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"The Storm"

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The Little Clay Cart (Mrcchakatika): The Construction of Gender and Emotion in Act V, "The Storm"

Mohan R Limaye¹ / Ms Kim Price

In Act V of *The Little Clay Cart*, a Sanskrit play written about 1600 years ago, the playwright Shudraka constructs a poetic duet between Vasantasena, the heroine, and a Vita, her male companion, as they walk to the house of her lover Charudatta in a raging storm. Their poetic descriptions of the storm portray the differences in gender and emotion between these two characters. Vasantasena's verses create an enriched gender-specific persona through the expression of her nuanced feelings for Charudatta and of the sentiment of love in separation. The Vita, on the other hand, describes the storm in manly images of power. The storm scene indeed enhances not only the aesthetic but also the dramatic quality of the play. This is how lyrical poetry in a play can serve a dramatic purpose.

It has been well recognized that the poetic duet in Act V of *The Little Clay Cart* between Vasantasena (the heroine of the play) and her Vita² provides the audience with "a feast for the ear"³ through a cascade of lyrical and descriptive exuberance⁴. What has not, however, been appreciated is that the storm scene with its poetry competition also creates an enriched gender-specific persona for Vasantasena and develops more fully the dominant emotion of the play, erotic love. In the tale of the growing love and passion between Charudatta (the hero of the play) and Vasantasena, Act V is crucial because their amorous longing attains consummation here. The storm scene of Act V also serves an important dramatic function: through an artful use of poetic conceits and figures of speech, Shudraka (the dramatist) produces varying perceptions of the

storm, unique to the character and moods of Vasantasena and the Vita, respectively. The description is neither “exaggerated” nor “verbose” and is not a “blemish on the author’s workmanship as a dramatist,” as several critics have maintained⁵.

The poetry competition or verse exchange between Vasantasena and her Vita, who accompanies her to Charudatta’s house in the raging storm, forms a major portion of Act V. In the case of the Vita, many of the poetic images allocated to him indicate presumably his “manly” spirit. Of course, this is what is to be expected because our ideas of what is feminine and what is masculine, of “manliness” and “womanliness,” are culturally determined. To a large extent, the actions as well as thoughts of men and women are socially constructed. The essentialist notion that men and women are inherently different may be dismissed by many (particularly, in the West) today. However, in Shudraka’s time, over 1600 years ago, Indian audiences would most probably have seen men and women as innately different. One could therefore maintain that, contrasted with the Vita’s poetry, Vasantasena’s poetry revels in her femininity. Her lyrical description of the storm manifests her much nuanced feelings, occasioned by her journey to see her lover, with whom she is deeply in love.

Both are excellent poets, but Vasantasena is clearly differentiated from the Vita in this respect. Shudraka constructs, along gender lines, different perspectives on the storm and the sentiment of love (*shringar rasa*). In Vasantasena’s stanzas describing the storm, for instance, we get glimpses into some of her complex feelings, all of them variations on “love in separation.” She interacts with the agents of the thunderstorm as if they were persons she needs to converse with. She throws her emotional self into the storm almost right away in the course of the duet: She regards the night as a threatening rival or co-wife obstructing her path (stanza 15). She accuses the dark, wet clouds of robbing the moon of its light (*pyotsna* = feminine gender), just as marauders kidnap the wife of a weak man (stanza 20), scolds an audacious cloud (a male figure) for his shamelessness (stanza 28), cajoles the lightning (female gender in Sanskrit) to empathize with her as a fellow young female should (stanza 32). At one time, she defies the rain god Indra (stanza 31); at another, she pleads with him—in order to co-opt him to her side—by reminding him how he lied to be able to make love to Ahalya, a mythical woman married to another man:

For Ahalya's sweet sake thou once didst lie;
Thou knowest lover's pain.
As thou didst suffer then, now suffer I;
O cruel, cease thy rain. (stanza 30)⁶.

