paramātmā parabrahma kari visatārana jaga jāla/  
jana pālana jaya jaga mahā rāsabihārīlāla//<sup>170</sup>

It goes on to say that through this one part, the avatāra Paramātmā, which is dependent upon icchā, Kṛṣṇa has created the entire expanse of the universe:

jāke eka hī amsa kari paramātmā avatāra/  
para icchā ādhīna hvai kīnom saba vistāra//<sup>171</sup>

169. Ibid., p.101, v.16.9.

'Rādhā is power causing bliss, Kṛṣṇa the form of bliss itself. Vṛndāvana is their form shining forth, and divine Will is the unique sakhī.'

170. Ibid., p.104, v.17.1.

'To that one who created Paramātmā Parabrahma in order to spread out the net of the universe and for the protection of the people, victory to that performer of the rāsa who is supreme in the world.'

171. Ibid., p.104, v.17.2.

'He who through his one portion, the incarnation Paramātmā, who is dependent on the Supreme Will, created all this expanse.'

In the above passages it may be noted that Viṣṇu is described as the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa and not vice versa, thus reversing the Purāṇic position. The role of Viṣṇu as the source of all other incarnations nevertheless remains unchanged. Both of these ideas are expressed in a verse which says that the one Paramātmā, taking incarnation, becomes many in the endless universe:

aise viśva ananta meṁ eka hī ye bahu aṁsa/  
paramātmā avatāra hvai nirvikāra niraśaṁsa/5/<sup>172</sup>

This can be compared with the Gauḍīyā description of Viṣṇu as the guṇa avatāra who is at the same time the source of other incarnations.

In his use of terms such as paramātmā, icchā-śakti, and hlādinī-śakti, Harivyāsadeva comes closer to theological discussion in the manner of the Gauḍīya Gosvāmīs, than do other Braj Bhāṣā poets such as Dhruvadāsa and Bihārinadāsa. He is, however, as uncompromising as they are in his rejection of any mythic interpretation of Kṛṣṇa. He does not indeed even refer to the possibility of Kṛṣṇa taking incarnation.

The above discussion illustrates how even in the Braj Bhāṣā texts the basic characteristics of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa, as traced in the Sanskrit texts, from the RV. to the Gauḍīya Gosvāmīs, remains fundamentally unchanged. This continuity can be found even in poets such as Dhruvadāsa who diverge

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172. Ibid., p.101, v.16.5. 'Thus in the endless universes he is one with many parts, this Paramātmā having taken incarnation, without modification, without doubt.'

most radically from the Purāṇic outlook. Viṣṇu is still the creator of the universe, while Kṛṣṇa is totally uninvolved in cosmic activity. Kṛṣṇa is still the manifest while Viṣṇu is the unmanifest.

The differences lie mainly in the approach to the relation between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu and so to the concept of incarnation. Attitudes vary in this respect, ranging from acceptance of the mythological Purāṇic structure by Sūradāsa, to its total rejection by Dhruvadāsa. To attempt an analysis of these differences on sectarian grounds would appear to be mistaken since certainly texts belonging to the Rādhāvallabha, Haridāsaī and Nimbārkiya sects are almost identical in their views, while even those from the Gauḍīya and Vallabha are very similar in many respects. A division into sectarian and non-sectarian would seem to be more fruitful.

## III

VR̥NDĀVANA AND ITS ROLE IN LĪLĀ

## CHAPTER III

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Vṛndāvana is the līlādhāman of Kṛṣṇa. In other words, it is the symbolic representation of that aspect of the divinity which forms the 'space' for the performance of divine self-manifestation. As līlā is an activity, it must have an area in which to manifest itself - an area which is, however, not limited by the physical notions of time and space. The image of Vṛndāvana puts this concept into concrete terms of a mentally conceivable place. In order to understand the nature of Vṛndāvana it is therefore necessary to examine the concept of līlā

1. The nature of līlā

The term līlā means play or action performed not for a purpose, but as a form of divine self-expression.<sup>1</sup> As a manifestation of divine nature this concept of play is frequently connected with creative processes. This is illustrated by a passage from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upanīṣad which says that in the beginning there was only one, and the divinity could not sport alone:

sa vai naiva reme<sup>2</sup>

The verb ram used here indicates the same sense of expression and experience of internal delight as līlā. The passage implies

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1. For a discussion of the etymology of the word, see M. Mayrhofer, A concise etymological Sanskrit dictionary, Heidelberg, 1963. pt.17, p.104.

2. Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upanīṣad; in Astādaśa-Upaniṣadaḥ, op.cit., I.4.3. 'Thus he did not delight.'

that the expression of delight is inherent in the divine and is manifested through play. Thus creation takes place through the play of the divinity which takes the form firstly of division into two<sup>3</sup> and through these two evolves the whole of creation.<sup>4</sup> Creation, in this context, is an expression of the essential nature of the divine. It differs therefore from the cyclic notion of creation as a function basically external to the divine nature.

Though all of the texts to be examined regard līlā as the manifestation of the divine, certain texts draw a distinct line between creation and the essential nature of the divine. When this happens līlā becomes either totally disconnected from creation or the creative aspect is regarded as secondary.

#### a) Līlā in the Purāṇas

In the BhP. līlā is envisaged as incorporating both the manifestation of creation and self-manifestation in the form of incarnation. The text itself begins with the sages asking the reciter of the Purāṇa to describe to them the noble actions of that one who becomes divisible in sport (līlayā):

tasya karmāṇy udārāṇi parigītāni sūribhiḥ/  
brūhi naḥ śraddadhānām. līlayā dadhataḥ kalāḥ/<sup>5</sup>

In effect, this informs the reader that the BhP. is about the

3. Ibid., I.4.3. sa dv tīyam aicchat/ sa haitāvan āsa yathā strīpumāṃsau samparisvaktau/ sa imam evātmanam dvedhāpātayat/ tataḥ patīś ca patnī cābhavatām/ 'He wanted a second. He was as large as a woman and a man closely embracing. He divided this, himself, into two. He became a husband and a wife.'

4. Ibid., I.4.3. tām samabhavat/ tato manuṣyā ajāyanta/ 'He approached her and from that men were born.' The text goes on to describe how the various species of animals were born from the meeting of these two in the form of the male and female of each species.

5. BhP., op.cit., I.1.17. 'Describe to us who have faith, the noble deeds, proclaimed by the sages, of him who in sport assumes parts.'

manifest aspect of the divinity, and as can be seen from the contents of the text, these activities include both creation and incarnation. The phrase līlayā dadhatah kalāh indicates how the manifestation takes place through līlā. Kalā denotes a part of a whole and is commonly used for the digits of the moon which are said to be sixteen in number.<sup>6</sup> Therefore 'assuming parts' would appear to imply becoming divisible in contrast to the unmanifest, indivisible Brahman.

The connexion between having kalās and being manifest is substantiated in another passage according to which the divine took the form of puruṣa which has sixteen kalās through desire to create the world:

jagthe pauruṣaṁ rūpaṁ bhagavān mahadādibhih/  
sambhūtam sodaśakalam ādau lokasirksayā//<sup>7</sup>

The puruṣa form of the divine is here evidently the active, manifest form involved in creation. It is this form which is described as having sixteen kalās, again connecting the possession of parts with activity and manifestation.

While in the first passage it was through līlā that the process of manifestation took place, in the second passage it is through the innate desire for creation (lokasirksayā). That the two terms are used in very similar contexts, suggests again that līlā and the desire for creation are seen as synonymous.

6. M. Monier Williams, op.cit., p.211, col.3.

7. BhP., op.cit., I.3.1. 'The Lord, in the beginning, took the form of puruṣa which arose through principles beginning with mahat and which has sixteen parts, through his desire to create the world.'

That the cosmic process is inseparable from līlā is further indicated by a verse which says that it is through self-sport (ātmalīlā) that the creation, protection and destruction of the world takes place:

ya eka īśo jagad ātmalīlayā srjaty avaty atti  
na tatra sajjate/<sup>8</sup>

The whole process is thus a form of self-expression of the divinity.

Not only creation but also the entrance of the divine into creation, i.e. incarnation, is a part of līlā. In one verse the sages ask to hear the stories of the incarnation (avatāarakathāh) of Hari who performs līlā through his own incomprehensible power (ātmamāyā):

athākhyāhi harer dhīman avatāarakathāh śubhāh/  
līlā vidadhatah svairam īśvarasyātmamāyayā//<sup>9</sup>

Thus the events of the incarnation are effected when the divine is performing līlā.

The use of the term ātmamāyā in the above passage is significant since in another passage it is said to be through ātmamāyā that creation takes place:

sa evedam sasarjāgre bhagavān ātmamāyayā/  
sadasadrūpayā cāsau gunamayyāguno vidhuh//<sup>10</sup>

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8. Ibid., I.10.24. 'That one Lord who through his self-sport, creates, preserves and devours this universe, but is not attached to it.'
9. Ibid., I.1.18. 'Now relate, Oh intelligent one, the auspicious stories of the incarnation of Lord Hari, who sports according to his own will through his own power of māyā.'
10. Ibid., I.2.30. 'That divine Lord who is without qualities, through his own māyā created all this which has the form of existence and non-existence and which is formed of qualities.'

It is therefore through the same ātmanāyā that both incarnation and creation occur, showing how they are both essentially the same process. In other words there is no real difference between creation and the entrance of the divine into creation. Both are expressions of the divine self-manifestation.

In conformity with their nature as epic texts, neither the Hariv. nor the ViP. give much overt prominence to the līlā concept. The few references there are suggest a standpoint not differing essentially from that of the BhP.

The ViP. prefaces its account of creation with a statement to the effect that the activities of Viṣṇu are like those of a child playing:

vyaktam viṣṇus tathāvyaktam puruṣaḥ kāla eva ca/  
krīdato bālakasyeva ceṣṭhām tasya niśāmaya//<sup>11</sup>

This distinctly suggests that creation is of the nature of līlā.

The connexion between līlā and incarnation appears in a passage where Balarāma is said to ask Kṛṣṇa why he is acting like a human to the extent of allowing Kālīya to overpower him. Balarāma tells Kṛṣṇa that he has descended among mortals for the sake of the world, because of his desire to remove the burden of evil which was weighing it down.<sup>12</sup> This incarnation is called human līlā (mānuṣyalīlā) and is said to be imitated by the

11. ViP., op.cit., I.2.18. 'Viṣṇu is manifest and unmanifest, he is puruṣa and time. Hear the activity of that one who who is like a child playing.'

12. Ibid., V.7.38. jagatyartham jagannātha bhārāvataraneccaya/  
avatīrno 'si martyeṣu tavāṃśaś cāham agraḥ//  
'Oh Lord of the world, you and also I, your portion and younger brother, have descended among men for the sake of the earth, because of your desire to take away its burden.'

gods who remain with Kṛṣṇa:

mānuṣyalīlām bhagavan bhajatā bhavatā surāḥ/  
vidambayantas tvallīlām sarva eva sahāṣate//<sup>13</sup>

So far the impression is that this form of līlā is primarily for a purpose, i.e. the protection of the earth, but the next line belies this and shows how it is basically for the expression of the divine nature. According to this verse the goddesses were first made to descend to the gokula and afterwards Kṛṣṇa descended with play as his aim:

avatārya bhavān pūrvam gokule tu surāṅganāḥ/  
krīdārtham ātmanah paścāt avatīrno 'si śāśvata//<sup>14</sup>

Pure sport is thus the only real motivation for the incarnation.

Though references to līlā are even rarer in the Hariv. than in the ViP., there are still sufficient allusions to suggest that the basic concept is inherent in the account. One passage, for example, describes how Kṛṣṇa sported with the other cowherd boys as he had previously sported in heaven:

sa tatra vayasā tulyair vatsapālaih sahānagha/  
reme vai vāsaram kṛṣṇah purā svargagato yathā//<sup>15</sup>

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13. Ibid., V.7.39. 'Oh Lord, with you, who are engaged in human līlā, remain all the gods imitating your līlā.'

14. Ibid., V.7.40. 'You caused the goddesses to descend first to the gokula; afterwards you yourself took incarnation for the sake of play, Oh eternal one.'

15. Hariv., op.cit., II.11.24. 'Kṛṣṇa played there for a day with cowherd boys of his own age, Oh sinless one, as he had done previously when in heaven.'

Here an identification is made between terrestrial and celestial sport and such sport is seen as innate to the nature of Kṛṣṇa.

b) Līlā in the sectarian philosophical texts

In contrast to the Purāṇic position discussed above, whereby creation is an aspect of līlā not basically different from incarnation, the philosophical texts of both the Vallabha and Gauḍīya sects draw a distinction between līlā as an expression of the essential nature of the divine and the creative process.

i. The Vallabha texts

The distinction between creation and inner līlā can be seen in the Tattvārthadīpanibandha ascribed to Vallabhācārya, which says that at times the divinity delights within itself and at other times it disports itself in the phenomenal universe:

kadācid ramate svasmin prapañce 'pi kvacit sukham//<sup>16</sup>

In another verse from the same text the sport which takes place within the divine itself (svasmin) is called ātmarati.<sup>17</sup> According to this verse, liberation does not entail the disappearance of the material universe (prapañca) but only of the illusion which makes the soul unable to perceive the world as an expression of the divine. At the time of Kṛṣṇa's ātmarati, however, even the material universe itself is absorbed into him. The manifestation of the universe is, therefore, envisaged as an expression of divine sport. At the same time, there is an even higher and more complete expression of līlā within the being of the divinity.

16. Vallabhācārya, Tattvārthadīpanibandha, ed. Kedaranātha Miśra, Benares, 1971, v.68. 'At times he sports within himself and at times in the phenomenal universe, happily.'

17. Ibid., v.24. samsārasya layo muktau na prapañcasya karhicit/ kṛṣṇasyātmaratau tu 'sya layah sarvasukhāvahah// 'In salvation there is dissolution of samsāra, never of the material universe. In the ātmarati of Kṛṣṇa, however, there is dissolution of this (material universe, which brings all happiness.'

The inner sport (ātmarati) is described in the Subodhinī in terms of the rāsa with the gopīs. Vallabha discusses the problem of how Kṛṣṇa can be sporting within himself alone at the same time as he is sporting with the gopīs. The solution found for this problem is that even when sporting with the gopīs, he has placed himself in the gopī and so in reality the sport is within himself:

asyām api daśāyām ātmarata eva rasādhāratvāya tasyām  
ātmanam sthāpitavān/<sup>18</sup>

The rāsa is thus a manifestation of his own essential being; it is the play of the divine within itself for the sake of self-expression.

A similar situation is postulated with regard to the entrance of human souls into the divine līlā. The Anubhāsyā describes how souls transcend the material body formed of qualities and obtain a body which is beyond the qualities and is suitable for līlā:

prākṛtaguṇamayam prapañcam atikramya guṇātītam  
prapañcam sāksāllīlopayoginam prāpnotīty avagamyate/<sup>19</sup>

It goes on to say that the divine which is formed of bliss enters the soul which then experiences the rasa, first of the pain of separation (as the gopīs did before the rāsa) and then of the manifested divine form itself:

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18. Vallabhācārya, Rāsapañcādhyaī - śrīsubodhinī, ed. J. Caturvedī, Varanasi, 1971, X.27.34. 'Even in this condition he was sporting within himself; in order to have a foundation for the rasa, he had placed himself in her.'
19. Vallabhācārya, Śrīmad anubhāsyam, ed. S.T. Pāṭhaka, Poona, 1921, I.1.11. 'It is known that (the soul) having transcended the material body, formed of qualities, obtains a body which is beyond qualities and is suitable for the līlā itself.'

jīve tv ānandamayā puruṣottamā praviśatīti  
rasātmakatvād ānandātmakam eva virahabhāvarasābhidhīm  
anubhūya paścāt prādurbhūtaprabhusvarūpam prāpya  
na bibhēti<sup>20</sup>

The concept here of the divine entering into the soul for the sake of līlā is similar to that of Kṛṣṇa entering into the gopīs for the sake of ātmarati as described in the Subodhinī. This līlā is evidently not the same as the process whereby souls are involved in the material condition, i.e. creation.

In the philosophy of Vallabha, creation of the material universe is in fact conceived as a process of concealment of the divine nature rather than manifestation. The most perfect expression of the divinity lies in total manifestation of the qualities of existence (sat), consciousness (cit) and bliss (ānanda). In addition to these three qualities the supreme expression of the divinity has six unique qualities (enumerated as aśvarya, vīrya, yaśas, śrī, jñāna and vairāgya) which are concealed in all other forms, even when the quality of bliss is partially manifested. In the material universe the bliss aspect is concealed, while in the unmanifest aspect of the divinity, identified as akṣara brahman, bliss is obscured so as to become finite and the six divine qualities are concealed. In the Anubhāṣya it is said that the unmanifest akṣara brahman cannot be the supreme goal because in it ānanda is limited:

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20. Ibid., I.1.11. 'Puruṣottama, the divine, formed of bliss, enters the soul. (That soul) having experienced the rasa-ocean of the pain of separation, which because it is rasa is of the nature of bliss, afterwards having attained the manifest form of the Lord, does not fear.'

athavā aksarabrahmany ānandātmake saty api tasya  
paricchinnavān na paramaphalatvam<sup>21</sup>

It is thus full manifestation rather than the absence of qualities or activities which constitutes the essential nature of the divine, and accordingly līlā is regarded as the highest expression of the divine.

The idea of different levels of līlā can be related to the Vallabha concept of reality as three levels of manifestation: i) the divine (ādhidaivika) in which all three qualities of existence, consciousness and bliss are fully manifested. ii) The spiritual (ādhyātmika) in which the bliss is partially concealed. iii) The material (ādhibhautika) in which both consciousness and bliss are concealed. These three terms are found in an explanation in the Subodhinī of the epithet sāksānmanmathamanmatha used for Kṛṣṇa by the BhP. Vallabha says that the material Kāma has the form of the god; the spiritual Kāma is in the hearts of all beings; and the divine Kāma is Kṛṣṇa because Kṛṣṇa is the essence of everything:

ādhibhautiko manmathah devatārūpah/  
tata ādhyātmika sarvahrdayeṣu sāksānmanmathah/  
tasyāpy ayam maṇḍalathah ādhidaivikah/  
sarvasyāpi sarvatvāt//<sup>22</sup>

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21. Ibid., I.1.11 (p.24, lines 24-25) 'Or though aksara brahman has the nature of bliss, because of its being limited it does not have the nature of being the supreme goal.'

22. Subodhinī, op.cit., X.29.2. 'Material Manmatha has the form of a god. Then the spiritual Manmatha himself is in the heart of all beings. This one (Kṛṣṇa) remaining in the circle, is the spiritual (form) of that; because he is the sum total of everything.'

In the Siddhāntamuktāvalī there is a verse in a similar vein which compares Gangā with the divinity, each of which is said to have three forms. The material universe is compared to the water of the river; the brhat (i.e. akṣara brahman) is compared to the invisible power of Gangā which rewards those who live on its banks; finally, the actual goddess, Gangā, is compared with Kṛṣṇa himself:

yathā jalam tathā sarvam yathā śaktā tathā brhat/  
yathā devī tathā kṛṣṇas tatrāpy etad ihocyate/<sup>23</sup>

Though the terms ādhībhautika, ādhīdaivika and ādhyātmika are not actually used in this verse, the commentator on the text uses these terms in his interpretation.<sup>24</sup>

It seems possible to see in the concept of līlā a parallel to the above idea of three levels of reality. The ādhīdaivikī līlā would be equivalent to ātmārati - the highest expression of the divinity wherein it manifests all of its divine qualities. Ādhyātmikī līlā involves the expression of the divine as the unmanifest, formless akṣara brahman. Here there is concealment of the six divine qualities and a limitation of the bliss aspect. Finally in ādhībhautikī līlā the creation is manifested through a further process of concealment.

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23. Vallabhācārya, Siddhāntamuktāvalī, Bombay, 1918, v.9.  
 'As is the water so is all this. As is the power so is the brhat. As is the goddess so is Kṛṣṇa. More about this is said here.'

24. Ibid., commentary by Dīkṣitalāla Bhaṭṭa. brahmano rūpatrayam/  
tatrādhīdaivikam param brahma kṛṣṇākhyam prathamam/ ādhyātmikam  
akṣarātmakam dvitīyam/ ādhībhautikam prapañcātmakam tṛtīyam/  
 'Brahman has three forms. Here the first is the divine, the supreme Brahman called Kṛṣṇa. The second is the spiritual identified with akṣara. The third is the material, having the nature of the material world.'

ii. The Gaudīya texts

Creation is relegated to an even more subsidiary position as an expression of the divine in Gaudīya texts than in those of the Vallabha sect. An even greater distinction is drawn between the eternal divine līlā and līlā as a cosmic process.

The Gaudīya understanding of the role of creation in divine self-expression is closely connected with their concept of the relation between the divinity and its powers(śaktis). These śaktis are described by Jīva Gosvāmī in his Bhagavat-saṁdarbha as being three in number.<sup>25</sup> The first is called antaraṅga or svarūpa-śakti; the term antaraṅga indicates that it is intrinsic to the divinity and, in fact, constitutes its essential being. Through this power the divinity expresses its own divine nature and realizes itself in its bliss. This relationship can be seen as corresponding to the ātmarati of the Vallabha texts discussed above.

Creation is, on the other hand, the function of the bahiraṅga or māyā-śakti<sup>26</sup> which is external to the divinity and cannot affect its essential nature. Creation is, therefore, a form of manifestation of divine power, and to this extent can be regarded as an aspect of līlā. However, the Gaudīya texts differ from those of the Vallabha sect in showing no direct involvement of the divinity in creation.

The situation of the soul is expressed in terms of the third tatastha or jīva-śakti. As long as the tatastha-śakti which forms

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25. Discussed in S.K. De, Early history of the Vaisnava faith and movement in Bengal, Calcutta, 1942, pp.210-211.

26. Ibid., p.211.

the soul is under the influence of māyā-śakti, obscuring its pure consciousness, it is bound. When the soul is released from this bondage, it becomes a part of the svarūpa-śakti and takes part in the eternal, divine līlā.<sup>27</sup> This can be compared with the account of the soul transcending its material body and entering into the līlā seen above in the Vallabha text.

The intrinsic līlā, the display of the svarūpa-śakti, is described by the Gaudīya texts in terms of the activities which in the BhP., for example, were associated with incarnation; that is to say, the activities of Kṛṣṇa and not of Viṣṇu. The separation of the cosmic aspect of divine manifestation from the divine līlā, coincides therefore with the emphasis on the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa līlā. It is the Kṛṣṇa līlā alone which is the intrinsic expression of the divine being.

Within Kṛṣṇa līlā itself, the sport of Kṛṣṇa with the gopīs is regarded as the innermost essence of the divine. It may be remembered that in the Vallabha texts, as well, the ātmarati was identified with the rāsa. In his Śrīkṛṣṇa-saṁdarbha, Jīva states that in the gopīs the essence (sāra) of the experience of love (premarasa) is displayed; this experience of love is itself the essence of that power by which bliss is experienced and caused (hlādinīsāra).<sup>28</sup> He goes on to say that because of the abundant display of this power in the gopīs, the supreme bliss of the divinity is manifest in them and hence the desire for sport arises:

tatprācuryaparakāśena śrībhagavato 'pi tāsū paramollāsaprakāśo  
bhavati tena tābhī ramanecchā jāyate<sup>29</sup>

27. Ibid., pp.211-212.

28. Ibid., p.267.

29. Ibid., p.267. 'Because of the excess of the expression of that (hlādinī-śakti) there is an expression of the supreme joy of divine in them; because of that is born the desire to sport with them.'

Where the Gaudīya texts differ from those of Vallabha is in their further singling out of Rādhā among the gopīs as expressing the highest degree of the supreme love (premotkarsaparakāsthā) and, in fact, as being identical with the hlādinī-śakti. Jīva states that Kṛṣṇa with Rādhā is the most wonderful of all manifestations of the divine:

rādhayā yugalitas tu kṛṣṇah paramādbhutaprakāśah<sup>30</sup>

Such an emphasis on the līlā of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is significant in view of the fact that this līlā alone is regarded as the eternal, divine sport by Braj Bhāṣā texts of the Rādhāvallabha and Haridāśī sects.

c) The Braj Bhāṣā treatment of divine sport

Braj Bhāṣā texts divide into those which speak of līlā as the supreme expression of the divine and those which postulate nitya vihāra, expressed through the sport of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa only, as being an even higher expression than līlā. The poets which concentrate on nitya vihāra are more or less the same as those which rejected the validity of incarnation in the context of Kṛṣṇa.

i. Texts which describe līlā

A. Sūradāsa

In the Sūrasāgara, līlā involves a manifold expression of the divine for the sake of devotees. This comes across clearly in a pada where Sūradāsa describes how Kṛṣṇa who cannot be reached by Śiva and other gods, laughs when he is rocked by Yaśodā, and concludes by saying that Kṛṣṇa takes

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30. Ibid., p.268.

many guises for the sake of his devotees:

sūra syāma bhaktani hita kārana nānā bheṣa banāvaim/<sup>31</sup>

In this sense, the performance of līlā is an assumed condition, not the one and only expression of the divine.

The above understanding of līlā fits in with the concept of the divine as having two aspects - Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu. When the divinity performs līlā he is Kṛṣṇa. The paradox of the two aspects - the inaccessible as the utterly accessible - creates the wonder of līlā. Thus Sūradāsa concludes a description of the two aspects - Viṣṇu who measures the earth in three steps and Kṛṣṇa who cannot even cross the threshold - by wondering at the greatness of this līlā which cannot be described even by Śeṣa:

sūradāsa prabhu kī yaha līlā parati na mahimā śeṣa bakhānī/<sup>32</sup>

The Surasāgara differs from the BhP. insofar as līlā is distinguished from creation. This can be seen for example in a verse which says that the Supreme Being who creates, preserves and destroys the universe, assumes līlā in the company of the cowherd boys:

loka racai rādhai aru mārāi/  
so gṛhāṇi saṅga līlā dhārāi/<sup>33</sup>

Here līlā is equated with Kṛṣṇa sporting in Braj with cowherd boys, not with any engagement in cosmic processes.

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31. Sūradāsa, op.cit., pada 663. 'Syāma of Sūra takes many guises for the sake of his devotees.'

32. Ibid., pada 762. 'The greatness of this līlā of the Lord of Sūradāsa even Śeṣa cannot describe.'

33. Ibid., pada 621. 'He who creates, preserves and destroys the world, he assumes līlā in the company of the cowherd boys.'

## B. Nandadāsa

A number of verses in the poetry of Nandadāsa reflect markedly the influence of the Vallabha definition of ātmarati discussed above. In his Siddhāntapañcādhyaī, for example, Nandadāsa says that in order to manifest the līlā which finds expression in rāsa, Kṛṣṇa made the gopīs equal to or like himself:

ramyo caḥata rasa rāsa inahīm apanī samasari kari/<sup>34</sup>

This is almost identical with the image of Kṛṣṇa placing himself in the gopīs found in the Subodhinī.

In another place in the same work, Nandadāsa states that the divine Lord draws all within himself in order to disport himself, and this sport is spontaneous (sahaja)- a natural manifestation of his own nature:

je jaga main jagadisa kahai ati rahe garva bhari/  
saba kara kiyau nirodha ni ja sahaja khela kari/<sup>35</sup>

This can be compared with Vallabha's description of the dissolution of the material universe during the divine self-sport (discussed above p.111 ).

This description of divine sport is close to the concept of nitya vihāra which will be seen in the poetry of Dhruvadāsa and Bihārinadāsa, but is not identical with it. Its similarity lies in the fact that the divine sport is envisaged as taking place within the divine itself and not really as being a

34. Nandadāsa, Siddhāntap., op.cit., v.66. '(Kṛṣṇa) wanted to enjoy the rāsa of rāsa, having made those (gopīs) equal to himself.'

35. Ibid., v. 9. 'That Lord of the world who is pre-eminent in the world, withdrew all (within himself), performing his own spontaneous sport.'

form of manifestation. However, there is not the same emphasis on its unceasing nature. In the first example cited above, the use of the verb kari 'having made' gives the sense of an action being initiated, rather than that of a continuous state. The second example similarly gives the impression of the sahaja khela as being a condition entered into from time to time.

There is, moreover, an emphasis on līlā as a response to devotion, similar to that of Sūradāsa, which is not found in the concept of nitya vihāra. The love of the gopīs is described as the reason why Kṛṣṇa initiates the sport:

jadapi ātmarāma ramana bhae navala neha basa/<sup>36</sup>

Devotion is thus the moving force behind līlā.

