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*The dīkṣita's Language.  
Vedic Homologies and rūpakas in Jaiminīya-  
Brāhmaṇa 2.60–64<sup>1</sup>*

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*astīti śāśvatagrāho nāstīty ucchedadarśanam |  
tasmād astītvānāstītye nāśrāyeta vicakṣaṇaḥ ||*

'Exists' implies grasping after eternalism.  
'Does not exist' implies the philosophy of annihilation.  
Therefore, a discerning person should not rely upon  
either existence or non-existence.  
(MMK 15.10, tr. Kalupahana 1991: 234)

1. *Premise*

The whole second Kāṇḍa of the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* has not been translated for a long time, except for section 2.334–370 in a German translation by Ryutaro Tsuchida in 1979, and some selected passages in *Das Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl* by Willem Caland (1919). This latter anthology includes the translation of JB 2.64, where a rather mysterious phrase, i.e. *vicakṣaṇavatī vāc*, oc-

<sup>1</sup> This paper is the result of joint research entirely discussed and shared by both authors. Just for the sake of academic requirements, §§ 1, 2.1, 2.4, 3 are attributed to Maria Piera Candotti and §§ 2.2, 2.3, 4 to Tiziana Pontillo. We are sincerely grateful to Dr. Ken Hurry, who patiently revised our English.

curs, but it unfortunately omits the intriguing final portion, which is devoted to the last rites before the ablution of the ‘consecrated man’ (*dikṣita*), performed at the end of the solemn consecration introducing to the *soma* sacrifice, so that the general context gets partially lost. The framework of this chapter is in fact a conversation between Keśin Dārbhya, the King of Pañcālas, and a deceased King named Yajñasena, in the form of a golden wild goose who instructs Keśin on consecration (*dikṣā*). In general, the whole account (JB 2.53–68) is mentioned as *kaiśinī dikṣā*, because it pertains to Keśin’s *dikṣā*.<sup>2</sup> Only recently, when the present contribution had already been submitted, a new entire translation of the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* was published by Ranade (2019).

In Ranade’s translation (2019: 623), the phrase *vicakṣaṇavatī vāc* is interpreted differently according to the several contexts as ‘conspicuous speech’ (twice), ‘words which are possessed of distinction,’ ‘words which are full of distinction,’ without further comments. Instead, in Caland’s translation (1919: 140) of the first part of JB 2.64, which is grounded on other later parallel Vedic occurrences surveyed below, it is commonly translated as ‘an utterance including the word *vicakṣaṇa*,’ but, in our opinion, *vāc* as ‘utterance’ rather than ‘language’ or ‘faculty of speaking, voice’ is highly improbable. Thus, the aim of the present paper is to check whether this interpretation of *vicakṣaṇavatī vāc* is actually well-grounded or merely founded on secondarily-invented traditional reworkings of the relevant lexicon and phrases. The method here adopted will include a tentative translation of the JB passages in which the phrase in question occurs and a ‘collation’ of all the available versions of analogous contexts in which the nominal stem *vicakṣaṇa* occurs. Working with a background hypothesis of internal stratification of the Vedic lexicon, we shall try to combine linguistic and philological patterns and tools, aiming at reconstructing a text with its variants, consolidated — through the action of time, locality and *śākhā* — well before they acquired any written form.

We dedicate this essay to Prof. Raffaele Torella, a scholar who has made philology the *sphragis* of his scientific activity.

<sup>2</sup> See Sarma 1968: 242; some details were discussed by Kulkarni 2016.

## 2. Focus on the phrase *vicakṣaṇavatī vāc*

### 2.1. The JB occurrence

We shall start from a tentative translation of the JB paragraph, where the phrase occurs in the first sentence *vicakṣaṇavatīm vācam vadati*:

[1] JB 2.64: *vicakṣaṇavatīm vācam vadati. annam vai vicakṣaṇam. annavatīm eva tad vācam vadati. vicakṣaṇavatīm vācam vadati. somo vai vicakṣaṇah. annam u vai somaḥ. annavatīm eva tad vācam vadati. vicakṣaṇavatīm vācam vadati. prāṇo vai vicakṣaṇah. tasya vāg eva mithunam. mithunavatīm eva tad vācam vadati. vicakṣaṇavatīm vācam vadati. annam vai vicakṣaṇam. annena hīmāḥ prajā vipaśyanti. tata ābhyah prajābhyo ’nnādyam prayacchati.*

He speaks a language characterized by being bright. The food is indeed bright. He actually speaks a language characterized by food. He uses the language characterized by being bright.<sup>3</sup> Soma indeed is bright. Soma is food indeed. He thus speaks a language characterized by food. He speaks a language characterized by being bright. Breath indeed is bright. His [the *dikṣita*’s] language is indeed a pair.<sup>4</sup> He thus speaks a language characterized by a pair. He speaks a language characterized by being bright. Food indeed is bright. These creatures [offspring and cattle] [can] discern through food. Therefore, he offers proper food to these creatures.

Below we will discuss the reasons behind the specific choices we have made in this translation, which considerably differs also from that proposed by Caland (1919: 140):

In seiner (An)rede füge er (nl. Der zum Somaopfer Geweihte) (das Wort) *vicakṣaṇa* („Ansehnlicher“) bei.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Kulkarni’s (2016: 78) translation: ‘language containing distinct words’ and Ranade’s (2019: 623): ‘words which are full of distinction.’ Significantly, in *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 2.4.54–55, *khyā-* is taught as the substitute for the verbal base *caḥ-*, for which the *Dhātupāṭha* (II 7) records the meaning *vyaktāyām vāci* ‘a distinct speech.’ Kātyāyana explicitly proposes a *vārttika* in order to prohibit this substitution before the suffixes *-as* and *-ana*, for which Patañjali gives *ṛcaḥsas* and *vicakṣaṇa* as examples.

<sup>4</sup> Namely, a legitimate and potentially fecund couple (Malamoud 2005: 38).

Caland's translation finds a partial support in a 'commentarial practice'<sup>5</sup> already attested in the Brāhmaṇas and consisting in referring to a Vedic stanza through a noun derived from a word contained in that stanza itself, suffixed by *-vat*. For instance,<sup>6</sup> in the AB *jātavat* is used both to refer<sup>7</sup> to a stanza which actually contains *jāta*, 'born,'<sup>8</sup> and to refer<sup>9</sup> to a stanza which contains a verbal form derived from the base *jan-*, namely *udajani-* 'was generated.' Nonetheless, neither in [1] nor in the other occurrences of *vicakṣaṇavatī* singled out in the Brāhmaṇas (see below [10], [11], [15]) it is possible to clearly identify a specific portion of Vedic text, unlike the above-mentioned AB examples, where we even find a *pratīka*.

Suffice it to say for the moment that we tentatively and provisionally interpret it by keeping the usual meaning of the affix *-mat/-vat* as taught by Pāṇini in A 5.2.94.<sup>10</sup> As far as the meaning of *vicakṣaṇa-* is concerned, we have chosen the term 'bright' which retains the ambiguity of the original term as both 'being visible, radiant' and 'being clear-sighted, wise' — meanings, as we will see, already attested in the ṚV.

<sup>5</sup> Lubin (2010: 7) considers this Brāhmaṇa technique as a 'forerunner of later commentarial practice.'

<sup>6</sup> We owe this pair of examples to Palsule 1957: 120; cf. Liebich 1919: 15–17.

<sup>7</sup> AB 5.5.12: *vaiśvānarasya sumatau syāmety āgnimārutasya pratīpad, ito jāta itī jātavac caturthe 'hani caturthasyāhno rūpaṃ*, 'Let us enjoy the benevolence of Vaiśvānara' is the introductory verse of the Hymn devoted to Agni and the Maruts. As containing the verbal base *jan-* in 'born from here,' on the fourth day, it is the visible appearance of the fourth day.'

<sup>8</sup> ṚV 1.98.1: *vaiśvānarasya sumatau syāma rājā hī kam bhūvanānām abhisrīh | itō jāto viśvam idām vi caṣṭe vaiśvānarō yatate sūryeṇa*, 'Let us enjoy the benevolence of Vaiśvānara. He is in fact the king and full glory of the beings. Born from here, he sees distinctly this whole universe, Vaiśvānara aligns himself with the sun.'

<sup>9</sup> AB 1.16.3: *sa yady ekasyām evānūktāyām jāyeta yadi dvayor, athota bruvantu jantava iti jātāya jātavatīm abhirūpām anubrūyād*, 'If he has been born both when only one [Gāyatrī stanza] has been uttered and when two, then, for him who has been born, he should repeat the corresponding stanza containing the verbal base *jan-* [beginning with] 'Let the living beings say.' See ṚV 1.74.3: *utā bruvantu jantāva ud agnir vṛtrahājani | dhanamjayō rāṇe rāṇe*, 'And let the living beings say: "Agni, the Vṛtra-killer, was generated, who is the booty-winner in every battle".'

<sup>10</sup> The *taddhita* derivative stem *vicakṣaṇavat* is formed by applying the *taddhita* affix *-vat* to the stem *vicakṣaṇa* according to A 5.2.94: *tad asyāsty asminn iti matup*, 'The *taddhita* affix *-mat* applies to a nominal stem in place of the sentence "X belongs to Y" or "X exists in Y", where X is the denotatum of the input, and Y is the denotatum of the output of the rule. Here X is *vicakṣaṇam* and Y is *vāc*.

## 2.2. The Śrautasūtra occurrences

This complex and ambiguous passage is later given a rigid and somewhat mechanical interpretation in the Śrautasūtras, in which *vicakṣaṇa* becomes 'a term' to be added by the contaminating *dikṣita* of the *soma* sacrifice after addressing somebody by his proper name; this is one of the features of the *dikṣita*'s jargon he is supposed to use in order to deal with the danger entailed by his transient status.<sup>11</sup> This interpretation is already found in the most ancient Śrautasūtra, i.e. the *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*, where *vicakṣaṇavat* is paired with the term *canasitavat*. The terms *vicakṣaṇavat* and *canasitavat* are thus features of a speech (*vāc*) characterised by *vicakṣaṇa* and *canasita* as honorific forms appended after the personal names or replacing them. The consecrated one is here instructed by the Adhvaryu priest:

[2] BŚS 6.6: *dikṣito 'si dikṣitavādaṃ vada satyam eva vada māṅṛtam mā smāyīsthā mā kaṇḍūyathā māpāvṛthā [...] yadi vācam viśṣjer vaiṣṇavīm ṛcam anudravatāt [...] yāni devatānāmāni yathākhyātām tāny ācakṣvātha yāny adevatānāmāni yathākhyātām tāny ācakṣāna upariṣṭād vicakṣaṇam dhehi canasitavatīm vicakṣaṇavatīm vācam vada. [...]*

The replacement of *m-* of *-mat* with *v-* is taught in A 8.2.9–11. The occurrence of forms where the input is in fact an adjectival form (as it is here *vicakṣaṇa*) is not impossible though not very frequent: see *nīlavat*, *bṛhadvat*, *bhadravat*.

