

VOYAGE BY THE MIND THROUGH A SEA OF STARS:
HANUMĀN'S SHAMANIC JOURNEY
IN THE RĀMĀYAṬA OF VĀLMĪKI

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Hanumān plays the most important and curious of messenger roles in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. Bypassing formal categories, his energetic and resourceful character brings diverse realms of experience together and performs a series of healing functions in ways that have rarely been recognized. His delivery of Rāma's message becomes a paradigm for similar flights, flights filled with rhetorical significance, and the messenger role itself takes on archetypal dimensions. For the *dūta*, the "messenger," enables the exiled parties, Rāma and Sītā, to make contact and foreshadows the possibility of reunion and return.

How exactly does the *dūta* in the *Rāmāyaṇa* perform the special function of a medium or mediator between corresponding worlds: the "human" world of Ayodhyā and the "demonic" world of Laṅkā—and all that they represent? What is the nature of his "message bearing," and why does the image of Hanumān leaping over the sea become such a lasting icon in the Indian religious imagination? This paper considers such questions by focusing on Vālmīki's depiction of the Son of the Wind's "sea voyage" in the *Sundarakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. More than an example of an "Eliadeian magical flight" (although Eliade's early work on shamanism will naturally serve as a jumping-off point), Hanumān's voyage to Laṅkā reveals various interrelated dimensions of the messenger role that deserve to be explored for their associations and affinities with one another and with the greater contexts of "message bearing."

The relationship between figurative language and message transmission is quite significant here, and is most overtly displayed in the *Sundarakāṇḍa*'s narrative depiction of Hanumān's voyage to Laṅkā, his subsequent stalking of the city, discovery of Sītā, and meeting with Rāvaṇa. Here, poetic lan-

guage overwhelms narrative form, as the text is infused with hyperbolic figures and waves of heightened emotion. From a literary point of view, Hanumān's leaping over to Laṅkā can best be described in terms of *adbhuta-rasa* (the aesthetic mood of wonder). For Hanumān's leap over the sea is one long, spectacular voyage of figuration, as the narrative literally bursts into the fabulous.

Hanumān as *Dūta*

Looking at the lore that surrounds Hanumān, one is aware of two specific qualities that have a direct relationship to his messenger role. First off is his position as the patron deity of spirit healing. The role of the healer/ shaman is essential to an understanding of Hanumān's voyage. Indeed, his journey to Laṅkā is, in many senses of the word, a "shamanic" one (a word I am using here in the widely accepted sense of a shaman as a spirit-healer who is capable of voyaging to "other worlds" and accessing extraordinary states of consciousness).¹ Secondly, Hanumān's association by lineage with the powers of speech should be noted. (This fact was not lost on Octavio Paz in his *Monkey Grammarian*). Hanumān's noted expertise in grammar is often derived from his speech to Sītā in the *Sundarakāṇḍa*, but over and above this is his filial relationship with Vāyu, the air deity. Through this lineage, Hanumān acquires the powers of flight, the cloud-like ability to change forms, and the general sympathy and support from the aerial powers, all of which are essential to his task. In short, Hanumān's flight becomes a magical flight of language, akin to the symbolic voyage of the shaman to the "other" world that is in this case, Sri Laṅkā.

The correspondences between Hanumān's voyage and the shamanic voyage (as described by Eliade, Harner, Kalweit and others) are numerous and too detailed to ignore.² They become even more striking when one analyzes the particular figures used to describe Hanumān's flight in the text of Vālmiki, figures that place the voyage squarely in the realm of the poetic. This does not necessarily occur in the formalized sense of *alaṅkāra-śāstra*, but harkens even further back to the sensibility of the Vedic *vipra*, whose "shaking" upon being overwhelmed by the passion and energy of magical language led to inspired verse. One cannot help but wonder to what degree Hanumān's activity may represent a less-examined side of Indian magico-religious practice that has often been minimized by scholarly circles, that is, until relatively recently. Just as Hanumān is absolutely

essential to the story of Rāma, so chthonic, shamanic practices and sensibilities may be essential to religious life itself on the subcontinent.

Using animals as messengers is a major shamanic theme, with analogues in the *Mahābhārata's* Nala story and in other traditional tales as well, such as the one in the Pali *Jātaka*, in which a crow is sent as a messenger to a wayward lover.³ More important, however, is the significance of animal forms themselves. Many deities in the Indian pantheon have animal helpers who serve in some capacity, usually as a mount to ride on. Viṣṇu has the eagle carrier Garuḍa, Siva the bull carrier Nandi, and Gaṇeśa rides on his rat, Eli. Historically oriented scholarship has tended to view the mounts as evidence of the “sanskritization” process, envisioning various sects and their “totems” as being absorbed into the normative brahmanical fold.⁴ A more intrinsically oriented approach, however, would see such helpers as contributing some kind of power from their own realm to the power of that particular god. Heinrich Zimmer says the following about Gaṇeśa and Eli, for example:

The Lord and Master of obstacles (vighnesvara), sits above a rat. Ganesha forges ahead through obstacles as an elephant through a jungle, but the rat too is an overcomer of obstacles, and, as such, an appropriate, even if physically incongruous mount for the gigantic pot-bellied divinity of the elephant head. The elephant passes through the wilderness, treading shrubs, bending and uprooting trees, fording rivers and lakes easily; the rat can gain access to the bolted granary. The two represent the power of this god to vanquish every obstacle of the way.⁵

Eliade has also been quite emphatic on the subject.

Animals are charged with a symbolism and a mythology of great importance for religious life; so that to communicate with animals, to speak their language and become their friend and master is to appropriate a spiritual life much richer than the merely human life of ordinary mortals.⁶

In the shamanic journey, the shaman may either meet an animal helper or incorporate within herself the power, even the very being, of a particular animal. The connection between the human and animal world is very basic to shamanic practice and includes the belief that shamans can metamorphose into the form of their guardian animal spirit.⁷ Eliade notes:

The shaman imitates, on one hand, the behavior of animals, and on the other, he endeavors to copy their cries, especially those of birds.⁸

Hanumān of course appears in the form of a monkey: he is not a human shaman transforming into a power animal. But, from the very beginning, he is presented as something more than his physical form and will later come to be considered a god in monkey form. Here, he is a magical being whose unusual capabilities derive from his species' qualities. Vālmiki's Hanumān, then, is much more than an animal mount or an appendage to a god, or even part of his entourage. He has the power and shape-shifting ability of the underworld *rākṣasas* themselves, as well as a playful, mischievous nature, all of which are lacking in the character of Rāma. Hanumān's *vega*, his agitated, accelerated, and even violent energy, contrasts with and complements the deliberately controlled energy of Rāma. One can thus envision Rāma's alliance with the monkeys as an alliance with the instinctual and magical energies of the forest—one that will make it possible to contact Sitā (who could be viewed here in Jungian terms as a separated anima figure) and to encounter Rāvaṇa as well (who may be seen, in similar terms, as Rāma's disowned "shadow" self).⁹

As a monkey, Hanumān's energy is primordial, exuding his uniquely raw and energetic nature, which is at once wise and foolish. It is unencumbered by the moral complexities of the human realm. Without Hanumān and the monkey kingdom, both Rāvaṇa's domain and Sitā are inaccessible to conventional human powers, personified by Rāma, the embodiment of *dharma*. Therefore, the animal messenger serves a healing function by playing a mediating role between the all-too-human realm of Rāma and the dark, shadowy world that he has entered into.