On the other hand, we notice that the Vita is relatively free of personal feeling when he describes the storm. The following stanza is a typical example of his masculine, rather objectified, perspective on the raging storm:

Sped by the fickle fury of the air
A flood of arrows in his rushing streams,
His drum, the roaring thunder's might blare,
His banner, living lightning's awful gleams—
Rages within the sky, and shows him bold
Mid beams that to the moon allegiance owe,
Like a hero-king within the hostile hold
Of his warlike foe. (stanza 17)

In the storm scene, we see various facets of Vasantasena's personality. At the end of Act IV, Vasantasena had already expressed her resolve to go to Chraudatta's house to "entertain" him, no matter what:

The clouds may come, the rain may fall forever,
The night may blacken in the sky above;
For this I care not, nor I will not waver;
My heart is journeying to him I love. (IV, stanza 33)

Now, on her way to her lover in Act V, she is doubly resolute and defiant of the storm:

The clouds may rain, may thunder ne'er so bold,
May flash the lightning from the sky above;
That woman little recks of heat or cold,
Who journeys to her love. (stanza 16)

(Prof. Ryder uses "recks" above to mean "reckon," "consider" or "heed"). She dares Indra, the rain god, to do his worst because he cannot stop the women who have embarked on meeting their lovers:

Thunder and rain and lighten hundredfold
Forth from thy sky above;
The woman canst thou not delay nor hold
Who journeys to her love. (stanza 31)

She also reminds him that he has no cause to be jealous, no reason to try to stop her by his mighty thunder because she was never attached to him amorously [They never had an affair, so to say]:

Did I then give thee of my love before,
That now thy clouds like mighty lions roar?
Ah no! Thou shouldst not send thy streaming rain,
To fill my journey to my love with pain. (stanza 29)

The thundering, profusely raining cloud (a male) frightens her but also excites her. As a young woman, she experiences both erotic longing and slight fear as reflected in her image of a shameless cloud (stanza 28, quoted below) who, while frightening her with his thunder, touches her all over with his hands in the form of showers. The dramatist purposely uses the plural form of “hand” to denote intensity, when in Sanskrit the dual form was available.

O Shameless cloud, you frighten me
With your noise, and at the same time
Touch me all over with your wet hands,
As I journey to my lover's abode.
(stanza 28, my translation)

Vasantasena displays some annoyance and feigned anger towards the naughty cloud, but her sexual excitement is hardly concealed. Having been pursued by Sansthanaka (the king's brother-in-law) in Act I and on the verge of being violated by him, Vasantasena describes the storm calling up the images of lonely women separated from their lovers or snatched violently from their husbands. Obviously, she feels empathic toward the plight of such women:

As dark as elephants, these clouds alone
Fall like a cruel dart—
With streaks of lightning and with white birds strewn—
To wound my wretched heart.
But, oh, why should the heron, bird of doom,
With that perfidious sound
Of “Rain! Rain! Rain!”—grim summons to the tomb
For her who spends her lonely hours in gloom—
Strew salt upon the wound? (stanza 18)

Here is another simile depicting violence done to a woman:

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Clouds, black as wet tamala-leaves, the ball
Of heaven hide from our sight;
Rain-smitten homes of ants decay and fall
Like beasts that arrows smite;
Like golden lamps within a lordly hall
Wander the lightning bright;
As when men steal the wife of some base weak thrall,
Clouds rob the moon of light. (stanza 20)

(Again, it needs to be emphasized that clouds are masculine gender and moonlight feminine).

Vasantasena gives vent to her feeling that women deeply in love but not united with their lovers are not at their best, when she describes the dismal-looking quarters of the sky:

Like lonely-parted wives, the heaven
Sees all her charms depart. (stanza 25)

One of the uppermost fears and anxieties in her mind is the reaction of a rival. Soon after she and her Vita start walking toward Charudatta's house in the storm, she voices this fear:

The night, an angry rival, bars my way;
Her thunder fain would check and hinder me:
"Fond fool! With him I love thou shalt not stay,
'T is I, 't is I, he loves," she seems to say,
"Nor from my swelling bosom shall he flee."
(stanza 15)

In Act I, when she took refuge in Charudatta's house, he asked her to take his son inside the house, mistaking her for his maid. She thus knew that he was married, if she had not already known it. The thought of a rival (or a "co-wife"—the original Sanskrit means precisely "another wife") naturally would be on her mind.

She appeals to the "woman" in lightning (female gender) to take pity on a fellow female. Appealing to the cloud (male) is useless: "men are known to be cruel, after all," she thinks, "But, lightning, you are one of us":

Let thunders roar, for men were cruel ever;
But oh, thou maiden lightning! Didst thou never
Know pains that maidens know? (stanza 32)

(In the above stanza, the literal translation would be "cloud", not "thunders").