<sup>11</sup> The specific meaning of this *taddhita* as 'containing a given word' (the meaning selected e.g. by Caland 1919: 140), is actually available in Pāṇini's framework, even though never specifically taught. Such a meaning is for example implied by A 4.4.125: *tadvān āsām upadhāno mantra itīṣṭakāsu luk ca matoḥ*, which teaches that when the *taddhita* affix *yat* applies to a nominal stem ending in *-mat* (to derive a name of the brick consecrated by means of a formula including that same stem) *-mat* is zero-replaced. Accordingly, inasmuch as *-mat/-vat* in the specific sense of 'in which there is a word, containing a word' is considered available by default (e.g. *varcasvat* 'in which there is the word *varcas*'), it is zero-replaced when a further derivative affix (*-ya*) applies to the same stem in which *-mat/-vat* is zeroed. Thus *varcasya-* denotes bricks on which the *upadhānamantra* containing the word *varcas* has been recited. Nevertheless, we cannot be sure that any kind of text or utterance can be named after a word contained in that text/utterance. Here for instance, Pāṇini includes a lexical constraint on the affix *-mat/-vat* which is zero-replaced, namely it has to refer exclusively to an *upadhānamantra*. According to Bender (1910: 62), the meaning 'containing the root or word X' — preferably conveyed by *-vat* 'even with words which would phonetically require *mant'* — is 'by its very nature limited to post-Vedic, and very largely to Brāhmaṇa texts,' i.e. more recent than the Vedic Samhitās.

You are the consecrated one: use the way of speaking of one consecrated! Speak only the truth, not the untruth!<sup>12</sup> Do not smile! Do not scratch yourself! Do not uncover yourself! [...] Should you release your voice, let a stanza addressed to Viṣṇu follow it! [...] Pronounce the [utterances] which are gods' names in accordance with how they are named but, after pronouncing the [utterances] which are not god's names in accordance with how they are named, add the word *vicakṣaṇa*! Speak a language characterized by *canasita* and *vicakṣaṇa*!

[... When the time of the fires comes, the Adhvaryu addresses the consecrated one and his wife ...]

*dīkṣita vācam yaccha patni vācam yaccheti sampresya vācam yamayor vrate dohayataḥ [...]*

O consecrated one, restrain your voice! O sacrificer's wife, restrain your voice! After this call, the two Vrata-milks of the two who are restraining their voice get milked.

[... Here follows a series of prescriptions concerning the day-time duties of officiants who seem to act and speak on behalf of the consecrated one. The consecrated one returns to the foreground in the evening:]

*uditeṣu nakṣatreṣu yajamānaḥ kṣṇājīnam āsajya pūrvayā dvāropāniṣkramyāgreṇa śālām tiṣṭhan bhūr bhuvah suvar vratam kṣṇuta vratam kṣṇuteti trīr vācam visṛjate 'thātithinām upasthām eti. canasitavatīm vicakṣaṇavatīm vācam vadati. sa yady u hāmedhyam upādhiḡacchati taj jāpaty abaddham mano daridram cakṣuḥ sūryo jyotiṣām śreṣṭho dīkṣe mā mā hāsīr iti.*

After the constellations have arisen, the sacrificer (*yajamāna*), having hung the skin of a black antelope and having gone out of the eastern door, standing in front of the shelter, emits three times the utterance '*bhūr bhuvah suvar*, provide the Vrata-milk! provide the Vrata-milk!' Then he meets the guests. He speaks a

<sup>12</sup> *satyam* 'truth,' which etymologically is 'that which exists,' conveys the meaning either of 'that which is perceptible' or of 'that which is permanent'; here it is equated with the order of world (*ṛta*-). The earliest hint at such an identification can be read — as underlined by Radicchi (1962: 102) — in RV 10.190.1–3: *ṛtām ca satyām cābhīddhāt tāpasó 'dhy ajāyata [...]* || [...] *sūryācandramāsau dhātā yathāpūrvām akalpayat | divam ca pṛthivīm cāntāriḡṣam ātho svāḥ*, 'Both truth and reality were born from heat when it was kindled. [...] The Ordainer arranged, according to their proper order, sun and moon, heaven and hearth, midspace and sunlight' (tr. Jamison and Brereton 2014: 1660).

language characterized by *canasita* and *vicakṣaṇa*. If he falls into something impure, he murmurs this, 'My mind is unrestrained, my sight is roving around. The sun is supreme among the luminaries, O consecration, do not abandon me!'<sup>13</sup>

In other Śrautasūtras, the two nominal bases *canasita* and *vicakṣaṇa* are provided with a specialised meaning,<sup>14</sup> to address, respectively, a *brāhmaṇa*, or a *rājanya* and a *vaiśya*, but the bottom lines of the description remain the same:<sup>15</sup>

[3] BhŚS 10.7.15–18: *canasita iti brāhmaṇam āmantrayīta. vicakṣaṇa iti rājanyavaiśyāv iti vijñāyate. brāhmaṇena caiva kṣatriyeṇa vā vaiśyena vā sambhāseta. tata evainam anuḡprayujyeran. yady enaḡ śūdreṇa samvāda upapadyetaiteṣām evaikaḡ brūyāt imaḡ nu vicakṣva iti.*

He should address a *brāhmaṇa* by saying '*canasita*.' It is well known that [he should address] a *rājanya* and a *vaiśya* by saying '*vicakṣaṇa*.' He might talk with a *brāhmaṇa*, a *kṣatriya* or a *vaiśya*. They should deal with him from that very place. If a conversation with a *śūdra* should take place, he should say to one of them (*brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*): 'Reveal this to him!'

This seems at a first sight to fit quite well with the strict ritual concerns that scrupulously regulate the consecrated one's permitted action and in particular his speech. Infringements of the vow of silence must always be ritually handled and amended. Nonetheless, some features in the Śrautasūtra passages intriguingly sound less ritually oriented than expected. A striking element in text [2] is the indirect link made between the vow of silence and the divine language which both characterize the behaviour of the consecra-

<sup>13</sup> The formula is taken from TS 3.1.1.2.

<sup>14</sup> On the contrary, a very late Śrautasūtra, KŚS 7.5.7 *vicakṣaṇacanasitavatīm vācam*, still presents the *dīkṣita*'s speech, interestingly, as a unitary whole without specifying different addressees. Cf. Thite's tr. (2006: 275): '(and he speaks) speech (with the words) *vicakṣaṇa* and *canasita*' with a reference to GB 2.2.23.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. e.g. the generic translation used by Caland and Henry (1906: 21), i.e. 'intelligent' for *vicakṣaṇa* and 'bienvenu' for *canasita*, referred to BŚS, ĀpŚS, MŚS, KŚS and VaitŚS occurrences. The masculine *vicakṣaṇa* can indeed be regularly formed by applying *-anā* to the verbal base *vi-cakṣ-* according to A 3.2.149 to denote an agent who performs the action as habitual disposition, duty or excellence; the neuter noun *vicakṣaṇa* according to A 3.3.115 or A 3.3.117 to form a neuter either as *nomen actionis* or as a *nomen instrumenti et loci*.

ted one. On the other hand, he may use everyday language only [5] in an indirect way: the addition of *canasita* and *vicakṣaṇa* after the utterance of human proper names is supposed to grant a kind of shield to the transparent name (his *pratyakṣanāman* in [4]) and essence both of the addressee and of the consecrated one himself so that his fire-bright speech does no harm to anyone, as underlined in [6].

[4] MŚS 2.1.2.29: *na pratyakṣanāmnācākṣita. canasitety arhatā saha sambhāṣamāṇo brūyād vicakṣaṇetitaraiḥ.*

He has to talk without using the transparent name; when speaking with a venerable one he should say ‘*canasita!*’, with others ‘*vicakṣaṇa!*’

[5] ĀpŚS 12.7–8: *canasitam vicakṣaṇam iti nāmadheyānteṣu nidadhāti. canasiteti brāhmaṇam. vicakṣaṇeti rājanyavaiśye. pariṇayena mānuṣīm vācam vadati.*<sup>16</sup>

At the end of the names he adds *canasitam* and *vicakṣaṇam*, *canasita* [when he addresses] a *brāhmaṇa*, *vicakṣaṇa* [when he addresses] a *rājanya* or a *vaiśya*. He speaks the human language in a contrived way.

[6] ĀpŚS 10.13.1–2: *agnir vā dikṣitas tasmād enaṃ nopaspr̥set. na cāsya nāma grhn̄yāt.*

The consecrated one is indeed fire. Therefore, none should touch him. None should use his name.<sup>17</sup>

The great emphasis placed on the requirement to stick to the truth in [2] is also found in other Śrautasūtra passages such as [7]

<sup>16</sup> *pariṇayena* lit. means ‘with a circular movement, going round about,’ *pariṇaya* is typically taking the spouse around the fire. Thite (2004: 514) translates it as ‘politely,’ which nevertheless may be accepted as an interpretation of what is in general an indirect, contrived way of speaking. Interestingly, Pāṇini (A 3.3.37) teaches how to form the term *pariṇāya* (with long penultimate syllable) in the domain of *dyūta* ‘game, gambling,’ in parallel with the term *nyāyah* in the domain of *abhreṣa* ‘fitness, propriety.’ The idea of a circular, indirect, crooked way of acting is implicit in this term. We furthermore consider that the whole sentence *pariṇayena mānuṣīm vācam vadati* is best interpreted in the light of the parallel sentence *parihvālam mānuṣīm vācam vadati* in [7].

<sup>17</sup> The same injunction is given in VaitŚS 11.19.

and hardly matches purely ritualistic and purity concerns. As also shown by the prescribed expressions used in [2] to describe the consecrated one's reaction to the contact with impurity, the consecrated one shows some typical features of an inspired and possessed man. Other passages in parallel texts seem to hint at the same background:

[7] BhŚS 10.7.13–14: *sa etad vratam carati. na māmsam aśnāti na striyam upaiti nopary āste jugupsetāṅgtāt. parihvālam<sup>18</sup> mānuṣīm vācam vadati canasitam vicakṣaṇam vānuṣajan.*

He practises this observance: he does not eat meat; he does not approach a woman; he does not sit on a high seat; he should detest untruth. He speaks the human language stammering, adding either [the word] *canasita* or [the word] *vicakṣaṇa* at the end.