This aspect of līlā is further emphasized in the Braj Bhāṣā adaptation of the BhP. by Nandadāsa, where he states that when the divinity had the desire to perform līlā, he first caused his devotees to take incarnation on earth for the sake of līlā:

jaba hari līlā icchā karaim/  
jagata maim prathama bhakta avataraim//  
tina kai prabhu kau parikara jītau/  
pragata hota līlā hita tītau/<sup>37</sup>

Thereupon Kṛṣṇa himself descends to fulfil the desires of his devotees:

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36. Ibid., v.62. 'Though experiencing bliss within himself, he began to sport (with them), overcome by the power of their fresh love.'

37. Nandadāsa, Bhāṣā daśama skandha, op.cit., I.115-116 (p.220). 'When Hari had a desire for līlā, first the devotees descended to earth. All of the attendants of the Lord manifested for the sake of līlā.'

taba śrī kṛṣṇa avatarahim āi/  
siddha karaim bhagatana ke bhāi//<sup>38</sup>

In this passage Hari first has the inherent desire to perform līlā, thus showing that the desire to disport himself is an essential part of his nature. At the same time the līlā becomes manifest for the sake of the devotees.

The emphasis on the role of devotion in līlā is much greater here than in the BhP. There it is not the devotees who become incarnate along with the divinity but the gods. The concept of devotees being involved in the incarnation would appear to reflect a sectarian slant, since it is also echoed in the Vidvanmandana of Viṭṭhalanātha. This text says that when the divine descends for the sake of play, some suitable souls are also caused to descend:

svāvatārasamaye kṛīdārtham sāksād yogyās ta eva  
bhavanti tīti tān apy avatārayīti punar nirgamayogyatvam<sup>39</sup>

Thus once again, the BhP. is seen to be modified by Nandadāsa in line with Vallabha sectarian considerations.

Whereas the līlā of Sūradāsa includes the childhood sport of Kṛṣṇa as much as the rāsa performed with the gopīs, the nitya vihāra is confined to the expression of love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. In this respect again, Nandadāsa takes the line of compromise, similar to that taken by the Gaudīyas. In the

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38. Ibid., I.117. 'Then Kṛṣṇa descended to fulfil the desires of his devotees.'

39. Viṭṭhalanātha, Vidvanmandanam, Ratnagopāla Bhaṭṭa ed., Benares, 1908, p.97, lines 15-16. 'At the time of his own incarnation, he causes those souls which are suitable also to descend for the sake of play; (this is the meaning of) suitability for coming out again.'

Rāsapañcādhyaī, for example, describes the childhood and adolescent aspects of the līlā as conditions of the divine, while Kṛṣṇa as a youth is its essential form:

bāla kumāra puṣaṇḍa dharama āsakta ju lalita tana/  
dharmī nitya kisora kāṇha mohata saba ko mana//<sup>40</sup>

This indicates that it is the activities of the youth aspect which display the essence of līlā.

## ii. Texts which describe nitya vihāra

### A. Dhruvadāsa

The distinction between līlā and nitya vihāra is connected with the way in which the texts distinguish between Braj Kṛṣṇa and Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa. According to Dhruvadāsa the līlā which was manifested by Kṛṣṇa in Braj for the sake of devotees was only the first stage of love:

pahilī pairī prema kī kīṇhī vraja bistāra/  
bhaktani hita līlā karī karuṇānidhi sukumāra//<sup>41</sup>

The term bistāra which comes from the Sanskrit root vistr, meaning 'to spread out, expand, diffuse', in this context appears to give the sense of expansion and manifestation as opposed to the inner essence. Thus līlā is seen to be a form of expansion of the reality performed through the divine power but not the innermost essence of that divine reality. Moreover,

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40. Nandadāsa, Rāsap., op.cit., I.36. 'That beautiful body which is furnished with the qualities of childhood, boyhood and adolescence - the possessor of these qualities is eternally a youth, Kāṇha, who charms the hearts of all.'

41. Dhruvadāsa, Brhadbāvana Purāṇa, op.cit., v.24. 'As the first step of love he made the expanse of Braj; the youthful (Kṛṣṇa), a mine of compassion, sported for the sake of his devotees.'

this manifold expression is not regarded as the acme of divine sport because it has a purpose - it is performed for the sake of devotees. Here a difference from the poetry of both Sūradāsa and Nandadāsa may be noted, where the greatness of līlā lay in the very fact of its being an expression of love for devotees.

The contrast between the inner essence - vihāra - and the manifold expression - līlā - comes across clearly in a further verse of Dhruvadāsa where he says that vihāra is the essence of all manifold līlā which took place in Braj:

braj mem jo līlā carita bhayau jo bahuta prakāra/  
sabako sāra bihāra hai rasikani kiyau nirdhāra//<sup>42</sup>

Similarly, in his Sata bhajana, Dhruvadāsa states that one who has in his heart the beauty of Kṛṣṇa as he appears in the vihāra, i.e. as a youth, will not like the līlās of adolescence, childhood and so forth:

nautana vaisa kiśora chabi basata hai jihi ura nitta/  
pauganda bāla līlādiḥum bhāvata nahim tehi citta//<sup>43</sup>

This verse can be compared with that of Nandadāsa discussed above (see p.123). The difference lies in the fact that though Nandadāsa regarded the youthful aspect as the essence, he still accepts the other activities as valid expressions of the divine, while Dhruvadāsa regards them as inessential distractions from the essential reality.

42. Ibid., v.42. 'The many and varied episodes of līlā in Braj - the essence of all these is the bihāra. This is the certainty which the rasikas have established.'

43. Dhruvadāsa, Sata bhajana, in Bayālīsa līlā, op.cit., v.59. 'In whose heart eternally remains the beauty of that youth of fresh appearance, his mind does not like even the līlā of childhood and boyhood.'

B. Bihārinadāsa

Bihārinadāsa expresses views similar to those discussed above when he describes the different stages of approach to the divine reality. He first describes bhakti, i.e. devotion in the form of ritual service of the deity, as a swamp which must be crossed in order to reach the Braj līlā:

bhakti daladalai kyaum tarai braja laum sakai na jai/<sup>44</sup>

This Braj is in turn described as being very large; its threshold is high, so that one may climb high and then slip and fall:

so braja parama visāla hai tākī badī su pauri/  
ūnce cadhe khisale pare nīcaim āvata bhaumri/<sup>45</sup>

In other words, one may get lost in and bewildered by the manifold manifestation of the divine as expressed in Braj līlā. This Braj līlā is said to have three main aspects personified by the gopīs, cows and gopas - all participants in the līlā as described, for example, by Sūradāsa:

tā braja ke āvarana suni gopī gāi guvāla/<sup>46</sup>

According to Bihārinadāsa, however, the essential expression of the divine reality, that is Kṛṣṇa performing vihāra, is far from all of these:

tina hūm te biharata duraim rasikana ke pratipāla/<sup>47</sup>

44. Bihārinadāsa, op.cit., v.662, p.244. 'One cannot cross the marsh of devotion: one cannot even reach Braj.'

45. Ibid., v.663. 'That Braj is very large, its threshold is high. You climb high, slip and fall, because when you look down you feel giddy.'

46. Ibid., v.664. 'Hear the coverings of the Braj - the gopīs, the cows and the cowherd boys.'

47. Ibid., v.664. 'Far from even these sports the protector of the rasikas.'

The intrinsic nature of this vihāra is expressed in another verse where Bihārinadāsa praises the founder of the sect, Haridāsa, saying that he alone could filter the madhura rasa eliminating ritual practice, knowledge, devotion and even the splendour of Braj; he alone could describe the pai parata the vihāra:

śrī haridāsa rasika ananya binu ko pai parata  
bihāra bakhānyaum/  
karma gyāna dūra bhakti braja vibho vākasa chāmdi  
madhura rasa chānyau/<sup>48</sup>

The nature of vihāra as an eternal fact, basic to the nature of the divine and different from the manifold expression displayed in līlā is thus described by both Dhruvadāsa and Bihārinadāsa. It could, in fact, be claimed that the vihāra is the divine itself and Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are instruments through which it is expressed, such is the importance attached to it.

## 2. The role of Vṛndāvana in līlā - an aspect of the divine

### a. In the Purāṇas

The fact that creation and incarnation are both essentially seen as the same process in the BhP. implies that the 'space' in which both occur is also the same. There is in fact only one divine space in which the divine displays its nature and which is essentially of the nature of the divine. There can, therefore, be no distinction between a heavenly Vṛndāvana and an earthly Vṛndāvana.

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48. Ibid., v.22, p.284. 'Apart from the rasika, Haridāsa who else could describe the vihāra. He filtered the rasa of love, leaving the remains of ritual acts, knowledge, devotion and even the splendour of Braj.'

Because the nature of the activities of Kṛṣṇa as līlā is less overtly expressed in the Hariv. and ViP., consequently the nature of Vṛndāvana as a līlādhāman is also less apparent than in the BhP. It is represented more as a place on earth where certain events occurred within time and space. The ambiguous nature of the imagery used to describe Vṛndāvana has, however, been examined, which indicates that in actuality the līlādhāman aspect of Vṛndāvana is implicitly recognized.

b. In the sectarian philosophical texts

i. Vallabha

The representation of an aspect of the divinity as the divine abode can be seen in the Anubhāsyā of Vallabha where he explains that the reason for the description of aksara brahman as the 'tail' shows that it is subsidiary to the Supreme Being, forming his substratum or abode:

tasmādd hīnatvam ceti pūṣṭhabhāgād api dūrasthita-  
puccharūpatvam brahmana ucyate/ purusottamādhisthānatvāt  
pratisthārūpatvam ca<sup>49</sup>

A statement along similar lines can be found in a later Vallabha work, the Prameya-ratnārnava, where it is said that to devotees aksara brahman appears as the abode of the Lord or Vyāpivaikunṭha:

tatra bhaktānām purusottamadhānavyāpivaikunthādyātmakatvādi-  
dharmavat pratīyate<sup>50</sup>

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49. Vallabha, Anubhāsyā, op.cit., I.1.11. (p.33, lines 18-20). 'Therefore it has a subordinate position; because of its being at the back, Brahman is said to have the form of a tail which is situated far; and because of its being the resting-place of the Lord, it has the form of a foundation.'
50. Bālakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭa, Prameyaratnārnava, Varanasi, 1971, ch. III, p.55. 'That is recognized by devotees as having conditions such as having the nature of the abode of the divine or Vyāpivaikunṭha.'

Vallabha similarly identifies Vyāpivaikunṭha with aksara:

guhāyām hrdayākāśe yad āvirbhūtam paramam vyomāksarātmakam  
vyāpivaikunṭham tasya puruṣottamagrharūpatvāt tatra  
nihitam sthāpitam iva vartamānam yo veda sa bhakto  
brahmanā nityāvikṛtarūpena vipaścitā<sup>51</sup>

Aksara brahman is an aspect of the divine reality possessing all the same qualities, though the ānanda aspect is limited. These statements, therefore, in identifying the dhāman with aksara brahman represent it as an aspect of the divine reality. Aksara brahman is that expression of the divine nature through which the līlā takes place, or to put it in a different way, it is the 'abode' in which the divine resides when performing the līlā of creation.

A question which arises is whether the ātmarati takes place in the same dhāman. There does appear to exist in the Vallabha texts a concept of a divine Vṛndāvana associated with the activities of the intrinsic divine līlā. The Anubhāsyam describes how the manifestation of the divine which causes first the pain of separation and then supreme bliss is not to be found in the world or even in Vaikunṭha:

loke kva cid api na dr̥ṣtam śrutam va vaikunthe 'pīti<sup>52</sup>

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51. Vallabha, Anubhāsyam, op.cit., I.1.11. (p.25, lines 22-23). 'In the secret place, i.e. the space in the heart, that supreme Vyāpivaikunṭha, of the nature of vyomāksara, which appears, because of its having the form of the abode of the divine, to be placed there, i.e. established, present there. He who knows this, that devotee is with Brahman who is wise, i.e. has an eternally unchanged form.'
52. Ibid., IV.2.15, (p.326, line 13). '... these are not seen or heard of anywhere in the world or in Vaikunṭha.'

These things are said to be found only in Gokula which is even more excellent than Vaikuṇṭha, and which is beyond nature and time, etc:

uktāni vastūni pare prakṛtikālādyatīte vaikunthād api  
śrīgokula eva santīti śesah<sup>53</sup>

In other words, Gokula is beyond both the material and the spiritual realms and is the divine realm of ātmarati.

## ii. Gauḍīya

Vṛndāvana is clearly depicted as an aspect of the divinity itself in the Gauḍīya texts. According to Jīva Gosvāmī in his Bhagavat-samdarbha, the dhāman of the Lord is also an expression of the power expressing his intrinsic nature (svarūpa-śakti). It is eternal and beyond prakṛti, which is an effect of the māyā-śakti itself, so that the soul can never reach it as long as he is subject to that śakti. This realm consists of the three attributes of existence, consciousness and bliss, as does the divinity itself.<sup>54</sup> In Śrīkṛṣṇa-samdarbha, Jīva describes the dhāman as the place where there is an excess of intrinsic divine bliss - svarūpānandasukhotkarsa; the dhāman is thus an expression of the highest hlādinī-śakti itself.<sup>55</sup>

This philosophical concepts find poetic expression in the Vṛndāvanamahimāmṛta of Prabodhānanda. Vṛndāvana is described, for example, as being situated on an island of

53. Ibid., line 14. 'These things exist only in the supreme Gokula which is more excellent than Vaikuṇṭha and which is beyond nature, time etc.; so it was left to be supplied.'

54. S.K. De., op.cit., pp.221-222

55. Ibid., p.254.

sweetness, which is in the ocean of the divine light of inner bliss and which is beyond the three gunas:

traigunyaṭītapūrnōjjvalavimalamahākāmabījātmadivyaajyotiḥ-  
svānandasindhau kim api sumadhuram dvīpam āścaryam asti/  
tasmin vṛndābanam ...<sup>56</sup>

This verse illustrates the way in which Vṛndāvana is regarded as the essence of the essence. The island is the essence of the ocean of bliss and Vṛndāvana is within this island. This resembles the Gaudīya concept where premarasa is the essence of the hlādinī which is the essence of svarūpa.

Secondly, the non-material nature of Vṛndāvana is stressed. Vṛndāvana is beyond the three material qualities and so is untouched by māyā. This means that is part of the svarūpa-śakti. This can also be seen in the fact that said to be in the sea of svānanda. The ānanda expresses the essential nature of the divine and so is equivalent to the hlādinī-śakti; this would correspond to Jīva's description of the dhāman as svarūpānandasukhotkarsa.

#### c. Vṛndāvana in the Braj Bhāṣā texts

In the previous discussion of divine activity, Braj Bhāṣā texts have been shown to be divided into two groups:

- a) The līlā approach illustrated by Sūradāsa and Nandadāsa.
- b) The nityavihāra approach found in the poetry of Dhruvadāsa and Bihārinadāsa. This division can be seen reflected in the portrayal of Vṛndāvana.

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56. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, Vṛndāvanamahimāmṛtam, Vṛndāvana, 1967, III.11. 'In the ocean of the divine light of intrinsic bliss, having the nature of the great kāmabīja (mantra), pure, fully brilliant and beyond the three material qualities, there is an astonishing sweet island; in that is Vṛndāvana ...'

In both approaches Vṛndāvana is regarded as an aspect of the divine itself, indispensable to the expression of divine activity. However, in the līlā approach, divine activity is a manifold manifestation of the divine in contrast to its still aspect, and thus can be revealed or concealed according to the wish of the divine. Corresponding to the revelation and concealment, Vṛndāvana assumes and casts off its role as a place.

In the nitya vihāra concept, on the other hand, a continuous flow of activity is seen as expressing the essential nature of the divine. Vṛndāvana is the means for this essential manifestation and accordingly the role of Vṛndāvana as divine space is eternal and unchanging.

#### 1. Vṛndāvana in līlā

##### A. Sūradāsa

In the Sūrasāgara, Vṛndāvana has an important role in the manifestation of līlā, though its nature as an aspect of the divine is not made so explicit. It is in Braj-Vṛndāvana alone that the Supreme Being displays its manifold līlā and becomes utterly accessible; it is here that the divinity experiences its own bliss to the fullest extent. According to Sūradāsa, the joy which Kṛṣṇa experiences in Vṛndāvana makes him forget the heavenly joys. One pada has Kṛṣṇa telling the cowherd boys that he likes Vṛndāvana exceedingly, and that tending cows here cause him to forget all the joys of Vaikuṇṭha - the wish-yielding cow, the divine tree and all his happiness with Lakṣmī:

br̥ndāvana maukaun ati bhāvata/  
sunahu sakhā tuma subala s̥rīdāmā braja taim  
bana gaucarana āvata/  
kāmadhenu surataru sukha jitane ramā sahita baikuntha  
bhulāvata/<sup>57</sup>

A contrast is made here between Vaikuṇṭha and Vṛndāvana; between the divine wish-yielding cows and the cows of Vṛndāvana; between Lakṣmī and Kṛṣṇa's playmates in Vṛndāvana. The contrast is equivalent to that made between the transcendent Viṣṇu and the immanent Kṛṣṇa. That Vṛndāvana is equal or even superior to Vaikuṇṭha is shown by the fact that the charms of Vṛndāvana cause Kṛṣṇa to forget his celestial abode. Nevertheless, Vṛndāvana is not portrayed as the one and only eternal abode. Kṛṣṇa is shown to have two abodes in accordance with his two conditions of being.

#### B. Nandadāsa

The nature of Vṛndāvana as an aspect of the divine is very apparent in the poetry of Nandadāsa, much more so than in the Sūrasāgara. In a verse from the Rāsapañcādhyaī he describes Vṛndāvana as pure consciousness which has assumed an inert state for the sake of the playful sport of Kṛṣṇa:

śrī vṛndāvana cidghana kachu chabi barani na jāi/  
kṛṣṇa lalita līlā ke kāja dhari rahyau jadatāi/<sup>58</sup>

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57. Sūradāsa, op.cit., pada 1067. 'I like Vṛndāvana exceedingly. Listen you friends, Subala and S̥rīdāmā, when I come to the wood from Braj to tend the cows, it makes me forget the wish-yielding cows, the divine trees and all the happiness with Ramā in Vaikuṇṭha.'

58. Nandadāsa, Rāsap., op.cit., I.17. 'The beauty of Vṛndāvana, which is pure consciousness, cannot be described. For the sake of the playful sport of Kṛṣṇa it assumes an inert state.'

The first point which may be noted about this verse is the use of the term cidghana as an adjective referring to Vṛndāvana, since (as seen above in the discussion of Vallabha philosophy) cit or consciousness is one of the three attributes used to describe the nature of the divine, the other two being existence (sat) and bliss (ānanda). So through the description of Vṛndāvana as cidghana, the verse indicates the nature of Vṛndāvana as an aspect of the divine which assumes the attributes of a place.

Secondly, the inseparable connexion between līlā and Vṛndāvana is expressed in this verse. The existence of Vṛndāvana as a place is purely for the sake of līlā -- līlā ke kāja. Though its essential nature as a part of the divine is pure consciousness, for the sake of the manifestation of divine activity it assumes a condition of unconsciousness -- jadatāi.

The verse following this one in the same text is also relevant to this discussion, since it describes how in Vṛndāvana all of the mountains, birds, deer, bowers, etc. are lovely with a splendour which is not derived from material qualities or time:

jaham naga khaga mrga kumja latā bīrudha tṛna jete/  
nahina kāla guna prabhā sadā sobhita rahe tete/18/<sup>59</sup>

This illustrates once more the non-material nature of Vṛndāvana, since only that which is divine can be unconnected with time and material qualities. A place unrelated to either time

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59. Ibid., I.18. 'Where all of the mountains, birds, deer, bowers, creepers and plants are always lovely with a splendour which is not derived from time or material qualities.'

or matter cannot be a place in the physical sense of the term. At the same time the verse visualizes Vṛndāvana in physical terms - mountains, animals, plants, etc. It is therefore symbolic space.

The way in which Vṛndāvana partakes of the nature of the divine similarly emerges from a verse in the Siddhāntapañicādhyaī which says that just as the son of Nanda is solidified existence, consciousness and bliss, so Vṛndāvana, which devotees obtain in the world when they become imbued with rasa, and which scriptures praise as the eternal abode of Kṛṣṇa, is solidified consciousness:

saghana saccidānanda namdanamdana īśvara jasa/  
taiseī tinake bhagata jagata mem bhaye bhare rasa//  
śrī vṛndāvana cidghana ghana ghana ghana chabi pāvem/  
namda sūnu ko nitya sadana śruti gana jihi gāvem/<sup>60</sup>

Thus both Kṛṣṇa and Vṛndāvana are essentially the same substance. Moreover, they are inseparable - Kṛṣṇa cannot exist except in Vṛndāvana.

In both of the above descriptions there is, nevertheless, a sense of contrast between the divine in its condition as pure existence, knowledge and bliss, when Vṛndāvana is also undifferentiated consciousness, and its condition when involved in līlā - when Vṛndāvana assumes the character of a place. This is reminiscent of the contrast found in the Sūrasāgara between Vṛndāvana and Vaikuṇṭha. Though the contrast in this

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60. Nandadāsa, Siddhāntap., op.cit., vv.19-20.

'Just as the Lord, son of Nanda, is solidified existence, consciousness and bliss, so Vṛndāvana which devotees obtain in the world, having become imbued with rasa, is solid consciousness and solid beauty, the eternal abode of the son of Nanda, of which the scriptures sing.'

case is less marked, there is still the sense, indicated for example by the phrase dhari rahyau 'assumed', that the līlā is a condition which is taken on, and accordingly that Vṛndāvana does not exist eternally and continuously as a līlādhāman.

ii. Vṛndāvana in nitya vihāra

A. Dhruvadāsa

The divine nature of Vṛndāvana as well as its indispensable role in the nitya vihāra is stressed by Dhruvadāsa. Vṛndāvana is, in fact, almost on a par with Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa and the sakhīs as one of the four eternal elements of the nitya vihāra. Dhruvadāsa describes how Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa eternally participate in an eternal pastime; Vṛndāvana is eternally co-existent; Lalitā and the rest are their eternal playmates; eternally they disport themselves in one single passion:

nita hī nitya vihāra karaiṃ yāme kachu na samdehu/  
nitya sahaja brndā bipina nitya sakhi lalitādi/  
nita hī bilasata eka rasa yugala kiśora anādi//<sup>61</sup>

The adjective nityasahaja applied to Vṛndāvana in this passage is capable of a number of interpretations. Sahaja in its original meaning denotes 'born with'.<sup>62</sup> Taken in this sense nityasahaja would imply 'eternally born with' or 'co-existent' with the nityavihāra to which reference was made in the previous line. This would reflect the inseparable relation

61. Dhruvadāsa, Brhadbāvana Purāna, op.cit., vv. 66-67.

'No doubt but that eternally they (Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa) participate in an eternal pastime; Vṛndāvana is eternally co-existent; Lalitā and the rest are (their) eternal playmates; eternally they disport themselves in one single passion, the youthful couple without beginning.'

62. M. Monier Williams, op.cit., p.1193, column 3.

spoken of earlier between the divine activity and the divine place. Another possible interpretation is that Vṛndāvana is nityasahaja with the youthful couple (Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa) mentioned in the following line. This would illustrate the relationship between the divinity and the divine place, implying a certain similarity of nature between the divine couple and Vṛndāvana. In either case, it is evident that for the nitya vihāra all four elements are essential.

The divine nature of Vṛndāvana and its apartness from the material world is made explicit in a verse from the Vṛndāvana sata, where Dhruvadāsa says that the wind of creation which is derived from māyā and the three guṇas does not touch that forest which has no beginning or end and which gives eternal happiness:

ādi anta jākau nahim nitya sukhada bana āhi/  
māyā triguna prapañca kī pavana na parasata tāhi/25/63

The statement that Vṛndāvana is untouched by creation formed from the three guṇas is similar in concept to the verse previously quoted from the Rāsapañcādhyaī (see above p. 133). Here again the point is emphasized that Vṛndāvana is not part of material creation, and so has no beginning or end, either in the sense of time or of space. It is 'space' in a purely symbolic sense.

In these verses of Dhruvadāsa there is a decided emphasis on the eternal nature of the divine activity - the constant reiteration of the term nitya, 'eternal' conveys this sense.

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63. Dhruvadāsa, Vṛndāvana sata, op.cit., v.25. 'That forest which has no beginning or end and gives eternal happiness, the wind of creation based on māyā and the three material qualities does not touch it.'



nasvara raja lagi jūjhaī nasvara pūta kahāi/  
śrī brndāvana seye rahaim so raja māmhi samāi//<sup>65</sup>

Thus in the poetry of both Bihārinadāsa and Dhruvadāsa just as vihāra is not a physical action, which must have a beginning and an end, so Vṛndāvana is not a 'place' which must also have a beginning and an end. At the same time, vihāra is expressed in terms of action which can, therefore, be termed symbolic action while the space in which it manifests itself is symbolic space. Vṛndāvana is, therefore, not merely a receptacle for the divine, but an aspect of the divine reality without which this reality cannot express itself.

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65. Ibid., p.165, v.332. 'People die fighting for destructible dust, calling the destructible pure; reside in Vṛndāvana, become become merged in that dust.'

IV  
GEOGRAPHY AND SYMBOLISM  
IN THE REPRESENTATION  
OF VRNDĀVANA

GEOGRAPHY AND SYMBOLISM IN THE REPRESENTATION OF VRNDĀVANA

In any given text the portrayal of Vṛndāvana as a place clearly reflects the attitude of the writer to the concepts involved in Vṛndāvana as a mythic and symbolic place. Three distinct pictures emerge - the mythological, the symbolic and the geographical. - though these may overlap in one single text.

The mythological depiction expresses the concept of sacred space in mythic terms. It is thus a reflection of the same process whereby the metaphysical contrast between the immanent and the transcendent becomes a mythological event through its expression as incarnation. It is therefore not surprising that the mythological picture of Vṛndāvana is found in texts where the theory of incarnation is incorporated. A basic characteristic of this picture is the 'linear' layout of Vṛndāvana in relation to Braj-Gokula and Mathurā. To this extent it is compatible with geographical considerations.

In contrast to this linear layout, the symbolic picture is circular in shape. That is to say, Vṛndāvana is portrayed as a circular area within the Mathurā region. In this plan there is a gradation of the three areas - Vṛndāvana, as the centre, being supreme. The images used in this case are frequently those of the yantra, suggesting a similarity of purpose, i.e. a symbolic representation of the transcendental realm. This yantric Vṛndāvana invariably forms the scene, not for the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, but for the eternal, unceasing union of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa - the nitya vihāra. The texts using this form of representation can be further divided into two categories;

the first being ritualistic and apparently intended for the practice of worship and meditation, the second concerned exclusively with the experience of rasa.

In the geographical picture Vṛndāvana appears as one of twelve forests surrounding Mathurā. In contrast to the above representations it is thus much more Mathurā-centred, which would appear to be related to the fact that these texts are concerned with pilgrimage. In this respect, they can be designated the most geographical in nature, since they are describing a place which can be visited in pilgrimage.

#### i. The mythological representation

The mythological representation predominates in the Purāṇic texts, and continues to play an important part in the poetry of Sūradāsa and Nandadāsa. All of these texts correspond in their division of the scene for the youthful activities of Kṛṣṇa into three localities, i.e. Mathurā, Vṛndāvana and Braj-Gokula. These three places are linked by the movements to and fro of Kṛṣṇa.

In considering the relation of Vṛndāvana with Braj-Gokula in this mythological picture of Vṛndāvana, it is necessary to look at the definition of Braj-Gokula itself, since these range from that of a general term for a cowherd encampment, to the present-day usage of Braj for the entire area and Gokula for a particular town. There can be no doubt that originally these two terms were used for the cattle station as well as for the actual herd of cows. The term vraja is attested in this sense as early as the RV.<sup>1</sup> while gokula first appears in the Mbh.<sup>2</sup> with similar connotations.

1. Cf. A.A. Macdonell, Vedic Index, Vol.II, London, 1912, p. 340, and K.F.Geldner, Vedische Studien, Vol.2, Stuttgart, 1897, p.282.

2. Cf. O. Böhtlingk, Sanskrit Wörterbuch, Vol.III, St. Petersburg, 1858, p.794. (Mbh.3.17179).

There is considerable evidence that the Purāṇas continue to use vraja and gokula as general terms rather than as proper nouns. Particularly relevant are the passages which describe the move to Vṛndāvana, since in all three Purāṇas it is clear that this does not involve a move from a place called Braj-Gokula as is later understood. In fact, the entire vraja-gokula is moved to Vṛndāvana, illustrating its nature as a movable encampment.