Because of her profession, we can believe that she knows about men inside out. She has seen them all. Her description, therefore, of a “nouveau riche,” an ostentatious man with newly acquired wealth, resembling a storm cloud, is right on the mark. The satire is quite biting: The cloud now rises, now descends, now pours (its showers), now thunders, and now produces a mass of darkness; thus it puts on manifold appearances, like a man getting wealth for the first time (an upstart). (Kale’s translation, stanza 26)⁷

When we turn to the Vita’s poetry, we notice how he introduces Vasantasena at the beginning of the storm scene in a stanza with the erotic as its dominant note and then announces her arrival at Charudatta’s house in verses suggestive of sexual arousal. The dramatist does not want his audience to lose sight of the fact that love is the stable sentiment (*rasa*) of Act V:

Laxmi without the lotus-flower is she,
Loveliest arrow of god Kama’s bow,
The sweetest blossom on love’s magic tree.
See how she moves, so gracefully and slow!
In her, good wives their dearest sorrow know.
When passion’s drama shall enacted be,
When on love’s stage appears the passing show,
A host of wanderers shall bend them low,
Glad to be slaves in such captivity. (stanza 12)

We note how many words denoting and connoting “love” and “sex” are employed in the stanza below, presenting Vasantasena as a woman in love eager to see her lover:

While clouds look beautiful, and in the hour
Fragrant with nipa and kadamba flower,
She comes to see her lover, very wet,
With dripping locks, but pleased and loving yet.
Though lightning and though thunder terrifies,
She comes to see you; ‘tis for you she sighs.
The mud still soils the anklets on her feet,
But in a moment she will have them sweet.
(stanza 35)

To many males in the audience, the image of a beautiful young woman rained on and hence with “dripping locks” of hair must appear incredibly sensual.

Vasantasena’s Vita, of course, is fully aware of her lovelorn emotional

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state. In fact, when the poetry competition between them begins, he is the first one to invoke an image of the clouds dark (and despondent) as the hearts of lonely young women away from their husbands and lovers:

Like a maiden's heart, that distant lover seeks.

(stanza 13)

Once the Vita links the colour of the clouds with women's "darkened" hearts because of their separation from their lovers, Vasantasena continues with this image. She alludes to it three times in her verses (stanzas 18, 20, and 25). The big difference, though, is that the Vita refers to women in separation only in passing, matter-of-factly, while Vasantasena in her emotional state identifies with such women.

The Vita's emotional disengagement and his objectification of the storm set his description apart from Vasantasena's emotionally charged verses describing the storm. He describes the storm without reference to himself. Very rarely does he delve inside himself. He does not need to, because his feelings are not engaged; he is not in love. His objectified storm description is replete with conceits of battle images and martial similes (*utprekshaas*) and metaphors. Some of his images are violent; it seems as if the combination of sex and violence was current even then. As was mentioned above, since masculinity and femininity are culturally produced, it makes sense that the dramatist puts a great number of images of battles, conquering princes, elephants in rut, showers of arrows, etc. in the Vita's mouth. Add to these similes and metaphors an abundant use of aspirated consonants, stops or plosives, such as kh, gh, dh, ph, and bh in his stanzas (See the original Sanskrit). The cumulative effect of the Vita's powerful description, not surprisingly, is of noise, strength, and dominance tinged with violence—attributes usually associated with "manliness" in many cultures. Here is the Vita's fully developed battle image with double-entendre epithets, applying both to a cloud (*megha*) and a king (*nripa*):

"But see, Vasantasena! Another cloud" (See stanza 17, cited above).

Here is his comparison of the stormy sky with an angry elephant:

It seems as if the sky would take the guise
Of some fierce elephant to service bred;
The lightning like a waving streamer flies,
And white cranes serve to deck his mighty head.

(stanza 19)

In the above stanza, the literal meaning of the word (for which Prof. Ryder uses the translation “fierce”) is an elephant “in rut”. Therefore, a male elephant in rut, “to service bred”, invokes male sexual prowess, a highly charged image, though glossed over by Ryder.