As already seen, the consecrated one's speech, when allowed, pertains to divine language rather than human. This stammering, jaculatory language interspersed by *canasita* and *vicakṣaṇa* seems to mimic another, more esoteric, language, comprehensible to the consecrated one alone, in his trance. Furthermore, in [2] the link between the rise of the asterisms and the allowed use of the

<sup>18</sup> This term is rare, but in the White Yajurveda School, it occurs once in KŚS 7.5.6 (*parihvālam vadati*) and four times in ŚB(M) 3.2.2.27–29 in an identical formula where *parihvālam* is a gerund form derived from a non-documented verb *pari-hval-* presumably meaning ‘to go around crookedly,’ and is opposed to the fluent way of speaking the human language that the *dikṣita* has to avoid: *parihvālam vācam vadati nā mānuṣīm prāsrtām*. Thite (1970: 167) commented this ŚB passage by emphasising ‘The supranormal life full of religious ecstasy can be seen particularly in the rule according to which the sacrificer, during the *dikṣā* period, should speak stammering speech.’ Thite (2006: 275) translates *parihvālam* in KŚS 7.5.6 as ‘falteredly.’ The term is also commented by Oldenberg (1988: 287 n. 316), who considers such a simulated inability to speak as a ritual consequence of the ‘motif of rebirth’ in the *dikṣā*. On stammering as an effect of the *dikṣā*, i.e., as ‘a senseless, instinctive way of speaking’ (‘Das Stammeln bei der *Dikṣā* gehört in die Kategorie des sinnlosen, triebhaften Redens’) in ecstatic experiences, see Hauer 1921: 76. Quite different is Minard's translation (1949: vol. 1, p. 188) of the quoted ŚB sentence: ‘voilà pourquoi (le consacré) emploie des circonlocutions, non la langue courante en usage chez les hommes.’ As more recently underlined by Heesterman (1993: 148) and Thompson (1996: 152), the *dikṣita* currently speaks a ‘non-human’ language. In fact, by entering his *dikṣā*, the sacrificer temporarily transcends himself to become ‘non-human,’ and then ‘He divests himself of his transcendent ritual persona and reverts again to his normal self.’

faculty of speaking for the *dikṣita* suggests a fascinating superimposition of the solar image as the creator's icon on the ascetic consecrated man. In the absence of the sun, during the night, the *dikṣita* plays the role of the sun. He is allowed to speak, but his language is the divine language, made of single effective syllables such as the mystical *vyāhrtis* (*bhūr bhuvah suvar*) uttered at the beginning of the creation. Again, this feature may be found in other passages, such as the following:

[8] MŚS 2.1.2.27: *nakṣatrāṇām sakāśād iti nakṣatram dṛṣtvā vācam visrjate. vratam carata.*

'Because of the visibility of constellations,' thus after sighting a constellation, he releases his voice. 'Prepare (2<sup>nd</sup> pl.) the Vrata-milk!'

[9] ĀpŚS 10.12.3-4: *sa vāgyatas tapas tapyamāna āsta ā nakṣatrasyo-detoh. vatsasyaikam stanam avaśiṣyetarān vratam dohayivā yāh paśūnām ṛṣabhe vācas tāh sūryo agre śukro agre tāh prahinvo yathābhagam vo atra śivā nas tāh pumar āyantu vāca iti japitva vratam kṛṇveti vācam visrjate.*

He (the *dikṣita*), after restraining his voice, continues practising penance until the rise of a constellation. He releases his voice [by enjoining:] 'Provide (2<sup>nd</sup> pl.) the Vrata-milk!', after leaving [unmilked] one teat for the calf and making [the milker] milk the other [three teats] for the Vrata-milk, and after muttering [the following formula]:<sup>19</sup> 'May you dismiss the voices of the cattle in the bull, which are at first the sun, at first the blazing one, let them come back here benevolent to us, each according to their share!'

<sup>19</sup> This *yajus* occurs in MS 1.2.3, where the first singular person of the indicative present *prahinomi* 'I am dismissing' occurs instead of the second singular person of the injunctive *prahinvah* and the expression *yathābhagam* is made clear by the final words, as follows: *vāyave tvā varuṇāya tvā rudrāya tvā nirṛtyai tvendrāya tvā marudbhyaḥ tvā*, 'You to Vāyu, you to Varuṇa, you to Rudra, you to Nirṛti, you to Indra and you to the Maruts.' A *pratīka* quotation of this verse is also included in MŚS 2.1.2.27. The powerful image of the great god as a roaring bull (endowed with four horns, three feet, two heads and seven hands), who entered mortals (*vṛṣabhō roravīti mahō devō mārtyām ā viveśa*), extolled in RV 4.58.3 is plausibly a presupposed background of [9] which helps us equate the *dikṣita*'s inspired stammering utterances and the Creator's action, which is envisioned as the Solar God's role in allowing men to perceptibly and linguistically discern the several objects of knowledge.

As often happens in the Śrautasūtra, the effort to rationalize and schematize mythic and ritual material at the risk of doing violence to the original texts is quite evident. There is no doubt that, in the Śrautasūtra milieu, our JB passage was also read against such an interpretative background, but this should not prevent us from approaching another, more ancient level of interpretation of the text which may have had a role to play in different times and cultural contexts. As a consequence, the first step to take is to read this Brāhmaṇa passage in the context of Brāhmaṇa literature,<sup>20</sup> assuming some kind of unity first of all at the literary and theoretical level, and secondly within a chronological perspective.

### 2.3. The Brāhmaṇas of the R̥gveda School

Indeed, the opposition *vicakṣaṇa* vs. *canasita*, which we have seen in the Śrautasūtras, is not found either in the JB [1] or in AB 1.6 [10] and KB 7.3 [11]. Only in the later Atharvaveda school, namely in GB 1.3.19 and 2.2.3, both terms are involved in a single sentence, but we will return to this in the next paragraph. The AB shows us how consecrated speech, far from being simply ritually pure, is in fact explicitly assimilated to divine language intimately connected with things as they are. No reasons are found to assume that *vicakṣaṇa* here signifies anything else than the quality of seeing and making someone else see reality perspicuously:

[10] AB 1.6: *ṛtam vāva dikṣā satyam dikṣā, tasmād dikṣitena satyam eva vaditavyam. atho khalu āhuḥ. ko rhati manusyaḥ sarvaṃ satyam vaditum. satyasamhitā vai devā, anytasamhitā manusyā iti. vicakṣaṇavatim vācam vadec cakṣur vai vicakṣaṇam, vi hy enena paśyati. etad dha vai manuṣyeṣu satyam nihitam yac cakṣus tasmād ācakṣaṇam āhur adraḡ iti. sa yady adarśam ity āhāthāsyā śrad dadhati. yady u vai svayam paśyati, na bahūnām ca nānyeṣām śrad dadhāti. tasmād vicakṣaṇavatim eva vācam vadet, satyottarā haivāsya vāg uditā bhavati bhavati.*

Consecration is the order of the world. Consecration is truth. Therefore, only the truth should be spoken by the consecrated man. Now they say: 'What man is capable of only speaking what is the truth? Gods indeed are clusters of truth. Men are clusters of

<sup>20</sup> '[...] The parallel texts usually are the best commentary of Brāhmaṇa style texts' (Witzel 1996: 166-167).

untruth.' He should speak a language characterized by being bright. Sight is indeed bright.<sup>21</sup> In fact he discerns (*vi-paś-*) by means of this. Sight is indeed what is established as truth among men. Therefore, they say to him who narrates something, 'Have you seen this?' If he replies: 'I saw [it],' then, they believe him. But if he sees for himself, he does not believe others, even if they were many. Therefore, he should speak a language characterized by being bright. Then the language spoken by him, actually becomes characterized by truth.<sup>22</sup>

The context of the occurrence of *vicakṣaṇavatī vāc* in KB 7.3, just before the section devoted to the so-called Kaiśinī *dīkṣā* as in [1], is quite similar to the AB one, but a sort of magic Abhicāra background also emerges:

[11] KB 7.3: [...] *tad āhuh kasmād dīkṣitasānye nāma na grhṇantīty agnim vā ātmānaṃ dīkṣamāno bhīdīkṣate tad yad asyānye nāma na grhṇanti ned agnim āsīdām eti yad u so 'nyasya nāma na grhṇāti ned enam agnir bhūtaḥ pradahānīti. [...] yam dviṣyāt tasya dīkṣitaḥ san nāma grasetaiva tad evainam agnir bhūtaḥ pradahati atha yam icched vicakṣaṇavatī vācā tasya nāma grhṇīyāt so tatra prāyaścittis cakṣur vai vicakṣaṇam cakṣuṣā hi vipaśyaty eṣā ha tv eva vyāhṛtir dīkṣitavādaḥ satyam eva sa yah satyaṃ vadati sa dīkṣata iti ha smāha tad āhuh kasmād dīkṣitasānaṃ nāśnantīti havir eṣa bhavati yad dīkṣate.*

[...] They say: 'Why do others not utter the name of the *dīkṣita*?' He who is consecrating himself, consecrates himself as Agni. This is why others do not utter his name [by considering]: 'Let us not go towards Agni!'. And this is why he does not utter the name of another [by considering]: 'Let me not burn him, since I have become Agni.' [...] He should just swallow the name of a man<sup>23</sup> he hates, while he is consecrated. Thus, having become Agni, he burns him. Moreover, he should utter the name of the man he desires [as a comrade] with a language characterized by being

<sup>21</sup> This passage also recalls another ritual detail, as suggested by Haug 1863, i.e. the two portions of ghee used in the Pravargya rite, which are called *cakṣuṣī*, i.e. literally 'the two (new) eyes' which the sacrificer symbolically receives to discern the truth.

<sup>22</sup> According to Sāyaṇa's 14<sup>th</sup>-c. commentary, *satyottarā vāc* means rather that 'the rest of his speech is made true by postposing the term *vicakṣaṇa* to every other word,' a reading evidently influenced by the Śrautasūtras' interpretations. See Keith 1920: 111 n. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Keith's tr. (1920: 384): 'he should mumble his name.'

bright.<sup>24</sup> He, in that situation, is amending; sight indeed is bright. In fact, he discerns by means of sight. Only the mystical utterance (i.e. *bhūr bhuvah suvar*) is the language of the *dīkṣita*, and it is actually truth. 'He who speaks truth is consecrated,' so he says. They say, 'Why do they not eat the food of the consecrated one?' Since he consecrates himself, he becomes an oblation.