In the Hariv., for example, the inhabitants decide that the entire vraja should be moved in order to avoid a massacre by the wolves who threaten them:

yāvad vrkair vadham ghoram na nah sarvo vrajo vrajet/3/<sup>3</sup>

The aim of the move to Vṛndāvana is described as not only the welfare of the cows but also the establishment of the vraja:

tesām matam athājñāya gantum vṛndāvanam prati/  
vrajasya ca niveśanāya gavām caiva sukhāya ca/<sup>4</sup>

Finally the beauty of the newly established vraja surrounded by the woods of Vṛndāvana is depicted:

tad vrajasthānam adhikam cakāśe kānanāvṛtam/<sup>5</sup>

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3. Harivamśa, P.L. Vaidya ed., Poona, 1969, 53.3. 'Before a dreadful massacre by the wolves, our entire encampment should move away.'

4. Ibid., 53.7. 'Having perceived their decision to go to Vṛndāvana for the sake of the establishment of the encampment and for the well-being of the cows.'

5. Ibid., 53.30. 'That place of the encampment, surrounded by the woods, looked even more beautiful.'

All the above examples correspond with a conception of the vraja as a nomadic settlement rather than as the name of a particular place.

The pattern is identical in the ViP. The elders decide that they should depart from their present location to Vṛndāvana before a catastrophe befalls the vraja:

vṛndāvanam itah sthānāt tasmād gacchāma mā ciram/  
yāvad bhaumamahotpātadoṣo nābhībhaveḍ vrajam/24/<sup>6</sup>

Here again the establishment of the vraja in Vṛndāvana is described:

sa samāvāsitaḥ sarvo vrajo vṛndāvane tataḥ/<sup>7</sup>

No change in this respect can be detected in the BhP. Both the protection of the vraja as the motive for the move and the eventual re-establishment of the vraja in Vṛndāvana are in evidence here as well. The elders assemble to discuss the affairs of the vraja, the term evidently denoting the community as a whole and not the place:

gopavṛddhā mahotpātān anubhūya brhadvane/  
nandādayaḥ samāgāmya vrajakāryam amantrayam/20/<sup>8</sup>

Using gokula synonymously with vraja, the elders decide that out of concern for the welfare of the gokula, they should leave the place:

utthātavyam ito 'smābhir gokulasya hitaisibhiḥ/<sup>9</sup>

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6. ViP., op.cit., V.6.24. 'Therefore we should go from here to Vṛndāvana without delay, before a terrestrial disaster befalls the encampment.'
7. Ibid., V.6.30. 'Then the whole settlement encamped in Vṛndāvana.'
8. BhP., op.cit., X.11.20. 'The elder cowherds, such as Nanda, experiencing disasters in the great forest, gathered together and discussed what was to be done about the settlement.'
9. Ibid., X.11.22. 'We who desire the well-being of the gokula should depart from here.'

Finally comes the description of the vraja settlement formed in Vṛndāvana with a semi-circle of carts:

tatra cakrur vrajāvāsam śakatair ardhaśāndravat/<sup>10</sup>

Other indications that vraja and gokula are employed as general terms can be found in their use in the plural as well as with the possessive qualification 'of Nanda' suggesting the possibility of other vrajas and gokulas. Such a use in the plural can be seen in a passage from the Hariv. which says that rich vrajas should move on to forests having fresh grass and that neither those who live behind closed doors nor those possessing house and fields are as praiseworthy as the vrajas which wander from place to place:

icchanty anupabhuktāni bhoktum gāvas trnāni ca/  
tasmād vanam navatṛnam gacchantu dhanino vrajāḥ/<sup>17/</sup>  
na dvārabandhāvaranā na gṛhakṣetrinas tathā/  
praśastā vai vrajā loke yathā vai cakṛcārinah/<sup>18/</sup><sup>11</sup>

In this passage the nature of the vraja as a nomadic community is evident in the contrast with the settled possession of home and property. The BhP. elsewhere describes how during the move to Vṛndāvana the cowherds each prepared their own vraja for the journey, suggesting that the vraja as a whole consisted of a group of smaller vrajas:

vrajān svān svān samāyujya yayur ūdhapariśhadāḥ/<sup>12</sup>

10. Ibid., X.11.22. 'There with the carts they established an encampment in the shape of a semi-circle.'

11. Hariv., op.cit., 52.17-18. 'The cows desire to eat grass which has not been made use of. Therefore rich encampments should move to a wood with fresh grass. Neither those surrounded by closed doors, nor those possessing house and fields are as famed in the world as the vrajas which move from one place to another.'

12. BhP. op.cit., X.11.29. 'Each one having made ready his own vraja, they set off, their goods being carried.'

The nature of vraja as a term for a particular type of settlement emerges from another passage from the BhP. which describes how Pūtanā wandered, killing children in towns, villages and vrajas:

śiśūmāś ca cāra nighnanti puragrāmavrajādisu/2/13

Again vraja is used in the plural, while its use with 'town' and 'village' place it in a similar category of meaning.

A few examples from the three Purāṇas will suffice to show the identification of the vraja-gokula where Kṛṣṇa resided as belonging to Nanda. The Hariv. speaks of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma being herdsmen in the govraja of Nanda:

govraje nandagopasya ballavatvam prakurvatah/1/14

The ViP. describes how for seven days it rained on the gokula of Nanda:

saptarātram mahāmeghā vavarsur nandagokule/15

The BhP. states that because it was the dwelling-place of Hari, Lakṣmī disported herself in the vraja of Nanda, endowing it with all wealth:

tata ārabhya nandasya vrajah sarvasamrddhimān/  
harer nivāsātmaṅgunair ramākrīdam abhūn nrpa/18/16

All of these uses imply the existence of vraja-gokulas belonging to others than Nanda, and so contradict the notion of Braj-Gokula as the name of a particular place.

13. Ibid., X.6.2. '(Pūtanā) wandered in towns, villages and encampments, slaying children.'
14. Hariv., op.cit., 50.1. 'Performing the duties of a cowherd in the cow-encampment of Nanda...'
15. ViP., op.cit., V.11.22. 'For seven nights the great clouds rained down upon the gokula of Nanda.'
16. BhP., op.cit., X. 'From that time the encampment of Nanda, endowed with all wealth, became the place of Ramā's sport, through virtue of being the dwelling-place of Hari.'

Vaudeville sees a distinction between vraja as the pasture-land and gokula as the encampment of the cowherd tribe.<sup>17</sup> Such a distinction is not, however, substantiated by the Purāṇic texts. The pasture-land is the vana, in particular Vṛndāvana, which is contrasted with the vraja and gokula which are both used for the inhabited area, though vana and the gokula-vraja together comprise the rural scene as opposed to the city of Mathurā.

Contrast between vana and vraja, wherein the vraja is the habitation of the cowherds and gopīs, while vana is the wild area where the cattle are taken to graze, can be frequently observed in the Hariv. One example may be seen in the incident where Kṛṣṇa is struggling with Kāliya in a pool of the Yamunā specified as being in Vṛndāvana by an earlier verse.<sup>18</sup> At that time the cowherd boys are said to return to the vraja to inform the others such as Nanda of the misfortune, thus indicating the nature of the vraja as an inhabited area:

etasminn antare bhītā gopālāḥ sarva eva te/  
krandamānā vrajaṁ jagmur vāspasamdigdhayā girā/14/<sup>19</sup>

The term gokula is used much less frequently by the Hariv. and if any difference of meaning can be detected, it is that gokula can be understood as the actual herds of cattle rather

17. Ch. Vaudeville, 'Braj, lost and found', Indo-Iranian Journal, 18 (1976), p.198.

65.30.

18. Hariv., op.cit., /kadācit tu tadā kṛṣṇo vinā saṁkarṣaṇam gurum/  
ścācāra tadvanavaram kāmārūpī varāṇaṇaḥ/  
 'Then once the handsome Kṛṣṇa, capable of assuming any form, wandered to that most excellent forest without the elder Sankarṣaṇa.'

19. Ibid., 56.14. 'In the meantime all the cowherd boys, frightened, went weeping to the settlement, their speech indistinct with tears.'

than the encampment. For example, in the context of the lifting of Govardhana it is said that the gokula was kept dry:

nirjalam gokulam krtvā dhrto govardhano girih/<sup>20</sup>

Here there is no clear indication, as there was with vraja above, that gokula is meant to be understood as an encampment.

No such ambiguity remains in the ViP. and BhP. where gokula and vraja are used with equal frequency and clearly synonymously. The ViP., for example, speaks of Kṛṣṇa as living in gokula when Pūtānā arrives:

vasatām gokule tesām pūtānā bālaghātini/<sup>21</sup>

The contrast between the vraja-gokula is as evident in the ViP. as it is in the Hariv. A passage describes, for example, how Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma return to the vraja in the evening with cows and cowherd boys after wandering in the wood during the day:

krīdantau tau vane tasminā ceratus tuṣṭamānasau/<sup>49/</sup>  
vikāle ca samam gobhir gopavṛndasamanvitau/  
vihrtvātha yathāyogam vrajam etya mahābalau/<sup>50/</sup><sup>22</sup>

The vana versus vraja contrast is similarly evident in the BhP. Kṛṣṇa tells the gopīs who have come to the vana attracted by the music of his flute, to return to the vraja:

prativāta vrajam neha stheyam strībhiḥ sumadhyamāh/<sup>23</sup>

He says that they have seen the beauties of the vana, which he

20. Ibid., 65.30. 'Keeping the gokula dry he held the mountain Govardhana.'

op.cit.,  
21. ViP., V.5.7. 'When those two were living in the gokula, Pūtānā, the murderess of children, ...'

22. Ibid., V.6.49-50. 'Those two, with happy hearts, wandered, playing in the forest. Then in the evening, those two of mighty strength returned to the settlement with the cows, surrounded by groups of cowherd boys, having disported themselves as was fit.'

23. BhP., op.cit., X.29.19. 'Return to the settlement. Women should not remain here, Oh beautiful ladies.'

describes as blossoming, lit by moonbeams, and adorned with trees rustling in the breeze from the Yamunā river:

dr̥ṣṭam vanam kusumitam rākeśakararañjitam/  
yamunānilalīlajattarupallavaśobhitam//<sup>24</sup>

All of these images evoke the atmosphere of the wood, romantic and uninhabited, which is in total contrast to the vraja, the gostha, where the relatives of the gopīs are lying asleep, and to which Kṛṣṇa urges them to return and serve their husbands:

tad yātam mā ciraṁ goṣṭham śuśrūṣadhvam patīn satīn//<sup>25</sup>

A contrast is thus maintained in all three Purāṇas between the vraja-gokula, the inhabited area, where the child Kṛṣṇa is brought up, and Vṛndāvana, the uncultivated, wooded pasture-land, where the boy Kṛṣṇa takes the cattle to graze, plays with the cowherd boys, and sports with the gopīs.

An almost identical pattern is to be found in the padas of the Sūrasāgara. The same contrast between Braj-Gokula and Vṛndāvana may be observed, for example, in numerous padas dealing with the theme of Kṛṣṇa taking the cows to graze in Vṛndāvana. In one pada, Kṛṣṇa expresses concern about the fact that night may fall while they are still in the forest and says that they should return to Braj:

brajahim gatau ēī aba sām̐jha/  
surabhī sabai lehu āgaim kari hoi jani banahim mām̐jha//<sup>26</sup>

Other padas describe the beauty of Kṛṣṇa as he returns from the forest to Braj in the evening. He is described as

24. Ibid., X.29.21. '(You) have seen the forest in flower, moonlit, adorned with tree-twigs agitated by the sports of the Yamunā river breeze.'

25. Ibid., X.29.22. 'Then return without delay to the settlement and serve your husbands, O pure women.'

26. Sūradāsa, op.cit., pada 1090. 'Let us go to Braj; evening has come now. Take all the cows, herding them in front. Let it not fall (while we are in) the forest.'

being surrounded by the cows and cowherd boys who have been wandering in the forest all day:

samdhya samaya gopa godhana samga bana taim bani  
braja āvata/<sup>27</sup>

Sūradāsa, thus, maintains the same contrast between the inhabited Braj-Gokula and the uninhabited vana as the three Purāṇas discussed above.

Like the Purāṇas, Sūradāsa sees Braj-Gokula as the location for the majority of the babyhood līlās, as well as incidents connected with the birth of Kṛṣṇa. This can be seen in a pada describing the celebration of this birth:

ānanda atisai bhayau ghara ghara nṛtya thāvamhim thāmva/  
nanda dvāraim bhenta lai lai umahyau gokula gāmva/<sup>28</sup>

Vṛndāvana, on the other hand, besides being the place where the cattle are taken to graze, also forms the background for the rāsa. Sūradāsa describes how the gopīs go running to the wood when they hear the sound of the flute.<sup>29</sup> As in the BhP., Kṛṣṇa asks the gopīs why they have come to the wood at night:

nisi kāhaim banakaum uthi dhāim/<sup>30</sup>

The contrast between Vṛndāvana and the inhabited community of Braj emerges when Kṛṣṇa laughingly suggests that they have lost their way to Braj as they were returning from selling curds in Mathurā:

27. Ibid., pada 1097. 'In the evening the cowherd boy, looking beautiful, comes with the cows from the wood to Braj.'

28. Ibid., pada 644. 'There was great joy in every home and dance in various places. Bringing gifts to the door of Nanda, the whole of Gokula village overflowed (with joy).'

29. Ibid., pada 1621. cali bana benu sunata jaba dhāi/  
'When they went running to the forest on hearing the flute ...'

30. Ibid., pada 1629. 'Why have you come running to the forest at night?'

hamai hamai syāma kahata haim sumdari ki tuma

braja māragahim bhulāim/

gaī rahīm dadhi becana mathurā tahām āju avasera lagāi/<sup>31</sup>

In the Sūrasāgara, the vana is also the scene of the meeting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa - an aspect of Vṛndāvana absent from the Purāṇic portrayal. Kṛṣṇa is quoted as asking Rādhā to go with him to Vṛndāvana:

bātani lai rādhā lai/

calahu jaiva bipina brndā kahata syāma bujhāi/<sup>32</sup>

Further padas describe how the youthful Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, imbued with the essence of love, disport themselves in Vṛndāvana:

navala gupāla navellī rādhā naye prema-rasa pāge/

antara bana bihāra dou krīdata āpu āpu anurāge/<sup>33</sup>

In fact, the concept of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa together as a couple is generally in the context of Vṛndāvana, not Braj. Sūradāsa does describe a few episodes where Rādhā meets Kṛṣṇa in Braj, as for example, when Kṛṣṇa calls her to milk the cows and all the sakhīs question why she who is from Vṛṣabhānupurā has come to milk in Braj.<sup>34</sup> However, even in situations such as these Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are not actually united, so it can be argued that the vana alone is the scene for their true union.

Though the essential contrast between Braj-Gokula and Vṛndāvana is basically the same in the Sūrasāgara as in the BhP., there does appear to be a basic difference in the definition of Braj-Gokula, i.e. its use suggests the connotation of a proper

31. Ibid., pada 1629. 'Laughingly Syāma says, "Or have you forgotten the way to Braj? You went to sell curds in Mathurā and there became late."

32. Ibid., pada 1301. 'With his words he brought Rādhā. "Come, let us go to the forest of Vṛndā", says Syāma, with full intent.'

33. Ibid., pada 1304. 'Youthful Gopāla and youthful Rādhā, imbued with the fresh essence of love, both disport themselves in the forest, each one full of love.'

34. Ibid., pada 1340. yaha vṛṣabhānupurā ye braja main kahām duhāvana āi/ 'Why has this girl from the city of Vṛṣabhānu come milking in Braj.'

name rather than that of a general term. Sūradāsa never uses Braj or Gokula in the plural, nor does he ever qualify them with the possessive adjective 'of Nanda'. The one and only pada which mentions the move to Vṛndāvana is inconclusive. It merely says that Yaśodā and Nanda decide that since disasters befall them daily in Gokula, they should go and settle in Vṛndāvana:

mahara mahari kaim mana yaha āī/  
gokula hota upadra yaha āī/rati basie brmdāvana main jāī/<sup>35</sup>

This does not make it clear whether Gokula is a place or a movable encampment. Apart from this single verse which could well be a later interpolation attempting to put the Sūrasāgara in line with the BhP, there is every indication that Braj-Gokula is a settled place near Vṛndāvana, and that no move is involved; especially since Braj-Gokula continues to be the term given to the inhabited area in verses which in the time sequence of the events of Kṛṣṇa's life should follow the above verse.

The frequent juxtaposition of both Braj and Gokula with qualifying terms including 'village' (gāmva) and 'town' (sahara) supports the supposition that Braj-Gokula has in the Sūrasāgara the connotation of a particular place. These suggest the sense of a proper name, i.e. 'the village called Gokula'. Sūradāsa says, for example, that at the birth of Kṛṣṇa all of the people of the city of Gokula were overjoyed:

ānamdamagana nara gokula sahara ke/<sup>36</sup>

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35. Ibid., pada 1020. 'This thought entered the minds of (his) mother and father, "Everyday there are disasters in Gokula. We should go and settle in Mathurā."'

36. Ibid., pada 648. 'The men of Gokula city were absorbed in joy.'

Braj is used in a similar sense in a verse which describes Kṛṣṇa as he returns to the city of Braj from grazing the cattle in the woods:

pahumce āi syāma brajapura main gharahim cale mohana bala āche<sup>37</sup>

The difference of such statements from those of the BhP. where the vraja is specifically differentiated from both town and village (see above p.145) is obvious.

The above discussion shows how the three Purāṇas and the Sūrasāgara share certain basic elements in the portrayal of Vṛndāvana, among which the contrast between the inhabited Braj-Gokula and the forest Vṛndāvana is of primary significance. In this context the similar contrast in the Vedic myth of Purūravas and Urvaśī between the village (grāma) and the forest (āranya). The presence of this parallel suggests that such a contrast forms a basic mythological motif, possibly having reference to two stages in the evolution of creation - the vana representing Eden, while the grāma is the evolved material world of time and space.

It may be noted, however, that none of the above texts suggest any gradation between Vṛndāvana and Braj-Gokula in their respective importance - both are portrayed as being on the same plane. The interrelation between the two is reflected in the constant movement of Kṛṣṇa back and forth between Braj-Gokula and Vṛndāvana.

All of the four texts discussed above accept in one way or another the concept of the divinity as comprising two aspects -

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37. Ibid., pada 1145. 'Syāma reached the city of Braj; Mohana and Bala went home.'

Viṣṇu as transcendent and Kṛṣṇa the immanent incarnation. In the Hariṣ. and ViP. the process of incarnation is presented as a series of events within time and space while the BhP. and the Sūrasāgara emphasize the metaphysical dimensions of the concept; nevertheless, all four texts accept the same basic mythological structure. It is not surprising, therefore, that all four use the same mythological pattern in their portrayal of Vṛndāvana.

#### ii. The symbolic representation

The overlapping of the mythological and the symbolic pictures of Vṛndāvana can be seen in the Laghubbhāgavatāmṛta of Rūpa and the works of Nandadāsa - which while not rejecting outright the concept of incarnation reinterpret it insofar as Kṛṣṇa is regarded, not as an incarnation of Viṣṇu, but of himself. This involves the existence of Vṛndāvana on two levels, i.e. in Gaudīya terminology, the manifest (mythological) and the unmanifest (symbolic). In this way the two distinct approaches are reconciled, enabling the incorporation of the Purāṇic pattern to a certain extent.

The first significant difference observable in the portrayal of Vṛndāvana as found in the Laghubbhāgavatāmṛta is the lack of importance attached to the contrast between Vṛndāvana and Braj-Gokula. This emerges from a verse describing the abodes of Kṛṣṇa, which first divides them into two, i.e. Māthura and into Gokula and the city (pura):

dhāmāśya dvividham proktam māthuram dvārvatī tathā/  
māthuraś ca dvividhā prāhur gokulam puram eva ca/<sup>38</sup>

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38. Rūpa Gosvāmī, Laghubbhāgavatāmṛta, op.cit., p.249, v.175.  
'His (Kṛṣṇa's) abode was said to be divided into two -  
Māthura and Dvārvatī; and Māthura was said to be twofold -  
as Gokula and the city.'

There is thus a degree of identification of Mathurā and Gokula as being the two parts - urban and rural - of a single area, but there is no further division of Gokula, which must then be inclusive of Vṛndāvana.

The inclusive nature of the term Gokula as used by Rūpa, as well as his reinterpretation of the Purāṇic structure, is also implicit in a further statement, according to which Kṛṣṇa goes to and fro between Gokula, Mathurā and Dvāravatī in the manifest līlā alone:

tatra prakatalīlāyām eva syātām gamāgamau/  
gokule mathurāyām ca dvāravatīyām ca śārṅgīnāh/<sup>39</sup>

Here again Gokula must stand for the entire Gokula-Vṛndāvana area. The movement from one to another of these three abodes is said to occur only in the manifest līlā, i.e. in the mythological context. This concept of manifest līlā is used to explain the separation of Kṛṣṇa from the gopīs in another passage:

vraje prakatalīlāyām tīrṇ māsān viraho 'munā/<sup>40</sup>

This is in contrast to the unmanifest līlā where Kṛṣṇa disports himself in Vṛndāvana continuously and always with the inhabitants of Gokula:

preṣṭhebhya 'pi priyatamair janair gokulavāsibhih/  
vṛndāraṇye sadaivāsau vihāram kurute harih/<sup>41</sup>

Thus the manifest līlā retains the Purāṇic pattern of the contrast and relation between Braj and Mathurā, but this is absent in the unmanifest līlā where the sport in Braj-Vṛndāvana is an unbroken process.

39. Ibid., p.230, v.158. 'There, in the manifest sport, Kṛṣṇa goes to and fro between Gokula, Mathurā and Dvāravatī.'

40. Ibid., p.240, v.167. 'In Braj there is separation from him for three months in the manifest līlā.'

41. Ibid., p.246, v.172. 'With his dearest, most beloved inhabitants of Gokula, Hari always disports himself in the forest of Vṛndā.'

A further respect in which Rūpa differs from the Purāṇic texts is in the obvious gradation which may be seen in the presentation of the various abodes. This emerges even from the verse discussed above from the order in which the dhāmāṇs are enumerated. That is to say Māthura comes before Dvāravatī, indicating the precedence of Māthura; then, in the further division of Māthura, Gokula precedes the pura, showing the supremacy of Gokula above all the other abodes. The pre-eminence of Gokula becomes even more explicit in a further passage according to which though Kṛṣṇa disports himself in all three abodes eternally (i.e. in the unmanifest līlā) in Gokula his sweetness is greatest; that is to say, he finds his most complete expression:

iti dhāmatraye kṛṣṇo viharaty eva sarvadā/  
tatrāpi gokule tasya mādhuri sarvato 'dhikā//<sup>42</sup>

This particular sweetness which is said to exist in Braj—Gokula alone (vraja eva) is fourfold, consisting of majesty, sport flute and beauty of form:

caturdhā mādhuri tasya vraja eva virājate/  
aiśvaryakṛīdayor venos tathā śrīvigrahasya ca//<sup>43</sup>

All of these statements point to an intentional and overt elevation in the status of Gokula-Vṛndāvana above that of Dvāravatī and Mathurā, an elevation possibly inherent in the BhP. but never emphasized in this way.

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43. Ibid., p.254, v.181. 'Thus in the triple abodes Hari ever disports himself; still in Gokula his sweetness is greatest.'
44. Ibid., p.256, v.183. 'His fourfold sweetness only appears in Braj, (that is) majesty, sport, the flute and a beautiful form.'

Nandadāsa resembles Rūpa insofar as he retains the BhP. mythological structure of Vṛndāvana-Braj-Mathurā, but gives importance only to the contrast between Mathurā and Vṛndāvana-Braj, not to that between Vṛndāvana and Braj. This can be seen in the Bhramaragīta where both Vṛndāvana and Braj are contrasted with Mathurā. The use of Braj in this context can be seen in a verse where the gopīs tell Uddhava that in leaving Mathurā and coming to Gokula to teach Yoga, he has made a mistake since only people with love live here:

madhubana sudhihim bisārikai āye gokula māhim/  
ita saba premi basata haim tumarau gāmhaka nāhim/<sup>45</sup>

Vṛndāvana is used in a similar way when Uddhava entreats Kṛṣṇa, who is in Mathurā to return to Vṛndāvana and the company of the gopīs:

puni puni kahai he syāma jāya brmdāvana rahiya/  
parama prema ko punja jahām gopī samga lahiya/<sup>46</sup>

Something of the Gauḍīya concept of manifest and unmanifest līlā would also appear to be reflected in the Virahamañjarī of Nandadāsa which, though the whole poem is based on the theme of Kṛṣṇa's absence from Braj-Vṛndāvana, says in the introduction that Kṛṣṇa always resides in Vṛndāvana:

sadā bassu brmdāvana dhāmā/<sup>47</sup>

The reference must be to the unmanifest līlā. A similar allusion is also detectable in the last verse of the Bhramaragīta which says

45. Nandadāsa, Bhramaragīta, op. cit., v.55. 'Forgetting Madhubana you have come to Gokula. Here dwell only those with love, not your customers.'

46. Ibid., v.72. '(Uddhava) said again and again to Syāma, "Go and stay in Vṛndāvana, where you will have the company of the gopīs who are formed of supreme love.'

47. Nandadāsa, Virahamañjarī, in Nandadāsa-granthāvalī, op.cit., v.6. 'He always dwells in the abode of Vṛndāvana.'

that Kṛṣṇa showed himself to be one with the gopīs, and then cast again the net of illusion and hid his form of sport (bihāra):

gopī āpa dikhāi eka karikai banavāri/  
ūdhau ke bhare naina dāri vyāmohaka jāri/  
apanau rūpa bihāra kau līho bahuri durāya/<sup>48</sup>

The divergence of Nandadāsa from the mythological preoccupations of the BhP., despite certain apparent similarities, emerges clearly from the description of Vṛndāvana in the Rāsapāñicādhyaī. This account contains elements which have no counterpart in the BhP. and which can be identified as characteristic of the symbolic description of Vṛndāvana. Among these is the description of a dais upon which a sixteen-petalled lotus, circular in shape (oakṛārti), is situated:

taham ika mani-maya-amka citra ko samkha subhaga ati/  
tāpara godasa-dala-saroja adbhuta oakṛārti/<sup>3/49</sup>

Kṛṣṇa is said to be enthroned in the centre of this lotus on its seed-pod (karinikā):

madhi kamanīya karinikā saba sukha sundara-kandara/  
taham rājata brajarāja kumvarabara rasika puramdara/<sup>50</sup>

These motifs, i.e. a dais, a sixteen-petalled lotus, the central seed-pod of the lotus as the seat of the deity, and the circular area, all occur frequently in texts to be examined and characterize the symbolic portrayal of Vṛndāvana as opposed to the mythological.

48. Nandadāsa, Bhramar op.cit., v.75. 'Banavāri showed himself and the gopīs to be one. Having cast a deluding net over the tear-filled eyes of Uddhava, he again caused his sportive form to disappear.'

49. Nandadāsa, Rāsap., op.cit., I.31. 'There is a bejeweled dais, made of variegated shell, extremely beautiful. Upon that is a sixteen-petaled lotus, astonishing, circular in shape.'

50. Ibid., I.32. 'In the centre is a lovely pericarp, the beautiful source of all happiness; there is enthroned the Lord of Braj, the best of youths, the foremost of rasikas.'

Later in the text a connexion is made between the circular area depicted as a sixteen-petalled lotus and the circular rāsa dance which is depicted as taking place upon the lotus:

ārambhita adbhuta surāsa uhi kamala-cakra para/<sup>51</sup>

In this way, a link is formed between the concept of a circle already present in the rāsamandala of the three Purāṇas and the Sūrasāgara, and the concept of Vṛndāvana as a circular area. It is arguable that in both the symbolic element is present, but in the mythological texts it is presented as an event, while in the symbolic expression it is an image of an unchanging condition.

Though the term rāsamandala is not used in the Hariv., the circular concept appears even here in a verse which describes Kṛṣṇa as being surrounded by a circle (cakravāla) of gopīs:

evam sa kṛṣṇo gopīnām cakravālair alamkṛtaḥ/  
śaradīṣu śacandrāṣu niśāsu munude sukhī/<sup>52</sup>

In the ViP. and the BhP., on the other hand, the term rāsamandala is frequently used for the formation of the gopīs around Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. The ViP. describes how Kṛṣṇa forms the rāsamandala taking the hands of the gopīs, one by one:

hastena grhya caikaikām gopīnām rāsamandalam/  
cakāra tatkerasparśanimīlitadrśam hariḥ/<sup>53</sup>

51. Ibid., V.4. 'The extraordinary rāsa started on that lotus circle.'

52. Hariv., op.cit., 63.45. 'Thus that joyful Kṛṣṇa adorned by circles of gopīs, rejoiced in the moonlit, autumn night.'

53. ViP. op.cit., V.13.50. 'Having taken by the hand the gopīs, one by one, whose eyes closed at the touch of his hand, Hari formed the rāsa circle.'

