

On Presenting Characters and the Representation of Persons

**A Narratological Study of Characters in Narrative Suttas
of the Majjhima Nikāya**

Inaugural-Dissertation
zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde
der
Philosophischen Fakultät
der
Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität
zu Bonn
vorgelegt von

Bruno Galasek

aus
Dernbach

Bonn 2016

Gedruckt mit der Genehmigung der Philosophischen Fakultät
der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn

Zusammensetzung der Prüfungskommission:

Prof. Dr. Stephan Conermann, Institut für Orient- und Asienwissenschaften, Abteilung für Islamwissenschaften

(Vorsitzender)

Prof. Dr. Konrad Klaus, Institut für Orient- und Asienwissenschaften, Abteilung für Indologie

(Betreuer/Gutachter)

Prof. Dr. Peter Schwieger, Institut für Orient- und Asienwissenschaften, Abteilung für Tibetologie

(Gutachter)

Prof. Dr. Julia A. B. Hegewald, Institut für Orient- und Asienwissenschaften, Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte

(weiteres prüfungsberechtigtes Mitglied)

Tag der mündlichen Prüfung: 6. September 2013

“Life is a series of interwoven stories, not a set of concepts. Ideas are generalizations, always some distance from the truth. A story, with its array of meanings and richness of detail, is recognizably much closer to real life. That is why we relate more easily to stories than to abstract theories. We love a good yarn.”

(Ajahn Brahm 2005: xvii)

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Part I.....	14
1. Persons – East and West.....	15
1.1 The Problem of Personal Identity (PI) and the Buddhist Philosophical View of Persons	22
1.2 “Selfless Persons” or Impersonal Selves? Is the ‘Eastern Self’ peculiar?	33
Part II	50
2. Narratology	51
2.1 Focalization	58
3. Narratology of Characters	62
3.1 ‘Basis type’	64
3.2 Theories of Characters	66
3.3 Characterisation.....	73
3.4 James Phelan’s rhetorical approach to characters: <i>Reading People, Reading Plots</i>	84
Part III.....	92
The presentation of characters in selected <i>Suttas</i> of the <i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>	93
4. The presentation of characters in the <i>Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta</i> (MN 81).....	94
4.1 Introduction	94
4.2 The Commentary.....	95
4.3 Content of the <i>sutta</i> & narrative structure	97
4.4 Comparison with the <i>Jyotipāla Sūtra, Mahāvastu</i>	111

4.5 “Ur- <i>Jātaka</i> ”	114
4.6 Narrative Progression.....	115
4.7 Character analysis	119
4.8 Interpretation	150
4.9 Conclusion.....	154
5. The Presentation of Characters in the <i>Āṅgulimāla Sutta</i> (MN 86)	161
5.1 Introduction & the Commentaries.....	161
5.2 Content of the <i>sutta</i> & its Narrative Structure	163
5.3 Richard Gombrich: “Who was <i>Āṅgulimāla</i> ?”.....	183
5.4 Monika Zin.....	188
5.5 A Critical Verse.....	202
5.6 A “paper-being” named <i>Āṅgulimāla</i>	215
5.7 Internal Focalization.....	225
5.8 Conclusion and Prospects	235
6. The presentation of characters in the <i>Piyajātika Sutta</i> (MN 87).....	239
6.1 Introduction	239
6.2 The Commentary.....	240
6.3 Content of the <i>sutta</i> & its Narrative Structure:	243
6.4 “ <i>Leitmotivik</i> ” and the characterisation of the Buddha.....	252
6.5 The Embedded Narrative	260
6.6 The Householder (<i>gahapati</i>) (MN I 339-413)	261
6.7 Narrative progression: ‘Mimetic dimension’ and ‘thematic functions’	272
6.8 The Gamblers:.....	278
6.9 Queen Mallikā.....	281
6.10 The ‘Brahmin’ <i>Nālijaṅgha</i>	286

6.11 Pasenadi.....	288
6.12 Interpretation	290
6.13 Conclusion.....	292
7. Conclusion	294
7.1 Individuality and focalisation.....	297
7.2 The Nature of the Characters	305
Bibliography	309
Abbreviations	309
Bibliography.....	310

Introduction

Beginning in *medias res*:

In the *Cūḷataṇhāsāṅkhaya Sutta* (MN 37), Sakka (= Skt. Indra), king of the gods, gets straight to the point – for kings, and even more so kings of the gods, have much to do and are chronically short of time – by asking the Buddha: “Venerable sir, how in brief is a [monk] liberated in the destruction of craving, one who has reached the ultimate end, the ultimate security from bondage, the ultimate holy life, the ultimate goal, one who is foremost among gods and humans?”¹

While the Buddha is explaining, one of the Buddha’s most prominent disciples, Mahā Moggallāna accidentally eavesdrops on their conversation. Since the Buddha and his disciples are always intent on helping others on the spiritual path and gods are generally known for their poor receptiveness, Mahā Moggallāna decides to test Sakka on his understanding of the Buddha’s lesson:

- “5. Now on that occasion the venerable Mahā Moggallāna was sitting not far from the Blessed One. Then he considered: ‘Did that spirit penetrate to the meaning of the Blessed One’s words when he rejoiced, or did he not? [**Ascription of psychological state.**] Suppose I found out whether he did or not.’
6. Then, just as quickly as a strong man extended his flexed arm or flexed his extended arm, the venerable Mahā Moggallāna vanished from the Palace of Migāra’s Mother in the Eastern Park and appeared among the gods of the Thirty-three. Now on that occasion Sakka, ruler of the gods, was furnished and endowed a hundredfold with the five kinds of heavenly music, and he was enjoying it in the Pleasure Park of the Single Lotus. [**Character sketch – gods like to distract themselves by enjoying sense pleasures.**] When he saw the venerable Mahā Moggallāna coming in the distance, he dismissed the music, went to the venerable Mahā Moggallāna, and said to him: ‘Come, good sir Moggallāna! Welcome, good sir Moggallāna! It is long sir Moggallāna, since you found an opportunity to come here. Sit down, good sir Moggallāna; this seat is ready.’ The venerable Mahā Moggallāna sat down on the seat made ready, and Sakka took a low seat and sat down at one side [**Character sketch – Buddhist monks (in this particular case just a certain one) are superior to the highest gods and even venerated by them.**] The venerable Mahā Moggallāna then asked him:
8. ‘Kosiya, how did the Blessed One state to you in brief deliverance in the destruction of craving? It would be good if we might also get to hear that statement.’ ‘Good sir Moggallāna, we are so busy, we have so much to do, not only with our own business, but also with the business of the gods of the

¹ MN I 251: *Kittāvatā nu kho, bhante, bhikkhu saṅkhittena taṇhāsāṅkhayavimutto hoti accantaniṭṭho accantayogakkhemī accantabrahmacārī accantapariyosāno seṭṭho devamanussānanti?* Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001, 344.

Thirty-three. [**Confirmation of the earlier narratorial character sketch – gods are busy and therefore distracted.**] Besides, good Moggallāna, what was well heard, well learned, well attended to, well remembered, suddenly vanished from us. Good sir Moggallāna, it once happened that war broke out between the gods and the titans. In that war the gods won and the titans were defeated. When I had won that war and returned from it as a conqueror, I had the Vejayanta Palace Built. Good sir Moggallāna, the Vejayanta Palace has a hundred towers, and each tower has seven hundred upper chambers, and each tower has seven nymphs and each nymph has seven maids. Would you like to see the loveliness of the Vejayanta Palace, good sir Moggallāna? [**Gods are not only distracted, they also tend to forget easily, and then try also to distract others.**] The venerable Mahā Moggallāna consented in silence.

9. Then Sakka, ruler of gods, and the divine King Vessavana went to the Vejayanta Palace, giving precedence to the venerable Mahā Moggallāna. When the maids of Sakka saw the venerable Mahā Moggallāna coming in the distance, they were embarrassed and ashamed and they went each into their own rooms. Just as a daughter-in-law is embarrassed and ashamed on seeing her father-in-law, so too, when the maids of Sakka saw the venerable Mahā Moggallāna coming, they were embarrassed and ashamed, and they went each into their own rooms [**Ascription of psychological state.**]

10. Then Sakka, ruler of gods, and the divine King Vessavana had the venerable Mahā Moggallāna walk all over and explore the Vejayanta Palace: ‘See, good sir Moggallāna, this loveliness of the Vejayanta Palace! See, good sir Moggallāna, this loveliness Vejayanta Palace!’ ‘It does the venerable Kosiya credit as one who has formerly made merit; and whenever human beings see anything lovely, they say: “Sirs, it does credit to the gods of the Thirty-three!’ It does the venerable Kosiya credit as one who has formerly made merit.’”

11. Then the venerable Mahā Moggallāna considered thus: ‘This spirit is living much too negligently. What if I stirred up a sense of urgency in him?’ [**Ascription of psychological state**] Then the venerable Mahā Moggallāna performed such a feat of supernormal power that with the point of his toe he made the Vejayanta Palace shake and quake and tremble.² [**Mahā Moggallāna possesses (odd) supernormal powers – he can shake palaces with merely one toe!**] Sakka and the Divine King Vessavana and the gods of the Thirty-three were filled with wonder and amazement, and they said: ‘Sirs, it is wonderful, it is marvelous, what power and might the recluse has, that with the point of his toe he makes the heavenly region shake and quake and tremble!’

12. When the venerable Mahā Moggallāna knew that Sakka, ruler of gods, was stirred to a sense of urgency with his hair standing on end [**Ascription of psychological state**], he asked him: ‘Kosiya,

² Cp. also the *Māratajjanīya Sutta* (MN I 337f.) and the references to the SN 51.14 (= V 269f.) and MN 37 (*Cūḷatanhāsankhaya Sutta*), the last mentioned of which is our passage here, when Mahā Moggallāna shakes the Vejayanta palace with his big toe. In general, the *Māratajjanīya Sutta* (MN 50) is an interesting source in connection with the characterisation of Mahā Moggallāna.

how did the Blessed One state to you in brief deliverance in the destruction of craving? It would be good if we might also get to hear that statement.’

‘Good sir Moggallāna, I went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, I stood at one side and said: “Venerable sir, how in brief is a bhikkhu liberated in the destruction of craving, one who has reached the ultimate end, the ultimate goal, one who is foremost among gods and humans?” [...; **here follows a repetition of the content of the Buddha’s earlier teaching.**] That is how the Blessed One stated to me in brief deliverance in the destruction of craving, good sir Moggallāna.’

13. Then the venerable Mahā Moggallāna delighted and rejoiced in the words of Sakka, ruler of gods. Then just as quickly as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm, he vanished from the gods of the thirty-three and appeared in the Eastern Park in the Palace of Migāra’s Mother.

14. Then, soon after the venerable Mahā Moggallāna had gone, the attendants of Sakka, ruler of gods, asked him: ‘Good sir, was that your teacher, the Blessed One?’ – ‘No, good sirs, that was not my teacher, the Blessed One. That was one of my companions in the holy life, the venerable Maha Moggallana.’ – ‘Good sir, it is a gain for you that your companion in the holy life is so powerful and mighty. Oh, how much more so must be the Blessed One, your teacher!’”³

To begin with, this book is not about gods (although a lot can certainly be said about gods in the Pāli Canon.⁴) It is about humans. In the above example, I have marked and spelled out those characterization statements about a god (*deva*) named Sakka – who appears quite human-like – that were made by others, directly or indirectly in order to describe him, or those that can be inferred from his own statements. Many, many more qualifications could be identified. My point here is to illustrate the possibilities that lie dormant, as it were, of analyzing the different characters that are presented in the texts that constitute the basis of the only surviving school of early Buddhism, the Theravāda or “Doctrine of the Elders”. How this can be undertaken in a more systematic way will be the subject of Part II.

The texts that I am concerned with here are found in the so-called Pāli Canon.⁵ This Canon consists in the thematically arranged “three baskets” (*tipiṭaka*), which is in fact the indigenous appellation for the Pāli Canon. The first of these “baskets”, the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, contains the rules regulating all aspects of the monastic life. The third, or the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* (literally

³ Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2009: 345-347.

⁴ There is a very interesting study on descriptions and the role of gods in the *Sutta Piṭaka* by M. M. J. Marasinghe (2009).

⁵ The following is based on von Hinüber 1996: §§6-10 and chapter II.2. Cp. *ibid.* for more details.

the basket of the “things relating to the teachings”), largely contains lists (*mātikā*) and all kinds of systematisations of the material found in the second basket of the Dhamma (*Sutta Piṭaka*), which – from an *Abhidhamma* point of view – presents the Buddha’s teachings “by way of analogy” (*pariyāyena*).⁶ The *Sutta Piṭaka*, in turn, is subdivided into five divisions called *Nikāyas* (*Dīgha-*, *Majjhima-*, *Samyutta-*, *Aṅguttara-*, and *Khuddaka Nikāya*), to which different organising principles apply, such as the length of the individual texts, called *suttas* (*dīgha* means “long”, and *majjhima* “middle”; the *Khuddaka Nikāya* contains a wide range of very diverse texts), or numerical principles. Here, I am concerned with the *Majjhima Nikāya*, which itself contains no less than 153 “middle length” *suttas*.

In Part III, I present analyses of three of those *suttas*, the *Ghaṭikāra Sutta* (MN 81), the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* (MN 86), and the *Piyajātika Sutta* (MN 87). It is important to know that the *suttas* constitute anonymous literature, i.e. they do not have a single author but have been collectively gathered, recited, redacted, and preserved by the community of monks (*bhikkhu-saṅgha*) over a long period of time, before they were finally written down sometime during the first century B.C. in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, the tradition of oral transmission continued, and continues to exist up to the present day, alongside the developing literate culture. The so-called Dharma-reciters (*dhammabhāṇakas*) were groups or individuals who secured oral transmission of the texts word for word and were responsible for the transmission of a certain collection which they learned by heart. However, when I refer to the *suttas* as texts, I am always referring to the written word, although, in principle, that would not make much of a difference for the modes of analysis that I apply.

Furthermore, extensive commentaries on the Pāli Canon were composed, whose author, Buddhaghosa, presumably lived in the 5th century in South India.⁷ Although occasionally I do refer to the commentaries, my main focus is the *suttas* themselves.

The Pāli language was not the language the Buddha spoke (which exactly, however, we do not know for certain). Pāli was most probably a kind of *lingua franca* among early Buddhists,

⁶ Cp. PED, s.v. *pariyāya*: “5. in Abhidhamma terminology, specifically: *pariyāyena*, the mode of teaching in the Suttanta, ad hominem, discursively, applied method, illustrated discourse, figurative language as opposed to the abstract, general statements of Abhidhamma = *nipariyāyena*, *nipariyāyato* Vism 473, 499; cp. DhsA 317 (figuratively).”

⁷ Cp. von Hinüber 1996: §207.

specifically used to preserve the Buddha's teachings. Thus while most of the texts are presumably very old, their linguistic form is not, and they look back on a long period of revision that started with the first Buddhist Council shortly after the Buddha's death.

The *suttas* of the *Sutta Piṭaka* collectively project a world with its landscape (mountains and rivers), its country areas/provinces (*janapadā*), kingdoms (*vijita*)⁸ and states (*raṭṭhā*), cities (*nagarā*), market-towns (*nigamā*), and villages (*gāmā*), all enlivened by its people, while each *sutta*, with its special incidents and events, serves as a window to that world. This world becomes only fully 'alive', however, *after* having read a whole collection (and only after some time during which one gradually becomes familiar with it), and it then seems to live a life of its own. In other words, the world of the Pāli *suttas* appears to exist independently of the texts, indicated by the fact that books have been written that reconstruct the life of the Buddha about the social structure of ancient Northeast India and about Buddha's disciples, whose life stories can only be reconstructed as collections of life-events by drawing from different collections within the Canon. Even maps have been drawn on the basis of the canonical texts depicting possible itineraries of the Buddha in historical Northeast India.⁹ The view that the world of the *suttas* during the reception process starts to live a life of its own, to a certain degree departing from and becoming independent from the text of particular *suttas* (because we can speak of the "inventory" of the world of the *suttas* without always having recourse to the particular text or passage), would be the perspective of the student of narrative theory. The view, on the other hand, that this world was already in existence before it was preserved (with what intention, though, must perhaps remain largely obscure) through the production of (oral or written) natural narratives about it, is the view of the historian. Most scholars of Pāli or early Buddhism in general regard themselves as historians and they either delve into the content of the texts in order to reconstruct the social, religious, and/or historical realities at the time of the Buddha, or they retrace the history of the texts themselves. For example, scholars employ the historical-critical method when they have reasonable suspicion as to whether received texts with a long history of transmission are 'trustworthy', unaltered sources for the knowledge of past times (which is, in fact, the case with most if not all

⁸ Note, however, that in ancient India kings ruled over people, not territory, so that the kingdom strictly speaking cannot be regarded as an "entity" of its own, independent of its social structure/content.

⁹ Cp. e.g. Fick 1974; Nyanaponika & Hecker, Helmuth 2000; Ānandajyoti Bhikkhu 2008 (<http://www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net/Maps/MP-index.htm>).

of the texts Classical Indologists deal with). Nevertheless, in more recent buddhological scholarship, more and more criticism is being voiced that questions the assumption that what Jonathan S. Walters has called “historical source mode” reading of the *suttas* is the only possible reading mode to make sense of early Buddhist texts. Even if we succeed in delimiting and contextualising a text or certain passages historically, still essential questions remain. Walters writes:

“Yet fixing the text at an early period does not in itself yield any significant historical information. If in fact in this instance we can circumvent the doubts raised about the antiquity of the *suttas* en bloc, we are still left with the question of how the autobiographical fragment ought to be interpreted. Within ‘historical source mode,’ the next move would be to ask whether the narrative as such can be taken as ‘accurate,’ a designation requiring that the reported information be the result of eye-witness observation and ‘objective’ recording. Here the problems inherent in ‘historical source mode’ are not so easily overcome.”¹⁰

Walters, after declaring the death of the 18th century’s “historical source mode” of reading of Pāli *suttas* as ‘quarries’ of history-bits and pieces cobbled together over time by more or less capable redactors, argues for other ways instead to read Pali *suttas* that could still be profitable for the historian of religion.¹¹ He then describes three modes of reading as alternatives to “historical source mode” reading. “Text of its day mode”, as expounded mainly by Greg Bailey, Walters argues, acts on the assumption that although the early Buddhist *suttas* are not to be read as historical documents, they yet betray, by way of reflexion, aspects of the social reality at the times of the historical Buddha. In this case, the way the texts describe or speak about different social groups, such as Brahmins, Ājīvikas, Jains etc., attests for the initial rivalry between the Buddha and adherents/exponents of Brahminism and/or other ascetic traditions of the time.¹² The “text as a whole mode”¹³, as whose main exponent Walters identifies Steven Collins, regards the *suttas* a priori as wholes, i.e. coherent texts. This reading shifts the focus of enquiry to the literary quality and the narrative aspects of the *suttas* because it presumes – quite plausibly – that, put simply, the form of the *suttas* as we now have them is the result of a purposeful act¹⁴ on the side

¹⁰ Walters 1999: 256.

¹¹ Cp. Walters 1999.

¹² Cp. *ibid.*: 259-266.

¹³ Cp. *ibid.*: 266-272.

¹⁴ However, Collins assesses the influence of the Theravāda tradition in Ceylon on the Pāli Canon much higher than other, more ‘conservative’ scholars, e.g. Richard Gombrich; cp. Collins 1990.

of the early compilers/editors/narrators/composers of the *suttas* (this is, however, a difficult point, because our concrete knowledge about how the *suttas* might have come into existence is not solved yet, and perhaps never will be, because it is shrouded in the mist of ancient history and tradition). Walters argues that Collins's opinions are equally relevant for later readers because the (assumed) deliberate and conscious employment of literary devices, frames, internal structuring, and ornamentation, which, as given phenomena in a certain text can objectively be analysed, and that they convey a certain message that is independent, or which, at least, can be retrieved independently, of the (socio-) historical context of the time of the composition/edition of the text.¹⁵ Finally, there is "Later reading mode"¹⁶, exemplified by Anne Blackburn's "reconstruction of eighteenth century monastic education through an examination of the holdings in period temple libraries"¹⁷: While clearly favouring the "text of its day" and the "text as a whole" modes over the "historical source mode", Walters still makes out an important drawback even in these more refined modes that shifted their focus of attention carefully "from reading to readership", and that is the problem of the historical reader. At the end of the day, the historian Walters points out concernedly, that it is still the scholar who 'pulls all the strings' of the texts; his or her act of interpreting is still the foundation for all conclusions about readership and social and/or historical context – for how could we know how the *suttas* were read or received?¹⁸ Walters therefore favours a fourth mode of reading, which still pursues the question about historical readership, but on the grounds of existing evidence. He then proposes three such kinds of evidence: manuscripts, supplementation, and commentaries. From among these, manuscripts themselves, and manuscript catalogues, can give important clues as to the popularity, use, and distribution of certain texts.

The problem with the *suttas* is, it seems, that in the long history of pre-modern South- and Southeast Asian Theravāda rather "the idea of the Pāli Canon" (= Collins 1990) existed – although enormous effort went into preserving the (written) texts, most of the *suttas* were probably

¹⁵ Walters then presents an analysis of the structure of the famous *Ariyapariyesana Sutta* (MN 26), containing an important autobiographical fragment of the Buddha's life that reveals an intricate symmetrical inner structure of the *sutta*, in which the inner autobiographical account of the *sutta* thematically (and artistically) mirrors the outer narrative communication situation, and also leaps over into the external, real communication situation.

¹⁶ Cp. Walters 1999: 272-282.

¹⁷ Ibid.: 273.

¹⁸ Cp. *ibid.*: 272.

not intensively studied or even read much as parts of the monks' curricula. For that purpose, compilations like the 'Book of Protection' (sinh. *Pirit Potha/Catubhanvara*) were used in pre-modern times. With supplementation Walters describes a way of compiling bits and pieces from different sources, e.g. in order to produce a biography, which is based on the "historical source mode". The Buddha's biography, with which many are familiar nowadays, is a strange breed indeed. Jonathan Walters has neatly described and summarised the process of its materialization for us:

"In terms of supplementation, [...] many later Buddha biographies – even all later Buddha biographies, including scholarly reconstructions – implicitly and often explicitly draw on NQ [= "Noble Quest", i.e. the Ariyapariyesana Sutta, MN 26] as their source. In this sense, 'historical source mode' – namely, extracting chosen bits of the biographical fragment and supplementing them with other sorts of evidence, pertinent or not – is merely the most recent contribution to a long-standing literary tradition."¹⁹

A full-blown consistent Buddha-biography is alien to the oldest layers of the Pāli Canon. The genre biography was not known in ancient India, least of all perhaps at the times of the historical Buddha (ca. 5th century B.C.). Nonetheless, biographies of Buddhism's founder have repeatedly been compiled from the bits and pieces scattered throughout the canonical texts from early on (by the commentator(s) on the Theravāda Canon) up to the present day.²⁰ This "tradition of supplementation", as Walters calls it, was in a similar way masterly employed in a book by Hellmuth Hecker and the Ven. Nyanaponika Thera about the twenty-four most important disciples of the Buddha.²¹ With no intention to downplay the merits or the extraordinary scholarship of this book, the biographies published by Hellmuth Hecker and the Ven. Nyanaponika are something of a fantasy, created to suit the needs and expectations of a certain audience (and not necessarily a modern audience, as we can probably deduce from the stock description of the main qualities of the different disciples in the *Etadagga-vagga* (AN 1.14 (*Ekanipāta*)).

The commentarial tradition then, Walters states, "is intended to transmit just *how* one is supposed to read the original".²² The commentaries on each *sutta* by Buddhaghosa, which are of

¹⁹ Walters 1999: 274.

²⁰ Cp. von Hinüber 1996: §66, for the elements scattered in the MN which presumably provided the building blocks for all later Buddha 'biographies' found in the Canon (as to that, cp. also *ibid.* §§95, 111, 235, 284, and 391sq.).

²¹ Cp. Nyanaponika & Hecker 2000.

²² Walters 1999: 278; cp. also pp. 272-282.

course taken as authoritative by the later Theravāda tradition, provide us with evidence as to how the respective *sutta* should ordinarily be understood. But, Walters notes, reading Buddhaghosa's commentaries it soon becomes clear how much his (Buddhaghosa's) agenda differs from our own. For example, Buddhaghosa's reading of the autobiographical fragment contained in the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*, which he supplements with all the elements that make for a docetic Buddha figure, rather reflects an "advanced Buddhology" that contrasts starkly with a modern reading which is – more or less consciously – influenced by 'secular humanism', i.e. the wish or want to find evidence for the human face of the Buddha, which, according to Walters and others, clearly shines through in the autobiographical fragment, the most ancient kernel of the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*. Buddhaghosa's 'reading mode', according to Walters, is rather a "text as a whole" mode. However, his reading can often strike one as "odd", an impression which alone reflects the very different thought-world in which he was living. However, Walters adds for our consideration that since Buddhaghosa was considerably closer to a presumed originary moment of the *suttas* than we are, his readings should at least – even if they seldom convince us of his interpretation – "serve to check our assumption that we can just pick up a *sutta* and 'get it'".²³ All of this illustrates how delicate the questions of understanding are with regard to the literary heritage of a temporally and culturally distant past, a problem which can be expected also to affect the presentation of characters in those same texts.

One of the observations that initiated the idea for the present study was that the stories and descriptions in the Pāli *suttas* leave the engaged listener/reader²⁴ with an aftervision of sorts of the characters and the situations depicted. Mostly, we can very well remember the plot and, as popular works like the above mentioned Ven. Nyanaponika's and Helmuth Hecker's *Great Disciples of the Buddha* (2000) show, main or characteristic attributes of the character's acting in them (like Mahā Moggallāna's in the above example). This is true for the reading of literature like novels and it is one of literature's primary appeals. It is all the more surprising, then, that

²³ Cp. *ibid.*: 282.

²⁴ By juxtaposing the alternatives listener/reader in the following, I am trying to account for the origin of the *suttas* in a culture of oral transmission. According to tradition, the *suttas* were written down sometime in the first century B.C. in the kingdom of Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, the oral transmission continued parallel to book culture and reading up to the present day. I dislike the translation "hearer" for P. *sāvaka* that is often used in connection with the *suttas* (probably to render the original Pāli word *sāvaka* used for the original disciples of the Buddha) – I am a 'hearer' of lift music (because I cannot escape from it!).

this seems also to be true for a literature whose formulaic nature has often been stressed and analysed²⁵, and that in earlier times was even disesteemed as “literature” for its “immature style” (Hermann Oldenberg). I propose that there is much more to and about these texts than the fact that they consist of formulas and formulaic building blocks. There was apparently always room for variations and, say, creative uses of formulas, as Greg Bailey and Ian Mabbett have also observed:

“The meal narrative just summarized is highly structured and quite repetitive in narrative sequence and language, a feature it shares with the other examples of the genre. **But whilst it is important to be aware of the structural aspects of the narrative, our task must be to penetrate beneath these virtually formalized features to discover the high emotion and excitement that must have accompanied the actual event** of the meal.”²⁶

Besides that, the famous word applies here that the finger pointing to the moon is not the moon. Texts are multi-layered, more or less complex signifiers, not identical with the signified. It takes some imagination to make sense of them. This creative or active imagination, however, is not necessarily over-active imagination – it is inherent in human beings. (Post-) modern narratology makes allowance for different varieties of this phenomenon and aims to describe and analyse as accurately as possible not only the structure and functions of texts, but also the role of the readers/recipients and their “system of presuppositions” (Ger. *Voraussetzungssystem*) that she brings into the reception process.

Coming back to our example from the beginning, passages like these have most probably already early within the Buddhist tradition(s) led to such “petrified” characterization statements, independent from their original occurrence in a concrete text, and known by every student of Buddhism, as this: “Mahā Moggallāna, master of magical powers”.²⁷ What is more, close reading with a view to finding out how characters are presented and characterised in a certain text or a passage, can already bring to the fore a range of characterisation statements, which can then be

²⁵ Cp. Mark Allon’s excellent study on the *Style and Function* of Pāli texts (1997), and the references therein, especially the general Introduction, pp. 4-7.

²⁶ Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 241; my emphasis.

²⁷ The *Etadaggavagga* of the AN (I 23-27) contains seven subchapters that enumerate and mention the Buddha’s foremost disciples and describe their special abilities/spiritual characteristics with a catchphrase, e.g.: “Bhikkhus, the foremost of my bhikkhu disciples among those with psychic potency [*iddhimantānaṃ*] is Mahā-Moggallāna.” Tr. Bhikkhu Bodhi 2012: 109.

analysed with regard to their content, ordered with regard to their significance, brought in relation with other statements or other characters, synthesised (or not) into a coherent (or incoherent) picture of a character, and many more operations.

From another, equally interesting point of view, conversations of humans with gods in ordinary, everyday language naturally raises the question about ancient Indian/Buddhist worldviews and cosmology, as well as about the nature of the beings inhabiting the different planes of existence and their relationship with the human realm. While important discussions have been held, and publications exist, about “Miracles and superhuman powers in South and Southeast Asian Buddhist traditions”²⁸, my treatment of the depiction of such phenomena in the Pāli Canon shall be narratological in this book. I will treat it as part of the inherent rules of the narrated or story-world instead of asking at every turn whether the event is realistically possible or not and welcoming each positive answer as historical fact and each negative one as forgery and fiction (which is one of the arguments in the historical-critical method applied to the Pāli *suttas*, which seeks to stratify the textual material into older and younger contents in order to ultimately arrive at the oldest ascertainable form of Buddhism). In the world of the Pāli *suttas* themselves, however, plain and simple, “[i]t is widely accepted [...], Bhāradvāja, that there are gods”²⁹, as the Buddha has allegedly stated – whether it could be proven to be equivalent with historical reality or not for that matter is irrelevant.³⁰ The aim of this book, in which the *suttas* of the Pāli Canon are, for the time being, regarded as coherent, intentional structures of meaning, is to describe, analyse, interpret, the specific ways in which characters are presented in some selected narrative *suttas* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, and how this may contribute to our understanding of the texts themselves.

I have no expertise in Analytic (or any other, for that matter) Philosophy. Nonetheless, I could not withstand the temptation of poking my head into the hornets’ nest of the problems concerning concepts of persons, self-theories and personal identity – all areas of research that have more recently, again it seems, attracted the attention of scholars working in the (conjoint) fields

²⁸ Cp. JIABS 2010 (2011): “Contributions to a panel at the XVth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, Atlanta, 23–28 June 2008” (Guest editor: David V. Fiordalis). Excellent explanations on Buddhist cosmology can be found in many of the more recent translations of the *Sutta Piṭaka*, e.g. Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000 & 2012, or Walshe 1987. Therefore, I will not go into details here.

²⁹ Saṅgāra Sutta, MN II 213,6f.: *Ucce sammataṃ kho etaṃ, Bhāradvāja, lokasmīṃ yadidaṃ atthi deva ti.*

³⁰ We will see later also that according to the Buddhist conception of the universe, i.e. from an emic viewpoint, that gods are generally seen as representing one of three possible types of individuality (*attabhāva*).

of Analytic Philosophy and Buddhist Studies. There can be no doubt that a relationship exists between the way characters are depicted in the *suttas* and probable historical and/or Buddhist concepts of the person. The exact nature of this relationship, however, is difficult to describe or define, and caution should be exercised in drawing a direct connecting line between these two things. Nevertheless, such an inquiry was necessary in order to clarify my own point of view, which means, becoming aware of and reflecting on my own “baggage” or *Voraussetzungssystem*, i.e. the system of presuppositions with which one approaches the legacy of other cultures. What is said about this in Part I, is nothing really new. I have mainly drawn information and inspiration from Steven Collins’s classic *Selfless Persons*, a book written by Raymond Martin and John Barresi, *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self*, which tells the fascinating story of the history of the concept of personal identity in Western civilization beginning with the ancient Greeks, and also Melford Spiro (1993), who has contributed with a thought-provoking essay to the question as to whether the ‘Western Self’ is a peculiar concept among the world’s cultures.

Characters are an integral and constituting part of literature and narrative. Imagine a narrative without people acting physically, verbally, and/or mentally. Surprisingly, the study of characters in the Pāli Canon seems to be a rather neglected field of research within the study of early Buddhism³¹, apart, perhaps, from the study of the historical Buddha, on whom a lot has been written from earliest times. Even so, what seems to be lacking most, are methodically guided and theory-based studies on the nature of characters in the Pāli Canon.³² Generally speaking, research about early Buddhism as embodied in the Pāli Canon (especially the *Sutta Piṭaka*) has concentrated much more on the doctrinal or the presumed historical contents of the *suttas* in lieu of the persons/characters, who are, however, an equally important part of the signifying structure of the *suttas*. Thus, this book aims to make sense of three individual *suttas* from the *Majjhima Nikāya* through the lens of the characters depicted therein.

³¹ In the American tradition of Buddhological scholarship, this term, if referring to an ‘original’ set of Buddhist teachings, is itself considered somewhat outdated; cp. Walters 1999: 248: “[...] I think it fair to say that among contemporary historians of the Theravāda there has been a marked shift away from attempting to say much of anything at all about ‘early Buddhism.’ Whereas earlier scholars tended to ignore post-Aśokan Buddhist history as corrupt, more recent scholars have tended to regard early Buddhist history as unknowable.” However, it ought to be considered that while this description may be true for (Anglo-)American scholarship, it can by no means said to be true for the entire ‘Buddhological world’. Many scholars standing in the Continental-European tradition still tend to separate the form from the content of the *suttas*.

³² That seems even to be true still for the Pāli Canon on the whole; cp. von Hinüber 1996: 1: “A second difficulty is the lack of adequate research on the subject [of Pāli literature, B.G.], and the last, but by no means less serious one is the **absence of any theory** suiting the needs of studying and describing Pāli literature.”

Part II introduces the discipline of narratology, which means that we will leave the path of traditional Buddhological or Indological scholarship for a brief moment and explore new territory and reach a new viewpoint. From there, I invite the reader to look at the characters populating the *suttas* anew. After a very brief overview over that branch of narratology which may be called applied narratology, which is very much dependent on the analytical tools provided by the French literary critic Gérard Genette to analyse the so-called ‘discourse-level’ of narratives, the work of two leading narrative theorists is introduced, whose analytical tools and models of literary characters I apply to the *suttas*: Uri Margolin and James Phelan.

Part III, which is really the heart of this study, presents the application of the methods introduced in Part II to the analysis and interpretation of the three above-mentioned *suttas* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* (MN 81), the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* (MN 86), and the *Piyajātika Sutta* (MN 87).

The Conclusion brings together the findings from Part III with what was said concerning the Pāli *suttas*’s underlying models and concepts of persons in Part I, and presents a summary of the characteristic way in which characters are presented and persons are represented in the *suttas*.

Part I

1. Persons – East and West

“What, monks, is the carrier of the load? ‘Person’ (puggala), it should be said. Carrier of the load, monks, is called this venerable monk here of such name and such clan.”³³

Historians, translators, literary scholars, and everybody else who works with texts that were produced in the distant past and/or in a culture that is different from one’s own (or in a language that is different from the one that one uses to describe them), face one common problem: they often have to operate with terms and categories anachronistically. They thereby use concepts and notions loaded with their own intellectual history to describe the objects they are studying. The question which then arises is, how best may scholars avoid superimposing ideas and concepts which are alien to that other culture’s ideas and concepts? I believe this can be achieved by self-reflection to the best of one’s ability.

Part of the difficulty of comparing different notions of self and person in different cultures and times, then, is without doubt the very different usage – or, in this case, the referent – of the respective designations. As John Barresi and Raymond Martin write in *The Oxford Handbook Self*:

“In philosophical theory, as well as in common parlance, the words self and person are often used interchangeably, usually, but not always, in an effort to express the same idea.”³⁴

Yet, for a number of reasons, it is necessary for us to arrive at a clear distinction between these two notions, and Buddhist thought has succeeded in achieving this in an interesting way. Outside of the context of Buddhism, some philosophers have likewise pointed out a necessity for this distinction to be made, especially those who subscribe to a ‘narrative view of the Self’. The American philosopher Marya Schechtman writes:

“[...] I am increasingly convinced that the concept of person as used by psychological theorists mixes together two components. One is [Galen] Strawson’s notion of the self [as the ‘Subject of Experience that is a Single Mental Thing’; i.e. his “Pearl String Theory”]; the other is a practical notion that is more intimately connected to social context.”³⁵

³³ *Bhāra Sutta*, SN III 25,15-26,17.

³⁴ Gallagher 2011: 33.

³⁵ Schechtman 2007: 169.

Schechtman goes on to elaborate what exactly the two components are that should be distinguished in the notion of the person:

“On the one hand a person is conceived as the subject of experiences, the ‘I’ that we experience as a psychological entity with persistence conditions distinct from human beings. On the other hand, a person is conceived as the bearer of certain complex social capacities that carry important practical implications. A person is a moral agent who can be held responsible for her actions, a reasoning creature who can be held irrational when she acts against her interests, and a creature capable of a range of complex relationships with other persons.”³⁶

Having said this, Schechtman explicates her “narrative self-constitution view”, separated into two narrative accounts:

“First is the claim that in order to constitute oneself as a person—someone with the capacity for moral responsibility, prudential interest, relations of compensation and related person-specific activities—one must implicitly organize one’s experience according to a narrative that recognizes past and future experiences as one’s own in the sense that one sees the past as having implications for one’s present situation choices, and the present as having similar implications for the future. Second is the claim that in order to constitute oneself as a self, one must have a narrative in which one experiences the past and the future as one’s own in the strong sense of experiencing the present as part of the whole narrative.”³⁷

While the Buddha would perhaps have agreed with Schechtman’s first statement, the narrative account of Selves, as we will see again and in some details below, he would doubtlessly have dismissed and refuted the second view, “in which one experiences the past and the future as one’s own”, in other words, the ‘continuity-of-essence’ or ‘identity’ sort of view. In fact, Schechtman’s “weaker” ‘narrative account of *persons*’ (‘PN’) sounds in principle like a reformulation of the Buddha’s doctrine of karma due to its signing over of moral responsibility to the individual. In fact, Mark Siderits has agreed that this narrative-self view would be acceptable for Buddhists on the level of conventional truth, where one could speak of ‘persons’ as “convenient designators”.³⁸ According to the Buddha’s original teachings on karma, personal continuity is defined by causal connections in relation to one’s mental, verbal, and physical acts. (Note therefore

³⁶ Schechtman 2007: 169.

³⁷ Ibid.: 169f.

³⁸ Siderits said this in a Target paper at the video-captured conference MIND & REALITY: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY SYMPOSIUM ON CONSCIOUSNESS at Columbia University in 2006. See <http://mindandreality.org/seminar5.html#MarkSiderits> (last accessed: 2 March 2012).

the difference in speaking of “personal continuity” rather than personal identity.) But in the Buddha’s view,³⁹ there is apart from this conditionality no lasting entity or essence to be found either within or outside of the five constituents (the *khandhā*) composing the empirical person that could properly be called a Self or a soul – the Buddha vehemently denied the existence of such an essence of living beings. Furthermore, he taught that it is a mistake to identify oneself (really: one’s Self) with one or all of these five constituents.⁴⁰

Clearly, the description and, by implication, the understanding of persons or, rather, of a person’s potential, in the Pāli Canon is very much characterised, if not dominated, by the description and ascription of special (psychic) abilities that originate in the training in meditative concentration. Although we certainly find direct or indirect references to the socio-historical conditions of the day, as has been and still is the focus of several studies⁴¹, the orthodox Theravāda-view that we come across in the Pāli *suttas* is on the whole very much determined and defined by the outline of the spiritual path leading to liberation. While we do encounter heads of households (*gahapati*), potters (*ghaṭikāra*), Brahmins (*brahmaṇa*), ascetics (*paribbājaka*) of various sects and so forth – that means, for example, social, occupational, and religious designations –, the *Nikāyas*’ overarching grid with regard to persons, nevertheless, is that of the distinction between worldly or ordinary people (*putthujana*) and those on the Path or beyond it (meaning the ones who have realized the final goal, *nibbāna*: the *arahats* (*a-sekha*); the individuals on the path, the *ariyapuggalā*, are called the ones “belonging to training”, *sekha*). This distinction reflects, in a way, the dichotomy of *saṃsāra* and *nibbāna* that is fundamental to the teachings of the Buddha on the whole.

In specialist Buddhist discourse, that is, in the works belonging to the *Abhidhamma*, much of the commentaries, as well as some *suttas* which discuss such technical matters of the view (*diṭṭhi*), the Self (*atta*), and so forth⁴², the Self and the person are said to be non-existent in

³⁹ Which can as a matter of fact not really be called a view, because the Buddha on several occasions strongly advised against adhering to any view whatsoever, for they were like a thicket, a wilderness etc., cp. *Brahmajāla Sutta* (DN 1) and *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* (MN 1). The Buddha says of himself that he teaches only *dhamma*, which can be interpreted as just being the truth about phenomena.

⁴⁰ MN I 140,33f.: *Tasmātiha bhikkhave yaṃ na tumhākaṃ taṃ pajahatha, taṃ vo pahīnaṃ dīgharattaṃ hitāya sukhāya bhavissati.*

⁴¹ Cp. e.g. Fick (1974); Bailey & Mabbett 2003.

⁴² These are texts like the *Brahmajāla Sutta* (DN 1), the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* (MN 1), or the *Pañcattaya Sutta* (MN 102), and many more.

an absolute sense (*paramatthato pana puggalo nāma n' atthi*). If a text speaks of persons, and so forth, it has “to be interpreted” – this is called *neyyattha*. A text whose “meaning is definite”, because it accords with ultimate reality (*paramatthato*), is called *nītattha*.⁴³ In a text of the latter kind, therefore, one will almost certainly find talk of the “three characteristic” (*tilakkhaṇā*) of samsaric existence: impermanence (*anicca*), un-satisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and selflessness (*anattā*), which are how all things (*dhammā*) ultimately are (*yathābhūtaṃ*). Nevertheless, rebirth (*punabbhava*) is an equally accepted fact. Now, in order to be able to talk about beings that are constantly reborn in a meaningful way, Pāli texts use the word *attabhāva*, “individual/personality”.⁴⁴ Collins writes:

“Attabhāva, then, refers to the fact, condition or status of being a ‘self’ – a ‘self, that is, in the sense in which the unenlightened man feels himself to be a separate individual, confronting real others.”⁴⁵

This word possesses different connotations. Frequently, for instance, it means “body”, which designates, as a technical term, one of three different forms of “acquiring individuality”, namely “gross-material” (*oḷārika-°/rūpī*), “mind-made” (*manomaya-°*), and “formless” (*arūpī*) bodies, which correspond to the three hierarchical levels of the Buddhist universe, the *kāma-* (“desire”), *rūpa-* (“fine-material”), and *arūpa-lokas* (“immaterial” planes of existence), and thus the term refers to the different appearances of a being or a person in different forms of existence, in which rebirth takes place in accordance with one’s karma – thus, as we have seen in the Introduction, talking to gods does not come as a surprise for Buddhists because gods similarly just are or have *attabhāva*.

The Pāli word for person, *puggala*, amalgamates several sets of concepts which “[systematise] the conventional view of personality and rebirth”⁴⁶ according to the Theravāda tradition. For all the Theravāda-Abhidhammika’s skill in systematisation, the differences between persons – all of which are due to karma and different combinations of the four “great elements” (*mahābhūtas*) plus the “three poisons” (*lobha, dosa, moha*) – listed under all kinds of headings which can be

⁴³ Cp. Collins 1982: 154.

⁴⁴ The following account is basically a summary of Collins 1982: 156-171. The translations of terms are his.

⁴⁵ Collins 1982: 157.

⁴⁶ Ibid.: 160.

found in the Canon⁴⁷ are too numerous to count, and seem rather to have been made up on the spot by the Buddha (and systematised later), instead of making the impression of being a single coherent concept. But more importantly, besides these vertical differences, the tradition was more systematic in terms of horizontal differences, that is, a stratification of *types* of persons according to the stages they have reached on the scale of spiritual accomplishment. The most important of these classifications is certainly the one of the so-called Noble Persons, *ariya-puggalā*. The Noble Persons, as opposed to “ordinary worldly people” (*puthujjanā*), are those *bhikkhus* or lay-persons who have *nibbāna* as their objective and have realised along the way, through the three trainings in conduct, meditation, and wisdom (*sīla, samādhi, paññā*), one of four possible stages of spiritual attainment by successively destroying the “ten fetters” (*dasa saṃyojanāni*) that bind one to samsaric existence.⁴⁸ The stage reached is irreversible. The four Persons are called: “Stream-Winner” (*sotāpanna*), “Once-Returner” (*sakadāgāmi*), “Non-Returner” (*anāgāmi*), and “Enlightened man”, or “Arhat”, or “Holy One” (*arahat*) – translations vary greatly for this last term. If the texts speak of the “Eight Noble Persons”, each of the four types is subdivided in being on the path towards, and having fully attained the respective stage.⁴⁹ Another important list of Noble Persons enumerates seven (sometimes nine, sometimes ten) types, probably hierarchically, according to their individual spiritual potential and quality and the specific way on which they reach the goal. Some of the types, respectively their descriptions, are obscure (for instance, the one “released on both sides”, or the “bodily witness”), while others are self-explanatory, and their possible historical development and relationship is complex. However, it seems reasonable to assume that their origin should be found in the different (psychological) characters, inclinations, and spiritual potentials of the Buddha’s disciples. Another interesting aspect of this list is

⁴⁷ These are to be found especially in the *Abhidhamma* collection, to which the *Puggalapaññatti* belongs, the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, but also in the other *Nikāyas* of the *Sutta Piṭaka*.

⁴⁸ The ten “fetters” are: belief in a Self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*); doubt or uncertainty, especially about the Path (*vicikicchā*); attachment to rites and rituals (*sīlabbata-parāmāsa*); sensual desire (*kāma-cchanda/(kāma-)rāga*); ill-will (*vyāpāda*); desire for material existence (i.e. rebirth in the *kāma-loka; rūparāga*); desire for immaterial existence (i.e. rebirth in the *arūpa-loka; arūparāga*); conceit (*māna*); restlessness (*uddhacca*); illusion (*avijjā*); cp. PED, s.v. *saṃyojana*.

⁴⁹ A presumably quite early passage in the Canon that mentions the eight types of Noble Persons (*ariya-puggalā*) is found in the *Ratana-sutta* of the *Cullavagga* of the *Sutta Nipāta* (II.1.6–7):

*Ye puggalā aṭṭha satam pasatthā, cattāri etāni yugāni honti.
Te dakkhiṇeyyā sugatassa sāvakā, etesu dinnāni mahapphalāni.
Idampi saṅghe ratanaṃ pañītaṃ, etena saccena suvatthi hotu.*

that some *suttas*⁵⁰ mention that, in principle and under certain conditions, it is possible for almost all of these (except for the last two) different types to reach arhatship. It suffices for my purposes here to just cite the list of seven types, without going into details of their descriptions⁵¹:

1. “released on both sides” – *ubhato-bhāga-vimutto*
2. “released by insight” – *paññā-vimutto*
3. “bodily witness” – *kaya-sakkhī*
4. “who has seen the point” – *diṭṭhi-ppatto*
5. “released by faith” – *saddhā-vimutto*
6. “follower of the teaching” – *dhammānusārī*
7. “follower through faith” – *saddhānusārī*.⁵²

Although that account of the orthodox Theravāda conception of persons seems straightforward, scholars of early Buddhism have been pointing out certain tensions between two kinds of discourse in the Pāli scriptures. Collins, recognising the failure in the Self-theories of some modern philosophers like David Hume, Derek Parfit, and Galen Strawson (whose ideas seem to lend themselves easily to comparison with the Buddha’s view on the Self) of finding an overarching, single theory that could somehow unify the different aspects of the human being, sees such a single theory that actually is able to unify a person’s real condition (in category-analytic terms) and its individual continuity and being a social being and a moral agent in the Buddhist concept of the “Two Truths”: conventional (*samutti-sacca*; Skt. *saṃvṛti-satya*) and absolute truth (*paramattha-sacca*; Skt. *paramārtha-satya*).⁵³ Collins writes:

“In many types of narrative – ethical, exhortatory, behavioural – the use of terms like *attā*, ‘self’, and *puggala*, ‘person’, was accepted as useful and meaningful; only in explicitly theoretical contexts, where the discourse contained or openly presupposed a definite system of psychology and metaphysics, were personal terms rigorously excluded.”⁵⁴

⁵⁰ AN I 118-120; *Kīṭāgiri Sutta*, MN 70.

⁵¹ For a detailed treatment of these types, cp. Gombrich: “Retracing an ancient debate: How Insight worsted concentration in the Pāli Canon”. In: Gombrich 2006a: 96-134.

⁵² Tr. Gombrich 2006a: 97.

⁵³ Cp. *ibid.*: 147, 154 & *ibid.* 1994.

⁵⁴ Collins 1982: 149.

In Western philosophical thought, however, this distinction was not always drawn (cp. M. Spiro below), and has consequently led to some confusion. In Buddhist narrative, then, and especially in the famous ‘rebirth-narratives’ (e.g. *Jātakas*), from an orthodox Theravāda point of view, the use of the concept ‘person’ to designate a unitary agent, connected as one being (*bhava*) through different rebirths, is doctrinally ‘permitted’⁵⁵ and not seen as contradictory, although the tradition did recognise that it could provide some grounds for misunderstanding, as in the case of the monk Sāti⁵⁶, who held that it was consciousness that transmigrates, a mistaken view, the commentary states, that has developed in Sāti because he was an expert in the memorisation of ‘rebirth-narratives’.

Similar to the misguided monk Sati’s view, in Western thought, however, consciousness was, and perhaps still is, often identified and regarded as the unifying element (the so-called “psychological continuity”). On the other hand, Mark Siderits summarises the orthodox Theravāda-view of the consciousness:

“The Buddha’s point is that the conclusion that the mind lasts at least a lifetime rests on an illusion. For what we call the mind is really a continuous series of distinct events, each lasting just a moment, but each immediately followed by others. There is no such thing as the mind that has these different events, there are just the events themselves. But because they succeed one another in unbroken succession, this illusion is created of an enduring thing in which they are all taking place.”⁵⁷

As with consciousness – the one thing that is thought to be truly “one’s own” – in the Western cultural context, so the terms Self and person seem rather to have been associated with individuality:

“From knowledge of what the self truly is people have hoped to gain greater happiness, deeper fulfilment, liberation from fetters or restraints, better relations with other people, or ways to achieve power over them. Selfhood thus matters to us both as individuals and as social creatures, shaping our personal existence and our relations with those whose lives we somehow share.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Cp. Collins 1982: 150.

⁵⁶ See n. 78 below and Collins 1982: 152.

⁵⁷ Siderits 2009: 41f.

⁵⁸ Seigel 2009: 3.

Although the formulation is general enough to be equally admissible for describing the general religious situation in the ancient Indian context (in fact, the statement is almost too generic to state anything significant at all), it is not valid for Buddhism, in which in fact the way to lasting happiness was seen in getting rid of the Self, which the Buddha had explained to be an illusion. This concoction, as it seems, of the ideas or the notions of Self, persons, and individuality, on the other hand, appears indeed to be a rather modern Western phenomenon.

1.1 The Problem of Personal Identity (PI) and the Buddhist Philosophical View of Persons

“Just how the Exhortation-Narrative attitude to rebirth coexists culturally with the systematic account of it put forward by the orthodox voice in the Debate section is a matter for history and ethnography: but the coexistence is genuine, and the two ways of speaking are both deemed (by Buddhist systematic thought) to contain ‘truth’: as #12.1. states, ‘both of these truths should be understood, without confusion’.”⁵⁹

One of the major questions in the study of literary characters – and one of the main points of controversy between structuralist and post-structuralist narratological stances taken towards literary character – is how to think about the exact relationship between characters in narratives and real persons. Another problem which is therefore bound up with (real or literary) persons, and which seems to be relevant for a discussion of literary characters and the thinking about their relationship to ‘reality’ – especially when adopting a post-structuralist position – is the notion of personal identity (PI). The concept seems to be especially relevant in the context of a study of the presentation of characters in early Buddhist *suttas*, for they apparently embody, as has often been pointed out by scholars, what appears to be a contradiction: the scholastic and “religious virtuoso’s” intellectual understanding of the Buddha’s teaching of *anattā* versus the “man-in-the-world’s”, the ordinary monks’, or the “naïve westerner’s views on reincarnation, in which a series of lifetimes, each containing a unitary ‘individual’, is somehow connected together as the

⁵⁹ Cp. Seigel 2009: 477. See also the next footnote, n. 61, for a quotation of the whole passage.

successive lives of one ‘person’”.⁶⁰ Speaking of texts, on the one hand, the Buddha was vehement in denying the existence of a Self, while on the other hand, (early) Buddhist literature abounds in stories about past and future lives of individuals⁶¹, and phrases and formulations which have already quite early in the history of Buddhism led to controversy.⁶² The set of problems regarding personal identity that is, strictly speaking, comprised of two questions, the concepts surrounding change or sameness of persons and things over time (“characterization-question”), and the idea of the Self in terms of some kind of an impermanent essence (“Reidentification-question”⁶³), is for the most part of a philosophical and often purely theoretical nature with no or merely marginal points of contact with our everyday notions and ideas of, or references to empirical persons.⁶⁴ As a philosophical problem, however, it is perhaps as old as philosophy itself. In the recent literature on the subject, one often meets with the expression that the philosophical and often highly theoretical treatment of the problem of PI is counter-intuitive from an everyday point

⁶⁰ Cp. Collins 1982: 150 and throughout, especially parts II & III. Steven Collins, in a later essay (Collins 1997) and from a somewhat different angle, has characterised the coexistence between systematic thought (“debate”) and instructional or edifying narrative (“Exhortation-Narrative”) inherent in the canonical material a contradiction-free dichotomy: “The Debate and the Exhortation-Narrative sections of the text translated here exemplify, respectively, systematic and narrative thought in Buddhism. I believe Bruner (e.g. 1986, 1991) and others are right to see narrative as a mode of cognition different from logical operations but equally basic to human thinking – neither systematic nor narrative thought is reducible to the other – and I find this a helpful rubric under which to think about Buddhist intellectual history (see Collins, 1998). (This is a position which for the purpose of making these comments I will simply assume to be true, although obviously it can be contested on various grounds, not least of which would be the view, which I attribute to Parfit and Strawson and then criticize, that a *complete* description of reality could be given without using the language of narrative and persons.) In the conceptual analysis of Buddhist systematic thought, and in the mode of psychological practice which goes with it (‘insight’ meditation), the person is deconstructed, broken down into what are seen as its constitutive parts, mental and physical. In exhortation, and the Buddhist narratives in which it is characteristically embodied, as in the second section here, persons are addressed and described as unitary agents, albeit ones whose careers span multiple lifetimes. The simple view of rebirth evident in the Exhortation-Narrative section would, were it to be taken for systematic thought, deserve the critical disdain with which Geach (1969) rejects what he calls the vulgar ‘Bridey Murphy’ approach to reincarnation. **Just how the Exhortation-Narrative attitude to rebirth coexists culturally with the systematic account of it put forward by the orthodox voice in the Debate section is a matter for history and ethnography: but the coexistence is genuine, and the two ways of speaking are both deemed (by Buddhist systematic thought) to contain ‘truth’: as #12.1. states, ‘both of these truths should be understood, without confusion’.**” (Collins 1997: 477; my emphasis)

⁶¹ Cp. e.g. the *Jātakas*, the *Dhammapadathakathā*, as well as many *suttas* in the *Sutta Piṭaka*.

⁶² As we will again see later, a Buddhist school of thought called the *Pudgalavādins*, affirmed that, in a certain sense (cp. Cousins 2005: 94; the answers given by the *Pudgalavādin* opponent in the *Puggala*-chapter of the *Abhidhamma-Kathāvatthu* are of a somewhat peculiar but astute ‘Yes-and-No’ type), it is one and the same person who undergoes the process of transmigration, which is clear from such statements made by the Tathāgata as, “He perished from there and reappeared here” (e.g. DN I 81), which would otherwise not make sense.

⁶³ Cp. Mark Siderits: *The Cartography of Personal Identity: Mapping a Course for the Future*. Podcast of a lecture given at the ‘Columbia Society for Comparative Philosophy’, available at: <http://www.cbs.columbia.edu/cscp/mark-siderits/> (last accessed: 24th June 2013).

⁶⁴ Cp. Martin & Barresi 2006: 3.

of view.⁶⁵ The counter-intuitiveness of the philosophical understanding of a strict notion of ‘same person’ seems to have already been recognised as early as the 5th century B.C. in ancient Greece, for which Raymond Martin and John Barresi have found blithe evidence:

“One of the earliest indications of interest in the problem of personal identity occurs in a scene from a play written in the fifth century B.C.E by the comic playwright Epicharmus. In this scene, a lender asks a debtor to pay up. The debtor replies by asking the lender whether he agrees that anything that undergoes change, such as a pile of pebbles to which one pebble has been added or removed, thereby becomes a different thing. The lender says that he agrees with that. ‘Well, then,’ says the debtor, ‘aren’t people constantly undergoing changes?’ ‘Yes,’ replies the lender. ‘So,’ says the debtor, ‘it follows that I’m not the same person as the one who was indebted to you and, so, I owe you nothing.’ The lender then hits the debtor, who protests loudly at being abused. The lender replies that the debtor’s complaint is miscredited since he – the lender – is not the same person as the one who hit him a moment before.”⁶⁶

Broadening the scope of the problem of PI beyond Greek antiquity, and just one lifetime (which does not make a difference in principle, separate from the fact that ‘reincarnation’ was a wide-spread concept also in ancient Greece, and likewise in many other world cultures⁶⁷), we find a striking parallel with regard to the problem of PI and its practical implications in the context of pre-modern South Asian Buddhism in the – though much later – extra-canonical but nonetheless very popular work the *Milindapañha*⁶⁸:

“The king said: ‘What is it, Nāgasena, that is reborn?’ ‘Name-and-form [i.e. the conglomeration of the khandhā] is reborn.’ ‘What, is it this name-and-form that is reborn?’ ‘No; but by this name-and-form deeds are done, good or evil, and by these deeds (this Karma) another name-and-form is reborn.’ ‘If that be so, Sir, would not the new being be released from its evil Karma?’ The Elder replied: ‘Yes, if it were not reborn. But just because it is reborn, O king, it is therefore not released from its evil Karma.’ Give me an illustration.’ ‘Suppose, O king, some man were to steal a mango from another man, and

⁶⁵ Cp. Martin & Barresi 2006: 12: “Heraclitus’s view was that nothing that changes can remain the same. Whether or not this view is true, it is not practical.”

⁶⁶ Ibid.: 3. The philosophical problem featured in this example, through the predicate “same [person]”, is what in philosophy is known as the Sorites-Paradox (or the problem of indeterminacy), i.e. the problem of at what point we can tell a thing (e.g. a heap) to have changed, i.e. ceased to be the same, by altering its constituents (e.g. gradually taking away single grains from a heap of grains).

⁶⁷ Cp. Marcel Mauss’s famous essay in: Carrithers, Collins, and Lukes 1985.

⁶⁸ Only in the Burmese Theravāda-tradition, however, the *Milindapañha* as the eighteenth book of the *Khuddhaka Nikāya*, is considered canonical. Due to the evident ties of the content of parts of this text with the Classical world, the mentioned parallels would not come as a real surprise. However, I refrain from any speculations about the nature of these parallels.

the owner of the mango were to seize him and bring him before the king, and charge him with the crime. And the thief were to say: “Your Majesty! I have not taken away this man’s mangoes. Those that he put in the ground are different from the ones I took. I do not deserve to be punished” ‘How then? Would he be guilty?’ ‘Certainly, Sir. He would deserve to be punished.’ ‘But on what ground?’ ‘Because, in spite of whatever he may say, he would be guilty in respect of the last mango which resulted from the first one (the owner set in the ground).’ ‘Just so, great king, deeds good or evil are by this name-and-form and another is reborn. But that other is not thereby released from its deeds (its Karma).’⁶⁹

What the simile perfectly provides is the “missing link” which explains the momentous relationship between different persons (i.e. in consecutive rebirths), respectively mangoes, and which constitutes one application of the Buddha’s famous “middle way” between or beyond the extremes of sameness or identity and total un-relatedness. In a nutshell⁷⁰, what is striking about the Buddha’s teaching on persons is that he could even explain continuity beyond bodily death, other than his ancient Greek ‘colleagues’, in an impersonal way in terms of cause and effect – instead of either denying any and all continuity or proposing some kind of transmigrating entity. Thereby, certain causes effect the new coming into being of a new set of ‘name-and-form’, which is itself an “exhaustive list” (R. Gombrich) of that which is conveniently designated by the “convenient designator” (M. Siderits) ‘person’, *puggala* in the Pāli language.⁷¹ A unified agent is not needed to explain the process. It is the same as saying, “it rains”, or “a plant grows” because of the presence of certain condition as the seed, sun, water, earth, etc. Similarly, it is perfectly comprehensible to say that it is “grasping” (*upādāna*) which brings about the coming-into-being (*bhava*) of a ‘person’. The Buddha’s understanding of “identity”, namely, as neither being essentially identical nor separate or unrelated entities, stands in contrast to, and may thus even be understood as criticism against, concepts that taught some form or other of a transmigrating entity such as a soul or ‘vital force’ (Skt. *jīva*); or consciousness, or concepts that oppositely taught the non-relatedness or randomness of actions and results. Common to the latter conceptions – and

⁶⁹ Cp. Müller 1890: 71f. and pp. 66-77 (= Mil 46,5-29). Nāgasena gives an even more illustrative example for a Buddhist answer to the problem of PI and rebirth in the simile of the infant, cp. *ibid.* pp. 63-65 (Mil 40,1-19).

⁷⁰ We are here really rushing through the topic in a somewhat superficial manner for the purpose of quickly grasping perhaps the most prominent or broader differences in the conceptions of persons in two of the most influential, or at least most often referred to currents of thought of the ancient worlds starting with the Buddha in India and Socrates in ancient Greece respectively.

⁷¹ Cp. Gombrich 2009: chapter 2 and pp. 61f.; Hamilton 1996: Introduction, pp. xv f.

regardless, it seems, of a specific cultural background – is the very basic idea of the existence of something outliving the body – whether conceptualised as being something physical (related to breath, Gr. *pneuma*, which in many ancient cultures was associated with breath either as the principle itself or its vehicle), as a soul or life principle, or as something mental, as consciousness, e.g. as “the experiencer” (Gr. *psyche*) – which may according to some scholars have originated in shamanism and the phenomenon of “out-of-body experiences”.⁷²

From a more systematic philosophical point of view, the Buddha’s (and his successors’) view on persons has been brilliantly systematised and summarised by Mark Siderits, a scholar of Indian and Analytic philosophies, as follows⁷³: As was already hinted at above, the problem of PI consists really of two main questions: First, the problem of re-identification and the diachronic unity of persons, which presupposes a Self in terms of a kind of a permanent essence, and, secondly, the “Characterisation Question”, concerning potential cores of persons and attributes or properties, which entails ethical questions; both questions and their different philosophical formulations address the problem with what can or should we identify (which touches on one of the major questions in ethics: How should we live?). However, one of the main differences between Western philosophy of the Self and Indian philosophical and religious systems seems to revolve more around soteriological questions. In the context of (most if not all of) the Indian systems, the interest in answering questions of PI lies mainly in “solving the problem of [...]”, i.e. finding ways out of “existential suffering”. In several places in the Pāli Canon, the Buddha is portrayed

⁷² Cp. Martin & Barresi 2006: 9-11 and n. 3 of chapter 1. The authors speak specifically about ancient Greece and ancient Greek shamanism. However, when compared to ancient Indian discussions of the different concepts, the parallels are striking, whether they are talking about the *jīva* or the *sākṣin*, in any case a pure or potentially pure entity existing prior to and separate from the material body; cp. Halbfass 2000: 195 and Gombrich 2009: 62-66. Shamanism, in particular, appears to be a global phenomenon in ancient cultures. Going back even further in time (pre-philosophical Greece and other cultural spheres as well, as the archeology of Germanic and Celtic burial practices betray), prior to the concept of the person transmigrating, it seems that a widespread idea consisted in the identity of the life principle or vital force with the breath leaving the body at the moment of death.

Socrates, like the Buddha, did not write anything. His teachings have presumably largely been preserved by the views of a character named Socrates in the plays of Plato. Plato’s views of the soul, then, are of course much more sophisticated (and have probably been developed during his career) than I have stated here. In his *Phaedo*, e.g., Plato’s view of the soul is conceptualised as being an immaterial (= not a physical object, however, subtle, like breath), single thing, without parts, unextended, and “essentially alive”, the natural consequence of which is the immortality of the soul (because the soul is unextended, it is not divisible, and thus not corruptible); cp. Martin & Barresi 2006: 16f.

⁷³ The following summary, and passages in “double quotes”, until annotated otherwise, is based on Siderits: *The Cartography of Personal Identity*, see n. 63 above.

to have addressed the different views on the Self that were circulating at his time in a very systematic way.⁷⁴ Three major views emerge from the Buddha’s analyses (as formulated in the *Pañcattaya Sutta*): a) ‘Eternalism’ (*sassatāvāda*), b) ‘annihilation’ (*ucchedavāda*), and c) the Buddha’s own “Middle Path” (*majjhimā paṭipadā*), which, in a modern philosophical way of speaking, can aptly be circumscribed as “the continued existence of a person [that] consists in a causal series of psychophysical elements [the *khandhā*], properly arranged, none of which is of the nature of a self” (M. Siderits). That leads us, then, to the important and perhaps genuinely Buddhist conclusion that it is useful and necessary to differentiate between the Self and the person (which many, especially Western taxonomies, do not, as we shall see further below). For Buddhists, it is no contradiction to state that persons do “exist” while the self does not – hence the seemingly contradictory expression “Selfless Persons”, the title of Steven Collins’s 1982 landmark book on the subject –, provided that a qualification as to how the quotation marks in “exist” are to be understood, is included. That qualification is as follows: The question is what the first-person pronoun “I” may refer to. When the *suttas* talk of “I”, they address either a Self, understood as the (permanent, unchangeable) essence of a person (which, for *all* Buddhists, is a false notion because it does not really exist), or the person as “the whole consisting of psychophysical elements properly arranged”, designated with the “convenient designator” ‘person’. In the words of Analytic Philosophy, in this case in M. Siderits’s words, the Buddhist teachings on the Self and the person teach a form of Reductionism or, to be more precise, they embody a “Reductionist view of personal identity”.⁷⁵ In a nutshell, the (orthodox) Buddhist view on the Self and the person is this: Strictly speaking, no such things as persons can be found to really exist. But it is according to folk theory that we say ‘person’, which in reality is nothing more, and nothing less, than a causal series of psychophysical elements properly arranged, and as such a “useful fiction”. Now, that does not mean that we are momentary (conscious) Selves, causally coming into and passing out of existence each moment. That would in fact be a form ‘Eliminativism’. Buddhist Reductionism holds that there is no such thing as a Self and, what is more, that there never was one to begin with. The ‘person’ is only conventionally real (“as a conceptual, useful fiction”); conventionally, we continue to exist as the same ‘persons’ at least for as long as the set

⁷⁴ Selectively, for the MN, there may be mentioned the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* (MN 1), the *Alagaddūpama Sutta* (MN 22), and the *Pañcattaya Sutta* (MN 102).

⁷⁵ Cp. Collins 1997: 468.

of psychophysical elements (*khandhas*) remain to be “properly arranged”, that is supposedly for one lifetime. Ultimately, the *khandhas* are impermanent and “occur in a causal series”. In other words, for Buddhists “the folk theory of persons is a *useful* fiction”, useful for legal purposes, for instance, as we have seen above in the Mango-example from the *Milindapañha*.⁷⁶

And yet, as straightforward as all that sounds from the ‘tidying’ point of view of Analytic Philosophy, certain passages in the early Buddhist Canon nevertheless seem to have led to confusion about the Buddha’s understanding of persons and the Self from very early on (thus, the problem is not new). Prominent examples include, in the MN, the monk Sāti’s “pernicious view” (*pāpakam ditthigatam*) of what it is that transmigrates and survives bodily death in the *Mahātaṇhāsāṅkhaya Sutta*⁷⁷, the arguments put forth by the *Pudgalavāda*-school of the *Vātsīputrīyas* in favour of the person as a really existing element (*paramatthato*, Skt. *dravyatas*), or the controversies over the different roles of memory (*sati*; Skt. *smṛti*; implying some view of ‘unity of consciousness’) in connection with the notion of the person and its continuation over time in different Buddhist schools⁷⁸.

⁷⁶ Yet we must be aware that with regard to that threefold taxonomy mentioned above (Eternalism or Essentialism, Eliminativism, and the Middle Path), the philosophy of the Buddha’s middle way most probably may have originally grown out of his “Middle Path” (*majjhimā paṭipadā*) as explained by the Buddha in what is traditionally held to have constituted his first sermon, which was to avoid the extremes of indulgence in sense-pleasures (“self-indulgence”) and self-mortification (“austerities”) with both of which the not yet awakened Siddhattha Gotama was all too familiar according to his own reports (e.g. in the *Ariyaparyesana Sutta*). This reminds us that we must keep in mind that these taxonomies are by themselves useful abstractions and systematisations. (Moreover, Siderits’s presentation of Buddhist philosophy, though astute and very handy, besides or although having an analytic agenda, appears to be very much stamped by the Madhyamaka school of thought founded by the Buddhist saint Nāgārjuna (ca. 2nd cent. A.D.) – which should make us cautious to not apply all of his findings uncritical to the earliest phases of the religion, in which the formation or the project of Buddhist philosophy proper with distinct schools of thought etc. was still underway.)

⁷⁷ Cp. *Mahātaṇhāsāṅkhaya Sutta* (MN 38): Sāti, the former fisherman’s view is rendered as follows (MN I 256,10-15): “I, friends, understand the *dhamma* taught by the Blessed One in this way, that that which goes on/continues [after bodily death], which transmigrates is this very consciousness and nothing else.” (*Evaṃ me sutam. Ekaṃ samayaṃ Bhagavā sāvatthiyaṃ viharati jetavane anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme. Tena kho pana samayena sātissa nāma bhikkhuno kevaṭṭaputtassa evarūpaṃ pāpakam ditthigatam uppannam hoti: tathāhaṃ bhagavatā dhammam desitam ājānāmi yathā tadevidam viññāṇam sandhāvati saṃsarati anaññanti.*) The Buddha reprimands Sāti and states how it should be understood correctly (in short): “In more than one way/in many parallel expressions, indeed, have I, monks, told you that consciousness originates from causes/is causally arisen, not from somewhere else can consciousness arise/consciousness cannot arise without cause.” (*Anekapariyāyena hi vo, bhikkhave, paṭiccasamuppannam viññāṇam vuttam mayā, aññatra paccayā natthi viññāṇassa sambhavoti.*)

⁷⁸ Cp. Gyatso 1992.

In particular, one short *sutta* in the SN seems to have caused much trouble already to the more immediate inheritors of the Buddha's teachings.⁷⁹ In the first short *sutta* of the *Bhāravagga* of the *Khandhasaṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha explains how he understands the term person (*puggala*):

“In Sāvathī. There [the Buddha said]: “I will teach you, monks, the load⁸⁰, the carrier⁸¹ of the load, the picking up of the load, and the laying down of the load. Listen to this! What, monks, is the load? ‘The five aggregates’ (pañca khandhā), one should say. What are the five? Such as [there is] the aggregate that fuels⁸² [the existential process of] form (or matter), the aggregate that fuels [the existential process of] feeling, the aggregate that fuels [the existential process of] apperception, the aggregate that fuels [the existential process of] volition, and the aggregate that fuels [the existential process of] consciousness. What, monks, is the carrier of the load? ‘Person’ (*puggala*), one should say. Carrier of the load, monks, is called this venerable monk here⁸³ of such name and such clan. What is the taking up of the load? There is this thirst, leading to rebirth and coupled with sensuous desire that delights in this and

⁷⁹ This *sutta* has “caused much trouble” in the later development of Buddhism, as R. Gombrich writes (2006a: 67). Several sources suggest that this *sutta* was used by the ‘Personalist schools’ (*Puggalavādins*) of Buddhism as a basis of discussion to ‘proof’ that the Buddha did not object to the existence of a person as a really existing entity, quasi a sixth element ‘above’, ‘behind’ or beyond the five *khandhā* that is neither identical nor different from them (cp. Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000: 1051, n.37).

⁸⁰ I render *bhāra* here with its primary meaning “load” because I think it better fits the metaphor than the figurative meaning “burden” (which has a very negative connotation which, in my opinion, is not necessarily vindicated in the light of the frequent emphasis on pleasant and blissful experiences in or resulting from meditation and ethical conduct. Of course, the Buddha did explain the general unpleasantness and suffering of existence, but he did certainly not teach depression as a way out of it.)

⁸¹ I translate *hāra* with “carrier”, and thereby follow Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation (2000: 871), in order to make the comparison in the text with ‘person’ smoother, but under the premise that both terms are merely “convenient designators” of conventional, ordinary parlance (*vohāra*) with no implications of a real existence of a person. Steven Collins (1982: 165) translated *hāra* as an action noun (“bearing”), presumably to present a more neutral rendering that would prevent a fostering of the reification of the term. But Collins’ argument that *hāra* as a noun can only mean “carrying” both in Sanskrit and in Pāli is wrong: see MW, *s.v.* *hāra*; Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000: 1050, n.35.

⁸² I adopt and incorporate Richard Gombrich’s understanding of *upādānakkhandha* as fire-metaphor in my translation; cp. Gombrich 2009: 114, who translates *upādānakkhandha* as “blazing masses of fuel”. In connection with persons, the word *upādāna* is usually translated as “clinging” (cp. Bodhi 2000: 871: “The form aggregate subject to clinging”), through which, according to Gombrich, the original metaphor is lost.

⁸³ This is clearly pointing to an actual (spoken) teaching situation, in which the Buddha may have exemplarily pointed to something or someone present or near.

that; such as [there is] the thirst for lust [-ful experiences], the thirst for becoming, the thirst for extermination. This, monks, is called the taking up of the load.”⁸⁴

The phrasing of the *sutta* seems indeed to suggest that the person described as “the carrier of the load” is an entity *who possesses* the aggregates and who lasts (at least) for one lifetime (one “rebirth”, *upapatti*); then, another “load”, or “burden” (*bhāra*), is taken up according to one’s karma. The phrase “of such name and such clan” (*evaṃ nāma, evaṃ gotto*), moreover, seems to suggest the basic idea of an individual (proper name plus property). However, nothing is said with regard to the person about its continuation after death or its exact nature. Nevertheless, it seems somehow comprehensible that the *Pudgalavādins* may have taken this and similar passages in the canonical literature as their points of departure for speculations about the *puggala*. However, also the *Pudgalavādins* did strictly not contradict the Buddha’s No Self doctrine. They were rather concerned with the exact nature of the “carrier of the load”. In sum, leaving out the subtler points of controversy, the rational division between the intellectual, expert understanding of the No Self teachings, and the preliminary or conventional understanding of persons seems, upon closer inspection, only to be clear-cut as a philosophical abstraction. As Collins wrote, “systematic thought” and “Exhortation-Narrative” are unambiguously co-existent in the Buddhist tradition(s):

“Just how the Exhortation-Narrative attitude to rebirth coexists culturally with the systematic account of it put forward by the orthodox [Theravāda-] voice in the Debate section [of the *Upāsakajanālaṅkāra*; see below] is a matter for history and ethnography: but the coexistence is genuine, and the two ways of speaking are both deemed (by Buddhist systematic thought) to contain ‘truth’: [...] ‘both of these truths should be understood, without confusion’.”⁸⁵

Furthermore, what seems to be the point of departure for the different objectives of Buddhist and Western philosophy of the Self and PI, the often attested counter-intuitiveness of the Buddha’s doctrine of No Self (*anattā*), would also not trouble the believing Buddhist for

⁸⁴ B^e(R): *Samyuttanikāyo* > *Khandhavaggo* > 22. (1. *Bhārasuttam*) [= SN III 25,15-26,17]: *Sāvattthiyaṃ ... tatra kho... “bhāraṅca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi bhārahāraṅca bhārādānaṅca bhāranikkhepanaṅca. Taṃ suṇātha. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, bhāro? pañcupādānakkhandhā tissa vacanīyaṃ. Katame pañca? rūpupādānakkhandho, vedanupādānakkhandho, saññupādānakkhandho, saṅkhārupādānakkhandho, viññāṇupādānakkhandho ayaṃ vuccatī, bhikkhave, bhāro. “Katamo ca, bhikkhave, bhārahāro? puggalo tissa vacanīyaṃ. Yvāyaṃ āyasmā “evaṃnāmo evaṃgotto ayaṃ vuccatī, bhikkhave, bhārahāro. “Katamaṅca, bhikkhave, bhārādānaṃ? yāyaṃ taṅhā ponobhavikā [ponobbhavikā (syā. kaṃ. ka.)] nandīrāgasahagatā [nandīrāgasahagatā (sabbattha)] tatrataṅgābhīnandīnī, sey-yathidaṃ: kāmataṅhā, bhavataṅhā, vibhavataṅhā. Idaṃ vuccatī, bhikkhave, bhārādānaṃ. ...*

⁸⁵ Collins 1997: 477.

whom it is no wonder that it is counter-intuitive – for while impermanence (*anicca*) and unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) are apparent and universal existential facts, it needs a Buddha to disclose their ultimate selflessness (*anattā*).⁸⁶

Alongside the philosophical, systematic, or debate-manner of thinking about the Self and persons expressed in the canonical Buddhist literature (and even more so in the commentarial tradition), other forms of expression do exist, as has repeatedly been noticed and pointed out.

Steven Collins, in presenting the translation of “chapter 9 of the *Upāsakajanāṅkāra*, ‘A Treatise (lit. ‘Ornament’) for the Laity’, entitled ‘A Proof of Meritorious Deeds and their Results’”, a medieval (tentatively from the 12th century A.D.) Thai-Buddhist treatise for the laity, notes:

I believe [Jerome] Bruner (e.g. 1986, 1991) and others are right to see narrative as a mode of cognition different from logical operations but equally basic to human thinking – neither systematic nor narrative thought is reducible to the other – and I find this a helpful rubric under which to think about Buddhist intellectual history [...]

In the conceptual analysis of Buddhist systematic thought, and in the mode of psychological practice which goes with it (‘insight’ meditation), the person is deconstructed, broken down into what are seen as its constitutive parts, mental and physical. In exhortation, and the Buddhist narratives in which it is characteristically embodied [...], persons are addressed and described as unitary agents, albeit ones whose careers span multiple lifetimes.

Here, it appears that the reductionist view of the person as one mode of thinking in Buddhism serves foremost a practical purpose: its application in analytical or insight meditation.⁸⁷ Yet, as my analysis of the *suttas* of the *Majjhimanikāya* shows⁸⁸, more than half of all of the individual *suttas* in this collection exhibit, as self-contained texts, more narrative than argumentative elements, and are thus clearly to be understood as texts of the “Exhortation-Narrative” type that Collins describes.

That dividing line between “systematic” and “narrative” thought is manifest in the seemingly contradictory presentation of such a “natural” or intuitive understanding of persons, as I

⁸⁶ Cp. Collins 1994: 60.

⁸⁷ Even though the practice of meditation as such does not necessarily involve cogitation, insight meditation (*vipassanā*) is infused with “the three marks/characteristics of existence” (*tilakkhaṇas*), impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, No Self (*anicca, dukkha, anattā*).

⁸⁸ Cp. Galasek 2009: 91, n. 81.

call it, alongside the Buddha’s vehemence in teaching the (counter-intuitive) “selflessness” (*anattā*) of persons in many Pāli *suttas*. Again, Collins put it neatly:

[W]hile it is true that there is – in principle, as one too easily says – a mode of analysis which can dispense with reference to persons (that is, obviously, the Secondary theory analysis in terms of ultimate truth, ultimately real Existents [such as using the *khandhā* as a personality model]), such a reductionist discourse cannot serve the social, legal or behavioral purposes of the non-reductionist discourses which it can, in principle, replace. This is not simply because certain practical ends are not well achieved by Secondary theory language: such as, for example, trying to book a ‘table’ at a restaurant using the language of micro-physics to describe it. I think that consideration of this kind of case could show, eventually, that – to use Ian Hackett’s terms in a way he might not condone – there is no absolute distinction to be made between representing the world and intervening in it. It is a philosophical fiction (albeit perhaps a necessary and fruitful one) to think that there could be an activity of describing the world, leave alone one of describing it completely, which would have no effect in it.⁸⁹

Jumping back to Epicharmus, Martin and Barresi sum up the problem of PI in a similar way:

This very strict sense of same person is not an everyday notion but the product of a philosophical theory. It is also not a very useful sense of same person – unless you owe someone money! [...] In everyday life, we want to be able to say such things as, ‘I saw you at the play last night,’ and have what we say be true. If everyone is constantly changing and every change in a person results in his or her ceasing to exist, no such remarks could ever be true. Assuming that such remarks sometimes are true, there must be a sense of same person according to which someone can remain the same person in spite of changing. Saying what this sense is, or what these senses are, is the philosophical problem of personal identity.⁹⁰

Much more, of course, would remain to be said about the philosophical problem of PI, especially concerning an attempt towards a more unified theory of persons that could account for both “truths”, “conventional” and “ultimate”, to be true. However, that is beyond the scope of this study, and what has been said so far may suffice as a sketch of the problem.

⁸⁹ Collins 1997: 479.

³⁶ Martin & Barresi 2006: 3. Another way to disentangle the problem of ‘same person’ was offered by Mark Siderits; cp. Siderits 2009: 33f. He called this a “common misinterpretation” of the term self. The ordinary parlance in connection with what we assume to be our Self, what makes up our true identity, confuses two things: what we are in fact speaking of are the properties of the person that we are, and not of the Self the Buddha and Buddhists are talking about. The distinction that is crucial here, as Siderits writes, is that of qualitative and numerical sameness. The problem with the word ‘same’ in English is that it doesn’t express this (implied) distinction (unlike, for example, the German “*dasselbe*” and “*das gleiche*”, cp. *ibid.* 2009: 33, n.1). Of course, we are numerically the same person that is in debt to someone as the one who borrowed the money, although qualitatively we may have changed.

One thing remains, though, which is that the Buddha, with his radical analysis of the person, appears to be an original thinker comparable to Socrates, who is likewise held to have replaced mythical by more rational or perhaps “scientific” modes of thinking in his own system of teaching.⁹¹ But more than that, the historical Buddha is traditionally credited with having ‘only’ rediscovered and taught (*sāsana*, i.e. Gotama Buddha’s teaching) universal and eternal truths (*dhamma*). This bold Buddhist claim to universalism, which pervades the early Buddhist Canon, turned out to have the potential to make my search for individuals among the Pāli *suttas* at times fairly cumbersome. Yet, it would be premature to subscribe to the Reductionist version of the story of persons as mere “useful fictions”.

1.2 “Selfless Persons” or Impersonal Selves? Is the ‘Eastern Self’ peculiar?

The last mentioned Buddhist claim to possessing universal truths, raises yet another question concerning characters and persons that deserves being addressed here: Can one, apart from what has been said so far about Buddhism’s unique view of the Self, rightfully speak of the existence of a characteristically Eastern conception and understanding of the Self and the person and if, is it in any peculiar way distinct from a Western one?

Besides the philosophical discourses on the Self and self-concepts – different “*ātman*-theories” – there are other, partly related areas or levels of meaning of the notion ‘self’: the every-day-understanding and our day-to-day experience as being (though continuing) separate, distinct individuals; the social dimension of the self and persons; and the way we talk about persons, i.e. language-use or grammar.⁹² The second, and partly also the first, aspect was addressed in an illuminating essay of the anthropologist Melford Spiro from 1993, which gives a good overview of some contemporary anthropological attempts to tackle the problem of the (supposedly) different ideas about the notions person and self in different cultural settings. His essay was partly motivated by a challenging statement made by the famous anthropologist Clifford Geertz that “the

⁹¹ Cp. Gombrich 2009: 1 & 3f.; Martin & Barresi 2006: 9-14.

⁹² I owe this idea of “organising” and summarising the large field of the self-theories to Dr Jowita Kramer, Munich (personal communication). Intellectually, I also owe a lot to Steven Collins’s works, especially his *Selfless Persons*. I act on the assumption, though, that the book is widely known, and instead of tiringly repeating what he has said, I have rather restricted my account – which, however, I do not believe add any significant new insights – to what I thought relevant for my main line of enquiry, the representation of persons in Pāli *suttas*. See also Collins 1982, who has argued that terms designating persons or a substantial self of any sort, like *attā*, *puggala*, *purisa*, are tabooed in intellectual, specialist discourse (“linguistic taboo in specialist discourse”), while permitted in other, non-specialist kinds of discourse like narratives; cp. *ibid.*: 76ff.

Western self and/or cultural conception of the self is [...] ‘a peculiar idea within the context of the world cultures’⁹³. The question is relevant here for narratologists generally agree that the presentation of characters in the literature of a given culture is, among other things, dependent on the respective contemporary idea of man lying at the basis of that culture.

According to Spiro⁹⁴, the anthropological literature of a certain period (roughly speaking, around the mid-1980s) displays a considerable interest in the cross-cultural analysis of self-conceptions.⁹⁵ One may even wonder whether these findings have played a role in forging certain wide-spread stereotypes, as for instance, the notion that the history of Western societies and traditions is mainly characterised by explorations of the outside world, while Eastern (generally deemed to be more ‘spiritual’) cultures were always more interested in exploring “inner worlds”.⁹⁶

Spiro’s survey of “the contemporary [i.e. from the mid-1980s up to the publishing of his article in 1993] literature on the non-Western self”⁹⁷ leads him to state that instead of clarifying, these studies had even added to the problem by producing two basic sources of confusion. The first confusion was their terminological vagueness in employing the term ‘self’, which was often conflated with other terms such as person, individual, personality etc. and, secondly, their imprecise techniques of inquiry, which had to lead to conflicting interpretations.⁹⁸ Depending on their

⁹³ Spiro 1993: 143.

⁹⁴ Cp. Ibid.: 115.

⁹⁵ Cp. *ibid.*: 146, n. 3.

⁹⁶ Spiro does not argue, however, that no differences at all could be found between the different conceptions of persons or ideas of man in different cultures; cp. *ibid.*: 143. Cp. also Siderits 2010: 10f.: As Mark Siderits suggests, the differences might be grounded in the fact that in Western philosophical traditions the ‘representationalist theories’ were/are more prominent than in the east, where much of the debate was fought out between ‘direct (perceptual) realism’ and its rivals.

⁹⁷ Spiro 1993: 113.

⁹⁸ Cp. *ibid.*: 113.

methodological or disciplinary contexts, from among the fields of Theology, Philosophy, Psychology, and Anthropology, Spiro distinguishes altogether seven different usages of the term ‘self’ in the surveyed literature.⁹⁹

In summing up his analysis of the Western conception of the self, which reveals a basic dichotomy of strong individualism (“Western”) *versus* (social) interdependence (“non-Western”), Spiro draws the conclusion that such “[...] a typology of the self and/or its cultural conception, which consists of only two types, a Western and a non-Western, even if conceived as ideal types [in the Weberian sense], is much too restrictive”.¹⁰⁰

Spiro goes on to concretise these two problematic and confusing points in the anthropological studies of cross-cultural comparisons of self and person on the basis of two examples, Clifford Geertz’s “cultural symbols-approach” to aspects of the Balinese, Javanese and Moroccan cultures¹⁰¹, and the “experimental task-approach” in a comparative study based on the enquiry of Oriyans and Americans, in the latter of which the participants were asked to describe the personalities of their acquaintances, carried out by Richard A. Shweder and Edmund J. Bourne (1984). Spiro mainly criticises the following points: Both Geertz’s and Shweder & Bourne’s approaches fail in giving an adequate account of the peoples’ own, private ‘sense of self’, their ‘self-representation’. But, he concedes, they may very well have given accounts of how the investigated subjects see and designate their fellow-countrymen, and how they might present themselves to others, in short: their ‘self-presentation’.¹⁰² Spiro doubts that these methods are able to

⁹⁹ Cp. Spiro 1993: 114; Spiro identifies the following fields of meanings:

- “1. The person, or the individual, including the package of biological, psychological, social, and cultural characteristics by which he or she is constituted.
2. The cultural conception of the person or individual.
3. The cultural conception of some psychic entity or structure within the person, variously designated as “pure ego,” “transcendental ego,” “soul,” and the like.
4. The person’s construal of such an entity as the center or locus of his or her initiative, sensations, perceptions, emotions, and the like.
5. The personality or the configuration of cognitive orientations, perceptual sets, and motivational dispositions that are uniquely characteristic of each person.
6. The sense of self or the person’s awareness that he or she is both separate and different from other persons. The former is often referred to as “self-other differentiation,” the latter as “personal individuation.”
7. The self-representation or the mental representation of the attributes of one’s own person as they are known, both consciously and unconsciously, to the person himself or herself.”

¹⁰⁰ Spiro 1993: 117.

¹⁰¹ See Geertz 2003 (Spiro’s reference is to: Geertz, Clifford. 1984 [1974]. “From the Natives’ Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding.” In: Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. LeVine (eds.). 1994. *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 123-136.)

¹⁰² *Ibid.*: 122.

provide “access to the actors’ ‘subjectivities’”.¹⁰³ Instead, he suggests the following: “[I]t becomes necessary to study their subjectivities more directly (dare I say ‘clinically’?) – by probing interviews, behavioural observations, projective tests, dreams, and other personal productions – but this Geertz believes to be unnecessary”.¹⁰⁴

Apart from the problems that Spiro’s requirements pose to the historical linguist or literary scholar, to whom no living “subjects” and interviewees are available, it is Spiro’s expression, “the actors’ *subjectivities*”, that somewhat troubles me. Gaining access to those seems especially difficult, if not impossible, when working with pre-modern, non-European texts, written in a “dead” language. Therefore, we should now like to have a somewhat closer look at the developments in the European cultural sphere or context with regard to that term, ‘subjectivity’, for its significance for the analysis of character-presentation in Pāli *suttas*. In any case, as Steven Collins has carefully demonstrated in the use of imagery in Theravāda-Buddhism in *Selfless Persons*¹⁰⁵, for a study of the representation of persons in pre-modern, non-European texts to be taken seriously, one has to be careful not to inconsiderately impose concepts of one culture on phenomena found in another culture (that means, for instance, using the same terms for what might turn out to be different ideas), however similar they may appear. Therefore, one must briefly compare what the notion of person means in the contexts in question: the modern “Westerner” as reader of the Pāli *suttas*, and the pre-modern Indian Buddhists, as authors of the texts.

The roots of that modern notion of subjectivity must be sought, anthropologists agree, in ancient Rome – the Latin word *persona* is the direct ancestor of the English person (Ger. *Person*; Fr. *personne*, etc.). The word itself, *persona*, through Greek *prósopon* designating a role in a drama¹⁰⁶, may be ultimately of Etruscan origin, meaning “mask”.¹⁰⁷ It was in ancient Rome, the French sociologist and anthropologist Mauss wrote, that “[...] the ‘person’ (*personne*) [became] more than an organisational fact, more than a name or a right to assume a role and a ritual mask. It is a basic fact of law. In law, according to the legal experts, there are only *personae*, *res* and

¹⁰³ Spiro 1993: 123.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Cp. Collins 1982, especially chapter IV, ‘Continuity’.

¹⁰⁶ Cp. Martin & Barresi 2006: 29.

¹⁰⁷ Cp. Carrithers, Collins, Lukes 1985: 14f.

actiones: this principle still regulates the divisions between our codes of law. Yet this outcome is the result of particular evolution in Roman law.”¹⁰⁸

Mauss, comparing the development of the notion ‘person’ in different world cultures, saw a shared characteristic of the term in the early (that is to say, pre-Roman/Latin) stages of its development, in the individual’s being absorbed in its rank and its role within the clan – or societal hierarchy and structure.¹⁰⁹ In summary, in many ancient cultures of the world, the role and function, the rights and duties, the exact place in the societal hierarchy, and so forth, of the individual was deemed of utmost importance for the perpetuation of the natural order of things, even of life itself.¹¹⁰ The history of the modern individual may, then, somewhat superficially, be told as the history of the emancipation of man from a role and a function within a tightly knit clan-structure. Although one’s ancestral origins were still deemed important, the spirits of the dead ancestors (and their “reincarnations”) slowly began to disappear, and the free citizen, with rights and duties, and personal forenames, (except for the slaves!) emerged and “[a]long with them the word *persona*, an artificial ‘character’ (*personnage*), the mask and role of comedy and tragedy, of trickery and hypocrisy - a stranger to the ‘self’ (*moi*) - continued on its way. Yet the personal nature of the law had been established, and *persona* had also become synonymous with the true nature of the individual.”¹¹¹ Martin and Barresi want to locate the emergence of something similar to our modern understanding of individuality and individual characteristics as distinguishing features of persons in Roman Stoicism (and its Greek antecedents) with its emphasis on an individualised and “voluntarist” ethics (to be more precise, in the writings of Cicero, 106-43 B.C.).¹¹² In short, Mauss traces the development of the semantic content of *persona* from the original meaning “mask”/“superimposed image”, to the citizen as the legal person, then, extended it to the individual (the innermost person, “with every mask torn away”), and finally – before coming to

¹⁰⁸ Cp. Carrithers, Collins, Lukes 1985: 14. Martin & Barresi, however, want to attribute an emphasis on individualism to the period of decline of the Greek city-states, during/through which the ideas of the Cynics and the Stoics gained in importance and currency; cp. Martin & Barresi 2006: 29f.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.: 6: “Thus, in short, you will understand that with the Pueblo we already see a notion of the ‘person’ (*personne*) or individual, absorbed in his clan, but already detached from it in the ceremonial by the mask, his title, his rank, his role, his survival and his reappearance on earth in one of his descendants endowed with the same status, forenames, titles, rights and functions.”

¹¹⁰ Cp. Carrithers, Collins, Lukes 1985: 8.

¹¹¹ Ibid.: 17.

¹¹² Cp. Martin & Barresi 2006: 29ff. and the entire chapter 3. Cp. also Carrithers/Collins/Lukes 1985: 18.

Christianity's massive influence – via the Stoics, to contain the moral or ethical element of the “accomplice”, the “witness”, “the consciousness of good and evil”: “To functions, honours, obligations and rights is added the conscious moral ‘person’ (*personne*).”¹¹³ ‘Person’ as a metaphysical entity, then, is to enter the stage through Christianity. The modern understanding of ‘person’ is still very much determined by the Christian concept of it. Mauss summarises the result of that last but all the more decisive development into modernity neatly:

“The person is a rational substance, indivisible and individual [which is really a resurgence of Aristotelianism]. It remained to make of this rational, individual substance what it is today, a consciousness and a category.”¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Carrithers, Collins, Lukes 1985: 18f.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*: 20.

Here also, in modernity, came into being the merging of the ‘person’ with the category of the Self and its identification with “psychological consciousness” (M. Mauss).¹¹⁵

The culture in which the historical Buddha was born was dominated by Brahmanism,¹¹⁶ with its strict social class (Skt. *varṇa*) system, in which each individual was assigned a fixed place in society and the rights and duties that came with it (Skt. *sva-dharma*). Welfare and, in fact, the persistence of the world depended on the (correct) performance of the Vedic ritual and

¹¹⁵ Cp. also Jerold Seigel (2009), who has a lot more to say about the development of the ‘modern self’ in the Introduction of his book *The Idea of the Self*:

“[T]he nature and meaning of selfhood have been recurring questions, implicitly or explicitly, in practically every known human time and place. Nowhere has the debate been more full-blown or more intense than in the modern West, the locale in which individuality has been both most fervently celebrated and most ardently denounced. [...] More than any other world culture, the modern West has made the debate about individuality and selfhood a central question – perhaps the central question – of its collective attempts at self-definition. Hence, those who belong to this culture, or who are moved to conceive themselves in relation to it – even if the relation be one of rejection – have much reason to care about the self.” (pp. 3f.)

Since René Descartes and John Locke, three dimensions have been sought as basis of selfhood in Western culture: the

- 1) bodily/material,
- 2) relational, and
- 3) reflective dimensions. (p. 8)

Solutions to where exactly to locate that self, include the basic distinction between a one-dimensional self and a multi-dimensional self. The latter solution, the multi-dimensional self has the disadvantage that it is “subject to competing pressures and tensions” (cp. e.g. Sigmund Freud’s model of the self: *Es – Ich – Über-Ich*); the often sought-for one-dimensional self, entails “consistency and self-directedness” of an individual as a life-goal (this is where narrative comes into play as a way ‘to make sense’); the road to “pure, homogeneous selfhood” is, however, (empirically) often full of obstacles.

Nevertheless, “[a]n image of [...] a seamless [self]-existence [...]” comes up when the self is posited or sought only in one of the three dimensions (like, e.g., in the philosophy of R. Descartes). What determines whether the self is conceived of as one-dimensional or not, can already be the relationship between the three dimensions: does reflectivity dominate the other two, or is it dominated by one of them (pp. 12-44)? The important dimension of ‘reflectivity’ is defined by Seigel as “intellectual (= “a mental ‘thing’”), self-awareness in selfhood” (p.12); that difficult notion of self-awareness is often said to be possible to be itself made into the object of reflection (= “second order relationship”); that is its active (intentional) aspect; “[...] active attentiveness that establishes a new relationship, and sometimes a distance, between consciousness and its contents.” On the other hand, the term reflexivity (= “an involuntary action, an uncontrolled response to a stimulus”), is passive. In Western European languages, ‘self’ is reflexive, not reflective: Italian *même*, French *stesso*, Spanish *nismo* = “same”. Italian and French, e.g., have no separate term for (the) ‘Self’ (*l’io, je, le moi*). German and English “*selbst/self*” do often serve as reflexive pronouns without bearing any existential statement (cp. Collins: the same applies in Pāli!).

Connected with reflexivity is, of course, the notion of the subject, which is so important for the ‘modern self’: “A subject in this sense is an active agent, a thinker of thoughts, doer of deeds, a bearer of properties, identifiable through its relations to its contents and qualities, yet remaining independent of them, so it persists as they change and fall away.” (p. 14)

Etymologically, ‘subject’ means (from the Latin) “support”: “In ancient and medieval usage, it referred to any substance of which qualities could be predicated [...]. Only from around the seventeenth century did the term subject begin to have special reference to conscious beings [...].”

¹¹⁶ This is generally agreed upon among scholars of early Buddhism, except for a few, e.g., Johannes Bronkhorst, who asserts an altogether different cultural context, one hostile to Brahmanic culture, for the context from which the Buddha stemmed and in which he taught.

the strict compliance of individuals with the respective norms as established by the social order (which was, of course, conceptualised as divine, not as a practical human invention).¹¹⁷ With the Buddha and his radical emphasis on this-worldliness and personal responsibility, the notion of the subject and the individual and its role and place in society also changed. Most scholars agree that this altered role or understanding of the individual was itself facilitated or initiated by economic conditions, most of all division of labour, which led to a surplus in food supply, and urbanisation.¹¹⁸ The Buddha's emphasis on the individual and man's personal responsibility in finding salvation, I want to argue, is also remarkably reflected in many of the texts of the early Buddhists. Although Buddhist or, rather, Theravāda orthodoxy did its best to conceal this fact from us through artificially highlighting systematisations, lists of character-types (the *Puggala-paññatti*, for instance), and the doctrine of No Self (*anattā*), I think that we can nevertheless find passages that can corroborate the idea that at the Buddha's time, the concept of the individual as a (self-) conscious and autonomous moral agent, maybe not entirely dissimilar to some of the views addressed above, played no unimportant role – whether as consequence, for example of certain social developments or as introduced by the Buddha, however, I do not feel confident to decide. The internalisation of ritual procedures and the subsequent centrality of consciousness as the essential self or essence of the person was a process that had already begun in Brahmanic speculative thought (in the *Brāhmaṇas* and, most importantly, in the *Upaniṣads*).¹¹⁹ Although the Buddha took a different road concerning the Self, nevertheless the idea of the human being as centrally conscious (even though not in metaphysical terms) was carried further by the Buddha. The Buddha's (reformulation of the) theory of karma is the key to his whole conception of ethics and morals, and to the understanding of the individual. The specific Buddhist idea of man as reflected in the Canon of the early Buddhists is very much delineated, if not determined, by two basic concepts: karma and the stages of the spiritual path (we will see more about the latter soon). In a famous statement, the Buddha is reported to have said: “Intention/volition, monks, I

¹¹⁷ Cp. e.g. Collins 1982: Part I, ‘The cultural and social setting of Buddhist thought’. The famous *Puruṣa-Sūkta*, the 90th hymn in the tenth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*, for instance, describes the origin of the four *varṇas* or castes as sprung from the body of the cosmic *puruṣa*.

¹¹⁸ For a summary, see Gombrich 2009: 22ff. See also Bailey & Mabbett 2003.

¹¹⁹ Cp. Collins 1982: chapter 1 & pp. 78-81.

call action. Having intended [something], one acts by way of body, speech, and mind.”¹²⁰ The point here is not so much whether the Buddha wanted to say that action is really of a mental nature¹²¹, or (just) whether a physical action originates in consciousness as intention/volition, but that the statement points to the centrality of consciousness or mind in the Buddha’s/Buddhist conception of the person.

Furthermore, the monk is duty-bound to constantly review himself and his (physical, verbal, and mental) conduct.¹²² This naturally implies the element of reflexive awareness and thus, reflexive references to the person, as is evident through the frequent use of the word *attā*, “self” (*not* ‘Self’) in the *suttas* (as forms of “non-specialist discourse”).¹²³

In fact, the whole set of concepts related to the person, the individual as conscientious moral agent, as Mauss and others have identified as an important stepping stone in the development towards the modern conception of the person and the Self, was also characteristic of the Buddha’s system of ethics, as Collins has shown.¹²⁴

In any case, first an analysis of the texts is necessary (see Part III below), before picking this subject up again in the Conclusion.

In natural narratives, however, which are most often an emulation of real life and often based on the human experience of real life, the situation seems to be very similar – it simply and naturally serves the purpose of narrating a sequence of events occurring in time that, for instance, pronominal reference to an already introduced character is understood by the listener/reader to be to one and the same person introduced earlier. What is more, the notion of development of a literary character – the example *par excellence* being perhaps the Western genre of the coming-of-age novel – is entirely based on our everyday, intuitive understanding of the natural continuity of persons through time, and not on the philosophical notion of “same person”, and much less even

¹²⁰ AN III 410 (Nibbedhika Suttaṃ, AN 6.63): *Cetanā ’haṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi. Cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti kāyena vācāya manasā*. Cp. also Gombrich 2009: 49f.: “By karma I mean intention.”

¹²¹ S. Collins provides, although in a different context, an interesting example for this idea: Collins 1997: 71: “[F]or monks, sexual thoughts in dreams and nocturnal emissions, being as far as ordinary agency is concerned unintentional, do not breach monastic law (Vin III 39, 112, 116); but on the metaphysical-psychological level, they are counted as facts of residual desire, and so as actions (*karma*), which necessarily produce a karmic result (Sp 521, Mp III 3178, Vbh-a 408).”

¹²² Cp. Collins 1982: 75f. and specifically p. 76: “they contemplate themselves by themselves well’, or in reasonable English ‘they practice strict self-examination’ (*sādhukam attanā va attānam paccavekkhanti*) [...]”

¹²³ Cp. Collins 1982: 73f. & CPD s.v. *atta(n)* for references.

¹²⁴ Cp. *ibid.*: 73-76.

on any such philosophical approach to the problem. What self-theorists mean, then, by the term Self, is that the Self is that unchangeable “thing” or the ‘essence’ of our existence, which provides for our sense of diachronic continuity:

“We said above that according to the self-theorist, a self is what explains why some person existing now is the same person as someone who existed earlier. The key thing to keep in mind is that here ‘same’ is meant in the sense of numerical identity.”¹²⁵

Additionally, M. Siderits explains, qualitative identity does not require a Self, but a person with certain attributes or characteristics. This is a common misinterpretation of the term Self: To equate (a sense of) identity (that is, our properties) with ‘the Self’. Now, inventories of properties are different from culture to culture and in different historical periods. Those properties, then, are conventional, historically and culturally variable names for (personality) traits. However, these are, of course, not the traits proper. Among other things, trait names depend on contemporary ideas of man and conceptions of persons that are, in turn, influenced or even determined by different disciplines or social institutions like science or religion, which influence peoples’ lives according to their acceptance or predominance in a given culture¹²⁶ (remember that here we are not talking about the “sense of self”, which is innate!) So far so good; thus, literary character equals proper name plus properties. But, as straightforward as it seems, it does not always work out that easily.

The above discussions express, according to Spiro, conventional “cultural conception[s] of the person or individual”.¹²⁷ But, regardless of nationality, the manifold concepts of persons of the peoples and cultures in the world, as well as the learned discussions about the philosophical implications and intricacies of the notion of the Self, I am inclined to agree with Spiro, referring to the works of William James (1842-1910) and Alfred Irving Hallowell (1892-1974), that every (sound) human being naturally has some sense or experience of herself or himself as a distinct person through some sense of psychological unity or unity of consciousness:

“Thus, both James and Hallowell, respectively the preeminent psychological and anthropological (cross-cultural) theorists of the self (in my view at any rate), construe self-other differentiation, the

¹²⁵ Siderits 2009: 33.