It is interesting to note that in KB 7.10 the pure *taddhita* stem used as an epithet is also found twice. The general context is the purchase of *soma*, but the story of the old contest between Asuras and Devas is first told, at the end of which the winners, i.e. the Devas, anoint Soma as their King. A couple of interesting Vedic equivalences follows. Here *vicakṣaṇa* is a qualifier of the moon and indirectly of *soma*, envisioned as usual as a King:

[12] KB 7.12: [...] *tad asau vai somo rājā vicakṣaṇas candramāḥ sa imaṃ kṛitam eva praviśati tad yat somaṃ rājānaṃ kṛīṇāty asau vai somo rājā vicakṣaṇas candramā abhiṣuto 'sad iti.*

[...] What is over there is King Soma, i.e. the bright moon. He enters that which has been purchased [i.e. the soma to be pressed]; when he purchases King Soma, [he says]: 'May King Soma, i.e. the bright moon, be pressed!'

#### 2.4. The Brāhmaṇa of the Atharvaveda School

While our JB and the two Brāhmaṇas of the Ṛgveda school ([1], [10], and [11]) use only the term *vicakṣaṇavat*, the GB [13] also uses the term *canasitavat*. Through this artificial addition, paving the way for the opposition in the Śrautasūtras, the meaning of the term *vicakṣaṇavat* is profoundly modified, favouring the shift of the term *vicakṣaṇa* itself towards a pure honorific. As we have seen, even though the authoritative translations of the relevant occurrences in AB, KB and JB take the ritual shift of meaning for grant-

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Keith's tr. (1920: 384): 'with a clear voice.' In this passage, two uttering modes are contrasted. Keith's translation evidently contrasts a mumbling/chewing pronunciation with a distinct one. Nevertheless, such a meaning as *gras-* to take into the mouth is never attested and the whole context of the text itself goes against this interpretation: on the one hand it is clear from the preceding sentence that the name must not be clearly pronounced, in order not to harm, whereas on the other hand the following sentence explicitly defines the language of the *dīkṣita* as consisting of single mystical syllables (*vyāhṛti*).



ed, nothing compels us to assume that this term is a later Śrauta reworking of the original sense of *vicakṣaṇavat*. It is thus particularly important, in this respect, to scrutinize the testimony of the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, a fairly late Atharvavedic text, which nonetheless has not been aligned with the Śrauta system.<sup>25</sup> There are two occurrences of an identical portion of text, but the context in which the term occurs is significantly different.

In one of the two occurrences, the context is exactly the same as the one drawn by JB, that is, the consecration of the sacrificer before the celebration of the Soma ritual. GB 1.3.19 is explicitly devoted to the specific features that characterize the consecrated one and to the mystic reality behind them. From the beginning in fact, whatever concerns the consecrated one is interpreted through the lens of the dichotomy between two levels of language, i.e. one which perfectly matches reality (*pratyakṣa*) and the other which only indirectly represents it (i.e. *parokṣa*), which is the everyday language of men:

[13] GB 1.3.19: [...] *kasya svid dhetor dikṣita ity ācakṣate. śreṣṭhām dhiyaṃ kṣiyatīti. taṃ vā etaṃ dhikṣitaṃ santam dikṣita ity ācakṣate parokṣeṇa parokṣapriyā iva hi devā bhavanti pratyakṣadviṣaḥ.*

[...] Why is he called *dikṣita*? He inhabits the highest form of thought. Indeed, they call *dikṣita*, in an opaque way, the one who

<sup>25</sup> The first passage here analysed, i.e. GB 1.3.19 is part of the so-called *pūrvabrāhmaṇa* (in five *prapāṭhakas*), which according to Bloomfield (1899: 101–102) ‘shows considerable originality, especially when it is engaged in the glorification of the Atharvan and its priests,’ and ‘(i)ts materials are by no means all of the usual Brāhmaṇa-character,’ while the *uttarabrāhmaṇa* (in six *prapāṭhakas*) ‘leaves the impression of a date still later than the *pūrvā*.’ Bloomfield (1899: 102) maintained that the chronological relations in the redaction of the following three works of the Atharvaveda-School were reversed as compared to the other Vedic Schools, namely the *Kausika Gṛhyasūtra* was composed before the *Vaitāna Śrautasūtra*, and the latter before the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*. The evidence he used was nonetheless discussed and rejected by several scholars (see Patyal 1969: XIV–XX, and bibliography there quoted), so that Gonda (1975: 356) states that ‘there can be no doubt that it (= GB) is one of the latest productions of its genre,’ but not later than the *Vaitāna Śrautasūtra*. Moreover, according to Gonda (1977: 544–545), all three works might have been a common lore of the Atharvaveda-School, rather than the exclusive property of the Śaunakīya or Paippalāda Schools.

‘has been inhabited by the thought’ (*dhī-kṣita*),<sup>26</sup> for it is as if the gods were fond of what is opaque and hated what is transparent.<sup>27</sup>

Not only must the real personal name of the consecrated one be concealed, but also his real status as a possessed, inspired man, which must only be hinted at in an indirect way. Significantly, the priests who participate in the *dikṣā* similarly act as a kind of shield between the consecrated one and the world. In particular [14], the marks of respect he deserves (he is one who does not stand up before others and does not salute) are justified by the presence of specific officiants next to him:

[14] GB 1.3.19: [...] *ye pratyuttheya abhivādyaś ta enam āviṣṭā bhavanti atharvāṅgirasas.*

[...] The *atharvāṅgirasas*, before whom one must stand up and whom one must salute, become the ones who are intent on him.

The following questions concern what is specifically atharvanic and what is specifically āṅgirasic in the *dikṣita*'s (ritual) behaviour. Atharvanic is said to be the fact that the *dikṣita* pours the oblation in/for himself and not in/for others. As to what is proper to the Āṅgiras, the text says:

[15] GB 1.3.19: [...] *athāsya kim āṅgirasam iti yad ātmanaś ca pareṣāṃ ca nāmāni na grhṇāty evaṃ ha tasminn āsād ātmanaś<sup>28</sup> caiva pareṣāṃ*

<sup>26</sup> The many semantic analyses of the word *dikṣita* in the Brāhmaṇas have been collected and analyzed by Thite (1970), who stresses the different insights on the notion of *dikṣā* that such analyses convey. Concerning our occurrence, Thite (1970: 167) highlights ‘the ecstatic nature of the *dikṣita*: during the time of the *dikṣā* the person who has gone through that ceremony goes to a particular religious thought [...]. The present reference [...] gives us the idea of religious ecstasy as a significance of *dikṣā*.’ Thite’s interpretation of *dhī* as ‘religious thought’ rather depends nevertheless on Ṛgvedic data, in our opinion. Deeg (1995: 234) translates *śreṣṭhām dhiyaṃ kṣiyati*, ‘Er besitzt den besten Gedanken’ and devotes fn. 169, p. 235 to explaining the meaning of the verb *kṣi-* (‘to dwell’) with acc. ‘to possess.’ The participle *kṣitaṃ* in the sense of ‘consumed, destroyed’ is involved in the paronymology of *dikṣā* in JB 2.54 (see below § 4). It is tempting to assume that the compound *dhīkṣita* in the second part of the present GB paronymology might have meant ‘consumed by the [inspired] thought.’

<sup>27</sup> This long-debated topic has recently aroused the interest of Raffaele Torella himself (see Torella 2019).

<sup>28</sup> v.l. *tasminnasādātmanaś*.

*ca nāmāni na gṛhyante. vicakṣaṇavatīm*<sup>29</sup> *vācam bhāṣante canasita-*  
*vatīm*<sup>30</sup> *vicakṣayanti*<sup>31</sup> *brāhmaṇam canasayanti*<sup>32</sup> *prājāpatyam*.<sup>33</sup>

[...] What is there of him which is proper to the Aṅgiras? The fact that he uses neither his name nor the names of others: thus, in fact his name and the names of others are not used there in the vicinity.<sup>34</sup> They speak a language characterized by being bright and well-disposed, they make the *brāhmaṇa*<sup>35</sup> see distinctly, they make [him] well-disposed towards the [vow] dedicated to Prajāpati.<sup>36</sup>

A more schematic and ritualistically-oriented translation could be only one step away, e.g. as follows:

They speak a language which uses *vicakṣaṇa*, which uses *canasita*, they address the brahmin with the word 'insightful' and the descendant of Prajāpati with the word 'gracious.'<sup>37</sup>

This interpretation would fit perfectly with the later Śrautasūtra tradition, except for the inversion of the characteristic of seeing

<sup>29</sup> v.l. *vicakṣaṇavati*.

<sup>30</sup> Mitra and Vidyabhūṣaṇa (1872) divide *ca na sitavatīm*.

<sup>31</sup> v.l. *vicakṣyati*.

<sup>32</sup> v.l. *na ca sayanti*. Mitra and Vidyabhūṣaṇa (1872) divide *ca na sayanti*.

<sup>33</sup> v.l. *prājāpatim*.

<sup>34</sup> A similar question is raised again some lines below with variations, when it is asked why the *dikṣita* is someone whose food is not to be consumed and whose name is not to be pronounced (by others) *kasya svid dhetor dikṣito 'nāśyanmo bhavati nāśya nāma gṛhṃanti*. Here the reason is found in the fact that he becomes someone who resides in food and resides in the name: those who eat his food eat his sin and those who pronounce his name throw off the sin in his name. The tabu thus concerns principally the persons addressing the *dikṣita* (notice the plural, *gṛhṃanti*) and not the *dikṣita* himself and is meant principally to avoid contamination.

<sup>35</sup> Every *dikṣita* is called *brāhmaṇa* or *brahmān* at the acme of consecration, notwithstanding the specific *varṇa* he pertains to, to lose it at the end (see Thite 1970: 169; Neri and Pontillo 2016).

<sup>36</sup> The translation is based on a phrasal segmentation we owe to Gaastra's 1919 edition, which puts a pause after *canasitavatīm*. The secondary form *prājāpatya* may signify both what comes/descends from Prajāpati (typically the warrior class), or what is dedicated to Prajāpati, typically either the sacrificial victim (and in particular any sacrificial victim not specifically dedicated to other deities), or some kind of vow (*vrata*) characterised by silence. See TS 2.5.11.4 and TB 2.1.4.6 *yat tuṣṇīm tat prājāpatyam*.