Similarly, the BhP. relates how the rāsa festival formed by the circle (mandala) of gopīs was initiated by Kṛṣṇa:

rāsotsavah sampravṛtto gopīmandalamanditah/  
yogeshvarena kṛṣṇena tāsām madhye dvayor dvayoh/<sup>54</sup>

A slightly more spatial element is introduced into the concept of the circular rāsa by Sūradāsa when he specifies the area encompassed by the rāsamandala as being twelve kośa in perimeter:

kośa dvādasa rāsa parimita racyau nandakumāra/<sup>55</sup>

The general picture is still, however, that of a circle formed in dance.

From the above discussion it appears that the circle (mandala) is throughout an important element in the concept of Vṛndāvana, basically disconnected from any geographical features. Whereas this element appears in the three Purāṇas and the Sūrasāgara in the form of a mythological event, it is given a more concrete symbolic form by Nandadāsa as the circular lotus within which the rāsa occurred. The similarity of this type of symbolic imagery with that of the yantra would seem to be more than coincidental. Not only the circle but also the lotus with its pericarp as the central form are basic yantric images.

54. BhP., op.cit., X.33.3. 'The rāsa festival, formed by circles of gopīs, was initiated by Kṛṣṇa, the lord of yoga, (who was) between every two of them.'

55. Sūradāsa, op.cit., pada 1752. 'Nandakumāra formed the rāsa, twelve kośa in perimeter.'

A text which exhibits the comparability of the conception of Vṛndāvana with a yantra at its most explicit is the Brahma-saṁhitā. Passages of this work are included in the Laṅghabhāṣavatāmṛta and it also has a commentary attributed to Jīva Gosvāmī. Both these facts suggest a pre-Gosvāmī date for the text, as well as indicating its acceptability within the Gaudīya theological framework. A comparison of the terminology of this text with that of Tantric accounts of yantra show evidence of an intention to portray a yantra-like form. At the same time the similarity in a number of respects with the description of Vṛndāvana by Nandadāsa is noteworthy.

A first point which may be observed is that the term Gokula is used in this text very much in accordance with the Rūpa Gosvāmī interpretation, i.e. as a general term for the abode of Kṛṣṇa not distinct from Vṛndāvana. It is also clearly not meant here in the Purāṇic sense of a cowherd encampment, but instead is used as a proper name.

The description begins with the lotus imagery already observed in Nandadāsa. In this case, Gokula is said to be a thousand-petalled lotus:

sahasrapatram kamalam gokulākhyam mahat padam<sup>56</sup>

Comparable uses of the thousand-petalled lotus image can be found, for example, in the Lakṣmī-tantra, a Pañcarātra text, which describes how the first stage of meditation upon Viṣṇu involves the visualization of a thousand-petalled lotus within which the

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56. Brahma-saṁhitā, commentary Jīva Gosvāmī, ed. A. Avalon, Calcutta, 1928, v.2. 'The thousand-petalled lotus called Gokula, the great abode.'

deity has its abode:

tatah samutthitam padmam dhyāyet ksīrāṇavodarāt/ ...  
sahasradalasaṃpannam sahasrakīraṇāvṛtam/  
sahasraraśmi-saṃkāśam tatprasthe cāsanam nyaset/<sup>57</sup>

In this case the thousand-petalled lotus is an image symbolizing the transcendental realm of the divine for the purposes of meditation. As will be seen, ritualized meditation also appears to be involved in such representation of Vṛndāvana.

The image of a thousand-petalled lotus is similarly used for the highest of the eight cakras, or spiritual centres within the body:

visargādhah padmam daśaśatadalam pūrnacandrātīśubhram/<sup>58</sup>

Here it represents the supreme spiritual state and hence is essentially identical in its connotations with both the thousand-petalled abode of the deity and the thousand-petalled Gokula, i.e. a symbolically spatial representation of a metaphysical concept.

The similarity of the Brahma-saṃhitā with both Nandadāsa and tantric texts is further observable in its definition of the pericarp of this lotus as the abode of Kṛṣṇa:

tatkarnikāram taddhāma tadanantāṃśasambhavam/<sup>59</sup>

57. Lakṣmī-tantra, ed. V. Krishnamacharya, Adyar, 1959.  
 36.10-12. 'Then one should meditate on the lotus which arises from the interior of the ocean of milk ..., thousand-petalled surrounded by a thousand rays, like the sun. In the back of that should be placed the seat.'
58. Satcakranirūpanam, ed. A. Avalon, Calcutta, 1913, v.40.  
 'Below the visarga is the thousand-petalled lotus, radiant as the full moon.'
59. BrSam, op.cit., v.2. 'The pericarp of that (is) his (Kṛṣṇa's) abode, (and has) arisen from his infinite portions.'

The Tantric parallel can be found, for example, in a statement of the Mahānirvāṇa-tantra to the effect that the main deity is to be situated in the pericarp of the lotus drawn in the yantra for the purposes of worship.<sup>60</sup> The pericarp is thus seen as the innermost point of the lotus and in all yantric diagrams, the central point represents the subtlest essence which gradually evolves into grosser forms as it moves outwards.

The Tantric parallel continues to be observable in the second verse of the Brahma-saṃhitā where the above described pericarp is portrayed as hexagonal in shape (satkoṇa) and is specifically termed a yantra:

karnikāraṃ mahadyantram satkoṇam vajrakīlakam/<sup>61</sup>

The hexagon image may again be compared with that of the Mahānirvāṇa-tantra which describes how in the construction of a yantra the sequence should be first a triangle around which is drawn a circle; around that is inscribed a hexagon and the outermost boundary is quadrilateral.<sup>62</sup> Even this particular sequence is more or less observed by the Brahma-saṃhitā when it describes the hexagon as being surrounded by a quadrangle called Svetadvīpa, the four corners of which form the fourfold

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60. Mahānirvāṇa-tantra, ed. Arthur Avalon, Madras, 1927, 5.179.

'Having established the deities of the seats in accordance with the rites for the placing of seats, and having worshipped (them), one should worship the original deity in the centre of the pericarp.'

61. BrSāṃ, op.cit., v. 'The pericarp (is) a great yantra, a hexagon, with a diamond wedge.'

62. MahāT., op.cit., athātmayantrayor madhye māyāgarbham trikoṇakam/vṛttam satkoṇam ālikhya caturasram likhed vahih//

'Then having inscribed the triangular māyā-interior, a circle and a hexagon between oneself and the yantra, a quadrangle should be drawn outside.'

abode of the four forms (presumably the caturvyūha -  
Vāsudeva, Sankarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha):

caturasram tatparitah śvetadvīpākhyam adbhutam/  
caturasram caturmūrti caturdhāma catuskṛtam/<sup>63</sup>

There is thus an unmistakable resemblance between the description of a yantra as found in a Tantric text and the representation of Gokula in a Vaiṣṇava text.

In the Brahma-saṁhitā, not only is the main deity situated in the pericarp of the lotus, but the filaments of the lotus are allocated to the portions of this deity, while the śrīs, i.e. the female energies identifiable with the gopīs, are situated on the petals:

tatkinjalkam tadamsānām tatpatrāṇi śriyām api/<sup>64</sup>

This can be compared with the way in which minor deities or aspects of śakti are situated on the various filaments and petals of the lotus in a yantra. The Tantrarāja, for example, describes the śaktis who are to be worshipped on each of the eight petals of the cakra of the Śrī Yantra.<sup>65</sup> Such a placement can also be compared with the encircling of the gopīs around Kṛṣṇa in the Purāṇas, only the yantric image is a static one. It again suggests, however, that a single concept is being presented in two different ways - one mythological, the other symbolic.

63. BrSām., op.cit., v. 6. 'Around it is the marvellous quadrangle called Śvetadvīpa. The four corners are the four abodes - the four forms, fourfold.'

64. Ibid., v.5. 'Its filament belongs to his portions and its petals to the śrīs.'

65. Tantrarāja-tantra, ed. A. Avalon, London, 1918, 4.77.

astasy api ca patresu trtīyāvarane sthitāh/

'And remaining on the eight petals in the third enclosure...'

That the Brahma-saṁhitā was accepted, particularly in its view of Vṛndāvana, by the Gauḍīya sect is supported by the fact that identical images and features can be found in a Braj Bhāṣā Gauḍīya account of Vṛndāvana - the Vṛndāvana yogapīṭha ascribed to Gadādhara Bhaṭṭa. The use of yogapīṭha in the title is in itself significant, since the term pīṭha is used both for the four main geographical seats of śakti worship as well as for the seat of the deity in a yantra. A homology is thus found between the geographical place (the pīṭha) and a symbolic formation (the yantra) in the Tantric texts<sup>64</sup> similar to that made in the case of Vṛndāvana by the Vaiṣṇava texts.

Like the Brahma-saṁhitā, the Vṛndāvana yogapīṭha describes the pīṭha as a thousand-petalled lotus with filaments between each petal:

tā mandapa maha yogapīṭha pañcaka ruçi lāgī/  
tāke mana mem udaya hota jo koṁ badabhāgī/17/  
tāke patra vicitra sahasra madhya kiñjalkai/  
padmarāga kī bhānti agra muktā mañi jhalakai//65

This in itself might not be enough to indicate direct influence, since the image of a thousand-petalled has been seen to be a common one. The Brahma-saṁhitā also describes, however, the pericarp as being vajrakīlakaṁ, an uncommon phrase meaning literally

64. Cf. Yoginīhrdayadīpikā, Benaras, 1923, commentary Amṛtananda Nātha, v.41, p.36. etāś catasrah śaktayas tu kā pū jā o iti kramāt/ 'These four śaktis, Kā, Pū, Jā, and O, in this order.' According to the commentary kā stands for Kāmarūpa, pū for Pūrṇagīri, jā for Jālandhara and o for Oḍḍāna.

65. Gadādhara bhaṭṭajī kī vāñi, Vṛndāvana, 1958, v.17-18. 'In that is a lotus seat, liking for which arises in the heart of one who is very fortunate. Between its variegated thousand petals are filaments, and on their tips pearls gleam like rubies.'

'having a diamond wedge or pin'. Exactly the same phrase is used by Gadādhara Bhaṭṭa to describe the pericarp:

kanaka barana karnikā kīla bajrana kī soha /<sup>66</sup>

The term kīla or kīlaka is apparently used for the inner syllables of a mantra.<sup>67</sup> Such syllables are inscribed on a yantra, thus combining a symbolism of sound and form. The connexion of the mantras is borne out by the second half of the verse from the Vṛndāvana yogapīṭha which goes on to speak of the greatness of the ten-syllabled mantra:

mantradasākṣara rūpa kahana mahimāko ko hai /<sup>19/68</sup>

The use in both texts of the identical phrase suggests that the Braj Bhāṣā text was familiar with the images of the Brahma-saṁhitā. This in turn indicates the acceptance by the Gaudīya sect of this symbolic picture of Vṛndāvana, particularly for the purposes of ritual meditation.

The Padma Purāṇa is another text which shows a yantric symbolic representation of Vṛndāvana combined with an emphasis on the eternal and unceasing nature of the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Passages from this text are quoted by the Gaudīya Gosvāmīs, indicating that at least parts of it predate them. The rejection of the concept of the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa as an event can be seen in the statement to the effect that the gopīs, the cowherd boys, Vṛndāvana and the Kṛṣṇa incarnation are all eternal:

66. Ibid., v.19. 'The golden pericarp, a wedge of diamond, looks beautiful.'

67. M. Monier Williams, op.cit., p.285, col.2.

68. Gadādhara, op.cit., y.19. 'Who can describe the glory of the ten-syllabled mantra.'

nityam me mathurām viddhi vanam vṛndāvanam tathā/  
yamunām gopakanyās ca tathā gopālabālakāh//  
mamāvatāro nityo 'yam atra mā samśayam kṛthāh/  
mameśtā hi sadā rādhā sarvajña 'ham parātparah/<sup>69</sup>

Such a concept of the eternal Kṛṣṇa incarnation is very much in accord with the Gaudīya theology as expressed, for example, in the Laghubhāgavatāmṛta.

If Mandadāsa can be said to combine the symbolic and the mythological aspects of Vṛndāvana, the PadP. combines the symbolic and the geographical forms of imagery. Geographical imagery will be discussed at length later in the chapter (see below p. 185 ); for the moment it may be noted that salient features of such imagery is the treatment of Vṛndāvana as one of twelve woods surrounding Mathurā, and the designation of the entire area as Māthuramaṇḍala. The enumeration of the twelve woods can be found in the PadP.:

bhadraśrīlohabhāṇḍīramahātālakhadīrakhāh/  
bakulam kumudam kānyam madhu vṛndāvanam tathā/<sup>70</sup>

However, such a limitation of Vṛndāvana as being no more than one of twelve other woods is contradicted by other passages which treat Vṛndāvana either as encompassing the entire area or as the innermost centre of the entire area (see below p. 170 ). In neither of these cases is the conception of Vṛndāvana geographical in nature, it is celestial and symbolic. The inclusion of Vṛndāvana as one of twelve woods along with these other statements would therefore appear to be an attempt

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69. Padma Purāṇa, ed. V.N. Maṇḍalika, Poona 1894. 'Know my Mathurā to be eternal and also the wood Vṛndāvana, with the Yamunā, the gopīs, and the cowherd boys. My incarnation is eternal; have no doubt about this. My beloved is always Rādhā, I am omniscient and supreme.'

70. Ibid., 4.69.16. 'Bhadra, Śrī, Loha, Bhāṇḍīra, Mahā, Tāla, Khadīraka, Bakula, Kumuda, Kāmya, Madhu, and Vṛndāvana.'

to incorporate the geographical picture into a basically symbolic layout.

A similar duality of interpretation can be observed in the use of the term Māthuramaṇḍala which could be seen as meaning no more than the geographical area of Mathurā with no particular connotations of a circular area. However, the PadP. makes the symbolic, circular connotations of the maṇḍala in this context clear by describing the Māthuramaṇḍala as having the form of a thousand-petalled lotus and as being encircled by the cakra of Viṣṇu:

sahasrapatrakamalākāram māthuramaṇḍalam/  
viṣṇucakraparimāṇam dhāma vaiṣṇavam adbhutam//<sup>71</sup>

The image of the Viṣṇu cakra not only emphasizes its circular nature but also its character as a supramundane realm.

Geographical consideration are thus clearly subordinate to symbolic representation.

Other yantric images used by the PadP. in its portrayal of Vṛndāvana include that of an eight-petalled lotus within a sixteen-petalled lotus. A similar image can be found in the Tantric description of the Śrī Cakra, where the second cakra going inward is a sixteen-petalled lotus and the third cakra is eight-petalled.<sup>72</sup>

The integration of the geographical and the symbolic can be seen in the way in which the twelve vanas are depicted as being situated on the various petals of these lotuses, along with the various scenes of Kṛṣṇa's līlās. For example, the

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71. Ibid., 4.69.14. 'Māthuramaṇḍala, having the shape of a thousand-petalled lotus, measured by the discus of Viṣṇu, is the extraordinary Vaiṣṇava abode.'

72. Cf. Arthur Avalon's description in the introduction to TantraT., op.cit., p.6-7, and also Yoginīhrdaya, op.cit., v.8.

seventh petal of the outer lotus is said to be Bakulavana,  
while the eighth petal is Tālavana where the demon Dhenuka was  
killed by Kṛṣṇa:

saptamam bakulāranyam dalam ranyam prakīrtitam/  
tatrāstamam tālavanam tatra dhenuvadhah smrtah//<sup>73</sup>

That Vṛndāvana is on a higher level than the rest of the  
Māthuramaṇḍala is indicated by its being called the pericarp of  
the thousand-petalled lotus:

sahasradalapadmasya vṛndāranya varātakam/<sup>74</sup>

The importance of the pericarp in yantric diagrams has been  
discussed above and the use of this image once again shows the  
basically symbolic preoccupations of the PadP. It differs from  
the mythological layout insofar as Vṛndāvana becomes a central  
point, on a higher level from the rest of the Māthuramaṇḍala.

The description of the pericarp itself in the PadP. is  
remarkably similar to the description of Vṛndāvana in the  
Rāsapañcādhyaī of Nandadāsa. The PadP. describes how an  
octagonal yogapīṭha is situated in Vṛndāvana:

tanmadhye mañjubhavane yogapīṭham samujjvalam/  
tadastakonanirmānam nāṇādiptimanoharam//<sup>75</sup>

Upon this yogapīṭha is a jewelled throne:

tasyopari ca māṇikyaratnasimbhāsanam śubham/<sup>76</sup>

This can be compared with the bejewelled dais described by  
Nandadāsa. The PadP. further describes how an eight-petalled

73. PadP., op.cit., 4.69.44 'The seventh lovely petal is famed as  
the Bakula forest; the eighth is the Tālavana where the  
destruction of Dhenu (took place) according to tradition.'

74. Ibid., 4.69.70. 'Vṛndāvana is the pericarp of the thousand-petalled lotus.'

75. Ibid., 4.69.81 'In the midst of that lovely palace is a radiant  
yogapīṭha. That eight-cornered construction shines with  
manifold brilliance.'

76. Ibid., 4.69.82 'Upon that is a splendid throne formed of gems  
jewels.'

lotus is situated upon this throne and in the pericarp of that lotus stands Kṛṣṇa:

tasminn astadalam padmam karnikāyām sukhāśrayam/  
govindasya param sthānam kim asya mahimocyate//<sup>77</sup>

This is paralleled by the sodasa-dala-saroja and madhi kamañiṣa karinikā of Nandadāsa. All of these are such standard yantric images, however, that it seems unnecessary to conjecture any direct relation between the two texts. It is more likely that these had become traditional images in the description of Vṛndāvana and both texts subscribed to this tradition, showing a similarity in their concept of Vṛndāvana.

Resembling the minor deities (āvarana devatās) and śaktis which are placed around the main deity in a yantra, the PadP. depicts Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as being surrounded, in the inner circle at the eight corners of the throne by the eight foremost beloveds of Kṛṣṇa:

tadbāhye yogapīthe ca svarnasimhāsanāvṛte/  
pratyaṅgarabhasāveśāḥ pradhānāḥ kṛṣṇavallabhāḥ//<sup>78</sup>

Proceeding outwards are then found four doorkeepers:

śrīdāmā paścimadvāre vasudāmā tathottare//  
sudāmā ca tathā pūrve kiṅkiṇī cāpi daksine//<sup>79</sup>

Of these two, Sudāman and Śrīdāman, correspond to childhood playmates or sakhās of Kṛṣṇa.<sup>80</sup> The other two are, in fact, puzzling since although from a previous verse which says that all four are equal in strength and prowess<sup>81</sup> it would seem that these were also intended

77. Ibid., 4.69.82 'Within that is an eight-petaled lotus having a pericarp which is the resting place of happiness. That is the supreme place of Govinda; what can be said of its glory.'

78. Ibid., 4.70.3-4 'Outside in the yogapītha which surrounds the golden throne, are the foremost beloveds of Kṛṣṇa, their every limb possessed with ardour.'

79. Ibid., 4.70.20-21. 'Śrīdāma at the western door, and Vasudāmā at the northern, Sudāmā at the eastern, and Kiṅkiṇī at the southern.'

80. Cf. BhP., op.cit., 10.15.20; Sūradāsa, op.cit., paḍa 1028.

81. PadP., op.cit., 4.70.19. samānavesavayasaḥ samānabalapauruṣāḥ/ 'Identical in dress and age, identical in strength and valour.'

as masculine names, they are actually feminine forms and can be traced as goddesses;<sup>82</sup> a fact which again suggests an association with yantras.

These doorkeepers are followed by the cowherd boys and the cows.<sup>83</sup> Then outside the yogapīṭha, on each of its four sides, lies a golden pīṭha in which one of the four vyūhas is enthroned.<sup>84</sup> This can be compared with the description of the four forms at the four corners of Gokula in the Brahma-saṁhitā. Finally, as the outermost doorkeepers, are the four Viṣṇus—white, golden, red and black, each having four arms.<sup>85</sup>

That these represent successive stages in the apprehension of the divine can be seen much more explicitly in the Braj Bhāṣā texts to be examined in due course. Even here, however, a progression can be traced in which the lowest level is represented by the four-armed Viṣṇu doorkeepers, indicating the subordination of Viṣṇu to Kṛṣṇa, as in the Gauḍīya texts. The four vyūhas are envisaged as the next stage upwards and inwards, followed by the cows and cowherd boys who are associated with the Braj līlā. The final circle is formed by the gopīs or sakhīs, while Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa occupy the innermost point.

82. Cf. M. Monier Williams, op.cit., Kinkinī, p.282, col.1, and Vasudānā, p.931, col.1.

83. PadP., op.cit., 4.70.22-25. svarnavedyantarasthe tu svaṇābharanābhūsite/ stokakṛṣṇāmsubhadrādyair gopālair ayutāyutair/22/ ... kṣaratpayobhir govindair asaṁkhyātair upāvṛtam/ 'On the (pīṭha) in the interior of the golden altar, adorned with decorations, gather round myriads of cowherd boys, such as Stokakṛṣṇa, Aṁśu and Bhadra ... and innumerable herds of cows, their udders dripping with milk.'

84. Ibid., 4.70.26-46.

85. Ibid., 4.70.59-64.

The use of the PadP. depiction of Vṛndāvana in sectarian Braj Bhāṣā texts, illustrating the compatibility of such images with sectarian views, can be seen particularly clearly in a Rādhāvallabha text attributed to one Rasikadāsa and written in A.D. 1691.<sup>86</sup> The actual title of the text as given in the colophon is Rasakadambacūdāmaṇi but it is popularly known today by the devotees of the sect as Vṛndāvana yogapīṭha, thus placing it in the same category as the yogapīṭha of Gadādhara Bhaṭṭa. In other words, it is a text describing Vṛndāvana for the purposes of ritual meditation.

Similarities with the PadP. are numerous. The same image is used of the outermost boundary being formed by the Sudarśana Cakra of Viṣṇu within which lies a thousand-petalled lotus:

sahasra sudala kau kamala kala kahyau purāna ke māṃhi/  
cakrasudarāsana para lasata samsai yāmaum nāmhi/17/<sup>87</sup>

All of the seven successive enclosures (āvaranas) are similarly described as eight or sixteen-petalled lotuses. As in the PadP. this text describes the twelve vanas and the scenes of the various līlās as being situated on the sixteen petals of the sixth enclosure.<sup>88</sup> Not only the vanas but even the upavanas correspond to those mentioned in the PadP. They are, in fact, mentioned in

86. The text is an unpublished manuscript in the collection of a Rādhāvallabha Gosvāmī, called Choṭe Sarkār in Vṛndāvana. The colophon runs: likhitam rasakadambacūdāmaṇi gramtha// samvatu sattraha sai varasa eka adhika pamoṣa// agahana vadi sasti sutitha dina dina mani suprakāsa// 'The book Rasakadambacūdāmaṇi has been written. In the year Sam. 1751, on the auspicious date of the sixth day of the dark half of the month of Agahana, it became manifest.'

87. Rasakadamba, op.cit., 2.7. 'It is described in the Purāna how the beautiful lotus with a thousand petals adorns the Sudarśana discus, there is no doubt about this.'

88. Ibid., 13.2-3. prathama bhadravana velavana puni sulohavana ehu// aru bhāṇḍirabanahi nirakhi mahavana lehu/2/ itahi tālavana khidravana bahulavana abhirāma// karahu kumudavana kāmavana madhuvana kaum paranāma/3/ 'First Bhadravana, then Velavana and beautiful Lohavana; and having seen Bhāṇḍiravana you reach Mahavana. Here itself is Tālavana, Khidravana and beautiful Bahulavana. I bow to Kumudavana, Kāmavana and Madhuvana.'

the same order, the difference being that in this text they are made to number thirty-two, as in the Brajabhaktivilāsa discussed below (see p. 191), whereas in the PadP. the number is left unclear. The PadP. says for example :

anyac copabanam proktam kṛṣṇakṛīdārasasthalam<sup>89</sup>

This would appear to mean no more than that there are other upavanas, place having the essence of Kṛṣṇa's sport. The Braj Bhāṣā text, however, has taken the phrase kṛṣṇakṛīdārasasthalam as referring to three of the upavanas, i.e. Kṛṇavana, Kṛīdāvana and Raha Asthala:

prathama kṛṣṇa vana guṇi manahi kṛīdā vana dvai jāmna/  
raha asthala hai tīsarau aurau suni dai kāmna<sup>90</sup>

This can be seen as localizing the līlās further, possibly connected with the continued process of identification of līlāsthālas, as well as the emphasis on the unity of the symbolic and geographical Vṛndāvana.

It may be observed that the structure of Vṛndāvana in both the PadP. and the Rasakadambacūdāmaṇi is basically the same, with certain modifications. In both there is a progression from Viṣṇu-doorkeepers through cowherd boy doorkeepers to the gopīs, with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the centre. In the Rasakadambacūdāmaṇi the implications of this picture, in terms of a progression towards both increasing intensity and purity of devotion and a more complete expression of the divine, are more clearly formulated.

89. PadP., 4.69.18. 'And another minor grove was described, a place having the essence of Kṛṣṇa's sport.'

90. Rasakadamba, op.cit., 13.7. 'Know in your heart the first to be Kṛṣṇa and the second as Kṛīdāvana. The secret place is the third. Listen to the rest attentively.'

The hierarchy among the forms of devotion represented in each surrounding enclosure (āvarana) is expressed by dividing the seven āvaranas into five categories, i.e. 1) the first and second outermost āvaranas are said to consist of pure majesty (aīśvarya):

prathama dutiya āvarana main kevala guṇa īśvarja/<sup>91</sup>

Among these two, those who perform devotion combined with observance of ritual and social practices, are entitled to the first āvarana:

tabām ke adhikārī kahaum nyārī rīti dīkhāi/  
bhakti karma miśrā kareṃ tana mana je ceta lāi/5/<sup>92</sup>

Those who combine devotion with knowledge, on the other hand, reach the second covering:

bhakti gyāna miśrā karata jaba je hota prapanna/  
taba te āi ihām aho pahucata haim śubha dina/8/<sup>93</sup>

As in the PadP., the doorkeepers of the first āvarana are four-armed Viṣṇus.<sup>94</sup> This is again in accordance with the theme of aīśvarya, since the four-armed Viṣṇu is always seen as inspiring awe, in contrast to the two-armed Kṛṣṇa who inspires pure love.

2) The third āvarana falls into the second category of majesty combined with sweetness (mādhurya).<sup>95</sup>

91. Ibid., 2.3. 'In the first and second enclosures, the only quality is majesty.'

92. Ibid., 3.5. 'I will describe those who are entitled to that place; those who, showing a unique method, practise devotion combined with performance of rites, with body, mind and consciousness.'

93. Ibid., 4.8. 'Those who become suppliant, performing devotion combined with knowledge, they reach here on an auspicious day.'

94. Ibid., 18.21. 'At the four doors are the doorkeepers with their śaktis; there all four are said to be four-armed, devoted to the great glory.'

95. Ibid., 2.3. prathama dutiya mem kahyau vara ati īśvarja apāra/  
aba īśvarja mādhurja kī trtiyem sandhi vicāra//

'In the first and second has been said to be the best supreme majesty. Now consider the third - the meeting of majesty and sweetness.'

3) Pure sweetness is found in the fourth to the sixth āvarana, and this sweetness is connected with Braj bhakti:

sunī caturtha āvarana tem chatha aim laum suvicāri/  
vrjāvarana nita hām hoi gaurasa mādhuburja apāra/2/<sup>96</sup>

The significance of the doorkeepers assigned to each enclosure may again be noted - cowherd boys in the case of the fifth<sup>97</sup> and the playmates (sakhās) in the case of the sixth enclosure.<sup>98</sup> This is roughly the same sequence as the PadP. and again fits in with the form of devotion ascribed to these āvaranas, i.e. Braj bhakti.

4) In the seventh āvarana, sweetness is combined with love (prema).<sup>99</sup> This prema is evidently the term used for the devotion of the gopīs, since it is here that the rāsa is portrayed as taking place.<sup>100</sup> Here also the gopīs propitiate Kātyāyanī in order to obtain Kṛṣṇa as their husband.<sup>101</sup> This particular āvarana is envisaged as forming the link between the Braj and Vṛndāvana līlās. Thus the eighth and last petal of this particular enclosure is defined as being neither Vṛndāvana nor Braj, but the meeting-place of both:

vrndāvana tem nyāre ī astama dala ye jāni/  
brjahū tem nyāre inahi lai ura maim hīm māni/53/  
vrndāvana vrja hu duni kī sandhahi samajhi vicāri/<sup>102</sup>

96. Ibid., 2.4. 'Listen with consideration (to the description) of the fourth to the sixth enclosures. This is the enclosure of Braj, where there is always the milk of unlimited sweetness.'