¹²⁶ Cp. Chatman 1989: 124f.

¹²⁷ Spiro 1993: 114.

sense that one's self, or one's own person, is bounded, or separate from all other persons as a distinguishing feature of the very notion of human nature."¹²⁸

One indication for this to be true is reflected in the simple linguistic fact that many natural languages distinguish three grammatical persons, "I", "you", and "he/she", which means that in the experiential or conceptual sphere of human beings there exists a, however basic, form of self-other differentiation that "not only reflects, but also facilitates a clear separation of self and other in all societies".¹²⁹ In this regard it is also interesting to note that the differentiation of persons or characters and their recognition in the course of a story, and the linguistic devices allowing for it (appellations, naming, property-attribution/characterisation), constitute one large and elementary part of narratological analysis of characters in texts.¹³⁰ Talk of persons, even in Buddhist texts, thus, often has to resort to 'ordinary language', underlying which is often some kind of folk theory of persons.

Nevertheless, the single-most important characteristic of a "peculiar" modern – I doubt, however, that it is exclusively Western – understanding of the individual is perhaps the (modern) individual's situation of multi-fold inner conflicts, as it features in many or most works of the (post-)modern Western literary canon. Yet, an innate 'sense of self' seems to be a shared characteristic of all human beings, similar perhaps to the DNA. What is more, 'subjectivity' and 'reflectivity' can by no means be claimed the 'privilege' or 'invention' of Western Enlightenment culture alone, as Marcel Mauss, in fact, seemed to suggest, when he wrote:

"Who knows even whether this 'category', which all of us here believe to be well founded, will always be recognised as such? It is formulated only for us, among us. Even its moral strength - the sacred character of the human 'person' (personne) - is questioned, not only throughout the Orient, which has not yet attained the level of our sciences, but even in the countries where this principle was discovered. We have great possessions to defend. With us the idea could disappear. But let us refrain from moralising."¹³¹

In a most recent development, Analytical Philosophy and scholars of Buddhist Philosophy seem to jump enthusiastically at recent findings in the cognitive- and neuro-sciences. One

¹²⁸ Spiro 1993: 110.

¹²⁹ Ibid.: 110f.

¹³⁰ This will be dealt with in more detail below. Cf. also Jannidis 2004: 109ff.

¹³¹ Mauss in Carrithers, Collins, Lukes 1985: 22.

such finding, in my opinion, is especially useful in coming to terms with the relationship between the notions person and the Self: the notion of the ‘minimal self’. The main question that can be raised here is: “Is it possible to speak of a non-conceptual access to the self – a more primitive self-consciousness that does not depend on the use of a first-person pronoun [...]” – for the use of language already implicates the existence of concepts. Support for a possible answer to this question has most recently come from research in the behaviour of Neonates, which Gallagher summarises as follows:

“When I perceive objects or movement in the external environment, I also gain information about myself – information that is pre-linguistic and non-conceptual. This is what [Ulrich] Neisser calls the ecological self. The fact that non-conceptual, ecological self-awareness exists from the very beginning of life can be demonstrated by the important role it plays in neonatal imitation. Neonates less than an hour old are capable of imitating the facial gestures of others in a way that rules out reflex or release mechanisms, and that involves a capacity to learn to match the presented gesture. For this to be possible the infant must be able to do three things: (1) distinguish between self and non-self; (2) locate and use certain parts of its own body proprioceptively, without vision; and (3) recognize that the face it sees is of the same kind as its own face (the infant will not imitate non-human objects).”¹³²

Now, whether a ‘minimal self’ as a minimal subject of experience does exist and whether it is dependent on the brain or not, is certainly a further question. What it proves is, in any case, that a sense of self seems to exist prior to an infant’s learning of cultural concepts. Thus, while the person and the Self are culturally and historically variable theoretical concepts, the “minimal self”, which does not even need a ‘person’ to exist, appears to be a biological given (and perhaps a driving force behind the intuitive sense of self and our perceived continuity throughout much of later life?).¹³³

In summary, I agree with Collins that narrative accounts of persons are not just the poorer or naïve version of describing reality; it is not reducible to what has been described as the expert view of reality and called the Reductionist view of persons. Narrative and systematic thought are both genuinely human modes of expression – man is not reducible to being a “rational animal”

¹³² Gallagher 2000: 17.

¹³³ Cp. Mauss 1985: 3: “Let me merely say that it is plain [...] that there has never existed a human being who has not been aware, not only of his body, but also at the same time of his individuality, both spiritual and physical.”

(Aristotle) – and they are, in fact, unambiguously co-existent in the Buddhist literature and traditions. I agree with Sue Hamilton¹³⁴ that the Buddha has perhaps rather thought in processes and that the Reductionist view of persons (the five aggregates) ascribed to him was rather intended as a description of *how* a human being exists, in order to facilitate and understanding of those processes that are relevant to understand in order to reach enlightenment, instead of a full description of *what* a human being is. That a radically Reductionist view of persons, moreover, was maybe felt to be unsatisfactory (in any case it was often felt to be unpractical and counter-intuitive, as we have seen) from very early on, is perhaps betrayed by the great number – if one can believe numbers – of adherents of the *Pudgalavāda*.

Implicit in some Pāli *suttas* is what we may call a “natural” understanding or view of the empirical person, which involves continuity of some sort (effected through causation or ‘the law of karma’) over time as well as a basic sense of being an individual. As Collins has explained, that view of the “unenlightened man” of the person as a persisting psychological unity and the Buddhist intellectual tradition have been reconciled by the orthodox Theravāda tradition through the concept of the two truths. Moreover, conventional truth has been systematised in the concepts of *attabhāva* and *puggala*. Nevertheless, as Collins himself states, “although these meta-linguistic doctrines do succeed – given Buddhist presuppositions – in making a coherent whole of the Buddhist teaching, it can scarcely be denied that they have the flavour of rationalisations after the event, rather than an original and determining influence on the development of Buddhistic culture.”¹³⁵

What is certain, though, is the departure of the ancient Indian philosophical points of view on the subject from the European tradition concerning the idea of the innate ‘sense of a self’ to be an illusion, not worth pursuing or defining, because, according to most ancient Indian

¹³⁴ Cp. Hamilton 1996: XXIV: “And just as this ultimate experience [Nirvana] involves understanding of the nature of the human being and how he or she exists in *samsāra*, so, my research has found, the Buddha also teaches that the analysis of the human being into five *khandhas* is not an analysis of what the human being consists of, but of those processes or events with which one is constituted that one needs to understand in order to achieve enlightenment.”

¹³⁵ Collins 1982: 165.

spiritual or philosophical traditions from the context of the *samaṇa*-movement, what keeps people tied to the ever-revolving wheel of cyclic existence (*saṃsāra*).¹³⁶ Most of the western philosophical analyses, on the other hand, according to Siderits, seem to have (and still do) enter ‘the path’ of “[...] exploring this sense [of Self] and trying to find its underlying structure”.¹³⁷ For the Buddha, this view is not only mistaken but, more importantly, it leads to ever more suffering and into a “thicket of views, a wilderness of views”, instead of to liberation from suffering. The mistake, according to the Buddha, is not so much to think of oneself as an individual with certain properties and of a certain duration, but to think of these (individually assembled and appearing) constituents of oneself (*khandhā*) in terms of ‘being’ or existence, as something permanent, belonging to an underlying entity that exists ‘within’ or ‘beyond’ them, by which they are “taken up”, “assumed” or “clung to” (*upādāna-kkhandhā*). What there is, according to the Buddha’s insight, is an ever-changing flux of causally produced experiences, which does not necessitate any permanent, central, or separate subject of experience. (Similarly, it is perfectly sound and valid to say, “*It rains*”.) Sue Hamilton, in her insightful book, expresses this in the following manner:

“And just as this ultimate experience [Nirvana] involves understanding of the nature of the human being and how he or she exists in *saṃsāra*, so, my research has found, the Buddha also teaches that the analysis of the human being into five *khandhas* is not an analysis of what the human being consists of, but of those processes or events with which one is constituted that one needs to understand in order to achieve enlightenment.”¹³⁸

Along this line of thought, the unwillingness to engage in philosophical debate ascribed to the Buddha is well-known. For the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the *Aggivacchagotta Sutta* (MN 72) and

¹³⁶ Cp. Siderits 2010: 3. How this idea came about and why it became so influential in India from the time of the *Upaniṣads* onward has as yet not sufficiently been explained; cp. Horsch 1957: 62-70. This idea seems not to have been around in the Vedic context, where the idea was rather prevalent that life is periodically rejuvenated through ritual actions (Skt. *karma*). Sought after in this context was the more life-affirming wish to gain a “full life[-span] (Skt. *sarvam āyus*, usually said to accord circa to 100 years) in this very existence.

The last phase of the Brahmanical tradition, the formation of the *Upaniṣads* as the last limb of Vedic literature, saw the emergence of an anti-Brahmanical, renunciatory *samaṇa*-culture, “peripatetic, mendicant, and celibate wanderers” (Hamilton 2001b: 35; cp. also Gombrich 2006b: 57f.), whose main concern was to “understand the nature of the world and the nature of the human being, expressed in terms of selfhood” (Hamilton 2001b: 38). The Buddha’s position might have been one of the most radical of these positions, in that he vehemently denied the reality of the Self.

¹³⁷ Siderits 2010: 3.

¹³⁸ Hamilton 1996: XXIV (Introduction).

the *Cūḷamāluṅkya Sutta* (MN 63) both present a list of ten “undeclared (*avyākata*) questions”¹³⁹, and presented in the latter is also the famous simile of the man shot by an arrow, who, instead of calling on the doctor to quickly remove the arrow, would first want to enquire all kinds of irrelevant facts about the man who had shot the arrow and why, and so forth. Some argue that to that list perhaps an eleventh item could be added. A passage in the *Samyutta Nikāya* seems to bear witness to the view that the Buddha may have included speculations about the existence or non-existence of a Self as among the questions he deemed pointless to pursue. In the *Atthattam Sutta*, SN IV 400f., the Wanderer Vacchagotta approaches the Blessed One and asks him: “What is it, then, friend Gotama, does the Self exist?” When the Buddha remains silent, Vacchagotta asks whether the Blessed One thought, then, that the Self did not exist. A second time the Buddha remains silent, whereupon Vacchagotta leaves.¹⁴⁰ Asked shortly thereafter by Ānanda, why he had not answered Vacchagotta’s questions, the Buddha says that answering them in a positive or a negative way would have meant to either subscribe to “the view of eternalism” (*sassatavāda*) or to “the view of annihilation” (*ucchedavāda*) held by some ascetics and Brahmins. What is more, the Buddha continues, if he had answered that a Self exists, that would contradict his knowledge (teaching) expressed in the words, “All phenomena are not-self” (*sabbe dhammā anattāti*). If, on the other hand, he had said that the Self did not exist, that would have caused even more confusion for the poor, already confused Vacchagotta (who obviously, according to this passage, adhered to a view that affirmed the existence of Self). So, on one line of the argument, the passage

¹³⁹ MN I 426,9-16: *Yān’ imāni diṭṭhigatāni bhagavatā avyākatāni ṭhapitāni paṭikkhittāni: sassato lokotipi, asassato lokotipi, antavā lokotipi, anantavā lokotipi, taṃ jīvaṃ taṃ sarīrantipi, aññaṃ jīvaṃ aññaṃ sarīrantipi, hoti tathāgato paraṃ marañātīpi, na hoti tathāgato paraṃ marañātīpi, hoti ca na ca hoti tathāgato paraṃ marañātīpi, neva hoti na na hoti tathāgato paraṃ marañātīpi: tāni me Bhagavā na byākaroti*, “The Blessed One has not made clear to me the following views, which are [left] undeclared by the Blessed One, set aside, refused [to be answered]: ‘The cosmos is eternal,’ ‘the cosmos is not eternal,’ ‘the cosmos is finite,’ ‘the cosmos is infinite,’ ‘the life-principle (jīva) and the body are the same,’ ‘the soul is one thing and the body another,’ ‘after death a Tathāgata exists,’ ‘after death a Tathāgata does not exist,’ ‘after death a Tathāgata both exists and does not exist,’ ‘after death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist.’” Cp. also the *Avyākata Samyutta*, (44th section of the SN, SN IV 374; see also Cousins 2005: 87f. & 92-95.

¹⁴⁰ One has to note here that, according to ancient Indian etiquette, remaining silent was a way to give one’s consent to a proposal.

expresses that there is no benefit whatsoever in engaging in speculations about the existence or non-existence of a Self.¹⁴¹

Spiro leads one to conclude that it is useful, as a working hypothesis, to keep the distinction between the notions ‘Self’ and ‘person’ or ‘personality’ – the latter being perhaps the broader term and the (wrongly understood) “carrier of the load”, that entails all the culturally variable personality concepts and ideas of man. Thus, ‘Self’ shall be used for all kinds of metaphysical speculations about an essence of the individual, whereas ‘the sense of self’ (being an individual characterised by the broad characteristics of having an outer appearance and an inner life), in a strict and limited sense, should be kept to designate the basic condition of being human, which does not change inter-culturally. Buddhist thinkers, ancient and modern, therefore, contend that it is perfectly reasonable to drop the (permanent) Self while keeping the person.¹⁴²

Thus, while it may be the business of philosophy to exactly determine and define “the sense according to which someone can remain the same person in spite of changing”¹⁴³, it should be clear that everyone possesses a very natural and sufficient working notion of that “sense” in order to talk meaningful about persons, however underdeveloped or under-defined, or refined, that sense may be. And what is more, in this regard, there do not seem to be substantial differences between Eastern and Western persons and their representations as we have seen (i.e. there seems to be a certain shared basic understanding of what a person is and how it appears, as a human being, discernibly individual, with an outer (human) appearance and an inner life, which finds its expression in culturally and historically variable terms).

What concerns Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia, finally, as anthropological and other studies have shown¹⁴⁴, is the more or less clear-cut dichotomy of ideology (the intellectual and analytical Buddhist teachings of *anattā* of the expert or “religious virtuoso”) and praxis (the lived reality of the non-specialist Buddhist lay person or common monastic). When looking at

¹⁴¹ On the other hand, paradoxically, this opens the door to all sorts of speculations (“Well – the Buddha has not affirmed the existence of a Self, but he has not denied it either!”). The Pudgalavādins, as can be gleaned from the *Abhidhamma*-work *Kathāvatthu* (Kv, *Puggala*-chapter), have carried the argument further, and pointed to the logical problems involved in strictly denying or affirming the existence of the person beyond bodily death (i.e. the *puggala* being either identical with or different from the *khandhā*); cp. Cousins 2005: 92-96. However, these specialist discussions are beyond the scope of this thesis.

¹⁴² Cp. e.g. Vasubandhu in Duerlinger 2003 and Collins 1982.

¹⁴³ Martin & Barresi 2006: 3.

¹⁴⁴ Cp. Spiro 1970; Gombrich 1991; Collins 1982: chapter 2, ‘Varieties of Buddhist discourse’. Spiro 1970

the latter, the sense of self and personal continuity appears ubiquitous and culture-transcending, “wired” through the way human perception and human brains function, as is suggested by more recent research in the neuro-sciences¹⁴⁵. Moreover, the Buddha may not have denied *the self* as a psychological centre of the person¹⁴⁶, but he certainly preferred to remain silent with regard to metaphysical speculations concerning *the Self* as an entity. The *suttas* explicitly state he regarded speculating over the Self as useless with regard to what his main concern was, namely, deliverance from continuous cyclic existence (*nibbāna*), which he had explained to be a whole “mass of suffering” (*dukkha-khandha*). Steven Collins exemplifies the point well: “Buddhist monks as social agents, therefore, are unitary and enduring persons. It is not simply a convenient (or “conventional”) fiction to use ordinary language to refer to such persons”¹⁴⁷, and I would extend his judgment to narratives and all persons occurring in them: Reductionist discourse can replace – except “*in principle*” – neither narrated nor experienced reality of individuals. With these remarks we can leave the philosophical aspects of persons, and go on to explore the methodical underpinnings of this study of characters in ancient Buddhist *suttas*.

The following main part of this study, then, is concerned with individuals and the way they are represented in narrative *suttas* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. This study’s main interest and focus of inquiry, however, lies in the modes of representation of the characters in the *suttas*. This interest entails a closely text-oriented approach (‘close reading’). This approach implicates the understanding, common to most of the different narratological theories, approaches and models, that it is impossible to talk about characters in narratives without analysing what is stated about them on the text’s “surface-level” (the ‘level of discourse’).¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Cp. Gallagher 2000.

¹⁴⁶ It is noteworthy, nevertheless, that the *khandha* of consciousness is on equal footing with the other aggregates of the empirical person, and is not singled out to a more prominent or dominant position, as is the case in our modern understanding of consciousness.

¹⁴⁷ Collins 1997: 69. The quote in fact, most interestingly for my purposes here, continues: “There is, *in principle*, an analysis of such agency which can dispense with reference to persons, but such a reductionist discourse cannot serve the social, legal, or behavioral purposes of the nonreductionist discourse which it can, *in principle*, replace. There are, likewise, many kinds of Buddhist literature in which the identity and agency of monks are depicted as being those of recognizable named individuals; this literature simply could not exist as reductionist discourse. [...] In narratives, whether canonical or commentarial stories, *Jātaka*-s or *Apadāna*-s (stories of the past lives of the Buddha and of famous monks and nuns), or other texts, it is obviously a constitutive necessity that characters appear and act as persons, albeit persons whose karmic identity can be carried across different lifetimes.”

¹⁴⁸ Cp. Neumann & Nünning 2008: 52: “In order to find out what traits and properties a certain character has and what claims can be made about him or her, there is only one avenue to pursue: inquire what is explicitly stated in the text and what can be inferred from it.”

Part II

2. Narratology

“[I]f narrative is as basic a cognitive process as the logical operations of systematic thought, and if narratives predominantly – perhaps always – require continuous and coherent characters, then we clearly cannot describe the world completely without referring to persons.”¹⁴⁹

I hope to have successfully prepared the ground in the foregoing chapter to argue for two things: First, that narrative is not merely the “Idiot’s Guide” to the world in absence of a more sophisticated, more intellectual expert-knowledge of “[...] whatever holds the world together in its inmost folds” (J. W. v. Goethe). Narrative is one of mankind’s very own ways of making sense of and explaining the world and their own part in it – man is, besides so many other things, the “story-telling animal”¹⁵⁰. Humans learn best through experience, and narration in emulating real life may be said to be a form of experience. Moreover, even highly abstract scientific publications, say, about Quantum physics, need to resort to ‘ordinary language’ in order to communicate their findings.

We have seen in Part I, following S. Collins, how Buddhism on the level of technical, specialist-discourse, conceives of persons respectively individuals in a “category-analytic” (S. Collins) way, in terms of physical and mental processes, because that serves the underlying strategy of the Buddha’s whole endeavour: reaching *nibbāna*. Other types of discourse, though, for instance narratives, cannot do without reference to enduring individuals as psychological unities. Literary characters stand structurally at the intersection of a net of possible relations and layers of meaning constituted by the narrative text. The main objective now is to adequately describe, analyse, and interpret – quite differently from a traditional Theravāda-approach – the way persons are depicted or represented in the *suttas*. To this end, an introduction to a method of textual analysis which accounts for the multivalent phenomenon that narrative characters are needs to be given. The Conclusion will evaluate the additional implications that the resulting findings may have for the understanding of persons in the narrative traditions of the context of early Buddhism.

¹⁴⁹ Collins 1997: 478.

¹⁵⁰ Neumann & Nünning 2008: 8: “Tom Crick, the narrator of Graham Swifts novel *Waterland* (1983), emphasises the indispensable value of narratives for the interpretation of reality when he characterises man as a “story-telling animal”. The “story-telling animal” is obviously an allusion to Aristoteles’ notorious definition in his *Metaphysics* of human as “the rational animal”.

I presuppose two things here: First, that the *suttas* of the *Sutta Piṭaka* are *all* narrative texts to a greater or lesser degree, and, consequently, that the analytical categories of structuralist narratology, although developed on the basis of the modern European literary canon, can nevertheless be adequate tools for the analysis of pre-modern Indian texts.¹⁵¹ These closed texts, that is, having a proper narrative (and at times dramatic) structure with beginning and ending, contain as their contents kaleidoscopic representations of the world of ancient India around the 5th century B.C. and the doctrines of early Buddhism. The form through which this content is conveyed is that of narrative. Narratives may easily *contain* even lengthy “sermons”, discourses, dialogues, discussions and so on, but by their overall structure they are still narratives.¹⁵² This furthermore implicates that I regard the *suttas* to be coherent texts, that is, to borrow a famous phrase from James Phelan, that *qua* narrative [they] “can be fruitfully understood as a rhetorical act: somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose(s) that something happened”.¹⁵³

Although the “invention” of narratology, or rather the coining of the term, lies in the late sixties¹⁵⁴ of the last century and we speak of the ‘narrativist turn’ of the nineties, we should not forget that the concern for narratives and narrative devices is really “an old hat”, going probably

¹⁵¹ I have put forth in detail and exemplified my arguments in Galasek 2009.

Someone might object whether this is methodologically the right road to pursue. For the time being I *a priori* regard most of the descriptive categories of structuralist narratology to be at least equally adequate tools for the analysis and description of culturally and temporally remote pre-modern Indian texts as the terms and definitions of Greek Rhetorics (as, e.g., Jan Gonda and Georg von Simson applied them have applied them in their works). One could also argue that the methods of the historical-critical method are ‘violating’ pre-modern Indian texts, because it is, firstly, “borrowed” from the classics, and secondly is the idea behind it alien to the Indian tradition itself.

¹⁵² Cp. Schmid 2010: 5ff. whether a text is termed narrative or descriptive is not a matter of proportions but dependent on its overall structure. Even a text containing lengthy descriptive passages can still be a narrative text. Cp. also Dietrich Weber’s ‘basic principles of narratives’ (“*Grundsätze zum Erzählen*”); cp. Weber 1998.

¹⁵³ Phelan 2005: 18.

¹⁵⁴ Cp. Nünning, Ansgar: “Towards a Cultural and Historical Narratology: A Survey of Diachronic Approaches, Concepts, and Research Projects”. In: Reitz & Rieuwerts. 2000. *Anglistentag: Proceedings of the Conference of the German Association of University Teachers of English, Mainz, 1999*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier: 345–373, p. 345.

as far back in time as Plato and his differentiation of *mimesis* and *diegesis hapsle* (which stand for “characters” and “narrator’s speech” – essential terms still in use today).¹⁵⁵

We owe most of the definitions in the “narratological tool-box” to Gérard Genette’s structuralist taxonomy, that he developed during his analysis of Marcel Proust’s magnum opus *À la recherche du temps perdu*.¹⁵⁶ Although Genette’s categories are for their part considered “an old hat” within the now widely out-branched field of narrative theories and their practical applications, it nevertheless remains *the* “toolbox”; Genette remains indispensable for anyone who wants to work systematically with narrative texts and narratology – although he does give people a run for their money. The literary theorist James Phelan writes humorously in the Preface to his book *Living to Tell About It* about his experiences in years using Genette’s narratological nomenclature:

“[...] Genette’s more precise terms have not caught on beyond the field of narratology; they have even proved to be infelicitous coinages for most other contemporary critics in the United States. Indeed, experience has taught me that these terms have the unfortunate effect of making the eyes of non-narratologists glaze over – or, if used in combination with other narratological neologisms (‘there’s a parapsis in the proleptic homodiegesis’), making some think they should call 911.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Plato, *Republic*, III 392c-394b; cp. De Jong 2004: 2-5: ‘dramatic’ vs. ‘narrative’ mode of presentation. Plato’s differentiation of *mimesis* vs. *diegesis hapsle* = modern: “telling” vs. “showing”. Between these poles narratological analysis distinguishes a wider range of “shades of grey” for the representation of events, speech, and consciousness (Cp. Neumann & Nünning 2008: 108, fig. 6.1). Cp. also Genette 1990: 42f.: “Like every verbal act, a narrative can only inform – that is, transmit meanings. Narrative does not ‘represent’ a (real or fictive) story, it *recounts* it—that is, it signifies it by means of language—except for the *already verbal* elements of the story (dialogues, monologues). And these, too, it does not imitate—not, certainly, because here it cannot, but simply because it need not, since it can directly reproduce them or, more precisely, transcribe them”. Cp. this to Goetsch 1985: 202: “*Mündlichkeit in geschriebenen Texten ist nie mehr sie selbst, sondern stets fingiert und damit eine Komponente des Schreibstils und oft auch der bewußten Schreibstrategie des jeweiligen Autors.*”

¹⁵⁶ The work in which his special nomenclature is demonstrated is Genette 1980, which has been “outsourced”, as it were, from his multivolume work *Figures*, and the English translation of which (*Narrative Discourse: An essay in method*) is perhaps his best known book. It had a follow-up, which was basically a reply to his critics, in 1990 (= *Narrative Discourse Revisited*).

¹⁵⁷ Phelan 2005: xi (Preface).

Nevertheless, the big advantage of Genette's system for describing narrative situations (and perhaps an unintended consequence) lies in the fact that his categories are more freely combinable to suit different kinds of narrative.¹⁵⁸

Genette was the first to propose the term 'narrative levels' and put forward a model of three such levels: the narrating, the very act of recounting the story, which is the "totality of the narrated events" (for which Genette also uses the term *diegesis*), which leads to the narrative or the "oral or written discourse that narrates the events".¹⁵⁹ Since narrating and narrative happen wholly simultaneously "in its earliest occurrence", the difference between narrative (Fr. *histoire*) and narrating (Fr. *narration*) is more one of aspect than of time: narrating designates the pragmatic aspect or the actual situation in which a discourse is uttered. Technically, there is an important difference between non-fictional narratives and fictional narratives: In a work of fiction this situation is of course fictive, imaginary. In a non-fictional text, say, the work of a historian, the story occurs first in (real) time and space but only through the "narrative act of the historian" the narrative comes into being. In a fictional work, on the other hand, the story and the narrative are "born" simultaneously in the very act of narrating. However, considering the product, or the discourse/narrative, there is no difference concerning the structure of the narrative transmission. This observation has let narratologists and some historians (e.g. Hayden White) to the statement that the distinction between purely fictional and purely non-fictional texts is rather a "fictive" differentiation of ideal types. In reality, we always have a mixed bag. This becomes especially problematic when no or only scanty external referents and evidences survive to prove the statements made in a text. However, there are also other narratologists who refuse the "mixed-bag conception" (Wolf Schmid). As soon as one enters the text-world of any narrative text, they propose, one enters a fictional realm, which is ontologically different, and separate, from the real world (e.g. must the character Napoleon in Tolstoy's novel *War and Peace* not be put on a level with the historical figure Napoleon Bonaparte¹⁶⁰). Be that as it may, the understanding of Genette's tripartite model is crucial for a narratological analysis of texts. This is a basic sketch of the narrative/communicative levels:

¹⁵⁸ In contrast, e.g., to Franz K. Stanzel's typological circle of the 'three typical narrative situations', which he created empirically on the basis of what he found in the Western literary canon of novel literature; cp. Strasen, Sven: "Zur Analyse der Erzählsituation und der Fokalisierung". In: Wenzel 2004: 113-120.

¹⁵⁹ Genette 1980: 13.

¹⁶⁰ Schmid 2008: 39.

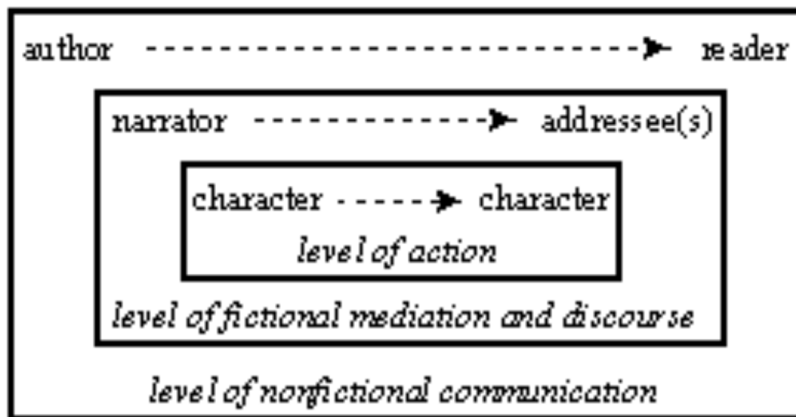


Fig. 1: Communication levels in narratives (source: Manfred Jahn, <http://www.uni-koeln.de/~ame02/pppn.htm>)

It is an interesting feature of the Pāli *suttas* that they share an important structural feature with fictional texts. In narrative theory, this is called a ‘doubled communication situation’ (“*doppelte Kommunikationssituation*”).¹⁶¹ The definition, in the words of the slavacist Wolf Schmid is as follows:

¹⁶¹ However, this is not a proof for the fictional status of the texts. On this subject, the question of fictionality in the Pāli *suttas*, I had a brief discussion with Wolf Schmid, narratologist and Professor emeritus of Slavonic studies at the University of Hamburg (E-mail correspondence from 6th February 2011). I give here an English translation of Schmid’s answer to me:

“Your interesting question touches on a tricky problem, and I will briefly outline the theoretical context. Your texts are without doubt narrative texts. Moreover, they appear as if they were fictional, such as the parables in the New Testament, for instance. Fictionality, however, does not mean so much in this case, for that status can equally be assigned to the examples in didacticism (i.e., e.g., in a math book, a joke, in a solemn speech, etc.) It would perhaps be useful to distinguish between didactic and artistic fictionality.

Yes, fictional narrative tends to form a doubled communication situation, so that the narrating and its enunciator (the narrator) appear as (mimetically) constructed. The reverse, however, is most probably not the case/true [i.e. the conclusion that any text that shows a doubled communication situation must be fictional]. Moreover, doubled communication situations in a factual context are nevertheless conceivable: A (= author) tells how B (= narrator) has told something. Narrators are of course conceivable in any everyday-speech contexts. Therefore, one cannot extrapolate from a doubled communication situation to fictionality.

I cannot therefore agree with your conclusion: “That would mean that, *because* of the criterion of the doubled communication situation, in the case of the Pāli *suttas* we are dealing with fictional texts?!”

A fictional status can, if other unique features such as the ones defined by E. M. Forster and Käte Hamburger, namely access to the mind/mental states of the characters in the third person, probably only be assigned through the pragmatological aspect of the speech situation and the context. What would be lost for you if you dropped the theory of fictionality, just stated the doubled communication situation and focused on the relationship between the narrator’s and the character’s speech instead?”

“[...] the narrative work does not just narrate, but represents an act of narration: the narrator’s communication in which the narrated world is created is part of the fictive represented world, which is the object of the real author’s communication.”¹⁶²

In summary, although *structurally* the *suttas* show a doubling of the communication situation, they are not strictly works of fiction, i.e. intentionally fictive, imaginative creations of a single mind: an author.

However, for the *suttas*, we have to extend this model to include one more level which oscillates, as it were, between the extra-textual (author – reader) and the intra-textual (narrator – addressee) realm, namely, where we have a real person (*bhāṇaka*) reciting or reading the text aloud for a real audience. In the case of the *suttas*, the *bhāṇaka* must not be confused with either the author or the narrator!

I shall now give a very brief overview over narratology’s nomenclature according to Genette’s system, which uses relational grammatical terms, and a very short introduction to narratological textual analysis. For the sake of clarity, I present them first in tabular form:

Time: (Relations of chronology between story and discourse)

- Order (chronological, analepsis (“flashback”), prolepsis (“flashforward”))
- Duration (scene, stretch, summary)
- Frequency (singulative, iterative, repetitive)

Mode:

- Distance (‘showing’ vs. ‘telling’)
- Focalization (fixed, variable, multiple)

Voice: (narrative instance/ ‘narrator’)

- Time of the narration (relation between the time of narration and the narrated events)
- Communication level (extra-, intradiegetic)
- Presence on the level of the characters/diegesis (homo-, heterodiegetic)
- Degree of explicitness (covert/neutral; overt/explicit)

¹⁶² Schmid 2010: 33.

‘Discourse’, or the level of mediation, is analysed and described using the following categories¹⁶³: The temporal organisation (Fr. ‘*temps*’) fundamentally describes the ratio of ‘narrative time’ (= “time of *discours*”) and ‘narrated time’ (= “time of the *histoire*”), for which order, duration and frequency of events are analysed. Mood (‘*mode*’) is basically perceived as the “regulation of narrative information”. Its modalities are ‘distance’ (= degree of ‘mediatedness’: ‘dramatic’ vs. ‘narrative’ mode of presentation, for which the Anglo-American tradition has coined the terms “showing” and “telling”)¹⁶⁴, and the so-called ‘focalization’, which determines the perception instance from which the narrated is perceived of the narrative (‘narrative perspective’; Ger. “*Erzaehlperspektive*”), Engl. ‘point of view’), and about which there is more to say later. Eventually, the category ‘voice’ (‘*voix*’) or the Narrating Instance, gives answer to the question about the ‘explicit’ or ‘implicit’ narrator, the ‘enunciator’ of the text, and includes the hierarchy of narrative levels (= ‘primary, secondary, or tertiary narrator’) of these instances, as well as the degree of involvement the narrator has with the narrated events. Genette has coined the term “extradiegetic level” for the manifestation of the narration in the form of a text. According to the terms ‘extra-’ and ‘intra-diegetic’ when referring to the levels of enunciation in narratives, Genette terms the narrating instances of the respective levels accordingly: the narrator at the extradiegetic level is heterodiegetic when he/she is situated ‘outside’ of the diegesis (which is, according to that terminology, the intradiegetic level). If a story occurs within a story, Genette calls this level metadiegetic¹⁶⁵. The defining feature of narrative levels is the change in the enunciator of the respective discourse. Genette’s definition is as follows:

“We will define the difference in level by saying that any event a narrative recounts is at a diegetic level immediately higher than the level at which the narrating act producing this narrative is placed.”¹⁶⁶

In other words, the crucial point is to determine the respective “locus” of the narrating and the relationship with the narrative. The *sutta*-narrator, as we will see, is an extradiegetic (he

¹⁶³ Cp. Genette 1980: 29-32.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.: 162.

¹⁶⁵ Genette’s terms have repeatedly been criticised for several reasons. Mieke Bal, e.g., suggested the term *hypodiegetic* for Genette’s *meta-diegetic*, and in fact, in terms of a hierarchy of the narrative levels or ‘levels of enunciation’, it would make more sense to speak of the levels that are dependent on the ‘first narrative’ (i.e. Genette’s *extra-diegetic* level) as subordinated – thus, *hypo-*^o. However, Bal’s suggestion causes more problems than it solves, which is why here I stick to Genette’s terminology.

¹⁶⁶ See Genette 1980: 228-234.

enunciates the diegesis), heterodiegetic narrator (he does not appear as a character in the diegesis). More applications of this rather hairy category will appear in the analyses of the *suttas* in Part III.

2.1 Focalization

According to some narratologists ‘mediacy’ (“*Mittelbarkeit*”), or the presence of a mediating instance between an author and the narrated world, is regarded as the defining characteristic of narrativity.¹⁶⁷ The underlying idea here is that what constitutes the nature of narrative is a “mediation process” which does not present the world as it really or objectively is, but as “filtered” through a human or human-like (a narrator’s or a character’s!) mind.¹⁶⁸ Consequently, the narrative technique of focalization plays an important role in the narratology of characters in general and techniques of characterisation in particular.¹⁶⁹

“[F]ocalization ‘is the submission of (potentially limitless) narrative information to a perspectival filter.’ In the case of focalization the reader typically becomes a witness of a character’s experiences and not the narrator’s communicative addressee.”¹⁷⁰

Ordinarily, to have a certain perspective is a natural occurrence for human beings, a given. Human perception (and that of all other animals) as a source of knowledge about the world is naturally perspective-bound. An “Olympic narrative perspective” (i.e. the “omniscient narrator”, or ‘zero-focalization’ according to Genette), by contrast, is not natural or biologically possible under normal circumstances. It is an artificial construct existing only in literature. The literary term ‘perspective’ or – as Gerard Genette has clarified – ‘focalization’, still carries the danger of being slightly misleading. The term ‘perspective’, as it is widely used in the analysis of literature, is really a state of knowledge including, but not exclusively bound to, sense-perception.¹⁷¹ Our perceptions of, and concepts about, the world and other beings are influenced, if not determined, physically by our stance, i.e. having a physical body and sense-functions. On the side of the

¹⁶⁷ This view is said to be prevalent mainly among the German literary theorists, “long before the term *narratology* was introduced to describe it.” (Schmid 2010: 1). For other views on what constitutes narrativity, see Schmid 2010: ch. I.1.

¹⁶⁸ Cp. Schmid 2010: 1, esp. the quotes from Käte Hamburger on that page.

¹⁶⁹ Cp. also Grabes 1978: 422.

¹⁷⁰ Neumann & Nünning 2008: 95, quoting Manfred Jahn.

¹⁷¹ Cp. Genette 1980: 185-212.

mind, there are perspectives, too, dependent on what people have experienced, learned and made their beliefs in the course of their lives. Under normal conditions people cannot just change, for instance, their visual perspective in real life. However, one of the functions and benefits of literature is that it provides us with access to the stances, perceptions, and perspectives *of others* – “to put oneself in someone else’s shoes”, as the phrase goes.

The term ‘focalization’ was coined by Gérard Genette, who pointed out that in the existing theories of point of view, there was a basic confusion of two different things or actions. He resolved the problem by distinguishing ‘voice’ from ‘focalization’: The former term provides an answer to the question “Who speaks?” while the latter gives an answer to the question “Who sees/perceives?”. As a definition one could say that a ‘focalizer’ is “[...] a psychological centre of orientation through whose perception and consciousness the fictional events are filtered before they reach the reader. Focalizers present narrative information through the filtering and colouring devices of their minds – [...]”¹⁷² Genette’s model has been highly influential, although it was also criticised and often modified, specifically by Mieke Bal, to the great displeasure of Genette.¹⁷³ He distinguishes three types: (1) ‘zero focalization’, which means that no restriction of perspective occurs (= “omniscience”), (2) ‘internal focalization’, i.e., the limitation of the perspective to a character, and (3) ‘external focalization’, in which the only possibility is the view of the outside of the characters (no inner life is portrayed). In combination with the two possible narrator-positions in relation to the narrative level (‘extra-, intradiegetic), six different types are thus possible.

The slavacist Wolf Schmid¹⁷⁴ has more recently offered his own model of narrative point of view: he distinguishes space, ideology (judgement), time, language, and perception as parameters of the notion of perspective, and forms his categories accordingly. He is thus able to add more scope and flexibility to the concept. However, for practical purposes, he states that the parameters of perception, ideology, and language (in this order) are the most common and the most important ones. He has criticised Genette’s model quite convincingly in several aspects, which does not mean, however, that Genette’s model is thereby outdated. Specifically, I found that for

¹⁷² See Neumann & Nünning 2008: 93.

¹⁷³ Cp. Schmid 2010: 91-95.

¹⁷⁴ Cp. Schmid 2008: 131-153.

my purposes in this thesis, and for the kind of texts that I am dealing with, Genette's model is not only sufficient but valid.¹⁷⁵

Since narrative is often an emulation of real life, it is impossible to restrict the analyses of the presentation of characters in early Buddhist *suttas* to one particular aspect. For my analyses of three Pāli *suttas* from the *Rāja Vagga* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* in Part III, I have therefore chosen a theoretical model that allows for a wider range of aspects of literary characters without artificially separating the element character from narrative discourse and plot. Moreover, although I regard the *suttas*, for the time being, as coherent narrative texts, I found it unreasonable at times to blend out other non-synchronic aspects of texts, literary characters, or areas of research, as, for instance, relative chronology of texts or parts of texts, "text-of-its-day-mode" readings (J. S. Walters), doctrinal aspects of early Buddhism, and so forth, from my discussion.

Literary characters are seen as complex phenomena by more recent narratological theorists, as "[...] devices in the communication of meaning and [as serving] purposes other than the communication of the facts of the storyworld as well".¹⁷⁶ This dimension of (literary) character, which James Phelan calls the 'thematic aspect', may potentially lead directly from description to

¹⁷⁵ Space does not permit to retrace all the subtleties, discussions, and disputes among theorists of narrative with regard to the concept of focalization here. I will therefore restrict myself to stating very briefly the major differences between W. Schmid's and G. Genette's system. Schmid's main criticism pertains to Genette's identification of the extradiegetic narrator with the author, which according to Schmid results in the limited independence of a narrator figure, and the consequent postulation of the category of "zero-focalization". For Schmid, it is the narrator who is responsible for the selection and presentation of the happenings and events (cp. Schmid 2010: 58). He furthermore distinguishes between two different acts in narration: comprehension and representation. Although superficially similar, this dichotomy, Schmid stresses, is not the same as Genette's distinction between 'Who sees' and 'Who speaks'. Schmid's premise with regard to the category of point of view is different from other models in that there can be no story without point of view prior to the act of narration. He explains: "Without point of view, there is no story. A story is only constituted at all when amorphous, continuous happenings are subjected to a selecting and hierarchizing viewpoint. One of the premises of this study is that every representation of reality implies a point of view or perspective in the acts of selection, naming and evaluation of its elements." (ibid.: 99) Now, in the Pāli *suttas*, we have no reason to grant the narrator that much independence as Schmid postulates for him (which does, nevertheless, fit very well for his literary corpus).

¹⁷⁶ Jannidis, Fotis: "Character", Paragraph 34. In: Hühn, Peter et al. (eds.): *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press. URL = hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php?title=Character&oldid=1729 [view date: 21 Nov 2012].

interpretation.¹⁷⁷ However, making “quick leaps from traits to themes”¹⁷⁸ has been criticized for its often leading to premature interpretations. Nevertheless, a common (post-structuralist) criticism¹⁷⁹ is that this ‘structuralist’ approach to the *suttas* seemed disconnected from the conclusions I had presented subsequent to my analysis. It was thus suggested to drop my structuralist approach altogether and focus on interpretation instead because that would yield the more interesting results. This criticism, however, seems to me warranted only when what is meant by a “structuralist approach” is a hermetic viewpoint and a certain presupposed text model, that is inseparable from a literary theory, which tries to find static and universal, time-transcending structures in texts, the latter being understood as a network or system of significations. What I mean by ‘structuralist approach’, on the other hand, is the application of the structuralist-narratological “toolbox” of textual analysis as fundamentally developed by Gérard Genette, without dragging along the ideological superstructure of structuralism itself. The advantage of the narratological toolbox lies in its wide scope of application and in its potential to function as a magnifying glass for close reading: applying the narratological categories to texts can reveal textual structures and details that one may easily pass over otherwise, and thus lead one to different interpretations.

¹⁷⁷ Cp. Jannidis, Fotis: “Character”, Paragraph 34. In: Hühn, Peter et al. (eds.): *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press. URL = hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php?title=Character&oldid=1729 [view date: 21 Nov 2012]: “The difference between characters as part of storyworlds and the meaning of character cannot be aligned with the difference between (narratological) description and interpretation because elements of a character or the description of a character are often motivated by their role in the-
matic, symbolic, aesthetic and other networks.”

¹⁷⁸ See Phelan 1989: 13.

¹⁷⁹ As it was indeed voiced after a presentation of my method of narratological text-analysis on at least one occasion: “Narrative Transmission in the Suttas of the Majjhima Nikāya”. Invited Lecture at the OCBS (Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies), Michaelmas term 2011, November 21, 2011.

3. Narratology of Characters

“What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?” (Henry James)¹⁸⁰

“As an element of the constructed narrative world, ‘character’ is a general semiotic element, independent of any particular verbal expression and ontologically different from them. Like all elements of the narrative deep structure, it must be designated by linguistic expressions in order to be communicated, but it cannot be reduced to them.”¹⁸¹

Although the two statements quoted above seem to express opposing viewpoints on literary characters, they are not from the outset incompatible. At a closer look, literary character is a virtually elusive phenomenon and, consequentially, there is a theoretical problem with literary characters, namely, to determine what exactly a literary ‘character’ is. Is it a person, a mere name or pronoun, a trait, an action, or an incident? And if so, where does ‘character’ begin and ‘incident’ end? The problem of many narratological typologies of literary characters, as Fotis Jannidis states¹⁸², is that many of them do not differentiate clearly between the two narrative levels, story and discourse, in their attempt at establishing analytical categories, and have thus often failed to locate the complex phenomenon precisely.¹⁸³ Characters, Jannidis summarises, can neither be reduced to linguistic reference, nor be regarded as direct representations of real(-life) persons. Nevertheless, characters do contain something of both and to identify this “something” is exactly

¹⁸⁰ From *The Art of Fiction* by Henry James (1885), quoted in Margolin 1983: 6.

¹⁸¹ Margolin 1983: 7.

¹⁸² Cp. Jannidis 2004: 163ff.

¹⁸³ Cp. *ibid.*: 98. Seymour Chatman was the first to describe character as being an essential part of the level of story, not, as the structuralists insisted, a mere surface-/discourse-phenomenon, as Jannidis states (*ibid.*: 165). Cp. also, what Phelan writes in the Preface of *Reading People. Reading Plots*, 1989: ix: “A myth of origin and evolution: In the beginning, I set out to write a book about character in narrative. It seemed to me that from Henry James through E. M. Forster and Walter J. Harvey down to most recent narratologists, the study of character had always gotten too mixed up with discussions of plot or action (the what-is-character- but - the - determination - of - incident? - what - is - incident - but - the - illustration-of-character? syndrome). I intended to isolate the element, analyze its nature, and report my findings to a breathlessly waiting critical world. As the title of this book indicates, however, I too have ended by mixing up the study of character with the study of plot—what is here called progression. I have ended this way, of course, because the events of the middle of my story pushed me in this direction. The more I tried to isolate the species, the more I became convinced that the task was impossible: the only way to capture the species’ dazzling variety was to link it to the chief influence on that variety—the larger context of the whole narrative created by the progression.”

what constitutes the ‘problem of literary characters’.¹⁸⁴ According to the two most recent character models in narratology, Uri Margolin’s model of characters as entities in fictional worlds (Possible Worlds Theory, PWT) and Ralf Schneider’s ‘mental models’, characters in fictional narratives are both dependent on the linguistic representation *and* at the same time independent from their linguistic representation. This is a fact that can easily be demonstrated by the evident ability of readers to remember contents and, specifically, characters (or character traits and characteristics) while the exact wording of the linguistic presentation is easily forgotten.¹⁸⁵ Thus, the most recent developments in the theory of characters seek to accommodate for “[...] our sense that [many] fictional characters are uncannily similar to people, [which is] not something to be dismissed or ridiculed, but a crucial feature of narration that requires explanation.”¹⁸⁶

The problems facing the case of the Pāli *suttas* are intricate. First, although it is clear that the *suttas* are not historical sources, they are not works of fiction either. As described previously, their structure does indeed resemble that of fictional narratives, but that does not entail that they are fictions. Secondly, theories of literary characters are numerous and they are usually part of a larger theoretical framework or text theory. At the heart of the problem lies the aforementioned controversy about the status and nature of literary characters. However, this is not the focus of this section. Although literary character is not exclusively a phenomenon on the discourse-level of narratives, the analysis of character-descriptions in narrative texts must, of course, start with the analysis of words. According to Jannidis, characters in a narrative text are categorised as follows: based on a distinction of the two constitutive levels of narrative texts, the story-level and the level of discourse, linguistically, the characterisation of characters in a narrative text occurs on the discourse-level through the attribution or ascription of information to a character, that is

¹⁸⁴ Cp. Jannidis 2004: 172.

¹⁸⁵ Cp. *ibid.*: 176, esp. n. 59.

¹⁸⁶ See Margolin 1989: 10, quoting Wallace Martin; the full citation goes: “Plainly speaking, I suspect that the scholars who expressed the dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs feel, like Wallace Martin, that our sense that [many] fictional characters are uncannily similar to people is not something to be dismissed or ridiculed, but a crucial feature of narration that requires explanation (Martin 1986: 120).”

itself represented by a name (or, if the name was already introduced earlier, by personal pronoun). For example, King Pasenadi is most often in his textual occurrences introduced as “King Pasenadi, the Kosalan” (*rājā pasenadi kosalo*).¹⁸⁷

3.1 ‘Basis type’

Recent narratological theory has come to the conclusion that most of the prevalent analytical categories of character typologies (Ger. “*Figurentypologien*”) are to a great extent culturally and historically dependent.¹⁸⁸ The American literary critic James Phelan described is in this way:

“Silently underlying this discussion of the mimetic component are some messy problems. First, all this talk about characters as plausible or possible persons presupposes that we know what a person is. But the nature of the human subject is of course a highly contested issue among contemporary thinkers.¹⁸⁹”

It is, however, as Jannidis has argued, reasonable to assess a ‘basis type’ (Ger. “*Basistypus*”) of literary characters, from which it is then possible to move on to the cultural particulars of the presentation. Comparing the findings of linguistic analysis of the presentation of characters with a respective prevalent idea of man is only a second step, and perhaps not always possible. The reason is that no culture in the world features one consistent characteristic personality model or idea of man (not even in a single historical epoch) and it is, of course, not advisable to superimpose such a model, even should one think to have identified it, on the texts. As Susan Hamilton has observed:

“In view of such diversity just in the contemporary Western understanding of the human being, one cannot assume a priori that any culture will have a consistent or coherent view of what constitutes a human being. And it would be particularly inadvisable to make such an a priori assumption of the Pali

¹⁸⁷ See e.g. all the beginnings of the *suttas* in the *Kosala Saṃyutta* of the SN, in all of which Pasenadi occurs as one of the main characters (besides the Buddha himself, of course).

¹⁸⁸ Cp. Jannidis 2004: 97. As examples, Jannidis discusses Baruch Hochman’s dichotomous categories ‘coherence’ – ‘incoherence’ and ‘changeability’ – ‘constancy’ as potentially problematic to apply in historical and cultural settings different from the modern European. Some cultures/societies may not be interested in the ‘coherence’ of characters, i.e. a stable character identity, and the category ‘changeability’ is mostly, or perhaps solely, “a reflection of a modern interest in ‘personal development’” (ibid.: 97); cp. the genre of the coming-of-age novels (Ger. “*Entwicklungsroman*”). Thus, the creation of categories is very much directed by specific interests.

¹⁸⁹ Phelan 1989: 11.

canon since it is a body of oral literature which is generally thought to have come together over time.”¹⁹⁰

Fotis Jannidis¹⁹¹ has proposed a ‘basis type’ or ‘minimal conditions’ for the perception of a textual phenomenon as a character to occur: (1) the ability to act (intentionally), (2) the differentiation of an inside (which is invisible, like thoughts and feelings) and an outside (which is visible, i.e. the body), and (3) the differentiation of transitory and persistent personality features (traits), which seems to be an inter-culturally relatively stable concept. In any case, these three aspects are very likely innate to the human condition and the way humans perceive other persons. However, it is important to consider, Jannidis points out, not to equate the perception of characters in these basic categories with the perception of actual persons. Humans have a natural disposition to ascribe, for instance, intentions to their fellow human beings. However, in the narrated world, it becomes a fact that intentions are real and not the very fact of the human disposition to ascribe intentionality. A narrative is essentially an image of the real world (“an illusion of mimesis”, G. Genette). Anything that is a part of that image can become a part of the narrated world, which is the reason why “witches can be real in the world of a novel”¹⁹² and Mahā Moggallāna can visit the god Sakka and make his Vejayanta palace quake with his big toe.

By the same token, ‘naturalism’ of literary characters can hardly be considered a generally and universally valid criterion of difference, since a realistic representation of characters (“complex character”) is known to be an ideal of the modern novel (a European development starting with the 18th century) and therefore bound to a specific character-ideal, conditioned by historical times and spaces and reader expectations.¹⁹³ The whole problem, then, hinges on how far the rules of the fictional world can be seen to be modeled after the actual world (in fictional narratives, however, this need not always be the case!). This is rather a question of style and taste, and in the case of the Pāli *suttas* we would easily run into trouble, as we have seen, since it is completely natural for Mahā-Moggallāna to pay occasional visits to Sakka, king of the gods, residing in the *Tāvātimsa* heaven. Thus, characters in narrative fiction *can* be person-like, and their representation is very often only effective *because* they resemble real persons, but it would

¹⁹⁰ Hamilton 1996: 12: xix.

¹⁹¹ Cp. Jannidis 2004: 126ff.

¹⁹² Cp. Jannidis 2004: 128.

¹⁹³ Cp. Jannidis 2004: 91f.

be too naïve an assumption to put literary characters generically on a level with real persons. Nevertheless, a human-like ‘basic type’ of literary character seems to exist, a structure basic enough to be shared by all human beings, which serves as an identifying feature in texts. The same is true for the persons acting in the early Buddhist *suttas*, although it is not intended here to deny their historical existence. However, it has become almost commonplace in the contemporary discussion to assume that historical texts contain a good portion of rearrangement and other “manipulations” of the historical and/or narrative raw material they are based on.

A similar problem constitutes the category of personality ‘traits’: they are not “atomic”, unchangeable factors; they convey information about a character which is largely dependent on language, literary genre, and current, that is, culture- and time-specific personality models (like, e.g., the psycho-analytical model etc.).¹⁹⁴

On one level (the “category-analytic” discourse of Theravāda orthodoxy), for instance, the characters’ traits in the Pāli *suttas* (Ger. “*Figurenmerkmale*”) are very often expressed in binary distinctions – as properties or characteristics of persons, either vested in the language of the Path (*sekha*; *a-sekha*) or in dependence of the early Buddhist system of ethical or moral values. In most cases, furthermore, they refer to the generic *states of mind* of individuals, like the opposition “negligence” (*pamāda*) and “vigilance” (*appamāda*), with the positive term having the greater value attached to it. These distinctions may be instantiations of the more abstract “man-in-the-world”/*saṃsāra* — “world-renouncer”/*mokṣa* dichotomy.

3.2 Theories of Characters

It is well-known that literary characters contribute to the significance of a work. In that characters may embody certain themes, they can fulfill different functions in the progression of the narrative action, and in particular they contribute to the structures of meaning and signification.

However, an equally well-known phenomenon in (Western) fictional literature is that that literary characters – once the members of a given society or epoch have grown accustomed to them – step out, as it were, of their realm, the story-world, to virtually commence an existence

¹⁹⁴ Cp. Jannidis 2004: 93.

independent of their medium of origin.¹⁹⁵ Another, but related, phenomenon was expressed by Peter Lamarque:

“What is striking is how often fictional characters from the literary tradition – like the well-loved Elizabeth Benett, Jane Eyre, Oliver Twist, Pip, Tess of the d’Urbervilles – enter reader’s lives at a highly personal level. They become, as Martha Nussbaum puts it, our ‘friends’, and for many readers the lives of these characters become closely entwined with their own.”¹⁹⁶

Also, Lamarque remarks¹⁹⁷, these lives from the canonical literary tradition seem, as time goes by, to serve as blueprints for the stories people tell about their own lives. It is reasonable to assume that the principle of narrating exemplary lives may also be applicable to Indian Buddhist literature, in which the identification or, at least, the process of comparing and/or identifying oneself with certain characters, may every now and then occur intentionally.¹⁹⁸

This phenomenon and its related problems are also well known in literary criticism, and attention has especially been drawn to it by those theories of literary characters whose objective

¹⁹⁵ An especially amusing, and rather exceptional, example for this is the fact that up to the year 2002 every year approximately 700 letters arrived at London’s 221b Baker Street addressed to Mr Sherlock Holmes. The then company in charge even employed a secretary to answer these letters; see Jan Westerhoff. 2010. *Twelve Examples of Illusion*. Oxford: OUP, p. 97.

¹⁹⁶ Cp. Lamarque 2007: 117.

¹⁹⁷ Cp. *ibid.*: 117f.

¹⁹⁸ The *Jātakas*, and especially their later Sanskrit versions (cp. Ohnuma 2007), by exhibiting certain Bodhi-sattva-virtues (mainly *dāna*, generosity) did serve in some respects as ideal ‘model-lives’ for the followers of Buddhism. The stories of the protagonists are often widely known. We learn, e.g., from the travel accounts of the Chinese pilgrims Faxian and Xuanzang of yearly offering ceremonies in front of special *stūpas* at Mathurā, which means that the practice was alive for at least from the early fifth to the seventh centuries; cp. Gifford 2003: 78: “Certainly, there is ample evidence to show that after Mahāmoggalāna’s death, cult practices arose that allowed both monks and laity to derive at least some of the benefits that would have accrued from a face-to-face meeting with the saint. According to Faxian, there were in the early fifth century various *stūpas* at Mathurā that memorialized several of the Buddha’s disciples, including Mahāmoggalāna. He reports that there was a yearly ceremony in which various groups of people each made offerings to the *stupa* of their special disciple, presumably to obtain some facsimile of the powerful qualities that disciple had embodied.” Although it is by no means clear that that was in fact the purpose of the reported activities (Gifford writes, “presumably to obtain [...]”), it is reasonable to assume that it was. Similarly, although there are reasons to assume that the individual texts of the collections of the *Sutta Piṭaka* were not really studied individually (cp. Collins 1990), but rather cursory in a handbook-like manner, as, e.g., the tradition of the *Pirit Potha* in Sri Lanka, it is also reasonable to assume that for the religious life of the laity, representations of the Buddha (statues, *stūpas*, etc.), not as mere representations in an intellectual manner, but even powerful, enlivened, and inspiring representations, have always been an important part of the religion.

it is to integrate the cognitive processes of the readers.¹⁹⁹ The phenomenon can be explained by reference to the two levels of representation (the story- and the discourse-level): The constitution of the story-world or the narrated world is dependent on the presentation in the narrative discourse, but they are not identical. The narrative discourse triggers certain semiotic processes (Ger. “*Zeichenprozesse*”), which become detached from the informational content of the message in the brain/mind of the reader. Empirical findings suggest that this is actually quite often the case: The average reader frequently remembers the content, but easily tends to forget the (exact) wording of a text.²⁰⁰ The representation of a literary character seems therefore to be much more dependent on certain cognitive operations of readers (so-called ‘bottom-up’ processes²⁰¹) than is generally assumed.²⁰² The thus generated mental image can then further enriched be by additional information from (real-) world/encyclopedic knowledge (Ger. “*Weltwissen*”) of the reader (‘top-down’ inferences). Although this is an irrefutable fact, as the most recent cognitive approaches to narrative have shown, the structuralist theory of characters, on the other hand, has no place for what James Phelan calls the ‘mimetic aspect’ of literary characters. However, it is beyond doubt that structuralism has contributed invaluable insights, and as Jannidis has explained in his historical overview of the development of theories of characters in literary fiction, every new theory has built its edifice on the foundation of the insights of their (structuralist) predecessors.

For these reasons, from now on I will use the term ‘character’ when talking about the persons that are depicted in the Pāli *suttas*, without, however, implying a final judgement about their ontological status. Therefore, I do not presuppose them *a priori* as either fictive “paper beings”²⁰³ (Mieke Bal) or representations of real persons, and for the purpose of this study, which is largely synchronic, it is in fact irrelevant. The term character seems ideal for that purpose. Uri Margolin has provided a definition of ‘character’:

“The core sense, shared by all usages of ‘character’ in literary contexts, is that of narrative agent (=NA), that is, an individual capable of fulfilling the argument position in the propositional form DO

¹⁹⁹ See Jannidis 2004: 177, and especially note 60 on that page for references concerning the “cognitive turn” in literary criticism and narratology.

²⁰⁰ See Jannidis 2004: 176, especially note 59.

²⁰¹ Cp. *ibid.*: 182f.

²⁰² Cp. *ibid.*: 175.

²⁰³ Cited in Neumann & Nünning 2008: 52.

(X), which is the sine qua non of all narrative and drama. It is an individual, human or human-like, of whom actions can be predicated.²⁰⁴

According to Uri Margolin, for readers to turn their focus of attention onto characters is purely a matter of choice, a second-level “interpretative activity” which is itself subject to certain conditions like contemporary prevalent poetic concepts and (literary as well as sociological) conventions.²⁰⁵ This is true, given the numerous other interesting aspects contained in the *suttas* as, for instance, the wealth of Buddhist teachings themselves. What is more, although Margolin’s statement points to the problem of the impossibility for historical scholars to know whether the historical addressees of the *suttas* had the same interest in their characters as a modern audience has, the following analyses show how characters have essential parts in the structure and narrative progression of the texts, and one can therefore assume that characters were indeed, in some way or other, in the focus of the attention of the historical listener/reader too.

Having thus decided to turn one’s attention to the characters, in order to go about the task, one is confronted with a plethora of character typologies (Ger. “*Figurentypologien*”). Within the already very diverse field of the discipline of narratology, a number of theories of characters ex-

²⁰⁴ Margolin 1983: 1f. Margolin is one of the most influential literary theorists of the 20th century. He has successfully combined structuralist, cognitive (reception theory), and philosophical (Possible Worlds Theory, “PWT”) approaches in his numerous ground-breaking studies of character analysis.

²⁰⁵ Margolin 1983: 6.

ist. They range from models grown out of structuralist approaches that view characters as ‘actants’, roles, and narrative devices up to characters as individuals/persons.²⁰⁶ In an important essay from 1983 about characterisation, Margolin summarises the different historically evolved positions of narratology regarding characters in literary narratives concisely.²⁰⁷ Characters, he writes, can be described as ‘actants’, as “abstract spheres of actions, defined in terms of a narrative case grammar (object, instrument, etc.)”, as ‘roles’, embodying “standardized, stereotyped and codified social role[s] with the norms of action and appropriateness, expectations and values associated with it”, they can be described as ‘individuals’ and/or (possible) ‘persons’, i.e. as narrative agents viewed “in terms of inner states, mental properties, personality traits, and general or specific complexes of such properties, i.e. individual personality models or personality types”²⁰⁸, and, finally, characters as ‘narrative devices’, sub-dividing in ‘character as symbols’ or as ‘theme, idea, thesis, [or] literary archetype’, character as ‘narrative instance’, and character as part of the formal design of the action of a particular work (as agent, “foil”, “card”, “ficelles”, and so forth, as described by Henry James).

In a later essay, Margolin gives a more detailed account²⁰⁹ of the field, which is very diverse and sometimes even contradictory, and in which he identifies two layers of meaning (“as

²⁰⁶ Cp. Margolin 1983: 2f.; see also Margolin 1989: 1f, passes a rigorous, even harsh judgement on the two main factions within the ‘narratology of characters’: “The debate about the nature of character in narrative has been raging for a long time. The views expressed range from the traditional one regarding literary characters as lifelike persons, to the deconstructivist one, which sees in them nothing but a collection of words on the page. The debate, however, has not yielded any measure of progress, and the different camps seem to keep talking past each other, each claiming to possess the exclusive truth about the subject. The root cause of this failure of scholarly communication resides in a dual confusion: theoretical and methodological. On the theoretical side, many scholars have succumbed (at least unwittingly) to the false dictum *unum nomen, unum nominatum*, coupled with an essentialist view on the nature of concepts. They accordingly assume that the term ‘literary character’ can have only one correct sense, as it designates an independently existing single concept or type of abstract entity with inherent defining or essential properties, which are to be discovered and correctly labeled by the literary scholar. **However, the existence of cultural concepts or entities with essential properties, independent of any linguistic formulation, is no longer a tenable view.** What is more, the vague and polysemic nature of most ordinary language cultural terms, where a single term refers to a variety of concepts, is by now widely acknowledged.” [my emphasis]

²⁰⁷ The following citations and references are all to Margolin 1983: 2 until stated otherwise.

²⁰⁸ This is the definition of character Margolin presupposes in his 1983 essay if not otherwise qualified; cp. Margolin 1983: 2. It seems that this is also a definition of character one encounters most often in works on literary characters (cp. Bachorz in Wenzel 2004: 53). The criticism of a psychological view of characters of the Structuralists and New Critics makes actually the impression of a temporary backlash, though a very important one.

²⁰⁹ All references and citations in this paragraph are to Margolin 1989: 2f.

an intuitive, pre-theoretical term and as a theoretical term within the confines of an explicitly formulated theory” – and he bemoans that they all too often had been blurred!) and six explications of the theoretical term ‘literary character’, which oscillate between the two poles of “textuality/signifier” and “representation/signified” together with their respective theoretical frameworks: a) “Character as the topic entity of a discourse” [= linguistic signifier; analysis is strictly intratextual or text-internal]; b) “Character as device, one of the pieces or components of the composition or design of the literary work”; c) “Character as textual speaker (speech position, voice, source of utterances) or communicative role in the enunciatory system represented by the text; in other words, a narrative instance or level”; d) “Character as thematic element, one of the figural projections of the narrative text’s underlying macrosemantic/thematic deep structure, ‘theme anthropomorphized’”; e) “Character as [1] actant and [2] role. For Greimas and his school, character as actant is a purely formal category, involving whoever carries out or undergoes an action, preceding any semantic investment. [...]. As a second step, the actant may undergo some qualitative semantic concretization, turning it into a role (that is, a bundle of social functions). At this point, standardized, stereotyped, and codified attributes, together with the norms of action and appropriateness, expectations, and values associated with them, become the defining features of character”; “f) Character as non-actual individual, designated by means of a referring expression, who is included in or is a member of some nonfactual state of affairs or possible world [‘Possible Worlds Theory’].”

The category or the view of “character as narrative instance” is particularly productive from the perspective of narratological textual analysis (Ger. “*Erzähltextanalyse*”) because it further yields information about such important analytical categories as ‘point of view’, ‘focalization’, ‘narrator’, ‘character’, speaker, and so forth.²¹⁰ The last mentioned model, however, the “character as a non-actual individual” in a “non-actual world” (= “textual actual world”), is interesting for its ability to connect (Ger. “*Anschlussfähigkeit*”) to extra-textual, historical personality theories. The treatment of literary characters as representational, as ‘possible persons’, on its part, offers the possibility to account for most audiences’ intuitive response to characters as person-like, and the interpretation of the possible motivations underlying their actions from folk-

²¹⁰ For a much more in-depth treatment and review of the different existing character models of the past six decades or so, which eventually leads into his own, eclectic model of character as mental model, see Jannidis 2004: Ch. 5 (pp. 152-195). For different typologies of character see *ibid.*: ch. 3 (pp. 85-108).

psychology. This procedure, as Herbert Grabes (1978) has explained based on empirical findings in psychology is not different from what one does in real life when interpreting the behaviour of fellow human beings.²¹¹ Because of the role conscious and reflecting individuals play in the *sut-tas*, the view I shall in principle, but not exclusively, adopt is that of characters as possible persons. As is apparent, there exists a stark opposition between the structuralist and the “personality” view, which lies at the centre of the New Critics’, the Structuralists’, and the post-Structuralists’ criticisms of too naïve a treatment of literary figures as real persons (= a “mimetic treatment of literary characters”).²¹² However, these different theories and character-models are not relating to each other in a kind of hierarchy of “increasing specification” (from ‘actant’ to ‘individual’).²¹³ If anything, their criteria and/or their “defining features” (Ger. “*Differenzkriterien*”) are different in each case and the insights and the knowledge about characters thus gained from narratives is not lost with the emergence of each new character-model. Ideally, applied in a combined way where possible and/or necessary, and without dragging along their respective ideological superstructure (particularly with regard to structuralism), the different kinds of information about characters thus obtained could rather complement each other or ‘pile up’ instead of contradicting each other, and have the potential to show a complex phenomenon from different angles.²¹⁴ However, when things start getting too complicated, one is well advised to concentrate

²¹¹ See also Jannidis 2004: chapter 3 (pp. 86-109) for a more detailed discussion and an exhaustive overview over the different character-typologies in narratology (up to the year 2004) starting with E. M. Forster’s basic – and still valid – distinction between ‘flat’ and ‘round’ characters: E. M. Forster, pp. 86f.; Christian N. Wenger, pp. 87-89; William Harvey (harking back to Henry James), pp. 89f.; Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan (influenced by Joseph Ewen and Gérard Genette), pp. 90-94; Baruch Hochman, pp. 94-97; David Fishelov, pp. 97f.

²¹² Cp. for a detailed discussion of the history of this criticism Jannidis 2004: 151-157; cp. also Grabes 1978: 405f.

²¹³ Cp. Margolin 1989: 5: “The different conceptions are semantically heterogeneous, and no two of them can be translated into each other or reduced to a common denominator; nor can they be synthesized in any meaningful way. At most, some weak correlations might be established between particular pairs of concepts. None of the concepts seems arbitrary or spurious, each seems to command a certain degree of theoretical legitimacy, and each of them enables us to see and say things we could not have otherwise.”

²¹⁴ Margolin 1983: 3; cp. also Stock 2010: 197; Jannidis 2004: 151, who states that even while certain approaches/views on character were eventually replaced by new models, the knowledge about characters didn’t vanish simultaneously: “Vielmehr kann der knappe Abriß verdeutlichen, daß das Wissen über einzelne Aspekte dieses komplexen Phänomens mit jedem neuen Ansatz zunimmt. Selbst wenn die jeweilige Lösung eines späteren Ansatzes wieder verworfen wurde, so ist doch nicht damit auch das Wissen über den Aspekt der Figur wieder verschwunden.” Cp. also Grabes 1978: 7, who states that the kind of questions asked of a text are totally different in a structuralist approach and an approach that values/acknowledges the ‘illusionary character’ (“*Illusionscharakter*”) of literary works of fiction with its presupposed “willing suspension of disbelief”.

on the basics. Although often criticised, narratologists have in principle never really departed from E. M. Forster's pioneering and sagacious distinction of literary characters as either "flat" or "round":

"We may divide characters into flat and round. Flat characters were called 'humours' in the seventeenth century, and are sometimes called types, and sometimes caricatures. In their purest form, they are constructed round a single idea or quality; when there is more than one factor in them, we get the beginning of the curve towards the round. The really flat character can be expressed in one sentence [...].

It is only round people who are fit to perform tragically for any length of time and can move us to any feelings except humour and appropriateness. [...] **The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat. If it does not convince, it is flat pretending to be round. It has the incalculability of life about it** – life within the pages of a book."²¹⁵

Now, how does one get, in a methodical way, from names to qualities, to traits, to characters, and, finally, perhaps to a personality model?

3.3 Characterisation

Before turning to the problem of finding a model that is suitable to adequately describe characters in the *suttas*, one must look at the problem of characterisation, which lies at the heart of any character-analysis.

One of the more intricate problems of literary characters is the question of how a coherent and unified semantic structure like a character in a narrative, a 'macrostructure', is developed from individual and consecutive textual/linguistic signifiers like words and sentences in the mind of a recipient.²¹⁶ In this context, Herbert Grabes questions what the "objective correlative" on the surface-level of a text is that ultimately triggers the successive subsuming of character-related information under the unified macro-semantic structure 'character'?²¹⁷ Therefore, what lies at the

²¹⁵ Forster 1985: 77 & 81.

²¹⁶ Cp. Grabes 1978: 409, 412, and, especially, 410: "Anschließend wird dann die ‚zweite Dimension‘ des Textes, die als dessen ‚Makrostruktur‘ bezeichnet wird, leider nur noch recht allgemein in ihrer Bedeutung für die Konstitution verschiedener Textsorten diskutiert. Es heißt zwar noch, ein Text würde folglich ‚aus Teilganzen (im Sinne der Gestalttheorie) bestehen, die als Sinneinheiten eine Funktion im Textganzen haben‘, und es wird auch das Problem gesehen, daß ‚diese Teiltex-te, welche die Makrostruktur eines Textes darstellen, auch direkt an der Textoberfläche erkennbar sein müssen‘, doch bleibt das Problem der Einheit ‚Figur‘ offen."

²¹⁷ Cp. Grabes 1978: 410.

heart of any character analysis is a linguistic/textual analysis of the characteristics, attributes, and traits ascribed to characters – a process called ‘characterisation’.

However, Uri Margolin, among others, has shown that characterisation proper, the “constitutive activities of the reader which involve the ascription of mental properties (traits, features) or complexes of such properties (personality models or types) to human or human-like NAs [=”narrative agents”]”²¹⁸ is at its very core a mental, inferential process of readers.²¹⁹ What is more, the treatment of character as individual, as Margolin in his 1983 essay does, presupposes some sort of psychological model of character. This means the ascribing of (or deriving from) of an inner, mental or psychological life to ‘narrative agents’ by readers/listeners. Margolin writes:

“[...] ‘character’ is meaningless without the notions of individual, person, mind, inner states and mental or psychic life.”²²⁰

Furthermore, Margolin suggests the following terminology:

“The ascription of individual properties to a NA [= “narrative agent”] may be called ‘characterization’, and the ascription of complexes of properties termed ‘character-building’, or character-profiling”, or ‘Portraiture’.”²²¹

The ascription of properties or complexes of properties to narrative agents is understood and analysed as a rule-based mental activity of readers/listeners. According to Margolin, two processes or activities follow upon each other here: first the reader/listener infers mental states etc. from a character’s actions (verbal, mental, or – representational – physical ones), (physical) appearance (“looks”), settings, and so forth, to a character’s personal features and traits, and the second process consisting in a dynamic and on-going “accumulation” (during reading), “classification”, “hierarchization”, “confrontation”, and “interrelation” of individual traits into a stable and unified personality model.²²² Margolin explains:

²¹⁸ Margolin 1983: 4.

²¹⁹ Cp. *ibid.* 1983.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*: 3.

²²¹ *Ibid.*: 4.

²²² Cp. Margolin 1983: 4.

“In fact, one of the first steps on the way from characterization to character-building is the determination whether a given trait occurs at one/several/all times and in one/several/all situations for this NA [= ‘narrative agent’].”²²³

Thus, according to Margolin the process of characterisation, unfolds as follows: Based on certain premises, the reader makes inferences termed ‘characterization statements’ (“CS”). These premises – textual cues in their most basic form: proper names or pronouns to which attributes are attached – consist of²²⁴: 1.) “Explicit characterization statements” (they actually function in both directions: when a character ascribes to or describes certain features of another character, these verbal acts can in turn be equally revealing about the personality of the character making the statement); 2.) Statements about the mental, verbal and physical acts performed by characters in the story-world (“dynamic elements”); 3.) Statements about a character’s name, appearance, the cultural and natural settings (“static elements”); 4.) Inferences made from statements about artistic compositional patterns like arrangement of characters (Ger. “*Figurenkonstellation*”) in artistic narratives. Points 2.) and 3.) are often called methods of indirect characterisation and they are generally held to be much too diverse to be listed comprehensively²²⁵; the aforementioned therefore represent the most common and obvious parameters.²²⁶

Certainly, it is one facet of the truth that characters in (written) narratives are first of all an illusion or an “illusion of mimesis”, as Gérard Genette has expressed that written or oral narration is truly a narrative *representation* of persons and events. Nevertheless, it is equally true that the characters presented in the narrative are neither just linguistic structures (nor, ultimately, ink on paper) nor, as entities in possible worlds, self-contained, i.e. existing as complete characters/persons merely by the text.²²⁷ The reader or listener of a narrative plays a crucial role in the construction and complementation (Ger. “*Leerstellen*”) of the story-world the text signifies. Fotis Jannidis (2004) has analysed three kinds of knowledge that readers generally apply in the process: (1) a concept of a ‘basis type’ (i.e. the question, which basic or minimal characteristics do

²²³ Cp. *ibid.*: 13.

²²⁴ References for the following description are entirely to Margolin 1983: 8.

²²⁵ Cp. Wenzel 2004: 60f.; Jannidis 2004: 17.

²²⁶ Cp. also Bachorz in Wenzel 2004: 60f.

²²⁷ Cp. Jannidis, Fotis: “Character”, Paragraph 6. In: Hühn, Peter et al. (eds.): *The living Handbook of Narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press. URL = [hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php title=Character &oldid=1729](http://hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php%20title=Character&oldid=1729) [view date: 15 Nov 2012].

textual structures need to have so that they are recognized as a character or a person?), (2) knowledge or presuppositions about character models or types (these are culturally and historically variable), and (3) world-knowledge, as well as knowledge of narrative and genre-conventions.²²⁸ An illustrative example for the role played by genre-conventions, and possibly reader-expectations, is the book *Great Disciples of the Buddha* by Hellmuth Hecker and the Ven. Nyanaponika²²⁹. The authors present 24 of the most prominent disciples of the Buddha found in the Pāli scriptures in a completely coherent biographical manner – a genre that is completely alien to ancient Indian literature. Thus, their reading is in no way reflected in, or suggested by, the original texts (which themselves give at best situational snippets of the life, respectively the actions of a certain figure).²³⁰

Concerning the second point mentioned above, i.e. that characters are not self-contained “as entities in a story-world”, more recent narrative theories accommodate the fact that the story- or the narrated world comes into being only through the process of narrative communication (or the participants and the roles they take on during the process of the narrative communication), and that “characters thus form a part of the signifying structures which motivate and determine

²²⁸ Jannidis 2004: 126ff., and Jannidis, Fotis: “Character”, Paragraph 4. In: Hühn, Peter et al. (eds.): *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press. URL = hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php?title=Character&oldid=1729 [view date: 15 Nov 2012] & Paragraph 10: “Until recently, there was nothing like a coherent field of research for the concept of character, but only a loose set of notions related to it touching on such issues as the ontological status of characters, the kind of knowledge necessary to understand characters, the relation between character and action, the naming of characters, characterization as process and result, the relation of the reader to a character centering around the notions of identification and empathy, etc. [...]. The situation has changed over the past ten or fifteen years thanks to a series of monographs on character, all of which are indebted to the ground-breaking work done by Margolin in the 1980s and 1990s. Most of these studies draw on the cognitive sciences and their models of text processing and perception of persons [...].”

²²⁹ = Nyanaponika & Hecker 2000.

²³⁰ Such an undertaking is of course warranted, for example, for the purpose of religious/spiritual uplifting and inspiration. The book thus addresses a specific kind of reader: A Western follower of the Theravāda tradition. The book, furthermore, may betray a certain need for identification with specific characters in the early Buddhist texts on the side of Western followers of Buddhism. The main point of criticism with regard to the method employed by the Ven. Nyanaponika and Hecker in their book is that they compile information about the Buddha’s disciples indiscriminately from all the collections of the Pāli Canon including the commentaries such as the *Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā*. The authors’ explicit aim was to cobble together as much information on the persons as possible from all the different sources to produce, say, individual “hagiographies of Buddhist Saints” – a genre which did not exist as such in ancient India. In the Preface to their book, the authors even state frankly that besides compiling information from varied sources they felt free to complete the characters where they felt that it was necessary or where they were able to do so. Furthermore, the authors state that they have deliberately taken an emic viewpoint in presenting these twenty-four Buddhist figures; cp. *ibid.*: 24.

the narrative communication.”²³¹ In other words, the study of characters in narratives according to the most recent narratological models of character analysis do not regard literary characters as something static²³², as merely static textual structures awaiting *in situ*-discovery (as was very much the idea of structuralism), or as only the effect of a linguistic system of references. More recent theories regard character as a complex and dynamic process by which, on the basis of (textual/linguistic) signs, the reader/listener draws inferences, which are, in turn, based on or influenced by particular culturally and historically variable parameters. The reader then piles up, revises, and modifies character-models based on the (additional) textual information received during the narrative communication process. At the end of that process, that is, the end of the text or the narrative, a ‘mental model’ of particular characters is concretised.

Already, as early as 1978, Herbert Grabes explained the “mechanism” and the nature of the formation of the narrative illusion (Ger. “*Illusionsbildung*”) with regard to characters.²³³ Imaginings of literary characters, Grabes writes, form through a process that he calls “synthesis/synthesisation” (Ger. “*Synthetisierung*”). The concrete work that the reader or listener has to provide in order to make this happen is to correlate the information on persons successively provided by the narrative with an identifiable and recognisable ‘substrate’ (Ger. “*Substrat*”).²³⁴ This substrate is sufficiently provided by a proper name or an unambiguously identifiable pronoun. However, the reader will probably also search for recognisable non-changing traits (Ger. “*Merkmale*”). In this regard, it is interesting to note how Grabes in this for German narratology foundational essay expands the range of character-information from direct and indirect characterisation

²³¹ Jannidis, Fotis: “Character”, Paragraph 6. In: Hühn, Peter et al. (eds.): *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press. URL = hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php?title=Character&oldid=1729 [view date: 15 Nov 2012].

²³² However, this is what college-level introductions to narratology often suggest when they show literary characters to belong to the story-level of narratives and, together with the ‘settings’, as elements of the ‘existents’ of a narrative; cp. e.g. Neumann & Nünning 2008. Regarding the necessity of including the reader in the reception processes, see Wenzel 2004: 20: “Beizupflichten ist somit lediglich der von der neueren Erzähltheorie gezogenen Schlussfolgerung, dass sich die Erzählforschung nicht auf die Modelle des klassischen Strukturalismus, auf die bloße Erfassung und Ordnung narrativer Techniken und auf eine formalistische Beschreibung statischer Textmerkmale beschränken darf, sondern auch solchen dynamischen Faktoren wie der Textrezeption und Textverarbeitung Rechnung tragen muss [...]”

²³³ Cp. Grabes 1978; the author favours a reading of literary characters as ‘possible persons’ and can therefore perhaps be regarded as a pioneer of a theoretically sound mimetic and psychological approach to character.

²³⁴ Cp. Grabes 1978: 421.

to the characters' recurrent utterances, gestures, and 'perspective' (Ger. "*Perspektive, Auffassungs-, Sicht- und Denkweise*"). According to Grabes, it is precisely the 'recurrences' ("*Rekurrenzen*") which encourage readers to transcend the level of the text and reach into the realm of imagination, the "inner world", in order to venture into imaginings and prognoses about the essence or the nature of the characters and their future behaviour or actions, which is, in novels, e.g., a basic strategy to keep the reader interested.²³⁵

The phenomenon of the formation of character-related ideas "in one's head" and their successive modifications on the grounds of new information while reading on, is easily comprehensible through a self-experiment: Anyone can experience for oneself while reading a novel that although one's imaginings feed solely on the text (in the case of fiction the only information available during the actual reading process), in the process of (re-)shaping the narrated world, the resultant imaginings/images cannot be reduced to the text (the linguistic signs or the discourse level). In other words, although a strictly text-oriented approach like Lamarque's (2007), e.g., proves a point in stating that the supplementation of literary characters was a kind of impoverishing "abstraction" (Lamarque 2007: 118), it is empirically clear that this is only half of the truth. For it is (1) what simply and inevitably happens in our minds while reading (but also what occurs while, for instance, making new acquaintances in real life!), and (2) what is intended by authors to happen because it is part of "the game", the cooperation-principle that applies to the relationship between authors and their audiences, as Jannidis has explained.²³⁶

Grabes describes three possibilities or modes for readers/listeners to deal with new information obtained about an already introduced character: the reader or listener can (1) discard the already formed "image", (2) modify it (this is commonly called development and a whole literary genre is devoted to such narrative: the coming-of-age novel) or, finally, (3) attest to the inconsistency of the character (Ger. "*Bruch*"). A typical case for the second point would be the classical detective story.

Another important aspect of the formation of imaginings (Ger. "*sich Vorstellungen machen von*") of characters is the so-called 'primacy effect'. Grabes references psychological experiments where test subjects were asked to envision persons based on written descriptions of features of fictive persons. The experiments showed that the first information or impressions

²³⁵ Cp. Grabes 1978: 421f.

²³⁶ Cp. *ibid.* 418.

given were dominating the test participants' image of the fictive person. Therefore, Grabes suggests, one is well advised to give the first information received on a character particular importance, and to pay special attention to them in the further analysis of literary characters.²³⁷ The findings further suggested that the forming of such a "character-prejudice" through the primacy effect is effective even despite the knowledge that characters are constructed successively, built up step by step through the successive distribution of information in the narrative discourse. The first information given is of primary importance in a (fictive or ancient) literary text because the narrative discourse is the only source of information for the reader. He/she has no possibility to refine the picture by checking back to 'reality'.

The consequent imaginings, Grabes explains, are further influenced by the personal background and life-experiences of the respective reader (no two readers will create absolute identical imaginings), but to an even greater extent by what Grabes calls 'social stereotypes' (Ger. "*soziale Stereotypen*").²³⁸ The formative processes with regard to character-images are basically the same in real life and in literature. The same psychological "mechanisms" apply²³⁹, as, for instance, the ascription of inner qualities and characteristics ('traits') of characters from observed behaviour. Readers automatically have recourse to social stereotypes to supplement the information the literary piece gives, in order to yield a complete picture of a (possible) person. That process, Grabes explains, sets in already after the first information about a character is received. The exact relationship between the depiction of social types in narratives and contemporary personality models, however, is not clear-cut. Even so, a historical narratology (of the kind that Jannidis (2004) proposes, for instance) is, on the other hand, and for obvious reasons, more concerned with reconstructing the authorial intention of a work of fiction instead of delving into empirical studies of contemporary reception or even the historical reconstruction thereof. This is

²³⁷ Cp. Grabes 1978: 418, 3.3.

²³⁸ Cp. *ibid.*: 416. Grabes subsumes under this term certain fixed (within any culture or society) conventional and commonly/widely shared combinations of personal feature/traits, but makes no clear distinction between social – societal, in the real sense – stereotypes and genre-related types. In fact, he states, certain or many genre-related character-models have an influence on social stereotypes! Those stereotypes can pertain to very general categories like sex, age, or temper/temperament, or to more specific ones as, for example, nationality, class, dress, or even more specific, individual ones like look, gesture, language, ways of thinking and feeling, etc. Cp., e.g., Theophrastes' work *Characters* (or "*Behavioural Types* or *Distinctive Marks of Characters*", as is probably the work's true title; cp. Diggle 2004: 5).

²³⁹ Jannidis (2004: 185ff.) emphasises the role of folk-psychology in this respect.

noteworthy because it need not always be the case for the rules of the narrated world and the real, actual world to partly or entirely overlap. For example, it is not so clear whether the different planes of divine forms of existence (*deva-lokā*) described in the *suttas* was common currency in ancient Indian society or is known only through Buddhist narratives.²⁴⁰ In any case, when dealing with non-naturalistic narrative, the application of genre-specific types makes perhaps more sense than that of social stereotypes.

Grabes thinks that the competence by which the reader accomplishes the ‘synthetization’ or building up (Ger. “*Synthetisierung*”) of character information works analogous to one’s own self-awareness (Ger. “*Selbsterfahrung*”), one’s self-perception of being an individual. From that, Grabes explains, one infers the in the end unprovable assumption that others must possess some form of self-awareness similar to one’s own. These assumptions form the basis for all of our social interactions. This is one of the crucial points of theories of literary characters. Plus, it is the point of intersection of character with culture-dependent personality models.²⁴¹ One’s own sense of self and self-awareness taken together with the assumption that it is similar to, or even identical with, others’ sense of self and self-awareness, is called the folk-theory of persons.

Grabes’ main concern or motive, however, is to arrive at a well-founded and reasonable hypothesis (Ger. “*begründete Hypothese*”) about the personality model of an author or a certain group of texts and thus, via the author’s intention, at a historical understanding of the respective character model employed. Thereby the readers or listeners will find themselves in a position in which they are able to add a further dimension to the already instantly available implicit personality theory (Ger. “*implizite Persönlichkeitstheorie*”).²⁴² Perhaps, he further emphasises, one would best attain to that (underlying) personality theory, which is at the basis of literary character, by paying attention to the characters’ dynamic aspect through tracing the ‘narrative progression’ (to borrow a term used from J. Phelan) on the discourse level by way of observing the (or

²⁴⁰ The Pāli commentarial literature mentions 26 different planes; see PED *s.v.* *deva-loka*; Altogether *saṃsāra* comprises 32 realms, distributed over 3 worlds or world-spheres/realms, in which one can be reborn; cp. also Walshe 1987: 37: “If we even provisionally accept the idea of rebirth, this almost necessarily requires acceptance of some kind of spirit-world or worlds. In the Buddhist scriptures we find a scheme of post-mortem worlds which, while having much in common with general Indian ideas, is in many of its details unique.”

²⁴¹ Cp. Grabes 1978: 421.

²⁴² Cp. Grabes 1978: 427.

one's own?) succession of personality-syntheses at different points in time during which the narrative progresses.²⁴³ To illustrate this, Grabes warns us about the limitations of a personality theory-guided synthesization of characters for our understanding of characters in any given corpus²⁴⁴: One might be surprised, for instance, how neatly the analytical categories of the Freudian personality theory fit the Shakespearean characters. But for all that, Grabes asks the rhetorical question, at what other conclusion is one to arrive, if one's presupposed personality theory, according to which one pieces together the successive character information during the reception process, is S. Freud's?²⁴⁵

According to Margolin, the process of inferring character-attributes is to be carried out as follows: a 'characterisation statement' (about actions, settings, formal patterns) can be inferred on the basis of a premise → (leading to) "a statement about non-structural attributes of a narrative agent" (*inferred* by applying the ("inference-") rules of the text(-world)) → conclusion (= statement/set of statements about character attributes) → ordering and organising the "named, inferred and accumulated attributes or traits" into a set of attributes concludes the process of

²⁴³ Cp. *ibid*: 427: "Bei diesem Verfahren werden außerdem auch die verschiedenen Synthesen greifbar, die beim 'Kennenlernen' oder bei der 'Veränderung' einer Figur während der Lektüre notwendig werden. Dies aber ist außerordentlich wertvoll, weil man durch die Beobachtung einer solchen Sukzession von Persönlichkeitssynthesen eine größere Chance hat, die der Figur 'zugrundeliegende' Persönlichkeitstheorie als Prinzip der Synthetisierbarkeit der sie konstituierenden Serie von Informationen auf induktivem Wege zu ermitteln. Wenn man dies schließlich für mehrere Figuren eines Werkes und mehrere Werke eines Autors versucht, kann man sogar zu einer begründeten Hypothese über die implizite Persönlichkeitstheorie eines Autors gelangen. Eine solche Hypothese ist zwar immer noch ein gut Teil spekulativ, sie ist aber in bezug auf die Figuren eine wesentliche Voraussetzung für den Rezipienten, die eigene implizite Persönlichkeitstheorie um eine Dimension zu erweitern. Nur indem man sich sozusagen auf die 'Intention des Autors', d.h. auf eine in der angegebenen Weise begründete Hypothese über dieselbe einläßt, besteht die Möglichkeit, im Bereich der Personenvorstellung etwas prinzipiell Neues zu erfahren."

²⁴⁴ Here, Grabes is alluding to the controversy about the interpretation of the Shakespearean characters and their naively mimetic psychological interpretations by A. C. Bradley; cp, Grabes 1978: 405.

²⁴⁵ Cp. Grabes 1978: 427f: "Das Tückische ist nur, daß man sich über den Erkenntniswert solcher Versuche meist allzusehr täuscht. Wenn man nämlich die sukzessiv beim Rezeptionsprozeß dem Text entnommenen Einzelinformationen – ‚bewußt‘ oder ‚unbewußt‘, im Zweifelsfalle jedenfalls wohl eher unbemerkt – nach dem Modell der Freudschen Persönlichkeitstheorie synthetisiert, braucht man eigentlich nicht mehr erstaunt zu sein, daß die ‚Figuren‘ als Ergebnisse solcher Synthesen sich bei einer analytischen Betrachtung sehr gut mit Hilfe der Freudschen Kategorien beschreiben lassen. Das Persönlichkeitsmodell, das der Freudianer bei der Figurenkonstitution hinzugetan hat, erscheint – da die Illusion die Subjektivität der Synthesebildung während der Lektüre unterschlägt – bei der Betrachtung des Ergebnisses der Illusionsbildung als (‚objektive‘) Beschaffenheit der Figur."

characterisation.²⁴⁶ This descriptive and inferential activity on the part of the reader/listener leads to a temporary “character frame” (= a set of character traits of a given character at a certain point in time in a narrative). However, since narratives are by nature progressing, the goal of character analysis may be described as “the integration of successive character frames into a final retrospective overall character portrait.”²⁴⁷ The processes or steps towards a “global personality model”, then, are essentially the same as those explained for the character frames.²⁴⁸ An assessment, finally, of the relations that obtain between individual character frames leads to a “resultant global personality model”, for which the following “typology of literary characters” has been proposed²⁴⁹:

1. No change at all or no change of core properties (more properties may be added in the course of the narration though, but without changing the core personality).

²⁴⁶ Cp. Margolin 1989: 15.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.: 18.

²⁴⁸ Cp. Margolin 1989: 18f. Margolin, in his 1989 essay, *Structuralist approaches to character in narrative: The state of the art*, describes the individual steps involved in coming to “a unified character construct” in much more detail: “What operations are involved in the transition from a list of features to a unified character construct? The following sequence of stages could be suggested:

- (1) Naming and accumulating a narrative agent’s properties, whether explicitly or implicitly designated by the text.
- (2) Sorting out or classifying the properties into categories or semantic dimensions (cognitive, ethical, etc.).
- (3) Inferring second-order properties from those named initially (depth properties, motivational or relational traits such as ‘inconsistent’).
- (4) Determining the temporal extent and intensity of traits, separating the abiding and persistent from the momentary and the pronounced from the weak. Similarity, repetition and contrast are good clues in this respect (Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 39).
- (5) Determining the absence of properties that are positively marked for interrelated narrative agents.
- (6) Rank ordering the features within each category into dominant and subordinate.
- (7) Totally or partially networking (hierarchizing) the categories themselves. The abiding and dominant features of the central category may be termed the core features or essential properties of the narrative agent at a given story state — ‘the sense of his proper name’, so to speak.
- (8) Identifying the resultant set of sets of features in terms of a global frame (kind of person or personality model). The sources for this identification are again general literary personality models (‘the suffering artist’), genre-specific models, and individual intertextual models (Don Juan), as well as explicitly formulated personality theories of an age and those stemming from its encyclopedia or life-world models.” (Margolin 1989: 17f.)

²⁴⁹ Summarized from Margolin 1989: 18, 19. The occasional quotations within the different points are from *ibid.*: 18, 19.

2. Progressive, unidirectional, semantically related change; classical example: the *Bildungsroman* (because the occurring change is gradually and unidirectional, the respective character frames are easily relatable).
3. An abrupt change in some or all core properties between two successive character frames/story-moments; the individual thus appears fragmented by two contradicting or incompatible character frames/property sets and can only be unified, or his/her coherence can only be preserved by a higher-ranking model: “To preserve individual identity and continuity over time, we need a second-order dynamic model, of which the two radically different character frames will function as variants.” As possible (cultural) models for this state of affairs, Margolin mentions cases of religious conversion, illumination, or mental breakdowns. (An example for this type is the character Aṅgulimāla in the famous *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*, treated extensively in Part III).
4. An “abrupt, iterative, and semantically unrestricted (random) change of most or all core properties of a narrative agent”, is set apart by Margolin for postmodern literary works. (This type is therefore most probably not to be expected in or the Pāli *suttas*.)

Different from Grabes’s account, narrative progression does not play a role for Margolin’s purposes because his description presupposes a “retrospective representation” of an “overall character portrait”, which emerges only *after* reading.

Most character models, as evidenced in one example above, distinguish between direct and indirect forms of characterisation. Here, familiarity with the instances of the narrative communication avails. Characters are characterised directly either by the narrator (or a less anthropomorphic narrating instance) or through direct speech uttered by other characters. One question in particular is of interest here, whether that person (character or narrator) is reliable or not.²⁵⁰ (A relevant example is treated also in the following Part III, in the *Piyajātika Sutta*.)

This concludes the introduction to the analysis and interpretation of literary characters that is mainly based on structuralist textual analysis. The rhetorical approach to narrative and the application of narrative communication models in the analysis of literary characters forms the

²⁵⁰ The narratological concept of ‘unreliability’ does not exactly feature prominently in the Pāli *suttas*. We will, however, provide an interesting example later of the appearance of unreliable characters from the *Piyajātika Sutta* in Part III.

subject of the following chapter. It has the advantage of not having to make assumptions about a text's status as fictional or factual. Thus it is possible to bypass this problem in the case of the *suttas*, as was stated in the Introduction.

3.4 James Phelan's rhetorical approach to characters: *Reading People, Reading Plots*

It was already mentioned that the starting point of the investigation of the presentation of characters in the early Buddhist *suttas* was the subjective impression of virtually being drawn into the story. Expressed alternatively in the perhaps more adequate jargon of literary studies or narratology: the Pāli *suttas* seem to effectively offer a possibility for the active involvement of the reader/listener in what J. Phelan calls the 'mimetic illusion', and that despite the fact that they are experienced highly formulaic and repetitive texts (at least by the standards of Western academia). Phrased in the language of the rhetorical approach to narrative (Rhetorical narratology), this phenomenon is described by James Phelan as follows:

"To participate in the illusion is to enter what Peter Rabinowitz has called the **narrative audience**; to remain covertly aware of the synthetic is to enter what Rabinowitz has called the **authorial audience**. In other words, the authorial audience has the double consciousness of the mimetic and the synthetic, while the narrative audience has a single consciousness" ²⁵¹

The "illusion" and the "synthetic" spoken of here by Phelan refer to the nature of any narrative as something constructed ("synthetic") and re-presented (narrative is always a recounting of what has already happened, except in the case of a live broadcast, say, of a commentated football match!). The 'synthetic aspect', however, can be more or less prominent for the reader. (In fact, most of the pleasure of reading a novel or watching films stems from the blocking out of the synthetic aspect. Aesthetic pleasure, however, is something that only the 'authorial audience' can enjoy!) Phelan, and Rhetorical narratology as a branch of narratology, is interested in analysing the ways narratives can effect or influence people. Furthermore, Phelan's model offers a highly practical and strongly text- or discourse-oriented approach, while at the same time it allows for a wide range of aspects of characters in narratives to be covered.

Rhetorical narratology conceives of narrative as a purposive communicative act:

²⁵¹ Phelan 1989: 5 (my emphases).

“[N]arrative is not just a representation of events but is also itself an event – one in which someone is doing something with a representation of events. [...] this conception gives special attention to the relations among tellers, audiences, and the something that has happened.”²⁵²

In a narrative, narrators (on all narrative levels) can perform three functions: (1) Reporting about characters and events; 2) Interpreting those reports; 3) Ethical evaluation of those reports and/or interpretations. Indications of endorsement or departure in the author’s comments from the narrators’ reports, evaluations, and interpretations can act as signals for unreliable narration.²⁵³ There are six ways, according to Phelan, in which a narrator’s speech can be assessed as unreliable: He can underreport or misreport, he can “underread (underinterpret)” or “misread (misinterpret)”, he can “underregard (inderevaluate)” or “misregard (misevaluate)” events. That means that a narrator can be a reliable reporter, but, at the same time, an unreliable interpreter, as we will see later in the gamblers’s episode in the *Piyajātika Sutta*: In accusing the Buddha of speaking nonsense, the householder misevaluates the spiritual truth in the Buddha’s words, and thereby bereaves himself of any chance to salvation (one would, however, not call the householder an “unreliable narrator” because he is not ‘lying’ – apart from the very fact that the householder is not the narrator but a character in the story.)

In his own practice, Phelan employs six key principles for approaching and interpreting narratives²⁵⁴:

1) ‘Rhetorical action’: “Somebody tries to accomplish some purpose(s) by telling somebody else that something happened.”

2) ‘The rhetorical triangle’: “The [rhetorical] approach postulates a recursive relationship among authorial agency, textual phenomena (including intertextual relations), and reader response.”

3) ‘Audiences’: Fictional narrative can address five intended audiences:

a) The actual reader [can/is invited to assume the roles of b) and c):]

b) The authorial audience (the author’s ideal reader, who “understand[s] the invitations for engagement [in the (meta-?) narrative ethical dimension of the narrative as a whole as intended by the author] that the narrative offers”).

²⁵² Phelan 2007: 203.

²⁵³ Cp. *ibid.*: 205. The following summary is based on *ibid.*: 205-206.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: 9.

c) The narrative audience (that is, “the observer position within the narrative world that the flesh and blood reader assumes. **In fiction, we are in this observer position when we respond to characters as if they were real people.**” [my emphasis])

d) The narratee (that is, “the audience [directly] addressed by the author” (this is not necessarily the flesh and blood reader. One could think, for instance, of letters that would accidentally fall into one’s hands, without being intended for oneself.)

e) The ideal narrative audience (that is, “the narrator’s hypothetical perfect audience, the one he expects to understand every nuance of his communication.”)

4) 'Reader response': "As flesh and blood readers enter the authorial and narrative audiences, they develop interests and responses of three kinds, each related to a particular component of the narrative: mimetic, thematic, and synthetic." As Phelan argues in *Reading People, Reading Plots* (1989), those are the three major features of narratives.²⁵⁵ The reader's response to the mimetic component consists in "an interest in the characters as possible people and in the narrative world as like our own [...]." One may call this the "emotional or affectional response" (or the empathetic), and it is what the actual reader does when he assumes the role of the narratee ('fictive reader'). This phenomenon is an indisputable fact that accompanies the active engagement with fictional worlds through reading, watching films etc., and it perhaps also accompanies our social interactions. It involves the actual, active application of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's famous phrase of the "willing suspension of disbelief" or, in its modern version, the recipients' engagement with the 'mimetic illusion'. Thus, the response to the thematic component describes the more reflective reader's interest in "the characters as representatives of classes of people [...], and in the cultural, ideological, philosophical, or ethical issues being addressed by the narrative [...]." A reader's response to the synthetic component, finally, describes the reader's being aware of the "constructedness" of the narrative, its nature of being an artificial, mental construct. Characters, then, are a vital element for an engagement with narratives in the first place.

In a way, Phelan's model transcends the structuralist heritage of binary oppositions: Instead of perpetuating or modifying the mimetic-didactic distinction of the neo-Aristotelians and their 'either-or' view, he proposes a 'both-and' model that gives equal weight to the three aspects of literary characters: the mimetic, the thematic, and the synthetic aspect.

Phelan has proposed his interpretative model for characters in narratives, first in a programmatic essay titled *Character, Progression, and the Mimetic-Didactic Distinction* (1987), and put it to test in his later book *Reading People, Reading Plots* (1989). His model centres on the notion of narrative progression.²⁵⁶ A narrative – and any narrative, not just the modern novel – can be propelled forward through the staging of a central conflict, usually fought out by its characters, or a constellation that creates instabilities (on the level of the story), or through the creation of tensions (caused by the difference in knowledge of the different instances or roles of the narrative communication). Whether the story itself is fictive or not does not really matter here – the zest of a story lies, among other things, in its ability to engage the listener/reader emotionally and/or intellectually through the creation of suspense and dénouement.