And, again, the Vita personifies the sky in intense images of varied actions:

The heaven is radiant with the lightning's glare;
Its laughter is the cry of myriad cranes;
Its voice, the bolts that whistle through the air;
Its dance that bow whose arrows are the rains.
It staggers at the winds, and seems to smoke
With clouds, which form its black and snaky cloak.
(stanza 27)

Here's another image of the streaming clouds like the strong and mighty elephants at the command of god Indra:

Clouds, harnessed in the lightning's gleams,
Like charging elephants dash by;
At Indra's bidding, pour their streams,
Until with silver cords it seems
The earth is linked with sky. (stanza 21)

At times, as mentioned above, the Vita's sexual images can be tinged with some roughness: the modifiers or epithets in the following stanza apply both to the earth (feminine) and to a young woman at the peak of her sexual appeal:

Smitten with falling drops, the fragrant sod,
Upon whose bosom greenest grasses nod,
Seems pierced with pearls, each pearl an arrowy rod.
(stanza 22)

When one considers that “sod” is female and “rod” is male (grammatical genders), the suggestion of sexual intercourse is unmistakable.

True, Vasantasena and the Vita take cues from each other, echoing each other's images: the Vita's image of “a flood of arrows” (stanza 17) prompts Vasantasena's image of elephants “struck with arrows” (stanza 20). Similarly, Vasantasena's use of the word “thundering” (*adbmat*) in stanza 18 finds an echo in the Vita's use of the same word modifying “cloud” in stanza 22. (After all, this is a lyrical repartee and, as in all conversations, cohesion is achieved through the device of the interlocutors harking back

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as part of turn taking). But the twists they give to those conceits differentiate them from each other. The most important difference, however, is that the Vita indulges in a simile indicating sorrow caused to a woman separated from her lover or victimized because of violence against her, but leaves it at that. On the other hand, when Vasantasena uses such images, her feelings are very strongly involved. She identifies and empathizes with such women. They become part of her emotional world (both the Vita's and Vasantasena's verses are cited above to illustrate their varying perceptions and reactions).

Act V is a landmark in Vasantasena's love life. On that rainy evening, she as a young woman passionately in love (*abhisarika*) takes the initiative to go and see her lover at his house. We see her in this act with the ardor, anxieties, and anticipations of a woman in love not fully sure of how she will be received by her lover. She certainly has lovemaking on her mind: for instance, she refers to a flock of cranes (feminine gender: *balakamala*) embracing a cloud (masculine gender: *megha*) with ardor:

And ardent cranes on high
Embrace it lovingly. (stanza 23)

She is not the breathless "high school" teenager any more wanting to take a look at Charudatta from the upper balcony of her mansion at the end of the second act, or even the girl who left her jewelry at Charudatta's house at the end of the first act to give herself an excuse to return to him later. The storm that evening brings to surface the complex feelings of a maturing woman expressing herself in passionate poetry.

The theme of lovemaking is struck from the very beginning of the play, though it keeps intensifying in the course of Act V. The second (benedictory) stanza of the preface itself (*nandi*) in Act I mentions the goddess Parvati's (*Gauri*'s) embrace of the deity *Shiva*, her husband:

May the neck of (the black-throated deity, viz.) Siva,
Resembling a dark cloud, protect you!—(the neck)
Whereon the creeper-like arm of Parvati
Shines like a streak of lightning.

(Act I, stanza 2: Kale's translation)

Even from as early as the end of Act I, Charudatta has also had love on his mind: He refers to the moon, pale as the cheek of a lovelorn young woman:

Attended by her starry servants all,
And pale to see as a loving maiden's cheeks,
Rises before our eyes the moon's bright ball,
(Act I, part of stanza 57).

Similarly, the stage direction at the opening of Act V refers to Charudatta as lovesick (*sotkantha*). When Vasantasena is introduced as starting on her journey to Charudatta's house, the stage direction referring to her employs the same epithet, *sotkanthaa*. However, at the beginning of Act V, Charudatta is not sure whether Vasantasena will reciprocate; he worries that she may only be won by wealth⁸. He is still looking for proof, which he gets when she comes to his house of her own accord:

The heaven is painted with the blackest dye,
And fanned by cool and fragrant evening airs;
Red lightning, glad in unison, clasps the sky
With *voluntary arms*, and shows on high
The love that maiden heart to lover bears. (stanza 46)

(In the above stanza, the italics are mine). The evidence of eager willingness on her part is important for him because this sets him apart from the malicious and boorish Samsthanaka (the king's brother-in-law), who attempts to win her love through force, even when she tries to ward him off by asserting that merit, not coercion, inspires love. "Yet true love would be won by virtue, not violence" (Act I, stanza 32). The storm scene and the poetry duet thus amply demonstrate that she is full of longing for Charudatta.