<sup>37</sup> Patyal (1969), albeit with a different segmentation of the text, goes in the same direction: they utter the speech containing the word 'discerning,' they pro-

distinctly and being satisfied.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, such a translation of the passage, which may be the first in which the opposition between the two terms is found, is not the only one possible and perhaps not even the preferable one. A quick glance at the variants in the reviewed manuscripts and the choices of some editors shows that the passage was also obscure for copyists. Furthermore, many forms in this brief utterance are puzzling: both the causatives are virtually hapax, being used only once again in the parallel, identical passage in GB 2.2.23. They are also morphologically puzzling since they can be derived neither from *vicakṣaṇa* nor from *canasita*: the translation 'address with the word *vicakṣaṇa*/with the word *canasita*' is thus highly interpretative. We have consequently preferred not to take the shift in meaning proper of the Śrautasūtras already for granted, and we have interpreted the two forms as coming from *vi-cakṣ-* and the denominal verbal base *canasya*, respectively, preserving a specific 'causative' meaning for these new formations. This translation has in our opinion some definite advantages, first of all that of maintaining the unity of the language attributed to the consecrated one, here called *brāhmaṇa*, a language that makes him see distinctly and enjoy what is dedicated to Prajāpati. This interpretation, on the other hand, raises the problem of clearly identifying the third person plural to whom such speech is attributed, in contrast with all the other occurrences both in the Brāhmaṇa and in the Śrautasūtra, which clearly identify the agent as being the singular *dikṣita*. It seems quite clear that here the agents are the Atharvāṅgiras who, as the following passage clearly shows, are making the first call for the Vrata-milk on behalf of the consecrated one himself:

[16] GB 1.3.19: *saiṣā vratadhug atharvāṅgirasas tām hy anvāyattāḥ*

The Atharvāṅgiras are this [language] which gives the *vrata*[-milk] for they have followed it.

claim the speech containing the word 'satisfied,' and address the Brāhmaṇa text connected with Prajāpati with the word 'satisfied.'

<sup>38</sup> Gonda (1986: 154) already noticed that this GB statement is not clear, even though he reads *vicakṣaṇa* and *canasita* as being associated with different interlocutors because BhŚ and ĀpŚ enjoin the former term when addressing a nobleman or a *vaiśya*, and the latter for a brahmin.

This interpretation is further strengthened by the second occurrence of the couple *vicakṣanavatī-canasitavatī* which is again attributed to a generic plural, that is, the priests involved in the *soma* pressing, which is outside the context of *dīkṣā*:

[17] GB 2.2.23: *vicakṣanavatīm vācam bhāṣante canasitavatīm. vicakṣayanti brāhmaṇam canasayanti prājāpatyam. satyaṃ vadanti. etad vai manuseṣu satyaṃ yac cakṣus [...] tasmād vicakṣanavatīm vācam bhāṣante canasitavatīm satyottarā haivaiṣām vāg uditā bhavati.*

They speak a language characterized by being bright and well-disposed, they make the *brāhmaṇa* see distinctly, they make [him] well-disposed towards the [vow] dedicated to Prajāpati. They say the truth. And among men truth is in the faculty of sight. [...] For this reason they speak a language characterized by being bright and enjoyed: their speech becomes indeed pronounced as essentially true.

3. A glance at the earliest semantic imagery linked to *vicakṣaṇa* and to the verb *vi-cakṣ-*

It is now time to analyse in greater detail what is behind our translation of *vicakṣaṇa* as ‘bright’ in the complex meaning that encompasses both the notion of being luminous/appearing and illuminating/seeing, watching.<sup>39</sup> To do so, it is important to understand the semantic imagery revolving around this epithet in the literature of the *Samhitās*. Having surveyed all the Vedic occurrences of the term, we will concentrate here on the earliest attestations and present crucial testimonies highlighting different aspects of this complex meaning. The epithet itself, by the way, is far from uncommon at an early stage of Vedic. In the *ṚV*, *vicakṣaṇa* primarily refers to the sun (*ṚV* 1.50.8; 10.37.8), but also

<sup>39</sup> Both these notions are proper to the reduplicated present base *cakṣ-* from *kāṣ-* recorded in Mayrhofer 1986–2001, *s.v.* as ‘leuchten, erscheinen, erblicken, sehen.’ These values are attested from the most ancient redactional layers of Vedic literature, see e.g. *ṚV* 10.5.1 *ēkaḥ samudrō dharūṇo rayiṇām asmāddhṛdō bhūrijanmā vi caṣṭe*, ‘There is only one water-body, foundation of riches, but he, having many births, peeps out from our own heart,’ in contrast to *ṚV* 10.55.3 *pāñca devām ṛtuśāḥ saptaṣṭa || cātustriṃśatā purudhā vi caṣṭe sārūpeṇa jyōtiṣā vīvratena*, ‘The five [groups] of gods in their proper sequence, seven by seven does he [Indra] variously illuminate with those thirty-four [which are one] light having a single form but performing different actions.’

to the moon together with the sun (*ṚV* 1.164.12, 8.41.9), to Prajāpati (*ṚV* 4.53.2), to Agni Vaiśvānara (*ṚV* 3.3.10), to Indra (*ṚV* 1.101.7; 4.32.22), to Bṛhaspati (*ṚV* 2.23.6), and, above all, it is referred to the word *soma* (*ṚV* 1.112.4; 9.12.4, 37.2, 39.3, 51.5, 66.23, 70.7, 75.1, 85.9, 86.11,19,35, 106.5, 107.3, 5, 7, 16, 10.11.4, 92.15).

Particularly interesting are all those occurrences showing that the term is explicitly used with a meaning that cleverly exploits its semantic ambiguity in passages dealing with the semantic area of sovereignty and, more specifically, of wisdom’s pre-eminence. In several hymns, such as [18] dedicated to Sūrya, and in others, such as the ones dedicated respectively to Soma [21], Bṛhaspati [20] and Agni Vaiśvānara [19], the prestigious status of the deity is explicitly evoked together with his enhanced capacity of seeing, which lies at the foundation of leadership itself. The sun [18], riding in the sky during the day, is explicitly assimilated from the very first stanza of the hymn to the ‘eye of Mitra and Varuṇa’:<sup>40</sup>

[18] *ṚV* 10.37.8

*māhi jyōtir bibhratam tvā vicakṣaṇa bhāsvantaṃ cakṣuṣe-cakṣuṣe māyah | arōhantam bṛhatāḥ pājasas pāri vayām jīvāḥ prāti paśyema sūrya ||*

While you are bringing the great light, O bright one, while you shine, a joy to every eye, may we, the living beings, look upon you while you ascend from the shining vastity, O Sun.

It is thus the moment of the rising of the morning sun that is envisioned here. The translation of *vicakṣaṇa* with ‘wide-gazing’ (see e.g. Jamison and Brereton 2014: 1437), highlighting the sun’s supervision of the whole earth with his celestial eye, is of course perfectly plausible, but we prefer to maintain the polisemy of the text unless the context explicitly points to any one option. In fact, the whole hymn plays on the ambiguity between the luminous light seen from afar, its appearance marking the orderly flow of days, and the divine eye whose ample view from the celestial heights guarantees the orderly development of human activities.

<sup>40</sup> *ṚV* 10.37.1a: *nāmo mitrāsya varuṇasya cakṣase* ‘honour to the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa.’

In other occurrences, the link to an active capacity of vision is, on the other hand, more clearly stated: Agni Vaiśvānara in [17] is extolled as the god who found the celestial light.

[19] ṚV 3.3.10  
*vaiśvānara tāva dhāmāny ā cake yēbhīḥ svarvid ābhavo vicakṣaṇa |*

O Vaiśvānara, I enjoy your established conditions,<sup>41</sup> by which you became the one finding the celestial light,<sup>42</sup> O bright one.

Ṛhaspati [20], on the other hand, honoured as the troop leader of all the troops (*gaṇānām gaṇapatih*), the inspired sage-poet of all sages (*kaviḥ kavīnām*),<sup>43</sup> at the beginning of ṚV 2.23, is, some lines below, extolled as the herder of men, a sharp-eyed creator of paths. Moreover, the *kavi*, sage and poet, whose abilities are also to ‘discover and carry out the proper measures for ritual,’ shows particular links with both the gods physically present at the sacrificial site, i.e. Agni [19] and Soma Pavamāna [21, 22],<sup>44</sup> the god, as we saw, prevalently associated with the epithet *vicakṣaṇa*:

[20] ṚV 2.23.6  
*tvām no gopāḥ pathikīd vicakṣaṇās tāva vratāya matibhir jarāmahe |*

[Ṛhaspati] You are our herdsman, who creates paths,<sup>45</sup> who is bright. We gather at your command by means of our thoughts.

<sup>41</sup> We are following here the interpretation suggested by Renou (e.g. 1955: 21) who considers *dhāmāni* as ‘formes en tant que résultant de fonctions,’ also paying attention to the connection with the verb *dhā-*, suggested by Oldenberg (1916: 181). Cf. Gonda’s translations as ‘statutes, institutions’ (Gonda 1963: 194) and as ‘locations,’ ‘places’ or ‘powers’ of a numen (Gonda 1967: 21) and the important criticism of the translation of *dhāman* as ‘place’/‘Stätte’ by Wilden (2000: 169) and against the concept of *dhāman* as a deity’s permanent abode in heaven rather than a ‘seat,’ i.e. ‘the place of activity’ by Bodewitz (2002: 168). See also Köhler’s recent (2016: 164) emphasis on the use of *dhāman* ‘for describing the establishment of ritual prescription.’

<sup>42</sup> The epithet *svarvid* is more commonly attributed to Soma and Agni, the two deities physically present in the sacrificial area precisely in their function as path-finders leading to heaven.

<sup>43</sup> On the important finding that in the *R̥gveda* the term *kavi* is relatively more frequently used with gods than with people and the complex sense of *kavi* referred to Gods as ‘Erkenner und Erzeuger von kosmischen oder rituellen Strukturen,’ see Köhler 2011: 215, 220.

<sup>44</sup> See Köhler 2019.

<sup>45</sup> Also in the case of Ṛhaspati ‘creator of the formula,’ the capacity to create paths may be read both at a ritual and a poetic level.