²⁵⁵ Fotis Jannidis (2004) describes basically the same aspects of literary characters as Phelan does (in Phelan 1987&1989). However, Jannidis's presentation is based on Matias Martinez's proposed threefold concept of motivations (which Jannidis adopted for his presentation of motivation and which I have, again, summarised here); cp. Jannidis 2004: 223: *“Die hier dargestellten Kategorien für die Motivierung der Figureninformationen auf der Ebene des narrativen Lesers (finale und kausale sowie leserorientierte Motivierung) sowie auf der Ebene des auktorialen Lesers (kompositorische Motivierung als Oberbegriff für ästhetische, thematische und auf den Realitätseffekt bezogene Motivierung), diese Kategorien entsprechen trotz ihrer gänzlich anderen Herkunft weitgehend dem Vorschlag von James Phelan, der drei Aspekte von Figureninformationen unterscheidet: den mimetischen, den thematischen und den synthetischen.”* However, Phelan's model is more easily applicable/pragmatic for the actual interpretation work because it is not laden with theory and minutest details in the way Jannidis' presentation is (cp. Jannidis 2004: 228f & 221-229; cp. also the review of Jannidis 2004 by Gesa Stedman [2007]). Jannidis criticises that Phelan's notion of character-information is limited because it is restricted to account only for those attributes that can or do serve as character traits, and does not, like his own model, give room for the inclusion of all the relevant information on character (ibid.: 229, n. 59). He goes on to equate Phelan's mimetic aspect with his “compositional motivation” of character-information, the thematic aspect with the “compositional-thematic motivation”, and the synthetic aspect with a special case of “aesthetic motivation”. Furthermore, Jannidis states that the mimetic aspect (= “compositional motivation”) served the purpose of achieving the ‘effect of reality’ á la Barthes. Even though this may be so in the case of fictional, literary narratives, it is not entirely convincing that Phelan also aims at this point. As Jannidis himself remarks, Phelan's categories have a completely different origin than his (*“trotz ihrer gänzlich anderen Herkunft”*, see quote above, Jannidis 2004: 223). In my view, Jannidis overrates the authorial intention more than is useful, if one wishes to include also other kinds of narrative than highly artificial, fictional literary narratives (the modern, 19th cent. realist novel, e.g.), which Phelan's model is broad enough to allow for. The description of superfluous details, according to Jannidis's theory, serves the purpose (Jannidis: ‘are motivated by wanting to contribute to the effect-of-reality’) of creating (on the side of the author) the reality-effect in a literary work of art (because, this is obviously the reasoning behind it, our real lives are also filled with superfluous, function-/purposeless details!). But to include a somewhat broader range of narratives, real-life or “natural narratives”, e.g., Phelan's model is still applicable and other explanations for the origin of “superfluous” character-information are possible. Is it not also conceivable, that certain (superfluous) details just stem from real-life “originals”, and that the author-narrator might also hand himself over to a kind of “willing suspension of disbelief” while narrating (especially in everyday or oral narration)? I do not find it convincing to say that the reader's impression of encountering a ‘possible person’ while reading narratives is created merely by the discrepancy between story- or action-related, functional character information and “superfluous” character information, as Jannidis's remark in one place suggests. (He writes: *“Auf die Figur angewendet bedeutet das, es ist zu erwarten, daß Figureninformationen kausal, final oder kompositorisch, etwa durch den Realitätseffekt, motiviert sind; letzteres würde, soweit es sich um Figureneigenschaften handelt, nicht mehr besagen, als daß die Figuren über den Grad hinaus individualisiert werden, der für den Fortgang der Handlung oder die ästhetische Komposition notwendig sind.”* Ibid.: 228) But Phelan is talking about the mimetic sphere of a (literary) character as being able to have functions as well as dimensions: “Mimetic functions result from the way these traits are used together in creating the illusion of a plausible person and, for works depicting actions, in making particular traits relevant to later actions, including of course the development of new traits.” (Phelan 1989: 11) For Phelan, the mimetic function is a function in itself, and does not necessarily have to have a function for or in the action/events of the story. In other words, a ‘mimetic dimension’ (= a character trait) cannot be said to always and automatically point to something ‘higher’ beyond the particulars depicted by the text. Mimetic dimensions turn into functions if a) they “are used together in creating the illusion of a plausible person” (for modern individuals: the more inner conflicts, the more “life-like” the character!) (Phelan 1989: 11) or b) serve as plausible

The advantage of Phelan's model lies not least in the fact that it does not overemphasize the factual-fictional distinction and that it remains rather undetermined with regard to the ontological status of the characters, whether they are representations of (possible – in fictional accounts –) persons, fictive characters, types (representatives of a certain class of people etc.), or embodiments of certain themes. Phelan explains:

“The distinction between dimensions and functions is based on the principle that the fundamental unit of character is neither the trait nor the idea, neither the role nor the word [these are, basically, the different structuralist positions, cp. S. Chatman], but rather what I will call the attribute, something that participates at least in potential form in the mimetic, thematic, and synthetic spheres of meaning simultaneously. **Thus, the rhetorical theorist need not stipulate in advance that the characters in a given work will be represented people, or themes with legs, or obvious artificial constructs.** The theorist only commits himself to the position that a character may come to perform any of these functions or indeed all three of them to varying degrees within the same narrative.”²⁵⁷

motivations, or are otherwise relevant, for a character's later actions (i.e. at least in works depicting or emphasizing action; cp. *ibid.*). Thus, Phelan argues, the ‘mimetic aspect’ of literary character is a, or has a, narrative function or purpose in itself, and is not – and this is the major difference of Phelan's model to a thematist or structuralist view of text – ‘just’ a point of departure for thematisation (= interpreting traits “habitually” as signifying something beyond themselves, like a general situation, or as instantiation of a “higher truth”). Underlying (t)his model is a view of texts as a communicative structure and an interest in the ((un-)/intended) effects of literary works and narratives on an audience. Further underlying is a view of literary character as something that has an (immaterial, of course) existence outside the text, a phenomenon which Phelan calls character as ‘possible or plausible persons’ (vehemently disliked, as we know, by structuralist approaches!). Nevertheless, as Phelan also acknowledges at this point in his discussion (Phelan 1989: 11), “[s]ilently underlying this discussion of the mimetic component are some messy problems”. Phelan writes: “First, all this talk about characters as plausible or possible persons presupposes that we know what a person is. But the nature of the human subject is of course a highly contested issue among contemporary thinkers. [B]ut [...] such a discussion is not a necessary preliminary to the rhetorical study I am undertaking. For that to be justified, it is enough that authors write with some working notion of what a person is and with some belief that characters can (or indeed, cannot) represent persons and that as readers and critics we can discern these ideas in the work.” (Phelan 1989: 11)

²⁵⁶ Cp. Phelan 1987: 285: “[... A]ny conclusion about the nature of character in a given narrative cannot be separated from the analysis of that narrative's developing structure, or what I will hereafter call its narrative progression. Progression, of course, is a nonliteral term: to speak literally would restrict us to the order or the sequence of the text. Adopting the term progression moves the analysis to the rhetorical mode, to an interest in how authors generate, develop, and resolve readers' interests in narratives. Authors may take advantage of numerous variables in the narrative situation to generate the movement of a tale. Progression may involve the elements of either story – characters, events, settings – or discourse – the way the story is told – or it may involve elements of both. The movement of most narratives depends at least to some degree on the introduction, complication, and resolution (to one degree or another) of instability at the level of story.”

²⁵⁷ Phelan 1989: 9 (my emphasis).

In order to go beyond a mere functional notion of characters, Phelan additionally distinguishes between the ‘function’ and the ‘dimension’ of a character²⁵⁸:

“We can usefully distinguish between the thematic elements of a character like the Duke and of one like Jack in Golding’s novel by making a distinction between a character’s dimensions and his or her functions. A dimension is any attribute a character may be said to possess when that character is considered in isolation from the work in which he or she appears. A function is a particular application of that attribute made by the text through its developing structure. In other words, dimensions are converted into functions by the progression of the work.”²⁵⁹

Expressed differently, the idea of the differentiation between ‘functions’ and ‘dimensions’ of characters’ attributes and their participatory role in the structure of meaning of a narrative is explained by Phelan in the following:

“Similarly, when an author creates a character, she creates a potential for that character to participate in the signification of the work through the development of the character in three spheres of meaning [i.e., the mimetic, the thematic, and the synthetic “sphere”]; that potential may or may not be realized depending upon the way the whole work is shaped.”²⁶⁰

Readers arrive at the mimetic dimension of any character by analysing his or her traits, i.e., the attributes ascribed to a character (represented by a proper name or personal pronoun). This is in principle a linguistic analysis, although not exclusively), and comprises the different

²⁵⁸ Again, Jannidis (2004: 223) – citing Matias Martinez – states that in the end all facts of the narrated world serve a certain function as long as a narrative can be regarded as an intentional whole (Ger. “*ein organisiertes Sinn Ganzes*”). Elements that do not serve any obvious intentional purpose for the progression still have the function of serving the ‘reality effect’ (R. Barthes). The different ‘motivations’ as put forward by Martinez have different recipients/readers: while the causal motivation (“*kausale Motivierung*”, i.e. when certain character traits serve directly as motives for certain actions) and the ‘final motivation’ (“*finale Motivierung*”: events that are predetermined in a narrative through a concept of providence etc.) are recognized by the narrative audience, the ‘compositional motivation’ (“*kompositorische Motivierung*”) can only be recognized by the authorial audience (see Jannidis 2004: 223). That is the case because the authorial audience (or ‘authorial reader’, “*auktorialer Leser*”, in Jannidis 2004) represents the counterpart of the implied author, the instance that is responsible for the semantic structures of the narrative as a whole.

²⁵⁹ Phelan 1989: 9.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*: 10.

processes or methods of characterisation which were described above.²⁶¹ In the case of a realistic narrative portrait, say, the realist 19th century novel, for example, a character's traits will be turned into mimetic function when these "coalesce into the portrait of a possible person" (J. Phelan), or when they become 'causes' (psychologically in the form of possible or inferred explanations or motivations) for later actions performed in the narrative world by that character.²⁶² The latter is an aspect of character that is often found in pre-modern (Western) narrative traditions which center more on action than on the psychological portrayal. However, at times, Jannidis's criticism of Phelan's model should be considered that not only traits (Ger. "*Persönlichkeitsmerkmale*") may (explicitly) serve to characterise a character, but also other information that are provided by the text in relation to a character, for instance, situational or environmental descriptions, and so forth, from which inferences can be drawn (remember, however, that in most cases this presupposes that the respective narrative text be regarded to carry meaning²⁶³).²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ Cp. Phelan 1989: 11: "Mimetic dimensions, as we have seen, are a character's attributes considered as traits, e.g., the Duke's maleness, his position of power, his imperiousness, his boldness, and so on. Mimetic functions result from the way these traits are used together in creating the illusion of a plausible person and, for works depicting actions, in making particular traits relevant to later actions, including of course the development of new traits. In works where the traits fail to coalesce into the portrait of a possible person, e.g., Swift's creation of Gulliver, or some modern works intent on destroying the mimetic illusion, a character will have mimetic dimensions without a mimetic function. Moreover, within the creation of a possible person, a particular trait might serve only to identify that character, e.g., the detective who always eats junk food, and the trait might not (though it often will) have any consequences for his later actions—or for our understanding of them. In such a case, the character has a mimetic dimension that is incidental to his or her mimetic function: the plausibility of the portrait would remain without the trait and the rest of the work would be essentially unaffected by its absence." Note, however, that Phelan's approach to characterisation is not decisively structuralist or based on an analysis that treats texts as something static because his interest does not lie in a detailed step-by-step (cognitive-narratological) analysis; he argues: "The point [...] is that my rhetorical theory of character is claiming to offer analytical distinctions that allow us to understand the principles upon which works are constructed rather than claiming to offer a blow-by-blow description of what happens when we read." (Phelan 1989: 10)

²⁶² Cp. also Jannidis 2004: 6.3: 'Motivierung' (pp. 221-229).

²⁶³ Cp. n. 258 above.

²⁶⁴ Cp. Jannidis 2004: 222.

Part III

The presentation of characters in selected *Suttas* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*

The following chapters will add flesh on the dry skeleton of narrative theory. I will take an in-depth look at three primary sources, all taken from the “Chapter on Kings” (*Rāja Vagga*) of the fourth division of the “Middle Fifty Discourses” (*Majjhimaṇṇāsapāḷi*) of the “Collection of Middle Length *Suttas*” (*Majjhima Nikāya*) of the “Basket of the Teachings” (*Sutta Piṭaka*) – which is the exact determination of their location within the Pāli Canon according to the indigenous organising principle of the Pāli Canon. After a short introduction, I will, based mainly on the notion of Genette’s narrative levels, first provide structural analyses of the three *suttas* followed by detailed summaries of the *suttas*’ contents. Following that I will analyse the main characters appearing in the texts, together with an investigation of the characters’ relation to their fellow-characters, as well as other elements of the story (especially narrative progression), in other words, their “entanglement” in the story. Throughout this process, I will constantly resort to the analytical tools laid out in Part II. Finally, I will bring this chapter to a close with an attempt at interpreting the role of the characters in the *sutta* as a whole. The analytical part will also provide accounts of the narrative’s ‘progression’ as defined by James Phelan.

For my study of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, I made use of Bhikkhu Bodhi’s English translation of the standard and probably most widespread edition of the original text in Pāli by the Pali Text Society. However, I also made extensive use of the Burmese edition of the Canon – as an alternative recension of the Pāli text, but also for its easy accessibility as electronic text.²⁶⁵ For the work on the texts focused on in this chapter, I have compared the Pali Text Society’s edition with the Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyana edition (both the print edition, Rangoon 1954-56, in Burmese characters, and the electronic version). Where variant readings may have a bearing on the meaning or are otherwise significant, or where I deviate from the Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi’s English translation, I have made an annotation accordingly in the footnotes.

²⁶⁵ The revised and annotated text of the Sixth (international) Buddhist Council (from 1954-1956 in Rangoon, Birma; known as the *Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyana*-edition) is available at: <http://www.tipitaka.org/> in various scripts. It is important to note, however, that the online-editions of the Canon are not thoroughly proofread and may contain several errors and/or omissions. For citations I referred, if not indicated otherwise, always to the PTS edition of the Pāli Canon in the ‘standard’ manner, providing the standard-abbreviation of the text according to the *Critical Pāli Dictionary*, followed by the volume number in Roman numerals and the page (and line) numbers in Arabic numerals.

4. The presentation of characters in the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta*²⁶⁶ (MN 81)

4.1 Introduction

The *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* is the first *sutta* of the *Rāja Vagga* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (MN 81). This text is very interesting in several respects, one of which is that it, according to Richard Gombrich, provides early evidence for the development and the proliferation of the tenet of former Buddhas that eventually became formulated in the Theravāda tradition.²⁶⁷ The *sutta* represents one of the very few examples in the Canon, in which the Buddha himself reportedly speaks of the existence of a former Buddha, namely, the Buddha Kassapa (Skt. *Kāśyapa*), who is one of the seven Buddhas mentioned in the DN²⁶⁸ and the third Buddha that appeared in our aeon (Buddha Gotama being the fourth), and how he is related to him.

The *sutta* furthermore represents a ‘proto-*Jātaka*’, a story told by the Buddha himself about one of his former births.²⁶⁹ However, if this text is to be regarded as a *Jātaka* proper, Richard Gombrich adds for consideration²⁷⁰, how could one possibly explain the fact that one of its main characters, Jotipāla, vanishes completely from the story after he has received ordination

²⁶⁶ This is the form of the main character’s name in the PTS edition; the B^c(R) reads *Ghaṭṭikāra*.

²⁶⁷ Cp. Gombrich 1980: 68. Gombrich’s main argument, in his article on the significance of former Buddhas in the Theravāda tradition, is that the concept of several Buddhas that have preceded Gotama Buddha was introduced – perhaps under the influence of the Jain tradition, as the analogy of the number of predecessors – twenty-four – and the names of the “Jaina-Buddhas” and of one of the former Buddhas, *Tīrthaṃkaras* and *Dīpaṃkara*, between the Jain and the Buddhist sources suggest – as a means or a strategy of authentication, for the Buddha did not from the start place himself in a succession line of teachers/*ṛṣis* etc., as the founders or promulgators of other contemporary traditions did: “We have suggested in this article that the original function of former Buddhas was to authenticate the Buddha’s message; and that they later acquired the function of ensuring the availability of that message by launching Bodhisattvas on their careers [through the theory of *paṇidhi* and *vyākaraṇa*: The Buddha-to-be, technically then a *bodhisatta*, makes an aspiration in the presence of a Buddha whereupon the Buddha has to give a prediction of the future Enlightenment of the Bodhisattva making the aspiration.” As Gombrich notes, this later theory is documented well in a later version of the Jotipāla-story in the *Mahāvastu* (ed. Senart, I, 332, line 2; cp. Gombrich 1980: 72, n. 26), where the Buddha Kassapa offers a prediction to Jotipāla, whereas it is missing in the Pāli canonical version, our *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta*. (Gombrich 1980: 71)

²⁶⁸ DN II 7.

²⁶⁹ Oskar von Hinüber calls this the “Ur-*Jātaka*” in his 1998 study of the genesis and structure of the *Jātaka* collection, see von Hinüber 1998: 182, as well as the entire chapter III.2, pp. 182-92, for a description of the early form of the *Jātakas* in the Vinaya- and Sutta Piṭakas. For more on the structure of the *sutta* see below.

²⁷⁰ Richard Gombrich, personal communication 28.05.2012.

(*pabbajjā/ upasampadā*) by the Buddha Kassapa himself? (This question will be returned to later with a possible answer to it from a text-internal viewpoint.)

The story of the Brahmin youth Jotipāla and his friend the potter Ghaṭṭikāra seems to have been fairly known and widespread, as the references to Ghaṭṭikāra and Jotipāla in the DPPN (see below), as well as a different version of the whole story in the *Mahāvastu-Avadāna* (= Mvu) of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādin *Vinaya* suggest.²⁷¹ The *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* is also ‘famous’ for narrating one of the four “Aeon miracles” (*kappaṭṭhiyapāṭihāriyā*), the miracle through which Ghaṭṭikāra’s dwelling remained rain-free for the whole duration of this present aeon.²⁷² Although the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādin version closely resembles the version in the *Sutta Piṭaka* in formal respects²⁷³, already a brief comparison of the two texts shows that while the plot is more or less identical, stylistically they are told in a completely different manner, as regards e.g. the use of certain stock phrases and – most interestingly – the characterisation as well as certain details of the actions of their protagonists.²⁷⁴ These two texts will be compared after the content of the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* has been introduced.

4.2 The Commentary

For the purposes of this study, the commentary on the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* is not too helpful because it mostly indulges in metaphorical and highly technical accounts. It starts, for instance, with a

²⁷¹ The DPPN lists five different persons under the name Jotipāla that occur throughout the Pāli Canon; for Ghaṭṭikāra/Ghaṭṭikāra the potter, see e.g. SN, *Sagāthāvaggapāḷi* 50. (“*Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta*”). For a detailed bibliography and a thoroughgoing comparison of the different versions of the story of Ghaṭṭikāra and Jyotipāla found throughout Buddhist literature, see Anālayo 2011: 441-451. Bhikkhu Anālayo also mentions two references to pictorial representations, one from Barhut (in Lüders 1913: 883) and one from Gandhāra (in Vogel 1954: 810), a fact that seems to corroborate the impression that the story may have been quite popular. However, unlike the former lives of the Buddha Śākyamuni as Mahāsudassana and Makhādeva, the life of the *bodhisatta* as the Brahmin youth Jyotipāla has not found its way into the *Jātaka* collection; see Anālayo 2011: 450, n. 53.

²⁷² Jā I 172,8-15: *Iminā hi saddhiṃ imasmiṃ kappe cattāri kappaṭṭhiyapāṭihāriyāni nāma: cande sasabimbaṃ, vaṭṭakajātakamhi saccakiriyaṭṭhāne aggissa gamanupacchedo, ghaṭṭikārakumbhakārassa mātāpitūnaṃ vasanaṭṭhāne devassa avassanaṃ, tassā pokkharaniyā tīre naḷānaṃ ekacchiddabhāvoti*. Cp. also Cowell et. al. 2002: 56 for further references.

²⁷³ Von Hinüber (1998: 198) in particular highlights the identical formulas/ formulations at the beginning and the end of the *sūtras*: *bhūtapubbaṃ <> bhūtapūrvam; siyā nu kho pana <> syāt khalu punaḥ*.

²⁷⁴ This is not the place for an in-depth comparison of the two texts – however interesting this would be – but one detail may be given here, since it nicely illustrates the manner of characterisation in both texts, and the different results: p. 263 states that Jyotipāla is Ghaṭṭikāra’s childhood playmate, (Ger. “*Sandkastenfreund*”), *sa-hapāṃśukrīḍanakah*.

very odd explanation of how it came to be that Ānanda could recognize the Buddha's very subtle smile²⁷⁵: Because, while 'normal' folk would jovially beat their breast and burst in laughter, calling "What? What?!", Buddhas just show very subtle and decent smiles, only exhibiting the tips of their front-teeth slightly – the Buddha's mirth in this particular incident occurs only inwardly, as the commentary explains, as a laugh whose "[state of] mind is concomitant with joy that is an element of pure mental cognition/apperception effecting no karma (*kiriyā-’hetuka-mano-viññāṇa-dhātu-somanassa-sahagata-cittaṃ*).²⁷⁶ It furthermore gives peculiar explanations about the nature and the different kinds of "skillful" versus "unskillful" laughter²⁷⁷ as well as, later on, the labour involved in the production of rice.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ Ps III 279,22-280,4: *Taṃ paṇ' etaṃ hasitaṃ evaṃ appamattakampi therassa pākataṃ ahosi. Kathaṃ? tathārūpe hi kāle tathāgatassa catūhi dāṭhāhi catuddīpikamahāmeghamukhato sateratāvijjulatā viya vi-rocamānā mahātālakhandhapamāṇā rasmivaṭṭiyo uṭṭhahitvā tikkhattuṃ sīsavaraṃ padakkhiṇaṃ katvā dāṭhaggesuyeva antaradhāyanti. Tena saññāṇena āyasmā ānando bhagavato pacchato gacchamānopi sitapātubhāvaṃ jānāti. The commentary asks: If the Buddha smiled so subtly, how did it come that Ānanda still recognised it? The four front teeth of the Buddha emitted rays of light resembling a flash of lightning from the Buddha's mouth like from a rain cloud, so vast that it extended over the whole earth, and rose up to the size of the trunk of a huge palm tree. After circling three times around the head of the Buddha it finally disappeared again in his front teeth. From that occurrence, the Venerable Ānanda, who was following the Buddha, recognised that the Buddha produced a subtle smile.*

²⁷⁶ Ps III 279,7-11: [...] *sitapātukammamakāsi, aggaggadante dassavā mandahasitaṃ hasi. Yathā hi lokiyamanussā uraṃ paharantā: "kuhaṃ kuhanti hasanti, na evaṃ buddhā, buddhānaṃ pana hasitaṃ haṭṭhapa-haṭṭhākāramattameva hoti.*

²⁷⁷ Ps III 279,11-21: *Hasitañca nāmetaṃ terasahi somanassasahagatacittēhi hoti. Tattha lokiyamahājano akusalato catūhi, kāmvāvacarakusalato catūhīti aṭṭhahi cittēhi hasati, sekkhā akusalato diṭṭhisampayuttāni dve ap-anetvā chahi cittēhi hasanti, khīṇāsavā catūhi sahetukakiriyacittēhi ekena ahetukakiriyacittēni pañcahi cittēhi hasanti. Tesupi balavārammaṇe āpāthagate dvīhi nāṇasampayuttacittēhi hasanti, dubbalārammaṇe duhetukacittadvayena ca ahetukacittēna cāti tīhi cittēhi hasanti. Imasmiṃ pana ṭhāne kiriyāhetukamanov-iññādhātusomanassasahagatacittaṃ bhagavato haṭṭhapa-haṭṭhākāramattaṃ hasitaṃ uppādesi.*

²⁷⁸ Ps III 283,10-22: *Paṇḍupuṭakassa sālinoti puṭake katvā sukkhāpitassa rattasālino. Tassa kira sālino vappakālato paṭṭhāya ayaṃ parihāro: kedārā suparikammakatā honti, tattha bījāni patiṭṭhāpetvā gandhodakena siñcimsu, vappakāle vitānaṃ viya upari vatthakilaṇjaṃ bandhitvā paripakkakāle vīhisīsāni chinditvā muṭṭhi-matte puṭake katvā yottabaddhe vehāsaṃyeva sukkhāpetvā gandhacūṇṇāni attharivā koṭṭhakesu pūretvā tatiye vasse vivariṃsu. Evaṃ tivassaṃ parivutthassa sugandharattasālino apagatakālake suparisuddhe taṇḍule ga-hetvā khajjakavikatimpi bhattampi paṭiyādiyiṃsu. Taṃ sandhāya vuttaṃ paṇītaṃ khādanīyaṃ bhojanīyaṃ - pe - kālaṃ ārocāpesīti.*

4.3 Content of the *sutta* & narrative structure

In doctrinal terms, or concerning its prevalent theme, the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* stresses the importance of faith in the Buddha, his teachings, and in the *saṅgha* (especially faith through understanding or one's own experience, *avecca-ppasāda*²⁷⁹).

The following offers a summary and structural analysis of the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* of the MN. The Roman numbers (I, II, III) signify the narrative levels, which are by definition always indicated through a change of the narratological category of 'voice' (i.e. the narrator)²⁸⁰, the Arabic numbers indicate paragraphs, which constitute units of meaning (introduction of a new theme or person, e.g.) or other structural units (indicated by textual signifiers)²⁸¹. (Note that my paragraph-division here may or may not coincide with the paragraph arrangement in the editions of the original Pāli text or the English translation in Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001.)

I.1 Exposition²⁸² (MN I 45,1-10) [0. *Bhānaka*: Introductory formula plus I.1. Narrator: extradiegetic, heterodiegetic *sutta*-narrator (= G. Genette), or 'primary narrative' (= Martinez/Scheffel), or 'first-level' narration (W. Schmid)²⁸³

²⁷⁹ See MN I 51,16f.: *Ghaṭṭikāro kho maharāja, kumbhakāro buddhe aveccappasādena samannāgato, dhamme – pe –* [according to the Critical apparatus of the PTS edition, do the Siamese and the Burmese mss repeat the phrase verbatim!] *saṅghe, ariyakantehi sīlehi samannāgato*.

²⁸⁰ Cp. Genette 1990: 84-87.

²⁸¹ Cp. Galasek 2009: chapter 2.2.

²⁸² I have adopted the term 'exposition' from the classical theory of the drama, in which it ideally or typically stands at the beginning of the drama, prior to the action and provides the spectator or reader with "the knowledge of and information about the [specific] preconditions lying in the past and determining the present, on which the following conflict [or story] is based". Cp. <http://www.li-go.de/definitionsansicht/drama/exposition.html> (last accessed: 9th March 2013).

²⁸³ See <http://www.li-go.de/definitionsansicht/prosa/ebenendeserzaehlens.html>, note 1 (last accessed: 16th March 2013). Different narrative theorists have coined different terms for the same phenomena. I mainly rely on the nomenclature coined by G. Genette, but give also, if useful, the alternative terms used by other important narratologists.

After the standard introductory formula (= the frame²⁸⁴ proper) for the longer *suttas*, “Thus have I heard” (*evam me sutam*), an extradiegetic, heterodiegetic narrating instance (henceforth: the *sutta*-narrator) provides the audience with the introduction or ‘exposition’, subsequent to which the *Jātaka* story unfolds. In it, as usual, the setting is provided, that is the (unspecified) time (*ekam samayaṃ*), the place (*Kosalesu*), as well as the introduction of some of the persons, and the protagonists, respectively, appearing in the story (*Bhagavā; mahatā bhikkhusaṃghena sad-dhiṃ*).

I.2 The first sentence²⁸⁵ that commences the actual story (if only of the frame story to the *Jātaka* in this case), relates that the Buddha, while wandering with a large body of monks following him, unexpectedly steps down from the road and smiles. Ānanda, knowing that Buddhas do not smile without a reason, enquires after the reason for this.

II. *Jātaka* (MN I 45,11-54,18)

II.1. 2nd Narrator: Buddha Gotama: ‘embedded’ narrative, 2nd level narration (“*sekundäres Erzählen*”)]

At this point, the role of the speaker is “handed over” by our covert omniscient narrator²⁸⁶ of the *suttas* to one of the main characters in the narrative, the Buddha Gotama (= extradiegetic, ho-

²⁸⁴ “Frame” I call the introductory formula (*Evam me sutam*) of all the longer *suttas* of the *Sutta Piṭaka*, enunciated by the recitator (*bhāṇaka*). What is usually called frame, I here call the “exposition”. I chose the term frame for convenience’s sake (see also n. 313 below!). However, it should be noted that by that term I do not mean the frame of a framed story, e.g. Narrative “embedding” with “frame story” etc. are older terms; cp. LHN s.v. Narrative Levels, §5: “Formally, embedding is defined by syntactic subordination, even though it does not necessarily involve a change of narrating instance (a digression can be related by the primary narrator).” G. Genette’s explanations, and subsequent clarifications (Genette 1990), on the narrative levels were meant to “[systematize] the traditional notion of “embedding,” whose main drawback is that it does not sufficiently mark the *threshold* between one diegesis and another – a threshold symbolized by the fact that the second diegesis is taken charge of by a narrative fashioned within the first diegesis.” (Genette 1990: 84) (For my use of ‘frame’ (marked by single quotes) in a cognitive sense, see further below!)

²⁸⁵ The actual ‘story’ or narrative that a *sutta* relates, structurally starts with the conjunction *Atha kho*, “And then...”

²⁸⁶ A narrator is ‘covert’ when he is not designed or does not appear as a distinct person in a text (= ‘overt’ narrator). Nevertheless, all narrating must have a ‘place of origin’. A more neutral term also current in narratology, in order to avoid the anthropomorphic connotation, would be ‘narrating’ or ‘enunciating instance’ (cp. Genette 1980: 212f.)

modiegetic narrator). This results in an interesting situation where the narrator, according to Genette's nomenclature, appears to be extradiegetic and heterodiegetic ("third-person narration"). However, given the *later* revealed identity of the Buddha Gotama with the Brahmin youth Jotipāla, whom Gotama addresses in the third person, he is in fact a homodiegetic narrator (Ghaṭikāra/Gotama Buddha).

As an answer to Ānanda's enquiry, he tells a story of the past beginning with *bhūtapubbam*²⁸⁷, "in old times/formerly", in which he himself features prominently (however, not as prominently as one might expect – the actual main character is Ghaṭikāra!). The following *Jātaka*, then, serves as an explanation of a place²⁸⁸: Somewhere on a made road in the ancient Indian state of Kosala, perhaps on the way to ancient Benares²⁸⁹, was once situated the prosperous and flourishing market town of Vebhaṅga²⁹⁰. Near that town dwelled the Buddha Kassapa who had once instructed his monks exactly on that very spot on which the Buddha Gotama and Ānanda are standing at this moment in the narrative of the (frame) story.

[I.3.] (MN I 45,18-46,1) The next part sees a shift back to the first narrative level (that of the frame story) through its change of speaker from the Buddha Gotama to the (omniscient) *sutta*-narrator. Ānanda arranges a seat for the Buddha with his robe and invites the Buddha to relate the story of the past in full to him and the assembled *saṅgha* of monks. After these preparations, the Buddha repeats his earlier comment to Ānanda verbatim to the assembly.

²⁸⁷ This phrase, which seems to be unique for Buddhist texts, also because it is alien to the great Indian epics, as Oskar von Hinüber states, resembles the traditional introduction of fairy tales (Ger. "*Es war einmal*"; Once upon a time); cp. von Hinüber 1998: 184, esp. n. 541.

²⁸⁸ Cp. von Hinüber 1998: 186.

²⁸⁹ MN I 49,11 states that half a month after Jotipāla's ordination, the Buddha set out from Vebhaṅga to Benares (*bārāṇasī*). Cp. DPPN s.v. Kāsi: "Kāsi (Kāsika). One of the sixteen Mahājanapadas (AN I 213, etc.), its capital being Bārāṇasī. [...] Sometimes the king is referred to merely as Kāsi-rājā. Among other kings of Kāsi mentioned are Kikī (MN II 49) and Kalābu (Jā III 39). The extent of the Kāsi kingdom is given as three hundred leagues (Jā V 41; also III 304, 391). The capital of Kāsi is generally given as Bārāṇasī [...]. **Kāsi was evidently a great centre of trade and a most populous and prosperous country. Frequent mention is made of caravans leaving Kāsi to travel for trade. One highway went through Kāsi to Rājagaha (Vin I 212) and another to Sāvattī (Vin II 10; Mhv V 114).** [my emphasis] Kāsi was famed for her silks, and Kāsi-ropes were most highly esteemed as gifts, each robe being valued at one hundred thousand. (See, e.g., Jā VI 151, 450; see also Addhakāsi)."

²⁹⁰ The mss., according to the critical apparatus of the PTS edition, give different spellings for the name of the town; the notes in the PTS ed. record: *Vegaliṅgam* (B^m) and *Vebhaligam* (Si) as vv.ll. Cp. MN I 45, n. 2. The B^c(R) has *Vegaḷiṅgam*.

II.2 (MN I 46,1-48,3) [Narrator: Buddha Gotama; Addressee: Ānanda/monks; Focalisers: Buddha Gotama/Jotipāla (MN I 47,27-48,3)]

(1) This part sees the continuation of the story begun by the Buddha (Gotama). At this point, the text introduces the main characters of the narrated world of the embedded story (= the *Jātaka*). In the town of Vebhaṅga once lived a potter, ‘Potter’ (*Ghaṭikāra*) by name, who served as the chief attendant (*agg’-upaṭṭhāka*) of the previous Buddha Kassapa. His very best friend was a Brahmin student called Jotipāla. The potter wished very much to go and see the Blessed One Kassapa, the *arahat*, the fully Awakened One, but his friend the Brahmin speaks contemptuously of the Buddha as a “bald-headed kind of a recluse” (*muṇḍaka samaṇaka*) and sees no point in meeting such an ascetic. Ghaṭikāra asks his friend three times, and three times he refuses to accompany Ghaṭikāra to go and see the Blessed One. It seems that the potter has given up, and he suggests to Jotipāla that it is perhaps time for the evening bath. Then the two friends go to the river to take the evening bath. But as soon as they arrive at the river, Ghaṭikāra starts again to entreat his friend. Altogether, the same phrase is repeated²⁹¹ verbatim six times in the text, realised as direct speech of Ghaṭikāra, before the situation finally escalates: As they dress after their bath (this fact is implicit in the text, because it states that Jotipāla is girding himself and has washed his hair), Ghaṭikāra first grabs the girdle of Jotipāla to lend weight to his bidding which Jotipāla once again rejects – also with the same wording as the six times before.²⁹²

(2) Then follows the dramatic climax of the narrative: Once again the potter entreats his friend (with the same words as before) and once again Jotipāla (the future Buddha!) refuses and slanders the Buddha Kassapa (also with those same words as before, MN I 46,6-10), whereupon Ghaṭikāra takes an even more extreme measure. He grabs Jotipāla by the [freshly] washed hair of

²⁹¹ First appearance of the phrase in MN I 46,6-10: *Āyāma, samma Jotipāla, Kassapaṃ bhagavantaṃ arahantaṃ sammāsambuddhaṃ dassanāya upasaṃkamissāma; sādhusammataṃ hi me tassa Bhagavato dassanaṃ arahato sammā-sambuddhassāti*, “My dear Jotipāla, let us go and see the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened. I hold that it is good to see that Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened (tr. Nāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 670,6.). When the phrase is repeated for the seventh time by Ghaṭikāra, at the river, the sentence is added to the phrase cited above: *Ayaṃ, samma Jotipāla, Kassapassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sambuddhassa avidūre ārāmo* (MN I 46,27f.), My dear Jotipāla, not far from here is the monastery (*ārāma* originally means a ‘pleasure grove’ or a park where the Buddha was usually staying; it has been doubted that a tradition of permanent structures, monasteries, as dwelling places for the saṅgha had been established by the time of the early saṅgha) of the Blessed One Kassapa.

²⁹² MN I 46,11f.: *Alaṃ, samma Ghaṭikāra; kiṃ pana tena muṇḍakena samaṇakena diṭṭhenāti?* “Enough, dear Ghaṭikāra, what is the use of seeing that bald-pated recluse?” (tr. Nāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 670,6.)

his head, entreating him for the last time with those same words: “The dwelling place of the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully awakened, is not far from here, my dear friend Jotipāla. Let us go, dear Jotipāla, to the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully awakened, let us approach [him] to see him/to behold him.²⁹³ I consider it good, indeed, to see/behold the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully awakened.” Jotipāla is astonished at this extreme act of his friend, thinking: “This is indeed surprising, this is astonishing!²⁹⁴ I imagine this [the meeting with the Buddha Kassapa] will certainly be no trivial matter, that (*yatra hi nāma*²⁹⁵) this potter Ghaṭikāra, while being himself of a lowly birth, should think it necessary to grab (*parāmasitabbaṃ maññissati*) our (*amhākaṃ*), the Head-Ablutioned’s²⁹⁶ (*sīsanahātānaṃ*) hair

²⁹³ The phrase probably does not have the same connotation that it later gained in the Hindu tradition and that is known as ‘darshan’ (Skt. *darśana*). However, it is likely that the idea of the possibility of partaking in or getting one’s share of the “enlightened charisma” of a spiritually highly realised being did already resonate in the expression (*dassanāya upasaṃkamissāma*). Cp. Gifford 2003: 77.

²⁹⁴ Note the Vocative singular of the honorific pronoun *bhavant*, *bho*, here used as an exclamation, which is indicative of actual speech, which in the Pali *suttas* is, however, always ‘simulated orality’ (Ger. “*fingierte Mündlichkeit*”; cp. von Hinüber 1996: §55). Since Jotipāla is not speaking here (we are but dealing with a representation of his thoughts) it is even more interesting how the text, for all, or despite, its formulaic character, creates a quite lively situation through this imitation of colloquial speech.

²⁹⁵ See PED, s.v. *yatra*.

²⁹⁶ I somewhat venturesomely, as an *interpretatio difficilior*, interpret *sīsanahāta* here as a noun functioning as an attribute to *amhākaṃ* (= Jotipāla). Because we are here clearly presented with Jotipāla’s point of view (in the form of a representation of his thoughts), the noun “Head-Ablutioned”, as a derived meaning, makes sense – it expresses his (arrogant and proud) view of himself and serves to underline the gravity of his friend’s act, as well as it is indicative (for Jotipāla) of the importance of the event to come (which is explicitly stated in the sentence before this one, which, in effect, expresses a speculation on Jotipāla’s part about Ghaṭikāra’s possible motivation for his action).

Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (2001: 671) translates the Pāli phrase *amhākaṃ sīsanahātānaṃ* accordingly absolute genitive-construction of (however, as the plural signifying that both Jotipāla and Ghaṭikāra had just washed their heads): “It is wonderful, it is marvellous that this potter Ghaṭikāra, who is of an inferior birth, should presume to seize me by the hair when we have washed our heads! Surely this can be no simple matter.”

(kesesu)!²⁹⁷ It was only after his friend the potter had gone so far, that Jotipāla consented to their going together to visit the Blessed One Kassapa.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ MN II 46f.: *Atha kho, ānanda, jotipālo māṇavo ovaṭṭikam viniveṭhetvā ghaṭikāraṃ kumbhakāraṃ etad avoca: Alaṃ, samma Ghaṭikāra; kiṃ pana tena muṇḍakena samanakena diṭṭhenāti? atha kho, Ānanda, Ghaṭikāro kumbhakāro Jotipālaṃ māṇavaṃ sīsanahātaṃ kesesu parāmasitvā etad avoca: Ayaṃ, samma Jotipāla, Kassapassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa avidūre ārāmo. Āyāma, samma Jotipāla, Kassapaṃ bhagavantaṃ arahantaṃ sammā-sambuddhaṃ dassanāya upasaṅkamissāma. Sādhussammataṃ hi me tassa Bhagavato dassanaṃ arahato sammā-sambuddhassāti. Atha kho, Ānanda, Jotipālassa māṇavassa etad ahoṣi: Acchariyaṃ vata, bho, abbhutaṃ vata, bho. Yatra hi nāmāyaṃ Ghaṭikāro kumbhakāro ittarajacco samāno amhākaṃ sīsanahātānaṃ kesesu parāmasitabbaṃ maññissati; na vat' idaṃ [B^m adds kira; Ps na vadat' idaṃ] orakaṃ maññe bhavissatīti; Ghaṭikāraṃ kumbhakāraṃ etad avoca: yāvetadohipi [B^e(R), B^m yāvatādohipi], samma Ghaṭikārāti. Yāvetadohi pi [B^e(R), B^m yāvatādohipi], samma Jotipāla. Tathā hi pana me sādhusammataṃ tassa bhagavato dassanaṃ arahato sammāsambuddhassāti. 'Tena hi, samma Ghaṭikāra, muñca; gamissāmāti.*

Ian Mabbett and Greg Bailey provide a very different translation of the phrase, *Acchariyaṃ vata bho...* (after Ghaṭikāra has pulled Jotipāla's hair; cp. Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 245). Interestingly, they interpret the phrase, *na vat' idaṃ orakaṃ maññe bhavissatīti*, as being Ghaṭikāra's thoughts, not Jotipāla's. That would indeed provide some kind of motivation for the potter's extreme action; however, not a very informative or convincing one, lest one assumes that Ghaṭikāra possesses some kind of higher knowledge (*abhiññā*) in order to be able to see what is waiting for Jotipāla.

²⁹⁸ The expression *yāvetadohi pi* (MN I 47,32; B^e(R) *yāvatādohipi*) must remain doubtful (probably a textual corruption). Buddhaghosa tries to explain it, but not entirely convincingly (Ps III 281,25f.): *Yāvetadohi pī ti ettha do-kārahikārapikāra nipātā yāvetaparaman ti attho. Idaṃ vuttaṃ hoti vācāya ālapanaṃ ovaṭṭikāya gahaṇaṃ ca atikkamitvā yāva kesegahaṇā pi tattha gamanattamaṃ payogo kattabbo ti, 'yāvetadohi pi' [means]: "Here, the sounds 'do', 'hi', and 'pi' are interjections. Yāveta [perhaps = yāva etad, "so far as this"] [means] 'farthest'. The meaning of this has to be understood as follows: After this had been said, i.e. the addressing [of Jotipāla] orally [*āyāma, samma Jotipāla ...*], surpassing the grasping (or reference to (*gahaṇaṃ*)) of the girdle, up to the grabbing of [Jotipāla's] hair, all this [, i.e. Ghaṭikāra's action, escalates] for the purpose of going [to see the Blessed One Kassapa]. However, compare also the expression *Cara pi re, Mallike* (MN II 108,22f.) occurring in the *Piyajātika Sutta* (MN 87), where "*pi re*" appear to be interjections/particles of some sort; cp. also von Hinüber 1994: 8ff.*

II.3 (MN I 48,3-48,32) [narrator: Buddha Gotama; addressee: Ānanda/monks]

Then the two friends approach the Blessed One Kassapa²⁹⁹ and Ghaṭṭikāra formally introduces his friend to the former Buddha and asks him to teach the *dhamma* to his Brahmin friend. The Buddha does so, he instructed (*sandassesī*) them, roused (*samādāpesī*) them, “fired them up” (*samuttejesī*), and “thrilled” them (*sampahaṃsesī*) with a talk on *dhamma* (*dhammiyā kathāya*), whereupon Jotipāla is so inspired that he wants to go forth under the Buddha Kassapa (beforehand, after having left Kassapa, Jotipāla asks his friend why he himself had not had the idea of getting ordained by the Buddha. Ghaṭṭikāra replies that it was impossible for him because he had to take care of his blind parents: “But surely you know me, dear Jotipāla – I take care of my blind old parents.”³⁰⁰).

II.4 (MN I 48,32-49,9) Jotipāla becomes ordained

After this conversation and Jotipāla’s resolve, the friends return to the Blessed One Kassapa. (There is a time leap in the text (an ‘ellipsis’)³⁰¹ –it is not mentioned what the friends do after they have talked about Jotipāla’s plans to become ordained. Nevertheless, it would be natural to assume that some time had elapsed between them leaving the Buddha Kassapa and their repeated

²⁹⁹ MN II 48,4-13: *Atha kho, Ānanda, Ghaṭṭikāro ca kumbhakāro Jotipālo ca māṇavo yena Kassapo bhagavā arahamaṃ sammā-sambuddho ten’ upasaṃkamimsu. Upasaṃkamitvā Ghaṭṭikāro kumbhakāro Kassapaṃ bhagavantaṃ arahantaṃ sammā-sambuddhaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Jotipālo pana māṇavo Kassapena bhagavatā arahatā sammāsambuddhena saddhiṃ sammodi., sammodanīyaṃ kathaṃ sārāṇīyaṃ vītisāretvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Ekamantaṃ nisinna kho, Ānanda, Ghaṭṭikāro kumbhakāro Kassapaṃ bhagvantaṃ arahantaṃ sammā-sambuddhaṃ etad avoca: — ... “Then Ghaṭṭikāra the potter and Jotipāla the young Brahmin student went to where the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully awakened [was staying]. [For a discussion of the yena ... tena-phrase “in its most common employment [...] in approaches to a person” (and not a place or “by way of”), see Allon 1997: 47]. After they had approached [the Blessed One], Ghaṭṭikāra the potter paid homage [in the sense of “Having prostrated himself at the feet of the Buddha”; cp. ibid.: 54] to the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully awakened and sat down to one side. But the young Brahmin student Jotipāla exchanged greetings with the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully awakened and, having exchanged agreeable and courteous talk [with him], sat down to one side.”*

Cp. Allon 1997: 51-54; 86f.; summary p. 95f.; 174, formula C.1).

³⁰⁰ MN I 48,29f.: *Nanu maṃ, samma Jotipāla, jānāsi: Andhe jiṅṅhe mātā-pitaro posemīti?* The blind parents are a frequent motif in Indian literature, as Bailey & Mabbett (2003: 247) explain: “The symbolism of the blind parents, found often elsewhere in Indian literature (e.g., the acetic killed by Pāṇḍu in the *Ādiparvan* of the *Mbh*) [cp. also the Jātaka’s], lends more dramatic emphasis to his domestic responsibility than would the simple declaration that he had to support a family.”

³⁰¹ MN I 48,31-32: *Tena hi, samma Ghaṭṭikāra, ahaṃ agārasmā anāgāriyaṃ pabbajissāmī ti. [...] Atha kho, Ānanda, Ghaṭṭikāro ca kumbhakāro Jotipālo ca māṇavo yena Kassapo bhagavā arahamaṃ sammāsambuddho ten’ upasaṃkamimsu.*

approach. Otherwise, the repeated use of the approach formula would perhaps sound odd even to one who is used to this highly formulaic language.³⁰² That the language is highly formulaic – using the usual approach formulas³⁰³ – does not come as a surprise (owing to the mnemonic exigencies), and should not mislead one over the liveliness and realistic touch of the situation). Again, it is Ghaṭṭikāra who asks the Buddha on behalf his friend to be ordained by him, and Jotipāla obtains the full admission into the order (*upasampadā*) in the presence of the Blessed One Kassapa.³⁰⁴

II.5 [MN I 49,9³⁰⁵-50,12] King Kikī/the ‘meal narrative’³⁰⁶ (Narrator: Buddha Gotama; Addressee: Ānanda/the monks respectively; Focaliser: Buddha Gotama; Place: Benares, the Deer Park]

It is an interesting fact in the story-world that at this moment the character Jotipāla disappears from the story. (We will return to this later.) The Buddha Kassapa wanders to Benares (= *Kāśī*) and makes camp in the famous Deer Park (*Isipatane Migadāye*). Kikī, the king of Kāśī at that

³⁰² This is perhaps a weak explanation; for a similar situation cp. Allon 1997: 57.

³⁰³ MN I 48,4-8 and re-occurring verbatim at MN I 48,33-49,5: *Atha kho, Ānanda, Ghaṭṭikāro ca kumbhakāro Jotipālo ca māṇavo yena Kassapa bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho ten’ upasaṃkamim̐su; upasaṃkamitvā Kassapaṃ bhagavantaṃ arahantaṃ sammāsambuddhaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdim̐su. Ekamantaṃ nisīno kho, Ānando, Ghaṭṭikāro kumbhakāro Kassapaṃ bhagavantaṃ arahantaṃ sammāsambuddhaṃ etad avoca: [...].* See Allon 1997: 172 (approach-formula A.6))

³⁰⁴ MN I 49,7-9: *Alattha kho, Ānanda, Jotipālo māṇavo Kassapa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa santike pabbajam̐ alattha upasampadam̐.* It is conspicuous that Jotipāla receives the full ordination at this point. This speaks for the assumption that the *sutta*-content may record a point of time in the history of the *saṅgha* where the ordination was not yet split into two separate ceremonies (*pabbajā* and *upasampadā*), as related by the *Vinaya* (Vin I 82).

³⁰⁵ Interestingly, unlike the PTS edition, the B^c(R) has a new paragraph starting here (287.), which congruously coincides with the starting of a new unit of meaning: the Buddha Kassapa, after having stayed at Vebhaliṅge for as long as he wished, half a month after the ordination of Jotipāla the Brahmin youth, set out for Benares. MN I 49,9-13: *Atha kho, Ānanda, Kassapa bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho arirūpasampanne Jotipāle māṇave addhamāsūpasampanne Vebhaliṅge yathābhirantaṃ viharitvā yena Bārāṇasī tena cārikaṃ pakkāmi; anupubbena cārikaṃ caramāno yena Bārāṇasī tad avasari ...*

³⁰⁶ Cp. Allon 1997: 125f.; Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 240 (It is somewhat noticeable that Bailey and Mabbett do neither cite Allon’s study throughout their book nor list it in the bibliography).

time, receives the message of the Buddha Kassapa's arrival and prepares to meet him.³⁰⁷ The king approaches the Blessed One Kassapa, greets him respectfully³⁰⁸, and sits down to one side. Kassapa is reported to deliver a discourse on *dhamma* to the king (it is reported that such an event took place, not its content; verbatim the earlier *dhamma*-talk given to the two friends: *dhammiyā kathāya sandassesī samādapesi samuttejesī sampahaṃsesī*³⁰⁹), whereupon the king invites the Buddha³¹⁰ and his entourage for a meal at his house for the next day. Kassapa agrees, customarily, by remaining silent (*adhivāsesī ... Kassapo ... tuṅhībhāvena*). Kikī leaves and arranges for a lavish meal to be prepared at his place during the night. By dawn, he sends for the Buddha to inform him that the meal is ready. Up to this point, including the following report of the meal at king Kikī's dwelling, the presentation of the narrative follows exclusively formulaic patterns,

³⁰⁷ The text employs the formulas frequently/standardly used for the description of this kind of action; see MN I 49,15-26: *Assosi kho, Ānanda, Kikī Kāsirājā: Kassapo kira bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho Bārāṇasī anupatto Bārāṇasiyaṃ viharati Isipatane Migadāye ti. Atha kho, Ānanda, Kikī Kāsirājā bhadraṇi bhadraṇi yānāni yojāpetvā bhadraṃ [B^m bhadraṃ bhadraṃ] yānaṃ abhiruhitvā bhadrehi bhadrehi yānehi Bārāṇasiyā niyyāsi mahatā rājānubhāvena [B^o(R) mahaccārājānubhāvena] Kassapaṃ bhagavantaṃ arahantaṃ sammāsambuddhaṃ dassanāya; yāvatikā yānassa bhūmi yānena gantvā yānā paccorohitvā pattiko va yena Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho ten' upasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā Kassapaṃ bhagavantaṃ arahantaṃ sammāsambuddhaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Ekamantaṃ nisinnaṃ kho, Ānanda,....* Cp. Allon 1997: 26ff. ("Hearing that the Buddha has arrived in town"), 36-40 ("Preparing to approach someone and the means of getting there"), 168-190 ("References to Part I" > Formula 'L'). For a translation and detailed treatment of this passage see below.

³⁰⁸ As Allon has discovered, this greeting (which as a gesture seems to be equivalent with [gen.] *pāde śirasā vanditvā*) is probably the most respectful within a hierarchy of possible forms of greetings addressed to the Buddha and *bhikkhus* respectively; see Allon 1997: 53f. The very respectful approach-formulas seem to have been reserved by the *sutta* redactors exclusively for approaching and addressing the Buddha(s) or *bhikkhus*; cp. *ibid.*: 59f. The 'simpler' approach-formulas (Allon's 'Type A Formulas'; cp. *ibid.*: 19-23) which exclude polite and more or less elaborate forms of address etc. are usually not used for describing an approach to the Buddha or a *bhikkhu* (*ibid.*: 21).

³⁰⁹ See above under II.3; cp. also Allon 1997: 133, where this formula is analysed as part of the "post-approach formulas" of the 'B-type' (formula 'B d) 1a'), for which see *ibid.*: 187 ("References").

³¹⁰ Note the address '*bhante*' here (MN II 50,1)! Cp. this to Allon 1997: 57&59 (59: when used in the approach-formulas (B 5-7), the address '*bhante*' is seen to go almost always together with the most formal salutation possible, i.e. the *abhivādetvā* salutation)

namely employing approach-formulas³¹¹ and formulas used to describe the Buddha following an invitation for a meal.³¹² The king serves the Buddha Kassapa and his monks with his own hands.

II.6 Failed “conversion frame”/competing donors: the qualities of the lay follower Ghaṭikāra³¹³

[MN II 50,13-51,11 (failed conversion/Kikī’s reprimand) // MN II 51,11-52,4]

After the meal is finished, Kikī sits down on a lower seat at one side of the Blessed One Kassapa and invites him to stay with him for the rains retreat. Although Kikī shows the highest possible respect in his behavior towards the Blessed One Kassapa, and thus declares his trust in him as a (his?) religious teacher³¹⁴, the way Kikī pitches a rains residence to Kassapa is somewhat unusual and occurs only in this place in the *Sutta Piṭaka*. Kikī repeats three times: “May the Blessed One,

³¹¹ See n. 307 and 308.

³¹² Cp. Allon 1997: 125-138. There is one minor, almost trifle, as it were, variation here in comparison to the formula described by Allon for the DN. MN II 50,13-16, *Ghaṭikāra Sutta*, has *Atha kho, Ānanda, Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho pubbanhasamayaṃ nivāsetvā pattacīvaraṃ ādāya yena Kikissa Kāsirañño nivesanaṃ ten’ upasaṃkami; upasaṃkamitvā paññatte āsane nisīdi saddhim bhikkhusaṅghena*. In the DN formula, the *saṅgha* is mentioned already in the approach-formula: *atha kho Bhagavā pubbaṅha-samayaṃ nivāsetvā patta-cīvaraṃ ādāya saddhim bhikkhu-saṅghena yena ...* (see Allon 1997: 125). This variation could mean, if nothing else, a difference of transmission within the different *bhāṅaka* groups/traditions of the DN and MN respectively. A brief database survey shows that the former variation occurs in this form, besides in the MN, ten times in the *Mahāvagga*, four times in the *Cullavagga*, one time in the *Pārājika* of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, and five times in the MN (=http://www.bodhgayanews.net/pali.htm; search entry: *nisīdi saddhim*; 19.03.2013). Allon has already recognised and described this difference; cp. *ibid.*: 127. According to his observation, the former variant is prevalent in DN and the *Udāna*, whereas the latter occurs in Vin, MN, AN, and Sn.

³¹³ The following unit (MN II 50,13-24), which I have detached here from the preceding one and joined with the following praise of Ghaṭikāra’s qualities, belongs strictly speaking still to the narrative frame of the ‘meal narrative’ (being what Allon calls the ‘post-approach’; cp. Allon 1997: 128-137). However, I have connected it here with what follows because, in my view, seen from a perspective of its narrative function, as a “failed conversion frame” it serves as a kind of bridge (Ger. “Überleitung”). Note that I use the word ‘frame’ (in converted commas) in its specialised narratological sense (defined, e.g., in Fludernik 2008: Glossary, s.v. *Rahmen*). ‘Frame’ in (so-called Cognitive) Narratology means certain standard situations which consist in a fixed sequence of actions (= ‘script’; e.g. ‘visiting a restaurant’ and ordering a meal), and which are typically known to the members of a given society as part of their world knowledge and expressed through stock phrases). I use frame (without inverted commas) to indicate its more common use in description of narratives, as in “frame story”, etc. See also n. 284 above.

³¹⁴ Cp. Allon 1997: 131; 133 & 137 (Conclusion): “The giving of a meal is a sign of respect.” Allon argues that the phrase was perhaps inserted later in the MN. In any case, this approach formula appears to be used to indicate an obsequiousness on the part of the person taking the “lower seat” and that the person approaching has trust in the Buddha as a teacher to salvation (and thus submits to his authority).

venerable sir, accept from me a rains residence in Benares. The service to/supply for the *saṅgha* will be of such a/this kind.”³¹⁵ Three times the Buddha Kassapa refuses.³¹⁶

Following upon the refusals, king Kikī gets upset. The narrator presents Kikī’s thought in the voice of the Buddha Gotama, introduced with an abridged variant of the usual formula ([gen. of person] *etad ahoṣi*, which is left out here): “Then, Ānanda, the following thought occurred to Kikī the king of Kāsi: ‘Kassapa, the Blessed One, accomplished and fully awakened, does not consent to my [offer of a] rains residence in Benares.’” The narrator (= Buddha Gotama) obviously saw the need to comment on the ‘mode’ in which this thought is to be understood: “He became depressed³¹⁷ and dejected.”³¹⁸ Then, Kikī asks the Buddha: “Is there anyone, venerable sir, who serves you better than I do?”³¹⁹ Kassapa replies truthfully that the potter Ghaṭikāra in the market town called Vebhaliṅga was his chief supporter. What is more, the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully awakened, and therefore endowed with the ability to read others’ thoughts (*ceto-pariya-ñāṇa*, one of the six *abhiññā*), contrasts the king with his chief supporter. The passage gives the strong impression of being a reprimand addressed to king Kikī.³²⁰ Kassapa

³¹⁵ MN II 50,24f.: *Adhivāsetu me, bhante, Bhagavā Bārāṇasiyaṃ vassāvāsaṃ; evarūpaṃ saṃghassa upaṭṭhānaṃ bhavissatīti*. Horner translates (1957: 247): “Revered sir, may the Lord consent to (accept) my rains-residence in Benares; there will be suitable support for the Order.” Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (2001: 673,17.) has: “Venerable sir, let the Blessed One accept from me a residence for the Rains in Benares; that will be helpful for the Sangha.” Both translations do not bring the full implication of this phrase across: a mild form of “extortion” of the Buddha Kassapa: “If you accept me as your donor and main supporter here in Benares (> prestige for Kikī), *this* (*evarūpaṃ* = the sumptuous meal just enjoyed) is what you can expect every day for yourself and your monks!”

³¹⁶ MN II 50,26: *Alaṃ, maharaja, adhivuttho me vassāvāso ti*, “Enough, great king, I have [already] consented to a residence during the Rains.”

³¹⁷ The commentary explains that literally the “change” (*aññathattaṃ*) that occurred in Kikī was pertaining to his mind or “mental” (*cittaññathattaṃ*); Ps III 284,6. Cp. also to the same expression used for the householder in the *Piyajātika Sutta*.

³¹⁸ MN II 50,31-51,2: *Atha kho Ānanda, Kikissa Kāsirañño: Na me Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho adhivāseti Bārāṇasiyaṃ vassāvāsaṃ ti. Ahu-d-eva aññathattaṃ ahu domanassaṃ.*

³¹⁹ Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 673,18., translate: “Then he said: ‘Venerable sir, have you a better supporter than I am?’” MN II 51,4f.: *Atthi nu te, bhante, añño koci mayā upaṭṭhākatāro ti?* However, according to Pāṇini, the suffixes *-taro* and *-tama* can theoretically be added freely to any noun without altering the meaning (R. Gombrich, personal communication). Buddhaghosa does not comment on this passage.

³²⁰ MN II 51,5-11: *Atthi, mahārāja, Vebhaliṅgaṃ nāma gāmanigamo; tattha Ghaṭikāro nāma kumbhakāro; so me upaṭṭhāko aggupaṭṭhāko. Tuyhaṃ kho pana, maharaja: Na me Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho adhivāseti Bārāṇasiyaṃ vassāvāsaṃ ti atthi aññathattaṃ atthi domanassaṃ; tayidaṃ Ghaṭikāre kumbhakāre [B^e(R), B^m Ghaṭikārassa kumbhakārassa] n’ tthi na ca bhavissati.*

Buddha says: “You, on the other hand, maharaja, [just] thought: ‘Kassapa, the Blessed One, accomplished and fully awakened, does not consent to my [offer of a] rains residence in Benares’, and you became depressed and dejected. [But] this is not so with the potter Ghaṭṭikāra and it will not be so (i.e. the potter does not and will never think thus!).” Now, the Blessed One Kassapa explains why Ghaṭṭikāra has no reason to be disappointed and will not be disappointed – it is because of his qualities (these qualities are related to the “wholesome courses of action” (*kusala kamma-paṭhas*), his trust in the four Noble Truths, his general virtuous conduct, and finally the stage of his spiritual attainment).

III. ‘Meta-metadiegesis’, 3rd level narrative (“*tertiäres Erzählen*” (Schmid))

III.1 (MN II 52,4 -54,2) [Narrator: Buddha Kassapa; Addressee: the maharaja Kikī; Focaliser: Buddha Kassapa]

Following this enumeration of Ghaṭṭikāra’s positive character traits, we have another “story of the past”, this time of the more recent past within the time frame of the *Jātaka* (= the time of the ‘metadiegesis’, Ger. „*erzählte Zeit*”; however, no absolute time specification is given, as always). Here the narration is handed over to a (real) homodiegetic narrator: the Buddha Kassapa – the Buddha Gotama thereby becoming an extradiegetic narrator. Thus, the narrative level or the narrating situation shifts from the second to the third level or, in Genette’s terms, meta-metadiegetic level of narration.³²¹

As to the content of this embedded story, three episodes from the life of the potter Ghaṭṭikāra as the chief supporter and lay follower of the Buddha Kassapa and of their relationship are narrated. These episodes serve to exemplify the potter’s virtues as well as to explain the roots of the rather intimate relationship between the Buddha Kassapa and the poor potter. In the first episode, Kassapa during his daily begging round reaches the dwelling where Ghaṭṭikāra is living with and caring for his old and blind parents. The Blessed One enquires of the whereabouts of

³²¹ MN II 52,4: *Ekam idāhaṃ, mahārāja, samayaṃ Vebhaṅgaṅge gāmanigame viharāmi*, “At one time, maharaja, I was living in/near a market town called Vebhaṅga.” Cp. also Genette 1980: 232–34.

the *bhaggava*.³²² His parents inform Kassapa that he has gone out but invite him to help himself with the food that had been prepared. He enjoys his meal and went on. Upon arriving home, the potter recognises that someone has taken from his food. He asks his parents and they tell him what had happened. After hearing that it was the Blessed One Kassapa, the Accomplished and fully Awakened One, who has asked for him and then taken food from the pots, Ghaṭṭikāra thinks, “It is indeed a gain for me, it is indeed well gotten by me that the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully awakened, is trusting me that much.”³²³ Because of this, feelings of joy and pleasure abided in the potter for half a month, and for seven days in his parents.

In the second episode, which is an almost entirely verbatim repetition of the first episode, Kassapa just reports (remembers!) having taken a different kind of food (*kummāsa*, kind of rice-porridge (?), and curry or some kind of sauce, *sūpa*, instead of boiled rice, *odana*, with curry).³²⁴

The third episode, however, is markedly different. Kassapa, the Buddha, relates that while he was once living in Vebhaṅga, his hut leaked. So he asked of his monks to go to Ghaṭṭikāra’s dwelling and see if he had some spare grass for the repair of his roof. When they return empty-handed, Kassapa sends them again to fetch the grass from Ghaṭṭikāra’s roof. The monks do as they were told and, asked by the blind parents, who were tampering with their house’s roof, the monks reply truthfully that the grass was for the Blessed One Kassapa, whose hut was leaking, whereupon the parents encourage the monks to take freely whatever they needed. After Ghaṭṭikāra had returned home and had seen what had happened to the roof, he asked his parents about it. After they tell him everything that had happened, the potter rejoices as before. Additionally, the Blessed One Kassapa relates that it was discovered that although it was rainy season, for the remaining three months not even a single drop of water fell into the potter’s

³²² The term *bhaggava*, literally “pertaining to/coming from [the ancient clan of] Bhṛgu”, seems to have been a general designation for potters; cp. DPPN, s.v. *bhaggava*: “[...] Bhaggava seems to have been a generic name for all potters, perhaps a special form of address used towards members of the kumbhakāra “caste”. Thus we find in the books several instances of potters being addressed as “Bhaggava”. E.g., DhA.i.33; J. ii.80, iii.382. At J. 111.382.”

³²³ MN II 52,21f.: *Lābhā vata me suladdhaṃ vata me yassa me Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho evaṃ abhivissattho ti*.

³²⁴ This gives Anālayo (2011: 448) reason to speculate whether this passage might have its origin in an accidental textual doubling. I find this idea not very convincing given the fact that the *suttas* abound in this kind of repetition (– and thus in “accidental” textual doublings?) Furthermore, there is a difference, if only a small one, in the kind of food between the two passages (which could have been inserted, of course, after the doubling had occurred).

house, which now had only the sky for a roof. This event came eventually to be known as one of the “Aeon miracles” (*kappaṭṭhiyapāṭihāriyā*).³²⁵ “Such, maharaja, is Ghaṭṭikāra the potter!”³²⁶ With these words, Kassapa closes his story and the king Kikī, impressed, comments on it using Ghaṭṭikāra’s own words: “It is a gain for the potter Ghaṭṭikāra, venerable sir, it is a well gotten gain for the potter Ghaṭṭikāra, venerable sir, that the Blessed One is trusting him so [much].”³²⁷

II.7 Kikī’s gift

In the last paragraph of the *Jātaka*, within the time frame of the *Jātaka* tale, the narrating instance shifts ‘back’ to the extradiegetic, heterodiegetic narrator, Buddha Gotama, and thus returns to the second, or metadiegetic, level of narration. It relates that Kikī has five-hundred cart-loads of foodstuffs (red husked rice with suitable materials for sauce)³²⁸ sent to Ghaṭṭikāra as a gift, which the potter rejects.³²⁹

II.8 Samodhāna; narrator: sutta-narrator; focalizing instance: sutta-narrator

In the following “application of the story” (*samodhāna*), the Buddha Śākyamuni finally resolves the identities of the persons in the story of the past to Ānanda. It should be understood as follows: He himself, he says, was no other than the Brahmin youth Jotipāla, not somebody else.

I.4 Concluding Sentence/-Formula

Ānanda was satisfied and rejoiced in what the Buddha had said. Although the text describes that the monks are assembled around Buddha Gotama and Ānanda, it is slightly puzzling that here only Ānanda rejoices about the *Jātaka* the Buddha told.

0. ‘Frame’:

-*ti*= inverted comma, indicating that this is what was heard (*evam me sutam*): the recitation of the *sutta* ends here.

³²⁵ Cp. n. 272 above.

³²⁶ MN II 54,4f.: *Evarūpo ca, mahārāja, Ghaṭṭikāro kumbhakāro ti.*

³²⁷ MN II 54,5-7: *Lābhā, bhante, Ghaṭṭikārassa kumbhakārassa, suladdham lābhā, bhante, Ghaṭṭikārassa kumbhakārassa yassa Bhagavā evam abhivissattho ti.*

³²⁸ MN II 54,8-10: *Atha kho, Ānanda, Kikī Kāsirājā Ghaṭṭikārassakumbhakārassapañcamattāni taṇḍulavāhasatāni pāhesi paṇḍumuṭṭikassa sālino tadūpiyañ ca sūpeyyam.*

³²⁹ Greg Bailey and Ian Mabbett, on the other hand, interpret the potter’s last sentence in a sense that he does accept the gift; cp. Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 246. I. B. Horner’s translation of the passage is of the same tenor. I will discuss the different interpretations and its implication of our understanding of the narrative below.

4.4 Comparison with the *Jyotipāla Sūtra*, *Mahāvastu*

In comparison to the version of this story found in the *Mahāvastu-Avadāna* (Mvu), which interestingly bears the title *Jyotipāla Sūtra*, one can observe a general tendency to dramatise or emote the action or the presentation of events in the Mvu. This is interesting in comparison to the characterisation in the *Ghaṭikāra Sutta* in some parts. Here are a few notable examples: Prior to the crucial “bathing scene”, the Mvu states, in a brief interior monologue, Ghaṭikāra’s thoughts. In it, the potter, because he realises that his plea will be unsuccessful, thinks of a trick for how to get his friend Jyotipāla to go see the Blessed One. This narrative technique is also standardly found in mediaeval European literature: a character’s thoughts are presented “to explain” the motivation for his action (the verbal statement of the action is usually identical to the thought representation, except perhaps for the grammatical person). In Ghaṭikāra’s mind, the idea to go for the evening bath just serves his intention because the nearby lotus-pond *Sumukā*, lies close to where the Buddha Kāśyapa is dwelling.³³⁰ And just as Jyotipāla is beginning to dress again after his bath, Ghaṭikāra starts again to entreat him. After having grasped Jyotipāla’s girdle and entreating him for the fourth time to go and see the Buddha Kāśyapa, Jyotipāla drags himself away, whereupon Ghaṭikāra runs after him and manages to catch hold of a strand of his friend’s freshly washed hair.³³¹ To even aggravate the bad habits in Jyotipāla’s character, the Mvu adds (i.e. when compared with the Pāli version) rather prosaically to the conversation with the Blessed One Kāśyapa that Jyotipāla professed himself to be unable to put all of the five sets of precepts (*pañca śikṣāpadāni*) into practice right away because he first had to kill somebody who had annoyed him. Asked by Kāśyapa who this person was, Jyotipāla replies that it was Ghaṭikāra, the potter,

³³⁰ Bāgci 1970: 265,7-11: *Atha khalv Ānanda Ghaṭikārasya kumbhakārasya etad abhūṣi | ko nu khalu syād upāyo yaṃ Jyotipālo māṇavo bhagavantaṃ Kāśyapaṃ darśanāya upasaṃkrameya paryupāsānāya | atha khalv Ānanda Ghaṭikārasya kumbhakārasya etad abhūṣi | asti khalu tasyai ’va vanakhaṇḍasya avidūre sumukā nāma puṣkariṇī yaṃ nūnā ’haṃ Jyotipālena māṇavena sārđhaṃ yena sumukā nāma puṣkariṇī gaccheyāṃ śīrṣasnāpanāya |*

³³¹ Bāgci 1970: 265,4f.: *Atha khalv ānanda Jyotipālo māṇavo Ghaṭikāraṃ kumbhakāraṃ apadhunitvā prayāt | tam enaṃ ghaṭikāro kumbhakāro anujavitvā praveṇikeśehi gṛhītvā etad avocet |* I disagree with Anālayo, that this Mvu version of the event would “[explain] why Ghaṭikāra undertook an action that would have been a serious breach of etiquette in view of the ancient Indian respect for the head [...]” He could as well have grabbed him by the arm. It does not particularly explain his reaching for his hair, an action which has, in my view, another function in the text, namely that of contributing to Ghaṭikāra’s character(-isation); see Anālayo 2011: 444.

because he, himself being of a low social class, had touched his freshly washed hair.³³² The expression *śīrṣa-snātaka* corresponds to Pāli *sīsanahāta*. One possible reading would be this: In the Mvu version, *me tadā evaṃ śīrṣasnātaṃ* is construed as an absolute accusative construction (instead of an absolute genitive construction as in the Pāli). The verb, *parāmrśati*, would then have to be construed with the instrumental (*keśehi*), “he/she grabbed *by* the hair”, instead of the locative in the Pāli (“*at* the hair”). In any case, the pronoun ‘*me*’ can stand for both the (enclitic) accusative singular or the dative-genitive singular.³³³ Another, and perhaps more likely, reading, then, would take ‘*me*’ as the direct object of *parāmrśati*, and *śīrṣasnātaṃ* as a *bahuvrīhi*-compound, “one who has bathed”.

However, the meaning seems to be the same (except that in the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit version of the Mvu, the reference of the pronoun (*me*) is to Jyotipāla alone (singular), not to both characters as in the Pāli (*amhākaṃ*), at least according to the Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation). Since both went to wash their heads, the singular here could be interpreted to be intentioned to highlight the difference in status between Jyotipāla and Ghaṭikāra. Now the word *snāta* “bathed, washed” in the expression *śīrṣasnāta* (lexicalized in classical Skt. as *śīraḥsnāta*; cp. MW, s.v.) can also have a religious and ritual connotation, “purified by ablution”³³⁴. Since bathing in a Brahminical context almost always has religious and ritual overtones, it is possible to interpret this particular passage as adding to the dramatic climax of the action (i.e. the pulling of the hair of Jyotipāla’s ritually bathed Brahmin head) through highlighting the difference in social status of the two friends, underlining the gravity of Ghaṭikāra’s action, and thereby (indirectly) contributing to Jyotipāla’s characterisation as a proud Brahmin. If this interpretation is acceptable, this passage may even be seen to contain a Buddhist critique of the *varṇa*- or ancient Indian class-system. It is possible that the different constructions in the (Buddhist Hybrid) Sanskrit and the Pāli simply reflect differences in language usage. On the other hand, if my interpretation is valid,

³³² Bāgī 1970: 265,15-22: *Atha khalv Ānanda Bhagavāṃ Kāśyapo Jyotipālaṃ māṇavaṃ trīhi ca śaraṇaga-manehi pañcahi ca śikṣāpadehi samādāpaye | atha khalv Ānanda Jyotipālo māṇavo Bhagavantaṃ Kāśyapaṃ etad avocat | na tāvad ahaṃ Bhagavaṃ sarvāṇi pañca śikṣāpadāni samādāpayiṣyaṃ | asti tāva me eko puruṣo viheṭhako roṣako jīvitād vyaparopayitavyo | evaṃ ukte bhagavāṃ Jyotipālaṃ māṇavaṃ etad avocat | katamo punar Jyotipāla eko puruṣo viheṭhako roṣako jīvitād vyaparopayitavyo | evaṃ ukte Ānanda Jyotipālo māṇavo Bhagavantaṃ Kāśyapaṃ etad avocat | ayaṃ Bhagava Ghaṭikāro kumbhakāro yo me tadā evaṃ śīrṣasnātaṃ mūrdhni keśehi parāmrśati |*

³³³ See Edgerton, BHS, § 20.11f.

³³⁴ Cp. Apte, s.v. *snāta*.

the Mvu seems to corroborate my interpretation of the Pāli *sīsanahāta* as “Head-Ablutioned” and even bring out the intended dramatic impact of the passage more starkly (which is not reflected by the Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation).

More interesting for my purpose here, however, is the fact that some of the direct speech passages in the Pāli text, appear in the Mvu version as representations of thoughts of the respective characters.³³⁵

The Mvu version deviates completely from the Pāli version towards the end of the *sutta*. Whereas the end of the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* enhances or once more emphasizes the moral qualities of Ghaṭṭikāra, the Mvu comes up with the prediction of the future Buddhahood (Skt./P. *vyākaraṇa*) of Jyotipāla by the Buddha Kāśyapa, before, for the last few pages, it bursts into all kinds of wonderworks and miracles performed by the Buddha to impress and/or instruct his monks (the Buddha bursts into flames, flies up into the sky, and “thrills” his monks with a ‘talk’ on *dhamma*: “Think like this, monks, not like that! Concentrate like this, monks, not like that! [...]”; all of this neither relates to the story nor serves to make it more interesting).

Anālayo observes that the Mvu version shifts the emphasis from the (moral) qualifications of Ghaṭṭikāra to the bodhisattva career with Jyotipāla at its centre.³³⁶

These few examples of a very superficial comparison may be indicative that the version of the story as preserved in the Mvu betrays an interest of its redactors/authors to change certain aspects of the story when compared to the Pāli version. This might be a simple and perhaps alternative explanation to the historical-critical one, that these comparisons may point to the existence of a different recension as basis for the *Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādin* translation. Also, the different titles given to these two versions may be seen to reveal something about the confusion the story must have raised early on (Mvu: *Jyotipāla Sūtra*; Pāli: *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta*).

At this point I will return to the Pāli version of the story and take up again my synchronic investigation of the *sutta* instead of venturing into more intertextual comparisons and other such speculations.

³³⁵ See e.g. Bāgci 1970: 272,19ff., and MN I 54,5-7.

³³⁶ Cp. Anālayo 2011: 450: “In this way, the *Mahāvastu* account presents the events described in the *Ghaṭṭikāra-sutta* from the perspective of the bodhisattva’s career. This shift of emphasis finds its explicit expression in the discourse’s title in the *Mahāvastu*, where the “discourse on Ghaṭṭikāra” has become the “discourse on Jyotipāla.”

4.5 “Ur-Jātaka”

As mentioned above, this *sutta* relates the story of the Brahmin student Jotipāla, one of the Buddha’s former births, and his friend Ghatikāra the potter, bracketed by the usual expository (or frame) story of the longer *suttas*, that shows the defining structure of the canonical “Ur-Jātaka” as found, e.g., in the *Sutta Piṭaka*.³³⁷ The two major structural or formal defining characteristics of which are, as von Hinüber has shown, the introduction with *bhūtapubbaṃ*, “in old times/ formerly” (MN II 45,11), etc., and the (early) form of the *samodhāna*, “Now, Ānanda, you may think thus: ‘Certainly, someone else was the brahmin student Jotipāla on that occasion.’ But it should not be regarded thus. I was the brahmin student Jotipāla on that occasion.”³³⁸

The content of the uplifting teachings the Buddha Kassapa gives them are, according to the commentary, to be understood as “connected with the former births [of the two friends, or of Jotipāla alone?]’ to evoke [their] memories.”³³⁹ In other words, here *dhammī kathā* should be understood to mean *Jātaka*. This is in accordance with “the purpose” of a *Jātaka*, as is often stated in the *Jātaka paccuppannavatthu*, namely to reveal the reasons and thus provide an explanation for a present situation through events in the past.³⁴⁰ The purpose or the reason for the Buddha in

³³⁷ Cp. von Hinüber 1998: 186f. Von Hinüber speaks congruously of a “*Jātaka in Suttanta-Form*” (ibid.), since the story of Buddha’s former birth as Jotipāla forms the main body of the text and the content of the *sutta*, framed just by the ‘standard’ *sutta*-frame and a somewhat longer introduction.

³³⁸ Tr. Nāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 676,23. MN II 54,16-19: *Siyā kho pana te, Ānanda, evam assa: Añño nūna tena samayena Jotipālo māṇavo ahosīti. Na kho pan’ etaṃ, Ānanda, evaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ. Ahaṃ tena samayena Jotipālo māṇavo ahosin ti.* See also von Hinüber 1998: 185, for the commentaries’ explanation of this usage of *bhūtapubbaṃ*, which is very similar to the general reason for relating a story of the past, in order to show the reasons [for a present event/situation] concealed by [the present] rebirth.

³³⁹ Ps III 282,1f.: *Dhammiyā kathāyāti idha satipaṭilābhatthāya pubbenivāsapaṭisaṃyuttā dhammī kathā veditabbā.*

³⁴⁰ Jā I 98,6f.: [...] *himagabbhaṃ padāletvā puṇṇacandaṃ nīharanto viya bhavantarena paṭicchannakāraṇaṃ pākataṃ akāsi*, rendered very poetically by Robert Chalmers (Cowell et. al. 1990: 4) as: “Having thus excited the Treasurer’s [=Anāthapiṇḍika] attention, he made clear the thing that re-birth had concealed from them, as though he were releasing the full moon from the upper air, the birthplace of the snows.” See also von Hinüber 1998: 16ff. Cp. also the ‘reminiscence’ of the elaborate and later abbreviated transition from *paccuppannavatthu* to *aṭṭavattthu* in Jā. 35.

the *Ghaṭikāra Sutta* to relate this story (*vatthu*) of the past is to shed light on the (‘pre-) history’ of a certain place.³⁴¹

4.6 Narrative Progression

The following discussion frequently takes recourse to Phelan’s model of narrative progression and characters, and I use his nomenclature (as explained in Part II).

It is vital to the progression of the narrative in the *Ghaṭikāra Sutta* that when the Blessed One had stepped down from the road and smiled, Ānanda asks for the reason for this – he first asks himself and then the Buddha. The Buddha’s (unusual) smile produces the first ‘instability’ in the story (“Why does the Tathāgata smile?” may be the question of the narrative audience at this point). Ānanda asks this question, which dissolves the first instability, as a substitute or representative for the narrative audience (or rather, in fact for the ‘authorial audience’, because the narrative audience is expected to know, like Ānanda, that Tathāgatas do not smile for no reason!). This initial instability serves as the motivation for the Buddha to tell the following story about Ghaṭikāra the potter. It might also not be mere chance that the interlocutor of the Buddha is Ānanda, because the story is perhaps as much about Ānanda’s and the Buddha Gotama’s relationship as it is about Ghaṭikāra’s and the Buddha Kassapa’s, as I will argue in the following.³⁴²

³⁴¹ However, in our case here, it does not seem entirely convincing that the whole *sutta* should be intended to be merely an explanation of a certain place. Buddhaghosa explains comments that the Buddha K. here is reminding Jotipāla of his former *bodhisatta* vows! According to Buddhaghosa, there must be some remembrance from an earlier life, because just before seeing the Buddha J. was not at all interested in seeing the Buddha and then he even asks for the full ordination right away! So far this is plausible. However, if one considers who the addressee on this level of communication within the *sutta* is, it is clearly Ānanda, to whom the “*Ur-Jātaka*” is addressed. The commentator is thus confusing narrative levels here: The actual *Jātaka* that is being told to Ānanda (as direct addressee), respectively the *saṅgha*, by the Buddha Gotama is exactly this “embedded” *Jātaka*-story of Jotipāla and Ghaṭikāra. There is no indication (or reason) why the Buddha Kassapa should refresh Jotipāla’s and Ghaṭikāra’s memory about their past lives (which would indeed mean that Buddhaghosa understood the content of the summarising statement, *dhammīkathā*, to be a *Jātaka* within the *Jātaka* that Ānanda is being told. This is Buddhaghosa’s interpretation, but it is not indicated by the *sutta* itself). This being so, the commentator seems to confuse the first-level or primary frame-narrative with the metadiegetic, second-level story, which is told by a homo-diegetic narrator (the narrator, the Buddha Gotama, speaks about himself in the third person because the identity of Jotipāla and himself is only, according to the *Jātaka*-genre convention, revealed later at the end of the narrative. (The account may be called, according to Genette’s taxonomy, auto-diegetic. However, there’s no model for a narrator who is one of the main characters in the story but speaks about himself in the third person, as is the case in the *Jātakas*).

³⁴² It is noteworthy, I think, in this respect that only the identity of Jotipāla is revealed in the *samodhāna*, not that of any other character.

All in all, when looking closely at the way this ‘exposition’ of the *sutta* is arranged, it strikes one as a quite scenic portrayal of the situation or, speaking with the Anglo-American (Neo-Aristotelian) tradition of narratological analysis, as “showing”, as opposed to “telling”, referring to Plato’s famous distinction of *diegesis* and *mimesis*.

It must surely strike one as a peculiarity here that the same narrator, namely the Buddha Gotama, repeats the same words in quick succession.³⁴³ Why does he do that? As regards the content, the passage does not seem to be very important. However, it is important insofar as it provides the occasion/a reason for the Buddha to tell a story of the past to the monks: And therein lies, in my reading of the *sutta*, the reason for the repetition. In the first instance, the Buddha is standing and talking to Ānanda, his close attendant. Whether we take the content of what the Buddha tells to Ānanda at face value or not (the “real”, i.e. the historical fact of the existence of the former Buddha Kassapa; furthermore, it has to remain a complete mystery how exactly the Buddha remembers the place, since – according to his own teaching – everything changes constantly!), this remark of the Buddha provides an occasion for him to give a sermon. Why, then, does he repeat the same words? At the very beginning of the *sutta* it was said that the Buddha was travelling with a large group of monks in the land of the Kuru’s.³⁴⁴ With the second repetition, after having sat down on a seat prepared by Ānanda, he is going to give the sermon to this large following, despite the fact that he continues to address directly only Ānanda (vocative case).

Now, the passage prompts us to take a closer look at the nature of the Buddha’s interaction with Ānanda. According to tradition, although Ānanda is still “in training” (*sekha*) shortly before the first council starts (AN 3:78), at which the whole of the Buddha’s teachings were to be recited after his death in order to preserve them and to which only *arahats* were permitted, he

³⁴³ MN II 45f.: *Bhūtapubbaṃ ānanda, imasmiṃ padese vehaliṅgaṃ nāma gāmanigamo ahoṣi iddho ceva thito ca bahujano ākiṅṇamanusso. Vehaliṅgaṃ kho ānanda, gāmanigamaṃ kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho upanissāya vihāsi. Idha sudaṃ ānanda, kassapassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa ārāmo ahoṣi. Idha sudaṃ ānanda, kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho nisinnako bhikkhusaṅghaṃ ovaḍati.* This phrase is only interrupted by the descriptive statement that Ānanda is preparing a seat for the Buddha (Gotama) to sit down at exactly that spot: *Atha kho āyasmā ānando catugguṇaṃ saṅghāṭiṃ paññāpetvā bhagavantaṃ etadavoca: tena hi bhante, bhagavā nisīdatu, evā’yaṃ bhūmippadeso dvīhi arahantehī sammāsambuddehi paribhūto bhavissatī’ti. Nisīdi bhagavā paññatte āsane. Nisajja kho bhagavā āyasmantaṃ ānandaṃ āmantesi: [...].*

³⁴⁴ MN II 45: *Ekamaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā kosalesu cārikaṃ carati mahatā bhikkhusaṅghena saddhiṃ.*

was nevertheless regarded as the highest of those who possess perfect memory (*aggam satimantānaṃ*).³⁴⁵ While others are said to be foremost in *one* area among all the disciples of Buddha, Ānanda is said to be foremost in no less than five areas (in the *Etadagga-Vagga* of the AN): Besides his perfect memory, he is also foremost among the learned (*bahussutānaṃ*, literally “those who have listened to many [teachings]”), among the ones who are resolute/posses a firm character (*dhitimntānaṃ*), among the clever ones (or the ones who show perfect conduct? *gatimantānaṃ*), and last, but most importantly, he was foremost among the monk-attendants of the Buddha (*upaṭṭhākānaṃ*).³⁴⁶ Now, seen together with the fact that Ānanda is the Buddha Gotama’s addressee throughout the *sutta*, the parallels between Ānanda and Ghaṭikāra appear even less accidental. I believe that here we have find a clue to the narrative strategy of the *sutta* itself.

But after these preliminary remarks, I will take up this thread again at a later point and shall now proceed with the progression of the narrative.

During the first half of the story, when the potter makes several attempts to convince his friend to go and see the Buddha Kassapa, narrative tension builds up dramatically: While the friends bathe and dress, three times, with increasing urgency, the potter insists on wanting to go and see the Buddha Kassapa. Now the number of the repetitions – three – is not unusual. Often in the *suttas*, a question is asked, or a statement or an injunction is made three times, and the same reply or a counter-argument repeated in equal number.³⁴⁷ However, in this particular instance, the repeated begging of Ghaṭikāra builds up a dramatic tension expressed through and accompanied by ever more blatant physical actions from the side of the potter, which finally climaxes in

³⁴⁵ Tradition has it that Ānanda was asked to recite the entire *Sutta Piṭaka* on the occasion of the first council. The whole story of the first council is told right at the beginning of the commentary to the DN, the *Sumaṅgala Vilāsinī*: Ānanda could not attend the council because only *arahats* were permitted, but soon Mahākassapa who was the convener of the council realized that without Ānanda, who had attended on the Buddha a life long and was therefore present at most of the Buddha’s talks, it would be impossible to retrieve all the sermons the Buddha held. So he commanded to pick Ānanda to recite the *suttas*. (*Bhikkhū āyasmantaṃ mahākassapaṃ etad avocum: “ayaṃ, bhante, āyasmā ānando kiñcāpi sekkho abhabbo chandā dosā mohā bhayā agatiṃ gantum, bahu cānena bhagavato santike dhammo ca vinayo ca pariyatto, tena hi, bhante, thero āyasmantampi ānandaṃ uccinatūti. Atha kho āyasmā mahākassapo āyasmantampi ānandaṃ uccinūti.*)

³⁴⁶ AN I 24f.: *Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ bahussutānaṃ yadidaṃ ānando. Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ satimantānaṃ yadidaṃ ānando. Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ gatimantānaṃ yadidaṃ ānando. Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ dhitimantānaṃ yadidaṃ ānando. Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ upaṭṭhākānaṃ yadidaṃ ānando.* [my emphasis]

³⁴⁷ The following references may suffice: MN I 172; 231,17-29; 359,17-29; 375,18-23;

Ghaṭikāra's highly inappropriate act of pulling (*parāmasati*, literally "to touch, to hold on to") his Brahmin friend's freshly washed hair. According to the understood behavioural codes of the social classes in ancient India, this is a grave offence. However, surprisingly, the Brahmin student Jotipāla's reaction does not at all meet the gravity of this offence. This and Jotipāla's thought "[...] this will surely be no trivial matter [...]", or in other words, "this [seeing of the Buddha Kassapa] must be very important, that the potter goes so far", prepare for the resolution of the instability created by Ghaṭikāra's repeated urging to go and see the Blessed One. On the other hand, it creates a tension on the level of the "author" (= the Buddha Gotama, in this case) and the authorial audience: Why does the potter insist so strongly on making his friend meet the Blessed One Kassapa? Does Ghaṭikāra know something that "we", the authorial audience do not know? Does he know what is going to happen soon after his friend has met the Buddha Kassapa? Whatever it may be – surely, it can be no trivial matter! The answer is, of course, that the Buddha, fully awakened and omniscient, already knows, other than the authorial audience, the outcome of the story, whose narrator he himself is (and even its "author" – whether or not that requires him to be omniscient or not is yet another question!). The resulting tension on the part of the audience seeks to be released: we desire to know what happens next!

Part II (2) (MN I 46,1-48,3) represents the "dramatic core" of the *sutta*. The climax of Ghaṭikāra's actions and their detailed description, the repetitive structure, and the internal focalisation at the height of the conflict between the friends – although there is no isochronicity here (like, for instance, in a drama scene), the flow of the narrative transmission is noticeably decelerated. The repetitive structure of this passage is what in the judgement of many modern Western readers would perhaps be considered tiring (and thus is often shortened in modern translations).³⁴⁸ The effect of this form of presentation of events – the more elaborate and detailed selection of actions or events – consists in a relative broadening or expansion of the narrative flow (and the 'narrative time'; Ger. "*Dehnung*"), specifically in contrast to the following summarised

³⁴⁸ This is not to say that repetition in the Pāli *suttas* is always of the same kind or type. Here I confine my discussion to repetitions on the level of the structure of the narrative composition (without labelling them). For what I regard as a different type of repetition that is also, and more abundantly, found in the *suttas*, cp. Allon 1997.

accounts (Ger. “*Raffung*”) of the subsequent events of the section of the friends’ visit to the Buddha Kassapa (Part II.3) and Jotipāla’s ordination (Part II.4). The expansion of this dramatic situation, however, is not a real expansion but rather what is called a “scene”.³⁴⁹ Genette writes:

“In novelistic narrative as it functioned before Recherche [Marcel Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu*, the object of Genette’s ‘Essay in Method’], the contrast of tempo between detailed scene and summary almost always reflected a contrast of content between dramatic and nondramatic, the strong periods of the action coinciding with the most intense moments of the narrative while the weak periods were summed up with large strokes and as if from a great distance [...]. The real rhythm of the novelistic canon [...] is thus the alternation of nondramatic summaries, functioning as waiting room and liaison, with dramatic scenes whose role in the action is decisive.”³⁵⁰

A most interesting additional aspect is that the ‘dramatic scene’ here is not solely comprised of the representation of (physical and verbal) actions, but also contains at its dramatic height an instance of ‘internal focalization’ (i.e. a filtering of the perception of events through a character’s mind) effected through a ‘direct thought representation’ that functions to characterise one of the protagonists in social and psychological terms.³⁵¹

4.7 Character analysis

Next will be a treatment of the characters in more detail through tracing the presentation of each of the protagonists (Ghaṭṭikāra, Jotipāla, and king Kikī) through the progression of the narrative. This section will start with the potter Ghaṭṭikāra and proceed in the order of events as given by the narrative discourse of the *sutta*, keeping in mind the classification or types of characters and

³⁴⁹ Cp. Genette 1980: 109-112.

³⁵⁰ Genette 1980: 109f.

³⁵¹ Cp. *ibid.*: 111, where Genette redefines his use of the analytical term ‘scene’ with regard to its special use in Proust’s work (“[...] where action [...] is almost completely obliterated in favor of psychological and social characterization.”). Again, I neither intend to draw coarse comparisons nor hold a purely structuralist view. Of course, there is a great difference in degree between a modern novel and an early Buddhist *sutta*. However, I find the idea fascinating that the basic concept seems to already find expression in those pre-modern texts. On another reading, one could perhaps even try to describe the dynamic of the story in terms of the classical drama: the whole passage II.2 (2) of the text seemingly serves as the second step in the ideal five-fold conception of the classical drama. The touching of the head is the climax (“*Steigerung*”) in the five-fold progression of a drama: After the introduction (of the characters, settings, situation etc.), the actions of the protagonists (and/or antagonists) antagonistically climax up to the very bold and almost extreme act of Ghaṭṭikāra – clearly the apex (‘*Peripetie*’) of the climax – and generate a tangible instability (on the level of the events) – which in turn serves to propel (/motivate) the subsequent actions of the protagonists – as well as a tension (the authorial audience must be puzzled by the calm reaction of Jotipāla towards this taboo breach of Ghaṭṭikāra’s.

character-related information obtained from direct and indirect characterisation statements given in the discourse.

The first information the listener/reader learns is the place where the following course of events is going to take place, namely in the kingdom of Kosala³⁵², one of the twelve *mahājanapadas* of ancient India, reigned over by the king Pasenadi at the Buddha's time.³⁵³ Though this information is not (direct) character information, it is one that is related to character – in this case to all the characters in the *sutta* but especially to the Buddha(s). What we learn from it is that the story, which is to be told in the following *Jātaka*, took place in this same region, however, at a much earlier, mythical time in the dim and distant past.³⁵⁴ In this case, in the Pāli *suttas* and the cultural settings whose expression they are, that relational information does indeed contribute to the characterisation, for it states that the place is attributed continually to the Buddha Kassapa (and thus Jotipāla) and the Buddha Gotama – although in general circumstantial information in narrative as we usually know it is only “temporary” – underlying what may be the (modern Western?) notion that if particulars are related in a narrative concerning time and date, that the

³⁵² MN II 45,1: *Ekam samayaṃ Bhagavā Kosalesu cārikaṃ carati ...*, “At one time the Blessed One was wandering **among the Kosalans.**” One has to bear in mind here that in ancient India kings reigned over people, not over land.

³⁵³ Cp. DPPN s.v. *Kosala*: “A country inhabited by the Kosalā, to the north-west of Magadha and next to Kāsī. It is mentioned second in the list of sixteen Mahājanapadas (E.g., AN I 213; IV 252, etc.). In the Buddha's time it was a powerful kingdom ruled over by Pasenadi, who was succeeded by his son Vidūdabha. By this time Kāsī was under the subjection of Kosala, for we find that when Bimbisāra, king of Magadha, married Kosaladevī, daughter of Mahākosala and sister of Pasenadi, a village in Kāsī was given as part of the dowry (Jā II 237; IV 342f). [...] In the sixth century B.C. the Sākyan territory of Kapilavatthu was subject to Kosala. The Sutta Nipāta (vs.405) speaks of the Buddha's birthplace as belonging to the Kosalans; see also AN I 276, where Kapilavatthu is mentioned as being in Kosala. Elsewhere (MN II 124) Pasenadi is reported as saying, ‘Bhagavā pi Kosalako, aham pi Kosalako.’ At the time of the Buddha Sāvatti was the capital of Kosala. Next in importance was Saketa, which, in ancient days, had sometimes been the capital (Jā III 270; Mtu I 348). There was also Ayojjhā, on the banks of the Sarayu, which, judging from the Rāmāyana, must once have been the chief city; but in the sixth century B.C. it was quite unimportant.”

³⁵⁴ The Mvu even gives the current name (at the Buddha Gotama's time), Mārakaraṇḍa, for the town Vebhaṅga of the *Jātaka* at the time of Buddha Kassapa; cp. Bāgcī 1970: 261,11. Exact time specifications as well as an exact statement of time spans (i.e., in this case, for the duration of the *sāsana* of Buddha Kassapa in this place) are only found in commentarial Pāli literature, and are often contradicting each other at that.

depicted events are unique, singular and not repeatable.³⁵⁵ Later on, in the commencement of the ‘story of the past’ (*atīta-vatthu*), the place itself is further characterised as having been “prosperous” (*iddho*), “rich” (*phīto*), and “crowded, full of people” (*bahujano ākiṇṇa manusso*).³⁵⁶

After this (repeated; see above) description of the place, the main characters, or protagonists, of the *Jātaka*-story are introduced (MN II 46,1-5). First, the story introduces someone named Ghaṭikāra³⁵⁷ who is a potter (*Ghaṭikāro nāma kumbhakāro*) by (inherited) profession (*sippa*).³⁵⁸ It is noteworthy that Ghaṭikāra is introduced first, which makes most of the following information, about Jotipāla, for instance, as somewhat relational to him, the focal point of the narrative (Jotipāla is *his* friend; *he* is the active part in trying to get Jotipāla to see the Buddha, it is *he* who asks for ordination on Jotipāla’s behalf, etc.). Ghaṭikāra, literally “jar-maker”, however, is not a very original name. Potters, *kumbhakāras*, belonged to an inferior class of artisans,

³⁵⁵ “Aus diesem Grund sollen alle diejenigen figurenbezogenen Tatsachen als Teil der Charakterisierung gelten, die - bezogen auf den Zeitverlauf der erzählten Welt - stabil bleiben. Angaben über die räumliche Position von Figuren gehören dann meistens nicht zur Charakterisierung, aber z.B. im Mythos von Atlas, der im äußersten Westen das Himmelsgewölbe tragen muss, ist diese Ortsangabe Teil der Charakterisierung.” (see: <http://www.li-go.de/definitionsansicht/prosa/tatsachendiezurcharakterisierungeneinerfigurindererzähltenwelt-beitragen.html> (last accessed: 22nd March 2013).

According to tradition all of the thousand Buddhas to appear in this *kalpa* or eon will manifest full enlightenment at the so called “vajra-seat” (*vajrāsana*), as the place upon which now the famous Mahābodhi temple is situated, in Bodhgayā. However, I was unable to trace any written sources for that; in fact, the *Mahāpadāna Sutta* (DN 14) does not allot specific places to the seven Buddhas of the past. Cp. also later in the *sutta*, when Ānanda had prepared a seat for the Tathāgata: “Venerable sir, may the Blessed One sit down. [In this way] will this very same spot have been used by two arhats, by two fully awakened Ones.” (MN II 45,20-22: *Tena hi, bhante, Bhagavā nisīdatu. Evāyaṃ bhūmippadeso dvīhi arahantehi sammāsambuddehi paribhutto bhavissati*). Perhaps we could say then that this function of places as specifically assigned to characters may be a peculiarity of the *suttas* (or perhaps other Indian religious traditions as well).

³⁵⁶ MN II 45,12f. This information is interesting given the implicit fact that this region was perhaps not so densely populated at the Buddha Gotama’s time; cp. DPPN, s.v. *Kosala*: “Yet, though woodland tracts were numerous (see, e.g., SA.i.225) where monks could meditate in solitude, the number of monks actually found in Kosala was not large (VT.i.226).” Malalasekera’s last mentioned reference (Vinaya Texts I,226) discusses rules concerning the impossibility for monks to get *nissaya* (“support”); the occasion is given as monks wandering in Kosala.

³⁵⁷ Richard Gombrich, in a personal communication (16.04.2012), remarked that Ghaṭikāra is not a very witty name, which together with the fairy-tale like introduction *bhūtapubbam*, “Once upon a time,” lends the whole story a fairly fictitious touch, “like the parables in the Bible.” Nevertheless, in ancient times where the structure of society and the social life, at least of the lowest social classes to which a potter belonged, was very much determined by profession (cp. Fick 1974: 203), this was perhaps not very unusual, like, for instance, Western names like Smith, which in modern life has, of course, become decoupled from the profession.

³⁵⁸ Cp. Fick 1974: 210.

as Banerji states.³⁵⁹ Already at the time of the Buddha, potters, among certain other professions, were regarded with very low social rank and esteem.³⁶⁰

The second attribute of Ghaṭikāra that is given in the discourse is that he is a “supporter” or “attendant” (*upaṭṭhāko*) and even the “main supporter/chief attendant” (*aggupaṭṭhāko*) of the Buddha Kassapa. The following sentence shows that Ghaṭikāra has a friend, Jotipāla by name, a very dear friend (*piya-sahāyo*), who is a young Brahmin (student?). Interesting about this first – and according to Grabes (1978) therefore very important narratorial explicit characterization – is the parallel sentence structure on the one hand³⁶¹ and the stark opposition (chiasm) of content between the two friends on the other hand: a potter from a disdained social class is the chief attendant of the Buddha Kassapa. His best friend is a Brahmin student. The implied oppositions lie in the social and religious sphere: potter \leftrightarrow Brahmin class; Buddha \leftrightarrow Brahmin. In a narratological reading, this contrast may be seen to hold a potential cause for conflict in that it anticipates or contains an (potential) instability. One may even go so far as to interpret it as anticipation or a foreshadowing³⁶² of the actual instability that is to unfold a little later in the story (the “pulling-of-the-hair” incident), in which the status disjunction plays an important role.

The next information obtained about Ghaṭikāra stems from an indirect characterisation – i.e. from Ghaṭikāra’s own words in his addressing his “dear friend” Jotipāla: “I consider it good, indeed, to see that Blessed One, accomplished and fully awakened.”³⁶³ However, this does not add new information, but rather confirms the information that Ghaṭikāra is Kassapa’s chief at-

³⁵⁹ Cp. Banerji 2007: 217 citing the *Suttavibhaṅga*.

³⁶⁰ Cp. Fick 1974: chapter 12, esp. pp. 208ff., where potters are even counted among the disdained social stratum, classed through their “base trade” (*hīna-sippa*), together with the weavers (*pesakāra*), barber (*nahāpita*), basket maker (*naḷakāra*) etc., whose origins as castes lie probably in their ethnic and/or professional group membership. The ‘collective’ social class, or caste proper, of the *sūdras*, however, may have come into existence through a mixing of the Aryan invaders and the locals; cp. Banerji 2007: 201.

³⁶¹ MN II 46,1-5: *Vebhaṅge kho, Ānanda, gāmanigame Ghaṭikāro nāma kumbhakāro Kassapassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa upaṭṭhāko ahosi aggupaṭṭhāko. Ghaṭikārassa kho, Ānanda, kumbhakārassa Jotipāla nāma mānava saḥāyo ahosi piyasahāyo.*

³⁶² However, this has to be distinguished from the ‘prolepsis’ or the definite anticipation of a future event by a character that has, by genre-convention, the ability to foresee the future. But if my reading is correct, it clearly shows/proves narratorial intervention: either this contrastive situation was skilfully created, or facts very skilfully narrated – both, in any case, from the redactors’ perspective or knowledge of the development and the progression of the narrative.

³⁶³ MN II 46,8-10: *Sādhusammataṃ hi me tassa Bhagavato dassanaṃ arahato sammāsambuddhassāti.*

tendant already received through the narrator. Nevertheless, by inference, it tells the listener/reader something about Ghaṭṭikāra's motivation. Since the listener/reader already knows that Ghaṭṭikāra must be close to the Buddha Kassapa, it is, already at this point in the story, possible to assume that he does not only consider it good to see the Buddha for his own benefit, but that he has his reasons for urging his friend to go and see the Blessed One. That Ghaṭṭikāra is not thinking about himself here, but that his sole purpose is to make his friend go, becomes then more and more tangible for the listener/reader during the dramatic climax leading up to the pulling of Jotipāla's hair, and fully so after they have seen the Blessed One, and Ghaṭṭikāra's statement that he, of course, could not go forth from home life to homelessness himself because of his obligation towards his parents. After he has pressed his friend three times without success, Ghaṭṭikāra suddenly seems to change his mind or give up his intention when he says: "Well then, dear Jotipāla, let us take a shell³⁶⁴ [and/filled with?] bath powder (*sotti-sinānīm*) and go to the river to bathe."³⁶⁵ However, at the river, Ghaṭṭikāra starts again to entreat his friend, now bringing forward the argument that the current dwelling place of the Buddha Kassapa was nearby.³⁶⁶ Thus, the text leaves no doubt that Ghaṭṭikāra has not given up on his plan (whatever lies behind this "plan" remains obscure for the listener/reader). Even if this may be stating the obvious, I find it worth noting that the redactors of old had obviously felt the need to explain Ghaṭṭikāra's sudden change of heart, namely to explain it in the way that it was not a change of heart at all, but rather a red herring for reluctant Jotipāla. In other words, what we have in the Mvu passage is an early attempt at inferring the motivation of a character's action that is not stated explicitly in the earlier version of the story.³⁶⁷

As mentioned earlier, the gravity of Ghaṭṭikāra's actions climaxes from intensely insisting upon the importance to go and see the Blessed One Kassapa (verbally), via holding Jotipāla by his belt while continuing to talk insistently to him, up to him pulling Jotipāla's hair. Now, what can this obtrusive mental, verbal, and physical behavior towards Jotipāla tell about Ghaṭṭikāra? As one possible explanation, his actions show that he has courage because it simply would have

³⁶⁴ The Pāli word *sotti*, explained as "[Sk. *śukti*] a shell (?) filled with chunam and lac, used for scratching the back, a back-scratcher acting as a sponge" (see PED s.v.; cp. also *sutti* 1), and translated by Bodhi as "loofah" (Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 670,6.), is doubtful (for the *vv.ll.* cp. MN II 46, n.3).

³⁶⁵ MN II 46,21f.

³⁶⁶ See above II. (2) (MN I 46,1-48,3).

³⁶⁷ See n. 330 above.

taken a big portion of courage to act in the way he did, being a member of a disdained social class. It is either courage or a sense of urgency that propelled him to pull Jotipāla’s hair. What is more, as we have seen earlier in the parallel passage from the Mvu, it is not unlikely that the potter even risked his life by this action³⁶⁸, which means that his trust in the Buddha must be such that he was even willing to risk his life or, at minum, severe punishment. One of the other main characters, Jotipāla, also makes a statement about Ghaṭṭikāra’s behaviour (technically, according to Pfister’s model, a “figural, explicit alterocharacterisation, made in private”³⁶⁹, i.e. in his own thoughts). His statement, similarly an attempt to infer Ghaṭṭikāra’s motivation, could also be regarded as delegating a characterisation statement about the potter by the narrator to another character. The *sutta*-narrator hands over an explanation for the behaviour of one of the protagonists to another character and thus assumes, and provides the audience with, that character’s perspective on the situation. (We will return to this passage and its function when discussing the characterisation of Jotipāla below.)

The next indirect characterising statement about Ghaṭṭikāra can be found in in the *sutta*-narrator’s description of the approach of the Buddha Kassapa. This approach is highly formulaic, as described above.³⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the standard formulas used here are still somewhat “individualised” for Ghaṭṭikāra and Jotipāla respectively according to their status and to the situation in the story. According to Allon’s analysis, the “*abhivādetvā*-approach”, which is the highest form of respect shown and equivalent to bowing down and touching the feet of the approached with one’s head³⁷¹, is most often used in the *suttas* as the form of respect that disciples and devotees show towards their teacher, whereas the “*saddhiṃ sammodi*-form” is clearly only employed for individuals who are not followers of the religious teacher they are approaching.³⁷² Thus, the narrative discourse is consistent with the information already gathered about Ghaṭṭikāra and Jotipāla but also concretized (the information we have received so far – that Ghaṭṭikāra was Kassapa’s main supporter – is thereby confirmed through this indirect characterization statement by the nar-

³⁶⁸ See n. 332 above.