Hanumān, in his *dūta* (messenger) embodiment, is charged not only with delivering the message, but also with ascertaining if Sitā is still alive. His mission will either restore or crush any hope of union. Considering his importance, then, it is no wonder that he can enter realms where others cannot, and he does this through a dazzling route based on his strategic ability to change forms. His path of flight becomes the way of figuration itself, the flight of language that breaks from everyday experience and, working through indirection, acquires miraculous power. The language of his flight becomes that of the ascent/descent of the shamanic voyage.

The relationship between the shamanic and figurative voyage is an ancient one. For the imaginative realm of figuration is the palpable realm of the fantastic: the realm of dreams, the disembodied, the mad, and the

dead. The ability of the shaman to leave conventional reality and visit other worlds is often predicated on his song, one that he alone has mastered. Eliade states:

A shamanic session generally consists of the following items: first, an appeal to the auxiliary spirits, which more often than not are those of animals, and a dialogue with them in a secret language; secondly, drum-playing and a dance, preparatory to the mystic journey, and thirdly, the trance (real or simulated) during which the shaman's soul is believed to have left his body. The objective of every shamanic session is to obtain the ecstasy, for it is only in ecstasy that the shaman can fly through the air or descend into hell, that is, fulfil his mission of curing illness and shepherding souls.¹⁰

The shaman, then, is a messenger, and his song/mission is twofold. There is, first, his own unique ability to transport himself to other worlds, and, second, the task of narrating his experience to his community. The messenger, as we shall see, gives hope and consolation, and often offers a sign, a token of the reality of his fantastic flight, by either his words, a mark on his body, or in the case of many messengers in the South Asian tradition, an ornament that becomes charged with significance—the “power object” of the shaman.

Hanumān's Flight

While the main image of Hanumān's voyage is that of flight, it is a most unusual one. From the forest realm of exile, the epic narrative reaches the shore of the ocean. The ocean, which is immeasurable, vast, and unattainable by ordinary means of crossing, but Hanuman has reached the ocean. The instinctual powers have attained a certain direction and have moved into alliance with the human. Now, new powers are ready to emerge, to enter into a new realm by the flight through water.

Ready to harass the enemy, Hanumān took the celestial bard's path, to trace Sītā to the place where Rāvaṇa had abducted her.

As Hanumān prepares to leap off the great mountain of Indra (Mahendra) in the presence of Jambavān and his other monkey cohorts, he creates utter chaos, the symbolic chaos that the shaman must produce to realize paranormal states. Hanumān uproots trees and frightens animals on the

mountain with his impact, as the rocks burst into pieces and brightly colored mineral ores ooze from the mountain's surface. The Vidyādhara and other beings flee the quaking mountain in fear as animals are trampled underfoot. The shamanic Hanumān first appeals to the auxiliary spirits. He offers homage to the Sun, to Indra, to his own father the Wind, to Brahmā, and to the spirit attendants of Lord Shiva. From the very beginning, other magical beings observe Hanumān and praise his undertaking a feat that no one else can accomplish: previously Hanumān had declared that only he himself, his father Vāyu, and Garuḍa are capable of crossing the ocean in this manner.

This initial description is clearly one of *adbhuta*, of wonder. While some may see this as a requirement of the oral tradition, one still has to ask why it is here that the text expands into the fabulous, for this imaginative description of Hanumān's superhuman power is stylistically intrusive to the previous narrative.¹¹ Clearly, the text wants to arrest the attention of the reader/hearer. The sustained hyperbole announces that something of the utmost significance is happening, as the narrative moves into its own version of "the magical flight."

At that time, one could hear the holy words of the purified souls of the rsis, sky wanderers, and perfected beings who stood without support in the spotless sky. "This Hanumān, born of the Wind, great as a mountain, and bursting with energy, is bent on crossing the monster infested sea."¹²

Aside from emphasizing Hanumān's great strength, versatile abilities, and divine lineage, the early verses point out other important aspects of his being that qualify Hanumān for the *dūta* role. One is his *vega*, his great "speed-energy" which is always ready to burst beyond the bounds of normality. It is in fact called "*mahā-vega*," emphasizing this energetic quality. One could say of Hanumān that his *vega* is his ecstasy, his means to literally go out of himself (Greek: *ek + stasis*), the ecstasy that the shaman must generate to assume his flight. This "agitated" sense of *vega* seems to be very close to the Tungusic *saman* and Manchu *saman* ("one who is excited, moved, raised"), from which the English "shaman" is derived.¹³

Then, there is the ever-present relationship between Hanumān and Garuḍa. Hanumān is not only compared to Garuḍa, the feathered carrier of Viṣṇu, but is often identified with him. The text is not so much concerned with defining the actual nature of the comparison as it is with exploring its many dimensions, as in the following verse where Hanumān

“thinks himself to be like Garuḍa.”

That best of monkeys Hanumān, after having spoken to the monkeys, rose with great speed and unhesitating energy. That great being thought himself to be like Garuḍa.¹⁴

The Garuḍa comparisons go with the images of flight that are common to shamanic voyages in which the divine messenger identifies himself with a bird and emulates his flight. It is interesting to note in this regard that Sarasvatī, who descends from Vāc as the goddess of speech and learning, is seated on a “sunbird” as her vehicle.

The magical flight motif, in fact, can be seen throughout the Sanskrit tradition, beginning in the *Ṛg Veda* where *manas* or mind is said to be the swiftest of birds (RV.VI.9.5), and where poets are said to have wings (X.177.2). In the *Pañcavimca-Brahmaṇa* (IV.1.13) there is a notion reminiscent of Plato's *Pheadrus*, that “he who understands has wings.”¹⁵ Furthermore, such a person is said to be a *kāmacārīn*, “one who can move about at will.” One also finds verses in the *Brahmaṇas* in which the poetic meters themselves are described as birds.

As a part of this tradition, we have seen the repeated theme of flight and arrested flight in the epic. It begins with the *krauñca-vādhana* incident, in which one of a pair of mating cranes is killed by an “evil hunter,” inciting Vālmiki's poetic utterance—and continues with Rāvaṇa's slaying of Jaṭāyus while in flight. In the cases up until this point, flights have been disrupted by agents of destruction: here, however, the image is one of free flight (albeit challenged), indicating the shifting of an established pattern.