[21] ṚV 9.107.7  
*sōmo mīdhvān pavate gātuvīttama ṛṣir vipro vicakṣaṇāḥ |  
 tvām kavir abhavo devavīttama ā sūryam rohaya divi ||*

Soma the bountiful is purifying himself, he, the best way-finder, the *ṛṣi*, the inspired, the bright one. You, you became the poet (*kavi*) who most gratifies the gods, you made the sun ascend in heaven/in the sky.<sup>46</sup>

[22] ṚV 9.12.4  
*divo nābhā vicakṣaṇó vyo vāre mahīyāte |  
 sōmo yāḥ sukratuḥ kavīḥ ||*

In the navel of heaven, in the sheep’s fleece, the bright one thrives: Soma, who is a poet of good resolve.

The background here is thus a different kind of vision, not linked to the imagery of sun, brilliance and height (whence the common translation of ‘wide-gazing’), but rather to that of *soma* purified through the sheep fleece to make the fluid translucent and at the same time rendering the things through which it flows translucent.<sup>47</sup> Brilliance is still at stake, but is rather another conception of it.<sup>48</sup> The purified and purifying *soma* is an image of the *kavi*<sup>49</sup> and of his relationship with language and reality.<sup>50</sup> In any case, it

<sup>46</sup> See also ṚV 9.86.11a *pātir divāḥ śatādhāro vicakṣaṇāḥ*, ‘Soma lord of the sky, of hundred currents, the bright one’ and 19 *vṛṣā matīnām pavate vicakṣaṇāḥ somah*, ‘The bull of thoughts, the bright Soma, purifies himself.’

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Gonda (1963: 193), who defines the ṚV epithet *vicakṣaṇā* as ‘a good example to illustrate the belief in an omniscience which is based essentially on the power of sight; a knowing which comes from, or is intimately connected with, an unusual and supra-normal faculty of seeing,’ and distinguishes the so-called ‘magical omniscience,’ which is ascribed to animals, spirits and exceptional men, from the ‘visual omniscience,’ which is the specific attribute of deities who are connected with the heavenly realms of light and in particular the sun. Thus, he prefers ‘clear-sighted, wise’ as the proper meaning of *vicakṣaṇā* instead of ‘out-looking’ (Gonda 1963: 194).

<sup>48</sup> See Renou 1961: 10: ‘De fait il existe au Livre IX nombre d’images ou de qualificants qui pourraient tout aussi bien se rapporter à Agni [...] sans parler de tel passage où le côté céleste de Soma est conçu comme igné ou solaire.’

<sup>49</sup> Such a capacity is sometimes due to a divine gift (ṚV 1.116.14) and allows the blind to see (ṚV 1.117.17).

<sup>50</sup> This interpretation of the imagery of *soma* is of course far from new. See above all Renou 1955: 25: ‘L’image de la pensée “clarifié,” décantée (*pu-*) est naturellement empruntée au soma qu’on filtre et qu’on transvase. Tous les

may be expressed as the capacity of seeing through, expressed by a verbal form from the same root *vi-cakṣ-* in [23], where the liquid element plays an important role in the metaphorical imagery:

[23] RV 10.177.1  
*samudré antāḥ kavāyo ví cakṣate mārīcīnām padām icchanti vedhāsah ||*

The sage poets spy it (the divine bird) within the sea; the ritual experts seek the footprint of the light beams.

Later on, the link between the transparency of water and that of words is explicitly affirmed:

[24] JUB 3.35.5  
*samudre antāḥ kavāyo ví cakṣata iti. puruṣo vai samudra evamvīda u kavayāḥ. ta imām puruṣe 'ntar vācam vicakṣate.*

Inside the extension of waters the sage poets see distinctly: thus [it is said]. The extension of waters is indeed the Man, the poets know it: they see distinctly this Word (*vāc*) within the Man.

Finally, both imageries, i.e. the solar and the somic, may intermix in very dense passages, such as the following:

[25] RV 9.75.1–2  
*abhī priyāṇi pavate canohito nāmāni yahvó ádhi yéṣu vārdhate |  
 ā sūryasya bhātó bhānn ádhi rátham víṣvañcam aruhad vicakṣanāḥ ||  
 ṛtasya jihvā pavate mādhu priyām vaktā pátir dhiyó asyá ádābhyah |  
 dádhāti putráḥ pitrór apīcyam náma ṛtīyam ádhi rocané diváh ||*

Well-disposed, he (i.e. *soma*) flows purifyingly towards [his own] dear names,<sup>51</sup> upon which he, the swift one, grows strong. He the lofty one, the bright one, has mounted upon the chariot of the lofty sun that faces in many directions.

hymnes à *soma* composant le 9<sup>e</sup> *mandala* transcrivent, de manière plus ou moins apparente, les progrès et les vicissitudes de l'inspiration poétique[...]; what seems to be additional in passages such as [24] is the immediate link with the parallel imagery of the word (and thought) as light, brightness, another element characterizing R̥gvedic imagery (cf. Renou 1955: 6). *Soma* is also functional in poetic inspiration, see Renou 1961: 16: 'le *soma* clarifié clarifie l'inspiration, anime la fonction orale.'

<sup>51</sup> See Renou 1961: 87: '« Nom » comme partie essentielle de l'être [...] notion toute voisine de *dhāman* « structure » (qui reçoit passim l'ép. de *priyá* comme *ṛtá* et comme *nāman* ailleurs encore).'

Tongue of truth (*ṛta*), he purifies as the dear honey. He is the speaker, the lord of this insight who is never deceived. [Albeit] the son, he establishes the third secret name of his parents upon the firmament of the sky.

Another interesting feature of this passage is the simultaneous presence of *canohita* (lit. 'disposed for fulfilment') and *vicakṣana*, both referred to the God Soma.<sup>52</sup> It is noteworthy that *canohita* is also God Agni in RV verses, where his function of conveying the oblation (*havyavah*) is clearly tuned to the property of being *canohita* as in RV 3.11.2–3: [... ] *cānohitah | agnir dhiyā sām ṛṇvati || agnir dhiyā sā cetati ketūr yajñāsya pūrvyāḥ* [...], 'well-disposed, through insight, Agni obtains [goods]. Through insight, Agni becomes perceptible, the ancient flag of the sacrifice.' Agni is here invoked under a form in which his strength, by nature fierce and frightening, is converted for the fulfilment of his devotees. The pair *canohita* and *vicakṣana*, attributes of Soma, is mirrored in this merger between Agni's being benevolent and the actions performed by his *dhi* 'insight.' It is tempting to assume that such a merger might have been a remote inspiration for depicting the *dikṣita* in his ambivalent igneous nature.

To the basic meanings encountered so far, it is necessary to add that the verbal base may even develop a causative meaning, i.e. that of illuminating/making someone else see. The oldest testimony of this meaning is, to the best of our knowledge, the following:

[26] VS(M) 10  
*anyád evāhūḥ sambhavād anyád āhur āsambhavāt |  
 ūti śuśrūma dhīrāṇām yé nas tād vicacakṣiré ||*

They say that it (i.e. the One) is far different from coming into being, different also — they say — from not coming into being. So we heard from the insightful men who revealed it to us.

<sup>52</sup> According to Mayrhofer (1986–2001, vol. 2: 528), both the *tatpuruṣa* compound *canohita* 'made inclined to do something' (well-documented in early Vedic literature) and the passive past participle *canasita* 'made gracious, welcome' are derived from the nominal stem *canas* meaning 'pleasure, inclination, fulfilment.'

This passage occurs almost identical in VS(M) 13, where *vidyā* takes the place of *sambhava*. The agents involved in the action of revealing are the *dhīras*, the men endowed with *dhī* 'insight,' who convey a form of wisdom rather than practicing poetic skills. In analogous contexts, this causative value is found in imperative forms from the Brāhmaṇa [27] and Epics ([28]). In the GB, the context is that of the sage Glāya Maitreya who, having lost a wisdom contest, has now become a disciple of Maudgalya:

[27] GB 1.1.32: [...] *taṃ hopetya paṃraccha kiṃ svid āhur bhoḥ savitur vareṇyam bhargo devasya kavayaḥ kiṃ āhur dhiyo vicakṣva yadi tāḥ pravettha. [...] tasmā etat provāca vedāṃś chandāṃsi savitur vareṇyam. bhargo devasya kavayo 'nnam āhuḥ karmāṇi dhīyah.*

[...] Having approached him as a student (Glāya Maitreya) questioned him: 'My Lord, what do the sage poets call "Savitṛ's boon," what do they call "the glory of gods"? Reveal to me [what they call] the insights, if you know them.' (Maudgalya) answered him: 'The Vedas, the metres are Savitṛ's boon, the poets call food "the glory of gods." The insights are the sacrificial actions.'

It is important to point out that the answer to Glāya Maitreya's request is in fact a typical homology of the kind we are used to finding in the Brāhmaṇas and that it is supposed to give access to a deeper and more perspicuous knowledge of reality. This point will find ample discussion in § 4. The shift from the poetic domain to a more ascetic one is even more evident in an Epic occurrence that involves a teacher 'of steady vows' (*saṃśītavrata*), addressed by a pupil in search of the highest good:

[28] MBh 14.35.4  
*bhagavantam praṇanno 'haṃ niḥśreyasaparāyaṇaḥ |  
yāce tvāṃ śirasā vipra yad brūyāṃ tad vicakṣva me ||*

I resorted to You, being desirous of attaining the highest good; I deferentially implore you, O inspired one (*vipra*), to reveal to me what I ask you.

#### 4. The effective 'words' pronounced by the *dīkṣita*

It seems quite evident from the present survey of occurrences that the opposition between *canasita* and *vicakṣaṇa* is quite late — since none of the Brāhmaṇas mentions it, with the partial exception of

GB — and similarly, their usage as mere, almost meaningless, honorific terms. The testimony of the Brāhmaṇas lies somewhere between two extremes. On the one hand, the Śrautasūtras show the usage of the two honorific terms seemingly acting as a shield between the consecrated one's language and his interlocutors, so that the *dīkṣita* can be not 'dangerous' like a fire, but rather 'bright' and 'benevolent' as the fire when it is active within the sacrificial area. At the other end of the spectrum, in the earlier Samhitās, *vicakṣaṇa* was rather the property of being bright in the sense of the double power of fire, which makes itself seen as well as making other things seen. As an attribute of *vāc*, such power would be that of a language capable of revealing things as they actually are, thus highlighting the god-like, albeit temporary, inspired attitude of the *dīkṣita*.