³⁶⁹ Cp. Neumann & Nünning 2008: 56, fig. 3.3.

³⁷⁰ See n. 299.

³⁷¹ Cp. Allon 1997: 54.

³⁷² *Ibid.*: 79f.

rator, but also refined): Besides being his chief lay patron, Ghaṭṭikāra is also a devoted and accepted student of the Blessed One Kassapa. Another fact of the story world is confirmed or repeated, this time in the character’s discourse, when Ghaṭṭikāra introduces his very dear friend with the words: “This young Brahmin student Jotipāla here, venerable sir, is my friend, my very dear/close friend; may the Blessed One teach him the *Dhamma!*”³⁷³

A further trait of the potter is introduced shortly after the friends have returned from their visit of the Buddha Kassapa. When Jotipāla, still feeling inspired from the teachings, asks his friend if he had never thought of entering the Buddha’s order after hearing such teachings³⁷⁴, Ghaṭṭikāra replies: “But surely you know me, dear Jotipāla – I take care of my blind old parents.”³⁷⁵ With these words, Ghaṭṭikāra reminds his friend of a stable character trait of his: He would never disregard an obligation once he has committed himself to it.

After his friend’s ordination, the story diverts into another episode (the meeting of king Kikī and the Buddha Kassapa) and Ghaṭṭikāra reemerges only later, now again as a character in an embedded story – this time told by the Buddha Kassapa as narrator. The Buddha Kassapa exposes the king as a thinker of inadequate thoughts, because Kikī had shown signs of great disappointment over his refusal of the king’s offer to provide lodgings and food for the *saṅgha*’s rains

³⁷³ MN II 48,13f.: *Ayaṃ me, bhante, Jotipālo māṇavo saḥāyo piyasahāyo; imassa Bhagavā dhammaṃ desetūti.*

³⁷⁴ MN II 48,26-28: *Imaṃ nu tvaṃ, samma Ghaṭṭikāra, dhammaṃ suṇanto, atha ca pana na agārasmā anāgariyaṃ pabbajāsīti?* Ñāṇamoli/Bodhi (2001: 671,11.) translate: “Now that you have heard this Dhamma, my dear Ghaṭṭikāra, why don’t you go forth from the homelife into homelessness?” However, I think that it would better fit the actual dynamic of the story to translate (and understand) the present tense form of the verb *pabbajasi* more in a (durative-) iterative sense or as a general statement: “Having heard this Dhamma, then, dear Ghaṭṭikāra, [have you ever had thought of] going forth from the homelife into homelessness?” We also need not take the particle *nu* as an adverb of time, as Bodhi does in his translation (cp. PED s.v.). From what we have learned so far by following the progression of the story, it is clear that Ghaṭṭikāra is already a student of the Buddha Kassapa before he introduces his friend Jotipāla to him. Thus, it is most likely not the first time he had listened to his teachings. And what is more, at MN II 48,14 he requests the Buddha Kassapa to teach the Dhamma to his dear friend – he is not requesting teachings for himself!

³⁷⁵ MN II 48,29f.: *Nanu maṃ, samma Jotipāla, jānāsi: Andhe jiṇṇe mātā-pitaro posemīti?*

retreat. He then points out Ghaṭṭikāra’s qualities to the king, which are – this seems to be the implication of this passage³⁷⁶ – the opposite, as it were, of the king’s current state and feelings. The Buddha Kassapa says: “Ghaṭṭikāra the potter, great king, has gone for refuge to the Buddha, he has gone for refuge to the *dhamma*, he has gone for refuge to the *saṅgha*. Ghaṭṭikāra the potter, great king, is one who abstains from killing living beings, who abstains from taking what was not given to him [or stealing], who abstains from misconduct regarding sense-pleasures [or sexual misconduct], who abstains from false speech [or lying], who refrains from consuming intoxicating drinks which leads to carelessness.³⁷⁷ Ghaṭṭikāra the potter, great king, is endowed with intelligent faith in the Buddha³⁷⁸, in the *dhamma* and in the *saṅgha*, [and] he is endowed with moral discipline (*sīlavat*) that is dear to the Buddhas’ disciples (*ariya-kanta*). Ghaṭṭikāra the potter, great king, is one who is without doubt with regard to [the Noble Truth of] suffering, [repeat] the origin of suffering, [repeat] the cessation of suffering, [repeat] the path leading to the destruction of suffering. Ghaṭṭikāra the potter, great king, is one who eats only one meal per day, lives chaste, observes the five moral precepts, and has a virtuous character. Ghaṭṭikāra the potter, great king, is one who has freed [himself from the possession of] jewellery and gold [-ornaments], has gotten rid of [his supply of sterling-?]³⁷⁹ gold and silver. Ghaṭṭikāra the potter, great king, is one who

³⁷⁶ This seems to be clear from the phrase MN II 51,9f.: *Tuyhaṃ kho pana, mahārāja: Na me Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho adhiṅvāseti Bārāṇasiyaṃ vassāvāsan ti atthi aññathattaṃ atthi domanassaṃ; tayidaṃ Ghaṭṭikāre kumbhakāre na ’tthi na ca bhavissati*, “[...] and depression/anxiety and grief were present [in you]. Just that is not present/existing in the potter Ghaṭṭikāra and it cannot/will not be so.” What follows in the text, the statement of the potter’s qualities/virtues, serves as an explanation of a) the reason why depression and grief as consequence of anticlimaxes cannot develop in the potter, and b) how the relationship between the Buddha and the potter as his chief supporter came about or developed.

³⁷⁷ More literally perhaps: “abstains from situations (or places? Cp. Cone 2010: 257, II *s.v.* *ṭhāna* 3. iii.) leading to carelessness (*pamāda*) [caused by the intake] of fermented [and other] intoxicating spirits/drinks.” Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (2001: 674,18.) translate the stock expression *surā-meraya-majja-ppamāda-ṭṭhānā*: “[he abstains from ...] wine, liquor, and intoxicants, which are the basis of negligence”. Cp. also I. B. Horner’s more literal translation (1957: 248): “[...] restrained from occasions of sloth engendered by strong drink and spirits.”

³⁷⁸ Cp. CPD *s.v.* *avecca*. What is meant is trust in the Buddha that is based on understanding (*ava + √i, aveti*, “to know, to understand”) and one’s own experience, not blind faith.

³⁷⁹ Cp. PED *s.v.* *jāta-rūpa*: “‘sterling’, pure metal, i. e. gold (in its natural state, before worked, cp. *jam-bonada*).”

does not dig into the earth [for clay] with a pestle or with his hands. From what is there, crumbled from a river bank or dug up³⁸⁰ by rats, after having carried it home gladly, he forms pots [out of it] and declares: ‘He who wants [something] from here [/of this, *ettha*] may leave a portion of husked rice or a portion of beans or a portion of chick-peas and then take what he wants!’

Ghaṭikāra the potter, great king, looks after his blind old parents. Ghaṭikāra the potter, great king, is one who [will be] spontaneously born [in a Brahmā- or Deva-realm/heaven] because he has exhausted the five fetters connected with the [world] below [i.e. *kāmadhātu/-avacara*, the desire-realm] and, characterised by not returning from that world, will attain Nirvana there³⁸¹.³⁸²

³⁸⁰ I read *mūsik’-ukkarō* here, adopting the meaning of Sanskrit *utkara*, cp. MW s.v. (176, III): “m. anything dug out or scattered upwards, rubbish [...], a heap”, which makes most sense, instead of PTS *mūsi-kukkuro*, “mice/rats and dogs”.

³⁸¹ The term used is *opapātiko*, a standard term employed in the DN and MN for the third level or attainment within the system of the four ‘Noble Ones’ or ‘noble persons’, *ariya-puggalā*. The term probably goes back to the Prākṛit word *ovavāiya* (< *uvavāya*, “manifestation”) which denotes those beings who get reborn in a heaven or in hell spontaneously, i.e. not through a womb and conception (cp. Eimer 2006: 83f. and 87 (§6.3); cp. also Collins 1998: 303). Technically, this means that Ghaṭikāra was what in later Theravāda systematics was called an *anāgāmi*, one who will not return to the *kāma-avacara* after his death, and attain Nirvana in one of the Brahmā- or Deva-worlds. The so-called “five lower fetters” are: (1) *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, “belief in a [permanent etc.] self”; (2) *vicikicchā*, “sceptical doubt”; (3) *sīlabbataparāmāso*, “attachment to mere rules and rituals”; (4) *kāmacchando* “craving for sense-pleasures”; (5) *vyāpādo*, “ill-will”.

³⁸² MN II 51,13-52,3: *Ghaṭikāro kho, mahārāja, kumbhakāro buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gato dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gato saṃghaṃ saraṇaṃ gato. Ghaṭikāro kho, mahārāja, kumbhakāro pañātipātā paṭivirato adinnādānā paṭivirato kāmesu micchācārā paṭivirato musāvādā paṭivirato surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā paṭivirato. Ghaṭikāro kho, mahārāja, kumbhakāro buddhe aveccappasādena samannāgato, dhamme – pe – saṃghe, ariyakantehi sīlehi samannāgato. Ghaṭikāro kho, mahārāja, kumbhakāro dukkhe nikkāṅkho dukkhasamudaye nikkāṅkho dukkhanirodhe nikkāṅkho dukkhanirodhagāminiyā paṭipadāya nikkāṅkho. Ghaṭikāro kho, mahārāja, kumbhakāro ekabhattiko brahmacārī silavā kalyāṇadhammo. Ghaṭikāro kho, mahārāja, kumbhakāro nikkhittamaṇisuvanṇo apetajātārūparajato. Ghaṭikāro kho, mahārāja, kumbhakāro na musalena na sahatthā paṭhaviṃ khanati [B^o(R) *Ghaṭikāro kho, mahārāja, kumbhakāro pannamusalo na sahatthā paṭhaviṃ khanati*; other minor vv.ll. see MN II 51, n. 6,7,8,9,10,11]. *Yaṃ hoti kūlapaluggaṃ vā mūsikukkuro* [B^o(R) *mūsikukkarō*] *vā taṃ kāmēna* [B^o(R), B^m, Si *kājena*] *āharitvā bhājanaṃ karitvā evaṃ āha: — Ettha* [So S^k Si; B^m *tattha*] *yo icchati taṇḍulapabhivattāni* [B^o(R) B^m; So S^k *taṇḍulapaṭibhastāni*; Si *paṭibhastāni*] *vā muggapabhivattāni vā kālāyapabhivattāni* [B^o(R) B^m *kaḷāya*; S^k *kālāya*] *vā nikkhipitvā yaṃ icchati taṃ haratūti. Ghaṭikāro kho, mahārāja, kumbhakāro andhe jiṅṇe mātāpitaro poseṭi. Ghaṭikāro kho, mahārāja, kumbhakāro pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātiko tattha parinibbāyī anāvattidhammo tasmā lokā.* I have included the major variant readings from the B^o(R) and the footnotes from the PTS edition in square brackets. The sheer amount of variant readings in this passage indicates that the text has been corrupted in the mss. However, the variants are very often minor ones, the general meaning of the passage being easily cognizable. As a possible emendation for the obscure expression *taṇḍulapabhivattāni*, Margaret Cone in her discussion of the variants suggests the reading °-*pavibhastāni*, “apportioned (rice)” which makes good sense. Cp. Cone 2010: 276, I. s.v. °-*pabhivattāni*. Neither the form *pabhivatta* nor *paṭibhastā* do exist in Pāli.*

This passage, provided by a reliable narrator, which the Buddha Kassapa or any other Buddha would be expected to be, is crucial in terms of the direct characterisation of Ghaṭṭikāra. Clearly, most, if not all, of Ghaṭṭikāra’s attributes are turned into actions, or in Phelan’s words, his mimetic dimensions (i.e. his psychological attributes or traits) are turned into (thematic) functions.³⁸³ He acts perfectly in accordance with his ascribed traits when it is stated that he “is one who abstains from killing living beings” (*pāṇātipātā paṭivirato*) in the passage described by Kassapa that he does not even dig in the ground (in order not to destroy small living beings). The relationship to the (broader) thematic aspect of his traits becomes more apparent through an analysis of the aforementioned moral qualities. Ghaṭṭikāra’s behaviour is not only perfectly in accordance with the “five precepts” (*pañca-sīla*) that are characteristic of the lay adherents of the Buddhas but is even very close to the (ten) precepts that are binding for monks.³⁸⁴ For he is also described as observing three precepts from among the list of the “ten precepts” (*dasa-sikkhāpadāni*³⁸⁵), namely numbers 6), 8), and 10) as “one who eats only one meal a day” (*ekabhattiko*), who has freed [himself from the possession of] jewellery and gold [-ornaments] (*nikkhittamaṇisuvanṇo*), and “one who has gotten rid of [his supply of sterling-?] gold and silver (*apetajātarūparajato*). Supposedly, from the description given above, he also observed the other two precepts of the list of ten. His livelihood is exemplary, for he only takes what he needs to make his pots from what he finds on the surface of the earth without digging into it order to not harm any living beings.

Leading thus a life of perfect moral discipline according to the Buddhist precepts, the only item missing from this list, it seems, is the practice of meditation or absorption (*samādhi*). It

³⁸³ Cp. Phelan 1989: 11f.

³⁸⁴ The first four of the five *sīlas* are in fact the same as the first four items of another list, the “ten unwholesome actions” (*akusala-kamma-patha*) which are frequently enumerated in the MN. Cp. PED s.v. *sīla*: “(b) The **pañca-sīla** or 5 items of good behaviour are Nos. 1 – 4 of *dasa – sīla*, and (5) abstaining from any state of indolence arising from (the use of) intoxicants, viz. *surā-meraya-majjapamāda-tṭhānā veramaṇī*. These five also form the first half of the 10 **sikkhā-padāni**. **They are a sort of preliminary condition to any higher development after conforming to the teaching of the Buddha (saraṇagamana) and as such often mentioned when a new follower is “officially” installed, e. g. Bu ii.190: saraṇāgamane kañci nivesesi Tathāgato kañci pañcasu sīlesu sīle dasavidhe paraṇ.**” [my emphasis] |This, however, would not correspond with this example, since Ghaṭṭikāra is said to have attained the state of an “Non-returner” already.

³⁸⁵ These are (according to PED s.v. *sikkhāpada*): 6) *vikāla-bhojanā (-veramaṇī)*, not eating at the wrong hour; 7) *nacca-gītavādita-visūka-dassanā°*, to avoid worldly amusements; 8) *mālā-gandha-vilepana-dhāraṇa-maṇḍana-vibhūsanatṭhānā°*, to use neither unguents nor ornaments; 9) *uccā-sayana-mahā-sayanā°*, not to sleep on a high, big bed; 10) *jātarūpa rajata – paṭiggahaṇā°*, not to accept any gold or silver.

would strike one as only natural that a person that is committed to such a high level of spiritual attainment should be successfully engaged in this essential Buddhist practice.³⁸⁶ What is more, the *Puggalapaññatti* (Pp), although a much later (*Abhidhamma*-) text, explains the connection between the stages of the path and the “three trainings” in *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* in a way that the *anāgāmī/opapātika* does not only fulfill the moral precepts perfectly, but also the second of the so-called ‘three trainings’: concentration (= meditation/absorption, *samādhi*).³⁸⁷ While one could of course argue that the passage here may be an early, perhaps pre-systematised (i.e. pre-*Abhidhamma*) presentation or description of one of the stages of the Buddhist path, it still strikes one as strange that the Buddha Kassapa even mentions it, because the whole passage rather sounds like a ‘prophecy’ (*vyākaraṇa*) about the future attainment of a disciple (“future” from the stance of story-time), which is usually reserved for the *bodhisattas*, i.e. future Buddhas. This future attainment of Ghaṭṭikāra does indeed resurface in elaborate form in the introduction to the *Jātaka*-tales, the *Nidānakathā*.

Additional information on Ghaṭṭikāra can be found in other sources: According to the (legendary) Pāli commentarial literature (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*-commentary, the *Manorathapūranī*), Ghaṭṭikāra, after his death, became a deity in the Brahmā-world called Avihā³⁸⁸ due to the realisation he had gained during his life as a contemporary and main supporter of the Buddha Kassapa (he had reached the level of a Non-Returner, *anāgāmī*).³⁸⁹ This episode or information reoccurs in the *Nidānakathā*, when Ghaṭṭikāra sees from his abode in the heavenly realm of form (*rūpa-loka*) that his former dear friend Jotipāla has set out to renounce the world and eventually become the

³⁸⁶ It is not clear if lay followers of the Buddha did or were indeed encouraged to practice sitting meditation. However, as the *Kandaraka Sutta* (MN 51) states, householders did practice mindfulness (which is not necessarily to be practised in a formal setting and/or sitting). Cp. MN I 340,13f.: *Mayam-pi hi bhante gihī odātava-sanā kālena kalaṃ imesu catusu satipaṭṭhānesu supaṭṭhitacittā viharāma: ...* “From time to time, venerable sir, we white-clothed lay people also abide with our minds well established in these four foundations of mindfulness.” (Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 444, 4. Cp., however, also Bodhi’s translation of the cty (p. 1253, n. 542): “We too, when we get an opportunity, from time to time attend to this; we are also practitioners; we do not completely neglect meditation.”)

³⁸⁷ The ‘three trainings’ are: moral discipline, “meditation”, and wisdom (*sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*). Cp. Eimer 2006: 89 (§6.5.2). Pp 128 (PTS 37.13-24). *Katamo ca puggalo sīlesu ca paripūrakārī, samādhismiṃca paripūrakārī, paññāya mattaso kārī? anāgāmī: ayaṃ vuccati puggalo sīlesu ca paripūrakārī, samādhismiṃca paripūrakārī, paññāya mattaso kārī.*

³⁸⁸ According to Buddhist cosmology, this is the 23rd realm within the world of form, *rūpa-loka*; cp. Walshe 1987: 39.

³⁸⁹ Cp. DPPN, s.v. Ghaṭṭikāra.

next Buddha. He provides him with the necessities of a mendicant, including a begging bowl (*piṇḍapāta*). This same begging-bowl is said to have vanished at the same moment that Siddhattha Gotama gave up his severe austerities that had nearly caused him to die of enervation, and was offered a bowl of milk-rice by Sujātā.³⁹⁰

Therefore, the attainment of final Nirvana of Ghaṭikāra is an established fact in the world of the Pāli Canon. It is possible to explain this inconsistency. There exists also another group or classification of persons (*puggalā*) – “noble persons” (*ariya-puggalā*) in this case – in the *Majjhima Nikāya* (*Kiṭṭāgiri Sutta*, MN 70) comprised of seven types³⁹¹: “Seven kinds of [noble] persons, monks, are to be found existing in the world. What seven? The one liberated-in-both ways, the one liberated-by-wisdom, the ‘body-witness’, the one attained-to-view, the one liberated-by-faith, the ‘*dhamma*-follower’, and the faith-follower.”³⁹² Relevant here are “the one liberated-by-faith” (*saddhā-vimutto*) and the “faith-follower” (*saddhānusārī*). The faith-follower is one who has entered the spiritual stage of ‘stream-entry’ (*sotāpanna*), while the one liberated-by-faith is called so, because he has already attained to one of the other seven stages of the spiritual path³⁹³.³⁹⁴ The two are characterised as follows: They both do not (physically) experience the absorptions (*rūpa-* and *ārūppajhāna*) through the perfection of concentration (because they do not have the ability to meditate like this?), and they do not have sufficient wisdom for (all of) their

³⁹⁰ See n. 389; Ja I 65,11-19 and Ja I 69,29-32 respectively.

³⁹¹ This list of seven is presented in different orders throughout the Canon and the commentarial Pāli literature; cp. Eimer 2006: 92ff. (§6.8).

³⁹² The *Kiṭṭāgiri Sutta* (MN 70), MN I 477,22-24: *Satt’ ime bhikkhave puggalā santo saṃvijjamānā lokasmiṃ, katame satta: ubhatobhagavimutto paññāvimutto kāyasakkhī diṭṭhipatto saddhāvimutto dhammānusārī saddhānusārī*. I have adopted the Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation of the seven types; cp. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 580,14.

³⁹³ Cp. the “Eight Noble Persons” introduced in part I above, and Nyanatiloka 1980: 48 (A)).

³⁹⁴ Cp. Nyanatiloka 1980: 51 (*s.v. ariya-puggalā*) and Vism XXI, 73.

hindrances³⁹⁵ (*āsava*) to be destroyed. However, they have firmly rooted faith in the Tathāgata.³⁹⁶ Although the relevant passages do not specify if or in what degree the practice of meditation plays a role in attaining those paths and stages, it is possible to imagine that the formal practice of meditation was not obligatory for attaining some degree of liberation. However, according to the *Puggalapaññatti*, in this case one would not be able to experience the four “immaterial or formless absorptions” (*ārūpa-jhāna*) and thus the “realm without form” (*arūpāvacara*).³⁹⁷ Nonetheless, if one compares the phrasing of Ghaṭṭikāra’s characterisation with other, more technical, descriptions of the *anāgāmi*, more parallels come to light. The type “released-by-faith” (*saddhāvimutta*) is described by the *Puggalapaññatti*, which is largely a compilation of canonical materials, as one who “truly/as it is understands suffering, [...] the arising of suffering, [...] the extinction of suffering, [and] the path leading to the destruction of suffering.” He is one who has “fully understood through his insight what the Buddha has taught; it has penetrated his mind”, and therefore some of his defilements have been eradicated.³⁹⁸ The description of the type “follower-through-faith” (*saddhānusārī*), adds a characteristic feature of this type the “faith in and

³⁹⁵ Cp. CPD s.v. *āsava*: “[...] (b) t. t. for the obstacle to the attainment of Arahantship.” Two lists are presented in the Canon, one of three and one of four items, the former being the more frequent one. Three “hindrances” to Arhatship are: the hindrance of, craving for sensual pleasure (*kāmāsava*), craving for [eternal] existence (*bhavāsava*), of ignorance (*avijjāsava*), and – sometimes added – the hindrance of having, or adhering to, wrong views (*diṭṭhāsava*). The term itself, here provisionally and neutrally translated as ‘hindrances’, and its origin is problematic; several suggestions for translation exist; cp. CPD s.v.

³⁹⁶ MN I 478,29-35: *Katamo ca bhikkhave puggalo saddhāvimutto: Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo ye te santā vimokkhā atikkamma rūpe āruppā te na kāyena phassivā viharati, paññāya c’ assa disvā ekacce āsavā parikkhīṇā honti, Tathāgate c’ assa saddhā niviṭṭhā hoti mūlajātā patiṭṭhitā. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave puggalo saddhāvimutto.*

MN I 479,18-25: *Katamo ca bhikkhave puggalo saddhānusārī: Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo ye te santā vimokkhā atikkamma rūpe āruppā te na kāyena phassivā viharati, paññāya c’ assa disvā āsavā aparikkhīṇā honti, Tathāgate c’ assa saddhāmatam hoti pemamattam, api c’ assa ime dhammā honti seyyathīdam sadhindriyaṃ viriyindriyaṃ satindriyaṃ samādhindriyaṃ paññindriyaṃ. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave puggalo saddhānusārī.*

³⁹⁷ Richard Gombrich has treated the problematic list of different types of attainments in detail in his essay: “Retracing an Ancient Debate: How Insight worsted Concentration in the Pali Canon.” In: Gombrich 2006: 96-135. If my interpretation is correct, this passage would also support Gombrich’s theory that originally the *dhammānusārī* and the *saddhānusārī* designated only one type; cp. Gombrich 2006: 107-110.

³⁹⁸ Pp: 28. *Katamo ca puggalo saddhāvimutto? idhekkacco puggalo ‘idaṃ dukkhanti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, ‘ayaṃ dukkhasamudayoti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, ‘ayaṃ dukkhanirodhoti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, ‘ayaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadāti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. Tathāgatappaveditā cassa dhammā paññāya vodiṭṭhā honti vocarītā. Paññāya cassa disvā ekacce āsavā parikkhīṇā honti, no ca kho yathā diṭṭhippattassa: ayaṃ vuccati puggalo saddhāvimutto.*

affection for the Tathāgata”,³⁹⁹ while the *Puggalapaññatti*’s description stresses the more technical aspect, that this type is set on the path to enlightenment through the faculty of faith. In regards to content, these descriptions are in accordance with Ghaṭṭikāra’s characterization described above.⁴⁰⁰ Without the intention of making any claim as to whether this passage might have been the inspiration for the passage in the *Puggalapaññatti* or vice-versa, or about the antiquity of it in relation to other passages like, e.g., in the *Kīṭāgiri Sutta* or in the *Alagaddūpama Sutta*, what this comparison reveals, in my opinion, is that the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* presents an ideal type rather than a (possible) person. Add to this that the text is very clearly about Ghaṭṭikāra having “intelligent” faith in the Buddha, and the Buddha having complete confidence in him, which shows that the embedded story, the *Jātaka*-tale, as well as the whole *sutta* as such centers on faith (*saddhā*) and thus makes it an exemplification of the theme “faith”. The rest of Ghaṭṭikāra’s characterisation consists in the standard formula used for the attainment of the Non-Returner that also appears elsewhere in the Canon.⁴⁰¹ If Gombrich is right in arguing that in an earlier, pre-scholastic understanding of the different types, all three faculties (faith, concentration, and insight) were equally bound for awakening⁴⁰², then there is no contradiction in identifying Ghaṭṭikāra as being a “follower through faith” (*saddhānusārī*) and a Non-Returner.⁴⁰³ Furthermore, while Ghaṭṭikāra, in terms of his position on the spiritual path, may be a Stream-Winner (*sotāpanna*) as a ‘follower-through-faith’ (*saddhānusārī*), the text clearly states that he definitely *will be* a Non-Returner (*anāgamī/opapātika*) as one ‘liberated-through-faith’ (*saddhā-vimutto*) after his death.

There are, of course, many other statements inferable from the text that could be considered relevant for a comprehensive picture of Ghaṭṭikāra’s characterization, for example the type of food he eats, but they are not really relevant here, and it is moreover sheerly impossible to gather and evaluate *all* information about a character in a narrative. (The theoretical problem of

³⁹⁹ *Tathāgate c’ assa saddhāmatam hoti pemamattam* [...]. See n. 396 above. The translation is Gombrich’s; cp. Gombrich 2006: 100 (7.).

⁴⁰⁰ See n. 382 and the translation above.

⁴⁰¹ Cp. e.g. *Alagaddūpama Sutta* (MN 22), MN I 141,26-29: *Evaṃ svākkhāto bhikkhave mayā dhammo uttāno vivaṭo pakāsito chinnapilotiko. Evaṃ svākkhāte bhikkhave mayā dhamme uttāne vivaṭe pakāsīte chinnapilotike, yesaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ pañcorambhāgiyāni saṃyojanāni pahīnāni, sabbe te opapātikā tatha parinibbāyino anāvattidhammā tasmā lokā.*

⁴⁰² Cp. Gombrich 2006: 105ff.

⁴⁰³ However, there is also the possibility that this passage somehow preserves the pre-Buddhist, brahmanical idea of rebirth.

the sheer infinity of character, character-related, and inferential information in a narrative text has already been pointed out in Part II.)

However, a few more textual statements have to be discussed. The content of Ghaṭikāra's thoughts is reported three times after the Buddha Kassapa had visited the potter's house in his absence: After the Buddha had taken from the food offered by the parents, and Ghaṭikāra has returned home and learned from his parents that the Blessed One had visited in his absence and had helped himself to the food, Ghaṭikāra (and also his parents – although for a shorter period of time) experience a state of bliss and joy (*pītisukhaṃ*) for two weeks only because Ghaṭikāra thinks that the Blessed One Kassapa puts his trust in him (*me Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho evaṃ abhivissattho*).⁴⁰⁴

In sum, although Ghaṭikāra does not fit in exactly with one or the other model provided by the structure of the early Buddhist Path (e.g. he is either a *saddhānusārī* or one of the different types of *saddhā-vimutto*; he is definitely bound to be a Non-Returner after death; he fulfills the five *sīlas* that are binding for lay followers of the Buddha; but, according to the description, he actually fulfills not only the five precepts, but eight out of the ten *sikkhāpadas*), his character's traits in the thematic aspect of the presentation are outnumbering those in the mimetic aspect. He is thus the perfect embodiment of the follower-through-faith'. Add to this the “constructedness” and artificial, fairy-tale-like character of the whole *Jātaka*-episode (“Once upon a time”, *bhūta-pubbaṃ*), his impersonal name, his unusual friendship with a member of the highest social class, his somewhat exaggerated states of joy and bliss after the Buddha had come and taken his (simple) food, and so forth. It may perhaps sound odd to talk of the ‘synthetic aspect’ of a character in an early Buddhist *sutta*, but if one takes a closer look at such characters as the “mythical king” Kikī, Ghaṭikāra and Jotipāla, then the application of the concept does not seem very far-fetched. Perhaps names as Ghaṭikāra etc. were quite suggestive for an ancient Indian (authorial) audience of an invented tale (compare, for example, the parables in the Bible). It may have been obvious due to certain indicators – we would according to Phelan's model call them “synthetic aspect” of

⁴⁰⁴ *Atha kho, mahārāja, Ghaṭikārassa kumbhakārassa etad ahoṣi: Lābhā vata me suladdhaṃ vata me yassa me Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho evaṃ abhivissattho ti. Atha kho, mahārāja, Ghaṭikāraṃ kumbhakāraṃ addhamāsaṃ pītisukhaṃ na vijahi sattāhaṃ mātāpitaraṃ* (MN II 52,19-24; 53,8-12, 31-34).

a character – that the characters the Buddha was presenting in a tale were invented – either on the spot by himself or taken from folk-lore.⁴⁰⁵

Now, as for Jotipāla, the *sutta* has the following to say about him. Jotipāla, whose name literally means “guardian of light”⁴⁰⁶ or such like⁴⁰⁷, is introduced as Ghaṭṭikāra’s best friend⁴⁰⁸ and as being a *māṇava* or a “*Brāhmaṇa* boy”.⁴⁰⁹ The cordiality between the friends seems to be mutual, since both address each other frequently with the word *samma*, “dear” (e.g. MN II 46,11).

The second impression readers obtain of him is that he is not only not at all interested, but even thinks very lowly of the Buddha⁴¹⁰, and seemingly of *samaṇas* in general (if the word *samaṇa* designated also other, non-Buddhist ascetics).

Next, the expression (MN II 47,30) *sīsanaḥātānaṃ*⁴¹¹ demands some discussion. A *nahātaka* (*nhātaka* in Be; Skt. *snātaka*), usually translated as “one who has bathed”⁴¹², designates a Brahmin student (Skt. *brahmacārin*) who has completed his studies and who is thus obliged to move on to the next stage in his life (Skt. *varṇāśramadharmā*), which means marrying and becoming a householder (a *gṛhastha* or *gṛhapati*). As previously mentioned, the friendship between the two young men is unusual, to say the least, since we have reason to assume that the *varṇa-*

⁴⁰⁵ Cp. Phelan 1989: 115.

⁴⁰⁶ It is perhaps interesting to note that there might be some (however loose) connection between a recurrent story (in the Jā etc.) and the name of our protagonist Jotipāla: The *bodhisatta* born as a Brahmin bearing the name Jotipāla appears twice in the *Jātaka* collection. It is not clear whether they are one and the same person (or whether the tradition saw them as one and the same person). What is common to them, though, is the story of their birth, which is betokened by a flashing of all the weapons in the city in the moment of his birth. (Jotipāla = Sarabhaṅga? Cp. Jā 522; Jātaka (tr. Cowell) III, p. 277; von Hinüber 1998: 132).

⁴⁰⁷ Cp. Gupta 2006: 121: “tender of fire or lamp”.

⁴⁰⁸ MN II 46,4f. *Ghaṭṭikārassa kho, Ānanda, kumbhakārassa Jotipālo nāma māṇavo saḥāyo piyasahāyo.*

⁴⁰⁹ Banerji (2007: 214) has something peculiar to tell about the word: “*Māṇavas* appear (4.5.1-7 [*Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra*]) to have been the designation of a class of people indulging in dacoity [Ind. “bandenmäßiger Raub”], and using magical art in their activities. The word *māṇava* being generally used to denote a *Brāhmaṇa* boy, it has been suggested by some [reference of the author not clear; the author in question seems to be J. J. Meyer, the work the footnote is referring to is given in the bibliography as Meyer, J. J. *Sexual Life in Ancient India*. London, 1930] that it was the designation of a class of *Brāhmaṇas* who, before adopting the usual duties of their class, took to such heinous practices. Others, however, do not attach much value to this hypothesis.” I do not think this information carries any value for our understanding of the term in this context.

⁴¹⁰ MN II 46,11f. (et passim): Alaṃ, samma Ghaṭṭikāra; kiṃ pana tena muṇḍakena samaṇakena ditthenāti?

⁴¹¹ Vv.II. B^e(R) *sīsanaḥātānaṃ*; S^k *sīsanaḥātānaṃ*, B^m *Si sīsanaḥātānaṃ* (for the two latter cp. MN II 47, n. 2).

⁴¹² Cp. Cone 2001: s.v. *nahātaka*.

system was already well established at the time and the geographical area of the historical Buddha. Even if it is possible that a Brahmin *student* could have been friends with a low-caste potter⁴¹³, touching him by the head after the (ritual) bathing is by all means to be regarded as a very grave offence. The *sutta* does not specify the age of the two friends, but it is unlikely to assume that they were little boys. Nevertheless, judged from the silence of the text about it, and his rather spontaneous decision to ordain, it can be inferred that Jotipāla was not married yet. Arthur L. Basham gives as the ideal age of the “second birth” (*upanayana*), the rite of passage and one of the twelve “sacraments” (*saṃskāra*) of later Hinduism, eight (*brāhmaṇs*), eleven (*kṣatriyas*), and twelve (*vaiśyas*) respectively.⁴¹⁴ The period of studenthood (*brahmacārin*) would ideally amount to twelve years, so that the student would return home, give or take a couple of years, usually in his early twenties. On his return, he would take a ritual bath, put on fine clothes and wear ornaments, which ceremony would make him “one who has bathed” (Skt. *snātaka*; Pāli *nahāta(ka)*) and thus fit for marriage. Since the text states that Jotipāla received the full admission to the Buddha’s Order (*upasampadā*), we can presume that he was at least twenty years of age⁴¹⁵ and not married.

However, it is also possible that Jotipala was not even a Brahmin and that the authors of the Mvu version as well as the Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, who translates *māṇava* with “brahmin youth” throughout, have been influenced by two different appearances of the same compound. The compound *sīsanahātaṃ* occurs first in the narrator’s text when he describes Ghaṭikāra’s actions in that dramatic scene at the river, when he grabs his friend’s hair: *Atha kho, Ānanda, Ghaṭikāro kumbhakāro Jotipālaṃ māṇavaṃ sīsanahātaṃ kesesu parāmasivā etad avoca: Ayaṃ, samma Jotipāla, Kassapassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa avidūre ārāmo.*

⁴¹³ Cp. Banerji 2007: 203f.: See ‘privileges allowed to *śūdras*’; cp., however, also *Gobhilagṛhyasūtra* III 5.34 where a *snātaka* (a Brahmin youth who has finished his studies) is forbidden to “mix” (?? Be/walk alone) with a *śūdra*: *na vṛṣalaih saha //34// [cty.> vṛṣalāḥ śūdrāḥ; taiḥ kevalaiḥ saha; na saṃmiśraiḥ]*; see also Banerji 2007: 203. Cp. also Allon 1997: 58, who seems to be certain about a (*sīsa*)*nahāta* being indeed a Brahmin student.

⁴¹⁴ Cp. also MW, s.v. *upanayana*: “that ceremony in which a Guru draws a boy towards himself and initiates him into one of the three twice-born classes (one of the twelve संस्कारs or purificatory rites [prescribed in the धर्म-सूत्रs and explained in the गृह्य-सूत्रs] in which the boy is invested with the sacred thread [different for the three castes] and thus endowed with second or spiritual birth and qualified to learn the वेद by heart; a Brahman is initiated in the eighth year [or seventh according to हिरण्यकेशिन् ; or eighth from conception , according to शाङ्खायन &c] , a क्षत्रिय in the eleventh , a वैश्य in the twelfth ; but the term could be delayed).”

⁴¹⁵ That was the permitted age for the ordination; cp. Basham 2003: 281.

Āyāma, [...].⁴¹⁶ Here, the term can easily be taken as an adjective (*bahubbīhi*) relating to Jotipāla meaning, “who had [just] washed his head”.⁴¹⁷ However, in the second instance – Jotipāla’s direct thought representation –, the exalted diction suggests to read *sīsanahātaṃ* as a *tappurisa*-compound: “[...] Ghaṭīkāra, while being of a lowly birth, should think it necessary to touch (*parāmasitabbaṃ maññissasi*) our (*amhākaṃ*), the **Head-Ablutioned**’s (*sīsanahātānaṃ*) hair (*kesesu*)!⁴¹⁸

If my – admittedly adventurous – interpretation is correct, then there may even be a difference in the evaluation of the character Jotipāla: in the first case (in the narrator-text) the narrator’s, and in the second (Jotipāla’s direct thought-presentation), Jotipāla’s self-evaluation. This is effected by the presentation of Jotipāla’s perspective in his direct thought representation – his apparent nosism (his use of the *pluralis majestatis*), which is different from the narrator’s view. In any case, the character’s text does not merely repeat, verbatim or minor variations as so often, the narrator’s text (which would let us expect something like *mama māṇavassa sīsanahāta(ka)ssa kesesu* etc.). This is an important point with regard to Jotipāla’s characterisation which will be discussed at length below.

First, however, it is necessary to determine the other implications for the person Jotipāla found in the narrator’s text, which speaks of Jotipāla always as *Jotipālo māṇavo*. The term *māṇava* designates mostly Brahmin youths, but not exclusively. Basham states that in early times also *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas* were initiated into society through the *upanayana* ceremony and that the term “twice-born” (Skt. *dvi-ja*) has become synonymous with ‘*brāhmaṇa*’ only later (though possibly “even before the Christian Era”⁴¹⁹).⁴²⁰ In theory, thus, it is possible that Jotipāla was not a Brahmin but perhaps either a *khattiya* (Skt. *kṣatriya*) or a *vessa* (Skt. *vaiśya*). The narrator’s text

⁴¹⁶ See n. 297 above for the reference.

⁴¹⁷ Cp. PED s.v. *sīsa* 2: “**sīsaṃ nahāta**, one who has performed an ablution of the head”. This expression occurs *passim* in the *Sutta Piṭaka* in the context of king’s (i.e. *kṣatriyas*!) having performed ritual ablutions in preparation of the *uposatha* observances; cp. e.g. DN II 172: *Rājā ānanda mahāsudassano sattahi ratanehi samannāgato ahoṣi catūhi ca iddhihi. Katamehi sattahi? Idhānanda rañño mahāsudassanassa tadahuposathe paṇṇarase sīsaṃ nahātassa uposathikassa uparipāsādaragatassa dibbaṃ cakkaratanam pāturahosi sahasāraṃ sanemikaṃ sanāhikaṃ sabbākāraparipūraṃ, disvā rañño mahāsudassanassa etadahosi:*

⁴¹⁸ MN II 47,27-31: *Atha kho, Ānanda, Jotipālassa māṇavassa etad ahoṣi: Acchariyaṃ vata bho, abbhutaṃ vata bho. Yatra hi nāmāyaṃ Ghaṭīkāro kumbhakāro ittarajacco samāno amhākaṃ sīsanahātānaṃ kesesu parāmasitabbaṃ maññissati; na vat’ idaṃ orakaṃ maññe bhavissatīti.*

⁴¹⁹ Cp. Basham 2003: 162.

⁴²⁰ Cp. *ibid.*: 161f., 165f.

does not specify in the direct speech passages⁴²¹, which is why this must remain speculative. However, even if Jotipāla was a *khattiya* or a *vessa*, that would not make their difference in social status completely unproblematic.

According to my interpretation, then, Jotipāla saw himself to be of a superior social standing in relation to his friend (“the potter Ghaṭṭikāra, being of lowly birth”⁴²²), as well as in relation to the Buddha Kassapa (whom he does not recognise or address as a Buddha, but pejoratively as “some kind of recluse”), as he repeatedly states (“Enough, dear Ghaṭṭikāra, what is the use of seeing that bald-pated recluse?”⁴²³). Thus, one arrives at a relatively consistent impression of Jotipāla’s attitude for this section of the narrative, which is prior to his ordination. In the opposite direction (i.e. ‘alterocharacterisation’⁴²⁴), his contempt for the Buddha, without knowing him personally, as being just a “bald-headed recluse/ascetic” (*muṇḍaka samaṇaka*), identifies the Buddha Kassapa – from the biased point of view of Jotipāla – as belonging to a group of ascetics, implies information of the religious landscape at the time of the historical Buddha, in which different groups of ascetics were competing with each other. The text thus suggests that the situation was the same or equal at the time of the Buddha Kassapa. That the Buddha in the Canon is often characterised or addressed by others simply as a *samaṇa* is noteworthy and can be interpreted as expressing biased/competitive views of rivals (especially Brahmins), or perhaps as pointing to a physical characteristic of the Buddha himself, namely that there was no particularly outstanding characteristic about him (there are other passages in the Canon which seem to support this view).

Next, it is time to take another look at the salient passage in which Ghaṭṭikāra had just touched his friend’s hair: “Then, Ānanda, Jotipāla the Brahmin youth thought the following:

⁴²¹ MN II 47,28-31: *Acchariyaṃ vata, bho, abbhutaṃ vata, bho. Yatra hi nāmāyaṃ Ghaṭṭikāro kumbhakāro ittarajacco samāno amhākaṃ sīsanahātānaṃ kesesu parāmasitabbaṃ maññissati.* [my emphasis]

⁴²² ...*Ghaṭṭikāro kumbhakāro ittarajacco samāno...*

⁴²³ MN II 46,11f.&19f.&33-47,1&10f.&19f.: *Alaṃ, samma Ghaṭṭikāra; kiṃ pana tena muṇḍakena samaṇakena diṭṭhenāti?* (tr. Nāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 670,6.)

⁴²⁴ Neumann & Nünning 2008: 56, fig. 3.3.

‘This is indeed surprising, this is astonishing!’⁴²⁵ I imagine this [the meeting with the Buddha Kassapa] will certainly be no trivial matter, that (*yatra hi nāma*) this potter Ghaṭikāra, while being of a lowly birth, should think it necessary to touch (*paramasittabbaṃ maññissati*) our (*amhākaṃ*), the Head-Ablutioned’s (*sīsanahātānaṃ*) hair (*kesesu*)! [He] said this to the potter Ghaṭikāra: ‘[You go] as far as this, dear Ghaṭikāra?!’ ‘As far as this, dear Jotipāla!’ In this way/so [much] do I hold that it is good to see the Blessed One, accomplished and fully awakened.’ ‘Well then, dear Ghaṭikāra, let go [of me]! We will go then.’ And thus it was only after his friend the potter had gone so far, that Jotipāla consented to their going together to visit the Blessed One Kassapa.’⁴²⁶

This passage contains a short ‘interior monologue’ of the character Jotipāla, presented in the manner of direct thought representation (Ger. “*Gedankenzeit*”), which is in style similar to direct speech.⁴²⁷ The *sutta*-narrator ‘hands over’ his authority of focalization and perspective⁴²⁸ to one of the characters with the effect that the listener/reader is able to directly “hear” Jotipāla’s thoughts on the event. Characteristic of this mode is the introduction by a speech tag, in this case the formula “X thought the following: ‘....’”. Although also formalised like almost everything

⁴²⁵ Note the vocative singular of the honorific pronoun *bhavant*, *bho*, here used as an exclamation, which is indicative of actual speech, which in the Pāli *suttas* is, however, always ‘simulated orality’ (“*fingierte Mündlichkeit*”; cp. von Hinüber 1996: §55). Since Jotipāla is not speaking here, but only his thoughts are represented here, it is even more interesting how the text, for all, or despite, its formulaic character, creates a quite lively situation through this imitation of colloquial speech.

⁴²⁶ MN II 47,27-48,3: *Atha kho, Ānanda, Jotipālassa māṇavassa etad ahoṣi: Acchariyaṃ vata, bho, abbhutaṃ vata, bho. Yatra hi nāmāyaṃ Ghaṭikāro kumbhakāro ittarajacco samāno amhākaṃ sīsanahātānaṃ kesesu parāmasitabbaṃ maññissati; na vat’ idaṃ [B^m adds kira; Ps na vadat’ idaṃ] orakaṃ maññe bhavissatīti; Ghaṭikāraṃ kumbhakāraṃ etad avoca: yāvetadohipi [B^o(R), B^m yāvatādohipi], samma Ghaṭikārāti. Yāvetadohi pi [B^o(R), B^m yāvatādohipi], samma Jotipāla. Tathā hi pana me sādhusammataṃ tassa bhagavato dassanaṃ arahato sammāsambuddhassāti. ’Tena hi, samma Ghaṭikāra, muñca; gamissāmāti. Atha kho, Ānanda, Ghaṭikāro ca kumbhakāro Jotipālo māṇavo yena Kassapo bhagavā araham sammā-sambuddho ten’ upasaṃkamimsu.*

⁴²⁷ This seems to be the only mode for the rendering of thoughts and speech of characters in these early Buddhist texts.

⁴²⁸ Cp. Schmid 2008: 186, where he lists a catalogue of characteristics of characters’ text and narrator’s text, which are essentially the same as that posited for narrative perspective (perception, ideology, space, time, and language).

else in the language of the *suttas*⁴²⁹, the passages of direct speech and thought do indeed sometimes preserve, or imitate, an expressivity that is characteristic of (direct) character's speech. Expressive phrases like '*acchariyaṃ vata, bho, abbhutaṃ vata, bho*' and the "bunching together" of untranslatable particles like the phrase, *yāvetadohi pi*, are indicative of this.⁴³⁰ The use of the pronoun *amhākaṃ*, "our", is indicative of the Origo of Jotipāla through the presentation of his visual perspective, and of his evaluative stance towards the event through the use of the *pluralis majestatis*.

At this point it is important to remember the analysis of the narrative's progression. This focalised ('focaliser': Jotipāla) passage is not only the dramatic height and climax of the Jotipāla-plot, it is also crucial for the further development and progression of the plot, and finally for the resolution of the instability it caused: Only because of this extreme action on Ghaṭikāra's part does Jotipāla visit the Buddha Kassapa and is finally set (back?) on his predestined path to Buddhahood. Jotipāla's arrogance and conceit (his 'mimetic dimension') function in a way that they activate Ghaṭikāra to perform ever more blatant actions (= 'mimetic function'). The narrative flow (or rather the climaxing action) is restricted to Jotipāla's perspective exactly at the critical or decisive point of the conflict (the 'instability'): Instead of reacting in a drastic way, to which he would surely be entitled given his higher social rank, Jotipāla seems to have a quasi-cathartic moment of insight ("[...] this will certainly be no trivial matter [...]"). The friends go and see the Buddha Kassapa, which for Jotipāla becomes very significant: Upon hearing the Buddha teach, he decides that he wants to become a *bhikkhu* under the Blessed One Kassapa. This is not only a change of heart of Jotipāla, but could perhaps almost be called a conversion: his attitude must perform a volte-face. The text, however, is silent about it, and the story leaves the character

⁴²⁹ O. von Hinüber argues that the orality presented in the *suttas* is highly formalised and artificial owing to required memorisability of the texts; cp. *ibid.* 1996: 28,§55: "In contrast to a modern author, however, who might imitate an actual conversation in creating a 'fictitious orality', the true orality found in early Buddhist texts avoids the natural ways of conversation, a situation that is the result of their having to create a formalized text that can be remembered and handed down by the tradition. In this respect, the remembered and originally true orality of the Buddhists is ultimately much more artificial than the fictitious orality in a modern novel."

⁴³⁰ It is arguable in how far it is possible to discover traces of the narrator within the character's speech, e.g. the use of the conjunction *yatra*, which might be indicative of Sanskrit as the language used by Brahmins. However, this is perhaps overstating my point and must remain speculative. Cp. the explanation of *yatra* in the PED: "[...] It is merely a differentiation of forms to mark a special meaning in the sense of a causal conjunction, whereas *yattha* is adv. (of place or time) only] in which, where, since; only in phrase *yatra hi nāma* (in emphatic exclamations) with Fut. [...]"

Jotipāla behind with the words, “The youth Jotipāla, Ānanda, received the ‘going forth’/ordination (*pabbajjāṃ*) in the presence of the Blessed One Kassapa, the accomplished and fully awakened One, and he received the full admission to the Order (*upasampadaṃ*).”⁴³¹ The logic behind this seems to be: “The decisive moment for Jotipāla had happened already before. The rest should be clear.”

Nevertheless, this passage is also an indirect characterising statement of both Jotipāla himself and his friend the potter. First, it is notable and surprising for the narrative audience, that Jotipāla remains very calm in the face of this heavy offence through his outcast friend. Legally, it would perhaps have given him every right of retribution according to Brahmin law, as we have seen. When he says to his friend, “you go as far as this, dear Ghaṭṭikāra!”, he seems to show understanding and sympathy for his friend’s desire to see the Buddha. If one infers back from his behavior on his state of mind, his calmness in the face of such an extreme act is a statement of his affection for his friend.

But it also characterises Ghaṭṭikāra. His motivation to see the Buddha is simply that he holds that it is beneficial to see the Blessed One. This is enunciative of his strong faith in and affection for the Buddha, the dominant character-trait of Ghaṭṭikāra.

However, I think that the situation and the role of the characters is more complex than this, and thus another reading of the text is possible. Reconsidering the narrated facts, the following questions present themselves. Why is Ghaṭṭikāra so keen on dragging his friend along to the Buddha Kassapa? And it is unlikely that his stated, overt motivation that he holds that it is good to see the Blessed One is his real motivation, simply because he himself has already established a close relationship with him. This leads one to the conclusion that he, for some reason, has a covert motivation to bring his friend to the Buddha Kassapa. Moreover, Jotipāla’s calmness in the face of his friend’s offence must strike one as strange. Both cases seem also to have puzzled the editors/compiler/authors of the *Jotipāla Sūtra* in the Mvu, as seen above, which is perhaps why they felt the need to supply the readers/listeners with the unexpressed motivation of the potter and the ‘missing’ appropriate reaction to his offence.⁴³² With respect to Ghaṭṭikāra’s characterisation through Jotipāla’s statement, it implies that he must hold the Buddha dearer than his own

⁴³¹ MN II 49,7-9: *Alattha kho, ānanda, jotipālo māṇavo kassapaṃ bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa santike pabbajjāṃ, alattha upasampadaṃ.*

⁴³² Cp. nn. 330 and 332 above.

life and that he, according to one possible interpretation of Jotipāla’s expressed thoughts⁴³³, must know something Jotipāla does not (which is Jotipāla’s future Buddhahood). Remember also that the short dialogue between the two friends after they have visited the Buddha, in which Ghaṭṭikāra makes clear that he himself has never thought about entering the Order, supports this view. As stated earlier in the analysis of the narrative progression, the characters’ unclear motivations create a tension (the narrator, Buddha Gotama, knows more than his audience at this point about the course of events, and the authorial audience is in suspense about how the story will develop – his tension is only resolved at the end of the *sutta* when the narrator reveals his identity: “I was that Brahmin youth Jotipāla”). This situation makes Ghaṭṭikāra into a key figure in the *sutta*’s progression: it is because of him that Jotipāla becomes ordained by Kassapa Buddha and later becomes himself a Buddha! However, we do not learn about his real motivation explicitly from the text, except that he is a model example of Buddhist values, and thus Ghaṭṭikāra as a character remains opaque and somewhat unknown to the reader/listener, without (a possible, real) identity. Ghaṭṭikāra the potter serves discrete functions in the progression of the narrative, which is reminiscent of Greimas’s theory of actants. It is also thinkable that Ghaṭṭikāra himself does not even know why he is doing all this. He just acts out of his affection for the Buddha. It is somewhat awkward that he almost violently insists on their meeting with the Buddha, although, as a character in the middle of the story, he cannot not possibly know why it is so important. The plot actually owes the audience an explanation as to his obscure motivation. At this point his mimetic dimensions or attributes, which are explained only later during the ‘meal narrative’ to the king Kikī, are turned into functions. In sum, however, it becomes obvious that his real function lies in the thematic sphere, which is pointed out from the beginning through turning the audiences’ attention to his synthetic aspect. The one who ultimately knows about the significance of Ghaṭṭikāra’s actions for the future Buddha is the narrator, Gotama Buddha, himself.

Jotipāla leaves the story after his ordination, and we do not learn anything from the text about his further development or whereabouts. His name only reoccurs at the end of the *sutta*, when the Buddha (Gotama) states his identity with Jotipāla. Seen in isolation, one could indeed

⁴³³ This interpretation is based on my reading of the phrase, “I imagine this [the meeting with the Buddha Kassapa] will certainly be no trivial matter” ([...] *na vat’ idaṃ [B^m adds kira; Ps na vadat’ idaṃ] orakaṃ maññe bhavissatīti*). The demonstrative pronoun “this” (*idaṃ*) in combination with the future “will be” (*bhavissati*) refers to a future event.

get the impression that in this (and similar) *sutta*(s) at this point (i.e. the “dropping out”, as it were, of the main character according to the traditional commentarial view!) one story ends and another begins, and that the two stories have more or less consistently been cobbled together by the *bhāṇaka* tradition for one reason or another. However, such an impression would be caused by an ignorance of the principle of narration in the *suttas* (and the subsequent narrative tradition). This principle is, put simply, based on the specific insight (of the Buddha?), which as a cultural code has the status of a fact, that the world together with its events does not have an end, and that therefore narration as an image or a representation of the actual world, does likewise *not* have an end. Due to the kaleidoscopic character of the *suttas* (or one could perhaps also call this style “episodical”, although this term does not exactly fit because there is no real or recognisable sequential arrangement of the texts of the *Nikāyas*), the historical listener/reader might not have had the impression of an inconsistency, simply due to the fact that Jotipāla does not really disappear – the narrator/author/reciter just chose, likely in order to make a certain point, to restrict himself for the rest of the *sutta* to another plot line which focuses on Ghaṭikāra. (Cp. also what was said above, that the Ghaṭikāra-story represents a complication of the narrative’s progression which serves to further develop the theme, respectively the development of the instability and its resolution.)

However, in narratological terms, that does not necessarily mean that Jotipāla’s story is finished here. He is still present in the narrative universe (the narrated world) of the *suttas* – as the ‘prospective’ Buddha Gotama. He is just ‘covert’ as a character because the ‘contextual

‘frame’⁴³⁴ in which he appeared (/acted) changed, due to the change of location (in Part II.5), and is now “inactive”. In any case, the *sutta* is indeed about the character Ghaṭikāra (as the title already indicates, in contrast to the Mvu title) and the relations and identifications of the diegetic with the metadiegetic characters.

Although, in the passage of Jotipāla’s short interior monologue, the expression of emotions – besides his reaction being unexpectedly mild (thus creating a ‘tension’) – appears restrained to a very high degree through the use of “standard *sutta*-language” (*Acchariyaṃ vata, bho, abbhutaṃ vata, bho. Yatra hi nāmāyaṃ Ghaṭikāro*), already the use of the interior monologue is indicative of the importance of this passage for Jotipāla but also, or even much more, for the progression of the story. The same passage, dryly summarised by the narrator, would not yield the same dramatic effect, which is here achieved through the focalization of the event through the character-perspective.

In turn, this passage forms the introduction to the turning point of Jotipāla’s attitude towards the Buddha Kassapa, namely when the two friends depart from their first meeting with Kassapa. Although before they went to see the Blessed One, the significance of this event was only foreshadowed (“I imagine this [the meeting with the Buddha Kassapa] will certainly be no trivial matter, inasmuch/for which as this potter Ghaṭikāra, while being of a lowly birth, should think it necessary to tear at the hair of our freshly washed head”), and Jotipāla was perhaps still a

⁴³⁴ I use the term ‘frame’ (in inverted commas) here as it is used or defined in Cognitive Narratology, i.e. as a cognitive process of readers that “fills in the blanks” of the narrative; cp. LHN: “Schank & Abelson’s (1977) foundational work explored how stereotypical knowledge reduces the complexity and duration of many processing tasks, including the interpretation of narrative. The concept of script, i.e. a type of knowledge representation that allows an expected sequence of events to be stored in the memory, was designed to explain how people are able to build up complex interpretations of stories on the basis of very few textual or discourse cues (Schemata). Whereas the term “scripts” was used to refer to kinds of world-knowledge that generate expectations about how sequences of events are supposed to unfold, “frames” referred to expectations about how domains of experience are likely to be structured at a given moment in time (Goffman 1974). Frames guide my expectations about the objects and decor that I am likely to find in a university classroom as opposed to a prison cell; scripts guide my expectations about what I can expect to happen while ordering a beer in a bar as opposed to defending a doctoral dissertation.” (Herman, David: “Cognitive Narratology”, Paragraph 12. In: Hühn, Peter et al. (eds.): LHN. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press. URL = hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php?title=Cognitive+Narratology&oldid=2058 (last accessed: 15th April 2013)). Indeed, Allon’s important work (1997) on the approach formulas in the DN could be rephrased in cognitive terms as an analysis of the use of certain ‘frames’ and ‘scripts’ in early Buddhist Pāli *suttas*: The ‘frame’ of the Buddha dwelling in a certain place entails certain ‘scripts’, i.e. standardised courses of actions and events, e.g. approaching the Buddha etc, known to the original audience as well to the (later) audience who was familiar with the texts and their stories.

little bit reluctant to actually go, Jotipāla’s attitude changed after the Buddha had given them an inspiring talk about *dhamma*, about the actual contents of which the listener/reader is left in the dark. In the narrative discourse this change becomes manifest in the words, “they were thankful and approved joyfully of what the Blessed One had said”⁴³⁵, and in the *abhivādetvā* form of address on their departure, which is now used for both!⁴³⁶ His change of heart in regard to his attitude towards the Buddha is then fully expressed in his wish to become a member of the Buddha Kassapa’s order of monks.⁴³⁷ As in the two other *suttas* (the *Piyajātika* and the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*), also here the characteristic of and the most dramatic point in the story seems the change of heart (“conversion”?) of one of its protagonists.

Again, another crucial passage of the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* provides the listener/reader with a representation of the thoughts of one of the main characters. The passage is, as usual in such cases, introduced with the stock phrase for the representation of thought in the Pali *suttas*: “Then, Ānanda, the brahmin youth Jotipāla thought the following” (*Atha kho, Ānanda, Jotipālassa māṇavassa etad ahoṣi*). The thought provides us with an explanation or a possible motivation for Jotipāla’s consent, finally, to go and visit the Buddha. Moreover, Jotipāla’s extremely disrespectful and markedly dismissive address of the Buddha as *muṇḍaka samaṇaka* clearly betrays Jotipāla’s perspective: the narrator completely lends his voice to the character. And this generates a tension between his perspective and the authorial reader’s (and the implied author’s?) perspective because Jotipāla’s attitude towards the Buddha will reverse completely at the end of the story, when they will have met. In one possible reading, this later turn of events is already anticipated in the content of Jotipāla’s thoughts. The Brahmin youth senses something special to happen by the strange and absolutely unacceptable behaviour of his friend the potter. And the listener/reader is equally made aware that the situation is somewhat extraordinary through the way Jotipāla comments on the situation in words (“You go as far as this, dear friend?”) and thought

⁴³⁵ MN II 48,21f.: ... *Kassapassa bhagavato ... bhāsitaṃ abhinanditvā anumoditvā ...*; in my translation of the absolutes of the verbs *abhinadati* and *anumodati* here I follow the CPD *ss.vv*.

⁴³⁶ MN II 48,18-24: *Atha kho, Ānanda, Ghaṭṭikāro ca kumbhakāro Jotipālo ca māṇavo Kassapena bhagavatā arahatā sammāsambuddhena dhammiyā kathāya sandassitā samādapitā samuttejitā sampahaṃsitā Kassapassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa bhāsitaṃ abhinanditvā anumoditvā uṭṭhāy’ asana Kassapaṃ bhagavantaṃ arahantaṃ sammāsambuddhaṃ abhivādetvā padakkhinaṃ katvā pakkamīsu.* [my emphasis]

⁴³⁷ MN II 48,26-28: *Imaṃ nu tvaṃ, samma Ghaṭṭikāra, dhammaṃ suṇanto, atha ca pana na agārasmā anāgariyaṃ pabbajissāmīti?*

(“It is marvelous, it is strange [...]”). Through being touched by Ghaṭikāra, Jotipāla has become impure again, stained, by Ghaṭikāra’s action. Thus, under normal circumstances – and the reader (the authorial audience?) wonders perhaps why it does not happen – Ghaṭikāra’s behaviour would be regarded as outrageous and should provoke the rage of Jotipāla. The authorial audience, therefore, asks why Jotipāla does not even seem to feel in the least offended. The highly explosive social issue and cause for conflict lurking in this passage appears to have escaped the commentator. Thus, except for Jotipāla’s unexpectedly mild reaction towards Ghaṭikāra’s action, nothing in his characterisation prior to the meeting with the Buddha Kassapa points to his change of heart towards the Blessed One. Therefore, his wish to become ordained is all the more surprising for the listener/reader (who does not know yet that Jotipāla is the future Buddha). It is, therefore, fairly safe to say that Jotipāla’s actions do not correspond to his characterisation by the text prior to his ‘conversion’. Yet, this admittedly rather extreme change in the attitude of young Jotipāla does not destroy the mimetic illusion of the character Jotipāla as a ‘possible person’ in a “real situation”. First, this is because his deprecatory attitude towards the Buddha Kassapa is not a stable character trait (as, e.g. the psychological traits extroverted versus introverted). One can surmise that it is a kind of learned behaviour, probably stemming from his caste affiliation (no matter, then, whether he was a Brahmin or from a royal family). He sees the Buddha Kassapa just as one of the many ascetics around. Only the “ascetic Gotama’s” teachings, however, “turn his life around”. Furthermore, it is perhaps also safe to say that such events belong to the conventions of the “*sutta*-genre”: Several instances can be found in the Canon in which Brahmins or wealthy householders are converted to Buddhism after they had discussed with or heard the Buddha preach.⁴³⁸ Finally yet importantly, the ability to surprise the listener/reader is essentially what makes a character interesting, more “true-to-life”, what E. M. Forster has called a “round character”.

We will now turn our attention to another major figure in the *Ghaṭikāra Sutta*, “king Kikī”. The king Kikī seems to be a mythical figure, and only existent in the universe of Buddhist

⁴³⁸ Cp. e.g. the *Sāleyyaka Sutta* (MN 41), *Verañjaka Sutta* (MN 42), *Upāli Sutta* (MN 56), *Abhayarājakumāra Sutta* (MN 58), *Brahmāyu Sutta* (MN 91), *Sela Sutta* (MN 92), *Assalāyana Sutta* (MN 93). Thus, the impression of the MN-*suttas* as being mainly “debates”, as Manné posits, is perhaps warranted in many cases.

literature. *Kikin*, - ī / - i, -is (m.) in Sanskrit, is the blue jay⁴³⁹, which makes for a strange name for a king. However, according to Malalasekera’s *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names* (DPPN) Kiki appears by name and with the attribute “king of Kāsī” (*kāsirājā*) at the time of the Buddha Kassapa in the Pāli Canon in the *Mahāpadāna Sutta* (DN) and several times in the *Khuddakanikāya* (*Jātaka* and *Apadāna* collections).⁴⁴⁰ It is mentioned that he had several daughters, who all (i.e. their rebirths) eventually became nuns under the Buddha Gotama, and one son who followed him on the throne. Interestingly, King Kikī’s („Krikri“) son (Pathavindhara (Puthuvindhara?)⁴⁴¹) re-surfaces in a much later, Tibetan, source in his reincarnation as the Tibetan scholar-saint ’Jig-med gLing pa (1729/30?-1798).⁴⁴²

King Kikī enters the stage in the *sutta* in Part II.5 (MN I 49,9-50,12). The formula of someone receiving the news that the Tathāgata has come to a certain place is abbreviated here: “Kikī, king of Benares, Ānanda, had heard: ‘Allegedly the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully awakened, has arrived in Benares and is staying in the Deer Park’.”⁴⁴³ It misses the expression that contains the famous ‘*itipiso*’-formula, “the following high reputation has been preceding the Buddha [...]”⁴⁴⁴ etc., which is usually used to express that the people who have heard about the Buddha’s arrival are not his followers.

⁴³⁹ Grassman (*Woerterbuch zum Ṛgveda*) has (s.v.): „**kiki-dīvī**, m., der *blaue Holzheher*, auch bloß kiki genannt; der Name ist, wie *kāka* (Krähe), ursprünglich wol schallnachahmend [...] die Bedeutung des zweiten Theils (dīvī) ist nicht deutlich.“ This seems to be the ‘Indian Roller’ (*Coracias benghalensis*) and not the “blue jay”, which is an outdated designation, and the direct translation of the German “*blauer Holzheher*”.

⁴⁴⁰ See also <http://www.bodhgayanews.net/pali.htm>; search entry *kikī* (last accessed: 7th April 2013).

⁴⁴¹ p. DPPN s.v. Kikī.

⁴⁴² Cp. Tulku Thondup 2011: 31: “According to his [i.e. ’Jig-med gLing-pa’s] recollections and revelations, many millennia ago Jigme Lingpa was born in India as the son of a king named Krikri, and he developed enlightened aspiration (Skt. *bodhicitta*) in front of Buddha Kasyapa.” If nothing else, this perhaps indicates that the story of the potter, Jotipāla and the king Kikī must have been more widespread (and durative) than one may think.

⁴⁴³ MN II 49,15f.: *Assosi kho, ānanda, kikī kāsirājā: ‘kassapo kira bhagavā arahamaṃ sammāsambuddho bārāṇasiṃ anupatto bārāṇasiyaṃ viharati isipatane migadāye’ti.*

⁴⁴⁴ *Assosi kho X: “samaṇo khalu bho, gotamo sakyaputto sakyakulā pabbajito [place-name] cārikaṃ carati mahatā bhikkhusaṅghena saddhiṃ pañcamattehi bhikkhusatehi. Taṃ kho pana bhavantaṃ gotamaṃ evaṃ kalyāṇo kittisaddo abbhuggato iti pi so: Bhagavā arahamaṃ sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaṃ buddho Bhagavāti. So imaṃ lokaṃ sadevakaṃ samāraṃ sabrahmakaṃ sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiṃ pajamaṃ sadevamanussaṃ sayamaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedeti. So dhammaṃ deseti ādikalyāṇaṃ majjhekalyāṇaṃ pariyosānakalyāṇaṃ sātthaṃ sabyañjanaṃ, kevalaparipuṇṇaṃ parisuddhaṃ brahmacariyaṃ pakāseti. Sādhu kho pana tathārūpānaṃ arahataṃ dassanaṃ hotīti.)*

The king enters the realm of the Buddha – “Approaching by chariot”⁴⁴⁵

As soon as the king and his entourage reach close to the dwelling place of the Buddha Kassapa, they have to alight from their carriages, and even the king has to proceed as a “mere pedestrian” (*pattiko va*). The contrast is played out by the text through (first) using the compound “with full royal pomp”⁴⁴⁶ (*mahatā rājānubhāvena*⁴⁴⁷), i.e. including “a number of state carriages”, and subsequently contrasting it by the information that the king has to proceed “by foot only,”⁴⁴⁸ i.e. as a mere pedestrian. The reason given for this in the text is that the road was no longer suitable or passable for carriages. However, as I have elaborated on elsewhere⁴⁴⁹, the phrase carries significance beyond being a mere statement of facts, also since it is or has become highly formulaic in describing a king approaching the or a Buddha or, more rarely, other highly esteemed persons.⁴⁵⁰ The formula this passage here deviates from the standard formula in the *Dīgha Nikāya* described by Allon in the particular detail *mahatā rājānubhāvena* (plus *Kassapaṃ bhagavantaṃ arahantaṃ sammāsambuddhaṃ dassanāya*), which is also significant in that it serves to create or increase the contrast described above. Thus, the prominence of the Buddha (Kassapa) is emphasised: even a powerful king has to descend from his state carriage, which could be interpreted as representing his kingdom, and approach the Buddha on the same level.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁵ MN II 49,22-24: *yāvatikā yānassa bhūmi yānena gantvā yānā paccarohitvā pattiko va yena Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho ten’ upasaṃkamaṃ*; [...]. Cp. also Allon 1997: 36-40.

⁴⁴⁶ Tr. Bhikkhu Bodhi: *Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 672.13*.

⁴⁴⁷ Vv.II.: B^c(R) *mahaccarājānubhāvena*, Si *mahaccā rājānubhāvena*, for *mahatā* cp. Geiger 1994: §96.1. *mahacca/-ā=???* Instr. Sg. Fem., *mahatī*

⁴⁴⁸ Tr. Allon 1997: 38.

⁴⁴⁹ Cp. Galasek 2009: 94f.

⁴⁵⁰ The whole passage is a common variant of what Mark Allon has called ‘approach-formulas’; cp. Allon 1997: 36-40, 2.2.1 ‘Approaching by chariot or elephant’; The complete (in Allon’s sense or definition) formula runs: MN II 49,18-24: *Atha kho, Ānanda, Kikī Kāsirājā bhadraṇi bhadraṇi* [throughout instead of *bhadda*] *yānāni yojāpetvā bhadrāṃ yānaṃ abhirūhitvā bhadrehi bhadrehi yānehi Bārāṇasiyā niyyāsi mahatā rājānubhāvena Kassapaṃ bhagavantaṃ arahantaṃ sammāsambuddhaṃ dassanāya; yāvatikā yānassa bhūmi yānena gantvā yānā paccarohitvā pattiko va yena Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho ten’ upasaṃkamaṃ; upasaṃkamitvā ...*

⁴⁵¹ Cp. also Allon’s summary as in support of my argument (1997: 41): “As the preparations for an approach or the actual travel that must be involved in visiting someone are rarely depicted, it is certain that their inclusion in some approach passages functions to emphasise something particular about the approacher or the approach. In the case of chariot/elephant approaches it is to emphasise the status of the individuals who approach and hence, by association, the importance of the Buddha.”

Furthermore, the king shows the highest form of respect towards the Buddha Kassapa on his visit. Noteworthy in this respect is the address of the Buddha Kassapa with ‘*bhante*’ as he approaches (MN II 50,1). As Allon has found out⁴⁵², when used in the approach-formulas (“B 5-7”), the address *bhante*, “Venerable Sir”, almost always goes together with the most formal of salutations, i.e. the *abhivādetvā*-salutation. Similarly, his taking leave of the Blessed One is very respectful with the ‘paying-homage’ and ‘circumambulating’ formulas.⁴⁵³ This means, that in this respect he is similar to the lay follower Ghaṭikāra, and indeed the text is suggestive of the king being a follower or devotee of the Buddha Kassapa already.

However, that the “meal-narrative ‘frame’” is not coupled – as it otherwise often is – with the “conversion ‘frame’” is conspicuous here, because in most *suttas* this is the case.⁴⁵⁴ The king does not even ask to be accepted as a lay follower or the like, and the text seems to invite readers to surmise that the sole motivation of Kikī is either to gain prestige by hosting the Buddha⁴⁵⁵, which would also explain for his depression after being rejected to host the Buddha and his monks during the rains retreat (his aspiration was disappointed), or that he must be a follower already. His gesture of taking a lower seat to sit next to the Buddha after the meal, though highly formulaic too, adds to the general impression of Kikī being a devotee of the Buddha Kassapa. Yet, the text does not expressly state that. What is more, when the Buddha praises Ghaṭikāra’s qualities, he particularly – and in the first place – mentions that the potter has gone for refuge to the Buddha, his teachings, and the *saṅgha*. With his statement, “You, on the other hand, maharaja, [just] thought: ‘Kassapa, the Blessed One, accomplished and fully awakened, does not consent to my [offer of a] rains residence in Benares’, and you became depressed and dejected. [But] this is not so with the potter Ghaṭikāra and it will/can not be so (i.e. the potter does not and could never think thus!)”, Kassapa Buddha states implicitly that king Kikī is the actual opposite of good Ghaṭikāra in terms of the qualities listed next.

⁴⁵² Cp. Allon 1997: 57&59.

⁴⁵³ MN II 50,3-7: *Atha kho, ānanda, kikī kāsirājā kassapassa bhagavato sammāsambuddhassa adbhivāsanaṃ viditvā uṭṭhāyāsanaṃ kassapaṃ bhagavantaṃ arahantaṃ sammāsambuddhaṃ abhivādetvā padakkhiṇaṃ katvā pakkāmi.*

⁴⁵⁴ Cp. Allon 1997: 136f.; Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 240.

⁴⁵⁵ Cp. Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 248f.

Kikī’s real motivation, therefore, to serve the Buddha Kassapa appears rather covert. His demeanour, betrays that he regards himself as a follower or devotee of the Buddha. I have already stated earlier my own reading of a passage that is crucial for Kikī’s view of himself. Here, let me elaborate on this.⁴⁵⁶ On my view, the translations by the Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi as well as by I. B. Horner miss the point of the statement made in king Kikī’s words: Horner (1957: 247) translates: “Revered sir, may the Lord consent to (accept) my rains-residence in Benares; there will be suitable support for the Order.” Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (2001: 673,17.) translate: “Venerable sir, let the Blessed One accept from me a residence for the Rains in Benares; that will be helpful for the Sangha.” On my reading of the passage, the king is in fact trying to gain the Buddha Kassapa’s favour by, in a sense, “bribing” him: “If you accept me as your donor and main supporter here in Benares (= meaning prestige for the king), *this (evarūpaṃ*, referring to something at hand = the sumptuous meal just enjoyed!) is what you can expect every day for yourself and your monks”!⁴⁵⁷ The Buddha Kassapa’s reaction is prompt and determined: “Enough, great king! I have [already] consented to a residence during the Rains.”⁴⁵⁸ Begging thus three times and declined always, consequently the king is disappointed and depressed.⁴⁵⁹ and asks: “Venerable sir, have you a better supporter than myself?”⁴⁶⁰ Because Kassapa, the Buddha does have a *better* supporter, the king is depressed. In terms of what, then, is Ghaṭikāra a better supporter than the rich king (because it is very doubtful, and appears almost as a logical flaw in the story, how exactly the potter will be able to support the Buddha Kassapa and his entire assembly of monks mentioned in beginning of the *sutta* as accompanying him!)? The Buddha Kassapa himself gives the answer, as previously described in Ghaṭikāra’s characterisation.

Thus, in regards to his view of himself, king Kikī shares features with Jotipāla: he shows a similarly arrogant and over-confident attitude towards the Buddha. But other than Jotipāla, the king is reprimanded for his attitude by the Blessed One Kassapa who reads Kikī’s thoughts: “But

⁴⁵⁶ See n. 315 above. The Pāli text of the passage is MN II 50,24f.: *Adhivāsetu me, bhante, Bhagavā Bārāṇasiyaṃ vassāvāsaṃ; evarūpaṃ saṃghassa upaṭṭhānaṃ bhavissatīti.*

⁴⁵⁷ See Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 237-256 for “The importance of meals as a measure of social interaction”, and the discussion below in 4.8. “Interpretation.”

⁴⁵⁸ MN II 50,26: *Alaṃ, maharaja, adhivuttho me vassāvāso ti.*

⁴⁵⁹ MN II 50,31-51,2: *Atha kho Ānanda, Kikissa Kāsiraṇṇo: Na me Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho adhivāseti Bārāṇasiyaṃ vassāvāsan ti. Ahu-d-eva aññathattaṃ ahu domanassaṃ.*

⁴⁶⁰ tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 673,18. MN II 51,4f.: *Atthi nu te, bhante, añño koci mayā upaṭṭhākatāro ti?*

you, great king, thought: ‘The Blessed One Kassapa [...] does not consent to my offering a residence for the Rains’, and became [...] depressed.”⁴⁶¹

4.8 Interpretation

Although the king made a deliberate effort by inviting the Buddha to a meal, and although the ‘meal-narrative frame’ is in most of its occasions followed by the ‘conversion frame’⁴⁶² (perhaps it was even the king’s intention to become a convert, a lay follower at least, or at least receive a Dhamma discourse? The text, however, does not state this), he goes away empty-handed. Yet, the Brahmin youth Jotipāla, who in the beginning is even opposed to the idea of seeing the Buddha, eventually obtains the full admission to the order (which had even to be requested by Ghaṭṭikāra on his behalf!). What role in the narrative progression does Ghaṭṭikāra play, then? He appears as the driving force behind the action (he introduces Jotipāla to the Buddha; he asks on his behalf for the ordination, etc.).

As G. Bailey and I. Mabbett have stated⁴⁶³, there are striking parallels and even a certain complementarity between King Kikī and the lay disciple Ghaṭṭikāra which merit that we have a closer look at them.

For a satisfactory interpretation of the *sutta*, as G. Bailey and I. Mabbett have also demonstrated, the social connotations of some of its events have to be taken into consideration. Bailey and Mabbett wish to interpret the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* against the background of the doctrine of the transfer of merit and the concept of “gift exchange”.⁴⁶⁴ The authors argue, however, that the earliest and simplest form of alms-giving and -receiving may not have included the notion of direct reciprocity, while the meal-invitation, on the other hand, did, and it is likely that it was a highly ritualised and prestigious event for both parties. G. Bailey and I. Mabbett write:

⁴⁶¹ MN II 51: *Tuyhaṃ kho pana, mahārāja: Na me Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho adhivāseti Bārāṇasiyaṃ vassāvāsan ti atthi aññathattaṃ atthi domanassaṃ; [...]*.

⁴⁶² Cp. Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 238.

⁴⁶³ See *ibid.*: 248: “The size and the nature of the meals is perfectly consonant with the social and economic standings of the respective donors and as such there is no message of status disjunction being expressed here. Where the latter assumes its full force is in Kassapa’s refusal of Kikī’s invitation to spend the rains retreat with him. The contrasting emotions experienced by the favoured donor and the one who is refused are quite symmetrical, but do not explicitly turn on status disjunction so much as failure and joy in the wake of Kassapa’s refusal.”

⁴⁶⁴ Cp. Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 233, 236.

“It is normal in such cases for the meal to be enframed in the larger context of conversion, a common frame in Buddhist literature and not always including the kind of meal with which we are concerned here. All the meals presented in such cases are large, highly demonstrative and deliberately ritualized offering possibility for sumptuary display on the part of the patron who pays for the meal and an exalted status for the Buddha who receives it. [...] But if the attitude of the monk is to be one of absolute indifference [...], the text [the authors have just cited the Jīvaka Sutta to illustrate the perfect attitude of a monk following a meal-invitation] tells us nothing of the attitude of the donor. As we will see this is often characterised by competitive zeal.”⁴⁶⁵

This situation, when seen in connection with the king’s getting depressed when the Buddha refuses his offer to provide large-scale for monks’ rains retreat, may be interpreted as revealing the king’s prestige as the only motive his invitations. At the moment in the ‘meal frame’ when the donor is supposed to ask for a talk on *Dhamma*, the king makes yet another invitation. The Buddha Kassapa, in response, delivers a sermon nonetheless: Having emphasised Ghaṭikāra’s qualities, he relates the three episodes of visiting Ghaṭikāra’s house and being offered his food by his blind parents as an illustration of the potter’s virtue(s) (i.e. humility coupled with perfect generosity). It is difficult to believe that that much zeal is involved in the king’s offer – he is a king after all! Then again, comparing the king and the potter in terms of wealth, the contrast could hardly be more blatant. That the Buddha Kassapa calls the poor potter his chief attendant must be utterly humiliating for the generous and wealthy king. Now, what should listeners/readers make of this? When re-reading the passage another instance of contrast occurred to me: remembering the description of the circumstances in the beginning of the *sutta* (the Buddha travels with a large group of monks!), the fact that Buddha Kassapa is now depicted in quite poor, but apparently happy, circumstances (suggestive of a much earlier stage in his career?) struck me as strange. I think that here we can make out a hidden criticism by the Buddha Kassapa of the apparently historical practice of arranging sumptuous meals for the Buddha and his

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.: 237f.

saṅgha as public ‘*dāna*-events’ on a large scale.⁴⁶⁶ Perhaps the Buddha Kassapa does even nostalgically long to return to these earlier days? If so, it would indeed be a very personal and private statement. Yet, this might be an over-interpretation.

Concerning the social reality depicted in the *sutta*, Bailey and Mabbett write, “[b]oth Kikī and Ghaṭikāra play the traditional roles expected of members of their group. In the magnitude and the opulence of the meal Kikī supplies to Kassapa and then subsequently to Ghaṭikāra, presumably as a mediating figure in respect of Kassapa, the role of the political elites as providers of large-scale support to the order is expressed.”⁴⁶⁷ About the potter Ghaṭikāra the authors state that “[...] he is the archetypal image of the village lay Buddhist who supports the individual monk in whatever manner he can. The symbolism of his blind parents [...] lends more dramatic emphasis to his domestic responsibilities than would the simple declaration that he has a family to support. He must perform his household responsibilities whilst continuing to function as a Buddhist and modifying his behavior accordingly.”⁴⁶⁸ “[...] Above all”, they argue, “this narrative is about the means of measuring the status of people who interact with the Buddha.”⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁶ Cp. Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 243: “All of the meal narratives are given within the context of the Buddha being on tour at a particular time. No doubt touring occupied the majority of his time except during the rainy season. Though we would not want to suggest these tours were carefully stage-managed, they were centred on the figure of the Buddha himself and the evidence from the texts, especially given the elite background of those who host the meals, is that his fame preceded him. Most people are very eager to see him, an eagerness played down dramatically by the inevitably formulaic wording used in the narratives, and this bespeaks a fame, possibly cultivated [...], apparently enabling him to remain aloof from the hustle and bustle of the tour and daily life in the places where he stops and definitely giving him all the more esteem because of this. In no sense does he need to pursue converts, they come to him. Their eagerness to approach him directly and the forewarning many of those who give meals have of his coming must have worked to build up the anticipation of the people who lived in the areas through which he travelled, and would ultimately contribute to the creation of the public spectacle the meals must often have been.”

⁴⁶⁷ Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 247.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*: 247.

⁴⁶⁹ As n. 468.

Without a doubt, the meaning or significance of certain details in the Ghaṭṭikāra narrative, as well as of the *sutta* as a whole, gain in importance when considering the historical socio-cultural background that Bailey and Mabbett attempt to reconstruct for the “meal narratives”.⁴⁷⁰

Thus, it would be possible even to say that it is not only the past which serves to elucidate the present (= ‘*Jātaka*’), but also that with the (reconstruction of the) present conditions (of the Buddha’s or the discourse-time, Ger. “*Erzählte Zeit*”) as a backdrop, that the rhetoric of the tale of the past can be revealed.

Certainly, a lot more remains to be said about this *sutta* and G. Bailey and I. Mabbett have many illuminating things to say from the point of view of their “text-of-its-day mode” reading, and I agree with many of their findings.⁴⁷¹ However, I do not agree with all of their interpretations

⁴⁷⁰ Cp. *ibid.*: 232-256; especially p. 240: “Apart from the frame, virtually standard in all ‘meal narratives’, formed by the set structuring of the events of the meal, there is a conversation frame operative here; it offers us different possibilities for the interpretation of these ‘meal narratives’.” [Mabbett and Bailey’s use of the word ‘frame’ here fits exactly the narratological sense of it (cp. ‘frame’ and ‘script’)!] See the sequence of the meal narrative *ibid.* p. 240.; cp. nn. 284 and 313 above).

⁴⁷¹ Cp. *ibid.*: 246f.: “A folk-tale theme may lie at the basis of this narrative. The poor potter Ghaṭṭikāra outdoes the wealthy king by his piety and (measured by his commitment to his blind parents as much as by anything else) gains a material fortune from the very same king, a fortune matched by the religious fortune he has received from the Buddha’s recognition of the potter’s devotion towards him, this confirming the persistent Buddhist view that a person’s measure is determined by conduct, not by source of birth.”

based on their readings of the Pāli text.⁴⁷² But, my interest in the *suttas* lies elsewhere: in its rhetorical-narratological peculiarities.

4.9 Conclusion

The narrative of the *sutta* progresses through different stages, settings, and so forth, but does so in a very dynamic manner, as my analysis has shown. Some issues, however, must remain unresolved. For instance, the question of why the protagonist Jotipāla disappears from the story at the height of the plot. Answers to this question might be found in a diachronic investigation of different versions of the text. Did the two traditions of the Theravādins and the Mahāsaṅghika-Lo-kottaravādins take quite different roads in their versions (/interpretations) of the story, or as a synchronic reading suggests, did Jotipāla not really “disappear”? Indeed, he leaves a particular ‘frame’, but he does not leave the “narrative universe” of the *suttas* on the whole.

An interesting feature of this and similar narrative *suttas* is the characteristic employment of focalization at a crucial, dramatic (turning) point of the story. Furthermore, the presentation of change or development occurring in persons/characters as the narrative progresses is noteworthy. However, development always seems to follow concrete lines, delineated by a soteriological model of early Buddhism as posited in the *suttas*: the overall grid is that of the *saṃsāra—mokṣa/nibbāna* dichotomy; to reach the latter, virtues are the currency by which one travels, not wealth, social status or birth.

Richard Gombrich has expressed his suspicion that the authors/compiler/reciters of this *sutta* had confounded the identities of the true Buddha-to-be of the *Jātaka*-tale, Ghaṭikāra, and Jotipāla.⁴⁷³ However, in my interpretation, the narrative is not about Jotipāla. When Jotipāla (re-)discovers that he must become a monk and follow the Buddha Kassapa’s teachings or, in other words, when it is (re-)revealed to him that he is bound for Awakening due to past aspirations (that is not expressed directly by the text, but it is implicit), then Jotipāla, the future Buddha’s, part in the story is done with. The moment he is “set back on track”, there remains nothing for him to do in the *sutta* (except, now that he had met a Buddha who has appeared in the world and has taught the *dhamma*, to pass through the Path of spiritual training etc.⁴⁷⁴).

Reflecting on the embedded narrative within the *Jātaka*-tale and the *Jātaka* itself, one might question its purpose. The narrative technique of embedded stories or embedding stories “goes back to the very origins of epic narrating [the *Odyssey*]”, as Genette has observed, and is a

⁴⁷² E.g. this: Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 248: “King Kikī then sent five hundred cartloads of food to Ghaṭṭikāra. The potter expressed his satisfaction to the king’s messenger, saying he knew the king had much to do.” (“*Alaṃ me rañño va hotū ti*” [MN I 54,15]). Although the authors do not mention whether they have consulted Buddhaghosa’s commentary on this passage or not, on the grounds of their interpretation of the passage as given above, Bailey and Mabbett appear to have decided for a reading against the commentary (or vice versa, their interpretation is based on their understanding of the Pāli. They find a comrade-in-arms in Isaline Blew Horner’s translation “[Ghaṭṭikāra:] ’The king is very busy, there is much to be done. I am quite satisfied since this is for me by the king.’ (Horner 1957: 250) However, her understanding of the passage is not warranted by the PTS edition of Buddhaghosa’s commentary (Ps), which was also edited by herself, and which reads (Ps III 287,21 [II. 54.15]): “*Alaṃ me [S. eva] rañño va hotū ti kasmā paṭikkhipi?*” Frankly, I do not understand how exactly the authors understand this phrase and they do not provide a literal translation of it in their book. I can only surmise that they understand *alaṃ* as meaning “sufficient, adequate”, and *rañño va* as (perhaps owing to the imitation of everyday speech) incomplete for *rañño va laddha-lābham* or the like: “This [gift, profit, gain] of [= subjective Genetive = “from” the king] the king himself should (*hotu*) be adequate (*alaṃ*) for me”.

Unfortunately, the narrator does not tell us anything about the whereabouts of the five-hundred cartloads of foodstuffs. Also, the speech act seems to have failed in this instance – the potter has not at all made himself clear here. Therefore, I take – as the B^e(R) suggests (see note 472) – *Alaṃ me* and *rañño va hotu* as units of meaning respectively belonging together. I imagine the potter Ghaṭṭikāra, from all that we have said above about his characterisation, as a simple person (not as a simpleton, though! Rem.: Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 247: “As for Ghaṭṭikāra, he is the archetypal image of the village lay Buddhist ...”), who, day in, day out, goes about his (hard) work. He is not even thinking about his going forth under Buddha Kassapa when asked by his friend Jotipāla. Since the narrative lets us assume that he and the Buddha are quite intimate, he has obviously never even thought about it. Instead, his only interest is to care for his parents and to support the Buddha, not for a single instant thinking of what he might gain for himself in all this. This is a fact (in the story-world) that once again just adds to the narrative’s intended character-portrait of Ghaṭṭikāra and thus contributes to the narrative’s consistence. Thus, I can easily imagine an answer given by a surprised Ghaṭṭikāra at the sight of such richness suddenly appearing in front of his hut: “I have got enough. Let [this] be for the king himself!” Although Bailey’s and Mabbett’s understanding may reflect an *‘interpretatio difficilior’*, I opt for the simpler reading here, which, makes more sense given the context and the occasion in the narrative’s course of events, and, last but not least, on the grounds of Ghaṭṭikāra’s overall characterization in the story.

well-known phenomenon also in the ancient Indian context (cp., e.g., the *Pañcatantra*, or the well-known collection of “One Thousand and One Nights”, Persian *hazār-o-yak šab*, which ultimately goes back to an Indian origin). Genette distinguishes three kinds of relationships the metadiegetic narrative can have with the diegesis: causal, thematic, or digressive (i.e. no particular function for the diegetic narrative, but rather for the act of narrating).⁴⁷⁵ The first type gives an answer to the question, “What events have led to the present situation?”⁴⁷⁶ Thus, there exists a more or less defined spatio-temporal relationship between the two narratives. But it is important to note that the difference between a second-order narrative and an analepsis is that the real embedded narrative is characterised by a shift of the narrating instance (i.e. a character of the

After the king’s messenger reaches the potter together with the five-hundred cartloads of choice foods and having listed them, Ghaṭikāra says: (MN I 54,14-15) *Rājā kho bahukicco bahukaraṇīyo: alaṃ me rañño va hotūti*. The electronic version of the Burmese edition (B^c(R)) seems to support Nāṇamoli & Bodhi’s interpretation (in any case, the Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi follows the commentarial tradition rather closely in his MN translation!) of the passage by adding Western punctuation in decisive places: ‘*Rājā kho bahukicco bahukaraṇīyo. Alaṃ me!* [my emphasis] *rañnova hotūti.*’ (B^c(R) *Majjhimaṇṇāsa-atthakathā* 292.) The PTS edition (Ps) does not contain this punctuation: [= Ps III 287,21]: “*Alaṃ me rañnova hotū ti kasmā paṭikkhipi?*” *Adhigamaappicchatāya* Bodhi’s translation (Nāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 676,22.) reads: “‘The king is very busy and has much to do. I have enough. Let this be for the king himself.’” In the notes, Bodhi also gives a summary-translation of the commentary: “[...] he [Ghaṭikāra] refused because of his fewness of wishes (*appicchatā*). He realised that the king had sent the foodstuffs because he had heard the Buddha’s report about his own virtues, but he thought: ‘I have no need of this. With what I acquire through my work I can support my parents and make offerings to the Buddha.’” According to Buddhaghosa (Ps III 287,22-288,4) the potter realized that since he did not have a part in the fame gained by the words of praise the Buddha had presumably uttered when staying in Benares with the king, this is like what a dancer or a singer gets for his performance [= applause, fame, recognition?]. But through his (own hands’) work he is able to support his parents and the Buddha – which seems to be all he wants. Thus, in the real sense, Buddhaghosa says, the potter has no use for fame and praise.

⁴⁷³ Personal communication, 28.05.2012.

⁴⁷⁴ Cp. the stock phrase (DN II 62f. and passim): *Idha mahārāja tathāgato loka uppajjati arahaṃ sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathī satthā devamanussānaṃ buddho bhagavā. So imaṃ lokaṃ sadevakaṃ samārakaṃ sabrahmakaṃ assamaṇabrāhmaṇiṃ pajaṃ sadevamanussaṃ sayamaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedeti. So dhammaṃ deseti ādikalyāṇaṃ majjhakalyāṇaṃ pariyoṣānakalyāṇaṃ sātthaṃ sabyañjanaṃ kevalaparipuṇṇaṃ parisuddhaṃ. Brahmācariyaṃ pakāseti. Taṃ dhammaṃ suṇāti gahapati vā gahatiputto vā aññatarasmim vā kulepaccājāto. So taṃ dhammaṃ sutvā tathāgate saddhaṃ paṭilabhati. So tena saddhāpaṭilābhena samannāgato iti paṭisaṃcikkhati: ‘sambādhō gharāvaso rajāpatho. Abbhokāso pabbajjā. Nayidaṃ sukaraṃ agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā ekantaparipuṇṇaṃ ekantaparisuddhaṃ saṃkhalikhitaṃ brahmācariyaṃ caritaṃ. Yannūnāhaṃ kesamassaṃ ohāretvā kāsāyāni vatthāni acchādetvā agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajeyyanti.*

⁴⁷⁵ Cp. Genette 1980: 231-234.

⁴⁷⁶ Cp. Genette 1980: 232.

diegesis becoming the narrator).⁴⁷⁷ The second type knows two basic distinctions: analogy (like, e.g., the parable or the example) or contrast. In the third type the function of the meta-diegetic narrative lies not in the relationship of the two narrative levels but in the act of narrating itself, like Scheherazade who manages to escape her lot by continuing to narrate on and on.⁴⁷⁸ The relationship of the narrative materials or plot lines in our *sutta*, that is the episode told by Buddha Kassapa (meta-metadiegetic), and the metadiegesis, that is the actual *Jātaka*-story (itself being a metadiegesis) told by the Buddha Gotama, is one of explanation or causality: In the king Kikī episode, the Buddha Kassapa explains to the king why he had chosen the potter Ghaṭṭikāra to provide for his imminent rains retreat and how their relationship had developed over a period of time. At the end of Kassapa Buddha's episode, the narrative levels shift back with a barely perceptible or, better, abrupt transition to the metadiegesis (recognisable only through the different addressee: once more Ānanda, instead of the maharaja).

The relationship between the extradiegetic narration (diegesis) and the metadiegesis, that is the actual *Jātaka* for which the diegesis provides a framestory, however, is slightly more complex and it is here that where another key for the interpretation of the *sutta* lies. While the *Jātaka*-tale seems to have an explanatory function with regard to a certain place (and thus an explanatory or causal relationship to the first narrative), the relationship is essentially a thematic one. In the form of an analogy, the *Jātaka* functions as an exemplification of the relationship between Ānanda and the Buddha Gotama, although the identification of Ānanda is not explicitly stated in the *samodhāna*. Although this may be obvious, the explanation for this is that they are fictional beings, invented characters (invented by the original narrator, the Buddha Gotama!). Moreover, at least the character Ghaṭṭikāra with its predominance of the thematic function and the

⁴⁷⁷ Cp. *ibid.*: 231, n. 45; cp. also Coste, Didier & Pier, John: "Narrative Levels", Paragraph 4. In: Hühn, Peter et al. (eds.): LHN. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press. URL = [hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php?title=Narrative Levels&oldid=1571](http://hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php?title=Narrative+Levels&oldid=1571) (last accessed: 6th April 2013): "What distinguishes narrative level from the traditional notion of embedding is that it marks a "threshold" in the transition from one diegesis (spatiotemporal universe within which the action takes place) to another." This "transition", in turn, is indicated by the text through a change of the narrating instance (or the "level of enunciation"), see *ibid.*: Paragraph 5.

⁴⁷⁸ Cp. *ibid.*: 233.

authorial hints at his synthetic aspect (“‘Potter’ by name” etc.) represents a type rather than an individual.⁴⁷⁹

Embedded stories often have the function to mirror character constellations of the frame/main-narrative. That which is, in my reading of this *sutta*, really exemplified in the *Jātaka*, is the relationship between Ānanda and the Buddha Gotama. For instance, both Ghaṭṭikāra and Ānanda share an identical quality: being the foremost among attendants (*aggupaṭṭhākānaṃ*). It illustrates a certain character, which was later developed or systematized into a type: the one who follows the Buddha out of faith (*saddhānusārin*). The *sutta* ultimately illustrates that quality or type. The (deliberately sought-after) “reward” of the quality consists in, at least (in this case) becoming a Once-Returner. But even more than that, its function in the story is perfectly clear: What the Buddha is actually saying by way of analogy (*pariyāyena*) is, that if it hadn’t been for Ghaṭṭikāra (= Ānanda?), there would not have been a future Buddha (Gotama). That is, ultimately, a thematisation. But the way it is dramatically presented (pulling at/touching the hair of a Brahmin) serves to illustrate “how far faith/trust will go” – not for his, Ghaṭṭikāra’s own sake and advantage, but only because it is a positive quality in itself. Ghaṭṭikāra does not think goal-orientated: “If I have trust in the Tathāgata, I will become a Once-Returner.” Faith is just a quality or a trait that people have (even if they do not know what it is good for), and the Buddha/Buddhism values it greatly. But the Buddha also values Ānanda greatly by telling this story. Thus, their personal relationship finds an expression in this *sutta*, even though in a rather formal way. (The really interesting thing for a modern Western audience to know would of course be the events prior to when the *sutta* commences! Was there a particular event involving Ānanda and the Buddha, a private conversation along the way, while the group was wandering, a certain action carried out by Ānanda, that instilled the Buddha to covertly praise him, and so forth? These, however, are perhaps typical questions of a greatly psychologically influenced modern Western audience.) Nevertheless, besides the thematic aspect already mentioned, the *sutta* illustrates its ‘mimetic undercurrent’, i.e. the personal relationship between the Buddha and Ānanda, which is clearly expressed in this beautifully artistic *sutta*.

⁴⁷⁹ Comparing his characterisation (as being an *opapātika*) with the standardised description of an *anāgāmi* in the Pp. (cp. Gombrich 2006: 98: “*kalyāṇa-dhammo*”; 102,4.: “insight into the four noble truths”), it becomes apparent that the text is modelled upon the standard description of the *ariya-puggalā* (= types).

As aforementioned, the *sutta* itself does not clearly state this identification. In that way, the ending of the *sutta* does not really suspend the tension although it solves the story's instabilities. One can go about this problem also from another angle. When the Buddha (Gotama) finally reveals his identity in the *samodhāna* ("Now, Ānanda, you may think: 'Someone else surely was the Brahmin youth Jotipāla during that time.' But you should not regard this to be thus, Ānanda! I myself was the Brahmin youth Jotipāla at that time."⁴⁸⁰), any reader/listener who is only remotely familiar with the *Jātaka* genre will certainly ask himself, "Fair enough! But who is Ghaṭikāra?", because this naturally appears to be the more pressing question after all one has learned about him. With regard to the communicative structure, one can find a parallel in another *sutta* of the "Chapter on kings", the *Rājavagga*, in *sutta* 83, the *Makhadeva Sutta*. Ānanda is addressed throughout the text by the Buddha and the *sutta* finally closes with an admonition to Ānanda to uphold the good tradition (of the noble eightfold path) introduced by the Buddha lest he not be "the last man". The "message", then, of the story is that even a prospective Buddha may be forgetful and arrogant⁴⁸¹, and that it is the Buddha's dear friend who gets all the credit. Without such a selfless friend, there might even be no future Buddha. Therefore, the "hidden" meaning of the story and the intention of the original author-narrator⁴⁸² (Buddha Gotama) may be to covertly praise the selfless companion of the Bodhisatta – Ānanda. The fact that the Buddha is constantly addressing Ānanda directly throughout, although the introductory passage mentions a large following of monks, also seem to corroborate this interpretation. Last but not least, my interpretation is intended to reflect the state of knowledge of an authorial audience or an intended

⁴⁸⁰ MN II 54,16-19: *Siyā kho pana te, Ānanda, evam assa: Añño nūna tena samayena Jotipālo māṇavo ahoṣīti. Na kho pan' etaṃ, Ānanda, evaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ. Ahaṃ tena samayena Jotipālo māṇavo ahoṣin ti.* Cp. also n. 338.

⁴⁸¹ The presentation of Jotipāla, on the other hand, must strike one as strange. Naturally, if one were to think of anybody in the story to reach enlightenment quickly, one would almost certainly think of virtuous Ghaṭikāra. However, it is Jotipāla who is clearly identified as the Bodhisatta in the *samodhāna*, which calls for an explanation. The tradition, of course believing that Jotipāla must be the main character in the *sutta* because he is, after all, the Buddha himself, found an explanation to account for this inconsistency of the story by tracking the Bodhisattva's career: According to the late canonical *Apadāna* (Ap I 301,29ff.), the *bodhisattva* had to endure the extreme hardship of six years of austerities (longer than his predecessors, cp. DPPN, s.v. Jotipāla 2.) because of his insulting the Buddha Kassapa. This explanation, however, is not found, not even hinted at, in the Ps!

⁴⁸² This is a term typically used by Genette, cp. *ibid.* 1980: 230.

listener/reader that engages the story, and who picks up the hints given in the narrative that reflect the knowledge and the intention of its author.

5. The Presentation of Characters in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* (MN 86)

This chapter will look at the notorious character Aṅgulimāla mainly as he is presented in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*, but also in other sources. The character Aṅgulimāla is perhaps one of the best-known and most popular figures of Buddhism. His story is unique, and interest in this character has been and remains to be expressed by scholars and practitioners of Buddhism alike.

In particular, after a summarising statement of the progression and structure of the *sutta*, I will present two important but rival interpretations of who (or what) Aṅgulimāla might have been historically, then address the conclusion(s) one can draw from these interpretations, and finally suggest a “middle way” that is based on a strongly text-based approach to character that we have already employed in the foregoing chapter 4. Although narratological terminology will rather take a backseat in this chapter, narratological analyses and certain insights owed to narratology’s method of textual analysis will always be present in the background.

5.1 Introduction & the Commentaries

Information about the notorious mass-murderer Aṅgulimāla and the story of his peaceful conversion by the Buddha are found in the 26 stanzas attributed to the “elder” (*thera*) Aṅgulimāla in the *Theragāthā*⁴⁸³ (Th), and in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* (MN 86) respectively. Furthermore, there are two commentaries, the one on the *Theragāthā*, the *Paramattha-dīpanī* ascribed to Dhammapāla, and the one on the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the *Papañcasūdanī* ascribed to Buddhaghosa, both of which contain much background information concerning the character Aṅgulimāla. In fact, the *Papañcasūdanī* claims to provide a “successive (chronological?) narration”.⁴⁸⁴ However, this background narration, as Gombrich calls it, is not very credible and also quite inconsistent. Gombrich⁴⁸⁵ has dealt with both commentaries extensively and he comes to the conclusion that,

⁴⁸³ Th 866-891. The vv. Th 866-870 also occur at the dramatic climax in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*, Aṅgulimāla’s conversion, and the rest but the last five vv. of the Th occur also at the end of the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*.

⁴⁸⁴ B°(R): *Evaṃ me sutanti aṅgulimālasuttaṃ. Tattha aṅgulīnaṃ mālaṃ dhāretīti kasmā dhāreti? ācariyavacanena. Tatrāyaṃ anupubbikathā:* For anupubbikathā see CPD, s.v.

⁴⁸⁵ See Gombrich 2006a: 137-42.

“[o]bviously we do not expect from such sources a story which has verisimilitude, but we do expect somewhat more coherence.”⁴⁸⁶ Since I share his view in this regard, I will refer to the *Pañcasūdanī* only occasionally here.⁴⁸⁷

The story of Aṅgulimāla is also found (fragmentary) in a Sanskrit fragment of the *Samyuktāgama* of the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādins, wholly translated in the Chinese *Tripitaka*, and – in a somewhat altered version – in the Tibetan *’Dzangs blun zhes bya ba’i mdo*, the “Sūtra of the Wise and the Fool”.⁴⁸⁸ However, they will not concern my analysis here very much. First, because this book’s interest is not to present a comparative historical-critical study, and second, because the differences between the Pāli and the Chinese versions have been dealt with most expertly elsewhere.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁶ Gombrich 2006a: 142.

⁴⁸⁷ I think that, as Monika Zin has shown, what we find in the *cty.* is already a confusion of different versions of a story that must have been around at a later time (2nd cent.), as we can deduce from the different sources and datable representations in Buddhist art; see Zin 2006.

⁴⁸⁸ An excellent and probably exhaustive overview of all the versions can be found in Zin 2006: 101-107. Also several versions of the story exist in the Chinese Canon, see again Zin 2006 for an overview. A Mahāyāna Sūtra bearing the name of Aṅgulimāla has, however, not much to do with our story (and with Aṅgulimāla himself), cp. *Aṅgulimālīya-nāma-mahāyānasūtra* (*’phags pa sor m’i phreng ba la phan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po’i mdo*). Tōh. no. 213. Dergé Kanjur, vol. TSHA, folios 126r.1-206v.7.

⁴⁸⁹ See Zin 2006; Anālayo 2011: 485-502. Since I do not read Chinese, I have no direct access to the Chinese versions.