While some scholarly observers (Eliade, Frye, etc.) may habitually separate shamanic “flights of ascension” from “descents into the underworld,” Hanumān's voyage is an ambiguous mixture of the two. Like the shaman, Hanumān flies undetected. Only those beings with special powers, or roles to play in the flight itself, are privy to his location. The flight takes place over water, a watery “unconscious” peopled with all sorts of sea monsters. In fact, throughout Vālmiki's text, the flight through the air is juxtaposed with a voyage through water. The word that is regularly repeated here, both as a verb for the flight and as an epithet for the monkey, is *plavaga*, from the verbal root /*plu*. This word, which appears and reappears in different forms throughout the voyage, is of special significance, since *plava* can mean “swimming” as well as “flying” or “leaping.” Its use as a name for

a monkey comes from both its leaping connotation and its corollary meaning of “sloping inward.”¹⁶ Thus, Hanumān is described as *plavagarṣabham*, the “bull” or “best among leapers,” and *plavaga* itself becomes a name of Hanumān, “He who moves by leaps and bounds” (or one could say “He who swims, floats, and stoops”).¹⁷ Thus, in terms of the imagery employed, Hanumān is conceived of as both flying or leaping above the waters and swimming through the ocean at the same time.¹⁸

Hanumān begins his leap in an ecstatic fury. As he hurtles across the sky he is compared to a “winged mountain” (*pakṣavānīva parvataḥ*) due to his luminous power and great size. This image is an important one, the first of many which relate Hanumān as messenger to clouds and their mythology.¹⁹ The clouds were once the wings of mountains. Therefore, while Hanumān is flying over/under the ocean, the mountain named Maināka emerges from underneath the sea to offer him a place to rest, explaining to Hanumān that they are both related. The personified mountain narrates the story of how, in the golden age of the *kṛta-yuga*, mountains had wings and used to fly about in all directions with speed equalling that of both Garuḍa and the wind. However, the *ṛṣis* and *devas* were afraid that these flying mountains would fall down upon them, so Indra angrily clipped their wings with his thunderbolt. The wings became the clouds. This one mountain, however, was protected by Vāyu and dropped into the sea, wings intact. Therefore, Maināka tells Hanumān, she owes him this favor. Hanumān blesses the mountain, touching her with his hand, but continues on his flight without resting.

Thus begins a protracted relationship between the flying Hanumān and the clouds. He is constantly being compared to a cloud. Other clouds trail him on his flight, and he himself like the cloud is a *kāmarūpin*, “one able to take any form at will.”²⁰ The primary qualities of clouds, here, are flight and figuration. And the cloud simile is repeatedly employed in terms of the marvelous, enchanting powers of flight and the figurative strategies of concealment and sudden revelation (i.e., the ability to swell and change form). Their relationship to speech is also seen through their droning thunder.

Hanumān’s many powers are enumerated from the very beginning of the episode: his size, speed, energy, dexterity, etc. But certain epithets given to Hanumān are extraordinary in another sense. In V.1.211, for example, he is called a *manasāmpātavikramaḥ*, which Tilaka, Govindarāja, and other commentators take to mean “one who has been given a divine boon in which his power becomes equal to his mind.” In other words, he

can perform any task with his mind alone. Notice the manifold resonance of this compound. *Sam̐pata* can mean either a confluence (in the sense of *saṅgam*) or an occurrence or happening, as well as flying or running together. *Vikrama*, aside from its connotations of power, valor, and intensity is related to striving or stepping. Thus, at least in the sense of suggestive resonance, or *dhvani*, Hanumān is one who can stride with his mind. And this is precisely what the shaman does.

The striving energy of Hanumān is also of special interest. There is a constant bursting forth of the signifier from the signified as the fabulous descriptions and compounds interact with various levels of meaning so that the energy of the messenger is always outrunning the possibility of assigning any static signification to his activity. Therefore, the entire leap is an *adbhuta-atīśayokti*, a wondrous hyperbole. There is no way that Hanumān can be contained: neither by mountains, by seas, nor by *rākṣasas*. The only possible constraint on Hanumān is his regard for Rāma, even though at times—as when he indiscriminately burns Laṅkā, or participates in a drunken brawl in Sugrīva's honey orchid—he threatens to slip through this dharmic container as well.

The shamanic messenger's voyage is not without its prescribed ordeals. First Surasa, the mother of the serpents, confronts him in the form of a monstrous *rākṣasī* and declares that the Devas have allotted him as her food. This is a situation that we have seen before in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Shūrpaṅakhā confronting Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, for example), the hero being confronted by a demonic, threatening female. Surasa is also a *kāmarūpini*, and has a boon from Brahmā that none can pass her. There follows a dazzling display of magical changing of forms as each tries to contain and out run the other. The two *kāmarūpins* expand in turn; Surasa expands her mouth, and Hanumān enlarges the size of his body from ten to twenty to ninety *yojanas*. At this point, Hanumān “shrinks his body like a cloud” to the size of a thumb, enters her mouth, and exits.²¹ Thus the boon remains true and the “Garuḍa-like” Hanumān continues on his way.²²

Hanumān moves like the wind, attracting great masses of thick clouds (*hanumān meghajālāni prākaraṣanmāruto yathā*). He weaves in and out of the clouds and is seen everywhere hanging in the sky without any support, like the king of mountains with wings (V.1.198). In these descriptions, every possible word that can be used for “cloud” is used, both directly (as in *megh*, *jīmuta*, *balaka*, etc.) and obliquely (as in references to winged mountains), reinforcing the important comparison.

As the *dūta* hurdles through space, he passes through great rain showers and collections of mythical beings until he encounters another obstacle, the *rākṣasī* Simhika, also a *kāmarūpini*, who tries to pull Hanumān down by his shadow. This image reminds one of spirit possession scenarios—one of the great possible dangers in undertaking a shamanic voyage, since it is believed that one is particularly vulnerable in this situation.²³ Upon recognizing the *rākṣasī*, Hanumān expands his body “like a cloud in the rainy season” and ultimately tears out her vital parts, continuing on his sky-bound journey like “the serpent-killer Garuḍa.”

As Hanumān approaches Laṅkā he becomes aware of the size of his body like “a huge cloud,” and decides to contract his form so as to become invisible. Upon reaching the shore of the city, he changes to another suitable form. Thus, the episode ends:

Having crossed the demon-and-serpent infested ocean that was surrounded by gigantic waves through his heroic might, and landing on the shore of the great ocean, he saw the city of Laṅkā which was like Amarāvātī (the city of Indra).²⁴

I have gone through the voyage in relative detail to show how the metaphors of the fabulous crossing invoke the figurative power of the *dūta*. The crossing, like that of figurative language, is made on many levels at once, charging the narrative of exile and loss with hope and new life through its expansive sense of passage. The messenger must cross the seas of separation, simultaneously flying like a bird, floating like a cloud, and swimming, passing over enchanted territory, undergoing trials by ordeal, encountering obstacles, and reaching its destination through its extra-human power. The shamanic messenger, through his figurative ability and through the power invested in him by his *śaktimān* (Rāma), is able to penetrate realms where others cannot go and return to tell the tale.