Consequently, we shall now try to understand whether in our Brāhmaṇa — in particular in JB 2.64 — the real focus of the term *vicakṣaṇavatī* is to emphasise this power rather than the alleged danger of the language used by the consecrated man. Moreover, we shall ponder what kind of power it does consist of. Although the JB is not the earliest Brāhmaṇa text — the Brāhmaṇas of the Ṛgveda School are plausibly the most ancient ones — it is however one of the most conservative in terms of its contents.<sup>53</sup> We shall try to reconstruct this meaning, also using two other important passages (JB 1.18, 50), which Bodewitz (1969) has already highlighted as peculiar after-death scenes. In both, the focus is on the arrival of the deceased man at the door through which access to the sun becomes possible. In that place, the deceased (indeed his life breath)<sup>54</sup> has to announce himself to the doorkeepers, who are the Seasons.<sup>55</sup> He has to give them 'the correct password' and

<sup>53</sup> Merely on the basis of the 'ritualistic facts,' Caland (1931: XIX) even (hesitatingly) considered the JB older than the other Sāmaveda Brāhmaṇa, i.e. the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*. On the contrary, the linguistic data — which Caland had also taken into account — persuaded Keith (1932a; 1932b: 699–700) to conclude for the anteriority of the latter. On this last evaluation, see also Renou 1947: 101–102; Parpola 1973: 7; 9–10; Gonda 1975: 348–349.

<sup>54</sup> The concept that the life breath (i.e. *asu* or *prāṇa*) precedes the body dates back to RV 10.12.1. See Bodewitz 1973: 58 n. 14.

<sup>55</sup> I.e. the segments of Time, which together constitute the year, here identified with the sun. And sometimes, as underlined by Bodewitz (1973: 122 n. 26), the year is identified with King Soma itself (see e.g. TB 1.6.8).

to use a formula self-evidently aimed at demonstrating that 'he knows that he is not an individual, but identical with the highest god,'<sup>56</sup> in other words, that he shares divine knowledge of reality. This is why he is conscious that he is merely coming from the 'bright one' (*vicakṣaṇāt*) and destined to be temporarily and cyclically part of the world, but capable of becoming light forever in the sun. He comes from the *vicakṣaṇa* and he aims at returning to the *vicakṣaṇa* once more.

[29] JB 1.18: [...]  
*vicakṣaṇād ṛtavo reta abhṛtam ardhmāsyam prasutāt pitryāvataḥ |*  
*taṃ mā pūṃsi kartary erayadhvam pūṃsaḥ kartur mātary āsiṣikta ||*  
*sa upajāyopajāyamāno dvādaśena trayodaśopamāsaḥ |*  
*saṃ tad vide prati tad vide 'ham taṃ mā ṛtavo 'mṛta āmayadhvam ||*

[...] O Seasons, my seed is produced from the bright one, which is pressed out every half month and which is connected with the ancestors (i.e. *soma* identified with the moon and with seed). You brought this same me in a male agent. From the male agent you sprinkled [me] over a mother.

To generate something additional, I am being generated as the additional, thirteenth month by the twelvefold [year]. This I know, of this I am sure. So, lead me, O Seasons, to the deathless status!

In JB 1.50, virtually identical to the previous passage, *vicakṣaṇa* occurs twice, since after the word *pitryāvataḥ* the following sentence is inserted to explain what is meant by the 'seed' offered by the Seasons:

[30] JB 1.50: [...= 1.18] *yad ado vicakṣaṇam somaṃ rājānam juhvati tat tat*

That which they (i.e. the Seasons) offer there (i.e. in heaven) is the bright King Soma.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Bodewitz 1973: 52, 60 n. 28. At the second step of the after-death path, when the sun himself asks him: *kas tvam asi*, 'Who are you?', the wrong formula — which would eventually condemn the deceased man to be excluded from heaven — is that of the one 'who announces himself by his (personal) name or by his family (name)' ([...] *yo ha nāmnā vā gotreṇa vā prabrūte taṃ*). See JB 1.18 after [29].

<sup>57</sup> See e.g. KauṣUp. 1.5: *sa āgacchati vibhu pramitam. taṃ brahmayasāḥ praviṣati. sa āgacchati vicakṣaṇām āsandīm. [...] sa āgacchati amitaujasam paryāṅkam. [...] ta-*

The context of these latter occurrences of the nominal stem *vicakṣaṇa* is definitely philosophical, soteriologic and esoteric. A more extended and complex version of this JB after-death scene involving the term *vicakṣaṇa* occurs in KauṣUp. 1.2–6, where the lexicon and the imagery are very close. Moreover, both in the *Kauṣitaki Upaniṣad* and in the *Sāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka*, special attention is paid to the feminine nominal stem *vicakṣaṇā* as the name of Brahmā's throne (*vicakṣaṇāsandī*), i.e. the goal of the dead man at the end of the bright *devāyana*-path. In these occurrences of the stem *vicakṣaṇa*, no space is reserved for mere ritual behaviour, and language is strictly involved in a speculative self-presentation that must reflect the deceased's own innermost conviction.

As a matter of fact, even in the ritualized context of the ŚS occurrences (see especially [2], [3], [7]), every specific behavioural rule taught for the *dikṣita* seems aimed at creating the prescribed secluded context fit for the consecration of the sacrificer and his wife, to place them in an in-between status, which may be interpreted both in terms of death and in terms of coming to life. Death matches the *dikṣita's* prescribed silence: his voice is only released when he takes the place of the sun itself. Furthermore, the *dikṣita's* 'embryonal' life and language are an image of the Creator's power who through the words makes everything known and thus perceptible, i.e. eventually existing.<sup>58</sup> The crucial early Vedic concept presupposed here is the equivalence between

*smin brahmāste. taṃ itthaṃvit pādenaivāgra ārohati*, 'He arrives at the great hall Vibhu (lit. 'far-extending/all-pervading'). The renown of Brahman penetrates him. He arrives at the throne Vicakṣaṇā. [...] He arrives at the couch Amitaujas. (lit. 'almighty, of unlimited energy'). [...] On that (couch/throne) sits Brahmā. Knowing thus he ascends it in front with one leg.' (cf. KauṣUp. 1.3). Cf. also ŚĀ 3.5: *taṃ brahmatejah praviṣati sa āgacchati vicakṣaṇām āsandīm*, 'The fiery energy of Brahman penetrates him. He arrives at the throne Vicakṣaṇā.' In KauṣUp. 1.5–6, when God Brahmā asks the deceased man who he is, he has also to answer by identifying himself with the God and with the truth: *taṃ brahmāha ko 'sīti. taṃ prabrūyāt. ṛtur asmi. ārtavo 'smi. [...] yas tvam asi so 'ham asmīti. taṃ āha ko 'ham asmīti. satyam iti brūyāt. kiṃ tad yat satyam iti*, 'Brahmā asks him: "Who (*kas*) are you?" He should answer him: "I am a season, I am a descendant of the seasons. [...] I am who you are." He (Brahmā) says: "Who (*ka*) am I?" He should say: "That which is the permanent reality."

<sup>58</sup> 'The hut of the *dikṣita* constitutes his womb, for the *dikṣita* is an embryo. It, however, also facilitates his passage from the realm of man to that of the gods.' Cf. Kaelber 1978: 66 on the basis of ŚB(M) 3.2.1.6.

knowledge and creation both envisioned as involving the segmentation of reality. The *dīkṣita*'s prospect of using (albeit only provisionally) God's language and knowledge is perhaps to be understood against the background of the marvellous omniscience and omnipotence attributed to the inspired so-called 'wordsmiths,'<sup>59</sup> e.g. in ṚV 4.26, 10.71 and 10.129. In fact, the *dīkṣita*'s words are *satya* because of his specific vow, as explained both in AB 1.6 [10] (*dīkṣitena satyam eva vaditavyam*) and in KB 7.3 [11] (*sa yah satyaṃ vadati sa dīkṣate*). AB underlines the tight and exclusive interrelationship of the divine nature with truth (AB 1.6: *satyasamhitā vai devā, anṛtasamhitā manuṣyā iti*). Even more explicit is the following later Brāhmaṇa passage:

[31] ŚB(M) 1.1.1.4–5: [...] *satyām evā devā anṛtam manuṣyā idām aham anṛtāt satyam upaimīti tān manuṣyēbhyo devān upaiti. sa vai satyām evā vadet*

[...] And the Gods actually are the truth, and man is the untruth. Therefore, in saying 'I am now entering from untruth into truth,' he passes from mankind to the gods. Indeed, he should only speak what is the truth [...].<sup>60</sup>

Thus, *satya* is commonly out of the reach of human beings, except within the final gnostic salvation and at the time of the *dīkṣā*. Indeed, as in the case of the creative process consisting of the mere segmentation of reality, which only some *kavis* can achieve, the *dīkṣita*'s words are also necessarily followed by real consequences, generated by these words. For [11] the *dīkṣita*, language and truth itself are identified with the holy *vyāhṛti* (*eṣā ha tv eva vyāhṛtir dīkṣitavādaḥ satyam eva*), which elsewhere is a mystical utterance that creates the worlds. Consequently, the original image of 'visual omniscience' conveyed by *vicakṣaṇa*, which according to Gonda (1963: 193–194) was 'the specific attribute of deities,' is consistently associated with the *dīkṣita*. Therefore, it seems congruous that in our JB passage the *dīkṣita* is explicitly identified with the Sun, i.e.

<sup>59</sup> I.e. *brahmān, kavi, ṛṣi, vipra*: see Jamison and Brereton 2014: 25–26.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Kaelber (1978: 66): 'In the womb [...] the *dīkṣita* passes from death to immortality, from untruth to truth, from the impure (i.e. *a-medya*) to the pure (i.e. *medya*).' See also Thompson 1996: 152.

the main author of distinction of the parts, such as light and darkness.

The Sun's generative power — which includes providing people with food — seems to be highlighted by the two equivalences between *vicakṣaṇa* and *anna*, and between *vicakṣaṇa* and *mīthuna*.

[32] JB 2.54: [...] *tad u vā āhur vāg vāva dīkṣito vāg dīkṣā vāg idam sarvaṃ kṣiyati | vāci vāvedaṃ sarvaṃ kṣitam iti vāva tau tat samprocāte*.<sup>61</sup>

[...] Thus, they say: 'Language is indeed the consecrated one, language is the consecration, language consumes all this. These two people explain exactly thus: "All this is indeed consumed in the language".'<sup>62</sup>

The conclusion of the whole JB section devoted to the *dīkṣā* indeed seems to suggest that the so-called Vedic equivalences, the *upāsanas*, which are considered the main target of the Upaniṣads, might have been a crucial feature of the *dīkṣita*'s knowledge. In fact, the esoteric teaching given by Keśin Dārbhya consists of the action denoted by the verb *upa-ni-ṣad*:

[33] JB 2.68: [...] *eṣā vai kaisinī dīkṣā. etam ha keśi dārbhyo dīkṣām upaniṣasāda*.