5.2 Content of the *sutta* & its Narrative Structure

Aṅgulimāla is certainly one of the most popular Buddhist figures. Besides his great popularity in Asia, he has also been dealt with extensively in the (modern) West (and still the interpretation of his character seems to have some impact).⁴⁹⁰

The story of Aṅgulimāla in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* can be subdivided into three major parts: I) the conversion of the mass-murderer Aṅgulimāla by the Buddha through peaceful means, that is, by an “exercise of his magical or superhuman powers” (*iddhābhisamkhāraṃ abhisamkhāsi*, MN II 97-100); II) Aṅgulimāla’s ‘second life’ as a completely transformed/purified monk; this second part, in turn, can be subdivided into two significant episodes (MN II 100-103): a) the suspension of a criminal prosecution or the statement of Aṅgulimāla’s immunity, as it were, by king Pasenadi of Kosala, and b) an ‘act of truth’ (*sacca-kiriyā*), eventually becoming famous in the Theravāda-tradition as the *Aṅgulimāla-paritta* (*Aṅgulimāla pirit*)⁴⁹¹; and finally part III) Aṅgulimāla’s attainment of Arhatship or ‘extinction of [all] taints’ (*āsava-kkhaya*) (MN II 103-106). The following provides a brief summary and analysis of the most important structural aspects of the *sutta*.

⁴⁹⁰ For a probably preliminary and not fully exhaustive list, containing eight titles see Dan Martin’s ‘Tibskrit’ (<http://tibeto-logic.blogspot.co.uk/2011/02/tibskrit-reloaded.html> (last accessed: 28th March 2012). Most of the entries list works in which Aṅgulimāla is mentioned in one context or another etc. and are not relevant for our purposes here. For the sake of providing the interested reader with a complete overview, however, I cite Martin’s entire entry here:

“Aṅgulimāla (Sor mo’i phreng ba)

—Nakamura, Hajime. 1980. *Indian buddhism: a survey with bibliographical notes*. Hirakata: KUFU Publ. Kansai University of Foreign Studies., p. 20.

— EoB. His birth name was Ahimsaka (or perhaps Himśaka, which was later changed to Ahimsaka).

— Stearns, Luminous Lives, pp. 81, 203.

— Pia Brancaccio, Aṅgulimāla or the Taming of the Forest, *East and West*, vol. 49 (1999), pp. 105-118.

— Indiana University masters thesis by the late Nathan S. Cutler. 455

— Satish Kumar (b. 1936), *The Buddha and the Terrorist: The Story of Angulimala*, Viveka Foundation (New Delhi 2004).

— John Snelling, Angulimala: Old Finger-Necklace, *Middle Way*, vol. 60, no. 4 (February 1986), pp. 239-240.

— Monika Zin, The Unknown Ajanta Painting of the Angulimala Story, contained in: C. Jarrige, V. Lefèvre, eds., *South Asian Archaeology 2001* (Paris 2005), pp. 704-713.

⁴⁹¹ See Gombrich 1991 [1971]: 236-246&263 in connection with *saccakiriyā*.

Part I. The conversion of the mass-murderer Aṅgulimāla by the Buddha through peaceful means

Part I, following the usual ‘Introductory formula’ (I.1), as always provides the setting or the ‘Buddha-frame’, mentioning the (unspecified) time and the place of the events (I.1.1 *Sāvathī, Jetavana*). The following descriptive introductory passage (I.1.2 *tena kho pana samayena* + present tense predicate) introduces the main character of the *sutta* Aṅgulimāla by providing the first explicit characterisation statement (see below), which is repeated several times by different figures in course of the narrative. It conveys the reputation that precedes Aṅgulimāla. The perspective up to this point is not restricted in any way, thus making it ‘zero-focalisation’.

I.2 Story beginning: diegesis; beginning of narrative action (MN II 98,2-98,27)

The commencement of narrative action consists in the (formulaic) description of the Buddha going on his alms-round, returning, setting his resting-place in order, and setting out on the road where the notorious robber Aṅgulimāla is known to be up to mischief. Although the expression, “having set his resting place in order”⁴⁹², is a common formula depicting the everyday duties of a monk, it gives seemingly superfluous detail to the Buddha’s quite regular course of actions on this day, and thus adds to the tranquil atmosphere of this *sutta*-narrator passage. The text itself does not state the motivation of the Buddha to turn to the road leading to Aṅgulimāla. However, that he does so on purpose, or that he is simply unperturbed, can be inferred by the fact that he does not shy away from proceeding after being warned of Aṅgulimāla three times by local people that “although people had gathered in groups of up to 40 before entering that road, they all have fallen into Aṅgulimāla’s hands.”⁴⁹³

Seemingly, the text reflects the perspective of the people warning the Buddha; a focalisation of perception to the “cowherds, shepherds, ploughmen, and travellers” meeting the Buddha is indicated by a verb of perception, “seeing” (*addasāsum*), in sentence-initial position, and by their address of the Buddha as “ascetic” (*samaṇa*).⁴⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the focalised object in this

⁴⁹² MN II 98,5: *senāsanaṃ saṃsametvā*

⁴⁹³ MN II 98,15-18: *Etam hi, samaṇa, maggaṃ dasa pi purisā vīsatiṃ pi purisā tiṃsatiṃ pi purisā cattārīsam pi purisā saṃharitvā saṃharitvā paṭipajjanti, te pi corassa Aṅgulimālassa hatthatthaṃ gacchanṭīti.*

⁴⁹⁴ That means that they do not recognise the wandering ascetic or monk as the Buddha himself! MN II 98,7-10: *Addasāsum kho gopālakā pasupālakā kassakā padhāvino Bhagavantaṃ yena coro Aṅgulimālo ten’ addhānamaggaṃ paṭipannaṃ; disvā Bhagavantaṃ etad avocum:...*

passage is still the Buddha because the meaning of the passage concerns, or refers to, the Buddha, and its significance lies in the Buddha's reaction to the information about a notorious, fierce robber staying nearby – three times, hearing the message, “the Blessed One went on in silence”.⁴⁹⁵ In other words, while the *sutta*-narrator presents the perceptual perspective of several groups of people in his discourse, his “interest-vantage” is related to the figure of the Buddha.⁴⁹⁶ Thus, the *sutta*-narrator's point of view is stated indirectly instead of directly in form of a narrator-commentary as, for example: “despite the warnings, the Buddha went on in silence because he was not afraid of Aṅgulimāla/ his intention was to convert Aṅgulimāla/ in order to stop Aṅgulimāla in his wrong-doing [for the benefit of the people]”, and so forth. Once again, ‘showing’ as opposed to ‘telling’ seems to be the preferred mode of presentation also in this *suttas*.

I.3 Aṅgulimāla is converted by the performance of a miracle by the Buddha and becomes ordained (MN II 98,27-100,12)

Part I.3 represents the dramatic apex of the Aṅgulimāla narrative. And to come to the point: ‘internal focalization’ plays a key role in its presentation. The focalising instance in this whole passage⁴⁹⁷ is clearly Aṅgulimāla (analysed in detail below, ch. 5.7). The event of the Buddha approaching and performing a “feat of [his] superhuman power”⁴⁹⁸ is presented in a ‘showing mode’ from Aṅgulimāla's point of view (through direct thought representation), and eventually leads to his ordination by the Buddha after a versified dialogue has taken place between them.

A particular item of interest in this passage is the “converting magic”⁴⁹⁹ attributed to the Buddha. In the *Upāli Sutta* (MN 56), Mahāvīra, the leader of a group of ascetics (the *nigaṇṭhā*), which later became known as the Jain sect, who in the Pāli Canon bears the name (Nigaṇṭha) Nātaputta, and his men concoct a scheme to refute the Buddha in a public debate. They choose the householder Upāli to carry out the plan, whereupon another member of the sect named Dīgha Tapassī objects to it, saying “the [ascetic] Gotama is a magician and knows a converting magic

⁴⁹⁵ MN II 98,18,21f.,26: ... *Bhagavā tuṅhībhūto agamāsi*.

⁴⁹⁶ Cp. Chatman 1989: 152.

⁴⁹⁷ MN II 98,27-100,12.

⁴⁹⁸ Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 711, 5.

⁴⁹⁹ Cp. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 480, 8. MN I 375,11-14: *Na kho metaṃ bhante ruccati yaṃ Upāli gahapati samaṇassa Gotamassa vādaṃ āropeyya; samaṇo hi bhante Gotamo māyāvī, āvaṭṭaṇiṃ māyaṃ jānāti yāya aññatitthiyānaṃ sāvake āvaṭṭetīti*.

by which he converts disciples of other sectarians.”⁵⁰⁰ The scheme fails, of course, and the householder Upāli is converted by reason, not by magic. Eventually, because “the Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta was unable to bear this honour done to the Blessed One”, “hot blood then and there gushed from his mouth.”⁵⁰¹ In this case, the Buddha’s “converting magic” turns out to be superstition and the householder is actually won over by the more compelling inner logic of the Buddha’s teachings and his superior skill in debate.

But the Buddha apparently did have other means to make people comply, if he so wished. In the *Cūḷasaccaka Sutta* (MN 35), an incident is related in which Saccaka, the son of Jain parents and renowned as a skilled debater, two times refuses to reply to a question put to him by the Buddha. After the Blessed One had posed his question for the second time, the *sutta* goes on to report:

“Then the Blessed One said to him: ‘Aggivessana, answer now. Now is not the time to be silent. If anyone, when asked a reasonable question up to the third time by the Tathāgata, still does not answer, his head splits into seven pieces there and then.’

Now on that occasion a thunderbolt-wielding spirit [vajirapāṇi yakkho] holding an iron thunderbolt that burned, blazed, and glowed, appeared in the air above Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha’s son, thinking: ‘If this Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha’s son, when asked a reasonable question up to the third time by the Blessed One, still does not answer, I shall split his head into seven pieces here and now.’ The Blessed One saw the thunderbolt-wielding spirit and so did Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha’s son. Then Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha’s son was frightened, alarmed, and terrified. Seeking his shelter, asylum, and refuge in the Blessed One himself, he said: ‘Ask me, Master Gotama, I will answer.’”⁵⁰²

In contrast, this does indeed make appear the conversion of Aṅgulimāla somewhat peculiar. Neither is Aṅgulimāla up for a debate with the Buddha, nor does the Buddha use force, which he could clearly have, to stop the brigand. What brings about Aṅgulimāla’s change

⁵⁰⁰ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 480, 8.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.: 492, 31.

⁵⁰² Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 326, 13.f. = MN I 231,25-232,3. Bhikkhu Bodhi apparently decided not to take *vajirapāṇi* as a proper name, whereas Walshe, translating a verbatim passage in the DN, does; cp. Walshe 1987: 116 (3.1.21) = D I 95 (*Ambhaṭṭha Sutta*, DN 3). The *yakṣa* Vajirapāṇi is identified by Buddhaghosa as Sakka/Indra; cp. PED, s.v. *yakkha*. A *bodhisattva* figure named Vajrapāṇi is known in the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna traditions of Indian Buddhism. Furthermore, a bearded figure wielding a thunderbolt and attending the Buddha is depicted on numerous narrative reliefs from Gandhāra, and is usually identified with Vajrapāṇi.

of heart is his own insight facilitated by the Buddha's "miracle". Thus, the *sutta*'s narrative is indeed about Aṅgulimāla, as its title (or 'Paratext') already indicates, rather than about the Buddha's "converting magic".

Part II. Aṅgulimāla's 'second life' (MN II 100,13-105,24)

According to Joy B. Manné's categorisation of Pāli *suttas* – by implication – corresponding to their formulaic beginnings and endings, at this point of the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* a 'new' *sutta* should start (or might originally have started).⁵⁰³ The brigand Aṅgulimāla is disarmed and even converted, and linguistically a new narrative frame is opened by the formulaic, "Then the Blessed One set out to wander towards Sāvathī with Aṅgulimāla as his attendant. Wandering in stages, he eventually arrived at Sāvathī. Having arrived there, he dwelled in Sāvathī⁵⁰⁴, in [prince] Jeta's grove in the park [donated by] Anāthapiṇḍika. At the same time, at the gates of king Pasenadi of Kosala's palace, a large crowd of people had gathered, making a loud noise, a great uproar [...]."⁵⁰⁵

Now, if the story was about the Buddha and a display of his superhuman power of conversion⁵⁰⁶, the *sutta* could easily end here. However, since it is about Aṅgulimāla, the listener/reader is curious about his future development. So far, the narrative has left several questions unanswered for the audience, whose curiosity in the character Aṅgulimāla and his further development is piqued after having been provided access to his thoughts. For instance, will Aṅgulimāla reach enlightenment, and if so, how can it be possible for a mass-murderer given the stress laid in the Buddha's system on moral discipline (*sīla*); what happens with the accumulation of Aṅgulimāla's bad karma; how will the king and the populace react to his admission to the *saṅgha*, and so forth? As we will see, the *sutta* continues to satisfy its audience's curiosity.

⁵⁰³ Cp. Manné 1990: 82.

⁵⁰⁴ The repeated mentioning of Sāvathī here is superfluous, which makes the highly formulaic character of the passage visible.

⁵⁰⁵ MN II 100,13-19: *Atha kho Bhagavā āyasmataṃ Aṅgulimālena pacchāsamaṇena yena Sāvathī tena cārikaṃ pakkāmi; anupubbena cārikaṃ caramāno yena Sāvathī tad avasari. Tatra sudaṃ Bhagavā Sāvathīyaṃ viharati Jetavane Anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme. Tena kho pana samayena raṇṇo Pasenadissa Kosalassa antepuradvāre mahājanakāyo sannipatitvā uccāsaddo mahāsaddo hoti: ...*

⁵⁰⁶ This is what Monika Zin suggests in her book *Mitleid und Wunderkraft: Schwierige Bekehrungen und ihre Ikonographie im indischen Buddhismus*; see below.

II.2 Suspension of a criminal prosecution: Aṅgulimāla meets king Pasenadi (MN II 100,13-102,27)

The parts II) and III) of the *sutta* can be summarized as follows. After his ‘*ehi-bhikkhu* (“Come, monk”) ordination’, probably the simplest and oldest form of ordination that was first performed by the Buddha himself⁵⁰⁷, Aṅgulimāla accompanies the Buddha as his attendant (*pacchāsa-maṇena*) back to Sāvattihī. There, in the Jetavana, the killer escapes being pursued and, most probably, executed by king Pasenadi for his crimes through the fact that he had entered the *saṅgha*.⁵⁰⁸ Pasenadi had set out with an entire cavalry of five-hundredmen (*pañcamattehi assasatehi*) at the urging of the population to save them from the dreaded robber Aṅgulimāla (they use the same phrase to describe Aṅgulimāla as the *sutta*-narrator in I.1.2). However, the king first sets out for the Jetavana, though the text does not state directly the reason why.⁵⁰⁹ Here, the formula for approaching with a carriage is used, as encountered already in the *Ghaṭikāra Sutta*: “He drove thus as far as the road was passable for carriages, and then he dismounted from his carriage and went on as a mere pedestrian to where the Blessed One was [...]”⁵¹⁰ The ‘*abhivādetvā*-approach’ accounts for Pasenadi being a devoted follower of the Buddha, as also seen in the previous chapters. One might infer from this that his motivation to visit the Buddha before setting out to hunt down Aṅgulimāla is to ask for advice or get the Buddha’s blessing, or simply to inform him about the situation. Beholding the king being accompanied by a cavalry induces the Buddha to make the teasingly ironic remark as to whether some neighbouring hostile

⁵⁰⁷ Cp. Horner 1951: ix.

⁵⁰⁸ This was probably the one and only exception one can deduce from a *Vinaya*-rule; see below.

⁵⁰⁹ There is perhaps a reason given later in the text when the Buddha is having a conversation with the king. According to the PTS-edition’s reading, the king says at MN II 101,10f.: *Nāhaṃ, bhante, paṭisedhissāmīti*, “I will not be able to ward him [= Aṅgulimāla] off, venerable sir.” Thus, one could infer that the king is seeking advice from the Buddha about what to do. The *Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyaṇa*-edition, however, reads *tāhaṃ* (ChS p. 304) instead of *Nāhaṃ*. No matter which reading I choose, either of them do not affect my interpretation. In the case of the PTS-edition’s reading, however, it would simply mean that the king admits his ‘defeat’ (i.e. that he feels that he is no match for Aṅgulimāla) already earlier, and that the text states it explicitly.

⁵¹⁰ Tr., with my modifications, Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 712, 9.MN II 100,26-101,3: *Atha kho rājā Pasenadi Kosalo pañcamattehi assasatehi Sāvattihīyā nikkhami divādivassa yen’ ārāmo tena pāyāsi; yāvatiko yānassa bhūmi yānena gantvā yānā paccārohitvā pattiko va yena Bhagavā ten’ upasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā Bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Ekamantaṃ nisinnaṃ kho rājānaṃ Pasenadiṃ Kosalaṃ Bhagavā etad avoca: ...*

king had declared war on Pasenadi.⁵¹¹ In any case, the king does not know that Aṅgulimāla is present among the *saṅgha* of monks surrounding the Buddha. The king, answering the Buddha's question, repeats the same phrase that serves to characterise Aṅgulimāla throughout the first part of the *sutta*.⁵¹²

Next, the Buddha cleverly causes Pasenadi, perhaps without him recognising it, to grant Aṅgulimāla amnesty by posing a hypothetical question (the content of which the king in any case regards as fictive and impossible; at this point, the king is still convinced that it is he himself, who has to take Aṅgulimāla into custody and convict him): “But if you, maharaja, saw Aṅgulimāla having shaved off his hair and beard, put on yellow robes, gone forth from home life into homelessness, abstaining from killing living beings, abstaining from stealing and from telling lies, having become a one-meal eater, living the chaste life, virtuous, and good – what would you do to him?”⁵¹³ The king replies that he would of course highly honour him, provide for his necessities, his alms-food and his protection – but, he finishes, “how could such an immoral man, one of evil character, ever have such virtue and restraint?”⁵¹⁴ The question put into the Buddha's mouth is indeed wily, for the optative mode is used which implies a hypothetical condition and result.⁵¹⁵ When the Buddha finally points out Aṅgulimāla to the king, the latter becomes terrified. After the Blessed One managed to allay the “great” king's fears, Pasenadi enquires after Aṅgulimāla's clan and family, and then, as it appertains to a king, offers to keep his word that he had given earlier in response to a seemingly hypothetical question (that he has pledged to the Buddha earlier without recognising that the Buddha was outflanking him). Aṅgulimāla, however, refuses the king's offer because, the text states, “at that time he was [already] a forest-dweller,

⁵¹¹ MN II 101,3-6. The text just states that the king alone (singular) proceeds towards the Buddha. However, the Buddha apparently knows about the cavalry. It would be highly implausible to assume that such a great number of soldiers on horses may approach without being noticed, even if they stayed in a considerable distance from where the Buddha stayed.

⁵¹² MN II 101,6-11.

⁵¹³ MN II 101,12-16: »*Sace pana tvaṃ, mahārāja, Aṅgulimālaṃ passeyyāsi kesamassuṃ ohāretvā kāsāyāni vatthāni acchādetvā agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajitaṃ virataṃ paṇātipātā virataṃ adinnādānā virataṃ musāvādā ekabhattikaṃ brahmacāriṃ sīlavantaṃ kalyāṇadhammaṃ, kinti naṃ kareyyāsīti?*

⁵¹⁴ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 713, 11. = MN II 101,16-22.

⁵¹⁵ Cp. Warder 2001: 333.

and alms-food eater, and a refuse-rag wearer, one wearing [only] the three robes.”⁵¹⁶ Once more, the Buddha has presented the king with a fait accompli.

Thus, nothing much remains to do for king Pasenadi than to turn to the Buddha and acknowledge his superior prowess in taming the untamed⁵¹⁷: “It is wonderful, venerable sir, it is marvellous, venerable sir, how great a tamer the Blessed One is of the untamed, a pacifier of the disordered [/un-peaceful], one who leads to Nirvana those who have not yet attained Nirvana. The Blessed One has tamed without violence and weapons him, whom we were not able to tame by either violence or weapons.” Thus, while in truth Pasenadi only purports to save his subjects from a notorious brigand who is terrorising the kingdom by setting out with a whole cavalry, four (or respectively three depending on which reading we decide for) actions of the king can serve as signposts that the text offers to an ‘ideal narrative audience’ for the king’s inability to protect his realm from Aṅgulimāla: 1. his riding out with five-hundred armed soldiers on horses to hunt down one man⁵¹⁸; 2. his statement in front of the Buddha that he could not ward off Aṅgulimāla⁵¹⁹; 3. his panic when being confronted with Aṅgulimāla⁵²⁰; 4. his formally “admitting defeat” in front of the Blessed One⁵²¹. The ‘ideal narrative audience’ is aided in noticing the implicit characterisation of Pasenadi by the Buddha’s ironic remark. Thus, the audience is invited to read two possible implications into this. First, that king Pasenadi is a coward and/or secondly, that, affected by the relationship of contrast between the Buddha and the king, the Buddha’s might and his capabilities shine even brighter, for he accomplishes by literally doing nothing what a powerful king could not even accomplish by force with five-hundred armed men on horses. According to this reading, the king is probably happy that the Buddha presented a solution to the

⁵¹⁶ MN II 102,12f.: *Tena kho pana samayena āyasmā Aṅgulimālo ārañṇako hoti piṇḍapātiko paṃsukūliko tecīvariko.*

⁵¹⁷ MN II 102,16-27: *Atha kho rājā Pasenadi Kosalo yena Bhagavā ten’ upasaṅkami, upasaṅkamitvā Bhagavantam abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Ekamantaṃ nisinno kho rājā Pasenadi Kosalo Bhagavantam etad avoca: »Acchariyaṃ, bhante; abbhutaṃ bhante yāvañ c’ idaṃ, bhante, Bhagavā adantānaṃ dametā asantānaṃ sametā aparinibbutānaṃ parinibbāpetā. Yaṃ hi mayaṃ, bhante, nāsakkhimhā daṇḍena pi satthena pi dametuṃ, so Bhagavatā adaṇḍena asatthen’ eva danto. Handa dāni mayaṃ, bhante, gacchāma; bahukiccā mayaṃ bahukaraṇīyā ti. »Yassa dāni tvaṃ, mahārāja, kālaṃ maññasīti. Atha kho rājā Pasenadi Kosalo uṭṭhāy’ āsanā Bhagavantam abhivādetvā padakkhiṇaṃ katvā pakkāmi.*

⁵¹⁸ MN II 100,24.

⁵¹⁹ MN II 101,10f.

⁵²⁰ MN II 101,27f.

⁵²¹ MN II 102,16-27.

problem, which he is obviously unable to solve (what is more, he does not insist on his kingly right to act out his executive authority in spite of the Buddha's action). This reading is from the point of view of the 'narrative audience' that subscribes to the mimetic illusion that the narrative offers and that regards characters as possible persons.

On another reading, from the perspective of an instance located outside of the narrative communication model, namely, from the perspective of the "reconstructing literary scholar" or the scholar of early Buddhism,⁵²² the king is apparently duped by the Buddha because Aṅgulimāla is most probably, at least according to the *Vinaya*, the first and only case of a notorious criminal to be accepted to the *saṅgha* and escape conviction.⁵²³ Already, this singles out Aṅgulimāla as a 'plausible (real, historic) person'. The *Vinaya*-passage in question is Vin I 74 [= *Mahāvagga* 1,41]. This, and the following paragraphs, explain the rule that no *dhajabaddha* [B^o(R): - *bandha*]-thief (*dhajabhaddo coro*), "jail-breaker" (*kārabhedako coro*), or "outlaw" (*likhitako coro*) should be ordained. The passage reads:

"At that time, the brigand Aṅgulimāla had gone forth as one of the Buddha's monks. When the people saw [Aṅgulimāla on his alms-round], they shied away, or were frightened, or ran away; they went elsewhere, or turned around, or closed their doors. The people complained, publicly criticised, and

⁵²² Cp. Jannidis 2004: 27f.: "Nimmt man die oben ausgeführte Verankerung auch der literarischen Kommunikation in jeweils historisch und kulturell spezifischen Situationstypen ernst, dann kann der Literaturwissenschaftler jedoch nur in den seltensten Fällen die übliche Rezipienten-Position einnehmen. Er hat im Regelfall sehr viel mehr historisches Textwissen als ein Gegenwartsleser und weiß bei nicht zeitgenössischen Texten, selbst bei langzeitiger Spezialisierung, sehr viel weniger über die sprachlichen und literarischen Konventionen als ein Zeitgenosse. Vor allem aber weiß er es anders, d.h. es ist nicht das prozedurale Wissen der lebensweltlichen Verwendung. Gleiches gilt auch für die Sprache sowie die Skripte und konzeptuellem Schemata des Inhalts. Die Position des Literaturwissenschaftlers ist demnach außerhalb des bislang skizzierten Rahmens der narrativen Kommunikation zu suchen. Seine Aufgabe ist tatsächlich die Rekonstruktion der Kommunikation insgesamt, der sie ermöglichenden Codes und Konventionen und der Verwendung, die ein Autor in einem spezifischen Werk davon macht, um sein kommunikatives Ziel zu erreichen. Diese Gesamtrekonstruktion ist immer etwas anderes als die narrative Kommunikation selbst."

⁵²³ Isaline B. Horner opined that the person bearing the name Aṅgulimāla in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* is not the same as the one mentioned in the following *Vinaya* rule, and therefore she translates, "Now at that time a thief (wearing) a garland of fingers came to have gone forth among the monks." (1951: 93, especially no. 1) However, I do not find this very convincing and cannot agree with her. Further evidence would have to be provided for the idea that "wearing a necklace or garland of fingers" was a kind of a peculiar custom for some robbers, murderers, a certain tribe or members of a particular religious sect. However, it seems very unlikely that this was the case. Nevertheless, if such a 'custom' did exist, it would indeed support Richard Gombrich's thesis about Aṅgulimāla's identity; see below.

spoke disparagingly⁵²⁴ [thus]: ‘How could these ascetics the sons of the Sakyan [i.e. the followers of the Buddha] possibly ordain a dhajabaddha-robber?’ The monks heard of those complaints. Then, the monks informed the Blessed One about this matter, whereupon the Blessed One answered: ‘A dhajabaddha-robber is not to be ordained. Whoever should ordain a dhajabaddha-robber, commits a dukkaṭa-offence⁵²⁵.’⁵²⁶

There is a linguistic problem in this passage which is relevant for the discussion of the character Aṅgulimāla: The exact translation of the notion *dhajabaddho* poses some questions. Monika Zin (2006: 104) suggests the meaning “one for whom ‘Wanted’ posters have been put up” (“*steckbrieflich gesucht*”), which I find a rather creative interpretation.⁵²⁷ The PED lists the meaning “captured”, but cites as the only reference this same *Vinaya* passage, which therefore bears very weak testimony. Both suggestions are not satisfying. Dissatisfaction with the PED entry was already expressed by Franklin Edgerton in his BHSD⁵²⁸: “It is not clear where PTSD [= PED], which renders *captured*, gets authority for the allegation that āhaṭa is meant, since this is not in the comm. on the above Vin. Passage, the only one quoted in PTSD s.v.” I share Edgerton’s view because according to the story in MN 86 no mention is made that Aṅgulimāla was ever captured. Furthermore, the Sanskrit-expression *dhvajāhṛta* (*dhajāhaṭa*) seems rather to refer to a battlefield-context or the like.⁵²⁹ For this reason, and the references cited in the BHSD, I adopt Edgerton’s rendering ‘notorious’, which makes good sense, and can also be understood from the commentary on the *Vinaya*-passage:

“In this passage [he, Aṅgulimāla] is called dhajabandho, i.e., one who wanders about as if having bound (i.e. “attached to himself”?) a (victory-)banner or a standard, i.e., well-known in the world, like

⁵²⁴ For the standard expression in the *Vinaya*, *ujjhāyanti khiyyanti vipācenti*, the origin and etymology of which is not entirely clear, see the discussion in PED, ss.vv.

⁵²⁵ Literally, a “wrong action”, a particular kind of offence laid down in the *Vinaya*.

⁵²⁶ Vin I 74,26-35: *tena kho pana samayena coro aṅgulimālo bhikkhūsu pabbajito hoti. manussā passivā ubbi-jjanti pi uttasanti pi palāyanti pi aññena pi gacchanti aññena pi mukhaṃ karonti dvāram pi thakenti. manussā ujjhāyanti khiyyanti vipācenti: kathaṃ hi nāma samaṇā Sakyaputtiyā dhajabaddhaṃ [B^c(R) dhajabandhaṃ] coraṃ pabbājessantīti. assosum kho bhikkhū tesam manussānaṃ ujjhāyantānaṃ khiyyantānaṃ vipācentānaṃ. atha kho te bhikkhū bhagavato etamatthaṃ ārocesum [B^c(R) – pe –] bhagavā bhikkhū āmantesi [B^c(R) omits these three words]: *na, bhikkhave, dhajabaddho coro pabbājetabbo. yo pabbājeyya, āpatti dukkaṭassā ’ti.**

⁵²⁷ Horner (1951: 93) translates: “a thief wearing an emblem”.

⁵²⁸ Cp. BHSD, s.v. *dhvaja-baddhaka*.

⁵²⁹ Cp. Fick 1974: 197, who refers to Manu: *dhvajāhṛta*, “der (im Kriege) unter einem Feldzeichen gefangene [Sklave]”.

Mūladeva [= Kāṃsa, an ancient king of Mathurā and archenemy of Kṛṣṇa⁵³⁰], and so on. Therefore, one who wanders about as a marauder or a robber, waylaying at roads, or one who breaks into houses in the city and so forth, and who is well-known [among the people who say] ‘a certain such-and-such does this and that’, should not be ordained.”⁵³¹

It is noteworthy that here as well as in the eponymous *sutta*, Aṅgulimāla is referred to as a robber (*coro*) together with other categories of thieves, as, for instance, the “outlaw” (*likhitako coro*)⁵³² mentioned above, which would be a good example for one who is “*steckbrieflich gesucht*”. Waylaying at roads and marauding villages is precisely what Aṅgulimāla is described to be doing: “by him towns had been turned into non-towns, market-towns into non-market-towns, inhabited land into non-inhabited land” (he had depopulated whole towns etc.). He, repeatedly killing people, wears a necklace of fingers [Ps: the fingers of his victims]. [...] Do not take this road, ascetic, for on that road is the brigand Aṅgulimāla, bloody-handed [...].”⁵³³

Now, the *Vinaya*-rule is clearly contradictory to the story told in MN 86 and creates an “intertextual tension”, so to speak. Isaline Blew Horner wished to solve this tension in an annotation to the above cited passage in her translation of the *Mahāvagga* in the following way:

“It is difficult to reconcile the above *Vinaya* ruling with the story of Aṅgulimāla’s going forth, for the Lord recognised his unusual potentialities, hardly to be expected in the common run of thieves.”⁵³⁴

Thus, Horner places the *Vinaya*-rule, historically and regarding importance, first. If one, however, wanted to identify the person depicted in MN 86 with the “*coro aṅgulimālo*” of Vin I 74, one would probably rather have to come to the conclusion that the case of Aṅgulimāla must be the historic precedent for the *Vinaya*-rule. Although Horner’s conclusion is not as unlikely as it may first seem, given that Aṅgulimāla’s story is surely highly interesting and unusual, the lat-

⁵³⁰ Cp. MW, s.v. *mūladeva*.

⁵³¹ B^e(R): *Vinayaṭṭhake Mahāvagga-aṭṭhakathā*, 1. Mahākhandhakaṃ, Coravatthukathā: *Tattha dhajam bandhitvā viya vicarati dhajabandho. Mūladevādayo viya loke pākāṭoti vuttaṃ hoti. Tasmā yo gāmaghātāṃ vā panthaduhanaṃ vā nagare sandhicchedādikkammaṃ vā karonto vicarati, paññāyati ca "asuko nāma idaṃ idaṃ karoti, so na pabbājetabbo.*

⁵³² Cp. Vin I 75,21 (1,43).

⁵³³ MN II 98,12f.: *Tena gāmāpi agāmā katā, nigamāpi anigamā katā, janapadāpi ajanapadā katā. So manusse vadhitvā vadhitvā aṅgulīnaṃ mālaṃ dhāreti [...]*, and MN II 98,10f.:... “*mā, samaṇa, etaṃ maggaṃ paṭipajji, etasmim samaṇa magge coro aṅgulimālo nāma luddo lohitaṇṇi ...*”.

⁵³⁴ Horner 1951: 93, n. 1.

ter explanation seems more plausible. In effect, this episode communicates that the Buddha's authority stands – in this particular case – above that of King Pasenadi.⁵³⁵ The Buddha presented Pasenadi with a *fait accompli*, and he accepts it – has to accept it, for it is in general impossible, and specifically for kings, to depart from one's word (= 'Cultural Code'⁵³⁶).⁵³⁷ The relationship between Pasenadi (and maybe all kings) and the Buddha is supported by the use of the formula depicting approach by chariot: "He drove thus as far as the road was passable for carriages, and then he dismounted from his carriage and went as *a mere pedestrian (pattiko va)* to where the Buddha was".⁵³⁸ Thus, here as well as in the case of the criminal Āṅgulimāla being 'taken care of' by the Buddha instead of the ordinary jurisdiction, secular affairs and the spiritual/religious realm intertwine to the effect that the Buddha's authority and power does not stop at the margin of the Jetavana, so to speak, i.e., where secular power begins. Moreover, in the *Bāhitika Sutta* (MN 88), a formal 'elephant-approach formula' is used in a quite peculiar manner twice in short sequence to depict Pasenadi visiting Ānanda to ask him a simple question. When the king sees Ānanda coming on a road, he first sends out a messenger to ask if Ānanda would be free to answer a question for the king. When he agrees, the king approaches Ānanda personally by elephant: "Then King Pasenadi went by elephant as far as the ground was passable for the elephant, then dismounted the elephant, and went as a mere pedestrian to where the venerable Ānanda was."⁵³⁹ After greeting Ānanda appropriately, he suggests going to a more pleasant place at the

⁵³⁵ The Buddha's relationship with other kings would probably be highly informative regarding in particular to the character of Pasenadi. This, however, is a question for a separate study.

⁵³⁶ The "Referential or Gnostic or Cultural Code" is a term coined by Roland Barthes; cp. Chatman 1989: 39, 123, 125. It means that, e.g., (psychological) traits are not 'traits' but rather culturally accepted, recognized, and named personal (psychological) qualities, or culturally sanctioned behavior (cp. *ibid.*: 125).

⁵³⁷ Cp., e.g., the *Ramāyaṇa*, *Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa*, in which king Daśaratha has to banish his son Rāma because of a boon he had granted a long time ago to one of his wives, Kaikeyī, who became jealous and wanted her own son, Bharata. There are also numerous examples in the Jātaka literature; cp., e.g., the story of Sutasoma below (see n. 587).

⁵³⁸ MN II 100,26f.: *yāvatiko yānassa bhūmi yānena gantvā yānā paccārohitvā pattiko va yena Bhagavā ten' upasaṅkami*. Cp. also Allon 1997: 36-40. However, in the SN, Pasenadi does not approach the Buddha in this way, which could nevertheless be explained by the fact that the *suttas* of the SN are much shorter; nevertheless, the relationship between the Buddha and Pasenadi depicted in the SN seems much more cordial. Again, this is a question for a separate study.

⁵³⁹ MN II 113,10-12: *Atha kho raja Pasenadi Kosalo yāvatikā nāgassa bhūmi nāgena gantvā nāgā paccārohitvā pattiko va yen' āyasmā Ānando ten' upasaṅkami*.

river Aciravatī. In turn, Ānanda agrees, he goes ahead, and the king follows and again approaches by elephant.⁵⁴⁰ In the first instance, which is located on a road, the elephant-approach does not make sense (it is reasonable to assume from the description that the road on which the king went towards Ānanda was all the way very well passable for elephants!) except solely for the showing of utmost respect towards Ānanda. In this peculiar instance, Pasenadi's complicated approach is out of proportion to the question asked ("Venerable Ānanda, would the Blessed One behave with the body in such a way that he could be censured by wise recluses and Brahmins?"⁵⁴¹), even if one takes the commentary's background story at face value.⁵⁴² The Buddha on his part resumes the whole meeting with the words: "It is good, monks, for king Pasenadi of Kosala; it is a well-gotten gain, monks, for king Pasenadi of Kosala that he has had the opportunity to see and pay homage to Ānanda."⁵⁴³

Nevertheless, readers learn from the *Vinaya*-passage cited above that the Buddha was anxious to establish or maintain a good reputation of his *saṅgha* among the populace and that he therefore forbade ordaining criminals after people had started complaining about the ordination of Aṅgulimāla.⁵⁴⁴

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that once again an approach-formula is used to depict the king turning back to the Buddha after he had turned to Aṅgulimāla, although they do not sit wide apart. ("Now on that occasion the venerable Aṅgulimāla was sitting not far from the Blessed One."⁵⁴⁵) Now, it is possible to believe that this is merely due to the highly formulaic nature of

⁵⁴⁰ MN II 113,21-24.

⁵⁴¹ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 724,8.

⁵⁴² Buddhaghosa explains at Ps 346,17 that the *Bāhītika Sutta*, and Pasenadi's question in particular, was related to the case of the female ascetic named Sundarī who was used in a scheme by some wandering ascetics to discredit the Buddha (the story is related in Ud 43; cp. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 1294, n. 831).

⁵⁴³ MN II 117,23-26: *Lābhā, bhikkhave, rañño Pasenadissa Kosalassa; suladdhalābhā, bhikkhave, rañño Pasenadissa Kosalassa, yaṃ raja Pasenadi Kosalo labhati Ānandaṃ dassanāya labhati payirupāsanāyāti.*

⁵⁴⁴ I assume here that the *Vinaya*-passage and the story narrated in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* are related, i.e. that they are about the same person. For the Buddha's concern with public opinion, cp. Gombrich 2009: 52: "The same reason lies behind the Buddha's establishment of a rains retreat for the Saṅgha. The *Vinaya* says that originally they kept moving all year round; but this meant that they trod on lots of fresh grass (the term 'with one sense organ' is used) and killed tiny insects. Other sects, they said, avoided this by settling in one place for the monsoon. The Buddha therefore decreed that his Saṅgha should do likewise. We find that often the reason why the Buddha formulates a *Vinaya* rule is to placate public criticism."

⁵⁴⁵ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 713,12. = MN II 101,23f.: Tena kho pana samayena āyasmā Aṅgulimālo Bhagavato avidūre nisinno hoti.

the texts (because to depict a renewed elaborate approach is superfluous in this instance). However, an explanation that incorporates both alternatives is much more likely, namely, that the authors of the text deployed this formula *because* Pasenadi submits to the superior faculties of the Buddha in this passage, and it is therefore only appropriate that he approaches him with the highest possible form of respect. The use of a formula is subject to the narrated event or situation on the story-level.⁵⁴⁶

II.3 The origin of the *Aṅgulimāla-paritta* (MN II 102,28-103,27)

The focalising instance of this passage is clearly Aṅgulimāla.⁵⁴⁷ Later on, during one of his alms-rounds, the monk Aṅgulimāla witnesses a protracted and probably extremely painful parturition (*aññataraṃ itthiṃ mūlhaḡabbhaṃ visātagabbhaṃ*⁵⁴⁸; a breech presentation perhaps?). Overwhelmed by sympathy and compassion for the pain beings have to experience in *saṃsāra*, he asks the Buddha for advice. (Having brutally murdered hundreds, this sudden flash of compassion appears rather implausible and contrived! Nevertheless, it “works” for a narrative audience.) The Buddha’s advice is to perform an “act of truth” (*sacca-kiriyā*) in the presence of the women in labour. This proves to be effective and eventually leads to the revocation or dissolution of his bad karma of extensive killing.⁵⁴⁹ The way it becomes efficacious, however, is quite interesting. The Buddha first advises Aṅgulimāla to go to the woman and say: “In that case, Aṅgulimāla, go into Sāvattḡhī and say to that woman: ‘Sister, since I was born, I do not recall that I have ever intentionally deprived a living being of life. By this truth, may you be well and may your infant be

⁵⁴⁶ Cp. also Allon 1997: 162ff. Ibid.: 162: “The examples of complicated and particularly detailed approaches and of those which do not quite conform to the norm show that these structures were not blindly imposed on the material. The authors of this material were fully capable of breaking with the norm where necessary. Meaning was still the ultimate determinant of the diction.”

⁵⁴⁷ This is obvious not only due to Aṅgulimāla being the subject of the whole paragraph’s actions (the narrator’s focus is on Aṅgulimāla), but first and foremost due to the *sutta*-narrator’s adoption of Aṅgulimāla’s perceptual perspective, indicated by the use of words of seeing (“he saw”, *addasā*; “having seen”, *disvāna*) in sentence initial position, and direct thought representation (“he thought”, *assa etad ahoṣi*); see MN II 102,28-103,1.

⁵⁴⁸ MN II 102,31.

⁵⁴⁹ For the ‘Cultural Code’ of performing a (verbal) act of truth, cp. Lüders, Heinrich (1959). *Varuṇa*. Aus dem Nachlaß herausgegeben von Ludwig Asdorf. Bd. II, *Varuṇa und das Ṛta*. Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, Göttingen: 486-96, and *ibid.*: “Die magische Kraft der Wahrheit im alten Indien.” Sonderdruck aus: ZDMG, 98 (N.S. Bd. 23), 1944.

well!”⁵⁵⁰ Aṅgulimāla hesitates and replies to the Buddha: “Venerable sir, wouldn’t I be telling a deliberate lie, for I have intentionally deprived many living beings of life?” In turn, the Buddha says, “In that case, Aṅgulimāla, go into Sāvattihī and say to that woman: ‘Sister, since I was born with the noble birth [*ariyāya jātiyā*; i.e. having been “twice-born” as a disciple of the Buddha], I do not recall having ever intentionally deprived a living being of life. By this truth, may you be well and may our infant be well!”⁵⁵¹

Now, what could be the reason for this failed first attempt of the Buddha’s advice? Has the Buddha forgotten that Aṅgulimāla not long ago was a mass-murderer; or has the *sutta* just recorded a slip of the tongue of the Buddha? The answer to these questions depends, among other things, on the respective text-model that one takes as a basis. If one regards the *suttas* as literary productions, i.e. (narrative) literature – oral or written does not matter –, one assumes that no element in the narrative is there accidentally but has a certain function within the process of narrative communication. Now, on the one hand, the act of truth can only be efficacious, of course, if *a truth* is uttered. Moreover, it is very unlikely that the Buddha would have forgotten what Aṅgulimāla has done. Thus, one may first assume the standpoint of the ‘authorial audience’ and surmise that the Buddha enunciates this ‘first version’ of his advice intentionally and not randomly. One can safely assume that the Buddha can implicitly be understood to know that Aṅgulimāla, perhaps as good as any other, has the potentiality to overcome his evil past and attain liberation. This is expressed in a verse that Aṅgulimāla utters at the end of the *sutta*, which is also found at Th 872 (Dhp = 173). The episode with the labouring woman perfectly illustrates the principle mentioned in this verse, which states that all of one’s negative actions can be outweighed by positive ones, after – most importantly – one has repented and given up one’s “Evil done”:

Yassa pāpaṃ kataṃ kammaṃ kusaleṇa pithīyati | Somaṃ lokaṃ pabhāseti, abbhā muttova candimā ||

⁵⁵⁰ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 714,15. = MN II 103,12-15: »*Tena hi tvam, Aṅgulimāla, yena Sāvattihī ten’ upasaṅkama, upasaṅkamitvā taṃ itthiṃ evaṃ vadehi: ›Yato ahaṃ, bhagini, jāto nābhijānāmi sañcicca pāṇaṃ jīvītā voropetā. Tena saccena sotthi te hotu, sotthi gabbhassāti.*

⁵⁵¹ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 714,15. = MN II 103,16-21: »*So hi nuna me, bhante, sampajānamusāvādo bhavissati; mayā hi, bhante, bahū sañcicca pāṇā jīvītā voropitā ti. ›Tena hi tvam, Aṅgulimāla, yena Sāvattihī ten’ upasaṅkama, upasaṅkamitvā taṃ itthiṃ evaṃ vadehi: ›Yato ahaṃ, bhagini, ariyāya jātiyā jāto nābhijānāmisañcicca pāṇaṃ jīvītā voropetā; tena saccena sotthi te hotu, sotthi gabbhassāti.*

“He whose Evil done is covered by Good/Wholesome, illuminates the world like the moon freed from clouds.”

The passage is of some interest for its dogmatic content, on which it is necessary to digress for a moment. The law of karma in Buddhism, especially what concerns the later commentarial traditions (e.g. of the *Visuddhimagga* or the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*⁵⁵²), is a complicated and subtle matter.⁵⁵³ According to Richard Gombrich, one of the main accomplishments of the Buddha was his re-definition of the notion of karma, Skt. *karman* “[ritual] action”, in moral terms as volition (*cetanā*): “Volition, monks, is what I call karma”.⁵⁵⁴ The causes or “roots” (*mūlā*) for the performance of unwholesome actions are said to be greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*).⁵⁵⁵ In general, according to the law of karmic retribution that the Buddha has taught, each individual has to experience the corresponding results (*vipāka*) of the deeds he or she has done. Specifically, the exact corresponding (theoretical) result awaits Aṅgulimāla for the negative actions he has done described in the *Cūḷakammavibhaṅga Sutta* (MN 135), and with the same wording as in the characterisation of Aṅgulimāla. A Brahmin student visits the Buddha to enquire about the reason that some people are seen to be ugly, inferior, or sickly, while others are fair, superior, and healthy. The Buddha explains that this was so because “people are owners of their actions, heirs of their actions [...], it is action (*kamma*) that distinguishes beings as inferior and superior”. In particular, the Buddha explains the result of killing:

“Here, young man, some man or woman kills/injures living beings, is fierce, with blood on his/her hands, a killer, merciless towards living beings. He, through undertaking and succeeding [in doing]

⁵⁵² For references, cp. Bodhi 2012: 1639f., n. 372.

⁵⁵³ The celebrated commentator Buddhaghosa has dealt with the topic and its aspects and subdivisions in details in his standard work the *Visuddhimagga*; cp. Vism II 600,28-603,16 = tr. Ñāṇamoli 1964: 696-701.

⁵⁵⁴ Gombrich 2009: 49: “‘By karma I mean intention.’ Karma, whatever its instrument, is mental, a matter of the agent’s intention (or lack of it – negligence is taken into account), and has its effect through the agent’s mental condition, each state of mind influencing the next, even from one life to the next. One effect of this shift to intention is that in Buddhism there is more of a symmetry than in Jainism between good and bad karma. In Jainism, even good karma impedes liberation by weighing down the soul; in Buddhism good karma is the essential first stage of spiritual progress.” The canonical reference is: AN III 410, *Cetanā ’haṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi*.

The translator of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Bhikkhu Bodhi, comments on this definition that volition should probably rather be understood as a necessary factor in the production of karma and that “[i]t can [...] be seen as a counterfoil to the Jain position that any action, even and unintentional one, creates kamma.” (Bodhi 2012: 1768, n. 1417)

⁵⁵⁵ Cp. AN I 134 = Bodhi 2012: 230 [34 (4)].

such action, will be reborn in a wretched existence, in a low rebirth-destination⁵⁵⁶, in a place of suffering, [or] in hell after the breaking up of the body, after death. However, if not reborn in a wretched existence, in a low rebirth-destination, in a place of suffering, [or] in hell after the breaking up of the body, after death, but if coming back to the human state, then, wherever he is reborn, he will be short-lived. This is the way, young man, that leads to being short-lived, namely, being one who kills/injures living beings, who is fierce, with blood on his/her hands, a killer, merciless towards living beings.⁵⁵⁷

The underlined passages are verbatim the same as the *sutta*-narrator's and the peoples' description of Aṅgulimāla in MN 86.

Now, from a Buddhist understanding, the reason that Aṅgulimāla is ultimately able to avoid the ripening of his actions through his attainment of the state of an *Arhat* lies in the Buddhist understanding of the impersonality (*anattā*) of phenomena, which is perhaps especially characteristic of Buddhism. Buddhaghosa cites several verses “of the Ancients (?)” (*Ten' āhu porāṇā*) in chapter XIX of his *Visuddhimagga*, poetically rendered by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, which elucidate that the wise (*pañḍitā*) know that in fact the karmic process goes on without a doer:

“There is no doer of a deed
Or one who reaps the deed's result;
Phenomena alone flow on –
No other view than this is right.

And so, while kamma and result
Thus causally maintain their round,
As seed and tree succeed in turn,
No first beginning can be shown.

[...]

A monk, disciple of the Buddha,
With direct knowledge of this fact

⁵⁵⁶ Cp. CPD, s.v. *apāya*: “the four bad states (in the *samsāra*) = *niraya-tīracchāna-pettivīsaya-asurakāyā*”, i.e. in hell, the animal-realm, as a ghost, or among the ‘former gods’.

⁵⁵⁷ MN III 203,16-25: *Idha, māṇava, ekacco itthī vā puriso vā pāṇātipātī hoti luddo lohitapānī, hatapahate nivittho adayāpanno pānabhūtesu. So tena kammaena evaṃ samattena evaṃ samādiṇṇena kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā apāyaṃ duggatīṃ vinipātaṃ nirayaṃ upapajjati. No ce kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā apāyaṃ duggatīṃ vinipātaṃ nirayaṃ upapajjati, sace manussattaṃ āgacchati, yattha yattha paccājāyati appāyuko hoti. Appāyukasamvattanikā esā, māṇava, paṭipadā, yadidaṃ pāṇātipātī hoti luddo lohitapānī hatapahate nivittho adayāpanno pānabhūtesu.*

Can penetrate this deep and subtle
Void conditionality.

There is no kamma in result,
Nor does result exist in kamma;
Though they are void of one another,
There is no fruit without the kamma.

As fire does not exist inside
The sun, a gem, cowdung, nor yet
Outside them, but is brought to be
By means of its component parts,

So neither can result be found
Within the kamma, nor without;
Nor does the kamma still persist
In the result it has produced.

[...]”⁵⁵⁸

Accordingly, because *kamma* and its fruit are neither the same nor unrelated, there is theoretically a way to avoid or ‘purify’ the ‘ripening’ of one’s deeds, for instance, by removing the base for its ripening: the future existence of one’s being (= the “mentality-materiality”, *nāma-rūpa*, or the “five *khandhā*”). Technically, this is called *ahosi-kamma*, literally “karma that has been” or “suspended/lapsed karma”, or simply karma that does not come to its full corresponding fruition. This category is one of four scholastic categories that explain how karma can ripen. Buddhaghosa explains:

“Herein, kamma is fourfold: to be experienced here and now [diṭṭhadhammavedaniyaṃ; sic Vism!], to be experienced on rebirth [upapajjavedaniyaṃ], to be experienced in some subsequent becoming [aparāpariyavedaniyaṃ], and lapsed kamma [ahosi-kamma].”⁵⁵⁹

Thus, karma “lapses” on the condition that the basis for its ripening falls away particularly through the attainment of Arahantship.

⁵⁵⁸ Tr. Ñāṇamoli 1964: 700 = Vism II 602,32-603,14.

⁵⁵⁹ Tr. *ibid.*: 696 = Vism II 601,1-3. Cp. also AN III 415.

The passages describing Aṅgulimāla's 'new life' as a purified Buddhist monk, as well as that in the episode in part II.5, in which he – though already an *Arhat* – is attacked by some villagers whom he had probably harassed in his earlier life, is an illustration of this type of karma. Nevertheless, it is regarded as a very rare case and the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* is considered its canonical *locus classicus*.⁵⁶⁰ Moreover, the suspension of karmic ripening is ultimately brought about by Aṅgulimāla's act of truth (and possibly the merit accrued thereby). The verse the Buddha recommends Aṅgulimāla to tell to the labouring woman later became known as an important *paritta* or "protective verse", namely the *Aṅgulimāla paritta* (Singh. *Aṅgulimāla pirit*).

Therefore, with this knowledge one may infer that, first, the compilers of the text have the Buddha say the "protective verse" because this good deed (the act of truth), which is motivated by compassion and represents the opposite of killing, is able to outweigh Aṅgulimāla's evil actions and, secondly, the Buddha's suggested first version of the verse instills Aṅgulimāla to acknowledge, reflect on, and repent the evil he has done, which is a necessary prerequisite to the decision to henceforth do the opposite.⁵⁶¹

Seen from a standpoint of the story-level, as 'narrative audience', this dialogic event taking place between the Buddha and the former brigand, with minimal presence of the heterodiegetic, extradiegetic *sutta*-narrator, also indirectly characterises Aṅgulimāla: His statement gives proof that he is honest, not telling "deliberate lies" (*sampajānamusāvādo*), and that he has really changed and has truly "renounced evil forever".⁵⁶²

In narratological terms, however, one can discern Aṅgulimāla's 'thematic aspect' in this episode as a prime example (or even precedent?) for the rare and rather scholastic case of *ahosi-kamma*. Yet, this aspect is probably not that which could explain the interest in the listener's/readers' interest in the character and its continuing popularity.

II.4 Aṅgulimāla becomes one of the Arhats (MN II 103,27-104,2)

⁵⁶⁰ Cp. Gombrich [1971] 1991: 251ff. According to Theravāda doctrine, each person is responsible for his or her own deeds and must experience the fruit of one's actions. Usually, there is no way around this.

⁵⁶¹ In the Mahāyāna tradition of Indian Buddhism, this is called the "power of regret" and constitutes the first of the so-called Four Powers necessary to purify negative karma; cp. *Bodhicaryāvatāraḥ* by Śāntideva, ch. 2, vv. 27-56 :(<http://www2.hf.uio.no/common/apps/permlink/permlink.php?app=polyglotta&context=record&uid=a62407b8-6bec-11df-870c-00215acadea>, (last accessed: 11th May 2013).

⁵⁶² Cp. MN II 100,3f.: *So 'haṃ cirassā pahāssaṃ pāpaṃ, sutvāna gāthaṃ tava dhammayuttaṃ.*

Even though Aṅgulimāla has changed, he has not completely purified his extremely negative deeds. Although he attains the state of an *Arhat* after the event with the labouring woman who activated his compassion and his insight into the suffering of *samsāra*, which is described with one of the stock phrases in the Canon for this ‘Summum Bonum’ of Buddhist practice⁵⁶³, he still has to purify or expiate a ‘dilute solution’ of residual karma.

II.5 ‘Residual karma’ (MN II 104,3-17)

While on some other almsround (the text is unspecific and very formulaic here⁵⁶⁴), Aṅgulimāla is hit first by a clod, then by a stick, and finally by gravel (or a potsherd?) that people have thrown at him. It is apparent that this first sentence describing the event is an understatement.⁵⁶⁵ This is clear from the description of Aṅgulimāla’s appearance when he returns from his round to see the Buddha: he is really broken – something more must have happened to him than a few pebbles or clods could do. The *sutta*-narrator relates what happened then: “Then, with blood running from his cut head, with his bowl broken, and with his outer robe torn, the venerable Aṅgulimāla went to the Blessed One.”⁵⁶⁶ That does rather sound as if a rout had pressed Aṅgulimāla really hard and battered him, perhaps even tried to kill him. The Buddha, however, seeing Aṅgulimāla coming in the distance, calls out to him encouragingly (this is not an approach-formula): “Endure it, Brahmin; endure it!” Had he not reached Arhatship and thereby circumvented the ripening of his evil deeds in the next existence, he would have had to experience the full corresponding result of his

⁵⁶³ Cp. PED, s.v. arahant; here, we find a combination of the PED’s formula **A** and **B** (MN II 103,27-104,2): *Atha kho āyasmā Aṅgulimālo **eko vūpakattho appamatto ātūpī pahitatto viharanto** na cirass’ eva yass’ at-thāya kulaputtā sammadeva agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajanti, tad anuttaraṃ brahmacariyapariyosānaṃ diṭṭheva dhamme sayāṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja vihāsi. »**Khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇiyaṃ, nāparaṃ itthattāyāti abbhaññāsi**, “Before long, dwelling alone, withdrawn, diligent, ardent, and resolute, the venerable Aṅgulimāla, by realising for himself with direct knowledge, here and now entered upon and abided in that supreme goal of the holy life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the homelife into homelessness. He directly knew: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.’ And the venerable Aṅgulimāla became one of the arahats.” (tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 714,16.)*

⁵⁶⁴ The formula just describes one of the daily duties of the Buddhist monk: “Then, in the morning, the venerable Aṅgulimāla dressed, took up his begging bowl and his upper garment, and went into Sāvattihī for alms.” MNII 104,3f.: *Atha kho āyasmā Aṅgulimālo pubbaṅhasamayaṃ nivāsetvā pattacīvaraṃ ādāya Sāvattihī piṇḍāya pāvīsi.*

⁵⁶⁵ However, the question remains as to whether this would have also been recognized as an understatement by a historic, non-Western listener/reader, as Scholes & Kellogg (2006: 165-167) point out in their discussion of the notion of the ‘classic restraint’.

⁵⁶⁶ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 715,17. = MN II 104,8ff.

actions in the next life (*aparāpariyavedaniyaṃ*), namely, falling “into hell for many years, many hundred years, many thousand years”. That means that *arahants* too still have to experience the ripening of karma in their last existence, though in a weakened form. This event, in turn, enables him to purify the rest of his negative karma in the form of being attacked and injured (part II.5).

Against the background of the concept of *ahosi-kamma*, one can see how the events commencing in part II.2, when Aṅgulimāla escapes his lawful conviction, up to part II.5, seem to follow a certain line of development. While the interest of the ‘narrative audience’ in Aṅgulimāla’s story is maintained by the initial ‘instability’ of his surprise-conversion (representatively expressed for the narrative audience by King Pasenadi: “But venerable sir, how could such an immoral man, one of evil character, ever have such virtue and restraint?”), the ‘authorial audience’ is invited to see/understand through Aṅgulimāla’s example how effective the path offered by the Buddha is, and that the law of karma is still working unmistakably – this is to assure the king that the Buddha’s *saṅgha* will not be a haven for all sorts of criminals to evade conviction. By the same token, there may even be a historico-political implication, namely, that the Buddha proves that he and his *saṅgha* are not posing a potential threat to the state. If there is some historical truth in the Aṅgulimāla story as well as in ‘Sundarī-case’ referred to above⁵⁶⁷, at this point the Buddha had still to establish his reputation and stand up to rival *samaṇa*-sects in Kosala.

The whole process and the result reached is additionally described poetically in verses “uttered [in a] solemn utterance”⁵⁶⁸, allegedly by the *thera* Aṅgulimāla himself, some of which are also found in the *Theragāthā* and the *Dhammapada*, at the end of the *sutta* (MN II 104,21-105,24).

Before coming to a fuller narratological assessment of the character Aṅgulimāla, however, it is imperative to first look at two rival interpretations of Aṅgulimāla’s identity.

5.3 Richard Gombrich: “Who was Aṅgulimāla?”

As is widely known among Buddhologists, and by now probably itself notorious, the interpretation of the ‘notorious robber’ Aṅgulimāla was presented by Richard Gombrich in an essay with

⁵⁶⁷ Cp. n. 542 above.

⁵⁶⁸ MN II 104,19: *Atha kho āyasmā Aṅgulimālo rahogato patisallīno*⁵⁶⁸ *vimuttisukhaṃ paṭisaṃvedī tāyaṃ velāyaṃ imaṃ udānaṃ udānesi*. Cp. CPD, s.v. *udāna*: “a solemn utterance, mostly, but not necessarily, in metrical form, inspired by intense emotion and made without regard to any listeners.”

the title “Who was Aṅgulimāla?”, first published in 1996.⁵⁶⁹ In this essay Gombrich treats only part I) of the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*, which narrates his conversion. He compares the commentaries on the *Theragāthā*, the *Paramattha-dīpanī*, with the MN-commentary, the *Papañcasūdanī*, and concludes that both are incoherent and useless for answering the question of the identity of Aṅgulimāla, which is his objective. He then systematically examines the canonical text itself and especially the verses ascribed to Aṅgulimāla from the *Theragāthā*, and formulates the hypothesis that Aṅgulimāla must have been an early prototype, as it were, of a *Śaiva-vratin*. Gombrich accomplishes this by a simple but momentous conjecture, by which he changes a ‘seer’ (*mahesi*) into Śiva (*maheso*), which – almost literally with one stroke of the pen – turns Aṅgulimāla into a proto-Śaiva/Śākta.⁵⁷⁰ His conjecture, and his restoring metrically what he deems a corrupt verse (= Th 868), solves a problem posed by the first *pāda* of Th 868 (MN II 100,1) with regard to the plot of the story in connection with the intertwined verses. (A closer look at the linguistic aspect will be inspected again later on.)

His thesis has met with severe criticism by Alexis Sanderson and others, who mainly find fault with the lack of evidence for related cults at such an early date.⁵⁷¹ However, Gombrich, not deviating from his view in the face of this criticism, bases his argument on an interesting observation regarding the representation of persons in the *Sutta Piṭaka*. Gombrich writes:

“[...] For the most part he [the Buddha] interacts with, and in particular preaches to, human beings, and they seem to be realistically portrayed by our modern criteria of realism [...] none of the Buddha’s interlocutors seem to do anything which, to our way of thinking, they could not possibly have done.”⁵⁷²

Moreover (ibid. p. 143):

⁵⁶⁹ Henceforth = Gombrich 2006a.

⁵⁷⁰ See Gombrich 2006a: 151.

⁵⁷¹ Cp. Gombrich 2006: 152, especially n. 7 in which Gombrich cites parts of a private correspondence between him and Sanderson, in which Sanderson severely criticises Gombrich’s ideas as wrong and unverifiable; there had been no sanguinary vows or rites in connection with Śiva at any time, and the vows in connection with the Goddess (Kālī) or Bhairava would rather be classed as mortuary rites, and there was no evidence whatsoever of the adherents being enjoined to wear the severed body parts of their victims; cp. also Zin 2006: 111, where she cites the criticism on this view by Maithrimurthi and von Rospatt, who basically seem to find fault with the fact that certain sanguinary vows in connection with the goddess (Kālī) appear much later (ca. 1000 years later).

⁵⁷² Gombrich 2006a: 142.

“One can go further, once one has defined what would have struck the Buddha's followers as a realistic account. They accepted that by ascetic or meditative practices people could attain certain super-normal powers called *iddhi* or *iddhi-pāṭihāriya*.”

In these quotes, Gombrich makes two most interesting statements in connection with our study of the presentation of characters in Buddhist narrative texts. One might even go so far to call his remark narratological: He offers a description or analysis of some of the rules of the narrated world (the story-world) and thereby “defines” the role or the necessary abilities of a real historical reader/recipient. This approach, however, is at the same time highly problematic from a narratological perspective because it confounds two instances on the recipient’s side of the narrative communication, namely the addressee and the actual recipient.⁵⁷³ This is simply because of the fact that we have no data that would enable one to know what part of the story in particular, and how exactly, a historical listener/reader might have received the narrative when hearing/reading a *sutta*. What one can deduct strictly on the basis of the words of a given text is the *intended* real addressee of the respective text. Although this distinction may seem insignificant at first, it is absolutely necessary. The problem basically boils down to this: While one probably can, as Gombrich does, deduce Cultural Codes prevalent during Buddha’s time from the Pāli texts, one cannot tell whether these facts of the story-world were also accepted as facts in the real world as experienced in the mind of a recipient at Buddha’s times. In other words, Gombrich does not distinguish ontologically between the story-world and the world of history of ancient India at the time of the Buddha – for him as for many other scholars of early Buddhism – they are just the same. This is, of course, not a criticism in and by itself. It simply identifies the view of the *suttas* lying at the basis of his method to be what Jonathan Walters has called the ‘historical source mode’.⁵⁷⁴

I argue that an ontological difference must be made between Cultural Codes of a given epoch and a certain place – which are reflected in literature (fictional or not) – and the lived reality of people. All human beings share the same physical universe – except maybe for a few more

⁵⁷³ See Schmid 2008: 43: “Der Empfänger zerfällt nämlich in zwei Instanzen, die funktional oder intensional zu scheiden sind, auch wenn sie material oder extensional zusammenfallen: den Adressaten und den Rezipienten. Der Adressat ist der vom Sender unterstellte oder intendierte Empfänger [...], der Rezipient ist der faktische Empfänger.”

⁵⁷⁴ Cp. Walters 1999.

technical amenities –, as much then as we do now. (How this universe is perceived and explained, of course, can be very different!). That the people living in the ancient Indian civilisation would have inhabited a different universe, in which it was quite common to fly up to the sky to have a chat with Sakka, king of the gods, can hardly be accepted as a physical fact. However, that a historical audience perhaps firmly believed that it was possible and that Sakka existed may be true, but still, this discussion concerns Cultural Codes as reflected in literature and not about physical facts. As Jannidis has convincingly argued by means of the example of the human disposition to attribute intentionality to the actions of their fellow human beings and the transfer of this disposition to the human-like figures in literature⁵⁷⁵, a narrative text, fictional as well as non-fictional, reflects the *human perception* of the world, not the world itself (Ger. “*Abbild*”). Thus, there are elements in narratives that people may have believed in at a certain time and place, or explanations of phenomena, which were common currency in a certain culture, and which at a later time may not make sense or be intelligible any longer because they have been replaced by other beliefs and views on reality.

Having said that, I cannot agree with Gombrich’s assessment that, “[...] none of the Buddha’s interlocutors seem to do anything which, to our way of thinking, they could not possibly have done”. On the contrary, the Pāli Canon abounds in the description of things that people ordinarily cannot do, and which thus for a contemporary reader primarily count among the rules of the story-world, not the real world (though they may nevertheless reflect Cultural Codes!). Yet, people are interestingly nevertheless ready to accept the characters in the Pāli *suttas* as ‘plausible persons’, despite the fact they obviously often elude the narratological criteria of, as Gombrich states, “[being] realistically portrayed by our modern criteria of realism”.

⁵⁷⁵ Cp. Part II, ch. 3.1 above; Jannidis 2004: 128: “*So steht hinter der Figurenkategorie ‚Fähigkeit zum intentionalen Handeln‘ nicht dieselbe Kategorie auf der personalen Ebene, sondern vielmehr – so zumindest der heutige Kenntnisstand der Psychologie – eine angeborene Disposition, sich und anderen intentionales Handeln zuzuschreiben. Nicht diese Disposition geht in die Regeln der fiktionalen Welten und des Basistypus ein, sondern das vollendete Faktum. In der aktuellen Welt gibt es eine vererbte Tendenz, sich und anderen Intentionen zuzuschreiben und damit die psychische Realität von Intentionen. Daraus wird in fiktionalen Welten eine objektive Tatsache. In der erzählten Welt haben Figuren Intentionen, da diese Welten ja nicht analog zur aktuellen Welt gestaltet sind, sondern immer nur analog zur menschlichen Wahrnehmung der Welt.*”

In his analysis, Gombrich does not make this distinction and seems to take it for granted that all the “people” occurring in the Pali Canon must be historical and, by implication, their actions historical facts.⁵⁷⁶ In contrast, the argument could possibly have been made acceptable even for a narratologist by saying that it is highly probable that there are “real-life” accounts in the *suttas* for the simple reason that the characters and, for example, the environment in the *suttas* are *never*, unlike in the realistic novel, described in realistic detail (the physical appearance of people is never described, as is the landscape), and that this suggests the conclusion that the authors of the *suttas* presupposed the details to be known by their audience (or that they did not regard them essential to their aims). However, it is surprising that the Buddha should have converted a dreaded notorious killer by a rather simple play on words.⁵⁷⁷ This does not strike me as a very realistic or even plausible account.

Be that as it may, his main argument against Sanderson’s critique is that also elsewhere in the Pāli Canon a series of very strange ascetic practices are described, for which also no otherwise confirmed historical records exist. As an example, he cites the *samaṇa* Seniya of the *Kukkuravatika Sutta* (MN 57), whose ascetic practice consisted in the imitation of the behaviour of dogs. Gombrich writes, “What I’m trying to show is that, unless the AS [= *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*] is unique, Aṅgulimāla must have been a recognizable type of person in the environment of his day”.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁶ Cp. the discussion in Jannidis 2004: 151ff. Already the “New Critics” have argued, on the basis of their advocacy for strictly text-based methods, against an interpretation of characters in texts as real people. An especially interesting remark in this connection was formulated by Marvin Mudrick in 1961 (cited in Jannidis 2004: 152, n. 2): “One of the recurrent anxieties of literary critics concerns the way in which a character in drama or fiction may be said to exist. The ›purist‹ argument – in the ascendancy nowadays among critics – points out that characters do not exist at all except insofar as they are part of the images and events which bear and move them, that any effort to extract them from their context and to discuss them as if they are real human beings is a sentimental misunderstanding of the nature of literature. The ›realistic‹ argument – on the defensive nowadays – insists that characters acquire, in the course of an action, a kind of independence from the events in which they live, and that they can be usefully discussed at some distance from their context.”

⁵⁷⁷ Gombrich 2006a: 135: “The Buddha converts Aṅgulimāla by one of the commonest of his skillful means: playing upon words.” And on p. 154 he states: “It only remains to point out that the first three verses would make sense as a summary account of Aṅgulimāla’s conversion without positing the miraculous element that he was running fast but could not catch the walking Buddha. That piece of the story could have arisen as a mere over-interpretation of the word-play [= *thito—atthito*].”

⁵⁷⁸ Gombrich 2006a: 144.

The conversion of criminals or bad characters, however, is a common theme in religious literature, throughout history and in many cultures.⁵⁷⁹

It is questionable whether anyone will ever be able to pinpoint Aṅgulimāla's historical identity to any degree of satisfaction by employing a 'historical-source mode' reading of the *suttas*. The question that interests me altogether more, therefore, is whether a definite answer to this question is necessary for an understanding of the communicative structure of the text itself and its intended effect on the listener/reader. Furthermore, the question of Aṅgulimāla's 'real' identity does not seem to be so important when looking upon the *suttas* as (religious) narrative literature. Historical questions, namely the attitude of historical as the only questions worth asking of the *suttas*, express the historical-critical interest of the ones who ask them, which presupposes that a layer of historical reality lies in the *suttas* that is possible to lay open by merely eliminating all the mythical and magical "stuff". At least, this seems to have been the idea of great 19th-century Buddhologists like Herman Oldenberg.⁵⁸⁰

5.4 Monika Zin

Another attempt at an interpretation of the character of Aṅgulimāla was presented in 2006 by Monika Zin in her book *Mitleid und Wunderkraft: Schwierige Bekehrungen und ihre Ikonographie im indischen Buddhismus*.⁵⁸¹ In her account, she seeks to link the story of Aṅgulimāla directly with the story-material (Ger. "Erzählstoff") of the cannibal Saudāsa/Kalmāṣapāda of the *Mahābhārata*, who can be traced back in time as far as the *Ṛgveda*. Her book deals with what she terms 'conversion-tales' (Ger. "Bekehrungsgeschichten") in early Buddhist literature and their depiction in art. Particular kinds of 'conversion-tales', which relate how certain individuals are converted to the *buddha-dhamma*, are those, according to Zin, in which the conversion is forced upon the respective individuals. Zin surely presents a strong argument by stating that the

⁵⁷⁹ Cp. Nyanaponika & Hecker 2000: 335f: "Auch im Christentum finden wir Beispiele für radikale Veränderungen im moralischen Verhalten eines Menschen. Da ist der Schächer am Kreuz von Golgotha, dem Jesus versprach, er werde noch am selben Tage mit ihm im Paradies sein. Der heilige Franz von Assisi bekehrte einen Räuberhauptmann und machte ihn zum Mönch. Immer wieder haben solche Fälle die Gemüter religiöser Menschen bewegt. Die Skeptiker werfen allerdings die Frage auf, wie ein derartiger Wandel möglich ist. Aṅgulimālas Geschichte kann uns vielleicht eine Antwort hierauf geben."

⁵⁸⁰ Cp. Oldenberg 1882.

⁵⁸¹ Zin's account of Aṅgulimāla understands itself as a criticism and alterantive to Gombrich's essay; Monika Zin, personal communication, 23rd June 2011.

opponents of the Buddha are usually depicted as examples of extremely negative states of mind⁵⁸², and often pose a threat to the common people, who then beseech the Buddha for help.⁵⁸³ The Buddha's appearance, in turn, serves to highlight the superior qualities of the Buddha, like his superior compassion and his ability to perform all sorts of miracles demonstrating his special or superhuman powers (*iddhis*) and therefore, symbolically, his overcoming or taming of the those three poisons. However, whether this interpretation, which is essentially a 'thematising interpretation', can also be applied to the canonical text of the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*, is doubtful. Furthermore, Zin argues that the character as well as the canonical story of Aṅgulimāla is the result of a development of distinct literary motifs, which can be traced also in other Buddhist literature, and, as aforementioned, even back to the figure of *Saudāsa* in the great Sanskrit epics and even the *R̥gveda*. In the chapter on Aṅgulimāla in her book, Zin seeks to trace a straight line of development of the Aṅgulimāla story, the root of which – as far as the Buddhist context is concerned – she sees represented in the verses of the *Theragāthā*. She proposes the existence of a now lost, intermediary version of the tale that developed after the *Majjhima Nikāya*-version, on which the version of the *Majjhima Nikāya*-commentary and the later versions deriving from it must depend.⁵⁸⁴ Her underlying/implicit methodological approach is therefore entirely different from that of Gombrich's: Zin, as is her wont, looks for narrative motifs and elements in the many different version of the story and tries to trace their development. Although Zin's theory is convincing and her arguments are plausible, her approach could be problematic as well for its positing of non-

⁵⁸² According to the *Arthaviniścayasūtranibandhana* (reference in Zin 2006: Introduction (*Einleitung*)), a *Sārvāstivāda-Abhidharma* text, as popular examples of people who are difficult to tame (*durdamana*) are mentioned Nanda, **Aṅgulimāla**, and Kāśyapa, who are said respectively to be extremely captured by desire (*rāga*), hatred (*dveṣa*), and delusion (*moha*). This can clearly be seen as a later attempt at systematisation of the available material in terms of the path, a procedure which is often found in the Abhidhamma and the later Sanskrit tradition.

⁵⁸³ In this scheme, since the Buddha is the only one with the ability/capacity to help, i.e. to stop the murderer or the cannibal; cp. *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* at MN I 101, where the king Pasenadi is full of fear at the sight of Aṅgulimāla (*eso mahārāja aṅgulimālo ti. Atha kho rañño Pasenadissa kosalassa ahudeva bhayaṃ, ahu chambitattam, ahu lomahaṃso*), or the *Mahāsutasoma Jātaka* at Jā V 474,2-10, where neither the four *digpālas* (the 'Four Kings', residing in the lowest of the six *devalokas*) including retinue, nor Sakka (Indra) himself are able to stop the cannibal. Sakka, then, refers the tree-spirit to the Bodhisatta who is then the prince Sutasoma ([...] *cātum-mahārājikānaṃ santikaṃ gantvā kathetvā "nivāretha nan" ti āha, tehi "na mayaṃ sakkhissāmā" ti vutte Sakkaṃ upasaṃkamitvā tam atthaṃ kathetvā "nivarehi nan" ti āha, so pi "nāhaṃ sakkomi nivāretuṃ, samattham pana ācikkhissāmīti" vatvā "ko nāma" ti vutte "sadevake loke añño n' atthi, Kururaṭṭhe pana Indapattana-gare Korabyarājaputto Sutasoma nāma, taṃ nibbisevanam damessati rājūnañ ca jīvitaṃ dassati [...]*”).

⁵⁸⁴ Cp. Zin 2006: 108.

extant intermediary text-versions as “missing links” and rather free correlation of narrative motifs.

The identification of Aṅgulimāla with the cannibal Kalmāṣapāda (Pāli: Kammāsapada) in the Buddhist tradition itself is not new: the cannibal Kammāsapada, who is Brahmaddattakumāra, the ghoul longing for human flesh in the *Mahāsutāsoma Jātaka* (Jā 537, *Asītinipāta*), is revealed by the Buddha to be an earlier incarnation of Aṅgulimāla in the *samodhāna* of this *Jātaka*.⁵⁸⁵ Although Zin’s identification seems plausible at first sight, it presents some difficulties upon closer inspection. The *Mahāsutāsoma Jātaka* (Jā 537) belongs to the group of the longer or ‘epic *Jātakas*’.⁵⁸⁶ The plot, summarised in brief, is as follows: Koravya, the king of *Indapatta* (= the modern-day Delhi) in the Kuru-country sends his son Sutsoma to be educated in Takkaṣilā. On his way to the capital of Gandhāra, Sutasoma meets the son of another king, Brahmaddatta, king of Kāśī and Benares, Brahmaddattaputta, who is also on his way to Takkaṣilā for seeking an education. They become friends and later on study together. After some time has elapsed and Sutasoma has made considerable progress in his studies (faster than all the other student-princes), he eventually becomes Brahmaddattaputta’s tutor (*piṭṭhi-ācariyo*). Eventually, the story goes on and after having returned to their respective kingdoms after finishing their studies, the princes ascend to the thrones of their home-kingdoms. All adhere to a rule of righteousness and virtue except for Brahmaddattaputta who, through mere unhappy coincidence and the negligence of his cook, develops a fondness for human flesh. This develops into a dreadful debauchment of the king’s, and as more and more people in Benares fall victim to the king, the king’s commander-in-chief, Kāḷaḥatthi, mounts an enquiry and, the trail eventually leading to the king via his cook, Brahmaddatta is banished from the kingdom because he declares himself unable to abandon his horrible addiction. From then on, Brahmaddattaputta goes about his cannibalism in a nearby forest, killing and eating people as they pass by. At one point in the story, an episode occurs in which a certain tree spirit (*rukḅha-devatā*) plays an important role. In order to offer a promised blood sacrifice to this tree spirit, Brahmaddatta starts to catch one-hundred warrior-kings, all his former

⁵⁸⁵ Jā V 511,18-20: *Satthā imaṃ dhammadesanaṃ āharitvā “nāhaṃ bhikkhave idān’ eva Aṅgulimālaṃ damemi, pubbe p’ esa mayā damito yevā” ti vatvā jātakaṃ samodhānesi: “Tadā porisādarājā Aṅgulimālo ahoṣi [...]*”. But cp. also Jā V 456,19ff. That the prince Brahmaddatta is identified with the cannibal Kammāsapāda in the Jā. is clear from him being mentioned in vv. 471&472 (Jā V 503= B^o(R): 475&476).

⁵⁸⁶ See von Hinüber 1996: §114, p. 57.

classmates, except for Sutasoma. The tree spirit, however, who is not very fond of blood sacrifices, convinces Brahmaddattaputta that he must catch Sutasoma by whatever means possible, or else the blood sacrifice would not be effective. (In truth, this is a ploy of the tree spirit to avoid the sacrifice, in the course of which the cannibal is to be converted.) He actually captures Sutasoma eventually, but sets him free again, so that he can redeem a promise made to a Brahmin before his capture. Sutasoma, who is always veracious, as this is his *sva-dharma* as a *khattiya* – a central theme in the story –, promises to return to the ogre.⁵⁸⁷ Sutasoma, after having actually returned to the cannibal, succeeds with his skill and his unconditional honesty, to convert the cannibal, to free the *khattiya*-kings and, including Brahmaddattaputta, re-establish them in their kingdoms.

Although there are obvious parallels between the story of the *Mahāsutasoma Jātaka* and the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*, there are also a number of problems connected with Zin’s interpretation of *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* being a developed stage or derivative of the *Jātaka* story, and her identification of Aṅgulimāla with the cannibal Saudāsa/Kalmāṣapāda.⁵⁸⁸ One of the problems is that Zin does not explain convincingly the important eponymous finger-necklace of Aṅgulimāla, which she explains to be a motif that was developed out of the imprisoned one-hundred *khattiya*-princes, which the cannibal had tied up on a rope pierced through the palms of their hands in the *Mahāsutasoma Jātaka*.⁵⁸⁹ Nor does she explain the past participle *mahito* in that crucial verse in

⁵⁸⁷ Jā V 475 vv. 390-392 (=B[°](R) 393-395):

Ṭiṭṭhāhīti mayā vutto, so tvaṃ gacchasi yaṃmukho [B[°](R): *pammukho*; B[°](R) c.a.: *pāmukho* (ka.)]
aṭṭhito ṭhito ’mhīti [B[°](R): *Aṭṭhito tvaṃ ṭhitomhīti*] *lapasi*
brahmacāri [B[°](R): *brahmacārini*] *idaṃ te samaṇa ayuttaṃ,*
asiṅca me maññasi kaṅkappattan ti [B[°](R) c.a.: *kaṅkappattaṃ* (syā. ka.)].

Ṭhito ’ham asmi [B[°](R): *asmī*] *saddhammesu* [B[°](R): *sadhammesu*] *rāja,*
na nāmagottaṃ parivattayāmi,
corañ ca loke aṭṭhitaṃ vadanti,
apāyikaṃ [B[°](R): *āpāyikaṃ*] *nerayikaṃ ito cutaṃ.*

⁵⁸⁸ In an important work on the development of the figure of the cannibal Kalmāṣapāda in the epic and Buddhist traditions by Watanabe (1909), no direct line is drawn between the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* and Kalmāṣapāda, and therefore between Aṅgulimāla and the cannibal, apart from the traditional identification in the *Jātakas* (which is most probably a secondary development). This is so for certain reasons, as I will try to demonstrate in the following.

⁵⁸⁹ Jā V 473,19f: [...] *hatthatalesu chiddāni katvā rajjuyā nigrodharukkhe olambesi* [...]. We will come back to the finger-necklace and offer an alternative interpretation below.

the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*, which causes some interpretational problems. The problem with this principle, as Gombrich states, is this:

“And like Norman he [i.e. the translation of the Ven. Nyanamoli] produces an implausible meaning, for his translation suggests that Aṅgulimāla had been honouring the Buddha (‘this monk’) before the moment at which he speaks the verse, but that is manifestly not the case.”⁵⁹⁰

The persons are identified differently in Zin’s interpretation (the Brahmin, *mahesi*, of the verse is really the shape-shifted *rukkha-devatā* in Zin’s argument, detailed further later on), but the problem remains because neither does Kammāsapāda know that the Brahmin is really the tree spirit in disguise he was honouring before, nor did he venerate this Brahmin before.

Furthermore, and certainly one of the main arguments against a direct connection with the figure of Kalmāṣapāda, there is no evidence whatsoever in the Aṅgulimāla story for cannibalism. However, a crucial element in the *Jātaka*-story (and the other versions outside the Buddhist context) is precisely Kalmāṣapāda’s appetite for human flesh, and his abjuration from this terrible vice.

Likewise, it is not at all evident how Zin arrives at the conclusion that the basic theme of Sutasoma’s story in the *Jātaka* and the theme of the Aṅgulimāla-story were identical, namely “true Brahmanism”.⁵⁹¹ In all the versions of the story, which Watanabe discusses in his important essay (1909) on the development of the Kalmāṣapāda-story in the Sanskrit epics and the Buddhist tradition, the protagonists are *khattiyas*, and the moral always comes down to the theme of the *sva-dharma* of the *kṣatriya*, to always and under all circumstances – even at the risk of one’s lives – tell the truth. In the Buddhist context, respectively, the point to be illustrated is the ‘perfection of truthfulness’ (i.e. the seventh ‘perfection’ or *pāramī*: *sacca-pāramitā*, or that of *sīla* in the Chinese versions⁵⁹²).

⁵⁹⁰ Gombrich 2006a: 146.

⁵⁹¹ Cp. Zin 2006: 111.

⁵⁹² Cp. Watanabe 1909: 258.

According to my understanding of the text, however, there is no mention of any criticism of Brahminism. On the contrary, King Sutasoma offers sacrifices to Brahmins.⁵⁹³ Indeed, identical in both the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* and in the *Jātaka* is the element or motif of the vow of truthfulness: Aṅgulimāla, respectively Kammāsapāda, says in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*: “These monks, sons of the Sakyan, speak [always] the truth, keep a truth-vow”⁵⁹⁴; the *Sutasoma Jātaka* has the tree-spirit say: “Ascetics never speak untrue, even at the risk of their life.”⁵⁹⁵ The elements that are not found in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* are Sutasoma’s capture, his promise given to the Brahmin, and the promise to the ogre to return to him after having granted the boon to the Brahmin. It could be argued that these elements have been left out in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* in order to give the plot its present twist, which serves, according to Zin’s interpretation, only to demonstrate the superiority of the Buddha and his *dhamma*. Such an interpretation must be based on an assumption that admits a very high degree of creativity and transformation of narrative “material” in ancient India, which is generally thinkable and even probable, but which necessarily also entails a very high degree of speculation.

However, there is an even bigger problem in Zin’s explanation of the word *mahesi*. Instead of carrying out such a daring conjecture as Gombrich’s *maheso*, Zin keeps the great ‘seer’ (*maharṣi/mahesi*) of Th 868 but identifies him with the tree-spirit (*yakkhinī* or *rukkha-devatā*) in the disguise of an ascetic (*samaṇa/pabbajita*). She then explains the existence of this line and the whole stanza in the verses of the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* and the *Theragāthā* as a residue of the “original” Saudāsa/Kalmāsapāda-narrative and assumes that originally – i.e. in a hypothetical, no longer extant version – also in the Aṅgulimāla-story Aṅgulimāla must have been prophesied the coming of the Buddha by a Brahmin:

⁵⁹³ Jā V v. 393:

*Kasmīn nu raṭṭhe tava jātabhūmi,
atha kena atthena idhānupatto,
akkhāhi me brāhmaṇa etam atthaṃ,
kim icchasī demi tay-ajja patthitan ti.*

“In which kingdom lies your birthplace, for what reason have you come here, tell me, Brahmin, what is your purpose, what do you wish for? I will give you whatever you desire today.”

⁵⁹⁴ [...] *corassa aṅgulimālassa etadahosi*: “ime kho samaṇā sakyaputtiyā saccavādino saccapaṭiñṇā [...]”.

⁵⁹⁵ Jā V 474,24f.: [...] *bho pabbajitā nāma jīvitahetu pi alikaṃ na bhaṇanti* [...].

“As the cannibal was prophesied the arrival of Sutasoma (probably a long time ago), so may the arrival of the Buddha have been predicted to Aṅgulimāla in the original version, of which the gāthā with mahesi and cirassaṃ seems to report.”⁵⁹⁶

This is one of the possible clues that lead Zin to the conclusion that the version of the story in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* may depend on – via no longer extant intermediate version(s) – the version in the *Mahāsutasoma Jātaka*. However, the fact that we find an explanation for an element of a story in one version, which is not found in another, although it does contain the same element, does not mean that the former version must therefore be the origin. Nevertheless, to identify this suddenly emerging, and difficult to account for, Brahmin (*mahesi*) in Th 868 with the shape-shifting tree spirit by no means solves the problem. Such a Brahmin makes no appearance anywhere in the canonical Th-verses, or in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*. Apparently, Zin gets the Brahmin from the prose part (i.e. really the *Jātaka*-commentary) of the *Mahāsutasoma Jātaka*.⁵⁹⁷ But it is not just that not only this Brahmin is not a real Brahmin, but a tree-spirit in disguise. Moreover, the only one of the many variants of the story in which a real Brahmin occurs (the Brahmin Uttāṅka), is contained in the *Mahābhārata*.⁵⁹⁸ On the contrary, this Brahmin is considered by Watanabe, quite convincingly, to be the result of the influence of a Buddhist version:

“The scene is the forest, where the ex-king Kalmāṣapāda is roaming, terrible to see. A certain Brahmin, Uttāṅka, ordered by his teacher, comes to beg of the cannibal king jewelled earrings, worn by his queen, Madayantī. The king intended to devour him, but the Brahmin promised him to come again as victim after the fulfilment of his duty, as a Brahmin always keeps his word. In the hope of his deliverance from the curse through the merit of giving such precious thing, the king agreed to the request of the Brahmin, and also refrained from killing him afterwards. This episode has a striking analogy with the Sutasomajātakas, the main object of which teaches truthfulness. It would not be unnatural to suppose that here the Epic had received an unconscious influence from Buddhist writings.”⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁶ „Wie dem Menschenfresser das Ankommen des Sutasoma (wohl vor langer Zeit) prophezeit wurde, so wurde möglicherweise in der ursprünglichen Fassung das Ankommen des Buddha dem Aṅgulimāla angekündigt, wovon die gāthā mit mahesi und cirassaṃ zu berichten scheint.“ (Zin 2006: 111)

⁵⁹⁷ Or possibly from the v. 390, Jā V 475,1-4: *Tiṭṭhāhīti mayā vutto so tvaṃ gacchasi yammukho, aṭhito ṭhoto ’mhīti lapasi brahmacāri, idaṃ te samaṇa ayuttam, asiṅ ca me maññasi kaṃkapattan ti?* However, in the Buddhist context the compound *brahmacārin* does not necessarily always refer to Brahmins; in fact, it does so rather seldom.

⁵⁹⁸ *Aśvamedha Parvan*, 56, 30 et. seq.

⁵⁹⁹ See Watanabe 1909: 276&291.

In general, the whole episode in this prose section of the *Mahāsutāsoma Jātaka* seems contrived and raises serious questions about its credibility/originality.

The following contains a brief summary of this episode in the prose commentary of the *Mahāsutāsoma Jātaka*.⁶⁰⁰ The man-eating prince Brahmāḍattakumāra injures his foot by stepping on the thorn of an acacia tree (*khadira-khāṇuka*) during a chase through the woods where he ambushes people to kill them and eat them. He then prays to a tree-spirit (*rukḁha-devatā/yakkhinī*): if she made his wound heal within a week, he would offer her a blood-sacrifice of 100 (or 101? “*ekasata*”) *khattiya*-kings. His wound does actually heal within a week, but rather because it dries up because his injury forces him to a week’s complete abstinence from any food and drink, and without the assistance of the tree-spirit, as the text states.⁶⁰¹ However, the cannibal, full of gratitude to the tree-spirit, announces to fulfill his oath, which upsets the tree-spirit because she does not want to be responsible for such an atrocity. Yet the cannibal goes about to assemble the 100 *khattiya*-kings he needs to perform his sacrifice with the help of a mantra which imparts the supernatural power to walk very fast (*agghapadalakkhaṇaṃ nāma maṇṭaṃ*), except for Sutasoma because he had been his former tutor in Takkaṣilā. Assembling his victims one by one, he pierces the palms of their hands and hangs them like a necklace on the *Nyagrodha*-tree in which the tree-spirit lives. But she, in her dismay and perplexity, turns first to the Four Great Kings (*catur-mahārājikā*), asking them to prevent the ogre from the completion of his terrible plan. But they cannot help and refer her to Indra, king of the gods. Unfortunately, he also professes himself unable to help in this matter, but recommends the tree-spirit to convince Kammāṣapāda somehow to catch Sutasoma, because only he had the power and the karma to prevent the cannibal from carrying out his sinister plan, and would even be able to cure him once and for all of cannibalism. The tree-spirit then cooks up a trick: she magically changes her appearance into that of an (Brahmin-)ascetic and approaches the man-eater. At this point, the story becomes even odder: The cannibal hears footsteps behind him and thinks that maybe one of the kings had managed to break away and wanted to flee. But then he sees that the noise comes from an ascetic. He thinks, “Jolly good! Ascetics are *khattiyas*, indeed. If I just catch that one, I have gathered my 101 kings and can offer my sacrifice.” He thus takes his sword and starts to follow the ascetic. He runs as

⁶⁰⁰ Cp. Jā V 472,11-475,12.

⁶⁰¹ Cp. Jā V 472,24f.: [...] *tassa pana annapānaṃ alabhaṇṭassa sarīraṃ sukḁhi, antosattāhe yeva vaṇo phāṣuko ahoṣi* [...].

fast as he can, yet is unable to catch him, although the ascetic seems to walk at a normal pace. The cannibal is quite puzzled about this because earlier, he remembers, he was easily capable of following after and catching a running horse, a running elephant or a chariot in motion. Suddenly, he gets an idea: “Ascetics always do what they are told to do, don’t they? Suppose I simply ordered him to stop; when he has stopped, I will catch him.” Then he shouts: “Stop, ascetic!” Hereafter a little dialogue unfolds between the tree-spirit and the man-eater, which – similar to the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* – features a pun on *ṭhito-aṭṭhito*. The interpretation, however, is completely different from the pun in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* and serves to illustrate the virtue of truthfulness.

The similarities between this little episode and the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* are obvious. The verses themselves, however, are quite different.⁶⁰² In short, not only that the story of the tree-spirit in disguise is itself very odd (take, e.g., the statement “Ascetics are *khattiyas*, indeed.”), the whole story sounds so contrived that one easily gets the impression that perhaps some verses had become mixed up, for which the commentator later on felt compelled to provide an explanation in the prose text. Regarding contents, that is because the verses would actually fit better into the context of the last encounter of Sutasoma, who is identified with the Buddha in the *Jātaka*’s *samodhāna*, with the cannibal (= Brahmaddattakumāra), which eventually leads to his conversion – a dialogue between the cannibal and Sutasoma, which would insofar show similarities with the *Aṅgulimāla* story, as the critical dialogue then appeared at the most dramatic moment in the plot,

⁶⁰² The episode is also not found in any of the early Chinese translations of those texts, which feature the Kal-māṣapāda story; cp. Watanabe 1909: 241ff. 15. The *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra*, translated by Kumārajīva in A. D. 405, (see *op. cit.* p. 247) contains the capturing of the 100 kings, but not the tree-spirit. Another text, in Sanskrit, the *Ṣaṭpāramitā-samuccaya*, features an episode with a tree-spirit and a blood-sacrifice, but no mention is made of the tree-spirit disguising itself as an ascetic and playing a trick on Sutasoma (Watanabe 1909: 248). It goes on like this in the texts Watanabe analyses, which supports the thesis that the tree-spirit episode as it appears in the *Mahāsutasoma Jātaka* is very odd and most probably contrived.

namely the conversion of the cannibal, respectively, the murderer. However, this has to remain mere speculation.⁶⁰³

In summary, it is even more plausible – although Zin rejects this view⁶⁰⁴ – that the old and perhaps widely-known story of Kalmāṣapāda had to serve as the *Jātaka*-story of the previous incarnation of Aṅgulimāla (maybe because of its similarities with the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*). From the examples presented here, it is likewise thinkable that the narrator (or author(s)/ editor(s)) of the *Jātaka*'s prose-commentary knew the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*, and took certain (stock) phrases and formulaic expressions from it to reproduce them, more or less faithful to the original, in his story to

⁶⁰³ It is interesting to note that B^e(R), a Burmese ms. (“B^d”), and the Copenhagen palm-leaf ms. used by Fausbøll in the PTS edition all read *brahmacārini* in *pāda* three of v. 390 Jā V 475 (=B^e(R) 393) instead of *brahmacāri*, as if the redactor wanted to indicate the true identity of the suddenly occurring ascetic (= the tree-spirit in disguise?). Also interesting to note is the occurrence of the word *cora* in *pāda* three of v. 391, whereas the prose usually speaks of Brahmāḍattaputta/Kammāṣapāda as a *porisāda*, “cannibal”, throughout (the cty. is not very helpful here, since it just moralizingly explains *cora* to be a designation for someone who has left the path of wholesome action: *Corañcāti loke coraṅca dasakusalakammāpathesu aḥitaṃ nāma vadanti.*). The problem with the verses is that they cannot be fully understood without the prose, which provides the contextual frame story. From the verses alone, we could not always state with absolute certainty who is speaking and to whom. *Pāda* two of verse 391 Jā V 475,8, e.g., does not really make sense as the words of the tree-spirit (*na nāmagottaṃ parivattayāmi*). Although there are strong indications that a certain tree-spirit plays a role in the Kammāṣapāda story already from an early stage, I still suspect that the story as we now have it in the *Jātaka* is somewhat contrived, and last but not least, that the evidence is too little to construct a direct link to the Aṅgulimāla story, as Zin wishes to do. Also other associations Zin arouses, e.g. that the narrative element of Aṅgulimāla's mother bringing food into the woods in the later ‘northern’ versions of the story was derived from Th 882 (*pāda* d: ...*anaṅo bhuñjāmi bhojanaṃ*), are in my opinion very vague, cp. Zin 2006: 108.

Other added elements of the so called ‘northern versions’, with which the Pāli commentaries (*Paramattha-dīpanī* and *Papañcasūdanī*) must have had a common textual witness, as Zin argues, are: ‘background-story’; the evil teacher in Takkaṣilā and his wife (who gave A. the order); mother bringing food to the woods where Aṅgulimāla stays; Aṅgulimāla about to kill his last victim (his own mother bringing him food) in order to fulfil his vow. The details, however, differ as to the explanation why exactly the teacher sends Aṅgulimāla away (see Zin 2006: 104-106). I think Zin is right in assuming that the background stories of Aṅgulimāla's youth/former rebirths were invented in order to pass responsibility for Aṅgulimāla's evil deeds to someone else, namely, in the Pāli commentaries e.g., to the evil teacher, because his attaining Arhatship despite being a mass murderer, and therefore amassing very bad karma, obviously caused a doctrinal problem for orthodox Theravāda and other Hīnayāna schools, cp. Zin 2006: 108. Compare, however, the verse (Th 872 = Dh 173=MN II,104):

yassa pāpaṃ kataṃ kammaṃ kusaleṇa pithīyati | so 'maṃ lokaṃ pabhāseti abbhā mutto 'va candimā ||, which does not seem to exhibit any particular problem with this.

⁶⁰⁴ Cp. Zin 2006: 110.

illustrate the *Jātaka* verses.⁶⁰⁵ Although it is not possible to establish the chronological dependency of the textual version from only two textual examples (which moreover stem from different genres), the following table illustrates, to a certain degree, the general impression one gets from comparing the texts. (Since most of the *Jātaka*-prose is generally deemed to be younger than the *Majjhima Nikāya* material and more loosely narrated, as was stated above, the idea seems to suggest itself more naturally.)

Mahāsutasoma Jātaka (Jā V 474,16-475,4)

[...] *uṭṭhāya asihattho anubandhi, tiyojanaṃ anubandhitvāpi taṃ pāpuṇituṃ nāsakkihi*, gattehi sedā mucchiṃsu. So cintesi: “*ahaṃ pubbe hatthimpi assampi rathampi dhāvantaṃ anubandhitvā gaṇhāmi, ajj’ imaṃ pabbajitaṃ sakāya gatiyā gacchantaṃ sabbatthāmena dhāvanto pi gaṇhituṃ na sakkomi, kin nu kho kāraṇaṃ*” ti, tato “*pabbajitā nāma vacanakārakā hontī ti, tiṭṭhā*” ti naṃ vatvā “*ṭhitaṃ gaheṣāmīti*” cintetvā “*tiṭṭha, samaṇū*” ti ā[ha], “*ahaṃ tāva ṭhito*, tvaṃ pana ṭhātuṃ vāyāmā ’ti ā[ha], atha naṃ “*bho pabbajitā nāma jīvitahetu pi alikaṃ na bhaṇanti, tvaṃ pana musāvādaṃ kathesīti*” vatvā g[āthā]m ā[ha]:

Tiṭṭhāhīti mayā vutto, so tvaṃ gacchasi yammukho,
aṭhito ṭhito ’mhīti, lapasi
brahmacāri idaṃ te samaṇa ayuttaṃ asiṃ ca me maññasi kaṅkapattan ti.
 390.

Aṅgulimāla Sutta (MN II 99)

Atha kho coro aṅgulimālo asicammaṃ gahetvā dhanukalāpaṃ sannayhitvā bhagavantaṃ piṭṭhito piṭṭhito anubandhi. Atha kho Bhagavā tathārūpaṃ iddhābhisaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkhāsi [...]

Yathā coro aṅgulimālo bhagavantaṃ pakatiyā gacchantaṃ sabbatthāmena gacchanto na sakkoti sampāpuṇituṃ. Atha kho corassa aṅgulimālassa etadahosi: acchariyaṃ vata bho abbhūtaṃ vata bho, ahaṃ hi pubbe hatthimpi dhāvantaṃ anupatitvā gaṇhāmi, assampi dhāvantaṃ anupatitvā gaṇhāmi, rathampi dhāvantaṃ anupatitvā gaṇhāmi, migampi dhāvantaṃ anupatitvā gaṇhāmi. Atha ca panāhaṃ imaṃ samaṇaṃ pakatiyā gacchantaṃ sabbatthāmena gacchanto na sakkomi sampāpuṇitu’nti ṭhito bhagavantaṃ etadavoca: tiṭṭha samaṇa, tiṭṭha samaṇūti. ṭhito ahaṃ aṅgulimāla, tvaṅca tiṭṭhāti.

⁶⁰⁵ The the *Jātakas* accompanying prose is in fact generally held to have been a rather freely narrated commentary in most cases, cp. von Hinüber 1996: §113.

Atha kho corassa aṅgulimālassa etadāhosi: "ime kho samaṇā sakyaputtiyā saccavādino saccapaṭiñṇā. Atha panāyaṃ samaṇo gacchaṃ yevāha: 'thito ahaṃ, aṅgulimāla, tvaṇ ca tiṭṭhā 'ti. Yaṃnūnāhaṃ imaṃ samaṇaṃ puccheyyanti.

Atha kho coro aṅgulimālo bhagavantaṃ āthāya ajjhabhāsi:

"Gacchaṃ vadesi samaṇa thitomhi, mamañca brūsi thitam aṭṭhito 'ti.

pucchāmi taṃ samaṇa etamatthaṃ, kathaṃ thito tvaṃ ahaṃ aṭṭhitomhī

'ti. [...]

Perhaps, it is also possible to think of the existence of two different parallel narrative traditions or stories, namely that of the robber Aṅgulimāla and that of the cannibal Kalmāṣapāda, which were linked retrospectively.

Now, it is not unthinkable that the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* belongs to a class of texts, the peculiarities of which Moritz Winternitz⁶⁰⁶ has already recognised and thus referred to as *ākhyāna* (quite freely narrated prose narrative with intermittent verses), and which therefore would demand a special place within the *Majjhima Nikāya* or even the entire *Sutta Piṭaka*. This would come as no surprise though, since also elsewhere in the Canon echos of other genres are found, such as the *suttas* of the "*Jātaka*-type".⁶⁰⁷ This, however, would make the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* a

⁶⁰⁶ Winternitz 1993, 46: "Some of the Suttas (of the Majjhima-Nikāya) are neither dialogues nor sermons, but they are simply stories. Thus no. 86 [= *Aṅgulimālasutta*] is a regular old *Ākhyāna* in which in prose and verse the story of the terrible robber Aṅgulimāla is told who became a monk and reached even the height of an Arhat (the holyman who is sure of Nirvāṇa) – a valuable piece of ancient Buddhist poetry." = Winternitz 1913: 35: "So ist Nr. 86 [= *Aṅgulimāla-Sutta*, MN] ein regelrechtes *Ākhyāna*, in welchem in Prosa und Versen von dem schrecklichen Räuber Aṅgulimāla erzählt wird, [...] - ein wertvolles Stück altbuddhistischer Dichtung."

⁶⁰⁷ Passages starting with *bhūtapubbaṃ* (instead of *asite*, as in the Therāvada-version), for instance, are indicative of an early form of the *Jātaka*-genre; see von Hinüber 1996: §113.

special case or unique within the group of the longer *suttas*.⁶⁰⁸ An origin of the “paper-being” Aṅgulimāla in old Indian narrative material (and therefore no historical, real-life origin), mainly “drawn” from the template of the old Kalmāṣapāda narrative, would thus not be very unlikely. But it is impossible to verify and establish this beyond any doubt. Nevertheless, that would not pose any problem to my treatment of the characters of the Pāli *suttas*. Whether a literary character originates in a historical person or in some older story-material does not make any difference for (1) his synchronic narratological analysis, and (2) for, according to Margolin and others, when he/it enters the story-world, his/its ontological status also changes.⁶⁰⁹

Zin’s view ultimately regards the character Aṅgulimāla – and this is diametrically opposed to Gombrich’s interpretation – as the result of a purely literary development of an old narrative motif or older narrative ‘material’. Then, Aṅgulimāla is really Kalmāṣapāda/ Saudāsa, the “King ‘with speckled feet’” (Skt. Kalmāṣapādaḥ) of the *Mahābhārata*, who is in a dispute with and gets cursed by the Brahmins Vasiṣṭha and his son Śakti, and Viśvāmitra. In turn, may Saudāsa perhaps be identical with the historical king Sudās of the *Ṛgveda*? This would mean that there is no real-life origin of the character Aṅgulimāla. The implication of this situation could then sound like the following, then: Victory of “Buddho”, Emile Senart’s ancient sun-hero⁶¹⁰, over Sudās Paijavana, the famous winner of the battle of the ten kings in the *Ṛgveda*, an ancient

⁶⁰⁸ Funnily enough, although part of the *Rāja Vagga*, the “section about kings”, the main character in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* is the brigand Aṅgulimāla.

⁶⁰⁹ Cp., again, Jannidis 2004: 128, and Schmid 2008: 39-41.

⁶¹⁰ See Oldenberg 1882: 74: “In Senart’s opinion, Buddha, the real Buddha, did exist, it is true: his reality, he admits, is a logical necessity, inasmuch as we see the reality of the Church founded by him; but beyond this bare reality there is nothing substantial. The fancy of his followers attached to his person the great allegorical ballad of the life of the sun-god in human guise; the life of the man Buddha had been forgotten.”

myth newly arranged and reenacted, as it were, in an *ākhyāna* with the title *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*?⁶¹¹ Or, by the same token, is it the result of a progressing confusion, due to an ignorance of the old sources, a thicket of versions of a story, enlarged, tailored to new contexts, and/or messed up as time went on? These are, eventually, the possible implications of Zin’s ‘thematising’ interpretation. Although I do not find this categorically unthinkable – at least as regards specifically the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* – it completely ignores the ‘mimetic aspect’ of characters, which undoubtedly has an essential part in the effect of the story (which is already proven, I think, by the continuous popularity of the character), no matter what its origin is.