Hanumān in Laṅkā

Hanumān’s entry into Laṅkā highlights his ability to penetrate forbidden territory. Here, the messenger accomplishes his task through his power to change sizes and forms—forms that are related to the animal kingdom. The city of Laṅkā itself becomes an important archetypal image here. While reading or hearing the *Sundarakāṇḍa*, one may feel about Rāvaṇa and Śrī Laṅkā the way Blake felt about Satan when reading Milton, for the

descriptions of Rāvaṇa and of Laṅkā make those of Rāma and Ayodhyā almost seem sterile. The city is exquisite, exotic, overflowing with opulence, and filled with a seductive mystery that dwarfs Ayodhyā in comparison. It has moats filled with blue lotuses and walls inlaid with gold, its great buildings appear to touch the sky, and it is guarded by terrible *rākṣasas* with tridents and spears. Hanumān sees it as a city of the heaven-dwelling Devas and like the shaman he is, he is privy to its wondrous sights and sounds.²⁵

At this point, while marvelling at Laṅkā and its seemingly impregnability, Hanumān wonders how he will enter the city.

I cannot enter the demon city protected by fiercely
cruel and powerful *rākṣasas* with this present form.
The *rākṣasas* are a ghastly force, equipped with great
valor and strength. My seeking Janakī can only be done
through cunning and deception.
At the right time of the night, I will enter Laṅkā with
a form that is sometimes visible and sometimes invisible
in order to complete my mission.²⁶

The word *vañcanīya* (“stealthily”) is significant here. It comes from the verbal root/*vañc*, to move crookedly, slowly, slyly, or secretly, to avoid escape, deceive, or defraud. The “crookedness” (*vakrokti*) or indirection (*vyañjana*) of poetic language will later become one of the theoretical cornerstones of Sanskrit aesthetics and will be used to delineate the figurative effort. By changing his form to be sometimes present (*lakṣya*) and sometimes absent (*alākṣya*), by concealing and revealing himself at the proper time, Hanumān is poetically performing like the elusive shamanic voyager.

Ultimately, Hanumān assumes the form of a small monkey no bigger than a cat, and enters Laṅkā, which, again, is described as a city of absolute grandeur.

He saw that great city fanned out like the celestial city of the Gandharvas with rows of palatial mansions, pillars of gold and silver, golden decorated-lattice windows, and seven-or eight-storied buildings whose floors were inlaid with crystal and gold.²⁷

Among the many hyperbolic metaphors used to describe Laṅkā, that “inconceivably wondrous city” is one that compares it to *vitāpavatīm*, a syn-

onym (according to the major commentators) for Alakā, the legendary city of Kubera, and the city from which Kālidāsa's Yākṣa will be exiled in the *Meghadūta*.²⁸ Here, as with Kālidāsa's later description of Alakā, the various parts of Laṅkā are compared to the various ornaments of a beautiful woman.

The monkey Hanumān entered the city of the Rākṣasa Lord which was ever illumined by the radiant lights of the sky gleaming off its jeweled dwellings like a voluptuous, jewel-laden woman whose robes are studded with gems, whose meeting halls are her earrings, and whose full breasts are her dwellings with firm, high walls.

At this point Hanumān encounters the spirit of the city in the form of a woman who ultimately defers to his strength, a much easier meeting than Rāma has with Shūrpaṅkhā. Could Laṅkā be a converse reflection of Ayo-dhyā here, a repeating pattern that must be integrated into the whole? After all, the obstacles encountered by Hanumān on his voyage to Laṅkā are all female. He may be viewed, then, as repeating the confrontations with negative, dark side of the feminine that Rāma suffered through, both in the story of his exile and in his confrontations with female *rākṣasas* in the forest. Hanumān, unlike Rāma, however, is equipped with his instinctual and shamanic gifts and is therefore able to defeat the "spirit of Laṅkā" (embodied as a woman) and find the displaced feminine, Sītā.

Hanumān proceeds to stalk through Laṅkā at night, and his visions are properly shamanic. For Hanumān is able to witness the unthinkable, the transgressive, the subconscious fantasy which is the jeweled woman herself. What he actually runs into is a drunken orgy, the likes of which Rāma could never gaze at. But Hanumān, unlike Rāma and his human kind, is able to enter this night world, this shadow world of the *rākṣasas*, a world that might be comparable to "Night-Town" in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The scene portrays the amorous *rākṣasa* women gathered not only around Rāvaṇa, but around one another as well (with the frail excuse that in their inebriated condition they have mistaken one another for Rāvaṇa).

Presuming them to be Rāvaṇa's faces some of the *rākṣasa* women repeatedly desired to come near the faces of the other wives. Because of their infatuation for Rāvaṇa these marvelous women were carried away in a swoon of desire for their co-wives. These wantonly intoxicated women lay on the pillows of their bangled arms and fine white linens. Overpowered by the wine of love they lay resting on the thighs, sides, waists, and backs of one another, their limbs entwined in each others' limbs. The thin waisted women all

slept there, arm in arm, delighted by the touch of each others' bodies. That garland of women, their arms strung around one another, looked like a beautiful flower garland strung on a thread with intoxicated honey bees. (V.9.58-62)

Hanumān eventually sees Rāvaṇa himself in drunken sleep upon his luxurious bed. The description of Rāvaṇa is stirring: he arouses awe even in Hanumān, who retreats in fear.²⁹ Rāvaṇa's satanic grandeur is magnificent. His imposing body is filled with auspicious marks, smeared with sandal paste and loose ornaments. His shoulders are said to resemble Indra's flagpoles and his arms are like mountain peaks. The text goes through his entire body, noting his opulence, power, and beauty as he lies sleeping on his bed, surrounded by his consorts. Interestingly enough his description reminds one of Kṛṣṇa in terms of his love sports and his complexion (described as similar to a rain cloud in the red glow of twilight—*sandhyāraktamivākaśe toyadaṁ sataḍidguṇam* V.10.8). One might speculate that Kṛṣṇa, as a more developed incarnation, has incorporated this shadow side of Rāma into his own persona, absorbing the more terrifying aspects of his personality, but visibly retaining some of his other characteristics.