This is indeed the Kaiśinī consecration. Keśin Dārbhya indeed explained the equivalences of this consecration.

The root noun matching this verb is the famous *upa-ni-ṣad*: in the epistemic context evoked by this verb the object of worship is in a certain sense replaced by another through a procedure which, according to Acharya's words (2017: 544), constitutes a specific 'genre of Vedic teaching.'<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> 'Keśin Dārbhya and the golden bird' are the two agents of the dual verbal form *samprocāte*.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Deeg's tr. (1995: 235): 'in der Rede eben is dies alles vernichtet.'

<sup>63</sup> Even the famous Upanisadic *neti neti* is an *ādeśa*, namely an apophatic teaching/replacement of the Brahman. See ŚB(M) 14.5.3.11 (= BĀU 2.3.6): *athāta ādeśo neti neti. na hy etāsmād iti nēty anyat pāram asty ātha nāmādhēyam. satyāsyā satyam iti. prāṇā vai satyaṃ, tēṣāṃ eṣā satyām*, 'Now the specific instruction [about the Brahman]: "not so, not so." There is nothing beyond this "not": and



[34] ŚB(M) 10.4.5.1: *āthādeśā upaniśādām. vāyūr agnir iti ha sākāyanīna ūpāsata ādityo 'gnir ity u haika āhuh.*

Now the specific instruction (*ādeśa*) of equivalences. Indeed, the Śākāyanins maintain that Agni is Vāyu, but some say that Agni is worshipped as Āditya.

Indeed such knowledge, whose object is *ṛta* itself, which 'defines what a being is or object is and what it does, and it structures the relationships of beings and objects with other beings and objects' (Jamison and Brereton 2014: 22), seems to endow the *dīkṣita* with the ability to recreate it, i.e. to make *satya* real. In order to account for such high knowledge and consequent power over perceptible reality, the language of poets has also to be tuned to such a network of recognized relationships.<sup>64</sup> In our JB section, in the 'upaniśads' taught by Keśin Dārbhya, there are also several equivalences, the most important being the following two, which immediately precede the questioned sentence *vicakṣaṇavatīm vācam vadati*. In the first [35], the systematic flux of equivalences starts from identifications of the *dīkṣita* (and parts of his body) with the sun to end with the *puruṣa*-in-the-eye (lit. the orbit):

[35] JB 2.62 *eṣa vāva dīkṣito ya eṣa tapati. sa eṣa indriyam jyaiṣṭhyam śraiṣṭhyam abhi dīkṣitah. tasya ye 'ruāñco raśmayas tāni śmaśrūṇi ya ūrdhvās te keśāh. ahorātre eva kṛṣṇājīnasya rūpam. ahar eva śuklasya rūpam rātriḥ kṛṣṇasya. atha yad etan maṇḍalam tā āpas tad annam tad amṛtam. tasminn etasmin maṇḍale tejomayaś chandomayah puruṣah. sa prāṇas sa indras sa prajāpatis sa dīkṣitah. tad etad dīkṣayaiva sam-grhītam*

The consecrated man is indeed he who gives heat. He is consecrated to power, pre-eminence, excellence. The rays which are turned downwards are the hairs of his beard and his locks are

this is the name: "something existing in the place of something existing" since that which exists consists of the vital functions, and this [Brahman] exists in the place of them.' Cf. TUp 1.11.4: *eṣa ādeśah. eṣa upadeśah. eṣā vedopaniśat. etad anuśāsanam. evam upāsitavyam. evam u caitad upāsyam*, 'This is the specific instruction, this is a teaching. This is a Vedic equivalence. This is the instruction. This has to be worshipped in this way.'

<sup>64</sup> See Radicchi (1961–1962: 109) who notices that sometimes 'truth' is not a good translation for *ṛtā*.

those which tend upwards. Day and night are indeed the visible appearance of his black antelope skin. The day is indeed the visible appearance of the white [part], the night that of the black one. Moreover, the orbit [of the Sun] is the waters and food is immortality. In this, which is the orbit, is the *puruṣa* made of shining energy and of metres. This breath is Indra, he is Prajāpati, he is the consecrated man. This is what is gathered by means of the consecration.

In the second [36], the motion goes the other way round starting from the identification with the *puruṣa*-in-the-eye and parts of the eye itself. The two homologies together thus indirectly construct a macro-equivalence between the *puruṣa*-in-the-sun and the *puruṣa*-in-the-eye, between the human and the celestial orbit, and they shed light on the well-known monistic belief in the *puruṣa* that inhabits every human being, i.e. on the Upaniśadic identity between the macrocosmic all-pervasive unique Brahman and the homologous microcosmic Ātman.

[36] JB 2.63: *udag u yajñīyam karma samtiṣṭhate. iti nv adhidevatam. athādhyātman. ayam eva dīkṣito yo 'yam cakṣuṣi puruṣah. tasya yāny arvāñci pakṣmāṇi<sup>65</sup> tāni śmaśrūṇi yāny ūrdhvāni te keśāh. yad eva śuklam ca kṛṣṇam ca tat kṛṣṇājīnasya rūpam. śuklam eva śuklasya rūpam kṛṣṇam kṛṣṇasya. atha yad etan maṇḍalam tā āpas tad annam tad amṛtam. tasminn etasmin maṇḍale tejomayaś chandomayah puruṣah. sa prāṇas sa indras sa prajāpatis sa dīkṣitah. sa haivamvid dīkṣamāṇo yathaivaiṣa etad indriyam jyaiṣṭhyam śraiṣṭhyam abhi dīkṣita evam evendriyam jyaiṣṭhyam śraiṣṭhyam abhi dīkṣito bhavati.<sup>66</sup>*

Turned upwards (to the North), the sacrificial action is successful. It is thus as far as the gods are concerned. As far as the self is concerned, this *puruṣa*-in-the-eye is indeed the consecrated man. The eyelashes turned downwards are the hairs of his beard, and those

<sup>65</sup> Ehlers 1988: 12 emended *pakṣāṇi* (Vira and Chandra 1954) by replacing it with *pakṣmāṇi*.

<sup>66</sup> The context is more oriented here to a warriors' cultural background. The emphasized goals are definitely secular. The lexicon occurring in this case is crucial in several Vedic versions of the *vrātyastoma* (see Candotti and Pontillo 2015: 169–75). Moreover, Vedic *śreṣṭha*/Pāli *setṭha* is recorded as a synonym for the masculine noun *brahmān* in the compound *brahmabhūta* which is assumed to convey a shared ancient warrior-ascetic purpose of immortality (see Neri and Pontillo 2016: 136–139).

turned upwards are his locks. What is white and what is black [in the eye] is the visible appearance of his antelope skin. The white appearance is indeed the white of the eye, and the black the black of the eye. Waters are the orbit and food is immortality. In this, which is the orbit, is the *puruṣa* made of shining energy and of metres. This breath is Indra, he is Prajāpati, he is the consecrated man. He who performs the *dikṣā* and knows this indeed, in exactly the same way as he who is actually consecrated to [achieve] power, pre-eminence, excellence, is consecrated to [achieve] power, pre-eminence, excellence.

[35] and [36] are indeed two extended homologies, similar to several other Vedic homologies, between ritual features and cosmic entities or natural phenomena, etc. They can be interpreted as a sort of *samastavastuviṣayarūpakas* ante-litteram,<sup>67</sup> in accordance with Witzel's 1979 thesis, and with fundamental inquiries such as Mylius (1968, 1976, 1977) and Schlerath (1986), which demonstrate the methodical character of Vedic identifications and their systematizing aim. At first the two matching wholes are enunciated, i.e. the *upameya* (the subject of comparison, also defined as 'first term of comparison') and the *upamāna* (the object of comparison, also defined as 'second term of comparison'), here the *dikṣita* and the sun or (the *puruṣa*-in)-the-eye, respectively, then the listing of the equivalent parts pertaining respectively to the two wholes takes place in a rigorously parallel fashion, targeted on illustrating their *tertium comparationis*. In fact, as already explained by Witzel 1996 (p. 175 n. 23; cf. Witzel 1979), these identifications, which are similes or rather metaphors, 'cover, in the ritual framework only, anything from partial to complete identity of the two entities.' The role of the essence of *upameya* is played by the shape of *upamāna* in the *rūpakas*, provided that the identity of features to which attention is paid is an object of direct perception, i.e. a *pratyakṣapramāṇa* fruit.

In our JB passage, these two broad *rūpakas* contribute to establish the specific features of the *dikṣita*, and above all of his language, beyond any reasonable doubt. At least temporarily, the *dikṣita* is a god-like being, who distinctly knows beings, objects, and their relationships, and he can affect them. As a consequence, his lan-

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Pontillo 2009.

guage actually clings to reality, and is also capable of enlightening other beings, thus it can consistently be called *vicakṣaṇavatī*.

In following the lexical thread of the terms *vicakṣaṇa/vicakṣaṇavat*, we hope we have at least partially recovered a more ancient — and closer-to-the-original — semantic layer of JB 2.64, thus providing a small-scale specimen of the specific plot and warp of the JB. This southern, and plausibly redactionally-late, Sāma-vedic Brāhmaṇa, in our opinion, may have preserved much more than its mere school affiliation and late age would at first sight suggest, a feature which it shares with other late sources from peripheral cultural areas, such as the Eastern White Yajurveda sources (see [26] and [31]). Indeed, we are persuaded that the nature of this text may be obscured by a reading that relies purely on the later Śrautasūtra paradigms or on a purely Śākhā-confined interpretation: both approaches would oversimplify it.

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*The Emotional and Aesthetic Experience of the Actor.  
Diderot's Paradoxe sur le comédien  
in Sanskrit Dramaturgy\**

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'Moins on sent, plus on fait sentir'  
Diderot, *Le paradoxe sur le comédien*

'Everyone at every minute of his life must feel something.  
Only the dead have no sensations.'  
Konstantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*

The figure, role and personal experience of the actor have been the object of practical and theoretical scrutiny across latitudes and cultures since the very beginning of the various dramaturgical traditions across the globe. Famously enough, with regard to the actor's emotional involvement within the enactment of the play, the positions at the two extremes are represented by Diderot's paradigmatic refusal of any affective relation of the actor to the

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