In any case, these two opposed interpretations of the same story tell us much more about its authors’ view of the character Aṅgulimāla and the presuppositions their theories and views on persons in pre-modern Indian texts is based on. Funnily enough, in both presentations, the character Aṅgulimāla has become, in a way, independent of its textual origin. The incident of the fictive literary character Sherlock Holmes comes to mind, who receives circa seven-hundred letters each year from all parts of the world at “his” address, Baker Street 221b, London.⁶¹² As Monika Zin has demonstrated, there are several consonances between the Aṅgulimāla-story and the story of the cannibal Kalmāṣapāda. However, Zin’s argument is not entirely convincing that, and how exactly, the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* might have been developed from the earlier material of the cannibal stories as, for instance, that contained in the *Mahāsutāsoma Jātaka*, specifically considering the general assumption that the *Sutta Piṭaka* as textual composition is generally held to be older

⁶¹¹ However, more problems are lurking already in the early stages of the Kalmāṣapāda story: The name Saudāsa does not yet occur in the Buddhist adaption of the story, which, according to Watanabe, probably suggests that the mixing up of identities must have happened at a later stage, when the motifs were taken over into the epics, cp. Watanabe 1909: 290.

As to Sudās and Kalmāṣapāda, see also Watanabe 1909: 281: „The original materials of the first act of the Epic story can be traced in the Ṛg-Veda. Sudās, the king of Tr̥tsus, who had won a great victory in the famous ‘battle of ten kings,’ may be one of the greatest heroes in the Vedic period, having perhaps a historical character. He is called, also, Paijavana, the son of Pijavana, and occurs several times in the Ṛg-Veda. The name Paijavana is found in the later Vedic writings, but it is never mentioned in the Epic or in the Puranic literature. This Sudās Paijavana is the original and perhaps historical form of the Epic Kalmāṣapāda.” According to Watanabe (1909: 284) a confusion of names happened already at a fairly early stage: Saudāsa, according to a passage in the *Ṛgveda*, refers to the adherents or menials of Sudās, who become revolutionized by the jealous Viśvāmitra to kill Vasiṣṭha’s son Śakti: “Saudāsa, the followers of Sudās, killed Śakti, stirred up by Viśvāmitra. But the Epic changed the original meaning of the word, and took it for the son of Sudās. The innocent Tr̥tsus king himself became, therefore, guilty of the murder of Vasiṣṭha’s son. The Epic gave a new dress to the old tradition of the struggle between the two sages, Viśvāmitra keeping his odious character as an instigator.”

⁶¹² Cp. Westerhoff 2010: 97.

than the bulk of prose portions of the *Jātaka* literature.⁶¹³ It is indisputable that already the Buddhist tradition itself saw some similarities between the two stories, which is why in the *Mahāśutasoma Jātaka* Brahmādataputta, i.e. Kammāsapada (= Kalmāṣapāda/Saudāsa), was identified as a previous incarnation of Aṅgulimāla. Nevertheless, that does not solve convincingly the problem of Aṅgulimāla's real identity. Furthermore, Zin does not elucidate the character Aṅgulimāla himself, let alone that her approach could provide any convincing explanation as to the nature of the characters.⁶¹⁴ However, the seminal passage of internal focalisation in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* (part I.3) virtually calls for a character-model that takes the psychological dimension of persons, respectively characters into account.

5.5 A Critical Verse

In this chapter, a closer look will be taken at the verses ascribed to Aṅgulimāla in the *Theragāthā*, because they deserve more attention and a view from another angle.⁶¹⁵ I argue that the verses of the Th do appear to be worked neatly into the Aṅgulimāla-narrative of MN 86. The import of my argument, however, will be presented at the end of this excursus.

Upon comparing the Th-verses with MN 86, one finds that Th 866-870 correspond to the verses MN II 99,25-100,12, which relate Aṅgulimāla's encounter with the Buddha and his subsequent conversion from a gruesome criminal to a peaceful and ordained Buddhist monk. Th 871-886 are the same (never mind variant readings, which are not relevant here) as MN II 104,21-105,24. The remaining verses of the Th (887-891) are not found in MN 86.

Specifically, one verse, Th 868, as previously discussed, eventually gave rise to Gombrich's ingenious interpretation, and others' responses. The verse also seems to have caught the

⁶¹³ This is, however, not true for the narrative material of the *Jātakas*, of course, which is often much older than Buddhism itself; cp. von Hinüber 1996: §110, p. 55.

⁶¹⁴ In this regard, it is not unthinkable that by the time of Buddhaghosa, the identity of Aṅgulimāla was already forgotten. This could perhaps explain for the awkward background-stories in both commentaries (either that two stories – that of the cannibal Kalmāṣapāda and that of the robber Aṅgulimāla) were somehow muddled up or that the background stories are altogether inventions of the commentators in order to elucidate certain elements found in the text.

⁶¹⁵ These verses thematically represent, in a way, the nucleus of the story of Aṅgulimāla. But one certainly cannot go so far as to say that they must represent the earliest version of the story to be found in the Canon only because they are composed in verse, as Monika Zin implicitly, i.e., without further explanation, seems to presuppose; cp. Zin 2006: 101.

attention of scholars and translators and led to numerous different translations and interpretations. In the following I will look at this verse in further detail, summarise Gombrich’s main argument for his interpretation⁶¹⁶ and some of the grammatical and metrical problems involved, before finally offering a simple but new way of looking at the verse and what it can reveal about the presentation of the character Aṅgulimāla.

The verse in question reads as follows (the PTS-edition’s reading is given on the left with Norman’s translation underneath, and opposite Gombrich’s conjectured first *pāda* together with his translation underneath):

*cirassaṃ vata me mahito mahesi
mahāvanaṃ samaṇoyam paccavādi
so ’haṃ cirassā pahāssaṃ pāpaṃ
sutvāna gāthaṃ tava dhammayuttaṃ*

*ciraṃ vatā me mahito maheso
mahāvanaṃ pāpuni saccavādī
so ’haṃ caḷissāmi saḷassapāpaṃ
sutvāna gāthaṃ tava dhammayuttaṃ*

“Truly it is a long time since a great seer, an ascetic, honoured by me, entered the great wood. Having heard your righteous verse, I shall abandon my numerous evils.” (tr. Norman 1969: 82)

“For a long time to fulfill a vow I have been honouring Śiva. You have arrived in the forest, speaking truth. So, I shall give up my thousand crimes, for I have heard your verse, which teaches what is right.” (tr. Gombrich 2006: 154)

The verses in the *Theragāthā* and the *Therīgāthā* are generally held to have been sung or recited by the *theras* and *therīs* as spontaneous expressions of their spiritual attainments and/or experiences. Although spontaneous compositions of inspired verses or “songs of realisation” may be a widespread phenomenon in the Indian religious landscape, the collection of the *Theragāthā* was probably compiled over a long period of time, and the text is clearly the result of an editing process.⁶¹⁷ Another peculiar aspect of this genre is the absence of the idea of authorship. What is more, different schools of reciters (*bhāṇakas*) did exist, a fact that can explain the transmission

⁶¹⁶ For a detailed discussion of all existing translations of this verse and all the grammatical and metrical issues raised by Gombrich, see Gombrich 2006: 145-54.

⁶¹⁷ Cp. Norman 1983: 73.

of different versions (which in this case, a comparison of the verses in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* and *Theragāthā* (Th) shows). K. R. Norman wrote:

“This shows nothing more than the absence in ancient times of a law of copyright, and anyone could repeat any verse, which then became “his” verse when it was remembered in connection with his name.”⁶¹⁸

Therefore, the verses in the Th ascribed to Aṅgulimāla were probably not recorded instantly⁶¹⁹ in exactly that form and sequence as it is found in the version that has come down to us. In other words, there are good reasons to believe that the current text is the result of an intentional editing process of some sort in the different versions.⁶²⁰ Thus, the text in its present form must have made sense at least for the *saṃgītikāras* (= authors/compiler/editors/redactors/reciters). Obviously someone felt compelled, or free, to insert three verses (Th 870-873) into an otherwise coherent first-person account without being disturbed by the different ‘voices’ (narrator’s text and character’s, i.e. Aṅgulimāla’s, text) within verses of the Th as well as in the *sutta*.⁶²¹ My own analysis and interpretation below tries to account for this fact. The verses just mentioned indeed make the impression of being interpolated; the verses Th 869 & 870, because, as just men-

⁶¹⁸ Norman 1983: 74.

⁶¹⁹ This conclusion seems to present itself, since several of the verses are also found in different places in the *Dhammapada* (Dhp): Th 871f. = Dhp 172f.; Th 873 = Dhp 382 (here the idea suggests itself that the verse was taken over from this different place in the Dhp because of the identical *pādas* c and d, so as to create identical half verse-endings in three sequential verses); Th 877 = Dhp 80. However, it is also possible, and the idea probably suggests itself more naturally, that the verses originally belonged together and were taken altogether from a third source, cp. Norman 1983: 59.

⁶²⁰ In my opinion, this editing process is or has been very often underrated by Western scholars. It is fair to assume that the editing process in most cases would have been undertaken by someone with a considerable command of the Pāli language, though this was perhaps not always the case. Compilation was a widespread ‘literary’ technique in ancient cultures, and we are in no position to judge the treatment of texts in ancient cultures from the point of view of a (post-)modern Western notion of originality. Tradition and “correct” (whatever that may have entailed) transmission were held in high esteem.

⁶²¹ Cp. Norman 1997: §2: “Since Winternitz wrote, investigations have suggested that in many cases the *Dhammapada* did not borrow from elsewhere in the canon, but that in the canon as a whole borrowing took place from a store of verses which in all probability pre-dates the canon in its present form. Although we talk about *Dhammapada* literature, the Pāli parallels of verses in the other *Dhammapada* texts are sometimes to be found, not in the *Dhammapada*, but in the *Suttanipāta*, or the *Samyutta-nikāya*, or the *Jātaka*, or occasionally in other canonical texts.”

tioned, in them the enunciating ‘voice’ changes from a first-person account to a third-person narrative instance, and the other three verses (Th 871-873) because they are additionally found in the *Dhammapada* (Dhp 172, 173 & 382) in different contexts (*Loka-*, *Bhikkhuvagga* respectively).

These last verses express rather general statements that are not related specifically with Aṅgulimāla’s situation, but which were adapted or attributed – precisely due to their general nature – to Aṅgulimāla’s story.⁶²² (However, in the case of Th 869f., still the possibility has to be taken into consideration that it does not seem to have been very uncommon to speak about oneself in the third person.⁶²³)

Nevertheless, coming back to Th 868, the main problems in the first *pāda* of the verse are the corrupted metre, the adverb *cirassaṃ* and – as far as Gombrich’s conjecture is concerned – the noun *mahesi*. Furthermore, Gombrich writes: “A further problem is that the adverb *cirassaṃ* seems naturally to go with the verb nearest to it”⁶²⁴, i.e., *mahito* “honoured”. However, I do not see a problem in rating the possibility of *cirassaṃ* going with the main verb in the second *pāda*, opted for by Norman in his translation⁶²⁵, among poetic licence.⁶²⁶ As to the meaning of *cirassaṃ* I think we are not lead astray by sticking to the meanings recorded in the PED, “after a long time” and “at last”, instead of ‘borrowing’ a meaning “for a long time” from Sanskrit-usage, as Gombrich does.⁶²⁷ He writes:

“The problem here is that in the story (of the AS [=Aṅgulimāla Sutta] – never mind the commentaries) it is not a long time since the Buddha entered the forest.”⁶²⁸

⁶²² See n. 619.

⁶²³ Cp., e.g., Th 892 and 894-897, where the *thera* Anuruddha appears to speak about himself in the refrain: “[...] *Anuruddho ’va jhāyati*” and “[...] *Anuruddho anāsavo*”. Cp. also Tubb/Bose 2007: pp. 227-229, although the context is completely different (scientific and scholastic Sanskrit of the commentaries).

⁶²⁴ Gombrich 2006a: 145.

⁶²⁵ Cp. the citation in Gombrich 2006a: 145. He later emends to *ciraṃ* which better conveys the meaning of a stretch of time, cp. also Warder 2001: 18.

⁶²⁶ Cp. Warder 2001: 354.

⁶²⁷ Cp. Gombrich 2006a: 145.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*: 145.

I agree with the objection Gombrich has raised with regard to the existing translations mentioned earlier that the meanings they produce are “implausible”⁶²⁹. They suggest that either Aṅgulimāla had been worshipping the Buddha already before his arrival to the “great forest” (Norman) or that Aṅgulimāla just realises in that very moment that the Buddha had finally come to rescue him (Bhikkhu Bodhi/Buddhaghosa). Furthermore, Gombrich remarks that both commentators were obviously aware of the problem that Aṅgulimāla could not possibly have venerated the Buddha before his conversion, and therefore explain the personal pronoun *me* as the dative, meaning “for me, for my sake”.⁶³⁰ Gombrich suggested that therefore *mahesi* could not refer to the Buddha at all – thus his conjecture. The following pursues another direction of thought which keeps the Buddha addressed as *mahesi* (this seems plausible because already in the next but one verse, MN II 100,9 (= Th 870), the expressions *karuṇiko mahesi* are explicitly attributed to the Buddha), and venture to explain the temporal puzzle brought up by the verse.⁶³¹

Gombrich’s interpretation needs the third *pāda* of the Th version in his restored verse because it mentions “a thousand crimes” (*sahassapāpaṃ*), which in his reading is alluding to the

⁶²⁹ Cp. n. 590 above. Ñāṇamoli’s and Bodhi’s translation, which follows closely the explanation of the Ps that Aṅgulimāla in this moment recognises the Buddha in front of him, is closest to my understanding of the passage. The cty explains that although with regard to bodily activity Aṅgulimāla stands still (*iriyāpathena ṭhito pi*), he is running towards rebirth in the lower realms. Aṅgulimāla realises that this is a “great lion’s roar” and that such a “lion’s roar” can be “roared” by no one else than the son of Mahāmāyā, Siddhattha, king of the *samaṇas*. Thus, the one in front of him must be the Buddha himself, who came for his sake. This is what Aṅgulimāla thought. Therefore, he said *cirassaṃ vata me* and so forth; cp. Ps III 333,11-17. We can see here, as also in many other instances in his cty, that Buddhaghosa is not squeamish in ascribing thoughts to characters that are not explicitly stated by the text. Although I would line up with Buddhaghosa in that the text depicts a sudden moment of insight, however, with the perhaps subtle distinction or addition, if one wills, that I would not stress the idea too much that Aṅgulimāla recognises the Buddha (which he of course must have, because he asks for ordination right away), but rather that Aṅgulimāla experiences a sort of epiphany, the crucial point of which is not only the presence of the Buddha himself but his sudden insight that his actions are utterly wrong and evil.

⁶³⁰ Cp. Gombrich 2006a: 149.

⁶³¹ Additionally, for Aṅgulimāla to speak of the Buddha as “seer” (*mahesi*) would not at all be odd, mainly because it is a fact in the narrated world (the story) that Aṅgulimāla is of brahminical descent; cp. Th 889: *brahmajacco pure āsiṃ, udicco ubhato ahuṃ | (so ’jja putto sugatassa dhammarājassa satthuno ||)*, and the mentioning of his Brahmin parents MN 86 (B^o(R)): *Kathaṃgotto ayyassa pitā, kathaṃgottā mātāti? Gaggo kho, mahārāja, pitā, mantāṇī mātāti. Abhiramatu, bhante, ayyo gaggo mantāṇiputto*. There is also more evidence that the Buddha is sometimes addressed as *mahesi* in the Pali Canon, see CPD s.v. *isi*. Cp. also, e.g., just the *gāthā* following Aṅgulimāla’s verses in the *Theragāthā* (the verses of *Anuruddho thero*, Th 900), where the Buddha is referred to with what is obviously meant as an epithet of his, *mahesi*:

[...] *tassa dhammā ime honti kusalā bodhipakkhikā
anāsavo ca so hoti, iti vuttaṃ mahesinā || 900 ||*

thousands finger Aṅgulimāla is out for when he encounters the Buddha. (According to the commentary, Aṅgulimāla collects fingers of his victims to repay a debt to his former teacher in Takkaśilā.) This element of the story is not mentioned explicitly in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*, but for some reason the commentators seemed to feel an urgent need to find an explanation for it.⁶³² Yet, not to have the “thousand” in the verse or in the actual *sutta*-story would not pose any problem for an interpretation of Aṅgulimāla as a notorious criminal. In any case, it seems to be an element that was added later.⁶³³ However, deciding for a reading that keeps the “thousand” does not necessarily mean that it must refer to 1000 *fingers* because no fingers are mentioned, but “crimes” (*pāpaṃ*).

Since the first *pada* is the same in all available editions, and there does not seem to be further textual evidence, altogether I take it to be good as we have it, although it does not scan and may be corrupt.⁶³⁴ Gombrich’s conjecture has met with strong criticism and given the fact that there is no variant reading available for this first *pada*, I am very much inclined to stick to Norman’s emendation, which is much less invasive. He suggested dropping the anusvāra in *cirassam* (= common metrical licence) and reading *vata* as resolution of the fourth syllable of the

⁶³² See Gombrich 2006a: 149.

⁶³³ Cp. Zin 2006: 118: “Die Anwesenheit der Mutter (welche die Episode mit dem Lehrer impliziert) in den meisten Darstellungen deutet darauf hin, dass sich die bildliche Tradition an der entwickelten Version (d.h. nicht an Majjhimanikāya, T 99 oder T 100) orientierte. Da manche der Reliefs in das 2. Jh. zu datieren sind, zeigt, dass eine entsprechende Erzählung bereits damals vorhanden war.” “Bereits”, however, here doubtlessly means a terminus post quem and definitely **after** the *sutta*-version. That means, if the story about the mother is connected to the story about the teacher in Takkaśilā, then the thousand fingers as a ritual gift are also connected to the story of the teacher, and therefore quite possibly a later development/version.

⁶³⁴ There exists a permitted variant of the *tuṭṭhubha* metre that has 12 syllables per *pāda*, which, however, still does not scan in this example because of the two *laghu* syllables in “*vata*”; cp. Warder 2001: 359. I think that the problem could not be solved (until further textual evidence might be discovered), unless one regards oneself really on firm ground to modify the text as Gombrich does by his grave conjectures. However, there are no indications that could justify such an alteration of the text.

first *pada*, thus resulting in a 12-syllable *tutṭhubha* verse.⁶³⁵ Therefore, I take the *Thergāthā*-edition's reading as a basis and start from scratch in making sense of the verse through a close reading from a narratological viewpoint:

Cirassaṃ vata me mahito mahesī,
*Mahāvanaṃ samaṇo paccupādi*⁶³⁶
*So 'haṃ cajissāmi sahassapāpaṃ*⁶³⁷
*Sutvāna gāthaṃ tava dhammayuttaṃ.*⁶³⁸

Vata, the second word in the first line, is, according to the PED, a “particle of exclamation” with the meaning “surely, certainly, indeed, alas!” In this verse and in the preceding ones the speaker is Aṅgulimāla, who is directly addressed in verse Th 867 by the Buddha in their little dialogue (*thito ahaṃ Aṅgulimāla sabbadā / sabbesu bhūtesu nidhāya daṇḍaṃ*), and who is thus the one saying ‘Alas!’ This particle, nevertheless, has also another function: as an exclamatory particle, it refers back to the person/instance uttering the exclamation, that is, Aṅgulimāla. It therefore denotes Aṅgulimāla as the perspectival centre from which the event is perceived, or from which the utterance originates. Similar to the term ‘deixis’ in linguistics, the expression

⁶³⁵ Cp. Norman 1969: xxxvi, and his arguments summarised in Gombrich 2006: 150. The problem, however, as Gombrich criticised, with this emendation is that such a case of resolution of the fourth syllable in a *tutṭhubha* verse is not found elsewhere in the Th.

I am inclined to think that the reason the text was left as it is (in the Burmese edition) by the redactors at the occasion of the last council in Yangon in 1954, may be that there was no better solution on offer in any of the readings that were consulted at the council. However, religious or traditionalist reasons such as that that the *buddhavacana* must not be altered cannot be ruled out here. For that reason, I deem it proper first to see if the text as we have it makes any sense or not.

⁶³⁶ Variant readings as cited in the PTS edition of the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* (cp. also Gombrich 2006a: 144): Sinhala MSS: *mahāvana samaṇo 'yaṃ paccupādi*; S^e/K^e: *mahāvanaṃ samaṇa paccupādi*; B^e: *mahāvanaṃ pāpuṇi saccavādi*. Clearly, the S^e and the C^e are directly dependent on each other. The PTS-edition's reading ‘*paccavādi*’ is, as Gombrich already noted, most probably the *lectio difficilior* chosen by the editor of the PTS edition, which is only attested in the cty of the *Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyana* edition.

⁶³⁷ Variant readings as cited in the B^e(R): C^e: *sohaṃ cirassāpi pahāssaṃ pāpaṃ*, S^e/K^e *sohaṃ carissāmi pajahissaṃ pāpaṃ*; B^e: *So 'haṃ carissāmi pahāya pāpaṃ*.

⁶³⁸ As Richard Gombrich already noted, and as I have stated above, all *pādas*, except for the first, scan in the PTS edition of the text. Although that means that the text is most probably corrupt and cannot be restored with absolute certainty, and thus it is even harder (or probably altogether impossible) to assure its one/original meaning, I'll nevertheless base my following interpretation on it, since almost all other translators so far did the same.

‘Alas!’ here marks the centre of orientation within the text.⁶³⁹ The personal pronoun “*me*” has the same effect, and even more obviously. Although it may be obvious, it is still of utmost importance to mention that the listener/reader deduces that Aṅgulimāla is the centre of narrative orientation (Ger. “*Orientierungszentrum*”) in this sentence because the personal pronoun refers back to the vocative ‘*Aṅgulimāla*’ in the previous verse, which means they have to be understood as belonging together. Read in a sequence with the two opening verses (the word “opening” may be somewhat misleading here since the verses start really *in medias res*), this whole third verse gives the impression of being a kind of internal reflection on what is happening during that encounter with the Buddha, as if the words represented Aṅgulimāla’s thoughts. In fact, it is grammatically unclear if these lines are meant to represent speech or thought, since no speech tag or other enunciatory context is provided.

If for *cirassam* one adopts the meaning the PED records foremost, “at last”, the translation of the verse-beginning would be: “At last, alas ...!”. Why does this translation make sense in consideration of the situation portrayed in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*, in which Aṅgulimāla is about to be miraculously converted and subsequently ordained by the Buddha, and thus changes his evil ways? Does it mean that Aṅgulimāla was prophesied the arrival of the Buddha, as Zin suggested, and that he remembers in this very moment that a dramatic change of his destiny now dawns on him? It is possible to find another explanation, which is inherent in the text, without having to resort to other sources, destinies, or conjectures, in order to make sense of it. Let us proceed with the analysis in small steps. I now take ‘*me*’ to mean “for me, for my sake”, as suggested by the commentators, but for a different reason: it adds to the dramatic situation in which Aṅgulimāla finds himself in, his moment of realisation: “At last, alas! *For my sake* ...”. After all, he is about to change fundamentally in the next few moments. A translation “for my sake” would lend the situation a very personal and subjective touch. However, the other possible interpretation, to link ‘*me*’ with ‘*mahito*’ “praised”, is also possible and makes good sense in my interpretation of the verse if we understand it to signify “the sage revered by me [**now**, i.e., at the time of narration] entered [**back then**] the great forest” (the reason for this we shall see in a little while). Because the crucial point here is – and this is what I want to suggest as the decisive alternative reading of

⁶³⁹ This is what Karl Bühler had called the *Hier-Jetzt-Ich-Origo* (lat. *hic-nunc-ego-Origo*), the neutral point, as it were, to or from which relations are defined; cp. Weber 1998: 43-48.

this passage – that the sense of gravity or of the significance of what happens does not necessarily have to be explained by some sort of prophecy or the like, but makes perfect sense when explained as perceived or remembered from a retrospective. Already a cursory look at the subsequent verses reveals that in fact all the verses ascribed to Aṅgulimāla in the Th, are conceptualised as Aṅgulimāla’s retrospection or recapitulation of the events that lead to his final emancipation from the cycle of rebirths. In the Th, he, of course, utters them from the perspective of an *arahant*. A look at the tense (Aorist) and the temporal deixis (*pure* “formerly”) used, can prove this assumption (the last verse cited, then, mentions his attainment of Arhatship):

coro ahaṃ pure āsiṃ | Aṅgulimālo ’ti vissuto (880)
lohītapāṇi pure āsiṃ Aṅgulimālo ’ti vissuto | (881)
araññe rukkhamūle vā pabbatesu gūhāsu vā | tattha tatth’ eva aṭṭhāsiṃ ubbigamanaso tadā || (887)
brahmajacco pure āsiṃ udicco ubhato ahuṃ | etc. (889)
vītataṅho anādāno guttadvāro susaṃvuto | aghamūlaṃ vamiṭvāna patto me āsavakkhayo || (890)
pariçiṅṅo mayā satthā kataṃ buddhassa sāsaṇaṃ | ohito garuko bhāro bhavanetti samūhatā ’ti || (891)

The impression of non-mediatedness, as found in most of the Th-verses when dealing with words uttered in direct speech is effected through the use of the first person pronoun and through what Plato called “*mimesis*” and Henry James “showing” or, in Genette’s words, by “the poet ‘deliver[ing] a speech as if he were someone else’.”⁶⁴⁰ However, one must be aware that this is the illusion of non-mediatedness, in which the narrative instance is just hidden or covert to the highest possible degree, as one can see in the following two verses, Th 869, 870. In these verses, the situation is viewed from the outside or “from above”, as it were, and the scene is mediated through a witnessing or mediating narrative instance, which is reporting the events and refers to both the Buddha and Aṅgulimāla in the third person:

itv eva coro asim āvudhañ ca sobbhe papāte narake anvakāsi | avandi coro sugatassa pāde, tatth’ eva pabbajjaṃ ayāci buddhaṃ || 869 ||
 “With these words the robber hurled his sword and other weapons down a hole, a precipice, a chasm. The robber paid homage to the well-farer’s feet. On that very spot he asked the Buddha for admission to the Order.”
buddho ca kho kāruṅiko mahesi yo satthā lokassa sadevakassa | tam ehi bhikkhū ’ti tadā avoca; es’ eva tassa āhu bhikkhubhāvo || 870 ||

⁶⁴⁰ Cp. Genette 1980: 162f.

“And then the Buddha, the compassionate great seer who is the teacher of the world including the devas, said to him, ‘Come, bhikkhu’; this in itself was bhikkhu-status for him.”⁶⁴¹

From a narratological point of view, considering the category of narrative voice, it means nothing more and nothing less than that these verses are narrated by someone else than Aṅgulimāla.⁶⁴² The other verses, then, appear as put into Aṅgulimāla’s mouth, or as a narrator’s report, rendered in direct speech, about what Aṅgulimāla himself has said or thought, just in a different narrative mode (i.e. ‘showing’), the enunciator of which vanishes completely behind the reported speech.⁶⁴³ Nevertheless, the main point is that Aṅgulimāla reports what has happened as a memory, his own memory, reported, but somewhat re-experienced, from a later stance in time, in retrospective. This becomes clear from the context of the verses as a whole, as already stated, but also from the use of the Aorist tense in the second *pāda* of verse 868: *paccupādi*, “he entered”, which can also be interpreted as designating the deeper past (although the distinction among past tenses is almost lost in the Pāli language). The preterite in the speech of the person narrating (in *this* verse) determines (reflexively, as it were,) the narrative centre of orientation in a time *past* the event/occurrence, as it is described, seen or remembered from the perspective of a reformed or purified Aṅgulimāla at the time of the narration. This is a phenomenon that is well known from the genre of autobiography (or ‘quasi-autobiography’, if fictitious), in which the diegetic ‘narrating self’ and the ‘narrated self’⁶⁴⁴ stand in a quasi-heterodiegetic relation to each other. The ‘two selves’ are very often not only temporally separated, as representing different stages of the same psychophysical continuum⁶⁴⁵, but they can be separated from each other by a considerable ethical and psychological distance as well, as is expressed, for instance, in Th 879:

⁶⁴¹ Tr. Norman 1969: 82f.

⁶⁴² Which – in order to prevent possible jumping at conclusions here – means nothing as to the origin of the verses or any possible historical development. I am purely operating on the synchronic level of the discourse in the analysis. It is inherent in this kind of analysis that it does not allow for diachronic conclusions but first tries to make sense of the text as it is.

⁶⁴³ However, the idea that the following five verses are an interpolation of an editing hand intuitively suggests itself, namely, through the sudden switch into a different narrative mode (‘telling’), which is alien to the rest of the verses ascribed to Aṅgulimāla. Furthermore, the verses 871-873 are also found in the *Dhammapada*; see note 619 above.

⁶⁴⁴ Cp. Schmid, <http://lecture2go.uni-hamburg.de/veranstaltungen/-/v/10689>; „8. Sitzung, 12. Januar 2010”, 00.01.00 min.

⁶⁴⁵ Cp. Schmid 2008: 97.

Ahiṃsako 'ti me nāmaṃ hiṃsakassa pure sato / ajjāhaṃ saccanāmo 'mhi na naṃ hiṃsāmi kañcinam ||
“Although a killer/harming people in the past, my name [was from the beginning] Ahimsaka [“Harmless”]; Today my name speaks truth [because] I certainly do not harm anyone.”

In the next *pada* (*so 'haṃ cajissāmi saḥassapāpaṃ*⁶⁴⁶) the ‘narrated self’ is again more palpable – the main verb in the future tense is perfectly apt to express a wish or intention of Aṅgulimāla’s, which at that moment in the past, he recollects, appeared in his mind.⁶⁴⁷ Grammatically, by what has been termed ‘free indirect style’, it is again not stated definitely whether the words Th verses 868 and 869 (= MN II 100,1-4) represent Aṅgulimāla’s speech (re-reporting his past words in the moment of narration) or his thoughts. A *verbum dicendi* is neither found in the verses themselves nor in the surrounding verses, so that theoretically *itveva* (Th 869, *pada* a = MN II 100,5) could just as well render Aṅgulimāla’s thoughts. Thus, it is theoretically possible to interpret the line as representing Aṅgulimāla’s thoughts in the moment of the event, which are reported (in speech) at a later time of narration. I, for one, can think of no argument that could prove that the verse Th 868 must have been spoken (in verse!) by Aṅgulimāla on the very spot in the great forest (*mahāvanaṃ*).

Thus, while the situation sketched is consistent for the collection of verses in the *Theragāthā*, it is still necessary to explain the situation at that the time of narration in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* itself, for which my explanation of the Th verses does not seem to fit. Here, in MN 86, the contextual time frame (the time of the utterance of the verses) is different. Here is a problem which is out of the scope of a discourse-oriented narratological approach. Yet, this is exactly what a synchronic analysis is, among other things, supposed or expected to provide, namely, to detect remaining inconsistencies, at which point a diachronic investigation may follow. Never-

⁶⁴⁶ I.e. depending on which reading someone decides on; variant readings as cited in the B^c(R): C^e: *sohaṃ cirassāpi pahāssaṃ pāpaṃ*, S^e/K^e *sohaṃ carissāmi pajahissaṃ pāpaṃ*; B^e: *So 'haṃ carissāmi pahāya pāpaṃ*.

⁶⁴⁷ Cp. Warder 1963: 55.

theless, I can confidently conclude that the verses were (from wherever) inserted in the narrative to highlight and underline the most crucial or dramatic events of the plot.⁶⁴⁸ My reading of the Th verses is consistent when assuming that the collection of verses attributed to Āṅgulimāla, give or take a couple of verses, was already existent. Thus, the conclusion suggests itself that a more or less coherent stock of (auto-?) biographical verses about Āṅgulimāla existed, which were used at what the authors/reciters/compliers of the *Āṅgulimāla* story, i.e. *sutta*, thought to be the appropriate position. If one furthermore presumes that some artistic and/or poetic flair was present in this process of narrating (oral or written, again, does not make much difference in this case), one may find MN II 100,1-4 (= Th 868) Āṅgulimāla's thoughts at this dramatic apex of his development, respectively as his experience of epiphany, to be perfectly compatible with the foregoing passage (MN II 98,27-99,23) which likewise provided the listener/reader with an account of what happened as for most of its parts focalised through the perspective of the character Āṅgulimāla.⁶⁴⁹ Nevertheless, this must remain speculative for the time being, and it is evident that the textual history of the verses is somewhat messy and perhaps difficult to disentangle.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁸ The idea simply seems to suggest itself that the verses in the *Āṅgulimāla Sutta* were selectively taken over from the *Theragāthā* without much consideration of their narrative context or, presumed that the commentators really already felt that there was a problem with this verse, as Gombrich assumes [Gombrich 2006a: 149: "Thus the commentators have a very clear perception of the problems with the first line, but cannot offer a plausible solution."], simply because verses were traditionally regarded as *buddhavacana* and therefore exempt from alteration/editing/conjecture, except for taking them (also partially) over and "implanting" them somewhere else. Cp. also Cp. von Hinüber: "Jātaka Manuscripts from the National Library in Bangkok." In: *JPTS*, Vol X (1985), p. 19: "The syntactical difficulties felt when reading this verse, [...], are probably due to the somewhat careless combination of verses or parts of verses taken from different contexts and put together again mechanically, a procedure for which ample evidence has been collected by R. O. Franke, e.g. in his 'Jātaka-Mahābhārata-Parallelen' or 'Die gāthās des Vinaya-Piṭaka und ihre Parallelen' (both reprinted in *Kleine Schriften*, Wiesbaden 1978)." Apart from what I have said about the inclusion of verses from somewhere else into MN 86, I refrain from positing any hypothesis as to the development of the narrative elements and the plot – not even in the form of a chronology.

⁶⁴⁹ Note that the Burmese *Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyana* edition (B^o(R) > *Majjhimanāyāsapāli* 349.) contains the reading, *Tasmā ṭhitohaṃ tuvamaṭṭhitosīti* (and that despite the final *ti* seems to unnecessarily rape the metre), which may indicate the end of the spoken dialogue between the Buddha and Āṅgulimāla. However, for metrical reasons we must probably discard this reading as corrupt.

⁶⁵⁰ I see two major problems that remain with my interpretation of the verses in question: 1) we cannot be absolutely sure that the direct speech ends at MN II 99,32 (= Th 867) because an *iti* is only attested by the B^o(R) reading (although, on the other hand, the critical apparatus of the PTS edition of the *sutta* records a v.l. *idh'eva* for MN *īveva/ icceva* at MN II 100,5 for one Sinhalese edition of Buddhaghosa's cty, which would mean that in that case we also do not have an indication that the direct speech ends, although it is clear that it does through the change of the narrating voice!); 2) the pronoun *tava* "your" at MN II 100,4 (Th 868), seems very likely to be a direct address to the Buddha.

However, coming back to the main objective of this book, my conclusion to what has been said so far is that, viewed together with the progression of the Aṅgulimāla-narrative as found in MN 86, it is now time to sketch a line of development of the character Aṅgulimāla, to which the verses add not only substantial details for the plot but also poetic (and ‘emotional’? – *Aṅgulimālo ... udānaṃ udānesi*) utterance. The story of Aṅgulimāla in MN 86, which does perhaps not cover more than a few months to a couple of years, for all that one can say about this given the very vague and unspecific time indications provided in the *suttas*, starts out to characterise Aṅgulimāla as a “gruesome killer, with blood on his hands, etc.”. Then he appears in person at a point in the narrative (up to that point, his characterisation was based on what people told about him and his actions) that is to become the dramatic climax of the whole story, namely, his awakening or epiphany, to which the listeners/readers are invited to “co-experience” through the presentation of the event as filtered through Aṅgulimāla’s mind and perception. The subsequent verses poetically and emotionally express his experience of epiphany and conversion from a later perspective, as seen in the above analysis. Nevertheless, the editors may have found it suitable to insert them at this decisive moment. The story, then, is propelled forward through what Phelan called a ‘complication’ (Aṅgulimāla has to undergo a comparatively mild but obviously unpleasant purification of some ‘residual karma’), until a complete resolution, and thus ‘closure’, is arrived at the end of the *sutta*, which is again perfectly (and poetically) expressed by Aṅgulimāla’s “solemn utterance” – in essence a summary-statement of his way from a murderer to an *arahant*. Thus, the plot perfectly exhibits the abstract scheme: instability → [dramatic climax/ change/ epiphany] → complication → resolution⁶⁵¹, in which the verses serve to highlight and underline the most important events (epiphany and resolution).

Now for a more detailed analysis of the main character, Aṅgulimāla, and how it is presented by the text, employing as before the ‘tools’ of narratological textual analysis of characterisation and narrative communication.

⁶⁵¹ Cp. Phelan 2007: 212.

5.6 A “paper-being” named Aṅgulimāla

As to the name “Aṅgulimāla”, it is obviously a description rather than a proper name, derived from his distinguishing mark, the *aṅguli-mālā* or “finger-necklace” that he wears. The *sutta* suggests that it is more an appellation under which he was widely known for his gruesome actions.⁶⁵² His characteristic feature, the “finger-necklace”, seems to have bothered the commentators a lot. A hint towards a possible answer to the question why Aṅgulimāla is said to have worn a necklace of severed fingers can be found in Stith Thompson’s *Motif-index of folk-literature*⁶⁵³, which records a rich motif-context for cut-off limbs (including fingers), heads, nose, etc. as “proof of killing” (a monster, demons, enemies, etc.) or the victim’s “identification”, and so forth. Therefore, an alternative explanation of the necklace of fingers that Aṅgulimāla was allegedly wearing could be that it was just his trophy, a token of his cruelty, not necessarily for him maybe, but for everyone to see and thereby to instill fear in others. That he speaks of himself as formerly having been “renowned” (*vissuto*) in Th 880 (see n. 652 below), seems to suggest that a certain feeling of pride was attendant on his reputation. This interpretation is additionally backed by the expression *pasayha maññe*, “[as if] by force”, in the presentation of Aṅgulimāla’s thoughts at MN II 99,4. Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation, “as if driven by fate”⁶⁵⁴, may be (too much) influenced by the commentary, which explains the background to Aṅgulimāla’s thoughts: Aṅgulimāla is under the obligation to pay off his former teacher in Takkasilā with the gift of one thousand fingers. At this point in the story, he realised that only one finger is left to round off the thousand (imagine the size and weight of a necklace made of 999 fingers!), so he decides to kill the next best person he sees (*addasā*) to fulfil his duty (before he can finally go back to his parents).⁶⁵⁵ Therefore, the appearance of the *samaṇa* seems like as fate to Aṅgulimāla. However, restricting my analysis synchronically to the text of the *suttas*, I interpret the phrase *pasayha maññe* differently than Bhikkhu Bodhi (and the commentary) does. The expression *pasayha* appears only twice in the

⁶⁵² Th 880: *coro ahaṃ pure āsiṃ Aṅgulimāla ’ti vissuto* [...], “A brigand I formerly was, renowned as ‘Aṅgulimāla’.”

⁶⁵³ Cp. Thompson 1955-1958, s.v. Fingers. The following search-result may be closest to our example: “H.105.5: Ears, fingers and noses of demons cut off as proof of killing them.” However, the keyword ‘fingers, cut-off’ might also suggest a cannibalistic context (as Zin has suggested), for which, however, no sources or references specifically to India are given in the Index, which I find problematic.

⁶⁵⁴ Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 711,4.

⁶⁵⁵ Cp. Ps III 331,22-332,9.

Majjhima Nikāya, the other occurrence being a verse in the *Raṭṭhapāla Sutta* (MN II 72,30), which reads (and is translated by Bikkhu Bodhi accordingly):

Rājā pasayha paṭhaviṃ vijitvā sasāgarantaṃ mahiṃ āvasanto.

Oraṃ samuddassa atittarūpo pāraṃ samuddassa pi patthayetha.

“A king who may conquer the earth **by force** and inhabit the great earth confined [only] by the ocean [= a cakravartin], would yet not be satisfied with this shore, but desiring also the further shore.”⁶⁵⁶

There is little doubt that *pasayha* means the active application of force by a subject rather than that a force (such as “fate”) is affecting a patient. Therefore, it is clear that the Buddha *appears to Aṅgulimāla* (as to the important aspect of focalization in this passage, see below) as if he wished to provoke or tempt him. What Aṅgulimāla is really after is perhaps to be the most dreaded robber around. Aṅgulimāla accepts the dare, buckles his weapons on and goes after the *samaṇa* who enters stupidly, as it were, the road alone – an easy target.⁶⁵⁷

According to the *Theragāthā*-verses attributed to him, the name given to him at his birth by his parents was Ahiṃsaka “Non-Harmer”.⁶⁵⁸ His proper name, however, is mentioned in part II.2 of the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*, on request of king Pasenadi, as Gaggo Mantāṇiputto.⁶⁵⁹ Thus, his parents, whose *gotta*-names (Skt. *gotra*) are given as Gaggo (his father)⁶⁶⁰ and Mantāṇī/Mantāṇī (his mother), both are suggested to have been Brahmins.⁶⁶¹ Malalasekera writes:

“Gagga, whose wife was Mantāṇī, was chaplain to the king of Kosala [Ps II 743]. Gagga may have been a gotta-name. Thus when, after his ordination, Angulimāla is introduced to Pasenadi, the latter addresses him as Gagga Mantāniputta. [MN II 102].”⁶⁶²

⁶⁵⁶ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 690,42.: “A king who has conquered the earth by force, And rules over the land the ocean bounds [...]”

⁶⁵⁷ MN II 99,3-7: *Atha ca paṇāyaṃ samaṇo eko adutiyo pasayha maññe āgacchati. Yaṃnūnāhaṃ imaṃ samaṇaṃ jīvītā voropeyyanti. Atha kho coro Aṅgulimālo asicammaṃ gahetvā dhanukalāpaṃ sannayhitvā Bhagavantam piṭṭhito piṭṭhito anubandhi.*

⁶⁵⁸ Th 879: *Ahiṃsako 'ti me nāmaṃ hiṃsakassa pure sato [...]*

⁶⁵⁹ MN II 102,6-9.

⁶⁶⁰ The Burmese ms. (B^m), according to the vv.ll. in the notes of the PTS edition, has *Bhaggo* (Skt. *bhārgya*? Cp. MW, s.v.) – according to the DPPN a term for the inhabitants of a country between Vesāli and Sāvattihī (cp. DPPN, s.v. *Bhaggā*).

⁶⁶¹ MN II 102,6-9: *Kathaṃgotto, bhante, ayyassa pita? Kathaṃgottā mātā ti? Gaggo kho, mahārāja, pita; Mantāṇī mātāti. Abhiramatu, bhante, ayyo Gaggo Mantāniputto; ...*

⁶⁶² See DPPN, s.v. 2. *Gaggo*.

However, it is not clear whether Gaggo is really a clan-name as is mentioned in the *sutta* (*katham gotto*), or – as also the variant reading in one Burmese manuscript suggests (see n. 660) – the designation of a local people or tribe.⁶⁶³

Kare Manohar Gupta, moreover, provides a very curious interpretation of the name *Āṅgulimāla*, isolating it from the context of the narrative itself, and proposes that it pointed to a higher semantic level. He writes:

“While the narrative of the story on plain reading reveals the might of the master in taming even such a great criminal, it still has a deep message to convey. The name of the criminal *Āṅgulimāla* literally means one who is wearing a garland of fingers. **The fingers that are sought by the criminal in *Āṅgulimāla* represent the various teachers.** It was the practice of ancient days to approach a teacher for wisdom. But the ancient beings were not content with a single teacher. Thus wandering in search of teachers, they finally were accustomed to the habit of wandering. [...] Various schools of thought were prevalent during the time of the master, and the master with one stroke denounced all of them that promote wrong views.”⁶⁶⁴ [my emphasis]

Furthermore, Gupta purports, “there is a euphemistic remark that is hidden in the meaning of his name that exhibits an ancient practice of approaching various teachers who are regarded as mere fingers that symbolise the indicating of the way.”⁶⁶⁵

Now, Gupta does not only give an interpretation of the name *Āṅgulimāla*, but in the same breath a ‘thematising’ interpretation of the *Āṅgulimāla* story: The fingers *Āṅgulimāla* collects are representative of the various ‘heretic’ teachers at the Buddha’s time, and the Buddha finally puts an end to *Āṅgulimāla*’s futile search for wisdom by converting him to his teachings through a display of his magical powers. Apart from the missing reference to that “ancient Indian practice” and its connection with the simile of the fingers Gupta alludes to, readers/listeners have already encountered (and shared) Phelan’s demur and suspicion of this kind of ‘thematising

⁶⁶³ Malalasekera seems to be sure that his mother’s name, *Mantānī*, is of brahminic origin; cp. DPPN, s.v.: “2. *Mantānī*. A brahminee, mother of *Angulimāla*; her husband was *Gagga*. M.ii.102; ThagA.ii.58.”

⁶⁶⁴ Gupta 2006: 125.

⁶⁶⁵ Cp. Gupta 2006: 125. Unfortunately, Gupta does not give a reference for this “ancient practice of approaching various teachers” symbolised by the fingers. I was not able to secure a reference to the symbolism of the ‘finger showing the way’, but an online-discussion in the “Indology-list” seems to suggest that a similar picture, that of the “finger pointing at the moon” as a symbol of the distinction between “meaning” (*artha*) and “letter” (*vyañjana*) which is often attributed to *Nāgārjuna*, can only be determined for sure in Chinese translations. Cp. http://list.indology.info/pipermail/indology_list.indology.info/2013-March/037701.html (6th May 2013).

leap⁶⁶⁶, which perfectly illustrates Phelan’s proposition of the necessity for an analysis of character that takes the narrative’s progression into account.⁶⁶⁷

The first explicit characterisation statement about the character Aṅgulimāla or, according to Manfred Pfister’s system of characterisation⁶⁶⁸, the first “figural, explicit alterocharacterization” uttered in public and in the absence of the person concerned (i.e. Aṅgulimāla), first provided by the *sutta*-narrator, and subsequently repeated by the local people warning the wandering Buddha about Aṅgulimāla, is as follows:

[...] *coro aṅgulimālo nāma luddo lohitaṭṭhāni hatapahate niviṭṭho adayāpanno pāṇabhūtesu. Tena gāmāpi agāmā katā, nigamāpi anigamā katā, janapadāpi ajanapadā katā. So manusse vadhitvā vadhitvā aṅgulīnaṃ mālaṃ dhāreti [...]*.⁶⁶⁹

“[...] Aṅgulimāla, the robber, fierce/ gruesome, with blood on his hands, a serial killer⁶⁷⁰, merciless towards living beings”.

Furthermore, readers/listeners learn that because of Aṅgulimāla, “towns had been turned into non-towns, market-towns into non-market-towns, inhabited land into non-inhabited land” (i.e. he had depopulated whole towns, etc.). He, repeatedly killing people, wore a necklace of fingers [Ps: the fingers of his victims].” This direct characterisation does in fact occur altogether six times (inclusive of one repetition, abbreviated in the Pāli text by *peyyālaṃ*) throughout the story. After its first appearance⁶⁷¹, the formula is repeated verbatim (and collectively) three times in the voices of some cowherds, shepherds, people working (ploughing) on a field, and travellers whom the Buddha meets on his way⁶⁷², and later on by a large crowd of people, the subjects of the king Pasenadi of Kosala⁶⁷³, and last by the king himself at his meeting with the Buddha and Aṅgulimāla⁶⁷⁴.

⁶⁶⁶ Cp. also Phelan 1989: 11.

⁶⁶⁷ Cp. Phelan 1989: Introduction, p. ix.

⁶⁶⁸ As cited in figure 3.3 in Neumann & Nünning 2008: 56.

⁶⁶⁹ MN II 97,24ff.

⁶⁷⁰ R. Gombrich, personal communication: “The trivialising translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi (1995: 710), “given to blows and violence” (*hatapahate niviṭṭho*) is not strong enough and does not carry the meaning of the Pāli.”

⁶⁷¹ MN II 97,23-98,2.

⁶⁷² MN II 98,7-14.

⁶⁷³ MN II 100,17-23.

⁶⁷⁴ MN II 101,6-10.

The relatively high number of repetitions of this same information, and the fact that it is repeated in different ‘voices’, from different perspectives and at different times in the progression of the story, is indicative of it as being a relatively stable character-information, respectively a ‘fact in the narrated world’.⁶⁷⁵ Therefore, the information is reliable, and even moreso because it is confirmed by the verses attributed to Aṅgulimāla himself.⁶⁷⁶ Thus, up to this point of the narrative, before his conversion by the Buddha, the text has established the character of Aṅgulimāla as being an unscrupulous, “bloody-handed” and merciless murderer (/ “robber”) before he has actually appeared as an acting character in the story. The insistence on this characterisation by different characters in the narrative seems furthermore to suggest a permanent character trait. We will see later in the story that this is not the case, but that it rather represents the public opinion (a phenomenon that is not entirely unheard of in the modern world).

In stark contrast to this stand the descriptions given of him later on in the *sutta*, after his conversion by the Buddha. One learns, for instance, that Aṅgulimāla serves as the Buddha’s attendant after his conversion and ordination on their way back to Sāvathī.⁶⁷⁷ Later on, in Jeta’s Grove near Sāvathī, *the* *sutta* presents (in a very formulaic expression) in what way Aṅgulimāla has changed, namely, into a proper “son of the Sakyan”: Outwardly his hair and beard are shaven (which could give us an interesting clue about his former appearance, if this was not the stock phrase for becoming a monk that it usually is in the *suttas*) and he wears the yellow robe. Inwardly, he has gone forth, has become completely dispassionate and has completely given up his former evil ways.⁶⁷⁸ Although the optative mode of the verb used (*passeyyāsi*) expresses a hypothetical condition, this is implicitly the Buddha’s characterisation of Aṅgulimāla. Furthermore,

⁶⁷⁵ Cp. Jannidis 2004: 205.

⁶⁷⁶ *Coro ahaṃ pure āsiṃ, aṅgulimāloti vissuto.* [= Th 880 a,b]

Vuyhamāno mahoghena, buddhaṃ saraṇamāgamaṃ.

Lohitapāṇi pure āsiṃ, aṅgulimāloti vissuto.

Saraṇagamanam passa, bhavanetti samūhatā.

(reading of the B^c(R); cp. also MN II 105 for the PTS edition’s reading)

⁶⁷⁷ MN II 100,13f.: *Atha kho Bhagavā āyasmatā aṅgulimālena pacchā samaṇena [...]*. Personal communication with Prof Gombrich: “That [*aṅgulimālena pacchā samaṇena*] means with Aṅgulimāla as his attendant: this is a regular duty of newly ordained monks.”

⁶⁷⁸ MN II 100,13f.: *Sace pana tvaṃ, mahārāja, aṅgulimālaṃ passeyyāsi kesamassuṃ ohāretvā kāsāyāni vatthāni acchādetvā agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajitaṃ, virataṃ pāṇātipātā, virataṃ adinnādānā, virataṃ musāvādā, ekabhattikaṃ, brahmacāriṃ, sīlavantaṃ, kalyāṇadhammaṃ, kinti naṃ kareyyāsīti?*

listeners/readers learn that something like this to happen is generally deemed impossible by public opinion, which in part II.2 is represented by King Pasenadi.⁶⁷⁹ This is the real miracle happening in the *sutta*. Because the listeners/readers also learn (through direct characterisation) that Aṅgulimāla and his renown was such that even a man as powerful as King Pasenadi, despite being accompanied by almost an entire army (*pañcamattehi assasatehi*)⁶⁸⁰, trembled at his sight.⁶⁸¹

Besides hinting at the image of frightfulness public opinion has fostered about Aṅgulimāla, the tinge of mockery in the Buddha’s comment on Pasenadi cannot possibly slip the attention of the experienced or observant listener/reader of this passage, when Pasenadi arrives to where the Buddha is dwelling with his “cavalry”: “What is it, maharaja? Is king Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadhā attacking you, or the Licchavis of Vesālī, or other hostile kings?”⁶⁸² Additionally, what is interesting to note is that Pasenadi obviously does not recognise Aṅgulimāla who is sitting among the other monks during the Buddha’s conversation with the king. Thus stating what one does not see, can also be quite telling – the king obviously acts upon hearsay, without himself knowing the enemy, so to speak, and it may very well be that the rigidity of the public opinion about Aṅgulimāla as represented by the explicit characterisation statement is suggested to be challenged by this mocking remark of the Buddha.⁶⁸³ Although Pasenadi did not recognise Aṅgulimāla, as soon as the Buddha points him out, the king becomes afraid: “Now, all the while, the venerable Aṅgulimāla was sitting not far from the Blessed One. Then, the Blessed One extended his right arm and said this to the king: ‘Maharaja, *this* is Aṅgulimāla.’ Then king Pasenadi became so (*eva*) frightened (*bhayaṃ*) that he was paralysed with fear (*chambhitattaṃ*) and his hairs stood on end (*lomahaṃso*).”⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁷⁹ King Pasendai says MN II 101,20f.: *Kuto panassa, bhante, dussīlassa pāpadhammassa evarūpo sīlasaṃyamo bhavissatīti?* “But how, venerable sir, could someone of bad conduct and evil intention become thus restrained by virtue?”

⁶⁸⁰ MN II 100,24f.: *Atha kho rājā Pasenadi Kosalo pañcamattehi assasatehi Sāvattihīyā nikkhami.*

⁶⁸¹ MN II 101,27f.: *Tena kho pana samayena āyasmā aṅgulimālo bhagavato avidūre nisinno hoti. Atha kho Bhagavā dakkhiṇaṃ bāhuṃ paggahevā rājānaṃ pasenadiṃ kosalaṃ etadavoca: eso, mahārāja, aṅgulimālōti. Atha kho rañño pasenadissa kosalassa ahudeva bhayaṃ, ahu chambhitattaṃ, ahu lomahaṃso.*

⁶⁸² MN II 101,3f.: »*Kin nu te mahārāja rājā Māgadho Senīyo Bimbisāro kupito, Vesālīkā vā Licchavī, aññe vā paṭirājāno tī?*

⁶⁸³ Alternatively, the passage could also be interpreted with regard to the relationship between the Buddha and Pasenadi, in that the Buddha’s ironic remark is intended to express his superiority over the king.

⁶⁸⁴ MN II 101,27f.: *Atha kho rañño Pasenadissa Kosalassa ahud eva bhayaṃ ahu chambhitattaṃ ahu lomahaṃso.*

If the intention inferred from the text's diction is understood in this way, that is, by assuming the position of the 'ideal narrative audience', and if one allows this retrospective 'reader response' to occur that the passage invites for, it does surely have an implication for how to read into the 'conversion' episode (part I.3) – it puts it into perspective: Aṅgulimāla's vileness is *not* a kernel or permanent trait of his personality. It is not the Buddha's "converting magic" that is to be demonstrated in this *sutta*. Otherwise, how could this fundamental change in Aṅgulimāla possibly happen through the Buddha's peaceful means? The Buddha just facilitates for Aṅgulimāla to realise the vileness of his actions and the illuoriness of the self-image he has cultivated. The insight, though, is Aṅgulimāla's alone.

By the same token, then, it is possible to interpret the passage in which Aṅgulimāla refuses to have king Pasenadi himself as his donor – which would, besides renown, most probably have meant regular meal-invitations to the palace – as proof that his change of heart is real and that he complies with the rules of the *saṅgha*, when he says: "Now at that time the venerable Aṅgulimāla was [already] a forest dweller, an almsfood eater, a refuse-rag wearer, and restricted himself to three robes. He replied: 'Enough, maharaja, my triple robe is complete.'"⁶⁸⁵ Again, the other implication the passage bears from the perspective of the 'authorial audience' is delivering the message that the king has no reason to be afraid that the *saṅgha* could become a safe haven for all sorts of criminals.

Still later, Aṅgulimāla, standardly expressed in the formulas of the Pāli language, through his own effort in seclusion becomes one of the *arahants*.⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸⁵ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 713,13. = MN II 102,12-15: *Tena kho pana samayena āyasmā Aṅgulimālo ārañṇako hoti piṇḍapātiko paṃsukūliko tecīvariko. Atha kho āyasmā Aṅgulimālo rājānaṃ Pasenadiṃ Kosalaṃ etad avoca: »Alaṃ, mahārāja; paripuṇṇaṃ me ticīvaraṃ ti.*

⁶⁸⁶ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 714,16.: "Before long dwelling alone, withdrawn, diligent, ardent, and resolute, the venerable Aṅgulimāla, by realising for himself with direct knowledge, here and now entered upon and abided in that supreme goal of the holy life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the home life into homelessness. He directly knew: 'Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.' And the venerable Aṅgulimāla became one of the arahants." = MN II 103,27-104,2: *Atha kho āyasmā Aṅgulimālo eko vūpakaṭṭho appamatto ātāpī pahitatto viharanto na cirass' eva yass' athāya kulaputtā sammadeva agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajanti, tad anuttaraṃ brahmacariyapariyosānaṃ diṭṭheva dhamme sayāṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja vihāsi. »Khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ, nāparaṃ itthattāyāti abbhaññāsi; aññataro kho paṇ' āyasmā Aṅgulimālo arahataṃ ahosi.* For the 'Arhat-formulae' cp. PED s.v. arahant: **II.B. + A.** For wordplay on the t.t. *arahant* see MN I 280,30ff.

So much for the more or less direct characterisation statements about Aṅgulimāla. There is, however, also other information to be gathered about a character in a given text which is not necessarily directly attributed to the character (i.e. to his name), but which are nevertheless related to it. Often the information is to be extracted, inferred, or interpreted from contextual information provided by the discourse.

For instance, Aṅgulimāla inhabits the forest (*mahāvanam*) as a robber.⁶⁸⁷ This means that here, at this stage of his career, he represents the wild/wilderness. The opposition ‘populated, civilized areas’ and ‘wilderness’ is a very old one in the ancient Indian context (starting already from the *Ṛg Veda*) and a common metaphor. In the context of Theravāda Buddhism, however, to live in the wilderness is one of the duties that come with being a monk⁶⁸⁸. But this implies an element of taming. And at this stage of the story Aṅgulimāla has been tamed already: He tamed himself by following the Buddha’s path of becoming an ascetic. In the exegetical Pāli tradition, one word, by edifying etymology derived from one and the same root, with two meanings has been also allegorically joined: *vana*, “wilderness, jungle, forest”, and *vana* “lust, desire”.⁶⁸⁹ In the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*, the reinterpretation virtually takes place through the transformation of the figure of Aṅgulimāla. Before, as a “wildling” (*ārañṇiko*) with a desire to kill, he was striking fear into the hearts of men; now, he leads the secluded life of an ascetic (*ārañṇiko*), one who has taken up special ascetic practices (*dhutaṅgā*).⁶⁹⁰

Furthermore, as a brigand, Aṅgulimāla is staying in the vicinity of a major or high road⁶⁹¹. This location indicates a certain distance from an inhabited place like a town or a village. In the

⁶⁸⁷ MN II 100,1f.: *Cirassaṃ vata me mahito mahesī,*

Mahāvanaṃ samaṇo paccupādi.

So ‘haṃ cajissāmi sahassapāpaṃ,

Sutvāna gāthaṃ tava dhammayuttaṃ.

⁶⁸⁸ MN II 102,12f.: *ārañṇiko: Tena kho pana samayena āyasmā aṅgulimālo ārañṇiko hoti piṇḍapātiko paṃsukūliko tecīvariko.*

⁶⁸⁹ Cp. PED, s.v. *vana* 1 & 2.

⁶⁹⁰ Cp. Cone 2010, s.v. *dhutaṅga* (487, II: 4.); the list and praise of 13 of such practices in the *Milindapañha* is surely a later development (cp. *ibid.* for references). Furthermore, the later distinction between hermits and those monks living in villages (*gāmārañṇāvāsino*) as “preachers” (*dhammakathikā*) is also a late development; cp. Geiger 1960: 202f. Thus, the practices Aṅgulimāla is said to have taken up (*ārañṇako*, *piṇḍapātiko*, *paṃsukūliko*, *tecīvarako*) were probably enjoined on all ordained monks in the early times of the *saṅgha*.

⁶⁹¹ Cp. PED s.v. *addhānamaggaṃ*: “a long road between two towns”; cp. *addhaṃ*: “stretch, length, both of space and time”.

ancient Indian conception of the organisation of human society, the space or stretch between two inhabited places is tantamount to wilderness (*araññaṃ*), which since Vedic times⁶⁹² naturally bears a connotation of savagery and danger as opposed to a settlement (*gāma*). One of the many epithets of the Buddha is quite apt in this connection, *dametar*⁶⁹³ “tamer”. While Buddhaghosa⁶⁹⁴ rather scholastically discusses where *araññaṃ* begins according to the different commentarial traditions, there are more vivid accounts of what makes life in the wilderness altogether possible for the monk, in the *Bhayabherava Sutta* (MN 4), the *Cetokhila Sutta* (MN 16), and the *Vanapattha Sutta* (MN 17). The recurring theme in these (and many) *suttas* is that only taming oneself, through ethically flawless behaviour and firm concentration of mind, is what makes one fit to live in the wilderness as a monk without being carried away by fear. In the first-mentioned *sutta*, the Buddha explains to a Brahmin in a lively first-person account that for a recluse before setting out to live in the wilderness it is absolutely necessary to assure himself of the purity of his heart and intention. Otherwise, fear and dread would certainly overcome him. In another passage, the Buddha describes his own experience when he was still an un-enlightened *bodhisatta*, and how he overcame fear (by steadfastly keeping on doing what he was just about to do):

“I considered thus: ‘There are the specially auspicious nights of the fourteenth, the fifteenth, and the eighth of the fortnight. Now what if, on such nights as these, I were to dwell in such awe-inspiring, horrifying abodes as orchard shrines, woodland shrines, and tree shrines? Perhaps I might encounter that fear and dread.’ And later, on such specially auspicious nights as the fourteenth, the fifteenth, and the eighth of the fortnight, I dwelt in such awe-inspiring, horrifying abodes as orchard shrines, woodland shrines, and tree shrines. And while I dwelt there, a wild animal would come up to me, or a peacock would knock off a branch, or the wind would rustle the leaves. I thought: ‘What now if this is the fear and dread coming?’ I thought: ‘Why do I dwell always expecting fear and dread? What if I subdue that fear and dread while keeping the same posture that I am in when it comes upon me?’ While I

⁶⁹² Cp. Grassmann, Hermann. 1999. *Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, s.v. *āraṇya*, according to which it originally meant remoteness (“Ferne”), and since the *Atharvaveda* also ‘wilderness’ (“Wildnis”).

⁶⁹³ Usually in the phrase *adantānaṃ dametā* “tamer of the untamed”, as used by Pasenadi; cp. e.g. MN II 102,20f. Cp. also one of the descriptions or designations of the Buddha in the ‘ten-names formula’ (“Zehn-Namen-Formel”, *daśanāmaka*) which is different in phrasing but carries the same meaning: *purisadammasāra-thi*, “charioteer for those who are to be tamed”, see Zin 2006: 4 (also for further references). However, here the Buddha is described rather as the one who leads the way or ‘drives’ the vehicle than the one who forcefully converts.

⁶⁹⁴ Vism 71f.: in general, he explains, a stone’s throw from the last house or the enclosure of any village marks the border of the village environment and, beyond that point, the wilderness.

walked, the fear and dread came upon me; I neither stood nor sat nor lay down till I had subdued that fear and dread. While I stood [...]. While I sat [...]. While I lay down, the fear and dread came upon me; I neither walked nor stood nor sat down till I had subdued that fear and dread.”⁶⁹⁵

The point is that in the Buddha’s system stress lays on the individual training⁶⁹⁶: To tame the wilderness for the Buddha means to tame the “wilderness of one’s own heart/mind”⁶⁹⁷. The only taming taking place is that the Buddha shows Aṅgulimāla that his raging in the wilderness is in fact a raging in his mind (he *himself is* the wilderness) and that it can come to a standstill, to peace. Here, a ‘thematic function’ of the character of the Buddha, respectively of his Teaching (*sāsana*), emerges: “Intention, monks, is what I call ‘karma’”.⁶⁹⁸ The Buddha’s *Dhamma* is permeated by this internalisation of ethics and actions.⁶⁹⁹ Thus, it would only be natural to find that this principle did also infuse the Buddha’s disciples, and via his disciples the scriptures of the

⁶⁹⁵ Tr. Nāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 104,20.

⁶⁹⁶ Cp. Ven. Rahula (quoted in Gombrich 2006b: 150): “Buddhism is purely a personal religion.” For the sake of completion, I must add that this quote stands in the context of the establishment of Buddhism in a foreign country, a theme which Prof. Gombrich discusses in his book *Therāvāda Buddhism* in the chapter ‘The Buddhist Tradition in Sri Lanka’. However, he argues further that the Buddhist teachings (*sāsana*) as the means for one’s personal liberation, in Theravāda Buddhism are always rooted and institutionalized in the *saṅgha*, which in turn is based in, and dependent on, the material world (and thus in institutions that first have to be founded/established in a new country).

⁶⁹⁷ Cp. the *Cetokhila Sutta*, MN 16.

⁶⁹⁸ Cp., once again, AN III 410: *Cetanā ’haṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi*.

⁶⁹⁹ Cp. Gombrich 2009: 55 et. seq.: Gombrich takes the term *āsava* to support his hypothesis that Jainism has had a massive influence on the Buddha and his teachings. In the context of the Jain idea that the ‘soul’ (*jīva*) is weighed down by these (impure) ‘influxes’ (*āsavā*) through/ of the (normally nearly unavoidable) actions of harming (*hiṃsā*) sentient beings, like dust sticking to something damp, the word makes perfect sense. In Buddhism, however, it does not, which is why Gombrich suggests the translation ‘corruptions’. As with many other terms, the Buddha adopted the term but gave it another meaning. The wording in the *Sabbāsava Sutta* (MN 2) supports the hypothesis that the Buddha may have reacted to ideas that were around already for some time. When he is reported to have said, *Jānato ahaṃ, bhikkhave, passato āsavānaṃ khayam vadāmi, no ajānato no apassato*, this makes the strong impression of being a kind of counterargument against a certain Jain formulation. Moreover, the whole *sutta* lends support to the idea that one of the most important and impressive contributions of the Buddha was his ability to abstraction and internalisation of ethics and morality, etc. As Gombrich formulates it: “But the Buddha rejected these austerities [Gombrich links the Buddha’s six years of practicing extreme asceticism with Jain practices], as he rejected brahmin rituals, because they dealt with externals. The Buddha’s great insight was that everything that matters happens in the mind.” (ibid.: 58) Gombrich makes the same suggestion for two more terms, the exact origin of which is not clear, *nāṇa-dassana* and *arahant*. All three terms are used in both Jainism and Buddhism in the context of describing the highest state/goal (ibid.: 65f.).

tradition and thus the presentation of the characters therein, since, in the light of this idea or novelty introduced by the Buddha, it was perhaps – for all its formulaic treatment – the inner life of the people that was more interesting than who people were and what they were doing.

The Buddha knows from the beginning that Aṅgulimāla's destiny will be rebirth in hell because of his evil deeds: "You are experiencing here and now the result of deeds because of which you might have been tortured in hell for many years, for many hundred years, for many thousand years."⁷⁰⁰ (That the Buddha does not enter the road leading to where Aṅgulimāla is by mere chance, is communicated by the text three times through repeating the same warning in part I.2 – the Buddha knew what he was doing, so to speak. This may serve as just another example of the 'showing' mode that is characteristic for the *suttas*: Situations and/or intentions of characters are seldom expressed directly – either by the characters themselves or through a narrator-comment – but 'shown'.) Aṅgulimāla has not reflected on his misdeeds so far, but is made aware of it by the Buddha's metaphorical illustration of the opposition "stopped ←→ not stopped". In early Buddhism, at least in the "ideal spirit" of early Buddhism, proselytisation by force does not exist.

Next is an investigation of the seminal passage of internal focalization that accounts for the crucial dramatic climax of the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*.

5.7 Internal Focalization

Moving forward, after this digression into a possible thematic aspect or dimension of the presentation of the character Aṅgulimāla, the time is ripe to return to the more interesting aspect, the 'mimetic' one.

One of my main arguments is that what makes a readers' experience of characters in many early Buddhist *suttas* such a lively experience is the presence in the texts of modes of presentation that skilfully minimise distance mainly either by a 'showing' mode of presentation (dialogues, direct speech and thought representation) or by the *sutta*-narrator's assuming the perspective of one of the characters ('focalization'). A striking, unusually extensive example is found in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* at MN II 98,27-100,12. The following provides a translation and an in-depth analysis of the passage:

⁷⁰⁰ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 715,17. = MN II 104,14-17.

Addasā kho coro Aṅgulimālo Bhagavantam dūrato va āgacchantam, disvān' assa etad ahosi: Acchariyaṃ vata bho, abbhutaṃ vata bho. Imam hi maggaṃ dasa pi purisā vīsatiṃ pi purisā tiṃsatiṃ pi purisā cattārīsam pi purisā paññāsam pi purisā saṃharitvā saṃharitvā paṭipajjanti, te pi mama hatthatthaṃ gacchanti; atha ca panāyam samano eko adutiyo pasayha maññe āgacchati. Yan nūnāhaṃ imam samanam jīvītā voropeyyan ti?

“The robber Aṅgulimāla saw the Blessed One coming in the distance. When he saw him, he thought: ‘It is [surprising], it is [astonishing]!’⁷⁰¹ Men have come along this road [after having gathered] in groups of ten, twenty, thirty, and even forty, but still they have fallen into my hands. But now this [ascetic] comes alone, unaccompanied, [forcibly, as it were]. Why shouldn’t I take this [ascetic’s] life?’⁷⁰²

Remember that the Buddha, staying near Sāvaththī, after finishing his meal, and casting all the warnings by the locals into the wind, sets out to meet Aṅgulimāla. Next, the narrating instance clearly assumes the stance or perspective of Aṅgulimāla. The following linguistic signs indicate this: the sentence-initial position of the verb form *addasā* “he saw” is not the usual position of a verb in the Pāli language, in which the word order is usually of the ‘SOV-type’ (subject – object – verb). Therefore, the deviation can be interpreted in the sense that it is intended or, at least, functions to raise attention to something – here, to the verbal action and thus the perceptual process that is occurring. The subject of the perception is Aṅgulimāla, addressed in the third person by the narrating instance (remember that the ‘voice’ and the ‘focalising instance’ do not always coincide). The phrase *dūrato va āgacchantam*, “coming in the distance”, betrays Aṅgulimāla’s physical position from which the happening is seen. Thus, the *sutta*-narrator presents the event as realised or perceived by a character, Aṅgulimāla. Schmid calls this parameter of perspective “spatial point of view”.⁷⁰³

Next, this same narrating voice becomes even more covert by directly giving the listener/reader access to Aṅgulimāla’s thoughts, introduced by the idiomatic speech-tag *assa etad*

⁷⁰¹ For a similar passage in the *Ghaṭikāra Sutta*, which suggests that we translate the words *acchariyaṃ* and *abbhutaṃ* in these contexts with “surprising” and “astonishing”, rather than with “wonderful” and “marvellous” (Bhikkhu Bodhi), cp. above, passim in ‘The presentation of characters in the *Ghaṭikāra Sutta*’.

⁷⁰² The translation is taken from Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 711,4., but modified where I thought it necessary as indicated by square brackets. For the meanings of *acchariyaṃ* and *abbhutaṃ* cp. CPD, s.v.; the Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi (2001) leaves out in his translation that the people had actually gathered, out of fear presumably, before entering the road where Aṅgulimāla was (“*saṃharitvā saṃharitvā*”).

⁷⁰³ Cp. Schmid 2008: 131 = 2010: 100f., which, according to Schmid, is the original import of the terms ‘point of view’ and ‘perspective’.

ahosi “the following [thought] appeared [in his mind]”. Furthermore, the language is indicative of colloquial speech, e.g. in the incomplete sentence “*Acchariyaṃ vata bho, abbhutaṃ vata bho*”, and the idiomatic expression “*pasayha maññe*”, “forcibly (i.e. wilfully), as it were”, as described above.⁷⁰⁴ Another clear indicator for Aṅgulimāla’s point of view is the fact that he addresses the Buddha as *samaṇa* “ascetic”. This indicates that Aṅgulimāla at this moment is not recognising who is crossing his way.⁷⁰⁵ The *sutta*-narrator never uses this designation for the Buddha, but instead always uses *Bhagavā*, etc. This means that here the *sutta*-narrator’s discourse is presenting not what he comprehends, but the character’s comprehension. Schmid’s model describes this phenomenon as the linguistic or “language parameter” of narrative perspective, which constitutes thus another clear marker of Aṅgulimāla’s point of view.⁷⁰⁶ Whether, however, one could interpret this also as an expression of Aṅgulimāla’s “ideological point of view”⁷⁰⁷ is no definite matter. Although the word *samaṇa*, “ascetic”, does often appear in the speech of Brahmins or adherents of other sects when addressing the Buddha, it is unclear in this particular instance whether Aṅgulimāla’s use of the word intends to express any judgement or just indicates his “linguistic point of view”, or, for that matter, his knowledge, namely, that he simply does not recognise the approaching as the Buddha himself. I opt for the latter explanation. Nevertheless, he seems to recognise him as an adherent of the Buddha by his outward appearance and to think highly of them, as one can infer from his statement: “These ascetics the sons of the Skayan are speakers of truth, they have a truth-vow.”⁷⁰⁸ Now, what makes this discussion highly interesting with regard to characterisation, is the implication that Aṅgulimāla does recognise the approaching as a Buddhist ascetic/monk without, however, recognising the identity of this particular “Buddhist monk”. Aṅgulimāla seems to discover his identity only through his performance

⁷⁰⁴ Schmid deals with this phenomenon under the heading ‘linguistic perspective’; cp. *ibid.*: 134. Although the adoption of this term for my analysis would surely be warranted, it has to be considered that in the *suttas* this aspect of perspective can only be relevant for the very broad distinction between character’s text and narrator’s text in general, because the cited phrase, e.g., is highly formulaic and cannot, or simply does not, serve as a feature individualising characters.

⁷⁰⁵ The commentator Buddhaghosa has obviously also picked this up; if, however, for linguistic or other reasons, he does not make clear; cp. Ps 331,23f.: *Kim pana the Bhagvantaṃ sañjānitvā etaṃ vadanti asañjānitvā ti? Asañjānitvā.*

⁷⁰⁶ Cp. Schmid 2008: 134f. = 2010: 103f.

⁷⁰⁷ Cp. *ibid.* 2008: 131ff. = 2010: 101f.

⁷⁰⁸ MN II 99,19f.

of a miracle (see below). This means, first, that although he has knowledge of the Buddha and his *saṅgha* he has obviously never met with the Buddha in person (which in turn, as an ancillary finding, corroborates Gombrich’s argument that the reading of the verse MN II 100,1f. is problematic, from a text-internal point of view⁷⁰⁹). Secondly, it could implicate an interesting fact about the Buddha himself, namely, that he was not distinguishable from any of his monks merely through his outward appearance. As a matter of fact, one can find further textual evidence for this hypothesis. I will return to this discussion in the Conclusion. Here, again, I suggest that for the time being one clearly distinguish between ‘facts of the narrated world’ and historical facts. (In any case, it is a matter of an inferred and not an explicitly stated fact of the narrated world. For the same reason I shall also refrain here from an interpretation or “rational explanation” of the miracle performed by the Buddha. My interest in the *suttas* in this book is not the excavation of a “realistic” historical core.)

The text goes on to depict what happens “through the prism”⁷¹⁰ Aṅgulimāla, interspersed with descriptions by the narrating instance⁷¹¹ but without leaving Aṅgulimāla’s perspective, thus presenting a somewhat extensive passage of what Genette termed “internal focalization”⁷¹². After Aṅgulimāla has decided that “this ascetic, coming alone” was an easy target, he takes up his sword and shield, buckles on his bow and quiver, and follows the Buddha “on the foot” (*Bhagavantam piṭṭhito piṭṭhito anubandhi*). But no matter how hard he tries, he is unable to catch the Buddha, because he performs “such a feat of his miraculous powers” (*tathārūpaṃ iddhābhisamkhāraṃ abhisamkāsi*) that it appears that although Aṅgulimāla is running with full power, the ascetic is walking at normal speed. Again, readers/listeners are presented directly with Aṅgulimāla’s thoughts:

“It is [surprising]; it is [astonishing]! Formerly, I could even catch up with a swift running elephant and seize it; I could catch up even with a swift running horse and seize it; I could catch up even with a

⁷⁰⁹ See n. 628 above.

⁷¹⁰ The metaphor is used by Schmid to describe the narratorial act of ‘seeing the world through the eyes of the character’ (= “perceptual point of view”), in other words, “it is the *subject* or the prism of perception through which the narrator sees the narrated world”; cp. Schmid 2010: 104.

⁷¹¹ In these passages, the *sutta*-narrator does not access directly the consciousness of the character to see through his eyes, but still, through a mixing of perspectives, i.e. through a mixing of the narrator’s text and the character’s text, as I will show in an example later on, the character’s consciousness is still indicated to be the object of the narrator’s presentation or perception; cp. Schmid 2010: 104.

⁷¹² Cp. Genette 1980: 189, et passim.

swift running chariot and seize it; I could catch up even with a swift running deer and seize it; but now, though I am walking as fast as I can, I cannot catch up with this [ascetic] who is walking at his normal pace!”⁷¹³

Eventually, he calls out, “Stop!” to the Buddha, and the Buddha replies enigmatically, “I have stopped, Aṅgulimāla, you stop too.” Aṅgulimāla, even more puzzled by this strange statement, thinks, “These ascetics the sons of the Sakyan are speakers of truth, they have a truth-vow. Now this one, though walking, says, ‘I have stopped, Aṅgulimāla. You stop, too!’ What if I asked him about it?”⁷¹⁴ In this way, the content of Aṅgulimāla’s thoughts about the happening is continuously the object of the *sutta*-narrator’s presentation or perception. This is a subtle but important distinction.⁷¹⁵ While the actual statement of the event of the miracle happening is now (as opposed to the beginning of the passage) presented from the point of view of the *sutta*-narrator (“Then **the Blessed One** performed **such a feat of his miraculous powers** [...]”), *how* it is perceived or experienced is reflected in, or expressed through, Aṅgulimāla’s “ideological” and “perceptual point of view” (“It is [surprising]; it is [astonishing]! Formerly, I could even catch up with a swift elephant [...]”). Moreover, the use of the same expression in both the narrator’s text and the character’s text (“although the Blessed one/this ascetic [seemed/seems] to walk at a normal pace, Aṅgulimāla/I, who is/am running with full power, is/am not able to catch him”⁷¹⁶) is noteworthy, for it indicates the mixing of two perspectives. However, it is unlikely that there is any authorial intentionality to it.

The direct speech following upon the presentation of Aṅgulimāla’s thoughts commences a versified dialogue between the two, which eventually leads to Aṅgulimāla’s conversion and, shortly thereafter, his ordination, and thus embodies his actual conversion. It is the actual expression of his change of heart already anticipated in his statement that the sons of the Buddha are “speakers of truth, they have a truth-vow”. In the famous verse, Th 867 the pun “stopped ←→

⁷¹³ Tr., with minor modifications, Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 711, 5.

⁷¹⁴ MN II 98,27-100,12.

⁷¹⁵ Cp. Schmid 2010: 104f.

⁷¹⁶ MN II 99,8-10 & 15f.: coro Aṅgulimālo/ ahaṃ Bhagavantam/ imaṃ samaṇaṃ pakatiyā gacchantam sabbatthāmena gacchanto na sakkoti/ sakkomi sampāpuṇiṭṭam. Note furthermore the present tense (sakkoti) in the narrator’s text, which clearly adds to the immediacy of the presentation of the event (but which from a historical-critical viewpoint might be explained as a copy error through analogy).

not-stopped” (*thito*—*aṭṭhito*) signifies the Buddha’s complete abstention from harming other beings (*thito*). Aṅgulimāla, on the other hand, is completely unrestrained towards living beings and therefore “not-stopped” (*aṭṭhito*). The following is a modified translation of the dialogue based on Norman’s Th translation⁷¹⁷:

“While walking, ascetic, you say ‘I am standing still’; and about me, who is standing, you say that I am not standing still. I ask you this, ascetic, ‘in what way are you standing still and I am not standing still?’”

“I am always standing still, Aṅgulimāla, having given up violence towards all beings; but you are unrestrained towards all living creatures. Therefore, I am standing still, you are not standing still.”

“Truly it is [now] a long time since the great seer [who is now (time of enunciation)] honoured by me entered the great wood. Having heard your verse, which [taught] what is right, I [thought (itveva) that I] will abandon my numerous evils.”

[sutta-narrator:] [itveva see foregoing verse!] Then the robber hurled his sword and other weapons down a hole, a precipice, a chasm. The robber paid homage to the well-farer’s feet. On that very spot he asked the Buddha for admission to the Order.

And then the Buddha, the compassionate great seer who is the teacher of the world including the devas, said to him, “Come, monk”; this in itself was bhikkhu-status for him.

With this dialogue, the most dramatic and crucial part with regard to Aṅgulimāla’s conversion in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* ends. As seen earlier, however, the verses relating this significant event are in parts problematic. Nevertheless, one can get a general picture of what the text wants to express. The commentator also specifies the kind of insight that had occurred to Aṅgulimāla, perhaps because the little pun seemed too minimalistic to explain such a dramatic insight. He is once again not at all hesitant to ascribe motivations and thoughts to the characters. Buddhaghosa explains, in short, that either the Buddha had meant to express, or that Aṅgulimāla had realised in that moment (which of the two the text does not make explicitly clear, although the first mentioned seems to be more likely), that *aṭṭhito si* implicated that, although regarding boldly posture Aṅgulimāla is standing still, he will nevertheless run into hell, into rebirth as an animal, into the realm of the unhappy ghosts, or into the state of being a demon [as the karmic result his evil actions]. Thereupon (i.e. having heard these words, or having thought these thoughts?) the realisation dawns upon Aṅgulimāla that such a “lion’s roar” can be no other’s than the lion’s

⁷¹⁷ Cp. Norman 1969: 82f. (vv. 866-871). See also above, ch. 5.5, “A critical verse”, for my attempt at reinterpreting this versified account from a narratological perspective.

roar of the Buddha Gotama himself. Surely, Aṅgulimāla thinks, he must have seen me with his very sharp eye, and now has come to me out of kindness. That is why, Buddhaghosa glosses, “he said, ‘At last, for my sake’ (*cirassaṃ vata me*), and so forth.”⁷¹⁸

Now, there are several interesting aspects to the phenomenon of internal focalization. The first pertains to the fact that narrative theory calls the presentation of the thoughts of a character one of the ‘signposts of fictionality’, because such a phenomenon as having access to the mind of others is not possible in everyday-reality. There are several explanations for this. One made earlier is that what passages of internal focalization in pre-modern texts actually present are the motivations underlying the actions of characters, which become clear from the actual, physical and/or verbal actions narrated afterwards. This translates to a simple and straight line from motivation or trait to narrative action. Modern Western literature is said to be specifically characterised by a more complicated relationship between trait and actions and by the condition that those two do not have to be identical at all. Very often in the modern Western novel tradition, the traits of a character contradict each other or remain just ‘dimensions’ (i.e. they do not lead to actions at all, or the character’s actions contradict her/his inner states or thoughts, attitudes, etc.). Interestingly, in this *sutta*, Aṅgulimāla’s conversion does not seem to have much to do with his former intention to kill the Buddha – for what reason he wants to kill him, the text itself, never mind the commentary, does not even state unambiguously. The question here is who has access to Aṅgulimāla’s mind? The answer must be: an omniscient narrator. Alternatively, was what was perhaps remembered by someone to have been narrated by the *thera* Aṅgulimāla himself on some occasion, put again into Aṅgulimāla’s thoughts by the redactors/authors of the Pāli Canon, and, if so, why was it put into another ‘voice’ then? Or does it, as often happens in the Canon or in the Commentaries, just represent what Aṅgulimāla was allegedly thinking? But then, by whom was it so alleged? Be that as it may – what this episode at least reveals is that some redaction must have taken place.

⁷¹⁸ Ps III 333,11-17: *Idāni iriyāpathena ʻhito pi “niraye dhāvissasī ti tiracchānāyoniyam pettivisaye asurakāye” dhāvissasī ti vuttaṃ hoti. Tato coro mhāyam sīhanādo mahantaṃ gajjitaṃ na idaṃ aññassa bhavissati mahāmāyāya pana puttassa Siddhatthassa samaṇarañño etaṃ gajjitaṃ diṭṭho vat’ amhi maññe tikkhiṇacakkhunā sambuddhena saṅgahakaraṇatthaṃ me Bhagavā āgato ti cintevā cirassaṃ vata me ti ādiṃ āha.*

The problem here is partly a typical aspect of pre-modern narration in an oral culture: After some time has passed, it becomes more and more difficult to trace an utterance back to its exact origin. (The other potential problem of oral transmission, namely that the content of what is to be transmitted undergoes slight alterations with each transmission, is most probably not true for the highly conservative Theravāda tradition with its highly trained experts, the *bhāṇakas*.) While the oral origin of the *sutta* narration may have been something like a multi-perspectival, many-voiced or ‘polyphonic’ situation, the transmission process with its continuous linguistic revision, its ‘smoothing out’, and formalisation of its texts, has created a situation which resembles the structure (i.e. the double-structured narrative communication) of fictional texts. Although in a strict sense there is no narrator-figure in a Pāli *sutta*, structurally it appears as if there was one.⁷¹⁹

Secondly, the passage above stretches over nearly one printed book page (exclusive the versified dialogue immediately following it)⁷²⁰, which is, crudely put, “an awful lot” of internal focalization focusing on one character for a pre-modern, non-Western narrative. Now, while I do not think that this presentation was consciously intended to facilitate a listener’s/reader’s identification specifically with the individual Aṅgulimāla (difficulties may accrue from identifying with a serial killer), I believe that similar to what we have seen in the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta*, internal focalization is used to dramatically highlight a narrated situation or event, and thus serves the progression of the narrative.

Indirectly, listeners/readers learn something about Aṅgulimāla’s state of mind in a later passage too, in which Aṅgulimāla returns from an alms-round (part II.5) during which he was attacked by some villagers who had probably recognized him as the former murderer Aṅgulimāla. Obviously, the Buddha has to cheer up Aṅgulimāla, who returns with his head broken and bleeding, his robe torn, and his begging-bowl broken. Only after the Buddha encourages him to endure it, press on and assures him that what had just happened was a good sign, and necessary at that (which means that he had now purified karma, which otherwise would have led him directly into hell), Aṅgulimāla retreats into seclusion (to meditate) and experiences the bliss brought about by liberation. Then, he has reached the final goal with all karmic traces eliminated, which gives rise to an in parts quite individual “solemn utterance” (*udānaṃ udānesi*) that ends

⁷¹⁹ Cp. below, Part III, n. 163.

⁷²⁰ MN II 98,27-99,23.

the *sutta* with a summarising statement, as it were, of Aṅgulimāla’s career from a bloody-handed robber to an *arahant*.

Pasenadi’s behaviour in part II.2 also sheds some light on his character. Similar to his presentation in the *Piyajātika Sutta*, here again the king seems to not believe that the Buddha(s) always speak(s) true. Aṅgulimāla, by contrast, does: “These ascetics the sons of the Skayans are speakers of truth; they have a truth-vow”⁷²¹. Add to this that he is rather outthought by the Buddha when it comes to Aṅgulimāla’s criminal persecution. (We will see another example in chapter 6, in the *Piyajātika Sutta*. There, queen Mallikā has to elucidate the meaning of a short statement of the Buddha through basic, practical examples.) Thus, a picture of Pasenadi starts to emerge as a character whose traits may be described as being a basically good person but not terribly smart or a quick thinker.

Concerning the character of Aṅgulimāla, one can once more discern the theme of trust and faith (*saddhā*) in the Buddha that appears to be a prerequisite in order to enter the path pointed out by him. Aṅgulimāla’s seemingly trivial statement expressing his belief that, “these ascetics the sons of the Skayans are speakers of truth, they have a truth-vow”, is crucial for the ‘ideal narrative audience’s’ understanding of and trust in the mere possibility of the whole process of his ‘conversion’ and future spiritual career. Had Aṅgulimāla not had the very idea that some truth lies in the ascetic’s words, the story would not have a compelling reason to go on – either he would have killed the Buddha (which is, of course, impossible for genre-conventional reasons, as one may know from the stories about Devadatta), or he would have just left the scene

⁷²¹ MN II 99,19f. *sacca-paṭiññā* is translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi as “[they] assert truth” (Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 711,5.); Horner has “approving of truth” (Horner 1956: 286). However, my translation of the *bahubbhī*-compound is also justifiable and perhaps closer to the ‘intention of the text’ because we are invited to ‘see’ from Aṅgulimāla’s perspective in this passage, and speaking the truth and keeping vows of truth plays a very important role as a Cultural Code, as we have seen in ch. 5.4, when discussing some parallels of the Aṅgulimāla-story in the Jātakas.

(like Upaka the Ājīvika, the first person the Buddha met after his experience of Enlightenment⁷²²). His faith or trust, however, is what ultimately saves him (= the story-level), but it is also what propels the miracle-story to continue (= the discourse-level; otherwise, there would not have been a reason for the versified dialogue, MN II 99,25-100,12, to occur); this is the actual miracle happening in the *sutta*. It demonstrates the very concept of *saddhā*, faith, in the Buddha and his claim to have discovered the truth.⁷²³ Faith, but not blind belief as also seen in the *Piyajātika Sutta*, is metaphorically said to be the “seed of all wholesome states”, and it is one of the five *indriyāni* or “faculties”.⁷²⁴ In a famous verse in the *Dhammapada*, it is said: “By you the effort must be made, the Buddha(s) are the teachers [i.e., they only show the way].”⁷²⁵

Another interesting question suggests itself following a subjective reading-experience: Why do I, as reader of the *Āṅgulimāla Sutta*, even sympathise with Āṅgulimāla – a man who has brutally murdered hundreds at certain moments in the text –, for instance, when he sees the labouring woman, or when he is attacked by the villagers? It is because of a “trick” of the text, I propose: the mimetic aspect. The text invites the listener/reader to adopt Āṅgulimāla’s perspective through employing the technique of internal focalization, and at a very early and crucial point in the plot at that (i.e. his encounter with the Buddha, leading to the ‘primacy effect’) – no force is used, no Yakka appears and threatens to split his head into seven pieces, and Āṅgulimāla penetrates by himself to the truth – he changes by himself through the help of the Buddha, not by force. The audience is thus guided by the text to the understanding that Āṅgulimāla possesses a

⁷²² In the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*, the just recently awakened Buddha meets Upaka, an adherent of the Ājīvikas and boasts about his experience, stating that he is ‘self-enlightened’, etc. Upaka, seemingly unimpressed by all this just replies, “That might be so”, and goes his way. MN I 170f: *Atha khvāhaṃ bhikkhave uruvelāyaṃ yathābhirantaṃ viharitvā yena bārāṇasī tena cārikaṃ pakkamiṃ. Addasā kho maṃ bhikkhave upako ājīvako antarā ca gayam antarā ca bodhiṃ addhānamaggapaṭipannaṃ. Disvāna maṃ etadavoca: vipasannāni kho te āvuso indriyāni, parisuddho chavivaṇṇo pariyodāto. Kaṃsi tvaṃ āvuso uddissa pabbajito? Ko vā te satthā? Kassa vā tvaṃ dhammaṃ rocesīti? Evaṃ vutte ahaṃ bhikkhave upakaṃ ājīvakaṃ gāthāhi ajjhabhāsīṃ: [...] Mādisā ve jinā honti ye pattā āsavakkhayaṃ, Jitā me pāpakā dhammā tasmāhaṃ upakā jino ’ti. Evaṃ vutte bhikkhave upako ājīvako ‘huveyyapāvuo’ ti vatvā sīsaṃ okampetvā ummaggaṃ gahetvā pakkāmi.*

⁷²³ For this claim and the Buddha’s general advice against blindly following hearsay or traditional ‘truths’ (i.e. the *Veda*), the *Caṅkī Sutta* (MN 95) may serve as an illustrative example.

⁷²⁴ Cp. Nyanatiloka 1980: s.v. *saddhā*; “faith” is the first of the five so-called faculties or ‘powers’ (which are: *saddhā*, faith; *viriyā*, energy; *sati*, mindfulness; *samādhi*, concentration, and *paññā*, wisdom); see also Sn 77 (tr. Norman 1995: 9): “Faith is the seed, penance is the rain, wisdom is my yoke and plough; modesty is the pole, mind is the (yoke-)tie, mindfulness is my ploughshare and goad.”

⁷²⁵ Cp. DhP 276.

good core, and that the nature of his being is not really that of a mass-murderer or, if it is, then even mass-murderers have the potential to reach liberation from *samsāra*. However, the text does not suggest that this is something which could or should be generalised (remember the *Vinaya*-rule). Therefore, Horner's conclusion that Aṅgulimāla must be a special case is perhaps not so much beside the point. It is thus the text itself and the manner of the composition of its discourse (i.e. a strong emphasis on the 'mimetic aspect' through the narrative technique of focalization) that invite the reader to take part in the mimetic illusion and make Aṅgulimāla such a lively and life-like character. Traditionally, then, these techniques contribute to this impression: First and foremost, internal focalization; the inherent potential of the character to change, combined with a rather dramatic change, that is, E. M. Forster's famous statement of the ability of the character to surprise us. Aṅgulimāla surprises us because, when he encounters the Buddha, without recognising him as the Buddha, the text has already established Aṅgulimāla's traits of character as "gruesome/fierce, bloody-handed etc." In the following events, he shows quite opposed features, like empathy, compassion, repentance, and last not least, unshakeable faith in the Buddha as the Awakened One.

5.8 Conclusion and Prospects

In the end, it is precisely Aṅgulimāla's development as a character that makes his story so fascinating. He seems to be a 'flat' character in the beginning, as is expressed by the stereotype formula at the beginning of the *Sutta* translated above. But after, and most of all due to, his encounter with the Buddha, things take an unexpected turn. The question back then might be just as relevant nowadays, judging from frequent controversies regarding the rehabilitation of prisoners, for example: How is it possible that a mass-murderer turns into a placid monk? On the website of the British Buddhist Prison Chaplaincy, which even goes under the name 'Aṅgulimāla', after a summary of a mixture of the contents of the actual canonical *sutta* and the commentarial 'background-story'⁷²⁶, we read the following:

⁷²⁶ All of the summaries Aṅgulimāla available to a wider public published in the World Wide Web mix the background-story given in the commentaries with the actual account in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*. See, e.g., <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/disciples01.htm>. Often these accounts omit details of the (main) story and sometimes add details, which can nowhere be found in the original text, like the following: "He simply smiled and continued on his way", or "The terrible things that he had done and the wretchedness of his life dawned on Angulimala and he broke down and sobbed" (see <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/disciples10.htm>).

“The story of Angulimala teaches us that the possibility of Enlightenment may be awakened in the most extreme of circumstances, that people can and do change and that people are best influenced by persuasion and above all, example.”⁷²⁷

In any case, whoever Aṅgulimāla might have been historically, it is safe to say that the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* reads – apart from the formulaic expressions mentioned – as a highly individualised account. The emphasis in this *sutta* clearly is on Aṅgulimāla as an individual. This effect is especially achieved through the narrative technique of internal focalization. This stands in direct opposition to the theme of another *sutta*, the *Piyajātika Sutta*, which will be seen in the following chapter, in which one of the main characters could be described as “Mr Everyman”. Aṅgulimāla is clearly a ‘round character’ in E. M. Forster’s sense: he changes (dramatically) and the reader is even invited to share in his struggle through the presentation of his thoughts, be it in the passage on the eve of his conversion or when the Buddha encourages him to be steadfast after he had been badly attacked by the villagers. What also makes the character Aṅgulimāla unique is that his story is one of the rare actual cases of *ahosi-kamma*, beyond its mere theoretical possibility.

Monika Zin and Richard Gombrich in their studies both focus on Aṅgulimāla’s identity. Not, however, in the sense of a purely (intra-)textual aspect of re-cognition of characters, but on his probable/likely real-life identity (even if, in the case of Zin, the “real-life” origin of Aṅgulimāla is a text or a legend: the *Kalmāṣapāda* and other narratives, from which Aṅgulimāla has been “synthesized” over time). Certainly, the textual evidence alone is not sufficient to establish the factuality of its statements in the real, physical world (even if, however, in the case of the Pāli *suttas*, it is likely). Although the interest in Aṅgulimāla’s real-life identity is, as a matter of fact, a natural one and an appropriate question for the historian of religion, one can sidestep this complex problem without missing out on anything of Aṅgulimāla’s story and its purport in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*. On the contrary, in researching texts, Biblical studies have established the synchronic analysis as a precondition for all follow-up questions on the text. Thus, accordingly, what could otherwise be regarded as incoherence of a character in a given text allegedly caused

⁷²⁷ <http://angulimala.org.uk/the-story-of-angulimala/> (last accessed: 11th May 2013).

by its diachronic development, may eventually just prove as the judgement of the character by the “wrong” personality concept.⁷²⁸

The interpretation thus far is partly based on the structuralist theory of characters because it avoids speculation about the ‘mimetic aspect’ of the character⁷²⁹ and concentrates on the ‘mechanics’ of characterisation (proper name + attribute/trait = literary character), and partly on the specific idea of man in ancient India, respectively especially in the Buddhist context, because it is evident that the model of the *ariya-puggalā* demarcates the limits, or determines the possible directions, of the character-development. However, what is striking about this *sutta* – and what thus makes it so appealing through the times – is that in one particular aspect it does go even beyond this otherwise rigid pattern, and *Āṅgulimāla* is able to surprise readers/listeners, as would befit a ‘round character’ in Forster’s sense, within the framework of the *ariya-puggalā*. The important moment of *Āṅgulimāla*’s insight is the decisive factor for all that follows; from the moment of his “conversion” on, the rest happens seemingly automatically. *Āṅgulimāla* is one of the very rare instances in which all the evil deeds/negative *kamma* one has done are outweighed by just one good (*kusalena*) – the ‘good’ here being not an action, but insight.

⁷²⁸ Cp. Grabes 1978: 418: “In diesem Fall haben wir es mit dem sogenannten ‚Bruch‘ im Charakter oder mit einer gewollten Zerstörung der Einheit der Figur zum Zwecke der Bewußtmachung des hier geschilderten Konstitutionsprozesses zu tun [cp. Grabes 1978: 417 (previous page)]. Allerdings ist hinzuzufügen, daß die Fähigkeit, zunächst widersprüchliche oder disparat erscheinende Informationen über eine Figur dennoch zu synthetisieren, mindestens so sehr von der ‚impliziten Persönlichkeitstheorie‘ des Lesers und seiner ‚kognitiven Komplexität‘ abhängt wie von der Art und Reihenfolge der aus dem Text zu entnehmenden Informationen. **Es kann demnach leicht zur Konstatierung eines ‚Charakterbruchs‘ kommen, wenn man den Synthetisierungsversuch mit Hilfe einer völlig anderen Persönlichkeitstheorie unternimmt, als sie der Autor beim Konzipieren seiner literarischen Figuren benutzt hat.** Ein typisches Beispiel dafür etwa ist der untaugliche Versuch, an die Gestalt des Lear in Shakespeares Komödie die Forderung nach psychologisch konsequentem Verhalten anzulegen. Man kommt dann auf die umständlichsten Spekulationen, um die vermeintliche Inkonsistenz des Charakters aus der Entstehungsgeschichte des Stückes, der Herkunft des Stoffes usw. zu erklären. Dabei genügt es völlig die Figurenkonvention des rhetorisch ausgerichteten elisabethanischen Theaters, die eine direkte und offene Selbstaussprache einer Figur in bezug auf ihr Inneres, ihre Gedanken und Gefühle, trotz aller psychologischen Unglaubwürdigkeit nicht nur erlaubte, sondern voraussetzte, in die Beurteilung des Lear einzubeziehen, um Lears Verhalten gegenüber Cordelia zu verstehen und den ‚Charakterbruch‘ zu eliminieren. Die kognitive Komplexität des Lesers bestünde in diesem Fall darin, über die zu seiner Zeit vorherrschende Persönlichkeitstheorie hinaus noch eine weitere, zur Entstehungszeit des Textes übliche, zur Verfügung zu haben.” [my emphasis]

⁷²⁹ Cp. Phelan 1989: 4, and Chapter 3.1.1 above. Moreover, the question does not even have to arise: That the narrative explores or employs or presents *Āṅgulimāla* as a possible person, with an inner life, with thoughts and emotions, etc., is a narrative end in itself (‘mimetic aspect’ of character) and does not (and perhaps did not even intend to) tell us anything about a (possible!) historical person.

To put the theme into another popular Buddhist context, the debate between gradual and spontaneous realisation of the Buddha's Path: What the moment of Aṅgulimāla's conversion signifies is a spontaneous, direct insight that has a massive effect: In 'seeing the Buddha, Aṅgulimāla beholds the *Dhamma*' – after having seen the goal, what remains for him to do is remove the subtle obstacles, habitual tendencies, etc. which prevent him from realising the goal for himself. Analyzed further, the *sutta* would move in the context of the 'insight' versus 'concentration' discussion and the division of the monks into meditators and scholars, and the question of how, why or under which circumstances enlightenment can be reached without (too much) meditation (i.e. without experiencing the *jhānas*).⁷³⁰

⁷³⁰ Cp. Gombrich: "Retracing an Ancient Debate: How Insight Worsted Concentration in the Pali Canon." In: Gombrich 2006a: 96-134.

6. The presentation of characters in the *Piyajātika Sutta* (MN 87)

In this chapter we will look at a very interesting piece among the ‘narrative *suttas*’ of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the *Piyajātika Sutta*. The focus in this chapter will be on ‘narrative progression’ and the role of characters therein.

Therefore, it may be good to start the chapter off with a quote from J. Phelan about his definition of narrative progression, and thereby set the stage for the following analysis of the *sutta*:

“Progression, as I use the term, refers to a narrative as a dynamic event, one that must move, in both its telling and its reception, through time. In examining progression, then, we are concerned with how authors generate, sustain, develop, and resolve readers’ interests in narrative. I postulate that such movement is given shape and direction by the way in which an author introduces, complicates, and resolves (or fails to resolve) certain instabilities which are the developing focus of the authorial audience’s interest in the narrative. Authors may take advantage of numerous variables in the narrative situation to generate the movement of a tale. In general, the story-discourse model of narrative helps to differentiate between two main kinds of instabilities: the first are those occurring within the story, instabilities between characters, created by situations, and complicated and resolved through actions. The second are those created by the discourse, instabilities—of value, belief, opinion, knowledge, expectation—between authors and/or narrators, on the one hand, and the authorial audience on the other. To recognize this difference in kind I reserve the term ‘instabilities’ for unstable relations within story and introduce the term ‘tension’ for those in discourse.”⁷³¹

6.1 Introduction

The *Piyajātika Sutta* is the 87th *sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and is, like the two *Ghaṭikāra* and the *Aṅgulimāla Suttas*, found in the *Rājavagga* or “Section on Kings”. The *sutta* is dominated by a single theme, indicated by the title of the *sutta*, “That which is born from those who are dear [to one] (*piyakjātika*)”: the loss of loved one’s, and the right or wrong views of what are the consequences of holding, and losing, someone dear. The *sutta* can be divided into two main parts⁷³² (MN II 106,1-107,21 and 107,21-112,7) according to its two different settings in which the theme

⁷³¹ Phelan 1989: 15.

⁷³² I.e. strictly speaking, into three different parts; see the detailed analysis of the content and the structure below.

is explored. The first part narrates the story of a householder who mourns the loss of his dear little son. The second part, then, situated in the palace of Pasenadi, the King of Kosala and Kāsī, has the Buddha himself as well as Pasenadi's queen Mallikā explicate a short utterance made by the Buddha to the householder in part I in more detail by means of analogy.

Some scholars have summarised the *sutta* as being an explanation as to *why* sorrow and pain arise from dear ones.⁷³³ However, in my understanding of the text, the “explication by analogy” (*pariyāyena*) does not provide a proper explanation as to *why*, but does rather state *how*, or simply the fact *that*, the loss of a loved one is and has always been a cause for pain (*dukkha*). What is more, the Buddha is not said anywhere in the text to have advised against holding someone dear. Even if it is within the realm of possibilities to come to this conclusion, it is not explicitly taught or advised in the *sutta*, but is presented simply as a “natural” consequence of certain attitudes and actions. The Buddha is said at many places in the Canon to have simply stated “how things are” (*yathābhūtaṃ*), which is perhaps characteristic for his first Noble Truth which diagnoses the existence of the ubiquitous unsatisfactory nature of the human condition (*dukkha*). The story of the *Piyajātka Sutta* thus also illustrates that certain existential truths are not necessarily something that everybody can or wants to accept simply because it's the truth. It is sometimes also very true that the truths taught by the Buddha can be quite counter-intuitive.