In the Aśoka Grove

Hanumān, now worried about his inability to find Sītā, speculates on her condition in separation. "She is not likely to eat, sleep, wear ornaments, or even touch water."³⁰ Before entering the Aśoka grove, he meditates for a moment as if approaching Sītā with his mind (*sa mūhurtam manasā cādhi-gamya tām*), another very shamanic activity. Only then does he spring from the walls of Laṅkā "like an arrow from a bow," and enter the grove in the flesh. Hanumān sees Sītā who is described in the conventional terms of a *virahinī*:

Then he saw her in a soiled cloth, surrounded by *rākṣasa* women. She was lean from fasting, and was sighing in misery again and again. She was like the pure crescent of the newly waxing moon. The exquisite beauty of her form became slowly visible like the glow of a fire covered by smoke. Clad in a soiled yellow garment, she was covered with dust and devoid of ornaments, and thus looked like a lotus pond without lotuses. Oppressed with burning sorrow, she was like an ascetic woman reduced to a listless state, like the constellation of Rohiṇi when afflicted by the planet Mars. . . . She

could not see anyone who was dear to her, as all she could see was the crowd of *rākṣasas* and was thus like a lone doe surrounded by a pack of hounds. (V.11.18-25)

In contrast to the stark purity and misery of Sītā, who wears but a soiled cloth, Hanumān observes the grotesque forms and behavior of the *rākṣasa* women who torment Sītā in alliance with Rāvaṇa (who has threatened to chop her up and have her served to him for breakfast if she does not acquiesce and become his queen). These descriptions are noteworthy, since they enhance the image of Lañkā as a bizarre, excessive night-world that is clearly a shadow of the day-world of Rāma and Ayodhyā.

As Hanumān, born from the very self of the wind, was observing Sītā, he saw an array of hideous-looking *rākṣasa* women; one-eyed or one-eared, covered by owl-like ears, having no ears at all, or spike-like pointed ears. One had her nose swelling up from her forehead. One had an enormous head. Another was thin with an elongated neck. One's hair was scattered, another had no hair, and another's hair was wrapped up like a shaggy, woolen blanket. One had a hanging ear and forehead, another had a long drooping belly and breast. One had a protruding underlip, another's lips hung like tongs over her chin. One had long jaws, another elongated knees. One was stunted, another was tall, one was hunchbacked, another deformed and hideous, one was a dwarf, one had a gaping crooked mouth, one had yellow eyes, and another a mutilated face. (V.17.4-9)

The descriptions then grow even more grotesque. Some of the women are said to have faces of pigs, deer, and tigers. Others have ears, noses, and limbs of various animals or limbs twisted around in the inverse directions. The language is that of hyperbolic wonder and horror juxtaposed to the image of "blameless" Sītā, whose effulgence has been lost and who droops due to her sorrow like "a cow separated from her herd and held by a lion," or like "a crescent moon but dimly visible amidst the clouds." (V.17)

Hanumān then observes the arrival of Rāvaṇa and his various attempts to win Sītā over, followed by his threats when Sītā refuses him. When Rāvaṇa leaves, Sītā is tormented by the various *rākṣasīs*, who urge her to unite with Rāvaṇa, the "Lord of the Three Worlds," and to forget about the mere human Rāma whom she will never see again. At this point Sītā makes one of her declarations of faith in Rāma and of the duties of a wife. Her statement asserts at once the pain and yet the impossibility of separation. For Sītā insists that she is forever bound to Rāma, whether in presence or in absence.

A human being should not become the wife of a *rākṣasa*. Devour me if you all desire, I will never follow your words. Whether destitute or deprived of his kingdom, my husband is my guru and I am eternally his beloved as the Sun God is to his consort. As Sacī ever stands with the great lord Indra, Arundhatī with Vasiṣṭha, Rohinī with the Moon . . . so I am totally devoted to Rāma, the best among the Ikṣvāku line. V.24.8-12

Sitā implies that the lover and consort, husband and wife, can never be separated. For their devotional vows (*anuvratā*) are beyond time and space. We can note along with Charlotte Vaudeville that the “devoted wife” of the Indian epic may indeed be a “prototype” of later religious devotion.³¹

Sitā, alone now, continues to lament in separation, and is considering suicide—but then she observes a series of auspicious omens. At this point, Hanumān, the messenger, comes out of hiding, and he does so in a most appropriate way. He begins to narrate the entire *Rāmāyaṇa*. He does this, he thinks to himself, to create confidence in Sitā's mind about his genuineness as a messenger. For a messenger/text must make contact with the other party, must induce the reader/hearer into considering its argument. Thus Hanumān decides:

Singing the glories of her dearest, the ever-accomplished Rāma, I will not cause Sitā, whose mind is ever on her husband, to fall into despair. Delivering the message of all-knowing Rāma, the finest of the Ikṣvākus, with words which are both charming and truthful I shall tell all very sweetly in high verse so that it she may correctly understand all, in complete trust.

The messenger ponders his task; not to be merely understood, but to be accepted with *śraddhā*, with full faith. To do this he must entice the hearer with the beauty and sweetness of the language and also win the reader's confidence in the essential rightness or truthfulness of the message (*dharmayuktāni*—literally “yoked to *dharma*”). He must convince the hearer that his words truly come from Rāma. Only then can they go beyond the apparent forms of language into a substance of another order. To accomplish this, Hanumān does not create something new, but appeals to “the story,” the central story of the Epic and the stories within the story, known both to Sitā and to the entire listening audience.

After Sitā hears the unknown messenger, her first reaction is total wonder. This feeling soon gives way to fear, joy, and an entire range of emotions that are instigated by the sight of the shaman-monkey. Again, interpretation plays a key role. Sitā sees Hanumān's strange form, transformed

again into one that is huge yet humble. Hanumān is described as “wearing white garments over a complexion of tawny yellow like flashes of lightning.” His eyes are the color of molten gold, and his body like the full-bloomed flowers of an Aśoka tree. And thus Sītā wonders if this “terrible form” is another illusion of the *rākṣasas*.

The strange, oblique form appears to be a dream (or a nightmare), but as she deliberates she decides that it cannot be a dream, because since her separation from Rāma she has not been able to sleep (V.32.10). She wonders whether, since she is always thinking of Rāma in the intensity of her separation, her vision may be a projection of her desire. But the form is apparently concrete. The deliberation on the messenger is concluded in a revealing verse.

*manorathaḥ syāditi cintayāmi tathā'pi buddhyā ca vitarkayāmi
kiṁ kāraṇaṁ tasya hi nāsti rūpaṁ survyaktarūpaśca vadatyayaṁ maṁ* [V.32.13]

Although it seems to me but my own heart's illusory desire, I am still wondering what may be its cause. For desire has no form, and he has a form and is clearly speaking before me.

The *dhvani* here is rather dense. Manoratha (literally “mind/ heart chariot”) can mean “desire,” “desired object,” or “illusion,” and often hints of indirectly expressed desires. Desire is said to have no form because the personification of desire, Kāmadeva or Manmatha, has no body (*anaṅga*); his limbs having been burnt to ashes by the anger of Shiva when the god of love (Kāma) disturbed Shiva's meditation. The innate relationship between illusion and desire, and the ever-present relationship between *kāma*, desire, and *viraha*, separation are thus brought to mind.