97. Ibid., 11.28, and 21.52-53.

98. Ibid., 12.6.

99. Ibid., 2.5. saptama jo āvarana hai tahām sunau cita lāi/  
suthi suthoma mādhuburja vara prema sahita lasāi/5/  
'In the seventh covering, listen with attention, which is very beautiful, shines the best sweetness with love.'

101. Ibid., 18.36.

102. Ibid., 18.45-46.

100. Ibid., 18.54. 'Know this eighth petal to be distinct from Vṛndāvana. Understand in your heart that it is also distinct from Braj. After consideration, realize that it is the conjunction of both Vṛndāvana and Braj.'

5) Finally, in the pericarp, only pure love exists:

tāke āgem karanikā ni ju premā suvilāsa,<sup>104</sup>

It is here that the divine couple, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa disport themselves eternally, and it is only sakhīs such as Lalitā that can enter this āvarana,<sup>105</sup> since in the devotion of the sakhīs alone is love found in its purest form. The pericarp is thus the scene for the eternal vihāra.

Corresponding to the various forms of devotion, a progression can be traced in the expression of the divine. Thus Viṣṇu is envisaged as dwelling in the second enclosure. Here he appears in two forms, i.e. as Mahāvaikunṭhanātha,<sup>106</sup> and as Viṣṇu who lies on Śeṣa.<sup>107</sup> The subordination of Viṣṇu to Kṛṣṇa in this way, as well as the portrayal of two forms of Viṣṇu, is very reminiscent of the Gaudīya texts.

The third āvarana contains the four vyūhas - Vāsudeva, Sankarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.<sup>108</sup> This can be seen as a statement about the position of the Dvārakā and Mathurā līlās, envisaged as superior to the Vaikunṭha of Viṣṇu but inferior to Braj and Vṛndāvana līlā.

The fourth, fifth and sixth āvaranas, above seen to be associated with mādhurya, are all three involved in the manifestation of Braj līlās. These include the tending of cows<sup>109</sup> as well as Kṛṣṇa's childhood sports.<sup>110</sup>

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104. Ibid., 2.6. 'Beyond that is the pericarp (where there is) the sportive expression of their own love.'

105. Ibid., II.5.1-20 and II.7.

106. Ibid., 6.4.

107. Ibid., 4.8.

108. Ibid.,

109. Ibid.,

110. Ibid.,

We have already seen how Kṛṣṇa appears as the Lord of the gopīs in the seventh covering, and finally in the pericarp itself the divine couple are found, eternally engaged in their divine play:

tāmen rājata rucira ati bhrājata mithuna kiśora<sup>111</sup>

A hierarchy is thus maintained with Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa sporting eternally with Rādhā on the highest rung; Viṣṇu on the lowest level; and Braj Kṛṣṇa in between. A contrast is thus made between Vṛndāvana and Braj, but it is different in nature from that made in the three Purāṇas and the Sūrasāgara. Here Vṛndāvana is envisaged as purely the scene for the eternal union of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. All of the līlās which in the Sūrasāgara, for example, were portrayed as taking place in Vṛndāvana, such as the rāsa and the grazing of cows, are here categorized as Braj līlās.

The above symbolic representation also differs from the mythological portrayal of events in that Vṛndāvana and Braj līlās are depicted as taking place simultaneously, each one in its own position in the yantric layout. In this way it agrees with Rūpa's concept of unmanifest līlā, in which all the facets of līlā are eternally co-existent. In the Purāṇas and Sūradāsa, on the other hand, there is a sequence of events and so a movement to and fro between Vṛndāvana and Braj. This is what Rūpa calls manifest līlā.

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111. Ibid., II.1.27. 'In that are enthroned the most beautiful, shining youthful couple.'

The correlation of the acceptance of the concept of nitya vihāra, and hence rejection of the theory of incarnation, with a symbolic, yantric portrayal of Vṛndāvana is again supported by the Mahāvānī of Harivyāsadeva. This text, whose concept of the eternal nature of the sport of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and its separateness from the process of incarnation has been discussed above (see p. 102 ), presents a picture of Vṛndāvana possessing many of the yantric elements found in the PadP., Nandadāsa and the other symbolic descriptions, though not including such specific details as to suggest direct borrowing.

The outermost boundary of Vṛndāvana in this account is said to be formed by the Yamunā river which is described as having the shape of a bracelet, i.e. as being circular:

kamkanāṅkāra saudhāri saritā/  
bahati atī surasa singāra bharitā/9/<sup>112</sup>

Such a picture of the Yamunā as encircling Vṛndāvana is absent from the mythological picture where Vṛndāvana instead is situated beside the Yamunā. The encirclement here is again reminiscent of the outer circle of a yantra, or the Sudarśana Cakra, making Vṛndāvana circular in form.

The lotus imagery is equally in evidence here. Within the area encompassed by the Yamunā is said to be a lotus with innumerable petals:

aiso nijadhāna jā madhya nitibhūmi/  
amitadala kamala ākāra rahi jhūmi//<sup>113</sup>

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112. Harivyāsadeva, op.cit., pada 3, v.9. 'The river pours forth, bracelet-shaped. It flows with the essence of love.'

113. Ibid., pada 3, v.17. 'Such is their own abode in the midst of which is the eternal ground which sways with joy, shaped as a lotus of innumerable petals.'

This can be compared with the thousand-petalled lotus found in the Brahma-saṃhitā, Gadādhara's Yogapīṭha, the PadP., and the Rasakadambacūḍāmaṇi. Moreover, as in the above texts, the next stage inward is formed by a row of eight petals:

madhya mamula baṇī aṣṭadala pānti/<sup>114</sup>

Equally familiar is the way in which each of the eight petals is described as having the bower of one of the eight main sakhīs situated upon it:

upari priya sakhini kī kumja sarasānti/18/<sup>115</sup>

The sakhīs here are equivalent to the śaktis found similarly situated in Tantric yantras.

From here on, the text proceeds to combine yantric elements with palace imagery. That the two are basically compatible has been pointed out by Eliade in his discussion of the mandala, in which he sees royal symbolism as playing an important part.<sup>116</sup> It is, of course totally absent from the Purāṇas. The Mahāvāṇi describes how a palace with eight doors stands in the centre of four lakes:

cahum saravarana ke madhya sohem/  
mahala atbadvāra chavi kom vimohem/<sup>117</sup>

The image of four lakes is also present in the Rasakadambacūḍāmaṇi where they are said to be in the seventh āvaraṇa.<sup>118</sup> This image

114. Ibid., pada 3, v.18. 'In the midst is a lovely row of eight petals.'

115. Ibid., pada 3, v.18. 'Upon them flourish the bowers of the dear sakhīs.'

116. M. Eliade, Yoga, immortality and freedom, New York, 1958, pp.220-221.

117. Harivyāsadeva, op.cit., pada 3, v.23. 'In the centre of the four lakes stands the eight-doored palace which enchants beauty itself.'

118. Rasakadamba, op.cit., I.18.9. ihi sapṭama āvaraṇa kī dutiya tarama ke māṃjha/ cārī sarovara aṣṭadala sumira udai dina sāmjha// 'Here in the second part of the seventh enclosure are four lakes and an eight-petalled (lotus). Remember their appearance day and night.'

is, in fact, also present in the PadP. which says that there are four lakes in the centre of the thousand-petalled lotus:

sahasradalapadmasya samsthānam madhyakorakam/  
catuhsaraś caturdvāram aścaryakulasamkulam<sup>119</sup>

This section describes how Arjuna wished to take part in the līlā of Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs, and eventually after bathing in these lakes he assumes the form of a woman and achieves his desire.

Certain basic yantric forms continue to be used by the Mahāvānī in the description of the palace. The palace is said to contain a cauka, which can mean courtyard but is literally a four-sided area. Within the cauka is said to be a mandala, again ambiguous in that it can be understood as either a circle or a platform:

tāju mahala ke cauka bici mani mandala rasapumja<sup>120</sup>

The image here of a circle within a square is remarkably similar to the yantra described above from the Mahānirvāna-tantra which used the same pattern. In this way the two images of palace and yantra are interwoven.

The yantric images continue in the description of the octagonal throne situated upon the mandala with one of the eight sakhīs standing at each corner of the throne:

āṅgana mohana mahala ke mohana mandala mamju/  
tā ūpara aṭha kaumna ko sukha singhāsana ramju<sup>34/</sup>  
komna komna pratyeka ika priya pramadāgana samga<sup>121</sup>

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119. PadP., op.cit., 4.74.57 'The place in the centre stalk of the thousand-petalled lotus, having four lakes and four doors, is exceedingly astonishing.'
120. Harivyāsadeva, op.cit., pada 3, v.28. 'In the middle of the four-sided courtyard of that palace is a circular platform of gems, formed of rasa.'
121. Ibid., pada 3, vv.34-35. 'In the midst of the palace's enchanting courtyard is an entrancing dais. Upon that is an octagonal, pleasant and pleasing. At each corner is a beloved with all her group of women.'

This is obviously similar to the PadP.

The presence of such image in the Mahāvāṇi, traditionally a Nimbārkiya text, demonstrates the way in which their use is not confined to one sect. Nandadāsa of the Vallabha sect, Rasikadāsa of the Rādhāvallabha sect, Gadādhara Bhaṭṭa of the Gaudīya sect and Harivyāsadeva of the Nimbārkiya sect, all employ to a greater or lesser extent similar images. Sūradāsa, on the other hand, who is traditionally claimed by the Vallabha sect, but whose divergence from sectarian preoccupations has been demonstrated in other contexts, does not.

If the PadP. and the Rasakadambacūdāmaṇi are compared, though both are similar in many ways, the emphasis on the different levels in the expression of devotion (rasa) is much more pronounced in the Rasakadambacūdāmaṇi. It is this aspect which predominates in the poetry of authors such as Dhruvadāsa and Bihārinadāsa. Though the picture of Vṛndāvana basically corresponds to that represented in the texts above, the aim in the two cases would appear to differ. Whereas texts such as the PadP. are more concerned with ritual and the depiction of Vṛndāvana as an aid to the meditational aspect of such ritual, poets such as Dhruvadāsa are entirely preoccupied with the experience of rasa. This is reflected in the poetry through a less stylised depiction of Vṛndāvana. Nevertheless, some of the same images are used and the picture is definitely symbolic rather than mythological in nature.

The use of yantric imagery in the poetry of Dhruvadāsa can be seen, for example, in his discussion of the relation between Vṛndāvana, Braj and Mathurā. This is described, as in the

Rasakadambaoḍḍāmani, in terms of circular areas within circular areas, each progressively superior as they proceed inwards. Thus the Braj mandala is said to be within the Mathurā mandala and also superior to it:

baikuntha hu te adhika hai mathurā mandala jēni/  
tāmam tāhu te adhika vrajamandala sukha-khāni/32/<sup>122</sup>

In the centre of the Braj mandala, in turn, lies Vṛndāvana which is compared to a jewel in a crown:

madhi rājata jyom mukuta mani vṛndāvana rasakanda/<sup>123</sup>

The term mandala has, of course, also the connotation of an area or district; so that the picture intended here could be a geographical one of a smaller district within a larger district rather than the symbolic circular image. The concept of a progression in circles from the innermost supreme point (bindu) outward, each circular area successively depicting an inferior manifestation of divine power resembles that of a yantra too closely, however, to be a mere coincidence. Moreover, the same gradation of Mathurā, Braj and Vṛndāvana corresponding to the level of devotion as well as to the fullness of the divine manifestation, has been seen to be depicted in symbolic terms in the texts discussed above, suggesting the presence of a tradition to this effect. It may be noted that here again the contrast between Braj and Vṛndāvana is seen in terms of a contrast between the eternal sport of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa with the rāsa with the gopīs, and not the mythological contrast between vana and grāma.

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122. Dhruvadāsa, Brhad bāvanapurāna, op.cit., v.32.

'Know the circular area of Mathurā to be superior to Vaikunṭha; in that and superior to that (area of Mathurā) is the circular area of Brāj, a mine of happiness.'

123. Ibid., v.34. 'Vṛndāvana, the source of love, adorns the middle like a jewel in a crown.'

Dhruvadāsa does occasionally use yantric images in other contexts as well. In his Muktāvalī līlā can be found the image of Vṛndāvana as a sixteen-petalled lotus upon a bejewelled circle with Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā in the very centre and a sakhī on each petal:

mandala manimaya adhika virājai nirakhata koti bhāna  
sasi lājai/  
tāpara kamala sudeśa suvāsā ṣoḍaśa dala rājate caḥum pāsā/  
madhya kiśora kiśorī soḥaim dala dala prati saḥacari  
chabi johaīm/<sup>124</sup>

Like Harivyāsadeva, he also describes the Yamunā as encircling Vṛndāvana. In Premāvalī līlā, Dhruvadāsa compares the Yamunā to liquid love itself (sṛṅgāra rasa) flowing in a circle around Vṛndāvana:

taranisutā caḥum diśa bahai sobhā liye athāha/  
manaum dharyau sṛṅgāra rasa kundala bāmdhi pravāha/<sup>55/125</sup>

He goes on to compare the river to a necklace of blue gems worn by Vṛndāvana:

āvata upamā aura ura adbhuta parama rasāla/  
vṛndāvana pahirī mano nīla manina kī mālā/<sup>56/126</sup>

Both of these similes conjure up a circular picture compatible with that of the yantric concept, but not with the imagery of the BhP.

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124. Dhruvadāsa, Rasa muktāvalī līlā, in Bayālīsa līlā, op.cit., vv. 15-17. 'The bejewelled circular platform looks very splendid; seeing it thousands of suns and moons are put to shame. Upon it is a lotus, a lovely fragrant place, having sixteen petals on all sides. The middle is graced with the youth(Kṛṣṇa) and the young girl (Rādhā), while on each petal a sakhī gazes on their beauty.'
125. Dhruvadāsa, Premāvalī līlā, in Bayālīsa līlā, op.cit., v.55. 'The Yamunā flows on all sides with an unfathomable beauty. It is as if liquid love were overflowing, its stream taking the shape of an earring.'
126. Ibid., v.56. 'Another simile, astonishingly beautiful, enters the heart - it is as if Vṛndāvana had worn a necklace of blue gems.'

Bihārinadāsa resembles Dhruvadāsa in his use of the yantric images purely for the purposes of describing the different levels of devotion. This can be seen, for example, in a passage (discussed above p. 125 ) which describes how Kṛṣṇa who sports eternally in Vṛndāvana is far beyond the devotion manifested in Braj, let alone ordinary bhakti. the different levels are the same as those found in the Rasakadambacūdāmaṇi; ordinary bhakti followed by Braj bhakti, and finally the pure rasa expressed in Vṛndāvana alone. Of particular interest is the use of the term āvarana in this passage. This is the term used in the Rasakadambacūdāmaṇi for the seven areas surrounding the central pericarp, Vṛndāvana. The verse of Bihārinadāsa describes the āvaranas of Braj as being the gopīs, cows and cowherd boys:

tā braja ke āvarana suni gopī gāi guvāla/<sup>127</sup>

The description of the gopīs, etc., as 'coverings' is, in fact, only comprehensible in the light of the above discussion.

The order in which the gopīs, cows and cowherd boys are mentioned suggests a hierarchy in which the gopīs are on the highest level. If it is seen in terms of circular areas surrounding the central point, the gopīs would be situated in the innermost circle. This is again in accordance with the Rasakadambacūdāmaṇi and again corresponds to the different bhāvas, proceeding from sakhya, represented by the cowherd boys, through to mādhurya or gopī-bhāva. Beyond this is the pericarp, the bindu, where only the love manifest through the eternal sport of Kṛṣṇa with Rādhā exists - the nitya vihāra - which can only be entered by the sakhīs.

127. Bihārinadāsa, op.cit., v.662, p.244. 'Hear of the coverings of that Braj - the gopīs, the cows and the cowherd boys.'

The devotion of the sakhīs is frequently called by Bihārinadāsa the service in the palace (mahala kī tahala). In the description of Vṛndāvana as a palace an echo can be detected of the type of imagery used by Harivyaśadeva. The descriptions in this case are, however, much less detailed and the emphasis is more on the expression of rasa. The actual term mahala is, of course, an Arabic word, suggesting possible Sufi influence. The use of the palace as a metaphor for an inner spiritual state can be seen in the description of the palace of Padmāvati by the Sufi poet, Jayasī. This palace is described as having seven levels and on the highest level is the bed where the union of Rātasen and Padmāvati takes place.<sup>128</sup> This can be compared with the seven āvaranas surrounding the central point where Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are united eternally, and could equally be the result of Hindu influence.

The use of Arabic terms is, however, very marked in some of Bihārinadāsa's verses, suggesting that in his case at least the influence was from the Sufi side, made possible by elements already within the bhakti tradition. For example, in a verse using very much the same sequence in the stages of devotion as those outlined above in the yantric scheme, he first describes ordinary devotees and those follow the path of wisdom as Khāns and Sultāns who are officers of the border:

bhakta bahu jagata abhimāna gyānī ghanem khāma

sultamna sarahada thānai/129

128. Malik Muhammad Jāyasī, Padmāvata, ed. V.S. Agravāla, Cīrgāmva, 1961, p.335, v.291.1. sāta khamda ūpara kabilāsū/ taha sovanāri seja sukhavāsū/1/ 'Above the seven sections is (the top-most part called Kailāsa. There is the bedroom, (in which) is the bed, the most pleasant place.'

129. Bihārinadāsa, op.cit., p.293, v.30, line 1. 'In the world there are many proud devotees and many who follow the path of knowledge; (these are) Khāns and Sultāns who guard the border.'

The inhabitants of Braj are nearer than these since they have the duty of attendants (khavāsī) and serve in the army which, presumably, guards the palace:

brajavāsī nikati nema khavāsī kataka main bahuta umarāva  
biradaīta bānai/<sup>130</sup>

Some devotees reach even as far as the door of the palace, but then turn back, for only the inmates (mahalanī) know the true nature of the palace:

paga bamdhā bāhirī paura daure phirem mahala kī bāta  
mahalanī jānaim/<sup>131</sup>

The sequence is thus once again, starting from the outside, 1) ordinary bhaktas; 2) those who follow Braj bhakti; and finally 3) the sakhīs. It could be argued, however, that the very use of non-yantric terms indicates a movement away from the ritualization of the yantra to a concentration on Vṛndāvana as an inner spiritual state, to be obtained by sakhī-bhāva.

### iii. The geographical representation

Both the symbolic and the mythological descriptions of Vṛndāvana are basically non-historical and non-geographical in nature. The mythological uses apparently historico-geographical terms, but in actuality is speaking about divine space. The nearest approach to a geographical representation in which the physical situation of Vṛndāvana is in question would seem to be found in the pilgrimage texts.

130. Ibid., p.293, line 2. 'The dwellers in Braj (who are) closer (to the palace), have the special duty of attendants, ( and are like) many chieftans famed for their brave character in the army.'

131. Ibid., p.293, line 4. 'Others are stopped outside, wandering around the doorway like doorkeepers. Only the inmates know the nature of the palace.'

An early pilgrimage text of this nature describing Mathurā and the surrounding areas is the Jain Vividhatīrthakalpa in Prakrit. The text is assigned to between A.D. 1307 and 1332,<sup>132</sup> i.e. more than 150 years before the rediscovery of the Vṛndāvana area by either Vallabha or the Gauḍīya Gosvāmīs. The connection with Kṛṣṇa is, however, maintained even here. Mathurā is, for example, said to be the birthplace of Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva:

ittha nayaṁ kṛṣṇavāsudevassa bhāvititthamkarassa janmo/<sup>133</sup>

The place of Vṛndāvana in this account is that of one of twelve woods situated in the Mathurā area:

duvālasavanām/ tam jahā - lohajaṁghavanam mahuvanam  
billavanam tālavanam kumūavanam kāmīavanam kolavanam  
bahulavanam mahāvanam/<sup>134</sup>

It may be noticed that this list is essentially the same as that of the PadP. with the exception of the substitution of Kola-vana and Bilva-vana for Bhadra-vana and Sṛī-vana.

The account in this text contains none of the yantric images seen in the texts above. There is no suggestion, for example, of any circular shape. The dimensions of Mathurā are given as twelve yojanas long and nine yojanas wide:

tayā ya mahurā bāraha joanām dīhā nava joanām vitthinnā .../<sup>135</sup>

The term maṇḍala is not used at all; Mathurā is referred to only as Mathurāpurī, never as Mathurāmaṇḍala.

132. See introduction by Jina Vijaya to Jinaprabhasūri's Vividhatīrthakalpa, Sāntiniketana, 1934, pp.2-3.

133. Ibid., Mathurāpurīkalpa, p.18, line 28. 'In this city is the birth of the future Tirthankara, Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva.'

134. Ibid., p.18, lines 30-32. 'The twelve woods - they were said to be: Lohajaṁghavana, Madhuvana, Bilvana, Tālavana, Kumudavana, Kāmyavana, Kolavana, Bahulavana, and Mahāvana.'

135. Ibid., p.17, line 4. 'That Mathurā is twelve yojanas long and nine yojanas wide.'

A description akin to the one above can be found in the Māthuramāhātmya of the Varaha Purāṇa. Its nature as basically a pilgrimage text is established in the opening where the earth asks which pilgrimage place is the best of all:

tīrtham tad vada kalyāṇam tīrthānām uttamottamam<sup>136</sup>

The reply of Varāha is that no place in any of the regions is as dear to him as Mathurā which is on earth:

na vidyate ca pātāle nāntarikse na mānuse/  
samānam mathurāyā hi priyam mama vasundhare//<sup>137</sup>

The emphasis here on Mathurā as a place on earth is in accordance with the geographical nature of the description. The orientation towards pilgrimage can also be seen in the way the text describes the various spots at which one must bathe, the appropriate rituals to be undertaken and the fruits of these actions. The description of each spot in the Mathurā area is followed by such details. It is thus very clearly speaking of a place on earth which can be visited and not of a mythological, celestial or symbolic place, though its nature as a pilgrimage place means that it again does involve sacred space.

The situation of Vṛndāvana as described by this text is the same as that in the Vividhatīrthakalpa, i.e. as one of the twelve woods in the Mathurā area:

vṛndāvanam dvādaśamam vṛndayā pariraksitam/  
mama caiva priyam bhūma mahāpātakanāśanam//<sup>138</sup>

136. Varāha Purāṇa, ed. Hṛṣīkeśa Śāstrī, Calcutta, 1893, 152.7. 'Describe that beneficial pilgrimage place which is best among pilgrimage places.'
137. Ibid., 152.8. 'Neither in the nether regions, nor in the heavens, nor in the human regions is to be found anything as dear to me as Mathurā which is on earth.'
138. Ibid., 153.45. 'Vṛndāvana is the twelfth, guarded by Vṛndā, my favourite, . . . destroyer of great sins.'

The list of the twelve woods is the same in the two texts, with the exceptions of Kunda for Kumuda, and, as in the PadP., Bhadra for Kola.

In this text, however, a correspondence is made between the geographical pilgrimage centre of Vṛndāvana and the symbolic space of the yantric diagram through the use of certain yantric images. While the PadP. fitted the geographical into the symbolic scheme, here the symbolic is applied to the geographical. The difference can be seen primarily as one of emphasis.

Yantric influence can be seen, for example, in the use of the term mandala for the Mathurā area, a term not used in the Jain text. The circular connotation of this term is reinforced by the way in which at one point the mandala is described as a lotus:

vimśatir yojanānān tu māthuram mama mandalam/  
idam padmam mahābhāge sarvesām muktidāyi ca/15/<sup>139</sup>

The concept of the principal deity as situated in the pericarp with lesser manifestations on surrounding petals is also found in this text, though here again the geographical nature of the text is shown in the fact that reference appears to be made here to actual images in the area. The text states that Keśava stands in the pericarp of the lotus:

karnikāyām sthito devi keśava keśanāśanah/<sup>140</sup>

To the west is the dweller in Govardhana:

paścimensa harim devam govardhananivāsinam/<sup>141</sup>

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139. Ibid., 163.14. 'My Māthura region is of twenty yojanas, and this lotus bestows salvation upon all, Oh most fortunate one.'

140. Ibid., 163. 16. 'In the pericarp is situated Keśava, the destroyer of Keśa, Oh goddess.'

141. Ibid., 163.18. 'To the west that Lord Hari, inhabitant of Govardhana ...'

To the north is Govinda:

uttarena tu govindam dr̥ṣṭvā devam param śubham<sup>142</sup>

Viśrāntideva is said to be situated on the eastern petal:

viśrāntisaṃjñake devam pūrvapatre vyavasthitam<sup>143</sup>

Finally to the south is said to be an image resembling the

Keśava form:

dakṣiṇena tu mām viddhi pratimām divyārūpinīm<sup>144</sup>

The use of the term pratimā shows that reference is being made to images of deities, while the correspondence with the geographical location can be seen in the fact that the Govardhana mountain is actually said to be situated in the west.<sup>145</sup> There is thus an attempt to fit geographical realities into a symbolic plan.

The Varāha Purāṇa forms the basis for two further pilgrimage texts. These are the Kṛtyakalpataru of Lakṣmīdhara Bhaṭṭa which has been given the early date of the twelfth century A.D.,<sup>146</sup> and the later Vīramitrodaya of Mitrāmīśra,<sup>147</sup> assigned to the early seventeenth century, i.e. nearly a hundred years after the date given for the arrival of Rūpa and Sanātana in Vṛndāvana, and approximately contemporary with Dhruvadāsa. In both these texts, as in the Jain text discussed above, Mathurā is described as one of many pilgrimage

142. Ibid., 163.19. 'To the north having seen Govinda, the Lord, supreme and brilliant...'

143. Ibid., 163.20. 'The Lord remaining on the eastern petal called Viśrānti.'

144. Ibid., 163.21. 'To the south know me (to be as) an image of divine form.'

145. Ibid., 164.1. asti govardhanam nāma kṣetram paramadurllabham/ mathurāpaścime bhāge adūrād yojanadvayam<sup>1/</sup> 'There is an area called Govardhana, very inaccessible, in a region to the west of Mathurā, not very far, only two yojanas.'

146. P.V. Kane, History of Dharmasāstra, Poona, 1975, Vol.I, part 2, p.699.

147. Ibid., p.953.

places such as Vārāṇasī, Prayāga and Gayā. The texts deal with Dharmaśāstra in general and do not show any sectarian bias.

The older Kṛtyakalpataru (approximately 75 verses long) is much the shorter of the two accounts. It does not include the lotus imagery of the Varāha Purāṇa, but only the verse wherein the Māthuramaṇḍala is said to be twenty yojanas in diameter:

vimśadyojanavistāre māthure mama maṇḍale/<sup>148</sup>

The fact that the overtly symbolic imagery is absent from this early text suggests the possibility that it forms, in fact, a later interpolation into the Varāha Purāṇa itself.

The Vīramitrodaya gives a much longer description (approximately 250 verses)<sup>149</sup> includes all which is left out of the Kṛtyakalpataru, as well as additional passages, some attributed to other Purāṇas such as the Padma and Skandha.

A possible argument to the effect that the above type of description is confined to non-sectarian works where Mathurā is regarded as just one of many pilgrimage centres, is disproved by the existence of the same pattern in the work of a follower of the Gaudīya sect, i.e. the Brajabhaktivilāsa of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. This text, said to have been written in about A.D. 1553, does differ in its use of the terms Braj and Gokula, both conspicuously absent from all of the above texts. In this work Brajamaṇḍala is, in fact, used as Mathurāmaṇḍala was in the other texts. This Brajamaṇḍala is said to have a circumference of 84 krośa:

148. Lakṣmīdhara Bhaṭṭa, Kṛtyakalpataru, ed. R.V. Rangasvāmī Aiyangar, Baroda, 1942, Vol.VIII Tīrthavivecanakāṇḍam, chapter 9, Mathurā-māhātmyam, p.193, line 7. 'In my region of Mathurā which is twenty yojanas in area ...' Cf, VārP., op.cit., 158.1.

149. Mitrāmīśra, Vīramitrodaya, Benares, 1971, Vol.X, Tīrthaprakāśa, pp.502-528.

caturastakakrośena paripūrnāvirājitaṁ/  
asya pradakṣiṇīm kurvan dhanadhānyasukham labhet/<sup>150</sup>

In another passage it is described as being a limb of the Lord:

atha savanacaturastakrośamaryāda vrajamaṇḍalam bhagavadamṣasvarūpāḥ/<sup>151</sup>

Braj is thus evidently used as a term for the entire area and not, as in the BhP., for a nomadic settlement, nor, as in the Sūrasāgara, for a particular town. The use of Braj in this way can be seen to be more in accordance with the picture of Braj as seen in the symbolic representations where it is a larger area surrounding Vṛndāvana. It could, therefore, be argued that in this text Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa is applying to the geographical area a symbolic concept, and that the idea of Braj bhakti led to the use of the term Braj as designating the whole area.

Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa also differs from the Purāṇas and other texts in the distinction he draws between Gokula and Braj. Whereas Braj is used for the entire area, Gokula is specified as one of the twelve adhivanas of the area (which is said in all to have twelve vanas, twelve upavanas, twelve prativanas, and twelve adhivanas):

saptamam gokulam sthānam aṣṭamam baladevakam/<sup>152</sup>

This Gokula is further described as being the location for the abode of Nanda (nandamaṇḍira),<sup>153</sup> the place where Yaśodā lay, (yaśodāśayanasthala),<sup>154</sup> and where Pūtānā suckled Kṛṣṇa.<sup>155</sup>

150. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, Brajabhaktivilāsa, Kusumasarovara, 1951, I.10. 'Performing the circumambulation of this (area) which covers 84 krośa, one achieves the happiness of wealth and prosperity.'

151. Ibid., I.92. 'Now the area of Braj, which with the woods has a boundary of 84 krośa, (has) the form of a part of the Lord.'

152. Ibid., I.30. 'The seventh is the place Gokula, the eighth is that of Baladeva.'

153. Ibid., III.73.

154. Ibid., III.74.

155. Ibid., III.86.

The similarity to the pilgrimage texts above can be seen in the portrayal of Vṛndāvana as one of twelve vanas, for like Gokula, Vṛndāvana is described as one of the adhivanas:

mukhyam vṛndāvanam śreṣṭham ekādaśam prakīrttitaṁ/<sup>156</sup>

The other twelve vanas of the Varāha Purāṇa are put in the ordinary vana category.<sup>157</sup> Vṛndāvana is thus shown to be superior to the other vanas, a departure from the approach of the other texts. The basic pattern of twelve vanas is, however, retained.

The use of this particular layout would seem to be inextricably connected with the nature of the text as being pilgrimage orientated. The text is concerned with describing the geographical area which the pilgrim is to visit, the rites he is to perform at each place, and the fruits of such rites. It describes, for example, the prayer to be recited on entering Vṛndāvana,<sup>158</sup> and how one is freed from all worldly bondages and ills by the circumambulation of the five krośa of Vṛndāvana:

pañcakrośapramāṇena pradaksinaṁ athācāret/  
muktibhāgī bhavel loka mucyate vyādhibandhanāt/79/<sup>159</sup>

The influence which the purpose of a particular text has on the way in which it describes Vṛndāvana may be seen from the fact that the twelve woods are not mentioned once in the poetry of Sūrādāsa, Dhruvadāsa, Bihārinadāsa or Nandadāsa. All of these are concerned with the symbolic and mythological aspects of

156. Ibid., I.32. 'Vṛndāvana, the eleventh, is famed as the foremost and the best.'

157. Ibid., I.13.

158. Ibid., X.151.

159. Ibid., X.79. 'Then one should perform the circumambulation which is five krośa in extent. People attain salvation and are freed from the bondages of suffering.'

Vṛndāvana, not its role as a pilgrimage centre. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, however, wishes to place Vṛndāvana in the contest of pilgrimage, therefore he uses the structure of other pilgrimages texts.

From the above discussion it is clear that not only are there three main divisions in ways of describing Vṛndāvana, i.e. the mythological, symbolic and geographical, but that these three overlap at times depending on the nature of the text. The divisions and sub-divisions can be analyzed as follows:

1. Mythological. Texts of this category include the Hariv., ViP., BhP., and the Sūrasāgara.
2. Symbolic
  - a) Purely symbolic - such descriptions can be found in the Brahma-samhitā and the works of Harivyāsadeva and Gadādhara Bhaṭṭa, which portray Vṛndāvana as an object of meditation using yantric images.
  - b) Combining symbolic and mythological. Descriptions of this sort can be found in the Laghubbhāgavatāmṛta where the symbolic is equated with unmanifest līlā and the mythological with manifest līlā. Nandadāsa similarly combines the two in his Rāsapañcādhyaī.
  - c) Symbolic incorporating the geographical. The Padma Purāṇa and the Rasakadambacūdāmaṇi are mainly concerned with describing Vṛndāvana in symbolic terms. Within this symbolic picture, however, they incorporate the geographical tradition.
  - d) Symbolic unconnected with ritual meditation. This can be found in the poetry of Bihārinadāsa and Dhruvadāsa where the symbolic plan is retained but the concern is with rasa rather than ritual meditation, so that the description is far less stylized.

3. Geographical. This resembles the mythological in that

Vṛndāvana is portrayed as a place near Mathurā, but differs in the absence of any reference to a Braj or Gokula (except in type c below) and in its enumeration of twelve woods. A few of the vanas, such as Vṛndāvana itself, Tālavana, and Bhāṇḍiraka are mentioned in the mythological texts but the rest are absent.

- a) Purely geographical - as the Jain Vividhatīrthakalpa.
- b) Geographical incorporating symbolic, such as the Varāha Purāṇa.
- c) Texts using the ancient geographical descriptions and incorporating into them many new places identifiable with present-day sites. The Brajabhaktivilāsa of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa is an example of this type of work.

V

THE ROLE OF VRNDĀVANA  
IN DEVOTIONAL PRACTICE  
AND EXPERIENCE

## CHAPTER V

### THE ROLE OF VRNDĀVANA

#### IN DEVOTIONAL PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE

A corollary to the role of Vṛndāvana in divine self-expression, discussed in Chapter III, is the part it plays in devotional experience. Since Vṛndāvana is the divine space within which the divinity reveals itself, it is this divine space itself which makes possible to the human soul participation in the divinity.

The question of the relation between the devotee and Vṛndāvana is interlinked with the understanding of Vṛndāvana as a terrestrial or extraterrestrial place. An injunction to live in Vṛndāvana immediately raises the problem as to whether a physical act or a spiritual state is involved. Insofar as residence in Vṛndāvana is a physical act, Vṛndāvana must be regarded as a place on earth. If on the other hand, it is a spiritual state, Vṛndāvana itself must be a supramundane realm.

The importance of dwelling in Vṛndāvana is not equally stressed in all the texts under consideration. An examination of these texts suggests a correlation between what has been termed the symbolic approach and the preoccupation with living in Vṛndāvana, while texts taking the mythological approach show no such emphasis.

An apparent contradiction lies in the fact that the very texts which portray Vṛndāvana the most unequivocally as a transcendent realm, are at the same time the texts which place most emphasis on dwelling in the geographical Vṛndāvana. The resolution of this problem would seem to lie in an understanding of the nature of the physical Vṛndāvana as a symbol.

It has been pointed out in Chapter IV that certain yantric images are used in the symbolic representation of Vṛndāvana. This suggests that the nature of the relationship between the divine and the geographical Vṛndāvana can be compared with that between the yantra and the divinity which it symbolizes. That is to say, just as the yantra is not regarded as merely a representation of the divinity but as partaking of the divine nature itself, so too there is identity between the physical and the divine Vṛndāvana.

A parallel to this identification of divine and earthly space may also be seen in the Vallabha notion of Kṛṣṇa's images being svarūpas, i.e. manifestations, instead of mūrtis or representations. This distinction expresses itself not only in the fact that worship of the image is regarded as sevā and not pūjā, but also in the explanation of its origin. The svarūpa is not constructed by human hands out of mundane material into which the divine is then invoked, but manifests itself.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. The mythological tradition

The identity between terrestrial and celestial is in a sense inherent in the concept of Vṛndāvana from the beginning and is not entirely absent even from texts which place Vṛndāvana in a mythological context. It can be seen, for example, in the constant ambiguity maintained in the imagery describing Vṛndāvana in the ViP. and the Hariv. (see Chapter II), allowing for a supramundane as well as a mundane interpretation. The fact that it is envisaged in the mythological past conceals the full

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1. For further discussion on svarūpa see R. Barz, The Bhakti sect of Vallabhācārya, Faridabad, 1976, p.48. See also P.D. Mitala, Braj ke dharmasampradāyom kī itihāsa, op.cit., p.237.

symbolic implications as well as distancing it from devotional practice.

No injunction to devotees physically to dwell in Vṛndāvana as part of their spiritual practice is attested in the ViP., Hariv., or even the BhP. In the BhP. there is a passage where Uddhava expresses the desire to be made a tree or plant of Vṛndāvana:

āsām aho caranarenujusām aham syām  
vṛndāvane kim api gulmalatausadhīnām/  
yā dustyajam svajanam āryapatham ca hitvā  
bhejur mukundapadaṇṇīm śrutibhir vimrgyām/61/2

This particular verse is referred to in later texts as an example of praise of Vṛndāvana. Prabodhānanda, for example, in his Vṛndāvanamahimāmṛta asks to be born again and again in Vṛndāvana even as grass or shrub:

janmani janmani vṛndāvanabhūvi vṛndārakendra-vandyāyām/  
api tṛṇagulmakabhāve bhavatu mamāsāsamullāsa-/9/3

It is evident that the inspiration for this verse lies in the BhP. passage. The api tṛṇagulmakabhāve here echoes the kim api gulmalatausadhīnām of the BhP. The connexion between the two is made explicit in the next verse of the Vṛndāvanamahimāmṛta where Prabodhānanda specifically refers to Uddhava, saying that he himself makes salutation to that forest of Rādhā where Uddhava, though fulfilled through the experience of the rasa of massaging

2. BhP., op.cit., X.47.61. 'Or let me become one of the shrubs, creepers and herbs in Vṛndāvana, enjoying the dust of the feet of those girls who abandoned their own relatives, so difficult to abandon, and the noble path, and followed the path of Mukunda which the Vedas seek.'
3. Prabodhānanda, op.cit., 17.9. 'Let me be inspired with desire to be born again and again even in the condition of grass or shrub in the land of Vṛndāvana which is hailed as best of groves.'

Hari, desires to become grass:

haripadapañka, jāsamvāhanarasam anubhūya pūrno 'pi/  
yatroddhava āśāste tṛṇatām tan naumi rādhikāvīpinam/10/4

Prabodhānanda thus sees in the utterance of Uddhava in the BhP. an affirmation of the greatness of Vṛndāvana, similar in nature to that expressed by Prabodhānanda himself.

Viewed in its context, however, the BhP. verse can be seen as an affirmation of the greatness of the devotion typified by the gopīs, rather than an injunction to live in Vṛndāvana. The aim of Uddhava in becoming a plant of Vṛndāvana is to receive the dust of the gopīs' feet. The emphasis of the passage is on the apparent lowliness of the gopīs which nevertheless enables them to have an experience of the divine which is impossible even for Lakṣmī. Once again, therefore, immanence is being contrasted with transcendence, and incarnation is shown to be an expression of divine grace (anugraha) with Vṛndāvana as the scene for this expression in the mythological past.

The BhP. does not include any mention of living in Vṛndāvana in its discussions of religious practice. Such spiritual practices as are mentioned consist, on a mental level, of the remembrance of the activities of Kṛṣṇa and, on a physical level, of image worship. The most well-known account of devotional practice in the BhP. is the 'nine-fold' path (navadhā bhakti) expounded by Prahlāda:

śravanam kīrtanam viśnoḥ smaranam pādasevanam/  
arcanam vandanam dāsyam sakhyam ātmanivedanam/23/5

- 
4. Ibid., v.10. 'I bow to that forest of Rādhā, where Uddhava, though fulfilled through the experience of the delight of massaging Hari's feet, desires to become grass.'
5. BhP., op.cit., VII.5.23. 'Listening, glorifying, remembering Viṣṇu, serving (his) feet, worshipping, bowing down in front of, servitude, friendship, self-surrender.'

Of these nine, the first three are forms of meditation of the activities of Kṛṣṇa - hearing them, reciting them and mentally remembering them. The next three have connotations of worship - serving the feet, worshipping and making obeisance. Reference may be made here either to mental or to image worship. The final three suggest entering into a relationship with the divine (bhāva) - the result of the two first stages.

The way in which the gopīs are portrayed as remembering the līlās of Kṛṣṇa and imitating them after his disappearance during the rāsa would seem to exemplify the path of devotion as envisaged by the BhP. The gopīs whose hearts are disturbed by the enchanting smiles, glances and playful activities of Kṛṣṇa are said to have assumed identity with him (tadātmikā) performing those same activities:

gatyanurāgasmitavibhrameksitair manoramālāpavihāravibhramaih/  
āksiptacittāḥ pramadā ramāpates tās ta vicesā jagrhuḥ tadātmikāḥ<sup>6</sup>

Here, as well, the BhP. sees remembrance of the divine sport of Kṛṣṇa as leading to union with him.

The Sūrasāgara resembles the BhP. insofar as residence in Vṛndāvana is not depicted as an integral part of devotional practice. There are indications that the few padas which do explicitly advocate residence in Vṛndāvana belong to a very late stratum of the Sūrasāgara.

In pada 1792, for example, the poet says that through the grace of Rādhā he will obtain residence in Braj:

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6. Ibid., X.30.2. 'The women whose hearts were disturbed by the gait, smiles of love, and wandering glances, by the sweet words and sportive movements of the Lord of Rāmā, assumed those actions, having identity with him.'

śrī rādhikā syāma kī pyārī kṛpā bāsa braja pām//<sup>7</sup>

An even more specific reference to physically living in the place is made in a further line where he speaks of building a hut near the forest abode of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa:

nava nikumja bana dhāma nikata ika ānandakutī racāum/<sup>8</sup>

According to Hawley, in his article on the Sūrasāgara, this pada is found only in later manuscripts.<sup>9</sup> Other features suggesting that it belongs to a tradition different from the majority of padas in the Sūrasāgara, and possibly closer to that of the Rādhāvallabha texts can be seen in the emphasis on the grace of Rādhā. The pada also refers to the grace of guru through which the poet says he will make known the glory of bhajana:

bhajana pratāpa carana mahimā taim guru kī kṛpā dikhāum/<sup>10</sup>

Such references are uncommon in the Sūrasāgara and suggest sectarian affiliations.

Another pada which appears to advocate physical residence in Vṛndāvana is pada 1108. It opens by using the imperative with regard to living in Braj:

aisam basie braj kī bīthini<sup>11</sup>

7. Sūradāsa, op.cit., pada 1792. 'Through the grace of Rādhā, the beloved of Syāma, I will obtain residence in Braj.'

8. Ibid., pada 1792. 'Near the forest abode formed by a fresh bower, I will build a hut, full of happiness.'

9. J.S. Hawley, op.cit., p.70, footnote 5.

10. Sūradāsa, op.cit., pada 1792. 'I will show the glory of bhajana through the grace of guru and the greatness of his feet.'

11. Ibid., pada 1108. 'Dwell thus on the pathways of Braj.'

It goes on to describe the physical means of livelihood --  
how, for example, one should subsist on grains of rice taken  
from the leaf-plates of the cowherds:

gvāranai ke panavāre cuni cuni udara bharījai sīthini<sup>12</sup>

It describes how one should roll in the ground of every  
bower and cover one's body with the dust of Braj:

kunja kunja prati loti loti braja raja lāgai rānga rītani<sup>13</sup>

All of these images suggest an acceptance of the importance of  
physically living in Braj.

That this pada is also a later addition, probably originating  
from a Rādhāvallabha source, is suggested by the fact that  
an almost identical pada is found in a collection attributed  
to the Rādhāvallabha author, Harirāmayāsa. It is, of course,  
not possible to come to a firm conclusion as to the source of  
the pada without more information about the results of Hawley's  
investigations into the Sūrasāgara as well as a critical study  
of the Harirāmayāsa padas. Nevertheless, Hawley's conclusion  
based on his findings regarding padas common to the Sūrasāgara  
as well as Hita Harivamśa and Paramānandadāsa that '... poems  
whose authorship was attributed to Sūr and another poet turn out  
to have been drawn into the Sūr corpus from elsewhere rather than  
dissipated from the Sūr Sāgar into other collections.' would  
suggest the probability that this is a further example of a  
pada originating outside the Sūrasāgara.

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12. Ibid., pada 1108, 'Fill your stomach with grains of rice  
taken from the leaf-plates of the cowherds.'

13. Ibid., pada 1108, 'Rolling on the ground in every bower,  
cover yourself with dust, happily.'

It is interesting to notice the way in which the differences in wording between the Sūradāsa pada and the Harirāmayāsa pada would seem to reflect differences in outlook. Whereas, for example, Sūradāsa speaks of eating from the plates of cowherds, Harirāma describes the plates as belonging to sādhus:

sādhuna ke panavāre cuna cuna udara poṣiyata sīthini/<sup>14</sup>

The difference is significant, since by speaking of sādhus Harirāma places the actions much more clearly in the present-day Vṛndāvana. Sūradāsa, on the other hand, is speaking in terms of the mythological Braj inhabited by the cowherd companions of Kṛṣṇa.

The divergence of the Sūrasāgara from the Rādhāvallabha images of the Harirāma pada can also be seen in the way that Sūradāsa speaks of seeing the darling of Nanda everyday:

nisidina nirakhi jasodānandana aru jamunā jala pītani/<sup>15</sup>

Harirāma, on the other hand, speaks of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa:

nita prati darasa syāma syāmā kau ..../<sup>16</sup>

This reflects the Rādhāvallabha concentration on the sport of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa to the exclusion of all other līlās.

A final difference can be seen in the last line where Sūradāsa says that through touching and seeing the divine the body becomes pure:

14. Harirāmayāsa, Bhaktakavi vyāsa II, Mathurā 1952, pada 97. 'Sustain yourself with grains of rice taken from the leaf-plates of holy men.'

15. Sūradāsa, op.cit., pada 1108. 'Seeing the darling of Nanda everyday and drinking the water of Yamunā.'

16. Harirāma, op.cit., pada 97. 'Having every the vision of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā...'

parasata sūra hota tana pāvana darasana karata atītani//<sup>17</sup>

Harirāma, on the other hand, says that in this way the body becomes pure and through this method one obtains the divine:

aisehim vyāsa hota tana pāvana ihm bidhi milata atītini//<sup>18</sup>

Here once again there is an impression that whereas Sūradāsa is speaking of the experience of the devotees in the mythological past, at the time of the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, Harirāma is speaking in terms of dwelling in Vṛndāvana as a spiritual practice to be followed at the present time.

If, therefore, pada 1108 was introduced into the Sūrasāgara from another source, it is clear that changes were incorporated into it, making the pada more in accord with the sentiments and concepts of the rest of the Sūrasāgara.

The third pada of the Sūrasāgara which includes the expression of a personal desire to live in Vṛndāvana, i.e. as the wish of the poet himself, is extremely long - 121 verses. This in itself, according to the findings of Hawley, suggests lateness.<sup>19</sup> Most of the pada is an account of the rāsa along the lines of the BhP. The last six lines (three verses) coming after the Sūradāsa signature (ghāpa), introduce a number of terms much more characteristic of Rādhāvallabha poetry than of the rest of the Sūrasāgara.

17. Sūradāsa, op.cit., pada 1108. 'The body of Sūra becomes pure by touching and looking upon the divine.'

18. Harirāma, op.cit., pada 97. 'In this way the body of Vyāsa becomes pure and through this method one obtains the divine.'

19. J.S. Hawley, op.cit., p.66.

The verse asking for residence in Vṛndāvana runs:

sūra āsa kari varanyau rāsa/  
cāhata hau brmdāvana bāsa//  
rādhā(bara) itanl kari kṛpā/<sup>20</sup>

If the bara, which is in brackets in the published text, were omitted, Sūradāsa would be requesting Rādhā for the favour of being allowed to live in Vṛndāvana, a request similar to that pada 1792 discussed above and very frequently found in Rādhāvallabha poetry. The significance of the brackets is unexplained in the text. Presumably the word in brackets is included in some manuscripts and not in others. The test of scanning the metre suggests that the bara is redundant, since without it we have a thirteen mātra line, and the rest of the pada consists of two fifteen mātra lines alternating with one thirteen mātra line. At this point the possibility of Rādhāvallabha influence may be noted.

The suggestion of influence from outside the main body of the Sūrasāgara tradition becomes even stronger in the next few lines of the pada, where the poet asks Hari to keep him there where harivamsī and haridāsī, and to grant him participation in the eternal sport - nita bihāra:

harivamsī haridāsī jahām/  
hari karunā ka<sup>21</sup>ābhāra dai/<sup>21</sup>hām//  
nita bihāra ābhāra dai/<sup>21</sup>

20. Sūradāsa, op.cit., pada 1798. 'Sūra with this desire describes the rāsa - I long to live in Vṛndāvana, Oh Rādhā ('s husband) have this much grace upon me.'

21. Ibid., pada 1798. 'Hari, have compassion and keep me there, where Harivamsa and Haridāsa are. Grant me (participation in) the eternal sport.'

Though the first line could be understood as referring to the flute and servant-maids of Hari, the placing of the two names together in such a context would seem to be too much of a coincidence, particularly in view of the reference to nita bihāra, which is such an important term in the poetry of the Rādhāvallabha and Haridāsī sects, while rare in the Sūrasāgara. Moreover, a further Rādhāvallabha/Haridāsī term, rasa rīti, is used in the following line which says that reciting and listening enhances the way of rasa:

kahata sunata bādhata rasa rīti/<sup>22</sup>

A final point which may be made about this pada is that the eight lines incorporating the Rādhāvallabha/Haridāsī elements all occur after the Sūradāsa signature. It is unusual for the signature to be anywhere but in the last or second to last line. The fact that these last eight lines occur after the signature could well indicate that they are later additions to the pada.

The three padas discussed above contain the main references in the Sūrasāgara which can be construed as referring to physical residence in Vṛndāvana along the lines of Rādhāvallabha and Haridāsī poetry. The fact that all three show distinct features suggesting that they are later additions, differing in outlook from the mainstream of the Sūrasāgara tradition, would seem to prove that such a concept was not a part of that tradition.

There are, however, a number of padas which refer to the blessedness of living in Braj-Vṛndāvana, and yet still do fit into the Sūrasāgara tradition. This is because they are speaking in

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22. Ibid., pada 1798. 'Reciting and listening enhances the way of rasa.'

mythological terms. An example of this can be seen in pada 689, which says that Nanda, the father of Kṛṣṇa, is blessed; the gopīs are blessed; blessed it is to live in Braj and blessed is the birth of Kṛṣṇa which purifies the earth:

dhanya nanda dhani dhanya gopī dhanya braja kau bāsa/  
dhanya dharanikaranapāvana janma sūrajadāsa//<sup>23</sup>

The reference to the gopīs and Nanda in the same line as to living in Braj indicates that they are to be understood as examples of people who enjoyed such an experience. The activity of living in Braj is thus placed in the mythological past, at the time of the birth of Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation. In other words, Braj-Vṛndāvana as the scene of incarnation is being glorified, but no connexion is made with a particular geographical locality. The devotee involves himself in the experience, first through memory of it and finally realization of that event within himself. It may be noted that this presentation is in line with the differences found in pada 1108 in contrast to the Harirāma pada 97.

One means employed to place the desire to live in Vṛndāvana in a mythological context is that of expressing this sentiment in the words of characters who form part of the mythological framework, rather than in the words of the poet himself. Pada 1107, for example, begins with the line, 'Oh Mādhava, make me the dust of Vṛndāvana':

mādhau mohim karau vṛndāvana renu/<sup>24</sup>

23. Ibid., pada 689. 'Blessed is Nanda; blessed, most blessed, is the gopīs blessed is (their) dwelling in Braj; blessed is the birth (of Kṛṣṇa) which purifies the earth, (says) Sūrajadāsa.'

24. Ibid., pada 1107.

At first sight the sentiment appears to be close in tone to those found in Rādhāvallabha literature. The rest of the pada makes it clear, however, that these words are being attributed to Brahmā. The third line speaks of the worthlessness of his divine body and high position:

kaḥā bhayau yaha deva deha dhari aru ūmcaim pada pāem ainu/<sup>25</sup>

These are both obviously attributes of Brahmā and not of a devotee.

Moreover, here again the emphasis is on the presence of Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation, in Vṛndāvana, not on physical inhabitation of Vṛndāvana as a spiritual practice. Brahmā desires to be made the dust of Vṛndāvana because the feet of Kṛṣṇa touch it everyday:

jihim caranani dolata nandanandana dina prati bana bana  
cārata dhenu/<sup>26</sup>

The mythological structure implicit in the above pada is made explicit in a further long pada which describes the Brahmā episode at length. Here again Brahmā is depicted as asking to be allowed to live in Vṛndāvana in any form - whether creeper, stone or tree:

karahu mohim braja renu dehu vṛndāvana bāsā/  
māṅgaun yahai prasāda aura meraim nahim āsā/  
joī bhāvai soi karahu tuma latā silā druma gehu/<sup>27</sup>

Again the contrast is made between the dust of Vṛndāvana and the celestial realm of Brahmā which is said no longer to please him:

brndāvana raja hvai rahaun brahma loka na suhāi/<sup>28</sup>

25. Ibid., pada 1107. 'What is the use of bearing this divine body and of obtaining such a high position.'

26. Ibid., pada 1107. 'Which is scattered by the feet of the son of Nanda everyday as he takes the cows to graze from wood to wood.'

27. Ibid., pada 492. 'Make me the dust of Braj; give me dwelling in Vṛndāvana. I ask for only this blessing and have no other desire. Make me whatsoever you like - a creeper, rock, tree or house.'

28. Ibid., pada 492. 'I will become the dust of Vṛndāvana; I do not like Brahmāloka.'

The other context in which desire to live in Vṛndāvana is expressed by the Sūrasāgara - that of the goddesses watching the rāsa - resembles the above, both in its contrast of a celestial region with Vṛndāvana and in the way the utterances are put in words of a mythological character. In pada 1664, for example, the goddesses ask why the creator did not make them women of Braj, why he made them live in heaven:

hamakaum bidhi brajabadhū na kīhī  
kaḥā amarapura vāsa bhaem/<sup>29</sup>

They, like Brahmā, ask to be made trees and creepers of Vṛndāvana:

br̥ndāvana druma latā hūjīyai karata saum māṅgiyau calau/<sup>30</sup>

Here again it is the nature of Vṛndāvana as the realm in which the divine becomes immanent which is emphasized.

#### ii. The symbolic approach

The concept of living in Vṛndāvana as a devotional practice as well as a spiritual state emerges distinctly from the writings of the Gaudīya Gosvāmīs. The Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu of Rūpa Gosvāmī, for example, describes the sādhana to be practised by a devotee. The five main practices advised are: 1) worship of an image; 2) listening to the BhP. as a means of remembering the activities of the divine; 3) keeping company with other devotees; 4) repeating the divine name; and, finally, 5) residing in the Mathurā area. The first four are all advised by the BhP. as well. This means that the idea of living in Vṛndāvana is one in which the Gosvāmīs display most clearly their difference from the BhP.

29. Ibid., pada 1664. 'Why did the creator not make us women of Braj; what's the use of living in heaven.'

30. Ibid., pada 1664. 'Let us go and ask the creator to make us trees and creepers of Vṛndāvana.'

It does not seem sufficient to explain this difference purely on the grounds of the establishment of the area as a sectarian centre by the Gosvāmīs. Rather it is arguable that the impulse to re-discover Vṛndāvana arose from the religious doctrines themselves; i.e. in particular the concept of līlā as being an eternal, unceasing fact. The geographical Vṛndāvana was not important to the BhP. tradition because it was concerned with the mythological expression of a metaphysical concept. The Gauḍīya Gosvāmīs, on the other hand, were concerned with its symbolic expression.

The lack of distinction between physical practice and spiritual state owing to the identification of the geographical with the symbolic Vṛndāvana is evident in the writings of the Gauḍīya Gosvāmīs. This can be seen in the way that the Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu describes the importance of living in Vṛndāvana both as a part of sādhana-bhakti, i.e. physical practice, and bhāva-bhakti, i.e. the state of devotion itself.

The paradox of the divine and earthly nature of Mathurāmaṇḍala is evident in the description in the sādhana-bhakti section. Salvation is said to be the fruit obtained in other pilgrimage centres, while in Mathurā that devotion to Hari which is sought by devotion itself is obtained:

anyesu punyatīrthesu muktir eva mahāphalam/  
muktaiḥ prārthyā harer bhaktir mathurāyām tu labhvate // <sup>31</sup>

The comparison of Mathurāmaṇḍala with other pilgrimage centres places it in a similar category of a place on earth which is to be physically visited, though the difference in the objects

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31. Rūpa Gosvāmī, Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu, ed. Bon Mahārāja, Vṛndāvana, 1965, p.233, I.235. 'In other holy pilgrimage places, salvation alone is the supreme fruit. In Mathurā, however, devotion to Hari, which is sought by salvation itself, is obtained.'

obtained in each -- one devotion, the other salvation -- is already apparent.