6.2 The Commentary

The commentary to the *Piyajātika Sutta* is perhaps worth mentioning only insofar as it counts among the shortest of the *sutta*-commentaries found in the *Papañcasūdanī* (Ps).⁷³⁴ My hypothesis is that the great commentator Buddhaghosa did not really find too much in the *sutta* that seemed to him worth commenting on. Perhaps for him, I presume, the *sutta* just contained very little of what could have been relevant for doctrinal discussion and elucidation (except really for the Buddha's short statement, “So it is, householder, so it is! Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and

⁷³³ Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 70: “87. *Piyajātika Sutta*: Born from Those Who Are Dear. Why the Buddha teaches that sorrow and grief arise from those who are dear.” And Anālayo (2011: 502): “[...] the ‘discourse on [the consequences that] arise from affection’, explains why sorrow arises from those one holds dear.”

⁷³⁴ Ps III 344-346.

despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear” – the *sutta*’s sole doctrinal theme).⁷³⁵ My assumption is perhaps corroborated by thematic considerations. The Ven. Bhikkhu Anālayo records that one parallel version of our *sutta* in the *Ekottarika-Āgama*, “seems to draw out the implications of the short comment made by the Buddha in the other versions [in the Chinese Canon and the Pāli *sutta*], where he only gives a brief pointer to the first Noble Truth, in the sense that dissociation from what is liked causes the arising of *dukkha* [...]”, and he refers to a similar statement at SN V 421,22, which says, “separation from pleasure/whom one holds dear is suffering” (*piyehi vippayogo dukkho*).⁷³⁶ In other words, the *Piyajātika Sutta* was obviously held to be “just” an exemplification of the first Noble Truth of suffering (*dukkha*).

The Pāli text itself has two minor difficulties, both of which the commentary explains unsatisfactorily. The first is the term *aññathattam* “change, alteration” in a short statement the Buddha is said to have directly addressed to the householder⁷³⁷, and the effect of his disproportionate (i.e. disproportionate in the eyes of the Buddha) grief. The term is explained by the commentary in the following manner: *Aññathattanti vivaṇṇatāya aññathābhāvo* “[the term] *aññathattam* means *aññathābhāvo* (‘change of state’)⁷³⁸ due to/with regard to *vivaṇṇatā*” (= paleness⁷³⁹? Perhaps the colour of the skin of the householder was pale suggesting a state of sickliness?). While the Pāli text does not seem to be corrupt,⁷⁴⁰ the exact translation of the phrase is not entirely clear. The Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi offers the following translation of the respective sentence addressed by the Buddha to the householder in the *sutta*, in its diction closely following the original Pāli: “Householder, your faculties are not those of one in control of his own mind. Your faculties are

⁷³⁵ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 718; MN II 106,17f.: *Evam etaṃ, gahapati* [B^o(R), B^m repeat *evam etaṃ, gahapati*]; *piyajātikā hi, gahapati, sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā* [B^m s-ūpāyāsā] *piyappabhavikā ti*.

⁷³⁶ Anālayo 2011: 503, n. 306.

⁷³⁷ MN II 106,10f.: *Na kho te, gahapati, sake citte ṭhitassa indriyāni atthi; te indriyānaṃ aññathattan ti*; for a detailed discussion of the phrase, see below.

⁷³⁸ Cp. CPD, s.v. *aññathābhāva* = antonym: *itthabhāva*; synonym: *vipariṇāma* “change (for the worse); vicissitude”.

⁷³⁹ The other meaning of the word *vivaṇṇatā* (Skt. *vivarṇatā*, see MW s.v.) recorded in MW is: “a low condition of life”, which does not fit the context here. For other possible meanings, no references are give in Apte (s.v. *vivarṇa*).

⁷⁴⁰ There are no variant readings of this passage given in either the apparatus of the PTS edition or in the two editions that I have consulted (PTS, ChS), except for a slightly different punctuation in the print editions of the PTS and the electronic ChS version, which are, however, anyway secondary editorial addenda. The ChS has: “*na kho te, gahapati, sake citte ṭhitassa indriyāni, atthi te indriyānaṃ aññathattanti*, while the PTS edition reads: *Na kho te, gahapati, sake citte ṭhitassa indriyāni atthi; te indriyānaṃ aññathattan ti*.

deranged.”⁷⁴¹ I. B. Horner translated quite literally: “Have not you, householder, controlling faculties for stilling your own mind? There is a change in your faculties.”⁷⁴² The statement seems terse, and the nominal style sounds rather cumbersome and “abhidharmic”, especially when one considers this comment being pronounced in a conversation.

Nevertheless, the translation very much depends on one’s interpretation of the terms *aññathattaṃ* and *indriyāni*, the first of which often occurs in contexts that indicate deterioration of some kind or change for the worse, specifically with regard to the mind or mental states.⁷⁴³ *Indriya*, on the other hand, has as its basic meaning (in Pāli as well as in Skt.) “power”, “faculty”, or “controlling principle”, but is also often short for “the five senses” (*cakkhu’ndriya*)⁷⁴⁴, which is a derived or specialised meaning (in the plural, *indriyāni*) together with other specific ‘faculties’ and factors.⁷⁴⁵

Therefore, as a working translation, I translate literally: “You do not have/possess, householder, the faculties of one who remains standing [firmly] within his own mind [i.e. perhaps: you are “out of your mind”]. Your faculties are clouded.”

The second problem concerns the imperative or verbal order *cara pi re*, perhaps “off with you!”, uttered by the King Pasenadi in a rage towards his favourite queen, Mallikā who, in his opinion, just pays lip service to the Buddha. The commentator explains that it could mean either of two things. First, he glosses the phrase with “Leave (= *apehi* = ‘*cara*’) as another/an outsider (= *pare* = ‘*pire*’: a locative used as an indeclinable), as you are no longer one of us (*amhākaṃ*)/as you no longer belong to our (*amhākaṃ*) household (*anajjhattikabhūte*).” Thus, as one possibility,

⁷⁴¹ Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 718, 3.

⁷⁴² Horner 1957: 292.

⁷⁴³ Cp. Cone 2001, s.v. *aññathā*: “1. (n.) change, alteration; change of mind; doubt, anxiety”, and CPD s.v. *aññathattaṃ* (*b*) (and references): “in the same sense, esp. the change of mind into delusion, depression, anxiety, remorse, etc.” Cp. also MN II 52,2 (*Ghaṭikāra Sutta*): *Ahu-d-eva aññathattaṃ ahu domanassaṃ*, which is said to be the state of mind of king Kikī after the Buddha Kassapa had refused his offer for a rains retreat. The cty explains that the king is sad because now he will miss out the opportunity for gaining merit by three months nurturing the *saṅgha* as well as hearing teachings from the Buddha, and that he is *not* sad not because of the Buddha himself [declining his offer] (Ps III 284,6 [51²]). *Aññathattaṃ* is glossed with *cittaññathattaṃ*, as is *domanassaṃ* (*citta*-°).

⁷⁴⁴ Cp. Cone 2001: s.v.; and CPD, s.v.: the five *cakkhu’ndriya* are: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch (“to which was added [...] mind as the ‘sixth sense’”).

⁷⁴⁵ Cp. CPD, s.v. *indriya*: “male sex, masculinity, life, vitality; pleasure, pain; joy, grief; indifference, equanimity; faith; energy; mindfulness; concentration; intellect, wisdom.

Buddhaghosa interprets Pasenadi to be so angry that he expells one his queen from his life and palace or in other words, to get ‘divorced’.⁷⁴⁶ However, more likely (*atha vā*), Buddhaghosa says, it means, “Go [far] away from [me]! Do not stay here!”⁷⁴⁷

Oskar von Hinüber identified the expression *re* as an old depreciatory form of address for males, which, however, already in the Pāli had become a linguistic particle, and subsequently used without gender distinction, as our passage proofs.⁷⁴⁸ This latter observation naturally raises the question as to the age of the *Piyajātika Sutta* or, to be more precise, it raises the question as to the age of the phrasing of the direct speech. If von Hinüber is right, then the diction of the *sutta* most likely belongs to a relatively younger (edited) stratum within the *Majjhima Nikāya* because it does not preserve the phrasing von Hinüber has concluded to be the original colloquial wording. However, even if this is so, it does not have any consequences for my analysis and reading of the *sutta* as an example of a “narrative *sutta*”.

6.3 Content of the *sutta* & its Narrative Structure:

As all the *suttas* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the *Piyajātika Sutta* begins with the introductory formula “Thus have I heard” (0. Introductory formula).

Part I: The Buddha and the mourning householder.

I.1 (MN II 106,1-6); First narrative, diegesis; extradiegetic, heterodiegetic *sutta*-narrator; (descriptive) ‘pause’; focalization: zero/householder

Immediately following the introductory or expository sentence that informs the listener/reader about the whereabouts of the Buddha (in Sāvattihī, in Jeta’s Grove, the park sponsored by the rich

⁷⁴⁶ Buddhaghosa may be influenced in this interpretation by the meaning the phrase has in the *Vinaya*, where *vinassa* means the expulsion of a monk or a nun from the order; Cp. Sp IV 871: “*dūsako nāsetabbo mettiyaṃ bhikkhuniṃ nāsethā*” ti [= Vin III 384] *ayaṃ liṅganāsanā nāma. “ajjatagge te āvuso samañuddesa na ceva so bhagavā sathā apadisitabbo” ti ayaṃ daṇḍakammanāsanā nāma. ayaṃ idha adhippetā. tenāha — “evaṃ ca pana bhikkhave nāsetabbo ... pe ... vinassā” ti. tattha carā ti gaccha. pīre ti para amāmaka. vinassā ti nassa; yattha te na passāma, tattha gacchā ti.* (I owe this suggestion to Mr. Lance S. Cousins, Oxford; personal communication 18.04.2013).

⁷⁴⁷ Ps III 344 [108¹]: “*Cara pi re*” ti *apehi amhākaṃ pare anajjhattikabhūte ti attho. Atha vā cara pi re ti parato gaccha, mā idha tiṭṭhā ti pi attho.*

⁷⁴⁸ Von Hinüber 1997: 9: “Das maskuline Gegenstück zu je ist *re*, das nur noch sehr selten als eine verächtliche Anrede an Männer in sprachlich alten Abschnitten des Theravāda-Kanons greifbar wird [...]. In der Regel ist jedoch *re* [...] bereits im Pāli zu einer Partikel geworden.”

supporter Anāthapiṇḍika⁷⁴⁹), a second narrative strand is introduced by the standard formula *tena kho pana samayena*, perhaps “at the same time; meanwhile”.⁷⁵⁰ The formula, furthermore, betrays the (covert) ‘presence’ of an omniscient (extradiegetic) *sutta*-narrator due the formula’s characteristic of (re-)introducing (new) characters or a changes of place⁷⁵¹. It is reported that a certain householder’s little only son has died and that the householder is in mourning: He is seen repeatedly visiting the cemetery (i.e. the cremation place), crying and whining, “My only little son, where are you?”⁷⁵² Formally, this descriptive part is iterative with respect to the frequency of the narrated events, but it furthermore has the effect of bringing the progress of the narrative to a halt or delaying it. Narratological textual analysis calls this narrative device a ‘pause’⁷⁵³. However, it is not a typical ‘descriptive pause’ as, for instance, the description of a landscape or the like, with which Western readers of novels may be familiar. The description is clearly related to a larger time frame (*tena kho pana samayena*), and does not provide the reader/listener with a description of physical attributes or the like. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to designate this passage as ‘pause’ because it serves this purpose here; the diegesis has not yet begun, and it serves, as a kind of narratorial comment to introduce and characterise one of the main figures of the story, as well as provides important background information of the character of the householder that is necessary for the reader in order to understand the following events.

I.2 (MN II 106,6-23); focalization: external(?)

While up to this point the listener/reader was presented with a description of a situation (indicated by the present tense⁷⁵⁴), with the following sentence the plotline of the *sutta* commences,

⁷⁴⁹ MN II 106,1f.: *Sāvattthiyaṃ ... Jetavane Anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme.*

⁷⁵⁰ Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (2001: 719, 2.) translate: “Now on that occasion”; Cp. Galasek 2009: 89-91 (2.2.2), where I have discussed the grammatical features of the formula *tena kho pana samayena* and its function in the *suttas* (of the MN) as a narrative technique to depict the contemporaneity of two actions or states/situations.

⁷⁵¹ Cp. Galasek 2009: 91.

⁷⁵² MN II 106,5f.: *So aḷāhanaṃ gantvā gantvā kandati: Kahaṃ, ekaputtaka? Kahaṃ, ekaputtaka?*

⁷⁵³ Cp. Neumann & Nünning 2008: 74.

⁷⁵⁴ Cp. Galasek 2009: 90. The present tense predicates function as descriptions of (durative) states of being in the narrated world. These descriptive passages serve to provide the background-information or setting for the plot that is to unfold, and they have an interesting effect on the listener/reader: The narration appears suspended, perhaps comparable to the camera-work known from the beginning of films, when the camera is zooming (without a commentator’s voice) into the locale of a scene.

indicated by the formula *atha kho* + a past tense verb, here *upasaṃkami*. We can observe an interesting aspect also here, one which was pointed out already in connection with the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta*⁷⁵⁵: The ‘frame’ opened in the exposition (part I.1, introducing the Buddha’s dwelling place in Sāvathī) may strike the listener/reader as purely formulaic and customary (it is an essential narrative strategy of the *suttas* to mention the Buddha, even if he does not play the main role in a *sutta*!) or even as misplaced. However, following the story line with its different episodes, we can observe this ‘frame’ resurfacing two more times during the progression of the narrative. First, immediately after the description in part I.1, when the householder pays a visit to the Buddha, and secondly, when queen Mallikā sends a messenger to the Buddha (part II.2). This means that the ‘frame’ does not disappear altogether but remains covertly present in the background in favour of other narrative strands which are then foregrounded, and thus that the passage is not misplaced at all but even necessary. (We will also see later in this analysis that the Buddha is indeed never absent from any of the narrative strands, although he does not figure in them in person.)

The householder, then, visits the Buddha⁷⁵⁶ who is quite outspoken and addresses him directly with a short statement, the gist of which is, “You are out of control, householder”.⁷⁵⁷ Hereupon the householder blurts out the reply that it was only natural that “his faculties were deranged”⁷⁵⁸ – after all, his little only son had died! The Buddha, in turn, comments on this with the lapidary statement, “So it is, householder, so it is. Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear...”⁷⁵⁹, which resurfaces several times throughout the *sutta*, thus serving as a connector running through the text like a thread. After a short argument, in which the householder states the opposite of the Buddha’s words (“[...] happiness and joy arise from those who are dear...”⁷⁶⁰), he rejects the Buddha’s view and leaves dissatisfied. The focalization in this passage appears to be external: everything that the (extradiegetic, heterodiegetic) narrator

⁷⁵⁵ Cp. chapter 4. above, “The Presentation of characters in the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta*.”

⁷⁵⁶ The usual formula (formula B) 6.; Allon 1997: 172) is employed for the approach: *Atha kho so gahapati yena Bhagavā ten’ upasaṃkami, upasaṃkamitvā Bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Ekamantaṃ nisinnaṃ kho taṃ Bhagavā etad avoca: ...*

⁷⁵⁷ MN II 106,10f.: *Na kho te, gahapati, sake citte ʔhitassa indriyāni atthi; te indriyānaṃ aṅṅathattan ti.*

⁷⁵⁸ Tr. Nāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 718, 3.

⁷⁵⁹ MN II 106,17-18; tr. Ibid.

⁷⁶⁰ MN II 106,19-23; tr. Ibid.

describes can be seen from the outside – he does neither show to have access to the consciousness of a character nor, for instance, knowledge of events happening at two spatially and temporally separated places.⁷⁶¹

I.3 (MN II 106,24-107,21) ‘Gamblers-episode’; Metadiegesis; Narrator: *sutta*-narrator/householder; focalization: householder

The following episode is likewise introduced with the formula “at the same time; meanwhile” (*tena kho pana samayena*). This episode is self-contained, and it brings to a close the whole part I of the *sutta*. After a narratorial introduction of the situation (“At that time, a large group of gamblers (dicers) was playing dice not far from where the Blessed One dwelled...”⁷⁶²), the householder steps forward in this short episode as ‘autodiegetic’ narrator (i.e. he is not only part of the story he recounts, but a main character) on the metadiegetic level (‘secondary narrative’). He addresses the gamblers as his equals and tells them all that has happened – that he had lost his son, up to that he had left the Buddha dissatisfied – with exactly the same words by which the *sutta*-narrator had introduced the listeners/readers (the narrative audience) to the story earlier. The gamblers for their part (appear to) listen to his story and eventually confirm the householder’s view saying, “So it is, householder, so it is! Happiness and joy are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.”⁷⁶³ Now the householder is satisfied, agrees with the gamblers and leaves.⁷⁶⁴ Through the ‘showing’ mode of presentation, and the householder as autodiegetic narrator, the text adopts or presents the perspective of the householder.

Part II. King Pasenadi and Queen Mallikā discuss the meaning of the Buddha’s short statement (MN II 107,21-112,7)

II.1 Setting: Pasenadi’s palace; characters: King Pasenadi, queen Mallikā, the Brahmin Nālijhaṅga, the Buddha; narrator: *sutta*-narrator/ Gotama Buddha; focalization: zero

⁷⁶¹ Cp. Genette 1980: 190.

⁷⁶² MN II 106,24-27: *Tena kho pana samayena sambahulā akkhadhuttā Bhagavato avidūre akkhehi dibbanti. Atha kho so gahapati yena te akkhadhuttā ten’ upasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā akkhadhutte etad avoca: ...*

⁷⁶³ Tr. Nāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 719, 4; MN II 107,18f.: *Evam etaṃ, gahapati, evam etaṃ, gahapati. Piyajātikā hi, gahapati, ānanda-somanassā piyappabhavikā ti.*

⁷⁶⁴ MN II 107,20f.: *Atha kho so gahapati: Sameti me akkhadhuttehīti pakkāmi.*

Here – structurally similar to the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* – the householder leaves the story and the listener/reader is introduced to a new setting and new characters. Nevertheless, the narrative continues the theme introduced by the householder’s story. Before the speed of the narrative decelerates in another ‘scene’⁷⁶⁵, a dialogue between the newly introduced characters King Pasenadi of Kosala and his favourite queen Mallikā, an extremely short summary effects the transition from one part of the story to the other: “Eventually this story reached the King’s palace.”⁷⁶⁶ In the following dialogue, the King discusses with his queen what the Buddha allegedly had said to the householder. When Mallikā replies to the King’s apparently jeering remark (“This is what Gotama that recluse of yours has said, Mallikā: ...”⁷⁶⁷) that, if the Blessed One had said so, it must be true, Pasenadi gets angry and dismisses Mallikā, accusing her of immature believe in anything the Buddha says and blindly following him just because he was her teacher: “It is in exactly this way (*Evam evaṃ panāyaṃ*) that whatever the drop-out⁷⁶⁸ Gotama says, Mallikā approves of it, [with the words] ‘If this, maharaja, was said by the Blessed One, it must be so.’ Like an apprentice approves of whatever his master says [with the words], ‘So it is, master. So it is, master’, so do you, Mallikā, approve of absolutely (*eva*) everything (*yaṃ yad*) the drop-out Gotama says [with the words], ‘If this, maharaja, was said by the Blessed One, it must be so.’ Go away, Mallikā, get lost!”⁷⁶⁹

II.2 (MN II 108,3-110,7) Queen Mallikā sends a messenger to the Buddha for clarification

⁷⁶⁵ Cp. Neumann & Nünning 2008: 73.

⁷⁶⁶ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 719, 5.

⁷⁶⁷ MN II 107,23-25: *Idan te, Mallike, samaṇena Gotamena bhāsitaṃ: ›Piyajātikā sokaparidevaduk-khadomanassupāyāsā piyappabhavikā ti.*

⁷⁶⁸ Cp. Walshe 1987: 22. Although, from all that we know, the *samaṇas* were an influential and probably much respected, at times and in certain individual case even revered (the Buddha counted among this group!), group of ascetics who taught very diverse, and sometimes very bizarre (cp., e.g., “The *Sutta* of the Dog-Duty Ascetic”, the *Kukkuravatika Sutta*, MN 57), practices or tenets, the word *samaṇa* here is definitely used depreciatory. This may be another instance, in which it becomes clear that the *suttas* can create or have shades of meaning beyond the mere words and phrasing, and that, therefore, the immediate context, always with an eye to its narrative situation and evolution, is important.

⁷⁶⁹ MN II 107,27-108,2: *Evam evaṃ panāyaṃ Mallikā yaññadeva samaṇo Gotamo bhāsati taṃ tad ev’ assa abbhanumodati: ›Sace taṃ, mahārāja, Bhagavatā bhāsitaṃ, evam etan ti. Seyyathāpi nāma ācariyo yaññadeva antevāsissa bhāsati, taṃ tad ev’ assa antevāsī abbhanumodati: ›Evam etaṃ, ācariya; evam etaṃ, ācariyāti; evam eva kho tvaṃ, Mallike, yaññadeva samaṇo Gotamo bhāsati, taṃ tad ev’ assa abbhanumodasi: ›sace taṃ, mahārāja, Bhagavatā bhāsitaṃ evam etan ti. Cara pi re, Mallike, vinassāti.*

After queen Mallikā has apparently walked away from the King to her quarters (the following events show that the King did not divorce his favourite queen!), she summons a Brahmin called Nāḷijaṅgha. Him she instructs to approach the Buddha in order to enquire whether he had indeed made the short statement, which she had learned from hearsay, commit the exact wording to memory, and convey it to her in exactly the same words upon his return to the palace.⁷⁷⁰ This episode consists structurally of two parts: the queen instructing the Brahmin Nāḷijaṅgha and the meeting of Nāḷijaṅgha with the Buddha, during which the Buddha acts as the heterodiegetic narrator on the metadiegetic level (intradiegetic).

II.2.1 (MN II 108,3-13) Queen Mallikā and the Brahmin messenger Nāḷijaṅgha

Strictly speaking, the text is elliptic at this point. It does not tell the listener/reader what Mallikā was doing after her husband dismissed her, or where she went, or how much time elapsed between her dismissal and the summoning of the Brahmin. After Pasenadi had sent her away, the text just continues with “And then the queen Mallikā summoned the Brahmin Nāḷijaṅgha.”⁷⁷¹

She instructs the Brahmin first to convey her regards for the Buddha in a most formal and respectful way⁷⁷², and then to listen well to the explanations the Buddha would give about the wording and content of the short statement given to the householder.

II.2.2 (MN II 108,13-22) The Brahmin Nāḷijaṅgha approaches the Buddha

The Brahmin Nāḷijaṅgha approaches the Buddha in the usual formal way, conveys queen Mallikā’s regards and puts his question forward as he was instructed to do. This part serves a kind of a transition from the palace scene to the ‘*Bhagavā-viharati* frame’ opened at the opening of the *sutta*.

II.3 (MN II 108,23-110,3) The Buddha illustrates his initial short statement by way of analogy; metadiegesis; Narrator (heterodiegetic): Gotama Buddha; focalization: Gotama Buddha.

⁷⁷⁰ MN II 108,9-13: *Bhāsītā nu kho, bhante, Bhagavatā esā vācā: ›Piyajātikā sokaparidevadukkhadomanas-supāyāsā piyappabhavikā ti? Yathā ca te Bhagavā vyākaroti, taṃ sādhukaṃ uggahetvā mamaṃ āroceyyāsi. Na hi Tathāgatā vitathaṃ bhaṇantīti.*

⁷⁷¹ MN II 108,3: *Atha kho Mallikā devī Nāḷijaṅghaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ āmantesi: ...*

⁷⁷² Cp. Allon 1997: 176, formula D. 1b); Indeed, we may have a minor variant here of the formula recorded by Allon for the DN (having *evaṃ ca vadeti* at the end instead of *so evam āha*, and thus a “mixture” of formula D. 1a) and 1b)): *Mallikā, bho Gotama, devī bhoto Gotamassa pāde sirasā vandati, appābādhaṃ appātāṅkaṃ lahuṭṭhānaṃ balaṃ phāsuvihāraṃ pucchati, evaṃ ca vadeti:...* Interesting is also the transposition of this formula earlier in the text into the imperative mode, as instruction to the Brahmin.

Here, the Buddha, at the same time a character of the ‘primary narration’ (W. Schmid) or the ‘intradiegetic’ level (G. Genette), appears as the extradiegetic narrator of an embedded story of the past (introduced with *bhūtapubbam*⁷⁷³). However, we cannot call this embedded story a narration of the *Jātaka*-type proper, despite the standard introduction (“In old times/Formerly”).

Asked by the Brahmin whether he had originated the utterance, “So it is, householder, so it is. Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear...”⁷⁷⁴, the Buddha confirms that this is so and that this was indeed what he had said. Without being questioned further, the Buddha starts to explain how his statement could (or should?⁷⁷⁵) be understood “by the following analogy” (*Tad aminā ... pariyāyena*).⁷⁷⁶ The then following analogous demonstration of particular instances – which, however, cannot really be regarded as concrete particular situations because they completely lack any individuality – of a loved one or relative who had died, is repeated altogether fourteen times throughout the *sutta*.⁷⁷⁷ The enumeration, which starts with a woman whose father and, subsequently, brother, sister, son, daughter, and husband had died, and continues with the same instances happening to “a man”, culminates in an absurd sounding climax illustrative of where attachment to a loved one can lead. The Buddha tells (the Brahmin) that in former times there was a young couple living in Sāvattihī. One day the wife

⁷⁷³ Cp. chapter 4.5, “*Ur-Jātaka*”, above.

⁷⁷⁴ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 720, 7.

⁷⁷⁵ The *participium necessitatis* ‘*veditabbaṃ*’ can express both meanings “can” and “should”.

⁷⁷⁶ MN II 108,26-28: *Tad aminā p’ etaṃ, brāhmaṇa, pariyāyena veditabbaṃ yathā >Piyajātikā sokaparidevaduk-khadomanassupāyāsā piyappabhavikā ti.*

The Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi appears to have decided to leave *pariyāyena* un-translated in his MN translation. (Mr. Lance Cousins, Oxford, made me aware of this; personal communication 21.11.2011.) However, the expression is important, for the Buddha here seems to ‘disclose’ a principle of his teaching style in the *suttas*. (Of course, we could not determine with certainty, whether it was indeed the Buddha himself who disclosed it or the editors/authors of the *sutta*!). Cp. PED, s.v. *pariyāya*: [acc. to Buddhaghosa 3 meanings: 1. *vāra*, “turn, course”; 2. *desanā*, “instruction, presentation (>*dhamma-p*° = *dhamma-kathā*)”; 3. *kāraṇa*, “cause, reason; matter”]; 5. Specifically, in *Abhidhamma* terminology, *pariyāyena* means the mode of teaching in the *Suttantas*, which is: ad hominem, discursive, an applied method, illustrated discourse, figurative language as opposed to abstract language and the statements which are *nippariyāyena*, *nippariyāyato*, “not figuratively/discursive, as is characteristic of the *Abhidhamma*.”

⁷⁷⁷ MN II 108,26- 110,3; The printed text was already in the different mss. usually abbreviated with ‘pe’, *peyyāla*, a so-called Māgadhism for *pariyāya* (perhaps “etc.”), indicating to the reciter that a particular phrase or the exact wording of a passage was to be repeated either from memory or according to the preceding phrase. (In this case, that the same phrase (*Iminā pi kho etaṃ ... until Api me XY addasathāti?*) should be repeated in the recitation each time with a new kinship term: “the father, brother, sister, son, daughter, husband of a woman had died...”).

went to visit her family who then informed her that they wished to divorce her and give her to another man (the text does not say why or to whom). But the woman said “no”, returned to her husband and told him what her family was up to, but that she had refused. Without further ado, the Buddha narrates, the man [took a knife and] “cut his wife in two” (*dvidhā chetvā*) before he killed himself with the thought: “After death we will be together [again]”.

II.4 (MN II 110,4-112,7) Dialogue between the queen Mallikā and the King Pasenadi

II.4.1 (MN II 110,4-7) Transition

This part serves to make the transition from the Tathāgata-‘frame’ back to the King’s palace. It is highly formulaic and contains only a short summary (literally: “as much conversation as there was with the Blessed One, all that he [Nāḷijaṅgha] related to queen Mallikā”)⁷⁷⁸, which is in stark contrast to the elaboration of the event it summarises, as well as to the following dialogue between queen Mallikā and King Pasenadi, which is presented completely in ‘dramatic/showing mode’ without any narratorial indication as to who speaks (no speech tags are employed).

II.4.2 (MN II 110,8-112,7) Mallikā skillfully proves the truth of the Buddha’s statement to King Pasenadi; dialogue (i.e. ‘showing’ mode)/ ‘scene’; Narrator: covert/ ‘absent’; focalization: external

A dialogue between Mallikā and Pasenadi stretches over the last two pages of the PTS edition of the *sutta*. Queen Mallikā, having been informed by the Brahmin Nāḷijaṅgha about his conversation with the Buddha, goes back into the presence of the King and starts to confront him rather suddenly (i.e. without any introduction) with some skillful questions: “What do you think, maharaja? Is the princess Vajīrī dear to you?” “So it is, Mallikā, the princess Vajīrī is dear to me.” She asks further whether “a change [to the worse]” affecting princess Vajīrī would cause him worries.⁷⁷⁹ It surely would, answers the King, since it would be the same for him as a

⁷⁷⁸ A variation of the formula is used which usually stands at the end of a *sutta* (“The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words”, [*Idaṃ avoca Bhagavā;*] *attamanā te bhikkhū Bhagavato bhāsitaṃ abhinandun ti*): “Then, delighting and rejoicing in the Blessed One’s words, the brahmin Nāḷijaṅgha rose from his seat, went to queen Mallikā, and reported to her his entire conversation with the Blessed One” (tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 721, 23.).

⁷⁷⁹ MN II 110,13-15: *Taṃ kim maññasi, mahārāja? Vajīriyā te kumāriyā vipariṇāmaññathābhāvā uppajjeyyūṃ sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā ti?*

deterioration of his own life.⁷⁸⁰ In return, Mallikā “reveals” to him that this was exactly what the Blessed One meant when he said, “Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear”.⁷⁸¹ The rest of the unfolding dialogue is not very varied; the questions and replies follow the same structural pattern, substituting only the object of the King’s attachment (his second queen Vāsabhā; their son, the King’s general Viḍūḍabha; Mallikā herself; his Kingdom Kāsi-Kosala), quite similar in fact to the Buddha’s tale (part II.3).

The *sutta* closes with Pasenadi acknowledging the superior wisdom of the Buddha (“It is surprising, Mallikā, it is astonishing, how far the Blessed One penetrates [the nature of things, *scil. parama-saccaṃ*]⁷⁸² with wisdom and sees with wisdom.”⁷⁸³ The King then orders Mallikā to get water for a ritual ablution including the rinsing of the mouth⁷⁸⁴, folds his hand in reverential salutation (*añjalim paṇāmetvā*), and makes three times the “joyful utterance” (*udānam udānesi*): “Honour to the Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened.”⁷⁸⁵

As we have seen above, the events are presented mainly in chronological order (except for the ‘analepsis’ in part I.3, the Gamblers episode), which means that story and discourse run predominantly parallel. This is characteristic of the narration in the *suttas*.⁷⁸⁶ Nevertheless, the discourse shows an arrangement of very different speeds of narration. The *sutta* starts off with a ‘descriptive pause’ (part I.1) and then the plotline commences, to be followed again immediately by a ‘scene’ (part I.2). Part I.3 again starts with a ‘stasis statement’ (*Tena kho pana samayena +*

⁷⁸⁰ MN II 110,16-18: *Vajiriyā me, Mallike, kumāriyā vipariṇāmaññathābhāvā jīvitassa pi siyā aññathattaṃ. Kiṃ pana me na uppajjissanti sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā ti?*

⁷⁸¹ MN II 110,19-21: *Idaṃ kho taṃ, mahārāja, tena Bhagavatā jānatā passatā arahatā sammāsambuddhena sandhāya bhāsitaṃ: Piyajātikā sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā piyappabhavikā ti.*

⁷⁸² Cp. CPD s.v. *ativijjhati*: “[...] (b) *ativijjha* (*sometimes written ativijjhā*): paññāya naṃ [*scil. parama-saccaṃ*] ~passati [...]”

⁷⁸³ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 721f., 29.: “It is wonderful, Mallikā, it is marvelous how far the Blessed One penetrates with wisdom and sees with wisdom!”

⁷⁸⁴ MN II 112,1f.: *Ehi, Mallike, ācāmeḥīti.*

⁷⁸⁵ MN II 112,5-7: *Atha kho rājā Pasenadi Kosalo uṭṭhāy’ āsanā ekaṃsaṃ uttarāsaṅgaṃ karitvā yena Bhagavā ten’ añjalim paṇāmetvā tikkhattuṃ udānaṃ udānesi: Namo tassa Bhagavato arahato sammāsambudhassa; namo tassa – pe – sammāsambuddhassāti.* This is the famous “itipiso-formula”.

⁷⁸⁶ We could easily think, for example, the *sutta* to begin *in medias res*, leaving out part I.1.2. That the editors/authors repeated the householder’s report to the Gamblers at the beginning of the *sutta* seems to indicate that a beginning *in medias res* would perhaps have gone against the expectations of the recipients of the *sutta*.

a present tense verb), followed by ‘process statements’ (= description of actions)⁷⁸⁷ and subsequently by a monologue. Part I.3 opens with an extreme, perhaps even elliptic, summary (*Atha kho idaṃ kathāvatthuṃ anupubbena rājantepuraṃ pāvīsi*; ‘elliptic’, because we do not learn anything about the lot of the householder afterwards.) In this way, the narrative flows onward, alternately accelerated or decelerated by ‘summary’, ‘pause’, and ‘scenes’ with intermittent narratorial ‘process statements’ (*Atha kho* + past tense verbs). This arrangement of the *sutta*, I want to argue, reveals the selecting and arraying hand of a narrator.⁷⁸⁸

6.4 “*Leitmotivik*” and the characterisation of the Buddha

Although the Buddha is personally absent from most of the story the *Piyajātika Sutta* (except for the parts I.1.1, I.2, II.3), he figures prominently throughout the whole *sutta*. This effect is produced by the use of a leitmotif that functions as substitute for the Buddha’s in-person appearance. Throughout the *sutta*, the Buddha is represented by the sentence: “So it is, householder, so it is, householder. Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear”⁷⁸⁹, which was uttered by him on the occasion of the householder seeking his counsel after he had lost his only small son. It is repeated verbatim twenty-nine times (including occurrences of parts of it) throughout the text. The use of leitmotifs as means for creating coherence in a text is well known in (Western) linguistics.⁷⁹⁰ Additionally, the use of a leitmotif to represent a person is well known in musical art. In the *Piyajātika Sutta*, the leitmotif “*sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā*” achieves both the coherence of the *sutta*, with its very diverse episodes and its appearance and disappearance of characters⁷⁹¹, and the standing in for the person of the Buddha. Each time the leitmotif appears in the text since its first enunciation by the Blessed One, the ‘Buddha-Gotama frame’ becomes ‘activated’ – the listener/reader knows that the Buddha is there without actually appearing in person.

⁷⁸⁷ For the terms ‘stasis statement’ and ‘process statement’, see Chatman 1989: 31f.

⁷⁸⁸ Cp. also Galasek 2009: 98.

⁷⁸⁹ (*Evam etaṃ, gahapati;*) (*Piyajātikā hi, gahapati,*) *sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā* (*piyappabhavikā ti*). MN II 106,17f., 18f.; 107,10ff.13f., 24f.; 108,10f., 21f., 23ff., 27f.; 109,2ff.,11f., 18f., 27f.; 110,2f., **14f.**, **18**, 20f., **25f.**, **29**, 31f.; 111,3f., 7, 9f., **14f.**, **18**, 20f., **27f.**, **31**, 33f. (the references marked in bold type contain the variant or the main part of the whole phrase, respectively: *sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā*).

⁷⁹⁰ Cp. Jannidis 2004: 64f.

⁷⁹¹ Cp. also Galasek 2009: 92-94.

The core of this ‘Buddha-theme’, which is also repeated several times, appears to be a reference to the twelve links of ‘Dependent Origination’ (*paṭicchasamuppāda*), for the two formulas share the phrase: *sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā*, “Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair”. In the full description of the twelve links of the Dependent Origination formula, our phrase is a detailed enumeration or exemplification of what is summarised as “this whole mass of suffering” (*dukkha-kkhandha*). This is the well-known phrase of Dependent Origination: “So, monks, with ignorance as condition there arise mental formations, with formations as condition there arises consciousness, with consciousness [...] name-and-form, with name-and-form [...] the six senses, with the six senses [...] sense-contact, with sense-contact [...] feeling, with feeling [...] craving, with craving [...] grasping, with grasping [...] becoming, with becoming [...] birth, with birth [...] old age and death, **distress, grief, suffering, sorrow and unrest.**”⁷⁹² Such is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.⁷⁹³

Here, in the *Piyajātika Sutta*, we are presented with the cause of this ‘whole mass of suffering’ (which is the Buddhist description of ‘existence’) as being *piya-ppabhavika*, arisen from/through those we love, which is, in other words, “attachment” (*upādāna*), which in turn forms the ninth link of the *paṭiccasamuppāda*-formula, and constitutes an alternative version of the first Noble Truth.

As pointed out in the beginning, the phrase is also found in a detailed description of the four Noble Truths given in the *Saccavibhaṅga Sutta* (MN 141). In the narrative of this *sutta*, which is located in the Deer Park in Benares, the Buddha reminds the monks that this was the place, where he first expounded the four Noble Truths. Furthermore, he praises his favourite disciples Sāriputta and Moggallāna – by the way, an interesting passage for the characterisation of these two figures – and advises the monks to associate with and follow those two wise disciples of his: “They are wise and helpful to their companions in the holy life. Sāriputta is like a mother; Moggallāna is like a nurse. Sāriputta trains others for the fruit of stream-entry, Moggallāna for

⁷⁹² Bhikkhu Bodhi translates: “Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair”; cp. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 353, 17.

⁷⁹³ E.g. in the *Mahātanhāsāṅkhaya Sutta* (MN 38), MN I 261,24-31: *Iti kho, bhikkhave, avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ, nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṃ, saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, vedanāpaccayā taṇhā, taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ, upādānapaccayā bhavo, bhavapaccayā jāti, jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti, evam-etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti.* Tr. Collins 1982: 107; Cp. also Collins 1982: 103-111.

the supreme goal.”⁷⁹⁴ Having said this, the Buddha leaves and Sāriputta starts a detailed exposition on the four Noble Truths: “And what, friends, is the Noble Truth of suffering? Birth is suffering; ageing is suffering; death is suffering; **sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are suffering**; not to obtain what one wants is suffering; in short, the five aggregates affected by clinging are suffering.”⁷⁹⁵ Looking at Sāriputta’s detailed exposition, one could indeed find an adequate (though still very general) description of the householder’s state (I shall restrict myself to one sample example): “And what, friends, is lamentation?” asks Sāriputta. “The wail and lament, wailing and lamenting, bewailing and lamentation, of one who has encountered some misfortune or is affected by some painful state – this is called lamentation.”⁷⁹⁶ The resemblance is with regard to content, however, and not with regard to wording, as is the case with “Sorrow, lamentation”, and so forth.

We have seen that the Buddha figures in this *sutta* mainly in a represented or substituted form. He is not really actualised as a ‘possible person’, except on a very basic level. He is identified: “*Bhagavā*”; he *exists* in the story world: *Sāvaththiyaṃ viharati*; he performs (very generalised) speech acts: “*Evam etaṃ, gahapati ...*”; but that is about all that we can extract from the concrete text. There are other *suttas*, in which the mimetic aspect of the person of the Buddha comes much more to the fore, be it through his mere personal presence in the narrated events (i.e., e.g., occurrences in the actual text) or quasi-autobiographical accounts from his life and his quest for awakening.⁷⁹⁷ This virtual absence of the Buddha in the *Piyajātika Sutta*, while his utterance lingers on, is especially interesting when one considers that the story itself thematises the

⁷⁹⁴ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 1097, 5. MN III 248,22-28: *Sevatha, bhikkhave, Sāriputta-Moggallāne, bhajatha, bhikkhave, Sāriputta-Moggallāne, paṇḍitā bhikkhū anuggāhaka brahmacārīnaṃ. Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, janettī, evaṃ Sāriputto; seyyathāpi jātassa āpādetā, evaṃ Moggallāno. Sāriputto, bhikkhave, sotāpattiphale vineti, Moggallāno uttamatthe; Sāriputto, bhikkhave, pahoti, cattāri ariyasaccāni vitthārena ācikkhituṃ desetū paññāpetuṃ paṭṭhāpetuṃ vivarituṃ vibhajituṃ uttānīkatuṃ ti.*

⁷⁹⁵ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 1098, 10. MN III 249,9-13: *Katamañ c’ āvuso, dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ? – Jāti pi dukkhā, jarā pi dukkhā, maraṇaṃ pi dukkhā, sokaparidevadukkhadommanassupāyāsā pi dukkhā. Yam p’ icchaṃ na labhati, tam pi dukkhaṃ; saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā.*

⁷⁹⁶ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 1098, 15. MN III 249,31-250,2: *Katamā c’ āvuso, paridevo? Yo kho, āvuso, aññataraññatarena byasanena samannāgatassa aññataraññatarena dukkhadhammena phuṭṭhassa ādevo paridevo, ādevanā paridevanā, ādevitattaṃ paridevitattaṃ; — ayaṃ vuccat’, āvuso, paridevo.*

⁷⁹⁷ Cp., for the MN, the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta* (MN 26), the *Ghaṭikāra Sutta* (MN 81), *Upakkilesa Sutta* (MN 128).

importance of understanding (or not), interpreting, and remembering the exact words of the Buddha. This ‘thematic dimension’ (or ‘potential’) of the Buddha’s representation is turned into a ‘thematic function’ by the narrative progression when queen Mallikā instructs the Brahmin Nāḷijaṅgha: “Then ask this: ‘Venerable sir, have these words been uttered by the Blessed One: “Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear”?’ Learn well what the Blessed One replies and report it to me; for Tathāgatas do not speak untruth.”⁷⁹⁸ And upon returning, the Brahmin does report exactly “his entire conversation with the Blessed One”.⁷⁹⁹

Thus, the story of the *sutta* itself thematises the importance of the accurate transmission of the Buddha’s words, a theme that has always been of great importance to the Theravāda tradition. Furthermore, it stresses the ‘thematic aspect’ of the Buddha.

The movement of the narrative of the *Piyajātika Sutta* is initiated by an ‘instability’ (= a conflict of opinions) that involves the householder, i.e. his painful experience of the loss of his little son, and the Buddha, i.e. his seemingly unemotional and dry comment on the householder’s situation (part I.2). However, at the same time, the narrative progresses also by a ‘tension’, which is due to the slightly enigmatic character of the Buddha’s statement; the listener/reader taking on the role of the authorial audience asks himself what the Buddha’s short utterance may mean. The ‘tension’ thus created is significantly amplified by the Gamblers-episode (part I.3), which reveals the householder as an unreliable narrator.

There seems to exist a peculiar break in the story after the Gamblers-episode, because the householder just disappears from the story (remember that also in the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* a main character, Jotipāla, leaves the story after roughly the first third of the *sutta* is completed!) The suddenness of the ending of part I.3 (the Gamblers episode) is highlighted by the extremely summarising sentence “Eventually this story reached the King’s palace”.

However, the reason that the story in the *Piyajātika Sutta* has to continue after the householder has left the Buddha grudgingly, and the gamblers with satisfaction, is a ‘tension’ that is

⁷⁹⁸ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 719, 6. MN II 108,9-13: *evaṅ ca vadehi – Bhāsītā nu kho, bhante, Bhagavatā esā vācā: Piyajātikā sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā piyappabhavikā ti? Yathā ca te Bhagavā vyākāroti, taṃ sādhukaṃ uggahetvā mamaṃ āroceyyāsi. Na hi Tathāgatā vitathaṃ bhaṇantīti.*

⁷⁹⁹ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 721, 23. MN II 110,6f.: *... yāvatako ahosi Bhagavatā saddhiṃ kathāsallāpo taṃ sabbaṃ Mallikāya deviyā ārocesi.*

created between the householder as narrator (part I.3) and the norms of the *suttas* as a genre, respectively the authorial audience. The ‘thematic dimension’ of the householder (the nameless householder being a representative of a certain class of people) is thus turned into a ‘thematic function’ by his conversation and his unanimity with the gamblers. By his leaving the gamblers, and the story, satisfied, the text states that some people (the historical listener/reader?) did not like agree with what the Buddha said. By continuing the story, the implicit norms of the *sutta*(s) convey that some people *did/do not understand* what the Buddha taught. This makes the householder, at this point of the narrative progression, a plausible representative of a class of people (= his ‘thematic function’) that the later Pāli texts and the commentaries call “ordinary persons” (*puthujjanā*).⁸⁰⁰ From the point of view of the authorial audience, however, the difference lies in the presence or absence of *sammā-diṭṭhi*, “right view”. Steven Collins has proposed three main meanings in which the term ‘right view’ occurs in the early Buddhist teachings: First, to have a general “pro-attitude” towards or “confidence” (*saddhā*) in such beliefs as *karma* and *saṃsāra* (without yet doing anything specifically Buddhist); second, an “acquaintance with Buddhist doctrine”, and third, as “liberating insight” (*sammā-paññā*) leading to “right release” (*sammā-vimutti*).⁸⁰¹ It is clear that our householder already disqualifies with regard to the first sense of ‘right view’.

The Buddha’s terse initial statement is not only linguistically somewhat enigmatic, but also because it expresses, from a common-sense point of view, a counterintuitive ‘truth’. Nevertheless, while the listener/reader may first tend to sympathise and agree with the strongly emphasized ‘mimetic aspect’ of the householder in part I.2 (“How could my faculties not be deranged, venerable sir?” and “Venerable sir, who would ever think ...?”⁸⁰²), he is finally made to become suspicious about the householder’s credulity through his meeting with a group of gamblers. Furthermore, the progression towards the resolution of this ‘tension’ is complicated by the introduction of a new ‘instability’ between queen Mallikā and King Pasenadi (part II.1), which is in fact thematically the same instability as that between the householder and the Buddha, for whom the royal couple act as deputies, so to speak.

⁸⁰⁰ Cp. Collins 1982: 92-95.

⁸⁰¹ Cp. *ibid.* 87-92.

⁸⁰² Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 718, 3.; MN II 106,12 and 19.

The ‘tension’, then, has by the time that “the story reached the King’s palace”, not yet been resolved (the initial ‘instability’, on the other hand, has been resolved *for the householder*, however unsatisfactory for the authorial audience, because he does not appear in the further progression of the story). Perhaps one could say that the ‘tension’, which resides as the norms of the text throughout the narrative on a level beyond the text⁸⁰³, “suffusing” the text, finally resurfaces or is once more concretised on the level of the characters in the argument between Mallikā and Pasenadi. That is because the ostensible ‘resolution’ that the householder presents (“The gamblers agree with me”⁸⁰⁴) is not really capable of resolving the initial ‘instability’ (i.e. the question: is the consequence of holding someone dear suffering or happiness?) completely.

Let us look at the narrative “mechanism” that is at work here in some more details. The householder’s assessment of the (/his) situation cannot offer a real resolution because, while the householder’s grief has an effective ‘mimetic function’ (“Venerable sir, who would ever think that sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear? [Rhetorical question – Nobody!] Venerable sir, happiness and joy *are* born from those who are dear, *arise* from those who are dear.”⁸⁰⁵ [my emphasis in italics; statement of fact!]), the characters of the gamblers and the whole Gamblers-episode serve to make the householder an ‘unreliable narrator’. However, the nameless householder is not unreliable in terms of untruthfulness or lying – the words he speaks or repeats respectively quotes are true to the letter. His unreliability lies rather in his judgement. As mentioned in Part II, J. Phelan has distinguished six ways in which a narrator’s speech (remember: the householder is “the one who speaks” as well as the “one who sees” in the Gamblers episode) can be assessed as unreliable: “[...] they [narrators] can be unreliable in six ways: they can underreport or misreport; they can underread or misread (underinterpret or misinterpret); and they can underregard or misregard (underevaluate or misevaluate)”⁸⁰⁶. A narrator can thus at the same time be a reliable reporter and

⁸⁰³ Cp. Phelan 2007: 212: The second kind exists at the level of discourse, that is, the narration and its techniques, and I call them tensions: they involve relations among authors, narrators, and audiences, and they include gaps between tellers and audiences of knowledge, beliefs, opinions, and values. Unreliable narration involves a progression by tension.”

⁸⁰⁴ MN II 107,20: *Sameti me akkhadhuttehīti*.

⁸⁰⁵ MN II 107,19-23: *Kassa kho nām’ etaṃ, bhante, evaṃ bhavissati: Piyajātikā sokaparidevadukkhadomanas-supāyāsā piyappabhavikā? Piyajātikā hi kho, bhante, ānandasomanassā piyappabhavikā ti*.

⁸⁰⁶ Phelan 2007: 205.

an unreliable interpreter. This is the case in the Gamblers-episode in the *Piyajātika Sutta*: By accusing the Buddha of having spoken nonsense and by seeking support from the “wrong” people, the householder not only is blind (because he is too upset) to the facts of the situation, but also miscalculates the (spiritual) truth that lies “hidden”, as it were, in the Buddha’s words (i.e. the first Noble Truth that always entails the other Truths), and thereby bereaves himself of any chance to attain salvation or liberation. In effect, then, the episode of the conversation and discussion between King Pasenadi and his queen, Mallikā, serves as a complication of the ‘instability’ before the story’s ‘tension’ can be resolved in a final resolution.⁸⁰⁷ (The ‘tension’ exists between the ‘authorial audience’ and the householder as unreliable narrator from the moment he rejects the Buddha’s “truth”.) The resolution of the ‘tension’ dawns on the listener/reader (i.e. here the narrative audience) only towards end of the narrative, when the “hidden” (i.e. the not directly obvious) truth in the Buddha’s words is finally “carved out” by the characters and acknowledged by a reliable, although initially also skeptical and highly critical, character: King Pasenadi. Eventually, Mallikā is able to “proof” to Pasenadi, as well as to the narrative audience, the truth that lies in the Buddha’s short statement. She accomplishes this in a very skilful, clever way: Instead of repeating what the Buddha had explained to the Brahmin Nālījaṅgha, and thus avoiding being once again accused by the King of just paying lip-service to the Blessed One (“As an apprentice who approves of whatever his master says [with the words], ‘So it is, master. So it is, master’, so do you, Mallikā, approve of absolutely (*eva*) everything (*yam yad*) the drop-out Gotama says [with the words], ‘If this, maharaja, was said by the Blessed One, it must be so.’ Go away, Mallikā! Get lost!”⁸⁰⁸), Mallikā herself makes Pasenadi understand by way of analogy (*pariyāyena*): “It was with reference to this, maharaja, that the Blessed One, who knows and

⁸⁰⁷ Cp. Phelan 2007: 212: “The sixth principle involves the importance of narrative progressions. A narrative’s movement from its beginning to its end is governed by both a textual and a readerly dynamics, and understanding their interaction provides a good means for recognizing a narrative’s purposes. On the textual side narratives proceed by the introduction, complication, and resolution (in whole or in part) of two kinds of unstable situations. The first kind exists on the level of story, that is, the events and existents, including character and setting, of narrative, and I call them simply *instabilities*: they involve relations within, between, or among characters and their situations. The progression of “The Cask” is generated in part through the unstable relations between Montresor and Fortunato. **The second kind exists at the level of discourse, that is, the narration and its techniques, and I call them *tensions*: they involve relations among authors, narrators, and audiences, and they include gaps between tellers and audiences of knowledge, beliefs, opinions, and values.** Unreliable narration involves a progression by tension.” [my emphasis]

⁸⁰⁸ MN II 107,29-108,2.

sees, who is accomplished and fully awakened, said: ‘Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who dear, arise from those who are dear.’⁸⁰⁹. The examples she picks are from the King’s own realm of experience. She lets himself draw the conclusion (“Impermanence and deterioration in Princess Vajīrī would mean deterioration of my own life, Mallikā. How could sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair not arise in me?”⁸¹⁰), and she herself simply facilitates the King’s understanding by maKing the appropriate connections with the Buddha’s statement.

The ‘tension’, which is produced by an inherent genre convention and picked up by the ‘authorial audience’, exists in the differences of knowledge of the ‘authorial audience’ and the householder as narrator: The ‘authorial audience’ knows that his estimation of the situation and his judgement about the Buddha’s wisdom must be wrong. Interestingly, the genre convention that the Buddha is always right and always sees with wisdom that surpasses that of ordinary people is on the one hand manifest in the numerous instances in the *suttas* in which he is depicted to be victorious in a debate as well as in the narratorial statement at the end of most *suttas* that “the monks were satisfied and delighted in the Buddha’s words”. At the same time, it is verbalised in the *Piyajātika Sutta* in Mallikā’s statement that “[...] Tathāgatas do not speak untruth”.⁸¹¹

One could thus say that ‘tensions’ created on the level of the different audiences seem rather to serve the thematic interests of a narrative, whereas the ‘instabilities’, supported by narrative techniques like focalization, rather serve listeners/readers mimetic interest in the characters.⁸¹²

The remainder of the *Piyajātika Sutta* moves towards the resolution of the ‘tension’ (= parts II.3; II.4, in which Mallikā is able to convince Pasenadi of the Buddha’s original wisdom), after the ‘complication’ of part II.1 of the initial instability.

After this analysis of the the narrative’s progression along general lines, the somewhat peculiar embedded story told by the Buddha deserves some more comment.

⁸⁰⁹ MN II 110,19-22: *Idaṃ kho taṃ, maharaja, tena Bhagavatā jānatā passatā arahatā sammāsambuddhena sandhāya bhāsitaṃ: Piyajātikā sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā piyappabhavikā ti.*

⁸¹⁰ MN II 110,27-29.

⁸¹¹ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 719,6. MN II 108,12f.: *Na hi Tathāgatā vitathaṃ bhaṇantīti.*

⁸¹² Cp. Phelan 1989: 34.

6.5 The Embedded Narrative

K. M. Gupta observes that in the short embedded story (part II.3), “the master [cites] various instances and in all those, there is no mention of any being, though the master was citing the events as if they occurred”.⁸¹³ Gupta further concludes that although the Buddha is well aware of death being a ubiquitous and inescapable lot for everyone and at all times (and thus could have stated it directly), this little embedded story with its “listing out several instances” served the narrative “to unfold the theme”⁸¹⁴. I think that his statement partly hits the mark because the Buddha’s “explanation” does not really serve as an explanation, but is more an ad nauseam repetition that “unfolds” a (theoretically) infinite sequence of the same thing over and over again in ‘showing mode’.

I have argued elsewhere that this tiringly repetitive episode, which does not bring any new information or insight to the listener/reader as it unfolds, is not to be taken literally.⁸¹⁵ It is furthermore hard to imagine that these repetitions should have fulfilled a function for mnemonics. Therefore, an answer as to its precise function must be sought elsewhere. I think that the Buddha’s little tale essentially serves two purposes and that its internal structure or composition builds up a kind of dramatic tension through repetition (not the ‘tension’ in the narratological sense) before it reaches its apex in the story of the young husband who first kills his wife and subsequently himself.⁸¹⁶

The first purpose the embedded story serves – as its “designation” already points to – is to provide an explanation by analogy (*pariyāyena*). In narratology, one speaks of the “correlative function”⁸¹⁷ as one of the ‘syntactic functions’ that embedded stories can have in relation to the frame story. Therefore, the artificial and very general character of the ‘examples’ as observed by Gupta should not overly surprise us.

⁸¹³ Gupta 2006: 126.

⁸¹⁴ Cp. *ibid.*

⁸¹⁵ Cp. Galasek 2009.

⁸¹⁶ Bhikkhu Anālayo states correctly that the last example the Buddha relates served “[t]o bring home the same point [...]” as the foregoing repetitions (Anālayo 2011: 504). However, I think he missed the dramatic climax that builds up in the passage.

⁸¹⁷ “*Korrelative Funktionalisierung*”; cp. Literaturwissenschaftliche Grundbegriffe Online: <http://www.li-go.de/definitionsansicht/prosa/sekundaereserzaehlen.html> (last accessed: 22nd April 2013).

Another possible explanation that comes to mind is that the passage was intended to be ironic. However, the ascription of a sense of irony to either the Buddha or other author(s)/compiler(s)/redactor(s) of the *sutta*(s) would ultimately depend upon our knowledge, whether or not the exact words (including the repetitions) did indeed originate in a concrete historical situation/speech act, which must remain speculative. The content of what the Buddha is trying to convey in this enumeration is not terribly difficult to understand. The episode does not really *explain* the meaning of the Buddha’s short utterance, although it appears or even claims to do so (“It can be understood from this, Brahmin, how sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair, are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.”⁸¹⁸) The Buddha just enumerates *similar* cases from the past – nothing like a “real” explanation like that given in the *Saccavibhaṅga Sutta* (MN 141), which we have seen above.⁸¹⁹ The seemingly endless monotonous repetition can be tiring for the listener/reader and seems exaggerated. Therefore, I do not find it unthinkable that the passage is intended to make fun either of the householder or the Brahmin Nāḷijaṅgha. However, that must remain mere speculation.

6.6 The Householder (*gahapati*) (MN I 339-413)

The first information about the character of the householder that the text provides us with stems from the *sutta*-narrator, and is as follows: There is “a certain householder” (*aññatarassa gahapatissa*). He had a son (*ekaputtako*) who was very “dear” to him (*piyo*) and “charming” (*manāpo*⁸²⁰), and who had died, presumably, just recently (*kālakato hoti*). Since the text is specific that this was his “only son” (*ekaputtako*), we can perhaps infer that this householder was not a particularly rich one, because some passages in the Pāli *suttas* suggest that polygamy was prevalent among this particular social group. (For a general depiction of householders in the Canon, see below.) Furthermore, we learn from the *sutta*-narrator that the householder was very upset because of his son’s death, and deeply in mourning. Apparently, he was so troubled that he found

⁸¹⁸ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 720,8. MN II 108,26ff.: *Tad amināp’ etaṃ, brāhmaṇa, pariyāyena veditabbaṃ yathā piyajātikā sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā piyappabhavikā ti.*

⁸¹⁹ Cp. ch. 6.4 above.

⁸²⁰ Bhikkhu Bodhi translates “beloved” (Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 718, 2.), as did Horner (Horner 1957: 292). The PED and the BHSD both give the meaning “charming”. In my opinion, “beloved” would be more suitable to be the translation of *piya*.

himself unable to work or even eat (*n' eva kammantā paṭibhanti na bhattaṃ paṭibhāti*). Frequently he went to the cemetery (literally: “the cremation place”, *āḷāhanaṃ*) wailing (*kandati*).⁸²¹

The *sutta*-narrator text uses the same phrasing for the description of the inner state of the householder as the householder himself does later in the narrative when describing his own situation from the first-person perspective (part I.3). The repetition (in parts with slight variation) of the same wording in different voices (narrator-text and character-text) is not an unusual stylistic phenomenon of the Pāli *suttas*. Yet, here, I think, it has a certain function or effect. The *sutta*-narrator's ‘perceptive perspective’⁸²² thus seemingly converges with that of the householder, which is indicated through his use of the verb *paṭibhāti*: ... *tassa kālakiriyāya n' eva kammantā paṭibhanti na bhattaṃ paṭibhāti* “Since his [son's] death, work⁸²³ did not even **occur to** him [i.e. the householder], eating did **not occur to** him”.⁸²⁴ By this, the *sutta*-narrator, as the one ‘who speaks’, reports the reflexion in the consciousness of the householder⁸²⁵, who in turn is the one ‘who sees’ (G. Genette) or, respectively, experiences in this situation. I have argued elsewhere⁸²⁶ that the passage on the whole furthermore proves, if nothing else, that an active emplotment has taken place: Given the oral nature and origin of the *sutta*-narratives, it is thinkable that the story which the householder later tells to the gamblers⁸²⁷, was passed on, and the same phrasing was then used as an ‘introduction’ to the story at the time of the compilation of the *suttas*. (Maybe because a beginning *in medias res* was considered not good ‘*sutta*-style’.) Whether the focalising effect was intended, is another question, and impossible to answer.

For the entire parts I.1 and I.2, the narrator remains extremely covert through the use of the dramatic mode of presentation or ‘showing’ mode (i.e. direct speech/ dialogue – it is mainly

⁸²¹ MN II 106,3-5: ... *aññatarassa gahapatissa ekaputtako piyo manāpo kālakato hoti. Tassa kālakiriyāya n' eva kammantā paṭibhanti na bhattaṃ paṭibhāti. So āḷāhanaṃ gantvā gantvā kandati: ...*

⁸²² Cp. Schmid 2008: 142.

⁸²³ Cp. CPD, s.v.: “1. work, labor; especially farm work, hence in some cases = farming; [...]; 5. **Ploughing**.”? [my emphasis].

⁸²⁴ Schmid (2008: 137 = 2010: 117) calls this the “figural point of view”.

⁸²⁵ Cp. Franz K. Stanzel's term of the “*Reflektorfigur*”.

⁸²⁶ Cp. Galasek 2009: 98. On p. 99 *ibid.*, I called a passage in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta* tentatively and cautiously “*Annäherung an den Figurenhorizont*”, which is without doubt ‘internal focalization’. The former description is in fact what we have in the passage analysed here.

⁸²⁷ MN II 107,8-12.

the householder who speaks in parts I.1. and 2.). This facilitates the listeners'/readers' convergence with the figural perspective⁸²⁸, without using 'internal focalization' exclusively over longer text passages. Certainly, this presentation is conducive to the creation of 'mimetic illusion' and the 'narrative audience's' participation in a character's perspectives. The narrative progression in the first part of the story lives largely on this mimetic representation of the householder (= *his* direct thoughts and speech, *his* feelings, *his* experience, *his* report to the gamblers) and his current state of being in mourning, and it turns the householder's 'mimetic dimension' (grieving deeply about the loss of a loved one) into a (mimetic) 'function' that causes the narrative to progress by his insistence in his conversation with the Buddha on his "right" to be "deranged". In other words, the narrative is propelled forward because the householder does not agree with the Buddha, but on the grounds of the conventions of the *sutta*-genre, in order to provide a successful closure of the story, the Buddha, or a proxy, is required to explain in detail what he meant with his short statement to the satisfaction of all, and thus be "victorious" at the end. If the story had ended after the Gamblers episode, the authorial audience's expectations as well as the *sutta*-authors'/-compilers' intentions would not have been met with, and the 'tension' caused by the instability not resolved.

The householder's formulaic approach to the Buddha⁸²⁹ reveals, according to Allon⁸³⁰, the householder to be either a lay follower of the Buddha or a sympathizer. To know this 'frame' is perhaps all the more important here, for the text does not give any hint as to his motivation to visit the Buddha. We can only infer that he seeks counsel from the Buddha or – and this is perhaps much more likely and would be supported by Allon's findings concerning the '*abhivādetvā*-approach formula' – that he considered himself to be a follower of some sort of the Buddha already. In any case, by using this particular approach-formula, the text seems to presuppose that the Buddha is no stranger to him (either from hearsay or personally).

The Buddha addresses the householder directly after his approach and thus gives the listener/reader the first 'figural explicit alterocharacterisation' (M. Pfister⁸³¹) of the mourning

⁸²⁸ Dietrich Weber (1998: 61) called this "erlebnisperspektivisches Erzählen" and "Annäherung an den Figurenhorizont".

⁸²⁹ MN II 106,6-9: *Atha kho so gahapati yena Bhagavā ten' upasaṃkami, upasaṃkamitvā Bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Ekamantaṃ nisinnaṃ kho taṃ Bhagavā etad avoca: ...*

⁸³⁰ Formula B 6a.); cp. Allon 1997: 52ff.; 84f.; 173.

⁸³¹ Cp. Neumann & Nünning 2008: 56, figure 3.3.

householder (and thus the Buddha’s perspective on the situation): “You do not have/possess, householder, faculties/power of one who remains standing [firmly] within his own mind [= you are “out of your own mind”]. Your faculties are clouded.”⁸³² Although the direct address of the one approaching the Buddha (*ekamantaṃ nisinnaṃ kho [acc. XY] Bhagavā etad avoca*) is part of the approach formula, its use here is interesting insofar as it remains unexpressed in the text whether the Buddha is informed about the householder’s situation or not. In fact, the householder only explains what had happened to him during his conversation with the Buddha. In any case, it seems that the Buddha in this passage is spontaneously reacting to the outward appearance of the householder.

The Buddha’s lapidary statement in response to the householder’s sad story, however, sounds rather unimpressed, if not indifferent. At least, it must have sounded indifferent to the householder, as his reaction proves. The text states that he could not believe that somebody would say this in such a case (“Who, Venerable Sir, would ever think thus: ‘Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those whom one holds dear [...]?’”⁸³³) and that he was “displeased with what the Buddha had said, scorned the Buddha’s words and rose from his seat and left”.⁸³⁴ In other words, the householder felt that the Buddha’s statement was an affront. In this whole passage, interestingly, the *sutta*-narrator appears especially neutral and the focalization seems to be ‘external’.⁸³⁵ Nowhere in the parts II.1-2 does the narrator show unambiguously that he has access to the consciousness of a character.⁸³⁶ His statement that not even eating did occur to the householder could also be based on mere observation (or from the householder’s own statement of it in the conversation with the Buddha, in which he repeats verbatim what the *sutta*-narrator has told earlier in the exposition). The narrator limits himself purely, as it were, to the description of what is directly visible (or audible). This produces the effect of an ‘objective

⁸³² MN II 106,10f.: *Na kho te, gahapati, sake citte t̥hitassa indriyāni atthi; te indriyānaṃ aññathattan ti.*

⁸³³ MN II 106,19-22: *Kassa kho nāṃ’ etaṃ, bhante, evaṃ bhavissati: Piyajātikā sokaparidevadukkhadomanas-supāyāsā piyappabhavikā? Piyajātikā hi kho, bhante, ānandasomanassā piyappabhavikā ti.*

⁸³⁴ MN II 106,22f. *Atha kho so gahapati Bhagavato bhāsitaṃ anabhinanditvā paṭikkosivā [S^k paṭikosivā; Si appaṭikkosivā, which is almost certainly an error] uṭṭhāy’ āsanā pakkāmi.*

⁸³⁵ Cp. Genette as summarized in Schmid 2008: 119: the narrator knows or reports less than the character knows → “objective narrative”.

⁸³⁶ The first time that the *sutta*-narrator renders the thoughts of a character is at MN II 107,20f.: *Atha kho so gahapati: Sameti me akkhadhuttehīti pakkāmi.*

narrative’ which is enhanced by the predominant use of the ‘showing’-mode of narration (i.e. direct speech of the characters) by the covert narrator. The *sutta*-narrator eventually disappears entirely from the narrative in the course of the conversion between the Buddha and the householder, indicated by the disappearance of all speech tags.⁸³⁷ This facilitates for the listener/reader the entering of the ‘narrative audience’, whose empathy in the beginning lies with the householder due to his position very likely being perceived as common sense, whereas the Buddha’s statement must appear opaque and even insensitive. This is another way of directing the readers’ response and introducing an initial instability that one can see in this *sutta*, for which end, as we have seen, in the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* and the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*, the narrative technique of ‘internal focalization’ was employed.

When their conversation does not reap the desired fruit for the householder, he leaves grudgingly. It appears that he is not only sad still, but that the whole conversation shifts into the direction of a ‘debate’ in which it somehow seems to be important for the householder to assert his ‘natural’ right to be ‘out of his mind’ due to the circumstances (“Who, venerable sir, would ever think thus: ‘**Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair** are born from those who are dear ...’?”), for he claims almost the exact opposite of what the Buddha⁸³⁸ said: “**Happiness and joy** are born from those who are dear, venerable sir, ...”.

After the moping householder has left the Buddha, his attitude towards the Buddha has changed significantly. This becomes tangible in the change of his address of the Buddha. While earlier – and provided Allon’s conclusions⁸³⁹ about the *abhivādetvā*-approach formula as the highest possible form of address are right (and compatible with the *Majjhima Nikāya*) – he had addressed the Buddha in the most formal and respectful way (with the *abhivādetvā*-formula and ‘*bhante*’), in his account of the what had happened in the presence of the gamblers, he uses the pejorative expression “the ascetic (*samaṇa*) Gotama”⁸⁴⁰.

⁸³⁷ MN II 106,12-22.

⁸³⁸ MN II 106,17f. *Evam etaṃ, gahapati; piyajātikā hi, gahapati, sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā piyapabhavikā ti.*

⁸³⁹ Cp. Allon 1997: 52-54.

⁸⁴⁰ MN II 106,27-107,1: *Idhāhaṃ, bhonto, yena samaṇo Gotamo ten’ upasaṃkami, ...*

The “householder’s lament” in the presence of the gamblers, although depicted as a dialogue, is really a monologue, or one may even call it a ‘soliloquy’ (although it is definitely a spoken monologue and not a representation of his thoughts), which repeats the entire exchange between himself and the Buddha. By re-enacting their encounter in front of the gamblers, the householder exhibits no signs of doubt or reconsideration of his own position – he “is done with that ascetic Gotama” – and he seeks support instead from a group of gamblers. The passage thus serves to characterise the householder (‘autocharacterisation’) as not only being in mourning, upset, and deranged, but as stubborn. The decisive sentence, which concludes the first part of the *sutta* treating of the householder, leads the listener/reader to the identification of this trait of the householder’s: *Atha kho so gahapati: Sameti me akkhadhuttehīti pakkāmi*⁸⁴¹ “Then the householder left thinKIng: ‘I agree with the gamblers.’”⁸⁴² I think that, besides being an important ‘autocharacterisation’ (trait), this sentence summarises the householder’s conviction, which is why I think that the Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation does not sufficiently bring this point to the fore. The difference may seem trivial, but I would suggest a more literal translation: “It fits [better]/ goes together for me with the gamblers”, instead of Bhikkhu Bodhi’s “I agree with the gamblers.” I want to argue, on the grounds of the effect of the development of the narrative up to this point, that the implication of the passage is not just that the householder agrees with someone else’s judgement. The gamblers are not even depicted by the text as presenting their own opinion in the matter. Rather, they just “nod the householder’s opinion through”. As I have argued above with regard to the narrative progression, the gamblers-episode on the whole serves the purpose of maKIng the householder an ‘unreliable narrator/ judge’. The ‘tension’ thus produced is highlighted and summarised in this final and definitive statement of the householder, in which he declares that he is no longer following the Buddha, and has now found more like-minded people. (We have to keep in mind here that in the beginning, the text depicts the householder as a follower of the Buddha through employment of the *abhivādetvā* approach-formula). Through that episode, a trait of the householder comes to the fore that was somewhat “hidden” behind his temporary state of being depressed and mourning, but which was already indicated by his replying disapprovingly to the Buddha throughout their conversation. By his final sentence, this ‘mimetic

⁸⁴¹ MN II 107,20f.

⁸⁴² Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 719, 4.

dimension' is turned into a function that propels the narrative progression forward. The presentation of the character of the householder forces the story to resolve the 'instability' through his insistent disagreement with the Buddha's judgement and his subsequent disappearance from the story. What makes this instability so amusing and non-credible for the 'authorial audience', and the fact that his new camp is made up of perhaps the least trustworthy kind of people imaginable – even by ancient Indian standards – finally produces the 'tension'. The gamblers' mechanical repetition of the householder's own words ("So it is, householder, so it is! Happiness and joy are born from those who are dear ...") in their reply may even lead one to think that they, emotionally quite uninvolved, just parrot the householder with the intention to quickly return to their business (gambling). In any case, the householder's final statement suggests to the authorial listener/reader that he must be a fool – though a suffering one.

Thematic aspect

Throughout the *Piyajātika Sutta*, the householder is addressed and described as "the householder" (*gahapati*). Not only does the *sutta*-narrator continually address him as "householder" (*gahapati*), but also the other characters, i.e. the Buddha and the gamblers.⁸⁴³ This fact, seen in retrospect and in combination with the peculiar Gamblers-episode, certainly contributes to the impression of the figure of the householder as a narrative function or, using Phelan's terminology, his 'thematic aspect'.

The *sutta* itself makes it easy for the listener/reader to discover the 'thematic dimension' or 'thematic aspect' of the figure of the householder: When the Buddha "explains" to the Brahmin messenger Nāḷijaṅgha the meaning of his short statement by way of an analogy, he makes it clear that death and loss are inescapable facts of life, sparing no one. Moreover, in narrating – repeatedly – how people went mad due to their losses of loved ones, just as the householder did, the Buddha even confirms that these emotions are natural. Inherent in the Buddha's "explanation by analogy" (*pariyāyena*), is the message that there is no more sense in going mad because of people dying, than in getting upset about the sun setting each night. Thus, *the text* (i.e. his author; we are now on the level author(s) → authorial audience) makes us understand explicitly that the

⁸⁴³ MN II 107,18f.: *Evam etaṃ gahapati evam etaṃ gahapati piyajātikā hi gahapati ānanda-somanassā piyapabhavikā.*

householder represents everybody. Even the expressions used in the *sutta* to describe the actions/state of the householder and the examples given by the Buddha in his analogy are structurally and with regard to contents very similar, as the following close comparison reveals: Both use the indefinite article *aññatarā* “some, any”. Further parallels can be seen in the underlined passages:

Householder: *Tena kho pana samayena aññatarassa gahapatissa ekaputtako piyo manāpo kālakato hoti. Tassa kālakiriyāya n’ eva kammantā paṭibhanti, na bhattaṃ paṭibhāti. So ālāhanam gantvā gantvā kandati: »Kaham ekaputtaka? Kaham ekaputtakā ti.*⁸⁴⁴

Buddha: *Bhūtapubbam, brāhmaṇa, imissā yeva sāvattiyā aññatarassā itthiyā mātā kālam akāsi. Sā tassā kālakiriyāya ummattikā khittacittā rathiyāya rathiyam siṅghātakena siṅghātakam upasamkamitvā evam āha: »api me mātaram addasatha; api me mātaram addasathā*⁸⁴⁵

Although the words used are different (*rathiyāya rathiyam* instead of *ālāhanaṃ; api me mātaram addasatha* instead of *Kaham ekaputtaka*), the structure and the actions described are very similar: At the beginning, a certain time-frame is given (“Meanwhile”, *Tena kho pana samayena* <> “Formerly”, *Bhūtapubbam*); then, we are told that someone’s (*aññatarassa* <> *aññatarassā*) relative had died (*Tassa kālakiriyāya* <> *tassā kālakiriyāya*); thereupon/because of that, this someone becomes mentally ‘deranged’ (*n’ eva kammantā paṭibhanti, na bhattaṃ paṭibhāti* <> *ummattikā khittacittā*) and acts irrational in deed (*ālāhanam gantvā gantvā* <> *rathiyāya rathiyam siṅghātakena siṅghātakam upasamkamitvā*), and word (*kandati: »Kaham ekaputtaka? Kaham ekaputtakā ti* <> *evam āha: »api me mātaram addasatha*). Thus, as the narrative progresses, it dawns on the listener/reader (having assumed the role of the authorial audience) that the householder is in fact “Mr. Everyman”. Conclusively, the householder, by not being able to accept a simple fact, just misses the chance for more detailed teachings and explanations. After all, it was the householder, displeased and scornful, who left the Buddha, not the Buddha who dismissed the householder. Although neither the Buddha nor the *sutta*-narrator say so explicitly, the householder has left the Buddha too early.

At this point, I think, a short excursion may be of some interest. I believe that the *Piyajātika Sutta* reveals something about the Buddha’s teaching style. Just as the *Piyajātika Sutta* ‘shows’ implicitly through its predominant employment of the ‘dramatic mode’ of presentation

⁸⁴⁴ MN II 106,4-6.

⁸⁴⁵ MN II 108,28-32.

(and the highly covert narrator), other *suttas* comment on the Buddha’s style more explicitly. This ‘style’ of teaching may be circumscribed as follows: Make a short and essential statement; see how people react (whether they get it or not!); then explain or have someone else explain in details when asked for more information.⁸⁴⁶ This is, of course, not a new insight. The Pāli-Buddhist tradition does possess terms for the description of this style of teaching in the *suttas*: the short initial statement is called *uddesa*, which is followed by a detailed exposition, *niddesa*, or *vibhaṅga* (“analysis”), which can include similes, and finally repeating or summarising the initial statement with a “conclusion”, *niggamana*.

What is passed over silently in the *Piyajātika Sutta*, is stated explicitly, for instance, in the *Kandaraka Sutta* (MN 51). The two *suttas* are somewhat similar with respect to the inherent potential of an individual to understand and practice the Buddha’s teachings, and we may gain some insight as to why the story does possess a proper closure in the *Piyajātika Sutta* after the householder has left grudgingly.

In the *Kandaraka Sutta*, in which the Buddha teaches four different kinds of persons that exist in the world, we find a similar situation as in the *Piyajātika Sutta*. The description of Pessa in the *Kandaraka Sutta*, the son of a mahout (*hatthārohaputta*), approaching the Buddha is the same as that of the householder (the ‘*abhivādetvā*-formula’): “[...] having paid homage to the Blessed One, [he] sat down to one side”⁸⁴⁷, which means that he is or regards himself as a follower of the Buddha. For the ascetic (*paribbājaka*) Kandaraka, on the other hand, as a follower of a different sect, the ‘*sammodanīyaṃ*-approach’ formula is used, which seems to suggest – if this is not just a random example – that Allon’s findings are also true for the *Majjhima Nikāya*.⁸⁴⁸

⁸⁴⁶ A prominent example exhibiting this structure is the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*, MN 18, and generally all *suttas* in the *Sutta Piṭaka* that feature the Venerable Mahākaccāna (= MN 18, 84, 133, 138; SN 22,3, 22,4, 35,130; AN 10,26, 10,127), who is said in the Canon to have been “foremost in giving detailed expositions (*vitthārena atthaṃ vibhajantānaṃ*) of short statements (*Samkhittena bhāsītassa*) given by the Buddha”; cp. AN I 23f.: *Etadaggaṃ, bhikkhave, mama sāvakaṇaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ rattaññūnaṃ yadidaṃ aññāsikoṇḍaṇṇo [...]. Samkhittena bhāsītassa vitthārena atthaṃ vibhajantānaṃ yadidaṃ mahākaccānoti.*

⁸⁴⁷ MN I 339,5f.

⁸⁴⁸ MN I 339,3-8: *Atha kho Pessa ca hatthārohaputto Kandarako ca paribbājako yena Bhagavā ten’ upasaṃkamim̐su, upasaṃkamitvā Pessa hatthārohaputto Bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi, Kandarako pana paribbājaka Bhagavatā saddhiṃ sammodi, sammodanīyaṃ kathaṃ vītisāretvā ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi.* Identical for the most part is also the approach of the two friends Ghaṭṭikāra and Jotipāla in the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* (cp. MN II 48,4-8), with the exception that Jotipāla also sits down. Cp. also Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 1252, n. 538: “From this difference in their manner of greeting the Buddha it is evident that Pessa is a follower of the Buddha, whereas Kandaraka – despite his respect and admiration – belongs to a different religious community.”

In the beginning of the *sutta*, the ascetic Kandaraka shows himself impressed with the discipline and calm among the Buddha's disciples, whereupon the Buddha explains to him what kind of realised disciples are among his students – including *arahants* – and that that was due to their right training, quite similar to the disciples of former Buddhas. After that, Pessa rejoices in the Buddha's words and remarks that also lay people like himself practiced the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) from time to time. The Buddha, thereupon, explains to Pessa four (metaphorical) distinctions of persons that exist in the world (the one who torments himself, others, both himself and others, and the one who torments no one but lives a holy life), and asks Pessa whom he liked best. The mahout's son answers correctly that he favoured the fourth type (for every sentient being strove for happiness and the avoidance of suffering). Then Pessa leaves and the Buddha comments:

“‘Bhikkhus, Pessa, the elephant driver's son, is wise, he has great wisdom.⁸⁴⁹ If he had sat a while longer until I had expounded for him in detail these four kinds of persons, he would have greatly benefitted. Still he has already greatly benefitted, even as it is.’⁸⁵⁰

The *sutta* continues with a detailed explanation to the monks. The situation that is depicted in the *Kandaraka Sutta* is thus in essence similar to the one in the *Piyajātika Sutta*, only that in the latter the reason for the continuation of the narrative is not stated explicitly. Implicitly, however, it is clear from a silent 'genre-convention' that the short statement of the Buddha still needs to be expounded more elaborately. The major difference, of course, is that in the *Piyajātika Sutta* the householder does not rejoice in what the Buddha has said, and that he obviously does not have the potential to follow the Buddha's teachings because he is not even able to accept the base, the first Noble Truth, although in the beginning he deports himself as if being a follower of the Buddha.

⁸⁴⁹ The Buddha says this, not because Pessa has chosen “the right” kind of person among the four, but because of his earlier statement to, and praise of, the Buddha that according to his observation working with elephants he found that animals were much more open to guidance than human beings could ever be, because “those who are called our slaves, messengers, and servants behave in one way with the body, in another way by speech, while their minds work in still another way. It is wonderful, venerable sir, it is marvellous how amid man's tangle, corruption, and deceptions, the Blessed One knows the welfare and the harm of beings.” (tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 444, 4.)

⁸⁵⁰ Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 446, 7.

This short excursion is meant to illustrate what I have called the inherent ‘genre convention’ of the *suttas*. In the light of the *uddesa-niddesa-niggamana*-structure of the Buddha’s teachings, I think that the *Piyajātika Sutta* is an especially interesting *sutta*, for while it follows this structure on a deeper textual level, at the same time on the discourse-level it exhibits a vivid story through mimetic transformation.

The ‘mimetic illusion’ of the nameless householder is effective because of its generality. From a common-sense point of view, the Buddha’s statement that loved ones’ are a source of pain seems equally counter-intuitive as his insistence on the non-existence of the Self. The householder’s basic reaction thus exemplifies the human predicament and humans’ shared experiences: It is generally to be expected that most people naturally experience their own life as the most important and significant. This sense of self seems to be an inborn fact of human existence, as I have tried to show in Part I of this study.⁸⁵¹ As Mark Siderits has aptly put it, most of our lives are “pleasure” or “happiness seeking enterprises”. We may even have been raised in an altruistic spirit by our parents, have been socialised solidly united, may live a cherishing and caring family-life and, being asked, we may even answer that our partner or our children are the most important persons in our lives, more important than ourselves. We may even have heard about the Buddha’s teaching and yet, at the end of the day, we are still intimately bound to our own perspective. Our own view on the world and the matters of life is an unconscious, all-underlying authority that judges everything that others do or say and everything that happens – “the way *I* experience the world, must be the way things are”. That is precisely the position of the nameless householder and it is perhaps also what most of us think, too. The next step, then, is to find approval for our intuition that we are right. The gamblers in our *sutta* willingly play this role. Since we exist in this world, we also think that we have the right to experience pleasure and not experience pain and mental suffering. If things happen differently, we resort to all kinds of hopes that things may change for the better. When they change for the better, all kinds of fears arise not to lose the favourable conditions again. And so it goes on forever. There is of course a

⁸⁵¹ In a later philosophical Mahāyāna school, the Yogācāra, this “natural” behaviour is even precisely explained to be a certain inborn aspect of consciousness which is called *sahaja-satkāya-dṛṣṭi*, (literally) “the [false] view that the body exists”/[Gombrich:] “the [false] view with regard to the category ‘existents’, which is inborn”, and which is taught to develop into *parikalpita-satkāya-dṛṣṭi*, “a conceptual [false] view about the category ‘existents’” later on in one’s life. (cp. Schmithausen 1987: *Ālayavijñāna*).

kind of instinct ingrained in living beings to avoid pain on a more superficial level of consciousness. The Buddha called this constant craving after pleasant things and experiences *taṇhā*, thirst. But on a yet deeper level of consciousness, it is really the view that we really and persistently exist as individuals that brings our whole situation about. The Buddha explained this as a general deep-rooted ignorance (*aññāna*). We really think that suffering and pain are just unfavourable conditions that could be avoided and will eventually, in our own case at least, subside. When disaster strikes, we are speechless – or the opposite, as in the case of our householder: we cry our unfair lot out into the world.

The Buddha claimed to simply teach how things are (*yathābhūtaṃ*) according to the truth or the simple facts of life. To the allegation that he taught the destruction of the person/living being at death, and therefore nihilism, he just replied: “Formerly as well as now, monks, I teach suffering and the cessation of suffering”.⁸⁵²

6.7 Narrative progression: ‘Mimetic dimension’ and ‘thematic functions’

To clarify the meaning of ‘thematic functions’ (J. Phelan) in a narrative, we need to ask what impact the actions of characters may have on (the behaviour and the feelings of) other characters or on the course of events in a story.⁸⁵³ The householder’s sadness and scepticism towards the Buddha’s statement could hardly be seen as a (permanent) character trait/attribute of the householder because it is – we know that from our own life experience – a transitory state. However, it serves as a mimetic function in this particular story because most people can identify with the householder and his tragic loss and grief. Moreover, this ‘mimetic aspect’ of the householder – which causes the initial instability and which in turn effects the following actions in the *sutta*’s progression – turns into a thematic function: first, through the endorsement of the householder’s judgement about the Buddha’s obscure statement by the gamblers (who themselves have thematic function) and, secondly, through the reappearance of the theme of scepticism towards the Buddha’s teachings in the character of King Pasenadi. Although both the householder and the gamblers vanish from the narrative of the *Piyajātika Sutta*, they do not so without leaving a trace.

⁸⁵² *Alagaddūpama Sutta*, MN I 140,14f.

⁸⁵³ Cp. Phelan 1989: 125.

The mimetic aspect of the householder and the gamblers that initially set in motion the unfolding/progression of the story through causing its major instability, has turned into a thematic function in that it reappears in King Pasenadi’s own scepticism towards the Buddha. The Queen-Mallikā-and-Pasenadi episode (part II), then, serves as the complication of the initial instability in the middle of the narrative before it can be resolved in the end by Pasenadi’s final acknowledgement of the Buddha’s superior wisdom.

My ‘thematising’ hypothesis that the nameless householder in the *Piyajātika Sutta* is eventually revealed in the course of the *sutta* as representative of a class of people is corroborated by the fact that in no other place in the *Majjhima Nikāya* a householder without proper name is the basis for a possible person in a concrete story. A not further specified collective body of people, “householders” (*gahapatayo*), though, is mentioned in very general statements, often in the phrase, “the Brahmin householders”⁸⁵⁴. More often, however, in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, ‘householder’ occurs in the singular, but still generically, as part of the formula:

“So too, Brahmin, here a Tathāgata appears in the world, accomplished, fully enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of worlds, incomparable leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, enlightened, blessed. He declares this world with its gods, its Māras, and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and Brahmins, its princes and its people, which he has himself realised with direct knowledge. He teaches the Dhamma good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing, and he reveals a holy life that is utterly perfect and pure. **A householder or householder’s son** or one born in some other clan [/family, household⁸⁵⁵] hears that Dhamma. On hearing the Dhamma he acquires faith in the Tathāgata. Possessing that faith, he considers thus: ‘Household life is crowded and dusty; life gone forth is wide open. It is not easy, while living in a home, to lead the holy life utterly perfect and pure as a polished shell. Suppose I shave off my hair and beard, put on the yellow robe, and go forth from the home life

⁸⁵⁴ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 379, 2; so, e.g., in the *Sāleyyaka Sutta* (MN 41), the *Apaṇṇaka Sutta* (MN 60), and the *Nagaravindeyya Sutta* (MN 150).

⁸⁵⁵ The Pāli word that the Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi translated as “clan” here is *kula*, which can have quite a range of meanings; cp. Cone 2010: s.v. *kula* (“assemblage; community, class, lineage; family, household; family residence; good family; a noble or eminent family.”). The existence of several specifications in compositional forms with *-kula* as last part of a compound, however, rather suggests a translation like, e.g., “from a family other than the *gahapati*-class” (i.e. basically merchants, farmers etc.; cp. Cone 2010, s.v. *gahapati(-kula)*). Other ‘*kulas*’ mentioned in the Canon are, e.g., *ācariya-kula*, “family of a teacher”; *kuṭumbika-k.*, “family of a landowner”; *rāja-k.*, “royal family”; *sindhava-k.*, “a family from [the region of] Sindh”; cp. *ibid.*, s.v. *kul – ifc.* *Kula* does often have the connotation of ‘noble’ or ‘eminent’, referring to a respected family(-line) within a community.

into homelessness.’ On a later occasion, abandoning a small or large fortune, abandoning a small or large circle of relatives, he shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the yellow robe, and goes forth from the home life into homelessness...’⁸⁵⁶

On another occasion, a householder occurs in a hypothetical case, where the Buddha explains to the Brahmin Caṅkī that the proof for a monk’s direct access to liberating knowledge or insight is the absence of greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) in him.⁸⁵⁷

The only instance, as far as I can see, in which a householder, or a man addressed as householder, as part of a concrete story occurs in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and the *Majjhima Nikāya*, is in the *Raṭṭhapāla Sutta* (MN 82), namely Raṭṭhapāla’s father. But again, although Raṭṭhapāla’s parents do not have proper names, they are more individualised than the householder in the *Piyajātika Sutta*: “At that time a youth of a noble family (*kulaputta*) named Raṭṭhapāla, the son of an esteemed family in that very town Thullakoṭṭhita, was also seated among the assembly.”⁸⁵⁸

In general, householders (*gahapatayo*) as a social grouping term in the Pali Canon are associated with an “elite status”⁸⁵⁹ and material wealth, and are characterised or described as “rich, with great wealth and property”⁸⁶⁰, or as “[...] rich [...] with great wealth and property, with a vast number of gold ingots, a vast number of granaries, a vast number of fields, a vast number of

⁸⁵⁶ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 272, 11./ 12 = MN I 178,37-179,21 [my emphasis]. Other occurrences of *gahapati* as part of this formula are, e.g.: MN I 267,21; 344,27; *et passim*.

⁸⁵⁷ “Here, Bhāradvāja, a bhikkhu may be living in dependence on some village or town. Then a householder or a householder’s son goes to him and investigates him in regard to three kinds of states: in regard to states based on greed, in regard to states based on hate, and in regard to states based on delusion [...]. And the Dhamma that this venerable one teaches is profound, hard to see and hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. This Dhamma cannot easily be taught by one affected by greed...”; tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 781, 17 (= MN II 171,31-172,16).

⁸⁵⁸ MN II 55,25ff.: *Tena kho pana samayena Raṭṭhapālo nāma kulaputto tasmim̐ yeva Thullakoṭṭhite aggakulikassa putto tissaṃ parisāyaṃ nissnno hoti*. His father is addressed as *gahapati* several times throughout the sutta (MN II 62,18,27,28; 63,1,4; 64,3,6,17).

⁸⁵⁹ Cp. Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 46-55, and 43: “Wealth is [...] a categorical feature and this is combined with *vaṇṇa* and what is essentially an agrarian elite (*gahapati*) category [...]. Note this group is in no way marginalized, being rather the accepted elite of the society described in the Pāli Canon.”

⁸⁶⁰ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 610, 11. MN I 505,3f.: ...*gahapati vā gahapatiputto vā aḍḍho mahaddhano mahābhogo ...*

land, a vast number of wives, and a vast number of men and women slaves”⁸⁶¹. Moreover, the sixth of the (metaphorical) “seven treasures” of a “universal emperor” (*cakkavatti*) is said to be “the treasurer” (*gahapati-ratana*), for instance, in the *Mahāsudassana Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*.⁸⁶² From a sociological perspective, the *gahapatis*, an often occurring designation in the early Buddhist texts, were most probably a “newly emergent” elite class during the times of the historical Buddha.⁸⁶³ Bailey and Mabbett draw a relatively coherent picture of this class and its relation to the other classes during the Buddha’s times. I summarise from them:

“Gahapatis were heads of some smaller units in the kaleidoscope of semi-autonomous social units. [...] Sometimes they are enumerated as a class alongside (and thus not overlapping with) Brahmins and kṣatriyas, but at other times there is an overlap and the term gahapati is a label for the social eminence of pillars of the community including Brahmins. [...] The brāhmaṇa-gahapati has an ambiguous status in early Buddhist texts. On the one hand, he seems ideologically and actually to be the opposite of everything for which the bhikkhu stands. [...] On the other hand, he was a source of material support for the saṅgha and its principal source of recruitment. Both monk and brāhmaṇa-gahapati were mirrors each of what the other was not.

If the gahapati was anything in early Buddhist literature it was an overlapping social (householder = the male head of the family) and economic (landowner) category and was flexible enough to be attached to some of the varṇa titles. [...]

What we note is a picture of a society focused on householders who showed a preference for agriculture and rural life rather than residence in those areas unambiguously urban in character. The gahapati is the foundational economic position in the transformed agrarian economy centred on all of the rural areas now supplying the cities and other developing conurbations.”⁸⁶⁴

However, whether the picture that G. Bailey and I. Mabbett draw was always so clear-cut is perhaps debatable. (What about such specified designations as *kuṭumbika-kula*, “property-owner clan”, in the Canon, for instance?) The somewhat distinct status of the *gahapatis* as in reality neither always coincident with *vaṇṇa* (*vessa*; Skt. *vaiśya*), locality (*negama*, “townspeople”), nor

⁸⁶¹ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 555, 12. MN I 451,36-452,4: *Seyyathā pi Udāyi gahapati vā gahapatiputto vā aḍḍho mahaddhano mahābhogo, nekānaṃ nikkhagaṇānaṃ cayo nekānaṃ dhañṇagaṇānaṃ cayo nekānaṃ khettagaṇānaṃ cayo nekānaṃ vatthugaṇānaṃ cayo nekānaṃ bhariyāgaṇānaṃ cayo nekānaṃ dāsagaṇānaṃ cayo nekānaṃ dāsigaṇānaṃ cayo ...*

⁸⁶² D II 176, 188.

⁸⁶³ Cp. Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 47f.

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid.: 50f.

occupation (*jānapada*, “farmer”), was already shown by Richard Fick.⁸⁶⁵ The focus of this study, however, is not in particular a “sociology of early Buddhism” as it plays out in the Pāli *suttas*, but rather the narrative discourse of characters and the effect that this discourse has on a listener/reader of that text.

Thus, we have seen that householders, unless they are clearly identified by a proper name or otherwise concretised, occur as a generic term for a certain important social group of people (merchants, landowners/farmers?). But nowhere else in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and the *Majjhima Nikāya* except in the *Piyajātika Sutta* occurs a *nameless* householder as an unspecified representative of that social group in a concrete story.

If my interpretation is right, this means that the *Piyajātika Sutta* could even be interpreted (thematically) as depicting a certain social group (*gahapatayo*) as by trend rather unfit (for whatever reasons) or unwilling to understand the basic teachings of the Buddha and thus to enter onto the path offered by him (among other religious leaders at that time). That group, in turn, may have been singled out in the *Piyajātika Sutta* (for whatever reason) as representative for the Buddhist category of the “worldling” (*putthujjano*). This would support Bailey’s and Mabbett’s finding that the *gahapati* in the early Buddhist texts “seems ideologically and actually to be the opposite of everything for which the *bhikkhu* stands”.⁸⁶⁶ That finding finds additional support in a passage from the *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda Sutta* (MN 143), in which the terminally ill *seṭṭhi-gahapati* Anāthapiṇḍika bursts into tears after being precisely instructed on his deathbed by the venerable Sāriputta how to free his consciousness from any clinging to whatever might present itself as experience inwardly or outwardly:

“When this was said, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika wept and shed tears. Then the venerable Ānanda asked him: ‘Are you foundering, householder, are you sinking?’ [Anāthapiṇḍika] ‘I am not foundering, venerable Ānanda, I am not sinking. But although I have long waited upon the Teacher and bhikkhus worthy of esteem, never before have I heard such talk on the Dhamma.’ [Ānanda:] ‘Such talk on

⁸⁶⁵ Cp. Fick 1974: 164f. Also Anāthapiṇḍika, the rich benefactor of the Buddha, is called a *gahapati* (cp. MN III 258,3: *Tena kho oana samayena Anāthapiṇḍiko gahapati ābādhiko hoti ...*), more specifically a *seṭṭhi-gahapati*, cp. Fick 1974: 167, esp. 166, n. 2: “Das Amt eines *seṭṭhi* scheint stets in Händen eines *gahapati* gelegen zu haben nirgends wird erwähnt, dass ein Angehöriger einer andern Klasse oder Kaste, etwa ein reicher Brahmane, die Stellung innegehabt hätte. Wenn nicht kurzweg vom *seṭṭhi*, wird immer vom *seṭṭhi gahapati* gesprochen ...”

⁸⁶⁶ Bailey & Mabbett 2003: 50.

the Dhamma, householder, is not given to lay people clothed in white. Such talk on the Dhamma is given to those who have gone forth.”⁸⁶⁷

Surely, this passage perhaps made, and continues to make egalitarians protest, and the Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi in his commendable translation of the *Majjhima Nikāya* devotes an extended footnote to it, in which he seemingly circumvents what the text, quite straightforwardly, says.⁸⁶⁸ It is difficult to imagine, as the Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi states, that the Buddha was exclusive in his teachings of a whole class of ancient Indian society. But one certainly has to keep in mind also that the *suttas* cannot be regarded as exact maps or images of the social, political, historical, and so forth, reality of ancient India. We cannot always draw clear-cut conclusions or extrapolate to, say, real ancient Indian social conditions from what we find in the texts. While the *suttas* undoubtedly do contain elements from such realities, they are after all narratives, and narratives follow their own ‘logic’ – “story-logic” (David Herman). For instance, we do still today find the hot springs near the modern day Rajgir (*Rājagaha*) mentioned at various places in the Canon.⁸⁶⁹ This fact, however, does not automatically put us in any position to assert that also the events reported in the Canon to have taken place there, must be historical, too. In the *Mahākaccāna-bhaddekaratta Sutta* (MN 133), for instance, a certain deity is reported to have approached the venerable Samiddhi, illuminating the whole of the Hot Springs Park.⁸⁷⁰ It is not so much that I want to argue that the text must be unhistorical because it is not verisimilar to believe that a non-

⁸⁶⁷ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 1111f., 15.

⁸⁶⁸ Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 1358, n. 1306: “This statement does not imply that there is any inherent exclusiveness or arbitrary discrimination in the Buddha’s way of presenting his teaching. But as those who remain in lay life must look after their families, possessions, and occupations, such talk leading to complete detachment would not have been appropriate for them.”

⁸⁶⁹ See, e.g., Vin I, 100: *Tapodā rājagahe yuddhaṃ nāgānogāhanena ca ...*; I 117: *Tena samayena buddho bhagavā rājagahe viharati veḷuvane kalandakanivāpe. Tena kho pana samayena bhikkhu tapode nahāyanti*; III 108,19: “*atha ca panāyaṃ Tapodā kuthitā sandati*” (cited in: Selected Papers on Pāli Studies. PTS, Oxford, 1994, p. 109f.); DN II 116f.: *Ekamidāhaṃ ānanda samayaṃ tattheva rājagahe viharāmi tapodārāme. Tatra pi kho tāhaṃ ānanda āmantesiṃ: ramaṇīyaṃ ānanda rājagahaṃ ramaṇīyo tapodārāmo*; MN III 192,2f. (*Mahākaccānabhaddekaratta Sutta* MN 133): *Ekam samayaṃ Bhagavā Rājagaha viharati Tapodārāme. Atha kho āyasmā Samiddhi rattiyaṃ paccūsasamayaṃ paccuṭṭhāya yena Tapodo ten’ upasaṃkamaṃ gattāni parisiñcituṃ*. Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 1044, 1.: “On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Rājagaha in the Park of the Hot Springs. Then, when it was near dawn, the venerable Samiddhi went to the hot springs to bathe his limbs.”

⁸⁷⁰ MN III 192,6-9: *Atha kho aññatara devatā abhikkantāya rattiyaṃ abhikkantavaṇṇā kevalakappaṃ Tapodaṃ obhāsetvā yen’ āyasmā Samiddhi ten’ upasaṃkamaṃ upasaṃkamtivā ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi*.

human being did actually appear there in this way (because perhaps most of us do not even believe that such beings really exist) but rather, that the way the events are depicted clearly shows the narrative transformation of story-material. When we simply ask ourselves who was present at the depicted event (the venerable Samiddhi and a certain deity), and ‘who speaks’ and ‘who sees’ on the discourse-level of the *sutta*, we are referred to an omniscient witnessing, narrating voice (in other words, our *sutta*-narrator). By simply accepting that the ontological status of ‘things’ changes once they crossed the threshold of story-world, the deity, then, just becomes an element of the ‘inventory’ of that story-world. Whether deities exist or once existed, or did not exist or are perhaps just another, culture-specific way of describing an inner experience of the venerable Samiddhi, does not have to trouble us any further. We can simply accept it as existent of the story-world. Therefore, while ‘historical source mode’ reading may constitute a (legitimate) Western academic interest in the *suttas*, that might not be identical with the interest or intention of their compilers/authors/reciters. By the same token are the characters depicted in the *suttas* like real people, and thus may be described and even analysed like real people, i.e. with the vocabulary (and the mechanisms of inference) used for the description of fellow human beings (in the case of the Pāli *suttas*, however, always with an eye to the cultural and historical differences of historically and culturally remote situations). But that is not tantamount to saying that characters in narratives *are* real people.⁸⁷¹

6.8 The Gamblers:

Frequent mention has been made so far of the group of gamblers in the *Piyajātika sutta* without giving a detailed character analysis. First, they certainly do have an important function in the progression of the *sutta*’s narrative, as we have seen above, they are not characters in a strict sense. Seymour Chatman has proposed three criteria to distinguish between major and minor characters, and elements of the setting of a story, “no one of which”, he adds, “is adequate in itself: (1) biology, (2) identity (that is, nomination), (3) importance [that means they must act or be affected by a plot-significant action of the story (= a so-called kernel event)]”.⁸⁷² When all three

⁸⁷¹ Cp. Chatman 1989: 138.

⁸⁷² Chatman 1989: 138-145.

criteria together are present in considerable elaboration, then an element of the discourse “is *more likely* to be a character [...] than an object”⁸⁷³.

Now the gamblers do not really match the proposed criteria in sufficient detail: they are presented as a homogeneous collective (*sambahulā akkhadhuttā*) rather than being individualised and named; they are human beings: they “play dice” (*akkhehi dibbanti*), they (seemingly, at least) listen to the householder’s story, and they answer or rather just repeat the householder’s own answer to an at any rate rhetorical question (*Evam etaṃ, gahapati, evam etaṃ, gahapati. Piyajātikā hi, gahapati, ānanda-somanassā piyappabhavikā ti.*), but none of these activities are plot-significant actions.

However, as already mentioned, the gamblers have a significant function in relation to the householder for the narrative’s progression. As a collective group, they nevertheless possess the ‘thematic dimension’ “unreliable” when it comes to assessing the truth of a statement of a wise person, and this attribute becomes effective towards the end of the *sutta*, when it finally becomes clear that the Buddha’s enigmatic statement was indeed an accurate and true description of “how things are”.

In order to understand the ‘thematic dimension’ of the gamblers we have to consider the cultural background of this kind of activity. In his book *Society in Ancient India*, Sures Chandra Banerji traces several aspects of the social life and activities in different periods of ancient Indian history as manifest in their literary productions.⁸⁷⁴ Dice-playing and gambling, for one, seems to surface everywhere throughout ancient Indian history under different names and of different kinds, suggesting that it has always been a quite popular pastime in India. Especially dice-gambling with stakes appears to have been very common in every period, and a problem with ruining results for many at that. According to the frequent mentioning in the sources⁸⁷⁵, it was widespread in ancient India already from Vedic times: “Gambling with dice was a common vice [in the age of the *Brāhmaṇas*].”⁸⁷⁶ Banerji summarises a passage from the tenth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda* (X 34.1): “RV X. 34.1 contains the lament and penitence of a gambler who, impelled by

⁸⁷³ Chatman 1989: 141.

⁸⁷⁴ Banerji 2007: 160-177.

⁸⁷⁵ I.e. since the *Ṛgveda* etc.; cp. Banerji 2007: 160ff. esp. 162. For dice-playing in the *Jātakas*, see Banerji 2007: 175.

⁸⁷⁶ Cp. Banerji 2007: 160; 163.

an irresistible urge, repeatedly gambles in dice, and has lost his all besides the sympathy of his near and dear ones. It seems that even one's wife was kept as a stake in this game. The deceptive activities of a gambler are referred to at several places [...]."⁸⁷⁷

We also learn, for instance, certain names in connection with special dice-games and throws from the Sanskrit *Sūtra* literature, and that a special public place was arranged or even permanently set up for gaming (Skt. *sabhā*).⁸⁷⁸ The name for a person (i.e. a man – gambling was men's business apparently) regularly indulging in gambling with dice is *kitavā*, a word we do find in Middle-Indic, too, but there the semantics changed (widened) to mean “a cheat”, ‘one who plays false’ in a rather general sense. This shift in meaning is very well understandable from the moral code implicit in the Vedic *Sūtra* literature. Banerji observes: “From the *Aśvalāyana Grhya* (I. 5.6) we learn that dice-play was common. It was regarded as a vice as is evident from the *Gautama Dharmasūtra* (XV. 17) and *Baudhāyana D.S.* (II. 1.2.8).”⁸⁷⁹ The designation used in the *Piyajātika Sutta* is *akkhadhuttā* (Skt. *akṣadhūrtāḥ*), which in Sanskrit can also mean something like a “cardsharper” of the game of dice⁸⁸⁰, which would make the general despicableness of this pastime explicit.⁸⁸¹

It is plausible to assume that the gamblers in the episode in part I.3 indicated non-credibility for an ancient Indian audience, too. One can therefore say that their function in the narrative is to underline the unreliability of the householder. They signal to the ‘authorial audience’ that there is something dubious about the householder and his rejection of the Buddha.