Along with the issue of linguistic appearance as illusion, there is a great doubt as to the nature of the message and the messenger—is it reality or a dream? One often encounters this question, with regard to the shamanic voyage, as Michael Harner has discussed extensively. But from the shaman's point of view the reality of the journey and its realm is unquestionable: while it may exist in contradistinction to normative waking consciousness it does not exist in contradiction to it.³²

Sītā is still not fully convinced, however, so Hanumān recounts the characteristics of Rāma's form giving an amazingly detailed account of his bodily parts, the ultimate mimesis. I use the word “ultimate” here because Rāma

is the ultimate principle that will valorize the message over and above all permutations of language. Figuration is not, then, the entire power of “message bearing” in this text. For with all his powers, even seemingly to the point of omniscience, Hanumān will not act without the sanction of Rāma, his lord. Later readings of the text will emphasize Hanumān's devotion as well as his extraordinary powers. He is not an ordinary *dūta*. He brings the message of the Lord. Hanumān, therefore, must not only speak “charmingly but must speak truthfully as well (*śrāvayīṣyāmi sarvāṇi madhurām prabuvan gīram/ śraddhāsyati yathā hīyam tathā sarvaṁ samādadhe* V.30.44), and his goal of truthfulness is fulfilled by establishing the presence of Rāma as the unquestioned, absolute principle, the pure personification of *dharma*. Hanumān follows with a description of Rāma's sorry state:

O Noble Lady, since he has not seen you
 Rāma is burning up like a great volcano
 from an ever-blazing fire.
 Because of you, sleeplessness, grief, and
 anxiety burn that great soul as a fire
 burns in its sanctuary.
 As a great earthquake shatters a large mountain
 Rāma is shaken with grief from not seeing you.
 Even while wandering through the most charming
 forest groves, streams, and waterfalls, he can
 find no pleasure since he does not see you,
 O Princess.³³

In his final words on Rāma's *viraha*, Hanumān describes that even while wandering through beautiful groves and streams, Rāma can find neither pleasure (*suramāyāni*) nor delight (*rati*). Both of these words come from the verbal root /*ram*, indicating pleasure, delight, and/or beauty (from which Rāma's name is derived). In Rāma's state of separation from Sītā, he is divorced from his very own nature. My own “depth psychological” reading of the Epic requires no manipulation here; for Rāma and Sītā will be theologically conceived to be one as *śaktimān* and *śakti*. Their separation will be said to be illusory by later devotional *Rāmāyaṇas*, part of the play of Rāma. But in this play, Rāma does lose himself, and Hanumān brings him back. Hanumān is the scout and thus the guide, pointing the way toward reunion. He alone is able to navigate this terrain, to find and to contact Sītā.

Hanumān goes on to describe his mission as a *dūta* as well as the story of

his own birth from the wind god. Having now instilled confidence in his listener, Hanumān delivers the substance of his message. He shows Sītā Rāma's ring, which has Rāma's name engraved upon it. The ring is such a powerful sign that it not only establishes beyond question the genuineness of the message, but also creates the effect in Sītā of seeing Rāma himself.

She took the jewel which had adorned the hand of her husband and, while gazing at it, became as joyful as if she had found her husband himself.³⁴

The ring, containing "the name," not only confers the authority of the "author" upon the message, but also comes with a promise. Upon giving her the ring, Hanumān declares. "Take heart! Fortune will be yours, the time of your suffering is over."³⁵ He says that Rāma will shortly appear and rescue Sītā, who will then see Rāma face to face.

Hanumān again enumerates the symptoms of Rāma's anguished separation, saying that he hardly eats, that he does not even drive away flies, mosquitoes, or worms from his body, that he does not sleep. And, most interestingly, "if he sees flowers, fruits, or anything that infatuates the mind of women, he sighs and calls out to you."³⁶ What one observes in every case, from the giving of the ring to the repeated descriptions of the separated condition, is metonymy. The principle of substitution constantly operates in the attempt to compensate for the absent one. The ornament, the monument, the objects of the natural world reminding one of the beloved, all speak a dual language which takes them beyond themselves and invokes the presence of the lost other. This is especially seen in the calling of the name, the invocation that seems to accompany the constant thoughts of the separated lover. Therefore, Hanumān's message ends with the following declaration.

The mind of that great-souled prince of firm vows, O Goddess, is forever burning in agony. He calls out your name alone, "Sītā," and is making great efforts to find you. (V.36.46)

This same principle is evident in Sītā's refusal of Hanumān's offer to carry her back over the ocean (on the grounds that she cannot, of her own will, touch the body of another man). The messenger is not meant to bring the beloved home. For the message cannot transgress its own *dharma* as language, nor can it counteract destiny—which Sītā cites, saying, "Whether in opulence or dreadful calamity, destiny drags a man along as though he were bound by a rope." (V.37.3)

The message thus intensifies suffering as it invokes its most painful aspects through the hope of presence it suggests. Likewise, a good shaman knows that cures often need to be effected by raising the symptoms to their most feverish pitch: for the wound itself can heal. Sītā thus informs Hanumān that the descriptions of Rāma are like nectar mixed with poison.³⁷ Still, hope is present, as is the possibility of reunion, expressed through metonymy as a reminder of a missing presence. When we think of “power objects” and “sympathetic magic” we often forget that figurative language itself dwells in this domain: *alamkāra* as talisman.

Hanumān and Sītā, the messenger and the receiver of the message, communicate through the exchange of signs, jewels and stories. Sītā, in fact, tells a very intimate tale to Hanumān, about the time when she was attacked by a crow who wounded her breast. Sītā relates this story so that Rāma will know beyond the shadow of a doubt that she has been contacted. Sita also gives Hanumān her Chūḍāmaṇi jewel, which she has been able to hide on her person, and asks Hanumān to give the jewel to Rāma.³⁸ After the exchange of tokens, Hanumān again assumes his shamanic role. Although he is standing next to Sītā in body, his mind/heart has already gone to Rāma (*harṣeṇa mahatā yuktah sītadarśanaḥ saḥ hṛdayeṇa gato rāmān śarīreṇa tu viṣṭitah* V.38.72).

Sītā and Hanumān reassure one another. Sītā wonders how the armies of monkeys will cross the ocean. She says that it would be right for Rāma to destroy Laṅkā and take her back to his kingdom. Hanumān, for his part, humbly says that only ordinary people are sent as messengers, and that many other more capable monkeys are waiting. He assures Sītā that Rāma will destroy Rāvaṇa, that she will soon be reunited with Rāma, return with him to his city, and find her sorrow at an end; last of all, he affirms that Sītā is already united with her husband.