The transcendental nature of the realm is illustrated by the fact that Mathurā is said to be greater than Vaikuṇṭha, the celestial region:

aho madhupurī dhanyā vaikunthā ca garīyasī<sup>32</sup>

The very next line indicates its geographical nature by saying that through dwelling there for one day devotion to Hari is born:

dīnam ekam nivāseṇa harau bhakti prajāyate<sup>33</sup>

This again affirms the importance of physical inhabitation of Vṛndāvana leading to a spiritual state -- devotion.

The mythological aspect of Vṛndāvana is undoubtedly drawn upon in the Gauḍīya texts far more than in the Rādhāvallabha and Haridāśī. This can be seen for example in the description of love for the dwelling-place of Kṛṣṇa found in the bhāva section of the above text. The devotee is depicted as desiring to visit Vṛndāvana where once Kṛṣṇa performed certain acts, and in this context refers to a number of BhP. lilās such as the destruction of the cart and the binding of Kṛṣṇa by Yaśodā:

atrāsīt kila nandasadma śakatasvātrābhavad bhañjanam  
bandhacchedakaro 'pi dāmaḥbhīr abhūd baddho 'tra dāmodarah/  
ittham māthuravṛddhavadaktraviṣalātprīyāsadhārām pivann  
ānandāśrudharah kadā madhupurīm dhanyāś carisyāmy aham<sup>34</sup>

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32. Ibid., p.233, I.237. 'Blessed is Madhupurī, greater than Vaikuṇṭha.'

33. Ibid., p.233, I.237. 'Through dwelling there for one day devotion to Hari is born.'

34. Ibid., p.356, II.40. 'Here indeed was the abode of Nanda; here was the breaking of the cart; here Dāmodara, the cutter of bondages, was bound by a rope -- drinking the flow of nectar from the mouths of the elders of Mathurā, with tears of joy flowing, blessed, when will I wander in Mathurā?'

Here the use of the past tense, e.g. āsīt, abhavad, and abhūt, is noteworthy, suggesting a reference to the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa in the mythological past, and at the same time a geographical Vṛndāvana in the present. In this it differs from both the Sūrasāgara tradition where all references to living in Vṛndāvana are in terms of the mythological past itself, as well as from the Rādhāvallabha texts where Kṛṣṇa and Vṛndāvana are eternally inseparable - Kṛṣṇa is always present in Vṛndāvana.

The paradox of identity and difference between the transcendental Goloka and the immanent Gokula is expressed in the Laghubhāgavatāmṛta of Rūpa in the context of discussing the different abodes of Kṛṣṇa. These are said to be basically threefold - i.e. Gokula, Mathurā and Dvāravatī. The apparent existence of a fourth abode - Goloka - is explained by saying that if a Goloka is postulated, that is also derived from the power (vaibhava) of Gokula:

yat tu golokanāma syāt tac ca gokulavaibhavam<sup>35</sup>

In other words Gokula and Goloka are not in reality two separate dhāmans. By analogy, however, with the concept of manifestations of the divine as vaibhavas (discussed in Chapter II), it would follow that Gokula is the original source of Goloka and so superior. This interpretation is substantiated by the next verse which states that the fact of Goloka's derivation from the power of Gokula results from the immenseness of the glory of Gokula:

tadātmakavaibhavatvam ca tasya tanmahimonnateh<sup>36</sup>

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35. Rūpa Gosvāmī, Laghubhāgavatāmṛta, op.cit., p.49.  
'But the "Goloka" realm is derived from the power of Gokula.'  
For the use of the term vaibhava as manifestation of power,  
cf. MārkP. śaktivaibhavika.
36. Ibid., p.250. 'Goloka's derivation from the power of Gokula results from the immenseness of the greatness of Gokula.'

In other words the transcendent is a reflection of the immanent. This basically fits in with the way in which the Kṛṣṇa aspect of the divine is regarded as superior to the Viṣṇu aspect.

The relation between the divine and the earthly Vṛndāvana, as well as the role of living in Vṛndāvana as a part of devotional practice, is also discussed in the Brhadbhāgavatāmṛta of Sanātana Gosvāmī with conclusions similar to those discussed above.

The principles of religious practice outlined in the Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu are here put into the context of a narrative dealing with devotees within historical time. These devotees are depicted performing the type of sādhana advocated in the above text. For example, after the Brāhman in the story has repeated the mantra given to him, he is told in a dream not to take sannyāsa but to go to Vṛndāvana:

mā mūrkhā kuru sannyāsam drutam śrīmathurām vraja/  
tatra vṛndāvane 'vaśyam pūrnārthas tvam bhaviṣyasi //<sup>37</sup>

Thus the repetition of the divine name eventually leads one to residence in Vṛndāvana. That going to Vṛndāvana usurps the place of sannyāsa is also interesting, as such a concept is echoed in the Braj Bhāṣā texts as well.

The concept of the simultaneous identity and difference between Goloka and Gokula is expressed in this text in a verse which says that Kṛṣṇa sports in the land of Braj just as he does in Goloka. The only difference is that one is below and the other above, i.e. one is immanent, the other transcendent:

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37. Sanātana Gosvāmī, Brhadbhāgavatāmṛta, Vṛndāvana, 1975, 2.1.53. 'Oh fool, do not take sannyāsa. Quickly go to Mathurā. There in Vṛndāvana you will undoubtedly have your desires fulfilled.'

yathā krīdati tadbhūmau goloke 'pi tathaiva sah/  
adhaūrdhvatayā bhedo 'nayoh kalpyeta kevalam/<sup>38</sup>

The text goes on to say that in Braj, i.e. the earthly region,

Kṛṣṇa is not always seen by all, though he is sporting  
kintu tadbrajabhūmau sa na sarvair drśyate sadā/

<sup>ti</sup> taih śrīnandādibhiḥ sārddham aśrāntam vilasam api/<sup>39</sup>  
kintu tadbrajabhūmau sa na sarvair drśyate sadā/  
taih śrīnandādibhiḥ sārddham aśrāntam vilasam api/<sup>39</sup>

This corresponds to the concept of manifest and unmanifest līlā discussed above (see p. 74). Goloka is the scene of unmanifest līlā, Gokula of manifest līlā.

The essential identity of the two abodes comes across most explicitly in a further verse according to which the same means through which aspirants can reach Goloka will also enable them to see the same Lord and his sport here in the world of mortals:

śrīgolokam gantum arhanty upāyair yadr̥g̥bhis  
tam sādhakāḥ tādṛśaiḥ syuh/  
dras̥tum śaktā martyaloke 'pi tasmims tādṛk krīdam  
suprasannam prabhum tam/<sup>40</sup>

Thus, living in the terrestrial Vṛndāvana is not only a spiritual practice but also the goal achieved through such practice.

38. Ibid., 2.5.168. 'As he sports in that region (of Braj), so (he sports) in Goloka. The difference between the two is only through lowness and highness.'

39. Ibid., 2.5.169. 'In that Braj region, however, he is not always seen by all, though sporting with Nanda, etc., tirelessly.'

40. Ibid., 2.5.172. 'By the same means through which aspirants are able to go to Goloka, they can see in that mortal world the same playful, well-pleased Lord.'

The concept of identity between the transcendent and the immanent, the symbolic and the geographical, is echoed in a statement of one of the characters, Gopa, who describes how after he had reached Goloka he realized that it was identical with the Mathurāmaṇḍala situated in the mortal world. It had all the same features - cowherds, cows, gopīs, mountains, rivers and so forth:

evam tatra cīram tisthan martyalokasthitam tv idam/  
mathurāmaṇḍalam śrīmad apaśyam khalu tādṛśam//  
tattacchṛīgopagopībhis tābhir gobhīś ca tādṛśaiḥ/  
paśupakṣīkṛmīkṣābhṛtsarittarvādibhir vṛtam//<sup>41</sup>

The transcendental abode is thus conceived as being modeled in the image of the terrestrial. The emphasis is upon the way in which the divine reflects the earthly, rather than vice versa. This is similar to the concept of the Goloka as a vaibhava of Gokula found in the Laghubhāgavatāmṛta.

In the Braj Bhāṣā texts of the Rādhāvallabha and Haridāśī sects the ambiguity between the divine and earthly nature of Vṛndāvana is as marked as in the Gauḍīya texts. The concept of Goloka is, however, utterly ignored. The texts in question do not mention Goloka even once. The explanation for this may be seen in the fact that these texts make no attempt to incorporate the Purāṇic mythological structure. There is no manifest and unmanifest līlā, there is only nitya vihāra. There is no divine and terrestrial Vṛndāvana - the terrestrial is the divine.

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41. Ibid., 2.6.371-372. 'Thus remaining there for a long time, I saw that this Mathurāmaṇḍala in the mortal world is just like that one (Goloka), having the same cowherd boys, gopīs, cows, animals, birds, insects, mountains, rivers, trees and so forth.'

The identity between the earthly and the divine Vṛndāvana is made clear by Dhruvadāsa in his Vṛndāvana sata. He says that though in the world, Vṛndāvana is supernatural:

vipina alaukika loka mem ati abhūta rasakanda/<sup>42</sup>

The paradox between alaukika and loka mem reflects the paradox in the nature of Vṛndāvana. This paradoxical situation is similarly inherent in a verse which says that though Vṛndāvana is on earth, it is higher than all other regions:

yadyapi rājata avani para saba taim ūmcau āhi/<sup>43</sup>

The nearest that Dhruvadāsa comes to giving an explanation of the situation is in the statement that though the forest of Vṛndāvana shines forth in the world, ordinary eyes cannot see it due to the influence of māyā:

pragata jagata mem jagamaṅgai vṛndāvipina anūpa/  
naina achata dīsata nahīm yaha māyā kau rūpa/<sup>44</sup>

It is, therefore, only illusion which conceals the real nature of Vṛndāvana, just as it is illusion which prevents the soul from participating in the eternal sport.

As in the Gaudīya texts, the act of living in Vṛndāvana is described both as a physical practice and as a spiritual state. Because Vṛndāvana is deemed to be both in the world and not of it, any differentiation between the two conditions is almost undetectable. Certainly there are frequent references to apparently physical acts. Dhruvadāsa describes how when living

42. Dhruvadāsa, Vṛndāvana sata, op.cit., v.35. 'The supernatural forest is in the world; a unique source of rasa.'

43. Ibid., v.74. 'Though it is on earth, it is higher than all else.'

44. Ibid., v.83. 'The unparalleled forest of Vṛndā shines forth, manifest in the world. Though one has eyes one cannot see it, such is the form of māyā.'

in Vṛndāvana one should be satisfied with leaves and vegetables gathered on the first and second day of the month:

dūje tīje jo jurai sāka patra kachu āya/  
tēhī som santosa kari rahai adhika sukha pāya//<sup>45</sup>

A further verse describes how the devotee wanders in the forest, clad in old clothes, his hair dishevelled, his heart filled with love, singing of the divine couple's happiness:

jīrana pata ati dīna lata hiye sarasa anurāga/  
vivasa saghana bana mem phiraisāvata yugala suhāga//<sup>46</sup>

Such a description of spiritual practice is reminiscent of the instructions of the Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu.

Also apparently in support of a physical understanding of the need to live in Vṛndāvana, is a comparison of such residence with visiting a pilgrimage place. Dhruvadāsa compares leaving Vṛndāvana for another pilgrimage place with abandoning a philosopher's stone for the sake of a cowrie:

taji kai vṛndā vipina kaum aura tīrtha je jāta/  
chāṁdi vimala cimtāmanī kaudī kaum lalacāta//<sup>47</sup>

The equivalence of Vṛndāvana with a pilgrimage place is more apparent than real in this verse, since an important distinction is drawn between the two. Though a wish-yielding stone and a cowrie are apparently both stones, in actuality they are not of the same substance. Whereas one is mundane, the other is supernatural. In other words, Vṛndāvana appears like any other pilgrimage place only to those who cannot perceive its real nature.

45. Ibid., v.89. 'Being satisfied with whatever vegetables or leaves you may gather on the second or third (day), live, having great happiness.'

46. Ibid., v.93. 'With old clothes and dishevelled hair, heart overcome, he wanders in the dense forest, singing of the couple's joy.'

47. Ibid., v.81. 'He who leaves Vṛndāvana and goes to another pilgrimage centre, (is like one who) giving up a pure wish-yielding stone, covets a cowrie.'

Bihārinadāsa resembles Dhruvadāsa closely with regard to his portrayal of living in Vṛndāvana, as he does in other respects, i.e. the concept of nitya vihāra and his description of Vṛndāvana. This can be seen in the way a number of Bihārinadāsa's verses describe living in Vṛndāvana in unmistakably physical terms. One verse says one should live in Braj carrying a clay-pot and a small blanket and be satisfied with whatever rice one gets from the inhabitants of Braj:

śrībihārīdāsa braja yaum basau karuvo kāmari khyātu/  
jathā lābha santosa gahi brajabāsina kau bhātu//<sup>48</sup>

Despite verses such as the above, it is arguable that the mental and spiritual aspect of living in Vṛndāvana is emphasized even more strongly in the poetry of Bihārinadāsa than in that of Dhruvadāsa. It is certainly made clear that the physical act in itself is not enough. One verse points out that there are as many ways of living in Vṛndāvana as there are of worship, and while some are true, others are false, practised merely out of greed:

jeto antara bāsa mem tetau jāni upāsa/  
śrībihārīdāsa kachu sāmca hai kachu kachu lobha libāsa//<sup>49</sup>

The equivalence made between a spiritual state and living in Vṛndāvana is apparent from the way in which never moving

48. Bihārinadāsa, op.cit., p.202, v.486. 'Bihārinadāsa says live thus in Braj, with the famous pot and blanket. Be content with whatever you get of rice from the inhabitants of Braj.'

49. Ibid., p.230, v.603. 'As many differences as there are in dwelling, so many know there to be in worship. Bihārinadāsa says, some are true, others are (practised) through greed.'

from Vṛndāvana is equated with the state of one-pointed devotion (ananyabhāva). One verse says that those who are ananya can never be tempted by supernatural powers, wealth or salvation itself to move a step from Vṛndāvana:

astāsīdhi nava nidhi mukti pada dai baurāvata dīkha/  
śrībihārīdāsa ananya na tari haim taji vṛndāvana bīkha//<sup>50</sup>

The act of living in Vṛndāvana as a spiritual state can also be seen expressed in the concept of service in the palace (mahala kī tahala). The palace has been seen to represent Vṛndāvana (see above p. 184), therefore service in the palace is synonymous with Vṛndāvana vāsa. It is through the service in the palace that the soul can participate in the eternal divine sport and so experience the rasa, which is the essence of the divine. The devotee, the soul, becomes a sakhī in the palace and thus one of the four essential elements of the divine sport itself. The subtle nature of the service in the palace, as well as the role of the sakhī in the sport, can be seen from a verse which describes how the Vedas searched the whole world and could not find the Lord. The only way of finding him is through service in the palace. The Vedas can never enter the sport where the sakhī keeps the divine sport alive with love, putting even madhura-rasa through a sieve:

veda dhamdhorā loka kau terata dhola bajāi/  
bihārīdāsa tā mahala kī tahala karau dularāi//  
śrībihārīdāsa bihāra mem veda na pāvaim jāmni/  
sakhī jivāvaim prema saum mahā madhura rasa chāmni//<sup>51</sup>

50. Ibid., p.389, v.69. 'The eight supernatural powers, the nine types of wealth and salvation may tempt him, but he who is one-pointed will not move a step from Vṛndāvana.'

51. Ibid., p.184, v.420. 'The Vedas searched the world beating a drum, but Bihārīdāsa performs service in the palace with love. Bihārīdāsa says, the Vedas cannot enter the sport. The sakhī keeps alive the divine sport with love, putting madhura-rasa through a sieve.'

Thus to live in Vṛndāvana, according to poets such as Bihārinadāsa and Dhruvadāsa, essentially denotes a spiritual state, i.e. participation in the eternal divine activity which finds its expression in the divine, symbolic Vṛndāvana. At the same time, because of its nature as a symbol, and the identification of the symbol with that which it represents, the earthly Vṛndāvana is identified with the symbolic. The entire concept is linked with that of rasa through which the real dwelling in Vṛndāvana takes place, when māyā drops away, and the divine reality which in actuality was always there is at last perceived.

## C O N C L U S I O N

## CONCLUSION

Vṛndāvana is presented in the literature in two distinct ways - mythic and symbolic. In both cases, Vṛndāvana is to be understood as an aspect of the divinity itself, essential for its self-manifestation (līlā). It is a means whereby the worshipper can envisage the self-manifestation by imputing to it a time and a place.

By mythic may be understood the presentation of Vṛndāvana as the fairy-tale setting of primordial myth. The symbolic representation, on the other hand, involves a manifest Vṛndāvana which, for the worshipper, symbolizes a transcendent and yet eternally present Vṛndāvana.

The concept of a mythic 'paradise' as an imaginary stage-setting for the ineffable process of self-manifestation and of a symbolic 'Goloka' can readily be recognized in the most ancient literature of India and Iran. The former may be seen in the wooded setting enjoyed by various primordial pairs of creatures; the latter in the yāvasa 'cattle pasture' or gavyūti, Avestan gaoyaoiti.

In the Vedic literature an ambiguity is maintained in respect of distinctions between the unmanifest and the manifest. Neither the mythic scenes that might be taken to be prototypes of Vṛndāvana nor the 'Goloka' concept as a temporal and spiritual reward is explicitly of this world or not of this world. If anything, the divine (e.g. tād ékam) is more real (sát) than the manifest (māyā).

The relevant Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas maintain the myth, but abandon the symbolism: new symbols of eternal bliss emerge -

22)

e.g. Vaikuṇṭha. Given the notion of a mythic Vṛndāvana in the Purāṇas, a quasi-historical and -geographical appreciation of the concept inevitably gathered strength. Nevertheless, the basic elements of Vedic symbolism (cows, cowherds, pastures etc.) subsist in the Purāṇic Vṛndāvana, conceived as a divine environment. Indeed in the BhP. there is a considerable development towards both geographical verisimilitude and symbolic metaphysical interpretations of geographical features.

The Purāṇas postulate an ultimate reality including both the manifest, that which is related to Kṛṣṇa, and the unmanifest, that which is related to Viṣṇu. Such a duality in the nature of the divine, as well as its specific expression in terms of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa, has also been seen to have its roots in the Vedic tradition.

In the Purāṇic texts, creation and incarnation are seen as both being equally forms of divine self-expression and hence of līlā. In fact, still no basic difference is being made between creation and incarnation: līlā is synonymous with any form of divine activity. Since Vṛndāvana is the space within which līlā takes place, it is as much the scene of creation as of incarnation.

In the Gauḍīya texts Vṛndāvana as the realm of divine manifestation remains a symbol of the totally transcendent world. No less than in the Vedic literature, the symbolism of cows and pastures is to the worshipper a guarantee of eternal reward; the subordination of these concepts to classical notions of Viṣṇu's divinity as seen in the Purāṇas is not so much rejected as ignored.

The Gaudīya texts, even more than the BhP., envisage the manifest Kṛṣṇa as being more real than the unmanifest Viṣṇu. This is compatible with the acceptance of līlā as the ultimate expression of the divine. In these texts, līlā as divine self-manifestation is seen as being outside of creation (which is essentially a product of māyā and so a form of divine self-concealment rather than self-expression). Vṛndāvana is therefore equally disconnected from creation: all interest is focussed on its role in relation to līlā, i.e. its role as concrete symbol of the divine world. However, the retention of the mythological framework of the Purāṇas results in Vṛndāvana being endowed with two forms - the mythic Vṛndāvana and the transcendent Goloka - which are said to be identical in reality.

The sectarian poets of Braj Bhāṣā such as Bihārinadāsa and Dhruvadāsa utterly reject all mythological elements in the expression of līlā, with the consequence of Vṛndāvana retaining purely its symbolic role. These poets, however, resemble the Gaudīya texts in their total dissociation of the eternal divine sport from the process of creation. Here again unceasing divine activity is viewed as the ultimate self-expression of the divine, a concept which necessitates the maintaining of Vṛndāvana as a transcendental entity in its role as divine space without which such activity is an impossibility.

The Sūrasāgara appears to be the result of an attempt to modernize the actual subject-matter of the Purāṇas. Where the Gaudīya Gosvāmīs interpret casuistically the actual wording of Purāṇic texts and other sectarian authors ignore them, the

Sūrasāgara incorporates elements of symbolic development into the Purāṇic mythological structure itself, much along the lines of the BhP.

As regards the historical development in the conceptualization of Vṛndāvana, the mythic expression found in the Purāṇic literature clearly represents the ideas of the classical period. The symbolic role of Vṛndāvana that is, on the other hand, stressed in Braj Bhāṣā and Sanskrit commentatorial literature might therefore be taken to reflect a purely medieval development. Since however a Vedic prototype of both aspects can be traced, the possibility cannot be ruled out that at any given historical period the two concepts were developing simultaneously, the choice of emphasis depending more on the nature of the text in question than on its chronological position. The relative lateness of the Hariv. and the BhP., for example, has not been proved by any objective criteria, but rather on the basis of one particular view of the history of ideas.

## A P P E N D I X

## APPENDIX A

In the following appendix, the full text of relevant RV. hymns is given, with translations of extracts most important for the present purposes as well as a minimum of necessary critical discussion.

The text used is Aufrecht's transliterated edition of the RV. It must be noted that his system of transliteration differs from the standard system otherwise used in this thesis in the following way:

<u>Aufrecht</u>	<u>Standard</u>
â, î, û	ā, ī, ū
ṛi	ṛ
ñ	ṇ
ḡ	ś
sh	ṣ

On the upper left hand side of each section of the appendix can be found the hymn reference number - the RV. Maṇḍala number followed by the hymn number. Next to this, important terms or concepts of the hymn or group of hymns in question are cited. On the upper right hand side the name of the author appears in brackets followed by the deity to whom the hymn is addressed. This information is obtained from the Anukr. Below is the Sanskrit text in which the translated verses and phrases are underlines. This is followed by the translation and finally the critical notes.

6.9. kṛṣṇām āhar, ārjunam āhar

(ṛṣi: Bārhaspatya

Bharadvāja;

devatā: Vaiśvānara Agni)

Āhaḥ ca kṛṣṇām āhar ārjunam ca vi vartete rājasi  
vedyābhiḥ | vaiśvānarō jñyamāno nā rājāvātiraḥ jyōtishāgata  
tāmānsi || 1 || nāhīm tāntum nā vi jānāmy ōtum nā yām  
vāyanti samarō 'tamānāḥ | kāsya svit putrā iha vāktvāni  
parō vadāty āvareṇa pitrā || 2 || sā it tāntum sā vi jānāty  
ōtum sā vāktvāny rituthā vadāti | yā im ciketaḥ amṛita-  
śya gopā avāc cāraṇ parō anyēna pācyan || 3 || ayām hōtā  
prathamāḥ pācyatemaṁ idām jyōtir amṛitam mārtyeśhu |  
ayām sā jāno dhruvā ā nishattō 'martyas tanvā vārdhamā-  
nāḥ || 4 || dhruvām jyōtir nibitam dṛiḥāye kām māno jāvi-  
śhṭham patāyatsv antāḥ | viḥve devāḥ sāmānasāḥ sūketā  
ēkaṁ krātum abhi vi yanti sādhu || 5 || vi me kārṇā pata-  
yato vi cākṣhur vīdām jyōtir hṛidaya ābitam yāt | vi me  
mānaḥ carati dūrādādhīḥ kīm svid vakshyāmi kīm u nū ma-  
nishyo || 6 || viḥve devā anamasyan bhiyānās tvām agne tā-  
masi tasthivāṁsam | vaiśvānarō 'vatōtāye nō 'martyo 'vatō-  
tāye nāḥ || 7 || 11 ||

1. kṛṣṇā āhar and ārjuna āhar alternate according to the  
vedyās<sup>1</sup> (what is to be known, must be determined? cf. 8.96.10-12  
kuvid angā vedat 'he (Indra) will surely know/understand,' like  
v.2 ab here, a type of phrase used to introduce important  
conundrums). Agni Vaiśvānara, as a new-born king, overcame  
the darkness with jyōtis.
2. ... Whose son is it will speak vāktvas (what is to be said  
cf. vedyābhiḥ in v.1.) here (that are) superior to his  
inferior father('s)?
3. ... He who is the amṛitasya gopāḥ will perceive this,  
wandering below and seeing (what is) above the Other.

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1. Translated by K.F.Geldner, Der Rig-Veda, Vol. 2, Harvard, 1951, p.101,  
as 'mit Vorbedacht'; by H. Grassman, Wörterbuch zum Rig Veda,  
Leipzig, 1873, p. 1353, as 'absichtlich' i.e. 'intentionally'.

4. He is the first hótr, behold him, this amṛtam jyótis among  
men; he has been ~~born~~ placed in the dhruvā, the immortal,  
tanvā vārdhasānah ...

7. Vīśve Devāḥ worshipped thee in fear, Agni, as thou stoodest  
in the darkness ...

Geldner sees here a 'Sängerstreit, i.e. competition between  
singers, but does some violence to the text to maintain his  
view. Significant for the present purpose is that there is  
speculation as to Agni's form when he stands in the dark. The  
dark and light forms are named as kṛṣṇā and ārjuna respectively,  
and the dichotomy is associated with the of pāra and āvāra  
which are identified as Viṣṇu and Agni respectively in  
AitBr. 1.1. The RV. evidently associated the matter with  
the higher and lower 'birds on a tree' motif (cf. especially  
the use of the term anya in both contexts).<sup>2</sup> From this it  
would follow that Kṛṣṇa is already envisaged in a vana, and is  
designated a gopāṇ (v.3.)

Important also is the fact of this being an Agni hymn, as  
this confirms the connexion between Kṛṣṇa and Agni.

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2. RV., op.cit., I.164.20.

Ā me hāvāṃ nāsatyāçvinā gáchatāṃ yuvām | mádhvaḥ  
 sómasya pítāye || 1 || imāṃ me stómam açvinemām me çri-  
 nutāṃ hāvām | mádhvaḥ sómasya pítāye || 2 || ayāṃ vām  
 kṛṣṇo açvinā hāvato vâjinīvasū | mádhvaḥ sómasya pítāye  
 || 3 || çṛiñutām jaritūr hāvām kṛṣṇasya stuvatō narā | má-  
 dhvaḥ sómasya pítāye || 4 || chardīr yantam ādābhyāṃ vip-  
 rāya stuvatē narā | mádhvaḥ sómasya pítāye || 5 || 7 ||  
 gáchatāṃ dāçúṣho grīhām itthā stuvatō açvinā | má-  
 dhvaḥ sómasya pítāye || 6 || yuñjāthām rāsabhaṃ ráthe ví-  
 dvāṅge vṛṣhaṇvasū | mádhvaḥ sómasya pítāye || 7 || trivan-  
 dhurēṇa trivṛtā ráthenā yātam açvinā | mádhvaḥ sómasya  
 pítāye || 8 || nū me giro nāsatyāçvinā prāvataṃ yuvām |  
 mádhvaḥ sómasya pítāye || 9 || 8 ||

3. I, Kṛṣṇa, call upon you, the Aśvins, rich in mares, so that  
sweet Soma may be drunk.

4. Listen to the invocation of the singer Kṛṣṇa as he offers praise,  
oh heroes, so that sweet Soma may be drunk.

There is no explicit suggestion that this Kṛṣṇa is in  
difficulties, but this is usually the basic idea of such passages  
and the presumable prototype, the adjacent passage 8.96.13ff  
refers to the help of Indra, while the ritual exhortation to the  
jaritṛ forms a part of the other frame-work of the story. Transfer  
to the Aśvins has involved drastic simplification vis-à-vis 8.96.

APPENDIX A.3.