Moreover, such a strong ‘tension’-creating signal for the authorial audience serves to direct the audience's attention to the ‘synthetic aspect’ or the factitiousness of the character in question, as Phelan has observed. However, this is very unlikely meant to deliberately undermine the mimetic illusion, a phenomenon that is well-known from post-modern literature and is thus

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid.: 160.

⁸⁷⁸ *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* (II. 10.25.12-13): referenced to and summarized in Banerji 2007: 163.

⁸⁷⁹ Banerji 2007: 163.

⁸⁸⁰ Cp. MW, s.v. *akṣa-dhūrta* (the entry is, however, rather “weak” because the only reference that Sir Monier Monier-Williams gives is “L” (= indigenous Indic lexicographers). Pāṇinī in his *Aṣṭādhyāyī* records the term *akṣa-dyūta*, meaning “dicing” (referenced and cited in Banerji 2007: 165). In the epics (*Rāmāyaṇa*), the word *dhūrta* “gamester”, and *devana* “playing with dice”, and several other terms, betray once more the popularity of dice-games (for references, see also *ibid.*: 166f.).

⁸⁸¹ That the ideas as laid down in the *Dharmaśāstra*-literature were most probably already prevalent as “community standards” during the Buddha's time, was put forward by Patrick Olivelle; cp. Olivelle 2006: 171.

probably not to be expected (as intentional) in pre-modern, non-European texts. Rather, the ‘authorial audience’ is made aware of the fact that the gamblers are a narrative strategy to achieve certain narrative effects, thus highlighting their ‘thematic aspect’. Likewise, whether this is intentional or not is impossible to know. That it can have an effect on the interpreter of the text, however, is evident.

The main characters of the second part of the two main parts in which I have subdivided the *Piyakātika Sutta* are King Pasenadi, Queen Mallikā, and a Brahmin called Nāḷijaṅgha. The following will treat them one by one.

6.9 Queen Mallikā

Mallikā, the daughter of “the chief garland-maker” of Sāvattihī, as we learn from G. P. Malalasekera, is the model of the wise woman – “wiser than Pasenadi would have desired”⁸⁸²! She appears in several instances in the *Jātakas*⁸⁸³ and is furthermore identified with Sujātā in the *Sujāta Jātaka* (Jā III 22), the Kinnarī in the *Bhallātiya Jātaka* (Jā IV 444), and Sambulā in the *Sambulā Jātaka* (Jā V 98). Furthermore, it is also in the *Jātakas* that Pasenadi and Mallikā are reported to have had serious quarrels⁸⁸⁴, which the Buddha had to reconcile. In both cases, which are told in the *paccuppannavatthus* of the respective *Jātakas*, Mallikā and Pasenadi are said to have gotten into a fight, as a consequence of which the King refused to speak to his queen (he possibly thought of divorcing her, too). In the *Bhallātiya Jātaka*, Pasenadi is of the opinion that the life of luxury that he provided her with through their marriage had turned her head, whereas in the *Sujāta Jātaka* the quarrel seems to have broken out over conjugal rights.⁸⁸⁵ The Buddha, then, decides to reconcile the couple and he relates a stories of the past in which he relates that Pasenadi and Mallikā had been a couple many times in former lives and that, therefore, their quarrel was

⁸⁸² Cp. DPPN, s.v. Mallikā: “Mallikā, though an exemplary wife, was not without lapses. Reference is made to the quarrels she had with her husband, once, at least, on the question of conjugal rights, as a result of which they both sulked and had to be reconciled by the Buddha. J. iv.437; also J. iii.20; in these quarrels the king was probably more to blame than Mallikā; it is said that until reconciled by the Buddha he ignored her very existence, saying that prosperity had turned her head.”

⁸⁸³ E.g. the *Kummāsapinda Jātaka*, Jā No. 415, and the *Mahāsupina Jātaka*, Jā No. 77.

⁸⁸⁴ Cp. Jā IV 437 = *Bhallātiya Jātaka*, No. 504; Jā III 20 = *Sujāta Jātaka*, No. 307.

⁸⁸⁵ The *paccuppannavatthu* of the *Sujāta Jātaka* (No. 306) relates: “One day, they say, there was a dispute at court between her [Mallikā] and the king [Pasenadi]. Men still speak of it as the ‘Harem Quarrel’.” (Tr. Cowell 1990 (Vol. III): 13). The translation “Harem Quarrel” is a bit misleading here, for the Pāli text has *sayanakalaho*, which rather means “bedroom quarrel”.

trifle and pointless. It is difficult or impossible to ascertain whether the situations mentioned in the *Jātakas* have any relation to the *Piyajātika Sutta* story.⁸⁸⁶

Similar to other characters of the Pāli Canon, Malalasekera draws an almost comprehensive, very life-like and biography-like picture of Mallikā from when she was sixteen years old and first met her future husband Pasenadi, until her death. The information about Mallikā, however, is scattered throughout the Canon and the commentaries (mainly the *Dhammapadatthakathā*).

The textual evidence shows that Mallikā was known for being a faithful disciple of the Buddha. From the *Vinaya* we learn that Ānanda was once sent by the Buddha on the king's request to teach the *dharmma* regularly in Pasenadi's harem (*itthāgāraṃ*).⁸⁸⁷ Moreover, in a *sutta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, we find one of the very rare (if not otherwise non-existent) references to the physical appearance of a person in the Pāli Canon. The background of the passage is as follows: one of King Pasenadi's two wives, queen Mallikā, one day pays a visit to the Blessed One to ask for the reason, why some women are ugly while at the same time rich and influential, and some are fair but poor, and others again are both beautiful and rich. The Buddha answers with an explanation of the karmic fruits of one's behaviour: being ugly is the result of being irritable when criticised, whereas wealth is the result of generosity. Furthermore, envy leads to being un-influential and petty. The following statement of Mallikā's in the presence of the Buddha is a response to what he had just explained, and it is one of the very rare (self-) descriptions of the physical appearance of persons in the Pāli Canon. Following upon it, Mallikā goes for refuge to the Buddha and asks of him to accept her as a lay-follower:

“When the Blessed One had spoken, Queen Mallikā said to him: ‘I suppose, Lord, that in some earlier birth I was irascible and irritable, and that when I was criticized even a little I lost my temper and became angry and upset; therefore now I am ugly, ill-formed and unsightly. But, Lord, I suppose that in some earlier birth I gave things to an ascetic or a Brahmin; therefore now I am rich, affluent, with great wealth and property. And, Lord, I suppose that in some earlier birth I was un-envious, not one

⁸⁸⁶ Strangely enough, each *Jātaka* ends by stating, “Ever afterwards the king of Kosala lived with her in harmony.” But it seems that the couple had more than one quarrel.

⁸⁸⁷ Vin IV 157-161.

who envied, resented and begrudged the gain, honour, respect, esteem, homage and worship given to others; therefore now I am of great influence.”⁸⁸⁸

Surprisingly, the introduction to the *Kummāsaṇḍa Jātaka* mentions Mallikā to have been “extremely beautiful (and very good)”⁸⁸⁹. I think we can take this as an illustrative example that the compilation of character-information across the different collections, including the later commentaries, is a rather unpromising undertaking.

I will therefore, now turn to the *Piyajātika Sutta* itself and examine from step by step this particular instance of characterisation and function of the character Queen Mallikā.

The first information we can obtain, by implication, is that she is an inhabitant of the royal palace (“Eventually this story reached the harem [of the King’s palace]”⁸⁹⁰). She is named (Mallikā) and her social position and marital status is mentioned (“queen Mallikā”, *Mallikāṃ devīm*).⁸⁹¹ Furthermore, she is referred to by the *sutta*-narrator as “queen” (*devī*) and addressed by a man designated “King Pasenadi” (*rājā Pasenadi*), which implicates that she must be the wife of the King of Kosala, Pasenadi.⁸⁹² Kosala was one of the sixteen emergent ancient Indian states (*mahājanapadā*), or the country (*desa*) inhabited by the “Kosalans” (*kosalā*)⁸⁹³, the “King” of whom at the lifetime of the historical Buddha was a man named Pasenadi. The capital of this ‘Kingdom’ was Sāvattihī, where the whole story of the *sutta* is located from the beginning (*Bhagavā Sāvattihyaṃ viharati Jetavane Anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme*).⁸⁹⁴

Mallikā is directly characterised by her husband Pasenadi in the conversation with him about the story of the householder and the Buddha’s remark after it had reached the palace (=

⁸⁸⁸ Cp. AN IV 197; tr. Nyanaponika Thera/Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000). *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha. An Anthology of Suttas from the Aṅguttara Nikāya*. Vistaar Publ., New Delhi [1st publ. Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 1999], p. 121-123.

⁸⁸⁹ Cowell 1990 (Vol III): 244.

⁸⁹⁰ MN II 107,21f. (*raja-*)*antepura* (Skt. *antaḥpura*) can mean both the royal palace and the harem; however, the latter meaning is more literal, cp. CPD, s.v. *antepura*: [...] (*b*) *esp. the inner apartments of the palace, the harem*.

⁸⁹¹ Interestingly, the Persian word for “queen” or “princess” is *mallik*. This may, however, be mere coincidence and no true or even intentional linguistic relatedness.

⁸⁹² MN II 107,22f.: *Atha kho rājā Pasenadi Kosalo Mallikāṃ devīm āmantesi ...*

⁸⁹³ Cp. n. 72, p. 21 in ‘Presentation of characters in the *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta*’.

⁸⁹⁴ The ancient capital Sāvattihī was situated near the modern day Sāheṭh Māheṭh, at the river Rāpti (= ancient *Aciravatī*).

‘figural explicit alterocharacterisation’⁸⁹⁵). In his characterising statement, Pasenadi taunts Mallikā as being naïve and gullible, not thinking independently, when he says:

“It is in exactly this way (*evam evaṃ paṇāyaṃ*) that whatever the drop-out (*samaṇa*) Gotama says, Mallikā approves of it, [with the words] ‘If this, maharaja, was said by the Blessed One, it must be so.’ As an apprentice who approves of whatever his master says [with the words], ‘So it is, master. So it is, master’, so do you, Mallikā, approve of absolutely (*eva*) everything (*yaṃ yad*) the drop-out Gotama says [with the words], ‘If this, maharaja, was said by the Blessed One, it must be so.’ Go away, Mallikā, get lost!”⁸⁹⁶

Seen in retrospect, that is, from the ending of the *sutta*, the listener/reader can understand that it is in fact the king himself, who does not think independently here, because he just follows public opinion. At this point of the story, however, this is not discernible for the ‘narrative audience’.

Although outwardly Mallikā kowtows to the king after having been reproached (she retreats to her chambers, as must be inferred from the gap (Ger. “*Leerstelle*”) in the text), secretly she sends a Brahmin called Nālījaṅgha to a) ascertain whether the Buddha had indeed made this utterance (i.e. the exact wording of it)⁸⁹⁷, and b) to record well how the Buddha would explain his statement, in order to relate it to her upon returning.⁸⁹⁸ The way she instructs the Brahmin to greet the Buddha on her behalf shows the highest possible form of respect (bowing with the head to the *Bhagavān*’s feet) and employs a standard, respectful approach-formula.⁸⁹⁹ Now, we can infer at least two traits from Mallikā’s behaviour. First, the sending of the Brahmin depicts her as being disobedient to the king. Instead of “keeping quiet” and submit to the king’s judgement, what was perhaps expected from a woman at this time and in this environment, she takes initiative.

⁸⁹⁵ Neumann & Nünning 2008: 56, Figure 3.3.

⁸⁹⁶ MN II 107,27-108,2: *Evam evaṃ paṇāyaṃ Mallikā yaññadeva samaṇo Gotamo bhāsati taṃ tad ev’ assa abbhanumodati: ›Sace taṃ, mahārāja, Bhagavatā bhāsitaṃ, evam etan ti. Seyyathāpi nāma ācariyo yaññadeva antevāsissa bhāsati, taṃ tad ev’ assa antevāsī abbhanumodati: ›Evam etaṃ, ācariya; evam etaṃ, ācariyāti; evam eva kho tvaṃ, Mallike, yaññadeva samaṇo Gotamo bhāsati, taṃ tad ev’ assa abbhanumodasi: ›sace taṃ, mahārāja, Bhagavatā bhāsitaṃ evam etan ti. Cara pi re, Mallike, vinassāti.*

⁸⁹⁷ MN II 108,9ff.: *evaṃ ca vadehi: Bhāsitaṃ nu kho, bhante, Bhagavatā esā vācā: Piyaṃjātikā sokaparidevaduk-khadomanassupāyāsā piyappabhavikā ti?*

⁸⁹⁸ MN II 108,11f.: *Yathā ca te Bhagavā vyākaroti, taṃ sādhukaṃ uggahetvā mamaṃ āroceyyāsi. Na hi Tathāgatā vitathaṃ bhaṇantīti.*

⁸⁹⁹ Formula D1b); cp. Allon 1997: 176.

Secondly, this proves her to be the exact opposite of what Pasenadi accuses her of. She is discerning, critical, and conscientious (after all, she instructs the Brahmin not only to enquire the exact wording of the Buddha, but also an explanation), but also courageous and self-confident.⁹⁰⁰

By Queen Mallikā's decision to send the Brahmin, her 'mimetic dimension' is turned into a function that makes the narrative progress towards the resolution of its underlying 'instability', which consists in the conflict of opinions, respectively truth, concerning the Buddha's statement.

She proves that she is self-confident and courageous in that she, after the Brahmin's return from the Buddha, faces Pasenadi again, and abruptly, as it were, confronts him with questions that are intended to make him understand the meaning of the Buddha's statement. "What do you think, maharaja? Is the princess Vajīrī dear to you?" "So it is, Mallikā, the princess Vajīrī is dear to me." "What do you think, maharaja? Would because of change [to the worse] and deterioration concerning Princess Vajīrī sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair arise in you?" "Mallikā, change [to the worse] and deterioration with regard to Vajīrī would be change [to the worse] and deterioration with regard to my own life. How could sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair not arise in me!"⁹⁰¹ Mallikā asks in the same manner with regard to Pasenadi's second queen Vāsabhakhattiyā, his general Viḍūḍabha, herself, and finally his kingdom (*Kāsi-Kosala*).

Thus, most skillfully, by striking the right chords in King Pasenadi, so to speak, she manages to make him understand the truth that lies in the Buddha's utterance.

Although, in my humble opinion, the credit for this insight of the king really goes to Mallikā, the Buddha alone is, of course, praised for his wisdom, and not the queen by Pasenadi: "It is wonderful, Mallikā, it is marvellous how far the Blessed One penetrates with wisdom and sees with wisdom!"⁹⁰²

⁹⁰⁰ This trait of Mallikā's seems to be in line with other passages in the *Jātakas* that Malalasekera adduces; cp. the discussion above, beginning of ch. 6.9.

⁹⁰¹ MN II 110,13-18: *Taṃ kim maññasi, mahārāja? Vajīriyā te kumāriyā vipariṇāmaññathābhāvā uppajjeyyūṃ sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā ti? Vajīriyā me, Mallike, kumāriyā vipariṇāmaññathābhāvā jīvitassa pi siyā aññathattam. Kiṃ pana me na uppajjissanti sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā ti?*

⁹⁰² Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 721f., 29. MN II 111,35-112,2: *Acchariyaṃ, Mallike, abbhutaṃ, Mallike, yāvaṃ ca so Bhagavā paññāya ativijjha paññāya passati. Ehi, Mallike, ācāmeḥīti.*

6.10 The ‘Brahmin’ Nāḷijaṅgha

The text does not give us any details about this figure or his function. We do not know whether he is perhaps the *purohita* (the king’s head priest) or a minister of the king. We only know his social position through his attribute, *brāhmaṇa*. One would normally think it unlikely that he held a high position or that he was of a high rank in the court hierarchy because this is not what one would usually expect of a messenger. By the (formulaic) description of his approach to the Buddha⁹⁰³, we can, following Allon, be sure that he was not a follower of the Buddha (‘*saddhiṃ sammodi*-approach’⁹⁰⁴ + “*bho Gotama*” form of address), but that he was favourable to him.⁹⁰⁵

Gupta interprets this Brahmin as a simple messenger on the grounds of a linguistic analysis of his name and its significance. He writes:

“The name literally means the legs (jaṅghā) that appear like pipe or tube or stalk of a lotus (nāḷi). The meaning of the name thus reveals the person’s job of going around using his legs for carrying out the duties of a messenger. A messenger’s chief work is to convey the information from one place to another and walking is the main work involved. Instead of mentioning him as one of messengers (aññātara), a name was used to give the context an interesting narrative, though the names would not have been real.”⁹⁰⁶

While I think Gupta could be right with his analysis of the name, which is admittedly strange and slightly artificial-sounding, and may thus point already to the ‘synthetic component’ of this figure, I cannot agree with his interpretation of him being a simple messenger, whose “chief work is to convey the information from one place to another”. In my view, the Brahmin signifies/stands for more than just a messenger. The fact that Mallikā entrusts him with such an important task means that she, first of all, trusts him personally (she would not send someone hostile to the Buddha). Secondly, she trusted him of being capable of this task. In other words, she knew him as one who has the proper background or education for this task (you would perhaps not send the cook). This can be inferred from the text since her motivation is to proof her point to the king.

⁹⁰³ Cp. Allon 1997: 64f., 79, 84, (B.4 formula, cp. *ibid.*: References: 171). For the *Ehi tvam*, ... form of summoning someone, see *ibid.*: 32.

⁹⁰⁴ MN II 108,14-18: »*evaṃ bhotīti kho Nāḷijaṅgho brāhmaṇo Mallikāya deviyā paṭissutvā yena Bhagavā ten’ upasaṅkami, upasaṅkamitvā Bhagavatā saddhiṃ sammodi; sammodanīyaṃ kathaṃ sārāṇīyaṃ vītisāretvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Ekamantaṃ nisinno kho Nāḷijaṅgho brāhmaṇo Bhagavantaṃ etad avoca: ...*

⁹⁰⁵ Cp. Allon 1997: 32f.

⁹⁰⁶ Cp. Gupta 2006: 126.

In any case, it should be clear that she would definitely send someone who she could trust. The (textual) fact that Mallikā sends a Brahmin may thus have significance. Aside from the assumption that Mallikā would definitely have sent a trustworthy person, why would she send a Brahmin? We can assume that she, being confined to her chambers by the angry king, was not able to go by herself without causing a stir. Brahmins, after all, were well known for their extensive (and intensive) training and achievements in memorisation and the oral transmission of their textual tradition. Several passages in the *Majjhima Nikāya* testify to this.⁹⁰⁷ Although the Buddha did criticise Brahmanic teachings as such⁹⁰⁸, the relationship is mostly depicted as friendly and courteous.⁹⁰⁹ In addition, the Brahmin Nāḷijaṅgha in the *Piyajātika Sutta* is approaching the Buddha in a respectful way, as we have seen above.⁹¹⁰

In sum, the Brahmin may neither simply serve as a messenger, as Gupta proposes, nor is it mere chance that Mallikā sends a *Brahmin* (and not any messenger). The ‘thematic dimension’ of the Brahmin Nāḷijaṅgha, as outlined above, becomes apparent in his precise attending to his orders: “Then, [...] the Brahmin Nāḷijaṅgha rose from his seat, went [back] to queen Mallikā, and reported to her his *entire* conversation with the Blessed One.”⁹¹¹

In addition to the stress laid on the short statement of the Buddha through its constant repetition (*Piyajātikā sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā piyappabhavikā*), the Brahmin’s ‘thematic function’ raises the ‘ideal narrative audience’s⁹¹² awareness of the importance of memorising the exact wording of the Buddha’s teachings. This concept is explicitly verbalised in another *sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the *Caṅkī Sutta* (MN 95). In this *sutta*, the Buddha is asked by the Brahmin Caṅkī about the best way to preserve ‘the truth’ (= the liberating insight of the Buddha),

⁹⁰⁷ Cp. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: (*sutta*-number, paragraph) 95,13f.; 100,7; 107,2 (= MN II 169,25-29 etc.; 211,10-13; III 1,10-12).

⁹⁰⁸ See MN II 170,25-171,7. (= tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 780, 14.) “Bhāradvāja, earlier you relied on faith [as a criterion for truth], now on oral tradition. [...]. Although, Bhāradvāja, [something] may have been transmitted orally well, yet it may be empty, hollow, and false.”

⁹⁰⁹ Cp. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 49.

⁹¹⁰ Note also that at the end of their meeting, the Brahmin leaves the Buddha “delighting and rejoicing” (*abhinanditvā anumoditvā*) in the Blessed One’s words, which is the direct opposite, linguistically as well as regarding content, of the householder’s reaction when taking leave of the Buddha after their conversation: “And then the householder, unappreciative of and rejecting the Blessed One’s words, rose from his seat and left”. MN II 110,4ff.: *Atha kho so gahapati Bhagavato bhāsitaṃ anabhinanditvā paṭikkosivā uṭṭhāy’ āsanā pakkāmi.*

⁹¹¹ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 721, 23. MN II 110,4-7.

⁹¹² Cp. Phelan 2007: 209.

to which the Buddha answers: “Memorising the teachings is most helpful for examining the meaning, Bhāradvāja. If one does not memorise a teaching, one will not examine its meaning; but because one memorises a teaching, one examines its meaning.”⁹¹³

Moreover, if Gupta is right with his proposition that the Brahmin’s name can be translated literally (‘Lotus-stalk Leg’), his name would indeed direct the reader’s/listener’s attention to his ‘synthetic component’. In other words, if the original name sounded as awkward to ancient Indian ears as it does in its English ‘translation’ to a modern Western recipient, a historical reader would have immediately picked up its artificiality.⁹¹⁴ This must, however, remain pure speculation.⁹¹⁵ It is furthermore much more likely that his name – independent of whether or not it did ever refer to a real historical person – was some kind of nickname for a Brahmin, as for instance the Brahmin Ghoṭamukha “Horse-face”, in the *Sela Sutta* (MN 92).⁹¹⁶

6.11 Pasenadi

The *Kosalasaṃyutta*⁹¹⁷ of the *Samyutta Nikāya* devotes an entire chapter to the meetings that took place between king Pasenadi and the Buddha and their relationship. There, they are depicted to have spoken in their meetings about a wide range of topics, and the overall picture is suggestive of the king being a devout follower of the Buddha, starting from the time when the latter had just started his teaching career (see below). The picture of Pasenadi that the *Piyajātika Sutta* presents, is thus all the more interesting.

That jeering remark of Pasenadi’s towards Mallikā with regard to the Buddha’s short statement characterises the king himself. We can infer from his contemptuous reference to the Buddha (“This is what Gotama, that ascetic of yours, has said, Mallikā ...”) that he is, at this stage of the narrative, not very fond of the Buddha. In my reading of the passage, the tone of his remark, and the situation in which it occurs – perhaps in a casual everyday conversation or as a remark on the side – perhaps also reflects public opinion, which is very much aligned with the

⁹¹³ Tr. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001: 784, 28. MN II 175,19-22. *Atthupaparikkhāya, Bhāradvāja, dhammadhāraṇā bahukārā; no ce taṃ dhammaṃ dhāreyya, na-y-idaṃ atthaṃ upaparikkheyya. Yasmā ca kho dhammaṃ dhāreti, tasmā atthaṃ upaparikkhati, tasmā atthupaparikkhāya dhammadhāraṇā bahukārā ti.*

⁹¹⁴ Cp. Phelan 1989: 14.

⁹¹⁵ Moreover, the question would then apply to many other names, too.

⁹¹⁶ I owe this note and the reference to Prof. Konrad Klaus, Bonn, who regards the existence of a ‘synthetic aspect’ of characters in the Pāli *suttas* impossible.

⁹¹⁷ SN I 68-103.

householder's. Pasenadi, for his part, appears to be quite satisfied with the outcome of the householder's and the Buddha's encounter, as well as with the public opinion about it. Rephrased in causal English, the king's remark appears to be suggesting to say: "Do you see *now* [from this story], Mallikā, what kind of nonsense this ascetic, your Buddha, is talking? Since '[...] happiness and joy arise from those who are dear...' ⁹¹⁸, this must prove to you that the Buddha's answer to the poor householder is nonsensical." This interpretation is warranted when examining Pasenadi's reaction to Mallikā's reply to this remark. Pasenadi becomes very angry because he did perhaps not expect such an answer from Mallikā. In any case, however, does his angry reaction show that he thinks public opinion (= householder's opinion = gambler's opinion) is right in this matter, and that Mallikā is obviously the only person thinking otherwise, which must mean (in Pasenadi's reasoning) that she automatically parrots anything the Buddha says, even if everybody else says the opposite. ⁹¹⁹

While the householder may be described as what E. M. Forster has called a 'flat character', being characterised by one prominent trait only, King Pasenadi bears a resemblance to the *Ghaṭikāra Sutta*'s Jotipāla. Like in his case, the course of events changes his attitude towards the Buddha significantly. In the *Piyajatika Sutta*, however, a mediator (Queen Mallikā) effects the change of heart through her cleverness, wisdom, faith, and courage. After the king realised the truth by his own experience, namely that change (to the worse, *aññathābhāva*) of loved ones causes pain (because of attachment), he performs a ritual ablution (in order to purify his wrong view or his wrong speech?) before he pays homage to the Blessed One three times reciting the 'itipiso-formula'. ⁹²⁰

Now, we learn from other sources that Pasenadi was a follower of the Buddha from quite early on and that their relationship was rather cordial until the Buddha's death. ⁹²¹ The *Dahara*

⁹¹⁸ MN II 106,19-23.

⁹¹⁹ Cp., again, MN II 107,27-108,2, "It is in exactly this way (*Evam evaṃ paṇāyaṃ*) that whatever the drop-out Gotama says, Mallikā approves of it, [with the words]"

⁹²⁰ MN II 112,1-7: *Ehi Mallike, ācāmeḥīti. Atha kho raja Pasenadi Kosalo uṭṭhāy' asana ekamaṣaṃ uttarāsaṅgaṃ karitvā yena Bhagavā ten' añjalim paṇāmetvā tikkhattuṃ udānaṃ udānesi: Namo tassa Bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa; ... [- pe - 3x].*

⁹²¹ Cp. DPPN, s.v. *Pasenadi*.

Sutta of the *Samyutta Nikāya*⁹²², for instance, records that at their first meeting, the King criticised the Buddha for his claim to be fully enlightened although he was obviously still quite “young in years and ha[d] just newly gone forth.”⁹²³ As a reply, the Buddha reprimands Pasenadi and warns him not to underestimate four things, a young *khattiya*, a young snake, a young fire, and a young *bhikkhu*, whereupon Pasenadi takes the triple refuge.

Thus, with a view to relative chronology, it is tempting to place the *Piyajātika Sutta* first among the accounts of his relation with the Buddha. Perhaps, this assumption could be corroborated by the fact that the texts speak of altogether four wives of Pasenadi⁹²⁴, while in the *Piyajātika Sutta* only two are (yet?) mentioned (Mallikā and Vāsabhakhattiyā).

6.12 Interpretation

J. Phelan’s theory of characters

I argue that the story in the *Piyajātika Sutta* unfolds because it has to: a ‘tension’⁹²⁵ created by the (narrated) fact that the householder is confirmed in his view by a group of gamblers, the members of which are to be regarded as highly unreliable in their judgments. In narratological terms, this poses an inequality in the states of knowledge between the ‘authorial audience’ and the *sutta*-narrator. While the narrator (who, because what he actually does through his act of narration is a re-capitulation/repetition of past events, knows how his narration will end, but keeps his audience uninformed about it!) is aware of the ending which releases the tension, his audience is not. Then again, the gamblers’ judgement cannot give closure to the story for the reason that the norms and values overarching the text (i.e. the *suttas*’ ‘perspective’ on the whole as their genre-convention, such as that the Buddha is wise and always victorious in debate etc. due to his transworldly as well as practical wisdom) would not have been met with through such an ending. The story, therefore, has to go on in order to resolve this tension, which in turn is caused by an ‘instability’, which expresses itself in the relation between the householder, who comes to see the

⁹²² SN I 68f.

⁹²³ Bodhi 2000: 164.

⁹²⁴ Cp. DPPN, s.v. *Pasenadi*: “Mallikā predeceased Pasenadi [AN III 57]; he had also other wives, one of them being the sister of Bimbisāra, and another Ubbirī. The Kannakathala Sutta [MN II 125] mentions two others who were sisters: Somā and Sakulā.”

⁹²⁵ Cp. Phelan 1989: 15, we need to remember that a tension was defined by Phelan as an instability on the level of narrative communication author > authorial audience.

Buddha for advice, and the Buddha. The tension consists primarily in the fact that this outcome of the encounter of the householder with the Buddha is felt to be unsatisfactory by the (reader entering the) ‘authorial audience’. This is the function of the character of the householder in the *sutta*, and seen from this angle, it is not necessarily surprising or inconsistent that he doesn’t play any further role in the narrative beyond this point.

When we consider the character of the householder, and we can do so by applying Phe-lan’s “3x2 terminology”, we find that his very character (i.e. his ‘thematic component’) also reflects back on the other characters – his character/understanding/general outlook on life, on the one hand, concurs with that of the gamblers (and vice versa) and, on the other hand, it stands in stark contrast to the Buddha and Queen Mallikā’s. The King, Pasenadi, inhabits a middle position, as it were, between these two poles established by the character, and the overarching theme (“Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear”) that holds the whole narrative together (also linguistically, as we have seen) is, at the same time, the splitting wedge that divides the two “poles” just mentioned, namely the right understanding of what the Buddha teaches.

From an authorial reader’s perspective, there is also a reason for that middling position of the king. It communicates to the ‘ideal narrative audience’ that there are two wrong ways to “grasp” what the Buddha teaches: blind faith (Mallikā) and outright rejection that is habitual, out of an existing preconception about how things are, without any openness to the possibility to have one’s own limited view challenged or changed, even if it was for the better. But there is more to the character of Mallikā than just this, since she is the one who, through skillfulness and wisdom, changes the king’s opinion in the end. The “message” of this seems to be: the Buddha is fully enlightened and thus possesses a kind of trans-worldly insight (and is ultimately always “right”). It is, however, permitted to first reject or challenge his view and be critical, but one should stay open to the possibility of having one’s opinion changed (of course, always for the better). This is what kings are supposed to do, namely to act and decide wisely, to make informed and intelligent choices. In this regard, the *Piyajātika Sutta* does indeed belong in the *Rājavagga*, because it is about kings and the way good kings are expected to act. Furthermore, the episode with the gamblers indirectly judges the character of the householder (i.e. his ‘thematic component/dimension’) in that it puts him intellectually and thematically (also socially?) on the same level with them.

Another instability is created by the conflict between King Pasenadi and his Queen Mallikā, which further complicates the plot.

Finally, if we don't interpret the plot-progression in this way, we might find the episode with the gamblers to be "a loose end" in the story, and regard it, from a historical-critical point of view, as an inconsistency (Ger. "*Bruch*"). Consequentially, one may want to explain it as a later addition. For the former kind of interpretation, we need to consider the narrative, and this means the *sutta*, as a coherent whole rather than consider the text as historically evolved and grown. This is, of course, no proof that it has *not* evolved. It does of course not exclude the possibility that one cannot find later additions to the text in the *suttas*. Nevertheless, if my interpretation would be found reasonable and intersubjectively comprehensible or reproducible, there is a good chance that the text as we now have it also made sense – at least – to the ones who authored/compiled/edited it in this form in the early days of the formation of the Canon. This is, in a nutshell, what a 'synchronic' analysis can achieve through analysing and investigating a text's form and content at a given point in time. Furthermore, it seems unwise to preclude the very possibility that the people (if not all, some) who were responsible for the composition, compilation editing, and transmission of the *suttas* have had an equally or (probably) better understanding of their texts and its language and narrative tradition than Western scholars, who are timely, culturally, and often geographically far removed from the origins of those texts.⁹²⁶

6.13 Conclusion

As a conclusion to the analysis of the *Piyajātika Sutta*, we can perhaps state that the strategy of the texts that points to the intention of the implied author(s), implies that the Buddha always be depicted as superior in the debate of religious or spiritual truths. To be more precise, the implicit genre-convention commands that the Buddha always speaks the Truth. The truth might not always be understood by everyone (because it is too subtle, too deep, for some minds to comprehend). But at some point in the story it will/has to be recognized as true and thereby confirm that the Buddha was right in the first place. Thus, with these words, we may be able to "translate" or

⁹²⁶ My point here is not to take sides in whatever form of an "Orientalism-debate". But it is an indisputable fact that the knowledge and understanding of even the most knowledgeable modern scholar of any ancient textual tradition lacks far behind the knowledge of a contemporary recipient, i.e. historical listener/reader.

paraphrase the narratological term of the ‘implied author’, and show that it is applicable to pre-modern, non-European narratives.

It is furthermore interesting, I think, that the *sutta* itself seems to thematise an aspect so central to the transmission of the Buddhist Canon, namely, the importance of first preserving and confirming, and then understanding the words of the Buddha correctly. To close with a quote from A. K. Warder:

“That life [of the Buddha] was evidently inessential for the doctrine of early Buddhism and did not interest the compilers of the Tripitaka, **who were content to record as carefully as they could the words of their teacher, the words which were their ‘master’ once the Buddha was no more.**”⁹²⁷

[my emphasis]

⁹²⁷ Cp. Warder 1970: 44.

7. Conclusion

From the analyses in Part III we can extract and summarise the following results:

First, some of the characters in the analysed Pāli *suttas* may be “paper beings” (M. Bal):

Ghaṭṭikāra, one of the main characters of the *sutta* (if not *the* main character) turned out to be a rather flat, even opaque character. We cannot penetrate into his mind, that is, we do not learn about his thoughts and or motivations – at least not in the Pāli version – except for once, when we learn about his feelings, namely, that “bliss and joy did not leave him for one month [...]”, which is, although extraordinary, not a very surprising event given his overall character portrait. His opaqueness leaves the listener/reader quite unsatisfied in one particular instance, in which we only learn what his friend Jotipāla surmises must be the reason for his insistence on visiting the Buddha Kassapa (“Surely, that can be no trivial matter”). But we never learn why Ghaṭṭikāra acts as he does or whether or not he knew that the meeting of Jotipāla and the Buddha will be important and why. The ‘flat’ character Ghaṭṭikāra can be characterised in one sentence: He is the embodiment of the good and virtuous disciple. Moreover, his not very original name may even point to his ‘synthetic aspect’, as does the just mentioned fact that he acts without hesitation but, apparently, not even knowing why. I have suggested that it is thinkable also that a historical listener/reader might have been aware of his ‘synthetic aspect’ because the narrative strategy of the *sutta* makes it somewhat clear that the metadiegetic (‘embedded’) *Jātaka*-tale mirrors the situation on the communication level ‘narrator (Buddha Gotama) → addressee (Ānanda)’, i.e. that the embedded episode has an instructional or illustrative function. A second illocutionary purpose is mirrored in the implicit critique addressed to the mythical king Kikī of the practice of arranging sumptuous meals for public display, which may reflect back on the situation stated in the beginning of the *sutta* which mentions a large crowd of monks travelling together with the Buddha and Ānanda – perhaps the Buddha is longing for more quiet with just Ānanda as his attendant and a few others. Other passages can be found in the Canon in which the Buddha expresses his dislike for crowds and noise.

Secondly, the characters in the Pāli Canon may be “formerly historical” persons or “paper beings with a biography”, as we have seen in the works of Richard Gombrich and Monika Zin, who try to come to terms with the notoriously elusive character Aṅgulimāla. While Gombrich sees in him the Proto-Śaiva par excellence, Zin spots in him the mythical cannibal (or shall we say, ‘undead’?) Kalmāṣapāda somewhere in the distance. Although both interpretations are not

implausible and have their merits, their reasoning and interpretation seem to betray the respective scholar's 'system of presuppositions', rather than presenting simple text-based information about the character in a descriptive manner. Although my own character analysis and description based on a synchronic investigation claims to be methodically stricter, I have no real solution to the "Aṅgulimāla-problem" to offer. However, I think that the 'thematic aspect' is predominant. The case of Aṅgulimāla, however, leads to an interesting observation. He was initially characterised as, "Aṅgulimāla, the robber, gruesome, with blood on his hands, a notorious killer, merciless towards living beings". Later, however, the only individualising element in his characterisation is the name 'Aṅgulimāla', which is, nevertheless, rather a description than a proper name, for the same characterising statement is also found, we have seen, in a general description of the results of one's actions in the *Cūḷakammavibhaṅga Sutta* (MN 135).⁹²⁸ Next – leaving out his encounter with the Buddha – we learn that Aṅgulimāla renounces his evil ways, becomes a monk and eventually "one of the *arahants*". The description, "having shaved off his hair and beard, etc.", *kesamassuṃ ohāretvā*, is a stock phrase in the Pāli Canon and not a genuine, individualised physical description. The expression "one of the" (*aññataro*), together with the usual *arahant*-formula, likewise cannot serve as individualising feature. Thus, we are left with his names (*Ahiṃsaka*, *Gaggo Matāṅgīputto*) and with his story of converting from being a murderer to a Buddhist saint as the only individualising features. Now, applying Margolin's question, "when is there an individual in a given narrative?" to Aṅgulimāla's case, he obviously fails even Margolin's minimal conditions (3), (4), and (5) that would make for a recognisable, sustainable, and clearly distinguishable individual in a story⁹²⁹, with the effect that we cannot speak of a realistic presentation of his character in the *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*. This may be the reason, on the one hand, why we find a 'thematising interpretation' unproblematic, as we can see in Monika Zin's suggestion. On the other hand, it does not explain why the presentation of characters in the Pāli *suttas* leaves listeners/readers with a more or less vivid impression of a representation of possible persons, as, for example, in the case of Gombrich's suggestion. A possible answer to the problem may be found in the so-called 'cognitive narratology'. This very recent branch of narratology has made the findings of cognitive science usable for a narratological model of readers' reception of

⁹²⁸ MN III 203,16-18.

⁹²⁹ Cp. Margolin 1989: 12: while the conditions (1), existence, and (2), identity are fulfilled, the remaining ones are not ((3) uniqueness, (4) paradigmatic unity, (5) continuity).

characters in literary texts which is called a ‘mental model’ – that is, a mental image of a character based on the data provided by the text plus world knowledge (Ger. “*Weltwissen*”) that readers create during the reception-process.⁹³⁰ Here, the insight is pivotal – similar to what Margolin had proposed earlier in his model of character analysis employing Possible Worlds Theory – that the result of a reading/reception process that involves literary characters is an entity that is neither independent from the text nor identical with it.⁹³¹ In the field of literary studies, it was Herbert Grabes (1978), who made a first attempt to make a case for a non-reductionist understanding of characters in literature by utilising the insights and concepts of social psychology.⁹³²

In conclusion, I propose two interrelated hypotheses (for the time being, with regard to the three texts analysed in this thesis): the impression of a person/individual *Aṅgulimāla*, for instance, is not necessarily based on false perception, as, for instance, the popular Reductionist or Structuralist argument claims: while looking from a considerable distance one perceives a somewhat homogeneous row of ants, but if one takes a closer look, one sees only individual ants following each other. Rather, (1) it is precisely due the scarcity of (individualising) information on characters provided by the *suttas*, the gaps (Ger. “*Leerstellen*”, i.e. the information or details that the texts *do not* provide), which are consequently filled/complemented by the listener/reader, who naturally draws up, as it were, a ‘mental model’ of a character following a describable process. This activity is not reducible to a Reductionist description of the world, as was argued in Part II. (2) The process of complementation of character into a ‘mental model’ is not random but facilitated by the skillfully arranged narrative progression, relation (of similarity and/or contrast) of the protagonists, and guided by the employment of internal focalization, and thus inviting the listener/reader to identify with or – to use a weaker and more cautious expression – “approximate the field of perception of the characters”⁹³³. While (1) can only be described very roughly and ap-

⁹³⁰ Cp. Jannidis 2004: 177-185.

⁹³¹ Cp. *ibid.*: 179: “Dieses Konzept des ‚mentalen Modells‘ weist ganz offensichtlich Ähnlichkeiten mit der Theorie fiktionaler Welten auf. Auch sie ging davon aus, daß aus den Textanagaben ein Gebilde erzeugt wird, das nicht mit dem Text identisch und doch weitgehend von ihm abhängig ist.”

⁹³² Cp. *ibid.*: 179, n. 64 & Grabes 1978: 412, where he mentions, e.g. the significance of “implicit personality theories” (“*implizierte Persönlichkeitstheorie*”) for the reception process, or the primacy- and recency-effects, also known in common parlance, which signify that the first and the last impression we get of people are decisive for our judgement about them; cp. *ibid.*: 413-416.

⁹³³ Cp. Weber 1998: 61: “*Annäherung an den Figurenhorizont*”, “*erlebnisperspektivisches Erzählen*”.

proximately in a strongly text-based approach to narrative by clarifying the listener/reader/interpreter's 'system of presuppositions' (Ger. "*Voraussetzungssystem*", consisting in world knowledge, personality theories, cultural scripts and 'frames', knowledge about different genres, emotional disposition, and so forth)⁹³⁴, which is what this study tries to summarise approximately in Part I, (2) can be effectually carried out, I believe, with the help of narratological models and analytical tools, as demonstrated in Part III of this study.

7.1 Individuality and focalisation

The Pāli *suttas* themselves and their textual history are a complicated matter. We must assume that during the long history of their transmission and preservation, the texts have been redacted and also linguistically levelled and standardised in different stages. Nevertheless, it is generally believed that older material does exist alongside the younger in them. To precisely separate the one from the other, however, is difficult, if not in many cases impossible. It is additionally also very difficult to pinpoint or assign exact dates for changes that may have occurred. What I want to argue for, as part of my findings reached through a 'synchronic' textual analysis, is that irrespective of who might be responsible for the current form of the *suttas*, we do find interesting passages of 'internal focalization' and a peculiar emphasis on the "inner life" of literary characters that might have appeared to the authors/compiler/editors/reciters as important; so they composed, elaborated on it, or at least keep it in the texts. We have also seen that in our examples these passages occur at crucial moments within the dramatic or dynamic of the plot of the *suttas*, which suggests a conscious, and skilful, act of redaction (whether carried out by an individual author/compiler or a collective does not matter) and/or a vivid and skilful (folk- or typically Buddhist?) tradition of story-telling.

With regard to the discussion of the notion of 'subject', undertaken in Part I (see specifically chapter 1.2.) of this study, I furthermore want to argue, though much more cautiously, that the employment of the narrative technique of narrating from or through the perspective of one of the characters ('focalization'), may be linked with, and an expression of, a newly emerging understanding of the individual – either large-scale within Indian society in and around the 5th century B.C. and within the context of the wider *śramaṇa*-movement of which the Buddha was one prominent part (G. Bailey & I. Mabbett's thesis), or peculiar for Buddhism and its founder (R.

⁹³⁴ Cp. Jannidis 2004: 183.

Gombrich's thesis).⁹³⁵ Much more research would be necessary to substantiate this thesis than an analysis of only three *suttas* can provide. In particular, comparisons – with a special emphasis on the narratological categories of 'perspective' and 'focalization' – with the earlier, contemporary, and later literature (for instance, with the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upaniṣads*) is required. But let it suffice here to cite an authority on early Buddhism, Richard Gombrich, who emphasizes the peculiar style of narration in the *suttas*:

“It is hard to exaggerate how amazingly different the *suttas* are from most early Indian religious texts. (And it is hardly less amazing that their distinctive character has survived the audition that followed their composition.) The style of the bulk of Vedic literature is declaratory; statements ascribed to gods or to primeval sages are made *ex cathedra*, and there is hardly the trace of an audience or a context. This remains the style until the early *Upaniṣads*. Here styles begin to vary: there are couple of formal debates, including a few rebuttals of oponents' arguments, and a few charming passages give us glimpses of some rather eccentric teachers of wisdom. But soon a didactic solemnity returns as the norm, and remains dominant for centuries. Indeed, to appreciate the Buddha's personal style in the Pali Canon, one could hardly do better than compare it with the Mahayana *sūtras* composed by his followers a few centuries later.”⁹³⁶

At the base of such an investigation would surely stand the question whether or not it is possible to establish a connection between the narrative technique of 'internal focalization', the notion of the individual, and the conditions of early Indic society? From the evidence gathered from the texts treated here, it becomes clear that one cannot speak of an understanding of persons as subjects in a modern, Western sense of the word. Nevertheless, individuals – most often the protagonists in the *sutta*-narratives – are in many cases depicted as possessing a strong sense of agency (i.e. the understanding that they are the ones who make decisions and choices as, for instances, Aṅgulimāla or Jotipāla, who act and react in ways that may have been considered unexpected from the point of view of historical listeners/readers), although their choices were surely limited to certain doctrinal or genre-specific alternatives. Subjectivity plays a role in so far as the listener/reader of the *suttas* is, more frequently than one would expect in such early material, granted (limited) access to the thoughts, feelings, and considerations of individual persons. And although, by and large, the persons in the *sutta*-narratives are more often than not presented as

⁹³⁵ Cp. Bailey & Mabbett 2003 and Gombrich, last 2009.

⁹³⁶ Gombrich 2009: 165.

representations of types (e.g. *ariya-puggalā*), they leave a strong, persistent and quite live-like “afterimage” in listener/readers’ minds. Something similar has been observed by Scholes and Kellogg with regard to Homer:

“The power of characterization which Homer manifests in this close-up of Achilles and throughout the Iliad and the Odyssey is, then, a very real power despite its difference from the manner of James, or Proust, or Dostoievsky. It is a power derived partly from its simplicity. Homer and other composers of primitive heroic narrative do not aspire to certain complexities of characterization which we find in later narratives and which we sometimes think of as essential elements in the creation of characterizations of interest. **Characters in primitive stories are invariably “flat,” “static,” and quite “opaque.” The very recurring epithets of formulaic narrative are signs of flatness in characterization.**”⁹³⁷

Can something be said about the state of society? Let me quote here at some length from Scholes and Kellogg again, for the way they write about the ideals of early Christianity reflected in the Scriptures, might bear some resemblance with the situation that we find in the Pāli *suttas*. They write:

“The concept of developing character who changes inwardly is quite a late arrival in narrative. True, we have such primitive motifs as the “unpromising hero,” the awkward or diffident young man who turns suddenly into a heroic figure. We can find this, for example, in Moses, in Beowulf, and there are traces of it in non-Homeric stories about Achilles. This essentially mythical pattern often becomes attached to historical figures, as in the Chronicle Histories of Henry V, whence Shakespeare’s characterization of Prince Hal. **But the character whose inward development is of crucial importance is primarily a Christian element in our narrative literature.** Most pre-Christian heroic narratives of the epic kind are based on notions of immortality through heroic actions which will live in the memory of the race. Achilles’ intense concern over the slight he receives from Menelaus derives from just this concept. He has chosen a short glorious life in preference to a long obscure one. If he is to be publicly humiliated, to have his posthumous reputation tarnished by this painful episode, then truly, what price glory? **As long as a culture emphasizes heroic actions and posthumous reputation (as in the old Teutonic European Culture) its literature will remain concerned with such external attributes of man. When the private and personal relationship of the individual soul with God supplants this public concept of heroic excellence, then this culture will tend to develop a literature which deals with this private relationship and ultimately with other aspects of the inward life.** When Jesus revives the Commandments in this way — Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to

⁹³⁷ Scholes/Kellogg/Phelan 2006: 164 [my emphasis].

lust after hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. **When He does this, then He is forcing His culture to take more cognizance of the inward life and less of the external actions of men.**

In older Hebrew literature we had had stories of men who change, seen in terms of sin and repentance. The story of David's sin in having Bathsheba's husband killed so that she could become his wife is a story of sin and repentance. But it is seen resolutely from outside the hero:

And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the King's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

As the narrative continues, situation after situation develops in which individuals must be experiencing the intensest emotions, but the narrative proceeds on its serene, untroubled way, without apparent awareness of this inward violence. **Even in the verse quoted above, Bathsheba's beauty is presented impersonally, as a fact, and not from David's point of view or in terms of his reaction to seeing her. The inward life is assumed but not presented in primitive narrative literature, whether Hebraic or Hellenic. This inscrutability of characters, their opaqueness, is neither a defect nor a limitation. It is simply a characteristic.** Much of the power of the David story is generated by the matter-of-factness of this narration of such violent and emotional events. **Such opaqueness in characterization functions for the modern reader as a kind of understatement, producing an ironic tension between the cool narrative tone and the violence which the reader imagines within the minds of the characters.** The conscious employment of such irony we call litotes, and recognize it as a fundamental characteristic of Germanic narratives such as Beowulf. But the conscious employment of understated irony is nothing more than a realization on the part of the narrators of the fundamental understatedness of primitive literature. **Critics whose judgements are emotionally oriented tend to attach a special value to such understatement and talk about it rather nostalgically as "classic restraint" but there is no restraint involved in not doing something which it does not occur to one to do. The narrative posture of understatement, associated as it is with the opaque and static character, is simply a successful narrative formula, well suited to primitive narration, which develops in all cultures as the inevitable style in which heroic narrative is treated.**⁹³⁸

Should this state of affairs be applicable also to the early Buddhist *sutta*-literature? If it is possible to establish a connection between the presentation of characters and the representation of persons – and from all that was said about the narrative structure of the three analysed *suttas* and the depiction of characters so far, I believe it is –, then, it may specifically be this: that the emphasis on the presentation of the inner events of conscious, conscientious, and reflective characters in the Pāli *suttas* might reflect the existence of an environment in which fixed roles

⁹³⁸ Scholes/Kellogg/Phelan 2006: 165-167 [my emphases].

(had) lost their significance and grip, and conscious, self dependent individuals began to emerge from behind the (ancestor) masks.

The following is a list of examples taken from the investigated material and from other *suttas* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* of what Scholes and Kellogg have called the “peering into peoples’ minds”:

1) *Potaliya Sutta* [MN I 359,19ff.]: *Evaṃ vutte Potaliyo gahapati: gahapativādena maṃ samaṇo Gotamo samudācaratīti kupito anattamaṇo tuṅhī ahoṣi.*

“After this has been said, the householder Potaliya, [thinking] ‘the recluse Gotama addresses me with the designation “householder”, [felt] angry and offended and remained silent.”

2) *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*: [MN II 98,27-100,12]: *Addasā kho coro Aṅgulimālo Bhagavantaṃ dūrato va āgacchantaṃ, disvān’ assa etad ahoṣi: Acchariyaṃ vata bho, abbhutaṃ vata bho. Imaṃ hi maggaṃ dasa pi purisā vīsatiṃ pi purisā tiṃsatiṃ pi purisā cattārīsam pi purisā paññāsam pi purisā saṃharitvā saṃharitvā paṭipajjanti, te pi mama hatthattaṃ gacchanti; atha ca paṇāyaṃ samaṇo eko adutiyo pasayha maññe āgacchati. Yan nūnāhaṃ imaṃ samaṇaṃ jīvitā voropeyyan ti?*

“The robber Aṅgulimāla saw the Blessed One coming in the distance. When he saw him, he thought: ‘It is [surprising], it is [astonishing]! Men have come along this road [after having gathered] in groups of ten, twenty, thirty, and even forty, but still they have fallen into my hands. But now this [ascetic] comes alone, unaccompanied, [forcibly, as it were]. Why shouldn’t I take this [ascetic’s] life?’”

3) *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* [MN II 47,27-31]: *Atha kho, Ānanda, Jotipālassa māṇavassa etad ahoṣi: Acchariyaṃ vata bho, abbhutaṃ vata bho. Yatra hi nāmāyaṃ Ghaṭṭikāro kumbhakāro itta-rajacco samāno amhākaṃ sīsanahātānaṃ kesesu parāmasitabbaṃ maññissati; na vat’ idaṃ orakaṃ maññe bhavissatīti.*

“This is indeed surprising, this is astonishing! I imagine this [the meeting with the Buddha Kassapa] will certainly be no trivial matter, that this potter Ghaṭṭikāra, while being himself of a lowly birth, should think it necessary to touch Our, the Head-Ablutioned’s hair!”

4) *Ghaṭṭikāra Sutta* [MN II 50,31f-51,10]: *Atha kho, Ānanda, Kikissa Kāsirañño: Na me Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho adhivāseti Bārāṇasiyaṃ vasāvāsan ti. Ahu-d-eva aññathattaṃ ahu domanassaṃ. Atha kho, Ānanda, Kikī Kāsirāja Kassapaṃ bhagavantaṃ arahantaṃ sammāsambuddhaṃ etad avoca: Atthi nu te, bhante, añño koci mayā upatṭhākataro ti?*

Atthi, mahārāja, Vebhaliṅgaṃ nāma gāmanigamo; tattha Ghaṭṭikāro nāma kumbhakāro; so me upaṭṭhāko aggupaṭṭhāko. Tuyhaṃ kho pana, mahārāja: Na me Kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho adhvāseti Bārāṇasiyaṃ vassāvāsan ti atthi aññathattaṃ atthi domanassaṃ; [...]

“Then, Ānanda, Kikī, the king of Kāsī, thought: ‘The Blessed One Kassapa [...] does not consent to my offering a residence for the Rains in Benares’, and he became depressed and dejected. And then, Ānanda, king Kikī of Kāsī said the following to the Blessed One Kassapa: “Do you, Venerable, have a better attendant than I am?” “Yes, maharaja, in a town called Vebhaliṅga lives a potter, Ghaṭṭikāra by name, he is my main supporter.” “You, on the other hand, maharaja, [just] thought: ‘Kassapa, the Blessed One, accomplished and fully awakened, does not consent to my [offer of a] rains residence in Benares’, and you became depressed and dejected. [But] this is not so with the potter Ghaṭṭikāra and it will/cannot be so (i.e. the potter does not and could never think thus!)”.

These passages have in common the element of mental reflexion: all of the characters are as a matter of fact reflecting (on) a present situation. The examples taken from the three texts analysed here, are of two kinds: reflection and ascription, respectively, of (supposed) mental/psychological states. They may not always constitute long soliloquies or inner monologues, but what nevertheless is peculiar about the practice of representing thoughts in the Pāli *suttas* is that it is generally held that providing readers with access to characters’ mind, which is the privilege of narrative, appears rather late in most literature around the world. To quote from Scholes and Kellogg again:

“The notion of peering directly into the mind and dramatizing or analyzing thoughts instead of words and deeds seems to arise quite late in most literatures.”⁹³⁹

Furthermore, in the Pali *suttas*, we do find inner conflicts of individuals. Their nature, however, is quite different from the inner conflicts (Ger. “*Zerissenheit des Individuums*”) that are

⁹³⁹ Scholes/Kellogg/Phelan 2006: 170f.

a feature of modern novels, and which is regarded a typical “symptom” of modernity.⁹⁴⁰ Most often, the texts depict situations in which alternative modes or courses of action are offered to an individual. This may, nevertheless, reflect the (radical?) novelty of certain innovations introduced by the historical Buddha.

As we have seen in the brief comparison of the *Ghaṭikāra Sutta* and the *Jyotipāla Sūtra* (Mvu; ch. 4.4), speculation about the motivations for the actions of its characters did matter to the pre-modern, ancient Indian authors/compiler/editors/reciters of Buddhist texts. Furthermore, characters are ascribed an inner life through the narrative techniques of interior monologue and ‘internal focalization’. Thus it is possible to assume that a recognition of persons in this particular cultural setting followed the same criteria as that proposed by Jannidis with his ‘basis type’ (Ger. “*Basistypus*”) of literary character, namely the ‘attribution/ascription of intentional action’ (“*Zuschreibung intentionalen Handelns*”), the ‘differentiation of an inward life and an outside appearance’, and ‘differentiation between stable and transitory character traits’.⁹⁴¹ Psychological research has shown, as Jannidis summarises, that the human ability or the habit to ascribe intentionality to (real) persons is inborn.⁹⁴² This ascribed intentionality, however, which in the real world is a psychological construct (and not a fact), becomes a fact in the “narrative universe” (i.e. literature as an image/representation of the way human beings perceive the world).⁹⁴³ On this very basic level, there does not seem to exist a fundamental difference in the basic idea of man between the ancient Indian and the modern world.

In this study, I have treated the persons depicted in the Pāli *suttas* as characters or “narrative agents” (U. Margolin). This nature of the characters is most prominent, I think, in the case of *Aṅgulimāla*: It is neither the *sutta*’s intention nor its promise to elucidate the elusive (“real-live”) person of *Aṅgulimāla* for us. That is, of course, not to say that one should not or could not ask

⁹⁴⁰ Cp. Seigel 2009: 8, where he describes the dimension of the self. The inner conflicts deemed so characteristic for the modern Western individual might be explainable by the existence of multi-dimensional self-concepts like that of S. Freud (“Es – Ich – Über-Ich”), which according to Seigel, has the disadvantage that it is “subject to competing pressures and tensions”.

⁹⁴¹ Jannidis 2004: 126-128 & 185-195; it should be understood, however, that Jannidis did neither propose a character typology with his ‘basis type’, nor is it considered the same as ‘literary character’; the type is just a kind of basic grid or model for the most basic conception of literary character based on universals of human ways of perception.

⁹⁴² Cp. *ibid.*: 127.

⁹⁴³ Cp. *ibid.*: 128.

historical questions of this kind. But, as J. S. Walters wrote, there are yet so many other interesting questions to ask that the *suttas* do give us answers to.

I feel somewhat reluctant to fully subscribe to a view that purports a strictly linear, progressive upward development of the basic structure and functioning of the human mind in history, as M. Mauss has suggested.⁹⁴⁴ My own standpoint regarding the development of human consciousness may be called ahistorical, but with a qualification: rather than subscribing to a traditional Buddhist view of an ‘eternal truth’, nevertheless, I would argue, that from a certain point onward in human history, the fundamental structure of human consciousness did not change dramatically (at least not as dramatically as before that point. This view is perhaps also reflected in the Buddhist tradition itself: the form in which even the Buddha’s teachings appear (*sāsana*), is itself ‘empty’, one among potentially countless expressions of the timeless truth (*dhamma*) that each Tathāgata is to reveal anew.⁹⁴⁵ The *suttas*, likewise, offer to the listener/reader, as part of their communicative strategy and through their “timeless” structure (*Evam me sutam. Ekam samayam ...*), potentially endlessly repeatable teaching situations, and thus accommodate for the desire of Buddhists to meet “the teacher” face-to-face. That is one aspect of what Steven Collins has called “Buddhist Universalism”⁹⁴⁶ – The Buddha and his teachings, which is itself considered universal, can be (re-)accessed at all times and in all places.⁹⁴⁷ Consequently – casually speaking –, to the Buddhist it does not really matter all that much *who* Aṅgulimāla was, but it matters *what* Aṅgulimāla means to you (now).⁹⁴⁸

⁹⁴⁴ Cp. ch. 1.2.

⁹⁴⁵ Cp., e.g., Gombrich 1980, 2009: xii.

⁹⁴⁶ Cp. Collins 1994.

⁹⁴⁷ What I have adopted here is, of course, that which in the social sciences is called the ‘emic viewpoint’, i.e., how the texts ‘wish’ to be received within the tradition that transmits them. From another point of view, the etic, the situation looks very different: Not disregarding the different levels of communication contained in a *sutta*, the respective ‘senders’ and ‘receivers’ have to be located on the same level – they cannot transgress it (except it is done deliberately, which is most probably not intended in the case of the *suttas*); cp. Galasek 2009: 83.

⁹⁴⁸ Collins has furthermore argued that the distinction between linear and cyclical time is a practical as a means of analysis, but that it does not hold true for “a form of cultural description and differentiation”, because „All human experience of time always involves both repetition and non-repetition” (p. 103). If there was a cultural difference in the concepts of time between the western Judeo-Christian tradition and some of the Indian religions it was, according to Collins, probably this: while there is no „notion of a collective end of the world” (p. 106) in Indian world-renunciatory systems, amongst which the Pāli tradition counts, they do offer an end to non-repetitive time for the individual, namely Nirvāṇa or *mokṣa* (Collins 2010).

Having said that, we have also to reconsider the possibility for identification that the *suttas* offer for the pious listener/reader. Although reading for the sake of identification seems, according to recent research, to have emerged as a reader attitude only in the 18th century, Jannidis states⁹⁴⁹ that the concept of empathy, especially with regard to empathy-causing signals (like, e.g., either facial expressions, gestures, voice, or the situation of another), largely contribute to the process of reception of a literary work.⁹⁵⁰ His conclusions are surprising⁹⁵¹: a text clearly offers a possibility for identification signalling that a situation is perceived from the perspective of one of the characters (or the protagonist etc.) – in other words, through the narrative technique of ‘internal focalization’. Searching for possible equivalents in texts for facial expression, for instance (Ger. “*Ausdruck*”), Jannidis offers the ‘representative expressivity’ of language itself: direct speech, free indirect speech, and the different ways of representing consciousness.⁹⁵² A third parameter that can guide/influence the reader—character relationship is the judgement/assessment of its characters that a text offers. The instances of these judgements can, again, be text-external or text-internal. A group of gamblers appearing in the *Piyajātika Sutta* (MN 87), for instance, transports an (ethical) judgement intrinsic to the background of contemporary ancient-Indian value-system.⁹⁵³ In this respect, perhaps there is not too much of a difference in principle between modern and ancient modes of narration.

7.2 The Nature of the Characters

Descriptions of the outer appearance of characters are very scarce in the Pāli *suttas* or almost absent. This seems to be equally true for the description of landscapes etc. (manions are sometimes described in very rough outline, as we have seen in the episode in which Mahā Moggallāna visits Sakka in the Introduction.) As an example for the physical appearance of a character and its description may serve the physicality of the Buddha (not his ideal form, which is characterized by

⁹⁴⁹ Jannidis 2004: 229ff.

⁹⁵⁰ Cp. *ibid.*: 232.

⁹⁵¹ However, one has to concede, Jannidis limits this conclusion to a possibility, a can and not a must, of identification of the reader with one of the characters; see Jannidis 2004: 235: “*Ob die vier genannten Aspekte nun tatsächlich zu einer Identifizierung des Lesers mit der Figur führen, kann ein Textwissenschaftler nicht beantworten.*”

⁹⁵² Jannidis 2004: 234.

⁹⁵³ See Chapter 4.1.

the 112 special physical characteristics of a “Great Man”⁹⁵⁴). In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, for instance, there are reports that the Buddha suffered from back-pain, and in several instances that he is not recognised as the Tathāgata. The first incident is reported in the *Sekha Sutta* (MN 53), and striking examples for the latter can be found in the *Cūḷagosiṅga Sutta* (MN 31)⁹⁵⁵. The latter is a direct characterisation of the Buddha’s physical appearance, which implicates that he was not obviously recognisable as someone special by both the common people and his own monks alike.⁹⁵⁶

Another such instance, which we have already met with, can be found in the *Ghaṭikāra Sutta* (MN 81) which perhaps suggests that the Buddha Kassapa (in his earlier days as a teacher?) used to wander about alone and that he was undistinguishable and unrecognisable – though certainly known to the locals – from any other mendicant. The following passage suggests the Buddha Kassapa kept a rather unassuming “low profile”:

“At one time, O great king, I stayed in a market town called Vegaliṅga. Then I, O great king, in the morning, having dressed and taken up my bowl and outer robe, went to where the parents of the potter Ghaṭikāra [lived]. After having gone there, I said the following to the parents of the potter Ghaṭikāra: ‘Hey! Where did this Bhaggava go?’ ‘He’s gone out, sir. Help yourself with rice and sauce from the saucepan!’ Then, o great king, I took rice from the pot and sauce from the saucepan, and after I had enjoyed it, I got up from the seat and left. Then, o great king, the potter Ghaṭikāra came back to his

⁹⁵⁴ Cp. *Lakkhana Sutta*, AN I 102.

⁹⁵⁵ MN I 205f.: *Evaṃ me suttaṃ: ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā nādiḷe viharati giṅjakāvasathe. Tena kho pana samayena āyasmā ca anuruddho āyasmā ca nandiyo āyasmā ca kimbilo gosiṅgasālavanadāye viharanti. Atha kho bhagavā sāyanhasamayam patisallāṇā vuṭṭhito yena gosiṅgasālavanadāyo tenupasaṅkami. Addasā kho dāyapālo bhagavantaṃ dūratova āgacchantaṃ dīsvāna bhagavantaṃ etadavoca: ‘mā samaṇa, etaṃ dāyaṃ pāvīsi. Santettha tayo kulaputtā attakāmarūpā viharanti mā tesam aphāsamakāsīti. Assosi kho āyasmā asnuruddho dāyapālassa bhagavatā saddhiṃ mantayamānassa. Suvāna dāyapālaṃ etadavoca: ‘mā āvuso dāyapāla, bhagavantaṃ vāresi. Satthā no bhagavā anupatto’ti. Atha kho āyasmā anuruddho yenāyasmā ca nandiyo āyasmā ca kimbilo tenupasaṅkami upasaṅkamitvā āyasmantaṅca nandiyaṃ āyasmantaṅca kimbilaṃ etadavoca: ‘abhikkamathāyasmanto, abhikkamathāyasmanto, satthā [PTS Page 206] no bhagavā anupatto’ti. Atha kho āyasmā ca anuruddho āyasmā ca nandiyo āyasmā ca kimbilo bhagavantaṃ paccuggantvā eko bhagavato pattacīvaraṃ paṭiggahesi. Eko āsanaṃ paññāpesi. Eko pādodakaṃ upaṭṭhapesi. Nisīdi bhagavā paññatte āsane. Nisajja4 kho bhagavā pāde pakkhālesi. Tepi kho āyasmanto bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdiṃsu. Ekamantaṃ nisinaṃ kho āyasmantaṃ anuruddhaṃ bhagavā etadavoca: kacci vo anuruddhā khamāniyaṃ? Kacci yāpanīyaṃ? Kacci piṇḍakena na kilamathā’ti. ‘Khamāniyaṃ bhagavā, yāpanīyaṃ bhagavā, na ca mayaṃ bhante piṇḍakena kilamāmā ti.*

⁹⁵⁶ Cp. Bhikkhu Anālayo: “The Buddha and Omniscience.” In: *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 7, 2006 [= Anālayo 2006], pp. 13f.: “The idea of a real protuberance could be the due to a misunderstanding caused by a feature found on Buddha images. Ancient Indian artists represented gods and divine beings with long hair, which at times was depicted as being worn in a topknot. Artists soon took to portraying the Buddha as well with long hair, thereby giving expression to the divine status he had acquired by their time. This mode of presentation stands in contrast to the early discourses, which leave little doubt that the Buddha was shaven-headed just like other monks.”

parents, and having returned, he asked his parents: ‘Who has taken rice from the pot and sauce from the saucepan and, after having enjoyed it, has gotten up from the seat and left.’⁹⁵⁷ ‘The Blessed One Kassapa, dear, the arahant, the totally enlightened One, has taken rice from the pot and sauce from the saucepan, and having enjoyed it, got up from his seat and left.’ Then, o great king, the potter Ghaṭikāra had the following [thought]: ‘It is a gain for me, it is a good gain for me that the Blessed One Kassapa, the arahant, the totally enlightened One, so confides in me/is so intimate with me.’ Then, o great king, pleasure and happiness did not leave the potter Ghaṭikāra for a fortnight or his parents for one week.’⁹⁵⁸

We have seen that in the “text of its day mode” reading, this passage is to be understood as implying a criticism of crowds and noise, an indication maybe that the Buddha’s ideal was indeed that of the wandering mendicant.

⁹⁵⁷ Here the formulaic character of some phrases of the Pāli *suttas* becomes visible: the phrase *paribhuñjītvā uṭṭhāyāsānā pakkanto* was just repeated from the sentence that was previously uttered by the Buddha, although this particular details doesn’t make sense in the context of the potter’s statement: how could he know that after eating someone had gotten up from the seat and left. Examples like this seem to support/reinforce the idea that everything that is reported to be the Buddha’s direct speech is in fact the Buddha’s own word, and therefore unalterable. We can often observe this phenomenon in the *suttas* that what was uttered in direct direct speech is repeated verbally in the narrator’s speech or another character’s speech. But all this tells us, in the end, is that the editors/compiler of the Pāli Canon did obviously regard the direct speech of the Buddha as a true representation of his own words, and therefore as unalterable (this idea was later picked up – deliberately or not – by the early scholars of Pāli/early Buddhism, which led in to the already mentioned view/conception of the *suttas* as “sermons with frame-stories”). Although the thesis cannot, of course, completely be ruled out, I am somewhat reluctant to accredit/ascribe such instances only to the inattention/carelessness or ignorance of compilers and/or scribes, as some scholars do. I think it is an out-dated mode of thinking to hold that modern Western scholarship can *per se* be regarded as superior to ancient scholarship, which was responsible for the texts to survive, and that therefore modern explanations and interpretations of ancient texts has to be granted a superior position in a hierarchy of interpretations of textual phenomena.

⁹⁵⁸ B^o(R): “*Ekamidāhaṃ, mahārāja, samayaṃ vegāṅge nāma gāmanigame viharāmi. Atha khvāhaṃ, mahārāja, pubbaṇhasamayaṃ nivāsetvā pattaṭṭhāraṃ yena ghaṭikārassa kumbhakārassa mātāpitaro tenupasaṅkamīṃ; upasaṅkamitvā ghaṭikārassa kumbhakārassa mātāpitaro etadavocaṃ – “handā, ko nu kho ayaṃ bhaggavo gato’ti? “Nikkhanto kho te, bhante, upaṭṭhāko antokumbhiyā odanaṃ gahetvā pariyogā sūpaṃ gahetvā paribhuñjā’ti. Atha khvāhaṃ, mahārāja, kumbhiyā odanaṃ gahetvā pariyogā sūpaṃ gahetvā paribhuñjītvā uṭṭhāyāsānā pakkamīṃ [pakkāmīṃ (syā. kaṃ. pī.)]. Atha kho, mahārāja, ghaṭikāro kumbhakāro yena mātāpitaro tenupasaṅkamī; upasaṅkamitvā mātāpitaro etadavoca – “ko kumbhiyā odanaṃ gahetvā pariyogā sūpaṃ gahetvā paribhuñjītvā uṭṭhāyāsānā pakkanto’ti? “Kassapo, tāta, bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho kumbhiyā odanaṃ gahetvā pariyogā sūpaṃ gahetvā paribhuñjītvā uṭṭhāyāsānā pakkanto’ti. Atha kho, mahārāja, ghaṭikārassa kumbhakārassa etadahosi – “lābhā vata me, suladdhaṃ vata me, yassa me kassapo bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho evaṃ abhivissattho’ti. Atha kho, mahārāja, ghaṭikāraṃ kumbhakāraṃ aḍḍhamāsaṃ pītisukhaṃ na vijahati [na vijahi (sī. syā. kaṃ. pī.)], sattāhaṃ mātāpitūnaṃ.”*

There is, however, last but not least, one caveat: How can we make sure that our reading is not entirely guided (blinded?) by modern expectation towards narrative texts? Scholes and Kellogg sound an audible note for caution:

“What, in modern fiction, would be referred to some internal psychological process, presented perhaps as an interior monologue or an analytical narrative, is referred by Homer to divine intervention and to the external processes of fate and the will of the gods. [...]

Primitive narrative often turns to myth rather than mimesis at just such psychological moments.

[...] This sort of treatment of mental process is essentially mythic rather than mimetic, but some of its effects strike the modern eye as peculiarly realistic. A character in saga, who always operates according to the attributes he is given on his first appearance in the story, tends to behave mechanically according to those attributes. But a character whose mental processes and the actions deriving from them are subject to sudden supernatural influences inevitably displays some of those irregularities of behavior which seem to twentieth-century eyes quintessentially human because they are irrational.”⁹⁵⁹

To add another caveat: It may, of course, also be necessary to carefully reconsider whether the notion of perspective and thus ‘narrative perspective’ is a universal human category (of the mind) or not. Even so, I think that my analyses have shown the potential of the narratological toolbox in the case of the Pāli *suttas*, and that through a close reading of the Pāli *suttas*, I hope to have highlighted something of the way by which the texts themselves can guide the reader’s attention towards the narrative agents and their inner dimension. However, I feel that this study just touches “the tip of the Iceberg”, so to speak, and that many areas worth investigating have only been touched upon here. Much more remains to be said about each of them. A statement once made by Steven Collins in reply to a career-related question I had asked as him an Undergraduate now feels truer than ever: To my naïve question, whether the Pāli Canon would still be worth studying or whether all had been said about it already, he just remarked: “Hardly anything has been said.”

⁹⁵⁹ Scholes/Kellogg/Phelan 2006: 176.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

The abbreviations used follow Heinz Bechert, *Abkürzungsverzeichnis zur buddhistischen Literatur in Indien und Südostasien*. Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden. Beiheft 3. Göttingen, 1990. For some editions I here provide the full bibliographical details together with the abbreviations since in some cases new editions exist that differ from the details given in Bechert. For quotations from primary sources in Pāli, I have used the PTS editions, if not indicated otherwise (first, the abbreviation of the work title is given, followed by the volume (Roman numeral), page (Arabic numeral), and line.

Ap = *Apadāna*, ed. Mary E. Lilley, 2 vols., London 1925-1927 (PTS)

Be = Burmese editions of the Pāli Canon

B[°](R) = Burmese edition of the Pali Canon in Roman script, i.e. the electronic form of the Burmese *Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyana* edition, based on the edition of the Pāli Canon as agreed upon at the sixth Buddhist Council in Kaba Aye, Yangon, from 1954-1956 (Available online at: www.tipitaka.org).

BHSD = Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. 2: Dictionary, New Haven 1953.

cty = Commentary

CPD = *A Critical Pāli Dictionary*, begun by V. Trenckner, ed. D. Andersen, H. Smith, H. Hendriksen, vol. I, Copenhagen 1924-1948, vol. II (fasc. 1ff.), Copenhagen 1960ff.

Dhp = *Dhammapada*, ed. O. von Hinüber, and K. R. Norman, Oxford 1995 (PTS)

DN = *Dīghanikāya*, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids, J. E. Carpenter, 3. vols., 1890-1911 (PTS)

DPPN = G. P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, 2 vols., London 1937-1938.

Jā = *Jātaka*, together with its Commentary, ed. V. Fausbøll, 6 vols., London 1963 (Repr.), vol. 7 (Index, D. Andersen)

LHN = *Living Handbook of Narratology*, an open access Internet-publication provided by the University Hamburg, based on based on the *Handbook of Narratology*, first published by Walter de Gruyter in 2009.

- Mil = *Milindapañha*, ed. V. Trenckner, Repr. London 1962.
- MN = Majjhimanikāya
- MW = M. Monier-Williams
- PTS = The Pali Text Society
- PED = The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids, W. Stede, London 1921-1925.
- Pp = Puggalapaññatti, ed. R. Morris, London 1883 (PTS)
- Ps = Buddhaghosa, Papañcasūdanī, Majjhimanikāya-aṭṭhakathā, ed. J. H. Woods, D. Kosambi, I.B. Horner, 5 vols., London 1922-1938 (PTS)
- Singh. = Singhalese
- Sn = Suttanipāta, ed. D. Andersen, H. Smith, London 1913 (PTS)
- Th = Theragāthā, in: Thera- and Therī-Gāthā, ed. H. Oldenberg and R. Pischel, rev. K. R. Norman, L. Alsdorf, London, 2nd ed., 1966 (PTS)
- Ud = Udāna, ed. P. Steinthal, London 1885 (PTS)
- Vin = Vinayapiṭaka, ed. H. Oldenberg, 5 vols., London 1879-1883 (PTS)
- Vism = Buddhaghosa, Visuddhimagga, ed. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, 2 vols., London 1920-1921 (PTS)

Bibliography

- Ajahn Brahm (2005): *Who Ordered this Truckload of Dung? Inspiring Stories for Welcoming life's difficulties*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Allon, Mark (1997): *Style and Function. A study of the dominant stylistic features of the prose portions of Pāli canonical sutta texts and their mnemonic function*. Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies of the International College for Advanced Buddhist Studies (Studia philologica Buddhica. Monograph series, 12).
- Anālayo, Bhikkhu (2011): *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima-nikāya; Vol I. (2 vls.)* Taipei, Taiwan, New York: Dharma Drum; Chan Meditation Center [North American distributor].
- (2011): *A comparative study of the Majjhima-nikāya. Vol. II. (2 vls.)* (Discourses 91 to 152, Conclusion, Abbreviations, References, Appendices.) Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing (Dharma Drum Buddhist College Research Series, 3).
- Bāgci, Śītāmsūsekhar [S Bagchi] (ed.) (1970): *Mahāvastu Avadāna. Vol 1. 2 Bände*. Darbhanga: Mithila Institute (Buddhist Sanskrit Texts, 14).
- Bailey, Greg M. (1995): *Gaṇeśapurāṇa. Part I: Upāsanākhaṇḍa*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

- Bailey, Greg M.; Mabbett, Ian William (2003): *The Sociology of Early Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press. Online verfügbar unter Balasooriya, Somaratna (et al.) (Hg.) (1980):
- Banerji, Sures Chandra (2007): *Society in Ancient India. Evolution since the Vedic Times based on Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, and Other Classical Sources*. 3rd ed. New Delhi: D.K. Print-world.
- Basham, A. L. (2003): *The Wonder that was India. A Survey of the History and Culture of the Indian Sub-continent before the Coming of the Muslims*. 40th imprint of the third revised edition [1967] edition, London: Sidgwick & Jackson. New Delhi: Rupa&Co (Sidgwick & Jackson great civilizations series).
- Bernier, Paul (2011): “Is the Buddhist Doctrine of Non-Self Conceptually Incoherent?” In: *Journal of the UK Association for Buddhist Studies* (28.2), pp. 187–203.
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu (2000): *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha. A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya*. (Vol. I). Oxford: Pali Text Society in association with Wisdom Publications (Pali Text Society translation series, 47).
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu (2012): *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha. A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya Teachings of the Buddha*. Somerville, Mass, Enfield: Wisdom; Publishers Group UK [distributor] (The teachings of the Buddha).
- Booth, Wayne C. (2005): Resurrection of the Implied Author: Why Bother? In: James Phelan und Peter J. Rabinowitz (Hg.): *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., pp. 75–89.
- Buddhaghosa; Ñyaṇamoli, Bhikkhu (tr.) (1964): *The Path of Purification*. (Visuddhimagga). 2. Ed. Colombo: Semage.
- Buddhaghosa; Caroline A. F. Rhys-Davids (tr.) (1920-21): *The Visuddhi-magga of Buddhaghosa*; London: Pub. for the Pali Text Society by H. Milford (Pali Text Society [Publications, v. 88, 89]).
- Buswell, Robert E. (Hg.) (1992): *Paths to Liberation. The Mārga and its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*; [papers presented at a conference held at the University of California, Los Angeles, June 25 - 30, 1988]. Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press (Kuroda Institute Book, 7).
- Buswell, Robert E. (Hg.) (2004): *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*. New York: Macmillan Reference USA Thomson Gale. (Available online at: <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip043/2003009965.html>).
- Carrithers, Michael; Collins, Steven; Lukes, Steven (ed.) (1985): *The Category of The Person. Anthropology, Philosophy, History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chatman, Seymour Benjamin (1989): *Story and Discourse. Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. 5th printing Cornell Paperbacks. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.
- Clark, Matthew (2010): *Narrative Structures and the Language of the Self*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

- Collins, Steven (1982): *Selfless Persons. Imagery and Thought in Theravāda Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- (1990) “On the Very Idea of the Pali Canon.” In: *Journal of the Pali Text Society* (15), pp. 89-126.
- (1994): “What are Buddhists Doing when They Deny the Self?” In: F.E. Reynolds and D. Tracy (eds.) (Hg.): *Religion and Practical Reason*, State University of New York Press, pp. 59–86.
- (1997): “A Buddhist Debate About the Self and Remarks on Buddhism in the Work of Derek Parfit and Galen Strawson.” In: *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 25 (5), p. 467.
- (1998): *Nirvana and other Buddhist felicities. Utopias of the Pali Imaginaire*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press (Cambridge Studies in Religious Traditions, 12).
- (2001): *Aggañña sutta. The Discourse on What is Primary: An Annotated Translation from Pali*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
- (2010): *Nirvana. Concept, Imagery, Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Cone, Margaret (2001): *A Dictionary of Pāli*. A – kh. Oxford: Pali Text Society.
- (2010): *A Dictionary of Pali*. Part II: g-n. Oxford: Pali Text Society.
- Conermann, Stephan (ed.) (2009): *Modi des Erzählens in Nicht-abendländischen Texten*. Berlin: EB-Verl. (Narratio Aliena? 2).
- Cowell, Edward B. et. al. (ed.) 1990 [1895]: *The Jātaka*. Or, Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births. Delhi: Motilal Banarshidass Pub.
- Duerlinger, James (2003): *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons. Vasubandhu’s “Refutation of the Theory of a Self”*. Delhi: Foundation Books (Routledge Curzon Critical Studies in Buddhism).
- Eco, Umberto; Hausmann, Friederike (ed.) (2006): *Die Geschichte der Schönheit*. 2. Ed. München [u.a.]: Dt. Taschenbuch-Verl.
- Eder, Jens; Imorde, Joseph; Reinerth, Maike Sarah (ed.) (2013): *Medialität und Menschenbild*. Boston: de Gruyter.
- Eder, Jens; Jannidis, Fotis; Schneider, Ralf (ed.) (2010): *Characters in fictional worlds. Understanding Imaginary Beings in Literature, Film, and Other Media*. New York: de Gruyter.
- Edgerton, Franklin (1953): *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*. vol. 2: Dictionary. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.
- Egger, Wilhelm (1996) [1987]: *Methodenlehre zum Neuen Testament. Einführung in Linguistische und Historisch-kritische Methoden*. 4th ed. Freiburg im Breisgau, Basel, Wien: Herder.

- Eimer, Helmut (2006): *Buddhistische Begriffsreihen als Skizzen des Erlösungsweges*. Wien: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien.
- Fick, Richard (1974) [1897]: *Die Sociale Gliederung im Nordöstlichen Indien zu Buddha's Zeit mit Besonderer Berücksichtigung der Kastenfrage. Vornehmlich auf Grund der Jātaka dargestellt*. Unveränd. Nachdr. d. 1897 in Kiel erschienenen Ausgabe Graz: Akad. Druck- und Verlagsanstalt.
- Fludernik, Monika (2008): *Erzähltheorie. Eine Einführung*. 2. Aufl. Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchges.
- Fogelin, Lars (2012): *Archaeology of Early Buddhism*. New Delhi: Dev Publ.
- Forchheimer, Paul (1953): *The Category of Person in Language*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Forster, Edward M[organ] (1985): *Aspects of the Novel*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Fuller, Paul (2005): *The Notion of Diṭṭhi in Theravāda Buddhism. The point of view*. London: RoutledgeCurzon (RoutledgeCurzon critical studies in Buddhism).
- Galasek, Bruno (2009): *Die frühbuddhistischen Suttas als Erzähltexte*. In: Stephan Conermann (ed.): *Modi des Erzählens in nicht-abendländischen Texten*. Berlin: EB-Verl. (Narratio aliena? 2), pp. 73–127.
- Gallagher, Shaun (2000): “Philosophical Conceptions of the Self: Implications for Cognitive Science.” In: *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*. Vol. 4 (1 (January)), pp. 14–21.
- (ed.) (2011): *The Oxford Handbook of the Self*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Gallagher, Shaun; Shear, J. (.) (1999): *Models of the Self*. Thorverton: Imprint Academic. Available Online: <http://www.gbv.de/dms/bowker/toc/9780907845409.pdf>.
- Geertz, Clifford (2003): “Aus der Perspektive des Eingeborenen”. Zum Problem des ethnologischen Verstehens. In: Clifford Geertz: *Dichte Beschreibung. Beiträge zum Verstehen kultureller Systeme*. Sonderausg. zum 30jähr. Bestehen der Reihe Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft. Unter Mitarbeit von Brigitte Luchesi und Rolf (tr.) Bindemann. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp (Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch Wissenschaft), pp. 289–311.
- (2003): *Dichte Beschreibung. Beiträge zum Verstehen kultureller Systeme*. Sonderausg. zum 30jähr. Bestehen der Reihe Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp (Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch Wissenschaft).
- Geiger, Wilhelm; Bechert, Heinz (1960): *Culture of Ceylon in Mediaeval Times*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Geiger, Wilhelm; Norman, K. R. (1994): *A Pāli Grammar*. Oxford: Pali Text Society.
- Genette, Gérard (1980): *Narrative Discourse. An essay in method*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.
- (1990): *Narrative Discourse Revisited*. 1. ed. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Gifford, Julie (2003): “The Insight Guide to Hell: Mahāmoggallāna and Theravāda Buddhist Cosmology.” In: John Clifford Holt, Jacob N. Kinnard und Jonathan S. Walters (Hg.): *Constituting Communities. Theravāda Buddhism and the religious cultures of South*

- and Southeast Asia. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press (SUNY series in Buddhist studies), pp. 71–85.
- Goetsch, Paul (1985): “Fingierte Mündlichkeit in der Erzählkunst entwickelter Schriftkulturen.” In: *Poetica* (17), pp. 202–219.
- Gombrich, Richard Francis: *Who Was Āṅgulimāla?* In: Gombrich (2006a): *How Buddhism Began. The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, pp. 135–165.
- (1980): “The Significance of Former Buddhas in the Theravādin Tradition.” In: Somaratna (et al.) Balasooriya (es.): *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula*. London; Sri Lanka: Fraser Vimamsa, pp. 62–73.
- (1991) [1971]: *Buddhist Precept and Practice. Traditional Buddhism in the Rural High lands of Ceylon*. 2nd ed. Delhi: M. Banarsidass Publ.
- (2006a): *How Buddhism Began. The Genesis of the Early Teachings*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge (Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism).
- (2006b) [1988]: *Theravāda Buddhism. A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge (The Library of Religious Beliefs and Practices).
- (2009): *What the Buddha Thought*. London, Oakville, CT: Equinox Pub (Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies monographs).
- Grabes, Herbert (1978): “Wie aus Sätzen Personen werden ... Über die Erforschung literarischer Figuren.” In: *Poetica* (10), pp. 405–428.
- Gupta, K. Manohar (2006): *Linguistic Approach to Meaning in Pali*. New Delhi: Sundeep Prakash an.
- Gyatso, Janet (ed.) (1992): *In the Mirror of Memory. Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism*. Albany: State University of New York Press (SUNY Series in Buddhist Studies).
- Gyatso, Janet (2001, c1998): *Apparitions of the Self. The secret autobiographies of a Tibetan visionary*. 1. ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.
- Haferland, Harald; Meyer, Matthias; Stange, Carmen; Greulich, Markus (ed.) (2010): *Historische Narratologie, Mediävistische Perspektiven*. Berlin ;, New York: de Gruyter.
- Halbfass, Wilhelm (2000): *Karma und Wiedergeburt im Indischen Denken*. Kreuzlingen: Hugendubel (Diederichs) (Diederichs Gelbe Reihe, 161).
- Hamilton, Sue (1999): “The ‘External World’. Its Status and Relevance the Pali Nikāyas”. In: *Religion*, 29 (1), 1999, pp. 73–90.
- (1996): *Identity and Experience. The Constitution of the Human Being According to Early Buddhism*. London: Luzac Oriental.
- Hamilton, Sue (2000): *Early Buddhism. A New Approach. The I of the Beholder*. London: Routledge (Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism).

- (2001): *Indian Philosophy. A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press (Very Short Introductions, 47).
- Herman, David (ed.) (2007): *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hinüber, Oskar von (1994): *Untersuchungen zur Mündlichkeit früher mittelindischer Texte der Buddhisten*. Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Jahrg. 1994, Nr. 5.
- (1996): *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*. Berlin [u.a.]: de Gruyter.
- (1998): *Studien zur Literatur des Theravāda-Buddhismus*. Stuttgart: Steiner (Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz – Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, 7).
- Hinüber, Oskar von; Norman, Kenneth Roy (1995): *Dhammapada*. With a complete word index. 1st. ed. (Reprinted with corrections). Oxford: Pali Text Soc.
- Holt, John Clifford; Kinnard, Jacob N.; Walters, Jonathan S. (ed.) (2003): *Constituting Communities. Theravāda Buddhism and the religious cultures of South and Southeast Asia*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press (SUNY Series in Buddhist Studies).
- Horner, Isaline Blew (1951): *The Book of Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka)*. Vol IV (Mahāvagga), Transl. by I[saline] B[lew] Horner. London: Milford [later]: Luzac (Sacred Books of the Buddhists, 14).
- (1957): *The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings*. (Majjhima-Nikāya). London: Luzac.
- Horsch, Paul (1957): The Wheel. An Indian Pattern of World-Interpretation. In: *Liebenthal Festschrift* 5,3 & 4.
- Hühn, Peter (2009): *Handbook of Narratology*. Berlin, New York: W. de Gruyter (Narratologia, 19).
- Hutto, Daniel D. (Hg.) (2007): *Narrative and Understanding Persons*. Philosophy (60). Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Jannidis, Fotis: “Character.” Hg. v. Peter Hühn et al (eds.). Hamburg University Press. Hamburg. Available online at: <http://hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php/Character>
- Jannidis, Fotis (2004): *Figur und Person. Beitrag zu einer Historischen Narratologie*. Berlin; New York: W. de Gruyter.
- Jong, Irene J. F. de (2004): *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press.
- Jurewicz, Joanna (2000): “Playing with Fire: The pratityasamutpada from the Perspective of Vedic Thought.” In: *Journal of the Pali Text Society* (vol. 26), pp. 77–103.
- Kellner, Birgit & Helmut Krasser (Hg.) (2010/2011): *JIABS - Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* (Vol. 33, Nos. 1–2).

- Koch, Thomas (1991): *Literarische Menschendarstellung. Studien zu ihrer Theorie und Praxis*; (Retz, La Bruyère, Balzac, Flaubert, Proust, Lainé.) Tübingen: Stauffenburg-Verl. (Romanica et Comparatistica, 18).
- Lamarque, Peter (2007): “On the Distance Between Literary and Real-Life Narratives.” In: Daniel D. Hutto (Hg.): *Narrative and Understanding Persons*. Philosophy (60). Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 117–133.
- Lance S. Cousins (2005) [1994]. “Person and Self.” In: Paul Williams (Hg.): *Buddhism. Critical Concepts in Religious Studies*, Vol II. London, New York: Routledge (Vol II (Early Buddhist Schools and Doctrinal History; Theravāda Doctrine)), pp. 84–101.
- Langer, Rita (2000): *Das Bewusstsein als Träger des Lebens: Einige Weniger Beachtete Aspekte des Viññāṇa im Pālikanon*. Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien.
- Lee, You-Mee (2009): *Beyond Āsava & Kilesa. Understanding the Roots of Suffering According to the Pāli Canon*. 1st ed. Colombo: Buddhist Cultural Centre.
- Lüders, Heinrich (1940): “Die magische Kraft der Wahrheit im alten Indien.” In: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*; Band 98,1.
- Lüders, Heinrich; Alsdorf, Ludwig (1959): *Varuna. II. Varuna und das Ṛta*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Marasinghe, M. M. J. (2009): *Gods in Buddhism. A Study in Their Social and Mythological Milieu as Depicted in the Nikayas of the Pali Canon*. Rev. ed. Nugegoda: Sarasavi Publishers.
- Margolin, Uri (1983): “Characterization in Narrative: Some Theoretical Prolegomena.” In: *Neophilologus* (67), pp. 1–14.
- (1989): “Structuralist Approaches to Character in Narrative: The state of the Art.” In: *Semiotica* (75-1/2), pp. 1–24.
- (1995): “Characters in Literary narrative: Representation and Signification.” In: *Semiotica* 106 (3-4), pp. 373–392.
- (1996): “Characters and Their Versions.” In: Calin-Andrei Mihailescu und Walid Hamarneh (Hg.): *Fiction Updated. Theories of Fictionality, Narratology, and Poetics*; [some essays are rev. versions of papers at a Conference Entitled Fictions and Worlds, held at the University of Toronto, spring, 1990]. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press (Theory/culture), pp. 113–132.
- (2002): Naming and Believing: Practices of the Proper Name in Narrative Fiction. In: *Narrative* 10 (2), pp. 107–127.
- Martin, Raymond; Barresi, John (2006): *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self. An Intellectual History of Personal Identity*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press.
- (ed.) (2008): *Personal Identity*. [reprint]. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publ. (Blackwell Readings in Philosophy, 11).

- McClintock, Sara L. (2010): *Omniscience and the Rhetoric of Reason. Śāntaraksita and Kamalaśīla on Rationality, Argumentation, and Religious Authority*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Metzinger, Thomas (2004): *Being No One. The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity*. 1. paperback ed. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Mihailescu, Calin-Andrei; Hamarneh, Walid (Hg.) (1996): *Fiction Updated. Theories of Fictionality, Narratology, and Poetics*; [some essays are rev. versions of papers at a Conference Entitled Fictions and Worlds, held at the University of Toronto, spring, 1990]. Conference Entitled Fictions and Worlds. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press (Theory/culture).
- Müller, F. Max (ed.) (1890): *The Questions of King Milinda*. Translated from the Pali by T. W. Rhys Davids. Oxford: Clarendon Press (The Sacred Books of the East, Vol XXXV).
- Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu; Bhikkhu Bodhi (trs.) (2001): *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha. A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*. 2nd, rev. ed. Oxford: Pali Text Society in Association with Wisdom Publications.
- Nārada (2009): *Buddhism for Beginners. The Life of the Buddha*. Parts I, II & III. Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Centre.
- Nichols, Terence L. (2010): *Death and Afterlife. A Theological Introduction*. Grand Rapids Mich.: Brazos Press.
- Norman, K[enneth]. R[oy]. (1969): *The Elders' Verses*. Theragāthā. [in 2 vols.] London: Published for the Pali Text Society by Luzac.
- (1981): "A Note on Attā in the Alagaddupama Sutta." In: L. D. Institute of Indology (ed.): *Studies in Indian philosophy. A Memorial Volume in Honour of Pandit Sukhlalji Sanghvi*. Vol. 84. Ahmedabad (Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Series, 84), pp. 19–29.
- (1995): *The Group of Discourses (Sutta-nipāta)*. Vol II Revised Translation with Introduction and Notes. Oxford: Pali Text Society (Pali Text Society Translation Series, 45).
- Norman, K. R.; Oldenberg, Hermann (1966): *The Thera- and Therī-Gāthā*. (Stanzas Ascribed to Elders of the Buddhist Order of Recluses). 2nd ed. London: Luzac.
- Norman, K. R. (1997): *The Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada)*. Translated with an Introduction and Notes. Oxford: The Pali Text Society (Pali Text Society Translation Series, 46).
- Nünning, Ansgar (1989): *Grundzüge eines Kommunikationstheoretischen Modells der Erzählerischen Vermittlung. Die Funktionen der Erzählinstanz in den Romanen George Eliots*. Trier: Wiss. Verl. Trier (Horizonte, 2).
- Nünning, Ansgar (2002): *Neue Ansätze in der Erzähltheorie*. Trier: Wiss. Verl. Trier.
- Nyanaponika; Hecker, Hellmuth (eds.) (2000): *Die Jünger Buddhas. Leben, Werk und Vermächtnis der Vierundzwanzig Bedeutendsten Schüler und Schülerinnen des Er- wach- ten*. 1st ed. Bern, München, Wien: Barth.

- Nyanatiloka, Ven (1980): *Pali Buddhist Dictionary*. Fourth Revised Edition. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
- Oetke, Claus (1988): “*Ich*” und das *Ich*. *Analytische Untersuchungen zur buddhistisch-brahmanischen Ātmankontroverse*. Stuttgart: Steiner-Verl. Wiesbaden (Alt- und neuindische Studien, 33).
- Ohnuma, Reiko (2007): *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood. Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Oldenberg, Hermann (1879-83): *The Vinaya Piṭakam: One of the Principal Buddhist Holy Scriptures in the Pāli Language*. Edited by H. Oldenberg, etc. Pali. 5 vol. Williams & Norgate: London, Edinburgh, Hertford [printed].
- Oldenberg, Hermann; Hoey, William (1882): *Buddha. His Life, his Doctrine, his Order*. London, Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate.
- Olivelle, Patrick (2006): “Explorations in the Early History of Dharmaśāstra.” In: *Between Empires*, pp. 169–191.
- Olivelle, Patrick (Ed.) (2006): *Between the Empires. Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press (South Asia research).
- Parfit, Derek (1992): *Reasons and Persons*. (Repr.) Oxford: Clarendon.
- Pauen, Michael (2002 [2001]): *Grundprobleme der Philosophie des Geistes. Eine Einführung*. 3rd ed. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verl. (Fischer-Taschenbücher Forum Wissenschaft Philosophie, 14568).
- Phelan, James. (1987): “Character, Progression, and the Mimetic-Didactic Distinction.” In: *Modern Philology*, Vol. 84, No. 3, pp. 282–299. Available Online at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/437204.pdf?acceptTC=true>.
- (1989): *Reading People, Reading Plots*. Character progression and the interpretation of narrative. Chicago [u.a.]: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- (2005): *Living To Tell About It: A Rhetoric And Ethics Of Character Narration*. Cornell University Press.
- (2007): Rhetoric/Ethics. In: David Herman (Hg.): *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 203–216.
- Phelan, James; Rabinowitz, Peter J. (ed.) (2005): *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Priestley, Leonard C. D. C. (1999): *Pudgalavāda Buddhism. The Reality of the Indeterminate Self*. 1st ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Centre for South Asian Studies (South Asian Studies Papers, 12,1).
- Quante, Michael (2007): *Person*. Berlin: de Gruyter (Grundthemen Philosophie).
- Ray, Reginald A. (1994): *Buddhist Saints in India. A Study in Buddhist Values and Orientations*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Reynolds F.E. and D. Tracy (eds.) (1994): *Religion and Practical Reason*. State University of New York: State University of New York Press.
- Ronkin, Noa (2010): *Early Buddhist Metaphysics. The Making of a Philosophical Tradition*. [S.l.]: Routledge.
- Ryan, Marie-Laure (1981): "The pragmatics of personal and impersonal fiction." In: *Poetics* 10 (6), pp. 517–539. Available online at: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0304422X81900024>.
- (2010): "Narrativity and Its Modes as Culture-transcending Analytical Categories." In: *Japan Forum* 21 (3), pp. 307–323.
- Schapp, Wilhelm (2004 [1953]): *In Geschichten verstrickt. Zum Sein von Mensch und Ding*. 4. Ed. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann (Klostermann Seminar, 10).
- Schechtman, Marya (2007): "Stories, Lives, and Basic Survival: A Refinement and Defense of the Narrative View." In: Daniel D. Hutto (Hg.): *Narrative and Understanding Persons*. Philosophy (60). Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 155–178.
- (2011): "The Narrative Self." In: Shaun Gallagher (Hg.): *The Oxford Handbook of the Self*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, pp. 394–419.
- Schmid, Wolf (2008): *Elemente der Narratologie*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- (2010): *Narratology. An Introduction*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Schmithausen, Lambert (1987): *Ālayavijñāna: On the Origin and the Early Development of a Central Concept of Yogācāra Philosophy*. Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies.
- Scholes, Robert; Phelan, James; Kellogg, Robert L. (2006): *The Nature of Narrative*. Fortieth anniversary ed., rev. and expanded. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schumann, Hans Wolfgang (1999): *Der Historische Buddha. Leben und Lehre des Gotama*. 7th ed., Sonderausg. München: Diederichs (Diederichs gelbe Reihe).
- Seigel, Jerrold E. (2009): *The Idea of the Self. Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Siderits, Mark (2003): *Empty Persons. Personal Identity and Buddhist Philosophy*. Aldershot: Ashgate (Ashgate World Philosophies Series).
- (2009): *Buddhism as Philosophy. An Introduction*. Repr. Aldershot: Ashgate [u.a.] (Ashgate World Philosophies Series).
- Siderits, Mark; Thompson, Evan; Zahavi, Dan (ed.) (2011): *Self, No Self? Perspectives from Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Spiro, Melford E. (1970): *Buddhism and Society. A Great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes*. NY: Harper & Row.
- Spiro, Melford E. (1993): "Is the Western Conception of the Self peculiar within the Context of the World Cultures?" In: *Ethos* (21), pp. 107–153.

- Stedman, Gesa ((Sept) 2007): “Fotis Jannidis, Figur und Person: Beitrag zu einer historischen Narratologie.” In: *Anglia - Zeitschrift für englische Philologie* (125 (2)), pp. 403–406.
- Steinthal, Paul (1885): *Udānaṃ*. London: Pub. for the Pali Text Society, by H. Frowde (Pali Text Society. [Publications, 12).
- Stock, Markus (2010): “Figur: Zu einem Kernproblem historischer Narratologie.” In: Harald Haferland, Matthias Meyer, Carmen Stange und Markus Greulich (Hg.): *Historische Narratologie, Mediävistische Perspektiven*. Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, pp. 187–205.
- Strawson, Galen [1997] (1999): “The Self.” In: Shaun Gallagher und J. Shear (Hg.): *Models of the Self*. Thorverton: Imprint Academic, pp. 1–25.
- (1999): “The Self and the SESMET.” In: *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6 (4), pp. 99–135.
- (2008): “Against Narrativity.” In: Galen Strawson: *Real Materialism and Other Essays*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 189–209.
- (2008): *Real Materialism and Other Essays*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- (2011): “Radical Self-Awareness.” In: Mark Siderits, Evan Thompson und Dan Zahavi (eds.): *Self, No Self? Perspectives from Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 274–307.
- Thích-thiên-châu.; Wayman, Alex (1999): *The Literature of the Personalists of Early Buddhism*. 1st Indian ed.: Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers (Buddhist Tradition Series, Vol. 39).
- Thiel, Udo (2011): *The Early Modern Subject. Self-consciousness and Personal Identity from Descartes to Hume*. 1st ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Thompson, Stith (1955-1958): *Motif-Index of Folk-literature. A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths*. Bloomington, Indiana: University Press.
- Thondup (2011): *Incarnation. The History and Mysticism of the Tulku Tradition of Tibet*. 1st ed. Boston, [New York]: Shambhala; Distributed in the U.S. by Random House (The Buddhayana Foundation series, 12).
- Tubb, Gary A.; Boose, Emery R. (2007): *Scholastic Sanskrit. A Handbook for Students*. New York: American Institute of Buddhist Studies; Distributed by Columbia University Press.
- Vetter, Tilmann (2000): *The ‘Khandha Passages’ in the Vinaypiṭaka and the four main Nikāyas*. Wien: Verl. der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zu den Sprachen und Kulturen Südasiens, 33).
- Walpola Rāhula. (1978): *What the Buddha Taught*. Rev. ed. London: G. Fraser.
- Walshe, M.O.C (1987): *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha (Dīgha Nikāya)*. Wisdom Publications.
- Walters, Jonathan S. (1999): “Four Approaches to the ‘Sermon on the Noble Quest’

- (*Ariyapariyesanasutta*).” In: *History of Religions* No. 3 (38), pp. 247–284. Available online at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3176354>.
- Warder, A. K. (1970): *Indian Buddhism*. 1. ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- (2001 [1963]): *Introduction to Pali*. A. K. Warder. London: published for the Pali Text Society.
- Weber, Dietrich (1998): *Erzählliteratur. Schriftwerk, Kunstwerk, Erzählwerk*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Wenzel, Peter (Hg.) (2004): *Einführung in die Erzähltextanalyse. Kategorien, Modelle, Probleme*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verl. Trier.
- Westerhoff, Jan (2010): *Twelve Examples of Illusion*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wiley, Norbert (1994): “History of the Self: From Primates to Present.” In: *Sociological Perspectives* 37 (4), pp 527–545. Online at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1389278>
- Williams, Paul (Hg.) (2005): *Buddhism. Critical Concepts in Religious Studies*. London, New York: Routledge (Vol II (Early Buddhist Schools and Doctrinal History; Theravāda Doctrine)).
- Williams, Paul; Tribe, Anthony (2000): *Buddhist Thought. A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Wilson, Liz (2003): “Beggars Can Be Choosers: Mahakassapa as a Selective Eater of Offerings.” In: John Clifford Holt, Jacob N. Kinnard und Jonathan S. Walters (eds.): *Constituting communities. Theravāda Buddhism and the Religious Cultures of South and Southeast Asia*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press (SUNY Series in Buddhist Studies), pp. 57–70.
- Winternitz, M. (1922 [1905]): *Geschichte der Indischen Litteratur*. Leipzig.
- Winternitz, Moriz (1913): *Die budhhistische Litteratur*. Leipzig: Amelang.
- Zahavi, Dan (2007): “Self an Other: The Limits of Narrative Understanding.” In: Daniel D. Hutto (ed.): *Narrative and Understanding Persons*. Philosophy (60). Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 179–203.
- Zin, Monika (2006): *Mitleid und Wunderkraft. Schwierige Bekehrungen und ihre Ikonographie im Indischen Buddhismus*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.