Do not cry, O Goddess, and do not let your mind be distressed by sorrow.
As Śacī is with her husband Indra, so are you with your husband. [V.39.52]

Hanumān promises reunion here, but the comparison to the king and queen of heaven again suggests that they are ever and always together. And thus, Hanumān is a messenger of a greater truth as well as the healer of a particular wound. Hanumān then leaves Sītā as he came, *manasā jagāma*—traveling by the mind.³⁹

The Fiery Return

Hanumān now takes on the furious aspect of the devastating wind and proceeds to destroy the Aśoka grove as well as the *rākṣasa* armies sent after him: he appears like a cloud at sunset (V.42.36). With his superior strength and skill in battle, Hanumān destroys more and more troops of the *rākṣasa* army before finally being brought down by the Brahmā missile of Indrajit, Rāvaṇa's warrior son. Only the boon of Brahmā can bring Hanumān's energy to a halt, but only Hanumān knows that the bondage of the missile will not last. He respects the missile, since it comes from the dharmic father, but uses the law to his own advantage. Now, Hanumān comes face to face with Rāvaṇa, Rāma's polar opposite.

Hanumān again is awed by Rāvaṇa ("What beauty! What courage! What nobility! What luster!" V.49.17), reflecting that if it were not for his lack of righteousness, he could rule over heaven. Rāvaṇa, however, is just as concerned with Hanumān: he is "struck with fear" and wonders just who this monkey is. Thus the shadow and the messenger face one another, not directly but through another messenger.⁴⁰ Rāvaṇa has his deputy question Hanumān, who tells Rāvaṇa of his mission and advises him to atone for his sins, for the fruits of his evil deeds are upon him. Rāvaṇa reacts with anger and orders Hanumān's execution, an order which is overridden by the pleas of Rāvaṇa's "good brother" Vibhīṣaṇa, who argues that according to *rājadharmā*, the laws of kingship, a messenger may not be executed.

This sets the stage for the lighting of Hanumān's tail and his subsequent destruction of Laṅkā. The monkey himself, by having a mutilated tail, is to become a sign upon his return. But at this point Hanumān exhibits another of his prominent shamanic characteristics, his mastery over fire.⁴¹

The text offers three reasons for this unusual ability. First, as Hanumān is the son of the wind himself the deity of fire is naturally well disposed towards him. Secondly, and more emphasized, is the intervention of Sītā, whose power of purity is not to be underestimated. Sītā addresses Agni:

If I have been obedient to my husband, if I have practiced austerity, and if I have been ever faithful to my husband, be cooling (O Fire) to Hanumān. (V.53.27.)

Upon hearing Sītā's supplication the fire now "burns" in a cool and mild way for Hanumān, and Vāyu the deity of the Wind himself begins to blow ice-cold. Hanumān reflects on this miraculous occurrence, and on his over-

coming of other seemingly insurmountable obstacles on his voyage. He concludes that it is due to the mild kindness of Sītā, the glorious power of Rāma, and the friendship of his father with Agni, the lord of fire.

The *tejas* or “shining power” of Rāma is the third factor in Hanumān's shamanic mastery, the same power that has enabled him to surmount obstacles on his flight over the sea and to penetrate the hidden realms of Laṅkā. This relationship to Rāma, who already shows signs of omniscience and all-auspiciousness, continuously protects and empowers the messenger.

Hanumān exhibits his mastery over fire by burning Laṅkā down with the torch of his tail. While he is doing so, the *rākṣasas* begin to identify him as Agni himself in the form of a monkey.⁴² After allaying his own fear that he might have destroyed Sītā while caught up in his energetic anger, Hanumān returns as he came, jumping off a mountain—which cringes, and is ultimately leveled under his pressure, as he soars into the air. Images of swimming and soaring are again mingled together in an extended metaphor on the “ocean of the sky.”

Soaring with unleashed energy, the inexhaustible Hanumān sailed like a winged mountain across the billowy ocean of the sky whose moon was its white water lily, and glowing sun its water fowl. The lunar mansions Puṣya and Shravaṇa were its swans, the clouds its water hyacinth and abounding mossy growth. The twin constellation Pisces was its great fish, and the red limbed Mars its sharks. The rainbowed Airāvata was its great island, and Arcturus its shining swan. The great converging winds were its large waves and the moon beams its cooling water. The sea-serpents, nature spirits, and celestial musicians were its burst open, blooming lotuses.

Hanumān sailed through that boundless sea as though gulping up space and burnishing the Moon. He appeared to be carrying off the heavens with their fiery orb and stars and drawing apart masses of pale, rose, blue, ruby red, and yellow-rose clouds. Like the appearing and disappearing Moon, Hanumān repeatedly entered and emerged from the deep masses of clouds. Clad in the dazzling white garment of the sky, bursting in and out of various colored clouds, his visible and invisible moonlike body soared and dipped again and again, bursting the clouds apart. That heroic son of the wind became like Garuḍa in the sky. (V.57.1-11)

Hanumān returns to the other shore and exclaims “*dṛṣṭa Sītā*”—“Sītā has been seen.” The journey is not complete, however, until the shaman narrates his experiences to those who cannot make the crossing and who

depend upon his abilities. Hanumān thus describes his entire voyage to the monkeys and their chieftains. His description here markedly differs from the wondrous language of the previous narrative. The narrative is compact and concise. Figurative speech is minimal. The evoked realm of the supernatural is gone.

When Hanumān finally does meet Rāma, he explains the situation, describes the suffering of Sītā, and repeatedly assures Rāma that Sītā has remained faithful and wholly devoted to him.⁴³

The connection between the envoy to the underworld and Rāma, his “human” ally and master, is completed when Hanumān presents Sītā’s jewel to him. Again, the sign—perhaps the object of power rescued from the underworld—has an amazing effect upon the usually sober Rāma, releasing a swooning flood of memory. Rāma describes his feeling upon seeing the jewel as that of a cow for its calf; then, the jewel incites him to remember his wedding, when Sītā’s father, Janaka, had presented the jewel:

O Gentle One, seeing this best of jewels today
 I have had the *darśana* of my own father
 and of the mighty Janaka as well.
 This jewel beautifully adorns the head of my beloved.
 I now feel as if I have obtained her *darśana*. (V.65.6-7)

The repeated use of the word *darśana* here again suggests the vision, the meeting, that Rāma has had through the “sign” of the jewel, not only with the absent Sītā, and his father-in-law, but with his departed father as well. Truly, the messenger has brought back the sign from the other world. The sign signifies what is absent. It evokes the bitter truth of loss and is therefore so emotionally potent, and in this evocation it heals. By simultaneously reminding one of what is not yet, but of what may yet be, the sign, the message, consoles as it re-opens the wound. Hanumān has done the shaman’s work. He has blazed a path through the underworld. He has seen the unseeable, known the unknowable, and has brought back a sign. And by doing so, he may also open our sense to the more chthonic aspects of the Epic that live on in local readings and enactments of epic traditions and practices like those at the Balaji temple near Bharatpur, and in ongoing practices of magical flight, spirit possession, and the like.