- 10.39 f. (dosā - vāstor (ṛṣi: Kākṣīvatī Ghosā; devatā: Aśvins)  
 10.41 — (āyātam madhupéyam appeal to Aśvins for offspring, with list of ancients helped by Aśvins (ṛṣi: Suhastya Ghaṇḍeya; devatā: Aśvins)

A.3a  
 10.39

Yó vām párijmā suvríd aṇvinā rátho doshām ushāso  
 hávyo havishmatā | ṣaṇvattamāśas tām u vām idām vayām  
 pitúr ná nāma suhávam havāmahe || 1 || codāyataṁ sūnṛitāḥ  
 pūvatam dhiya út pūramdhīr īrayataṁ tād uṇmasi | ya-  
 ṣāsam bhāgām kṛiputām no aṇvinā sōmam ná cārum ma-  
 ghāvatsu nas kṛitam || 2 || amājūraṣ cid bhavatho yuvām  
 bhāgo 'nāṣoṣ cid avitārāpamāśya cit | andhāśya cin nāsa-  
 tyā kṛiṣāśya cid yuvām id āhur bhishajā rutāśya cit || 3 ||  
 yuvām cyāvānam sanāyam yāthā rátham pūnar yuvānam  
 carāthāya takshathuḥ | nish taugryām āhathur adbhyās  
 pári viṣvét tā vām sávaneshu pravācyā || 4 || purāṇā vām  
 vīryā prā bravā jānó 'tho hāsathur bhishajā mayobhūvā |  
 tā vām nú nāvyañ ávase karāmahe 'yām nāsatyā ṣrād ārir  
 yāthā dādhat || 5 || 15 ||

iyām vām ahvo ṣṛiputām me aṇvinā putrāyeva pitārā  
 máhyam ṣikshatam | ānāpir ājñā asajātyāmatih purā tāśyā  
 abhiṣaster āva ṣṛitam || 6 || yuvām ráthena vīmadāya ṣundh-  
 yuvām ny ābathuḥ purumitrāśya yōshanām | yuvām há-  
 vam vadhrimatyā āgachataṁ yuvām sūshutim cakrathuḥ  
 pūramdhaye || 7 || yuvām víprasya jaraṇām upeyúshah pū-  
 nah kalér akṛiputām yúvad váyah | yuvām vāndanam ṛiṣya-  
 dād úd āpathur yuvām sadyó viṣpālām étave kṛithah || 8 ||  
 yuvām ha rebhām vṛishanā gūhā hitām úd airayatam ma-  
 mṛivāśsam aṇvinā | yuvām ṛibīsam utá taptām átraya  
 ómanvantam cakrathuḥ saptāvadhrye || 9 || yuvām ṣvetām  
 pedāve 'ṇvināṣvam nāvābhir vājair nāvātī ca vājīnam | car-  
 kṛityam dadathur drāvayātsakham bhāgam ná ṛibhyo hāv-  
 yam mayobhūvam || 10 || 16 ||

nā tām rájānāv adite kútaṣ canā nāñho aṇnoti duritām  
 nákir bbayām | yām aṇvinā suhavā rudravartanī purora-  
 thām kṛiputhāḥ pātnyā sahā || 11 || ā téna yātam mānaso  
 jāvīyasaḥ rátham yām vām ṛibhāvaṣ cakrūr aṇvinā | yāśya  
 yóge duhitā jāyate divā ubhé āhanī sudhne vivāśvataḥ || 12 ||  
 tā vartir yātam jayúshā ví párvatām āpinvatam ṣayāve  
 dhenūm aṇvinā | vṛikasya cid vārtikām antár āśyād yuvām  
 ṣacībhir grasitām amuñcatam || 13 || etām vām stómam aṇvi-  
 nāv akarmātkshāma bhṛigavo ná rátham | ny āmṛikshāma  
 yōshanām ná márye nityam ná sūnūm tánayam dādhanāḥ

10.39.12 With the chariot faster than thought, which the R̥phus made for you, at whose yoking the Daughter of Heaven is born, Oh Ásvins, come at the two auspicious days of Vivasvant.

In fact the Ásvins come night and morning - 10.39.1.

dosām usāsah, 1040.4. dosā vāstoh; so there is a clear allusion here to kṛṣṇām áhar ájunam áhar.

A.3b  
10.40

Rátham yāntam kúha kó ha vām narā prāti dyumán-  
tam suvitāya bhūshati | prātaryāvāṇam vibhvaṁ viçé-viçé  
vāstor-vāstor váhamānam dhiyā çūmi || 1 || kúha svid doshā  
kúha vāstor açvinā kúhābhipitvām karataḥ kúhoshatuḥ |  
kó vām çayutrā vidháveva devāram máryam ná yóshā  
kṛiṇute sadhāstha ā || 2 || prātár jarethe jaraṇéva kápayā  
vāstor-vāstor yajataḥ gachatho grihām | kāsya dhvasrā bha-  
vathaḥ kāsya vā narā rájaputrēva sávanāva gachathāḥ ||  
3 || yuvām mṛigéva vāraṇā mṛiganyávo doshā vāstor ha-  
viśhā ní hvayāmahe | yuvām hótrām pītutā júhvate naré-  
sham jánāya vahathaḥ çubhas patí || 4 || yuvām ha ghóshā  
páry açvinā yatí rájna áce dubitā priché vām narā | bhū-  
tām me áhna utá bhūtām aktávó 'çvāvate rathīne çaktam  
árvate || 5 || 18 ||

yuvām kaví śhṭhaḥ páry açvinā rátham viço ná kútso  
jaritúr naçáyathaḥ | yuvór ha mákshā páry açvinā mádhv  
āśā bharata nishkritām ná yóshanā || 6 || yuvām ha bhujoyām  
yuvām açvinā vācam yuvām çinjāram uçánām úpārathuḥ |  
yuvó rárvā pári sakhyām āsato yuvór ahām ávasā sumnām  
ā cako || 7 || yuvām ha kṛiçām yuvām açvinā çayūm yuvām  
vidhāntam vidhāvām urushyathaḥ | yuvām sanibhyaḥ sta-  
nāyantam açvināpa vrajām ūrūthaḥ sapṭāsyam || 8 || já-  
niśhta yóshā patáyat kanínakó ví cāruhan vírúdhó dānsánā  
ānu | āsmai riyante nivanéva sindhavo 'smā áhno bhavati  
tāt patitvanām || 9 || jivām rudanti ví mayante adhvaré dīr-  
ghām ānu prásitim dīdhiyur nárah | vāmām pītībhyo yá  
idām sameriré máyah pātībhyo jánayah parishváje ||  
10 || 19 ||

ná tāsya vidma tát u shú prá vocata yúvā ha yád yu-  
vatyāḥ kahéti yónishu | priyósriyasya vṛishabhiāsya retíno  
grihām gamemāçvinā tát uçmasi || 11 || ā vām agant su-  
matír vājiniवास ny açvinā hṛitsú kāmā ayañsata | ábhū-  
tam gopā mithunā çubhas patí priyā aryamṇó dúryāñ açi-  
mahi || 12 || tá mrandasānā mánusbo durópā ā dhattām ra-  
yīm sahāvīram vacasyáve | kṛitām tīrthām suprapāṇām çu-  
bhas patí sthānūm patheshṭhām āpa durmatīm hatam || 13 ||  
kvā svid adyā katamāsv açvinā vikshú dasrā mādāyete çu-  
bhās patí | ká im ní yeme katamāsya jagmatur víprasya  
vā yājamānasya vā grihām || 14 || 20 ||

- 10.40.1. ... chariot which leaves at dawn ... drives at dawn ...
2. ... at eve ... at dawn ... they turn in ... they have spent the night ... in bed ... in the assembly.
3. ... you woke at dawn ... you go home at dawn ... like princes.
4. ... at eve and at dawn...
5. Ghóṣā, the king's daughter, approached the Ásvins and said, 'I ask you, my Lords, be with me for the day and for the night; be helpful for a hero with horses and chariot.'
9. A maiden was born, a young boy took flight, and plants came forth wondrously; to him rivers came running as if downstream, to him is vouchsafed the status of husband for the day.

A.3c  
10.41

Samānām u tyām puruhâtām ukthyām rātham tricak-  
rām sávanā gánigmatam | párijmānam vidathyām suvṛiktí-  
bhir vayām vyūṣṭā ushāso havāmahe || 1 || prātaryūjam  
nāsatyādhi tishṭhathaḥ prātaryāvaṇam madhuvāhanam rā-  
tham | víṣo yēna gāchatho yājvarī narā kīrōc cid yajnam  
hōṭṛimantam aṣvinā || 2 || adhvaryūm vā mādhipāṇīm su-  
hāstyam agnidham vā dhṛitādaksham dāmūnasam | víprasya  
vā yāt sávanāni gāchathó 'ta ā yātam madhupéyam aṣvinā

- 10.41.2. The chariot which is yoked at dawn ... leaves at dawn.
3. Come, Ásvins, to the sweet (Some-) drinking.

This 3-verse hymn thus combines a version of the 6.9.1. motif (day/night) and of the 8.85 motif (refrain: sweet Soma).

## APPENDIX A.4.

10.42=44

(ṛṣi: Kṛṣṇa Ṇgīrasa;  
devatā: Indra)

A.4a

10.42

Ásteva sū pratarāṃ lāyam ásyān bhūṣhaṇa iva prā  
bharā stómam asmai | vācā viprās tarata vācam aryó nī  
rāmaya jaritaḥ sóma indram || 1 || dōhena gām ūpa cikshā  
sākhāyam prā bodhaya jaritar jārām indram | kócam ná  
pūrnāṃ vāsunā nyṛṣṭam ā cyāvaya maghadéyāya cūram  
|| 2 || kīm aṅgá tvā maghavan bhojāni āhuh cīcīhi mā cīcā-  
yāṃ tvā cīcīmi | āpnasvatī māma dhīr astu cakra vasu-  
vidam bhāgam indrā bharā naḥ || 3 || tvāṃ jánā mamasat-  
yēshv indra sanīasthānā ví hvayante samīké | átrā yūjan  
kṛīṇute yó havishmān nāsunvatā sakhyāṃ vashṭi cūrah  
|| 4 || dhānam ná syandrām bahulāṃ yó asmai tivrānt só-  
māñ āsunóti prāyasvān | tūsmāi cātrānt sutūkān prātār  
āhno nī svāshṭrān yuvāti hānti vritrām || 5 || 22 ||

yāsmīn vayāni dadhimā cānsam indre yāḥ cīcīya ma-  
ghāvā kāmam asmé | ārāc cit sūn bhayatāni asya cātrur  
ny āsmai dyumnā jānyā namantām || 6 || ārāc chātrum āpa  
bādhasva dūrām ugró yāḥ cāmbaḥ puruhūta téna | asmé  
dhehi yāvamād gōmad indra kṛidhī dhiyam jaritré vāja-  
ratnām || 7 || prā yām antār vṛishasavāso āgman tivrāñ sōmā  
bahulāntāsa indram | nāha dāmānam maghāvā nī yañsan  
nī sunvaté vahati bhūri vāmām || 8 || utā prahūm atidīvyā  
jayāti kṛitām yāc chvaghñī vicinóti kāló | yó devākāmo ná  
dhānā ruṇaddhī sām ít tūṃ rāyā sṛijati svadhāvān || 9 || gó-  
bhishī ṭaremaṃmatīm durévāni yāvena kshūdham puruhūta  
vīcivām | vayāni rājābhiḥ prathamā dhānāny asmākena vṛi-  
jānenā jayema || 10 || bṛhaspātīr naḥ pāri pātu paçcād utót-  
tarasmād ādharād aghāyóh | indrah purāstād utā madhyatō  
naḥ sākḥā sākhibhyo vārivah kṛīnotu || 11 || 23 ||

10.42.1 ... make Indra halt at the Soma.

2.... bring hither the sākhi (like a) cow with milking,  
wake Indra (like a) lover.

5... breaks his enemies to the yoke in the dawn of the day.

10-11 May we overcome ruinous poverty of thought with herds (of ideas),

hunger with corn ... May we be first to win wealth with our  
nation and our rulers. Let Bṛhaspati protect us from the enemy  
behind and from the one above and below; let Indra (protect) us  
from the one in front and in the midst, let the ally make space  
for the allies.

(References to cows, etc: v.5 syandram; 7 yāvamad gōmat;

8 vr̥sasavāsah ... sōmāh)

There appears to be here, at the outset(vv. 1,2,5) a vestige of the night/day motif. At the end, there is an insistence on nationhood and military power(suggestive, perhaps, of Dvārakeśa Kṛṣṇa); note the parallel syntax of the second verse and the second last verse. The concepts of sākhi and cows are prominent in the intervening standard accumulation of praise of Indra.

A.4b  
10.43

Āchā ma indram matāyaḥ svarvīdaḥ sadhr̥tēṣṭ vīcivā  
uṇatīr antāshata | pāri shvajante jānayo yāthā pātīm mār-  
yam nā cundhyūm maghāvānam ūtāye || 1 || nā ghā tvadrig  
āpa veti me mānas tvē it kāmam puruhūta cīcraya | rājeva  
dasma nī shadō 'dhi barhishy asmīnt sū sōme 'vapānam  
astu te || 2 || vishūvr̥id indro āmater utā kshudhāḥ sā id  
rāyō maghāvā vāsva īcate | tāsyaēd imō pravaṇē sapta sin-  
dhavo vāyo vardhanti vr̥ishabhāsya cūshmināḥ || 3 || vāyo  
nā vr̥ikshām supalāçām āsadant sōmāsa indram mandīnaç  
camūshādah | prāshām ānikam çāvasā dāvidyutad vidāt  
svār mānave jyōtīr āryam || 4 || kṛitām nā çvaghnīr vī cinoti  
dēvane sanivārgam yān maghāvā sūryam jāyat | nā tāt te  
anyō ānu vīryam çakan nā purāpō maghavan nōtā nūta-  
nah || 5 || 24 ||

vīçam-vīçam maghāvā pāry açāyata jānānām dhēnā ava-  
cākaçad vr̥ishā | yāsyūha çakrāḥ sāvaneshu rāpyati sā tī-  
vraiḥ sōmaiḥ sahate pr̥itanyatāḥ || 6 || āpo nā sindhum abhī  
yāt samāksharant sōmāsa indram kulyā iva hradām | vār-  
dhanti viprā māho asya sādane yavam nā vr̥ishṭīr divyēna  
dāmunā || 7 || vr̥ishā nā kruddhāḥ patayad rājāḥsv ā yō arya-  
patnīr ākṛiṇod imā apūḥ | sā sunvatē maghāvā jirādānavē  
'vindaj jyōtīr mānave havishmate || 8 || ūj jāyatām paraçūr  
jyōtishā sahā bhūyā pītāsya sudūgbhā purāṇavāt | vī roca-  
tām arushō bhānūnā çūciḥ svār nā çukrām çuçuçīta sūtpa-  
tiḥ || 9 || gōbhish çareṇāmātiṇi — || 10 || br̥ihaspātīr nah  
pāri — || 11 || 25 ||

10.43.1-2 Let my thoughts ... full of desire, shout forth to  
 Indra; let them embrace the lord for favour, like  
 wives the husband, or like (fathers) the splendid  
 youth. My mind set on thee cannot tear itself away,  
 I have fixed my desire on thee alone, Puruhūta  
 sit down, Dasma, on the strew, like a king. Let  
 the refreshment be thine at this very Soma.

3. Indra is the driver away of poverty and hunger. He,  
 the Lord, rules over riches and goods; these seven  
 rivers in their descent increase the strength of  
 that mighty bull.

4. As birds to the leafy tree, let the cheering vats of  
 Soma flock to Indra.

Reference to dyu :v.5 śvaghñī ... dévane. Reference to cows etc:  
 v.6 vīśā, v.8 vīśā, v.9 tāsyā sudūghāh; vv10-11 = 10.42.10-11.

The romantic beginning (i.e. Vṛndāvana?) here contrasts even  
 more starkly than in the preceding hymn with the military flavour  
 (Dvārakā?) of the close. The mentions of sākhī and cows in  
 10.42 here gives way to a fairly detailed description of a  
 landscape, admittedly on a grander scale than is eventually  
 envisaged for Vṛndāvana, and developing into a piece of  
 standard Indra hymnography.

If an etymology from the adverb vī(s)- is postulated for the  
 epithet Viṣṇu (and the characteristic activity of Viṣṇu is  
vikramana, not veśana), then a link is acknowledged in v.3  
 between Viṣṇu and Indra, and so a link is established between  
 Viṣṇu and this hymn. Similarly, 8.89.14 vīṣune.

Thus just as the kṛṣṇān āhar inspiration of 10.39 ff is petering out, we may observe the accumulation of gopā, Vṛndāvana, and Viṣṇu motifs accruing under the wide aegis of Indra and the tenuous leitmotif of Kṛṣṇa.

At the level of the Anukr., we may note that 10.43f may be deemed to contain allusions to the curious names of ṛṣis who are coupled with 'Kṛṣṇa Angiras' at 8.80ff., viz Ekadyu Naudhasa and Nodhā Gotama: 10.43.5 contributes dēvane, and 10.44 contributes nāvam. Of more significance is the possibility of registering the presence of a 'līlā' motif here in the guise of dēvana 'gambling'.

10.44 is dedicated to the stupendous exploits of the powerful gigantic Indra, with the intention of stimulating him to produce cows and vegetation. The motifs at the close could be associated with the Govardhanadhara and demon destroying aspects of the eventual Kṛṣṇa story:

A.4c  
10.44

~ yātv indraḥ svāpatir mādāya yó dhármanā tātujānās  
túvishmān | pratvakshānó áti vícā sūhānsy apārēṇa mahatā  
vṛishṇyeṇa || 1 || sushṭhāmā ráthaḥ suyāmā hāri te mīmý-  
ksha vājro nṛpate gúbhastau | cṛbhaṇi rájant supáthā yāby  
arvān vārdhāma te papúsho vṛishṇyāni || 2 || éndravāho nṛ-  
pátim vājrabāhum ugrām ugrāsas tavishāsa enam | prátva-  
kshasam vṛishabhām satyáḡushmanam ém asmatrá sadhamādo  
vahantu || 3 || evā pátim dropasācam sáccetasam ūrjāḥ skam-  
bhām dharatīna ā vṛishāyase | ójaḥ kṛishva sām gṛibhāya  
tvé ápy áso yáthā kenipānām inó vṛidhó || 4 || gámann asmé  
vásūny ā hí cānsisham svācisham bhāram ā yāhi somīnaḥ |  
tvām ícisho sāsman ā satsi barhishy anādhrishyā táva pā-  
trāṇi dhármanā || 5 || 26 ||

prīthak prāyan prathamā devābūtayó 'kṛiṇvata cṛa-  
vasyāni dushṭārā | ná yé cēkúr yajniyām nāvam ārūham  
irmaivā té ny āviçanta képayah || 6 || evaivāpāg āpare santu  
dāḡhyò 'cā yéshām duryója āyuyujré | itthā yé prāg  
āpare sānti dāvāne purūṇi yātra vayūnāni bhójanā || 7 || gi-  
rīr ājraṇ réjamānāñ adhārayad dyaūḥ krandaḡ antārikshāṇi  
kopayat | samitēñe dḡishāṇe vi shkabhāyati vṛishṇaḥ pítvā  
māda ukthāni cānsati || 8 || imām bibharmi sūkṛitam te an-  
kuçām yēnārujāsi maghavan chaphārūjaḥ | asmīnt sū te sā-  
vane astv okyām sutā ishṭau maghavan bodhy ābhagaḥ  
|| 9 || góbbish taremāmatim — || 10 || brīhaspátir naḥ pári  
— || 11 || 27 ||

## APPENDIX A.5.

8.96<sup>4</sup> drapsá kṛṣṇá  
amśumāti nadī  
dhāmāntam (kṛṣṇám)  
viśune

(ṛṣi Tiraścī Āngiras  
 or Dyutāna Māruta;  
devatā: Indra/Indra-Mārutah/  
Indra-Brhaspati)

Asmā ushāsa ātiranta yāmam indrāya nāktam ūrmyāḥ  
suṁcāḥ | asmā ūpo mātārah saptā tathur nṛbhiyas tārāya  
sindhavaḥ supārāḥ || 1 || ātividdhā vithurēṇā cid āstrā trīḥ  
saptā sānu sāṁhitā girīṇām | nā tād devó ná mārtyas tu-  
turyād yāni prāvṛiddho vṛishabhāc cakāra || 2 || indrasya  
vāja āyasó niniḡla indrasya bāhvór bhīyishṭham ójaḥ |  
ḡrshānu indrasya krátavo nireká āsānu éshanta ḡrútyā  
upáké || 3 || mánye tvā yajniyam yajniyānām mánye tvā  
cyāvanam ácyutānām | mánye tvā sātvanām indra ketúm  
mánye tvā vṛishabhām carshanām || 4 || ā yád vājram  
bāhvór indra dhátse madaacyútam áhaye bāntavā u | prā  
párvatā ánavanta prā gāvāḥ prā brahmāṇo abhinákshanta  
indram || 5 || 82 ||

tām u shṭavāma yá imā jajāna víḡvā jātāny ávarāṇy  
 asmāt | indreṇa mitrām didhishema ḡrbbhír ūpo námobhir  
 vṛishabhām víḡema || 6 || vṛitrāsya tvā cvasáthād íshamāṇā  
 víḡve devā ajahur yé sákhāyah | marúdbhir indra sakhyām  
te astv áthemā víḡvāḥ prítanā jayāsi || 7 || trīḥ shashṭis tvā  
marúto vāvṛidhānā usrá iva ráḡāyo yajniyāsaḥ | ūpa tvé-  
maḥ kṛidhí no bhāgadhéyam ḡśhmam ta enā havishā vi-  
dhema || 8 || tignām āyudbam marútām ánikam kás ta in-  
dra prāti vājram dadharsha | anāyudhāso ásurā adevāc ca-  
krēṇa tāñ āpa vāpa rījishin || 9 || mahá ugrāya tavāso su-  
vṛiktīm préraya ḡvátamāya paḡvāḥ | ḡirvāhase ḡira indrāya  
pārvīr dhehí tanvè kuvíd aṅgá védat || 10 || 83 ||

ukthāvāhase vibhvè manishām drūpā ná pāram frayā  
nadīnām | ní spṛiḡa dhiyā tanvi ḡrutāsya jūshṭatarasya ku-  
vid aṅgá védat || 11 || tād vividdhi yát ta indro jūjoshat  
stubi sushṭutīm námasā vivāsa | ūpa bhūsha jaritar mā ru-  
vanyāḥ ḡrāvāyā vācam kuvíd aṅgá védat || 12 || āva drapsó  
aṅḡumátim atishṭhad iyānāḥ kṛishṇó daḡábhiḥ sahásraiḥ |  
ávat tām indrah ḡācyā dhāmāntam āpa snéhitir nṛimānā  
adhatta || 13 || drapsām apaḡyam víshune cárāntam upahvaré  
nadyò aṅḡumátyāḥ | nábho ná kṛishnām avatasthivānsam

ishyāmi vo vṛiṣhaṇo yūdhyaṭājaú || 14 || ādha drapsó ancu-  
mātyā upāsthé 'dhārayat tanvām titvishānāh | víḥo ādevīr  
abhy ācūrantīr bṛihaspātīnā yujēndrah sasāhe || 15 || 31 ||

tvām ha yāt saptābhyo jāyamāno 'patrūbhyo abhavaḥ  
patrur indra | gāḥé dyāvāprithivī' ānv aviṇdo vibhumād-  
bhyo bhūvanebhyo rūpaṁ dhāḥ || 16 || tvām ha tyād apra-  
timānām ójo vājreṇa vajrin dhrishitó jaghantha | tvām cūsh-  
nasyāvātiro vādhatrais tvām gā indra pácyéd avindaḥ  
|| 17 || tvām ha tyād vṛiṣabha carshaṇānām ghanó vṛitrā-  
nām tavishó babhūtha | tvām sīndhūñr asrijas tastabhānām  
tvām apó ajayo dāsāpatnīḥ || 18 || sá sukrátū rāpitā yāḥ su-  
tēshv ānuttamanyur yó āheva revān | yá éka ín náry āpāñsi  
kártā sá vṛitrahā prátīd anyām ābulḥ || 19 || sá vṛitrahén-  
draḥ carshaṇīdhṛt tāṁ sushṭutyā hávyam huvema | sá prā-  
vitā maghāvā no 'dhivaktā sá vājasya çravasyāsyā dātā  
|| 20 || sá vṛitrahéndra rībhukshāḥ sadyó jajñāno hávyo ba-  
bhūva | kṛiṇvānn āpāñsi náryā purūni sómo ná pītó hávyah  
sākhibhyaḥ || 21 || 35 ||

8.96.1. The dawns traversed their stages, the nights by night ...

... rivers stopped for crossing ...

6f We would make friendship ... the gods who are your allies.

Let there be alliance between thee and the Maruts.

8. Maruts like herds of cattle.

9. Cast aside those godless Asuras with thy disc.

10. Make many speeches for Indra in person, who is most  
gracious to the victim; he will surely know.

11. Drive the devotion as with a boat to the far side of the  
river ... he will surely know.

12. Perform this service (viṣ - ) ... he will surely know.

13. Drapsá Kṛṣṇá came down to (the river) Amśumati marching  
with ten thousand, Indra helped him as he blew mightily  
and in heroic fashion plucked out those who were  
drowning.

14. I beheld Drapsá Kṛṣṇá moving away having come down black  
as a cloud into the lap of the river Amśumati; I send you,  
(Marut) bulls, fight in the conflict.

15. So Drapsá in the lap of Amśumati shone forth  
 an preserved his person. Indra joined with Brhaspati  
 defeated the attacking godless hordes.

16. As soon as thou wert born, Indra, thou didst become  
 the opponent of the seven unopposed.

20... the Maghávan is our helper, our advocate ...  
 the giver...

21. Indra, the slayer of Vṛtra, leader of ṛbhus as soon as  
 he was born, he became worthy to be called upon, doing  
 many heroic (nárya) deeds, (he became) worthy to be  
 called upon by his allies (sákhi).

The text can be deemed to be in principle a discussion between  
 the Maruts and Indra, with another speaker as first person narrator  
 (according to Anukr. the narrator is Dyutāna Māruta, cf. v.15  
 suggest that Anukr. sees Drapsá as the offspring or foster child  
 of the Maruts).

One important necessary correction is the identification of  
 a single individual or entity, drapsá kṛṣṇá. As Geldner<sup>5</sup>  
 observes, the tradition offers two separate stories by way of  
 background explanation, one with reference to drapsá only (= Soma)  
 and the other with reference to kṛṣṇá (= Asura) only. Both  
 mistakenly represent Indra as defeating Soma or Asura.  
 Sāyana<sup>6</sup> rejects the Soma story as without scriptural authority;  
 it is probable that he sees RV. 1.130.8 as the authority for a  
kṛṣṇa asura (Geldner refers to 1.130.8, but understands there  
 a reference to Dravidian autochthous, which certainly does not

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5. Geldner, op.cit., pp.422-423.

6. Sāyana, in Rigveda Samhita, ed. M. Müller, vol.4, London, 1962, p.871.

seem plausible in view of the tenor of 8.96). This connexion (īndrah...prāvat...svarmīdhesu ājisu...śāsad avratān, tvācam kṛṣṇām arandhayat) relates Drapsá Kṛṣṇá here then presumably with the kṛṣṇá/árjuna of 6.9, the basic idea being made explicit at the outset of 8.96.1. (uśāsah ... naktam...) Geldner correctly sees that Drapsá is aided by Indra. Against Sāyana, Ludwig and Oldenberg, he takes Kṛṣṇa to be a separate individual, but must then supply separate verbs, e.g. 'Kṛṣṇa (ist) im Anzug mit zehntausend'. It is in fact quite clear that Indra saves Drapsá Kṛṣṇá who as the Soma drop in the river is destined to emerge as a Kārttikeya saviour.

Having established a link between this 'Kṛṣṇa' hymn and the kṛṣṇām āhar concept, it is of considerable importance to the argument that the hymn shows a distinct intention of connecting the Kṛṣṇá Drapsá (or inchoate form of Agni-Soma) with Viṣṇu (or Indra-Viṣṇu), reflected in the inclusion of two etymologies of the name Viṣṇu. The name of the person addressed by the Maruts in the trca 10-12 is not given, but it contains the first reference to the root vis (vividhī) as the action which is demanded of that person. It follows that the person addressed here is the same as the one who gives the eye-witness account of the rescue/birth of 'Kṛṣṇa' in 13-15.

The alternative 'etymology' visune (i.e. an adverbial form of a derivative from vi-) is used with reference to Kṛṣṇá's plight in the river: Geldner translates 'in schlemine lage', but the sense of visu - is literally 'in all directions, various'.

Viṣṇu explicitly has the Maruts as his attendants in 5.87, for example, so the connexion with Maruts in this hymn is not unusual.

What is important is the RV. attestation of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa, the latter realizing his potential for expression and performance of action thanks to Viṣṇu's faculties of cognition and speech. The usual conception that Viṣṇu belongs ultimately to parama vyoman and Indra-Kṛṣṇa to the lower regions is evidently significant; so also is the intermediary role of sákhis (Maruts), associated with cattle (usrá iva rāsāyah)

The flute of Kṛṣṇa must surely be connected with the dhāmantam kṛṣṇām here where the blowing conception is an etymologizing idea based on the form drapsá (i.e. bubble or drop) that Indra assumes (see Geldner, ad. loc.). Drapsá is explicitly Soma and therefore one might conclude that Yamunā is connected with the Amśumatī (soma plant) matrix that drapsá (soma) naturally evokes.

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