Now Rāma gazes at the jewel and his absence from Sītā overpowers him. Perhaps it is this intensity of emotion that will lead him toward reunion.

Rāma asks Hanumān to repeat what Sītā said, comparing Sītā's words to water for one who has extreme thirst. He continues to lament, and repeatedly asks Hanumān to give him Sītā's message in truth (*tattvataḥ*), claiming that as a sick man is sustained through medicine or by a healing charm, he will be sustained by this message.

The *Sundarakāṇḍa* ends with Hanumān's account of the consolation he offered to Sītā, and of his promise that she will soon see Rāma crowned with her in Ayodhyā, their forest exile completed. The final verse is also given to Hanumān, who clearly explains the healing purpose of his messenger role.

*tato maya vāgbhiradīnabhāsīnā śivabhirīṣṭābhirabhīprasādītā
jagāma śāntīm mama maithilātmaajā tavāpi śokena tadā'bhīpīditā*

She was very much pleased by my favorable and considerate speech of noble-minded words. Although laden with grief, the daughter of Janaka felt deeply consoled by me.

Endnotes

1. See Kakar, *Shamans Mystics and Doctors* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982) on Hanumān and his role in spirit healing at the Balaji temple in Bharatpur. Interestingly enough, Hanumān's name itself is derived, at least in one of its major accounts, from his being wounded by Indra's thunderbolt—retribution for the child Hanumān's efforts to swallow up the sun. Indra's thunderbolt breaks the jaw of the divine offspring of Vāyu (the wind god) and Añjanā and knocks him unconscious. His father sadly picks him up and brings him to a cave, stopping the ten forms of wind in protest over the situation. The gods, deprived of air, all come down to ask forgiveness and one by one bless Hanumān with divine powers. This story is noteworthy in its mirroring of the shamanic process of developing powers through the agency of injury, illness, and particularly dismemberment. See H. Kalweit, *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman* (Boston & London: Shambhala, 1988), p. 94-104.

2. Michael Harner, *The Way of the Shaman* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980).

3. See *Pali Jātaka* 129.

4. Basham (*The Wonder That Was India*) would be an exemplary text here.

5. H. Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols of Indian Art and Civilization*, edited by Joseph Campbell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 70.

6. M. Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, translated from the French by W. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 51. Originally published as *La Chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase* (Paris: Librairie Payot, 1951).

7. Harner (1980), p. 58-60.

8. Eliade (1972), p. 60.

9. In a Jungian, depth-psychological reading, the entire epic could represent the cultural configuration of the psyche. Rāma becomes the ego (his brothers all being alter-ego aspects), Sitā the anima (the contra-sexual aspect of self) and Rāvaṇa and his realm the “shadow” or disowned aspect of the psyche. Seen in this regard, Hanumān plays a role of integration, bringing the separated aspects of the self together. See Kakar (1978) and Neumann (1954) for more detail on this perspective.

For a discussion of the concurrent growth and stature of Rāma and Rāvaṇa in the Epic (thus illustrating Rāvaṇa’s shadow nature) see Goldman and Masson, “Who knows Rāvaṇa?—A Narrative difficulty in the Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa,” (1969, *Annals of the Bhandarkar O.R. Institute*), Vol. 50, pp. 95-100.

10. Eliade (1972), p. 59.

11. See Wurm (1976), for example. The narrative actually begins at the close of the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*.

12. VR V.1.35-36. (citations of VR V are from Southern Recension: Mylapore, Ramakrishna Math, 1983).

13. Kakar (1982)p.89.

14. *evamuktvā tu hanumān vānaro vānarottamaḥ utpāpātātha vegena veganavicārayan suparnamiva catmanam mene sa kapikunjarah* (V.1.50)

15. Socrates’ second speech in the *Phaedrus* speaks of the perfected soul as possessing wings and moving above the solid density of matter.

16. See Apte, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Kyoto: Rinsen Book Company, 1986), 1142-43.

17. VR V.1.214.

18. Many images from Indian texts become comprehensible through the visual experience of nature. Seeing a sunset sinking into the ocean may help one understand why one of the dwellings of Agni is “in the waters.” Similarly, during the Indian summer nights the heat impels many people to sleep outdoors. As one lies looking upwards at the night sky the metaphor of “swimming through the sky” becomes evident, for it occurs every night in the dream-state.

19. *śuśubhe sa mahātejā mahākāyo mahākapiḥ
vāyumārga nirālambe pakṣavāniva parvataḥ* (V.1.87).

20. VR V.2.35.

21. *sa saṅkṣiṣṭhātmanah jīmuta iva mārutiḥ* VR (V.1.181).

22. *garuḍopamaḥ* VR (V.1.188).

23. See Harner (1980), p. 115, Kalweit (1988), p. 190.

24. *sa sāgaraṁ dānavapannagāyutaṁ balena vikramya mahormimālinam/nīpatya tīre ca mahodadhestadā dadarśa laṅkāmarāvātāmiva* VR (V.1.228).

25. VR. (V.2.18).

26. *anena rūpeṇa mayā na sahyā rākṣasa purī
praveṣṭum rākṣasaingruptā krurairbalasamanvitaiḥ*

*ugraujaso mahāvārya balavantaśca rākṣasaḥ
vañcanīya mayā sarve jānakīm parimārgatā
lakṣyā'lakṣyena rūpeṇa ratrau laṅkāpurīm mayā
praveṣṭum prāptakālām me kṛtyam sādhayitum mahat*

27. VR (V.2.51-2).

28. VR V.3.4.

29. Approaching the sleeping Rāvaṇa who was hissing like a serpent, Hanumān was terrified and backed away in fear. (V.10.12).

30. VR (V.11.2-3)

31. Charlotte Vaudeville, "Evolution of Love-Symbolism in Bhagavatism," *JAOS*, 82 (1962): "The Indian epic, therefore, knows *preman* as an ideal love relationship between husband and wife rising above mere sensual desire, *kāma*. But it is the wife, and she alone, who is really transformed and elevated by it, and who makes it, so to speak, her own *sādhana*. The pure Hindu wife, the Sati, is already a type of *bhakta*."

32. Harner (1980) pp. 33-50.

33. V.35.45-49.

34. VR (V.36.5).

35. VR (V.36.3).

36. VR (V.36.45).

37. VR (V.37.2).

38. The token of recognition will appear again in Kālidāsa and a host of other plays. It also appears throughout the Epic and Purāṇic literatures.

39. VR V.40.25.

40. V.50.2.

41. See Eliade (1972), p. 68: "... indeed all over the world the shamans are reputedly masters of fire; during their sessions they swallow live coals, touch red hot iron, and walk upon fire." Also see Eliade, *Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries* (1968).

42. VR (V.54.25).

43. VR (V.65.16).

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