Vasantasena's Vita is a stand-in or a double for Charudatta. In what ways can one say that the Vita fills in for Charudatta in the latter's absence for a while? For one, the Vita plays his brief role as a poet-companion of Vasantasena in Act V. After she dismisses him politely with one of her maids, he does not appear in the play again. Figuratively speaking, he dissolves into Charudatta. For another, the descriptions of the storm by him and by Charudatta (at the opening of Act V) are more similar to each other than they are to Vasantasena's description. For instance, Charudatta's "manliness," like the Vita's, is manifested in the image of the trumpet-bearing deity Vishnu ready to traverse and occupy the sky:

The wet bull's belly wears no deeper dye;
In flashing lightning's golden mantle clad,
While cranes, his buglers, make the heaven glad,
The cloud, a second Vishnu, mounts the sky.
(stanza 2)

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He later refers to the thick clouds resembling the platoons of the Kaurava armies with their overbearing and extremely proud leader Duryodhana when the Mahabharata war begins:

The sky is black as Dhritarashtra's face;
Proud as the champion of Kuru's race,
The haughty peacock shrills his joy abroad;
(part of stanza 6)

His images are generally comparable to the violent ones in the Vita's description of the storm (See stanzas 17, 22, and 27 cited above).

By the end of Act V, however, Charudatta has mellowed because he is now fully convinced of Vasantasena's passionate love for him. The pall of uncertainty and despondency hanging on him (at the beginning of the act) is lifted now. He is now ready to display the tenderness and erotic excitement befitting a lover (stanzas 37, 38, and 46), after she enters his house as an eager lover:

Oh, my beloved,
My evenings pass in watching ever,
My nights from sighs are never free;
This evening cannot else than sever—
In bringing you—my grief and me. (stanza 37)

The dripping flower that decks her ear, droops down,
And one sweet breast
Anointed is, like a prince who wears the crown,
With ointment blest. (stanza 38)

The heaven is painted with the blackest dye,
And fanned by cool and fragrant evening airs;
Red lightning, glad in unison, clasps the sky
With voluntary arms, and shows on high
The love that maiden heart to lover bears. (stanza 46)

Purged as he is of his doubts and dejection because Vasantasena has come to him of her own accord, Charudatta reaches a catharsis at the end of the act after she embraces him:

More grimly yet, O thunder, boom;
For by thy grace and power
My love-distracted limbs now bloom
Like the kadamba flower.
Her dear touch all my being thrills,
And love my inmost spirit fills. (stanza 47)

Let ceaseless rain a hundred years endure,
The lightning quiver, and the thunder peal;
For what I deemed impossible is sure:
Her dear-loved arms about my neck I feel. (stanza 48)

He only knows what riches are,
Whose love comes to him from afar,
Whose arms that dearest form enfold,
While yet with rain 't is wet and cold. (stanza 49)

The lovers then enter the “inside” of his house. By the way, the pun on “inside” (*abhyantaram*) is pretty transparent: In the first act, mistaking her for his maid Radanika, Charudatta had asked Vasantasena to bring his son Rohasena inside his house, out of the evening chill. Vasantasena had then muttered to herself that she was not lucky enough to enter his inside, his heart. Now she is again invited to enter the inside, literally as well as figuratively, of his house and his heart. Her doubts are also now resolved.

Finally, peace and harmony return at the end of the act. In stanza 46, Charudatta suggestively alludes to the reddish (pun: meaning also in love) lightning (female gender) embracing the sky, her beloved (male gender). Vasantasena taking the hint embraces Charudatta. The circle is complete: An earthly embrace imitates the celestial embrace (Gauri's embrace of Shiva, alluded to in Act I, stanza 2); and the love of the hero and the heroine finds fruition in this act. Both the lovers' longing ends with a promise of the night in each other's arms. The storm spends itself. The lovers are in sync, in rhythm (*talanusarena*), keeping time with each other's heart:

On palm-trees shrill,
On thickets still,
On boulders dashing,
On waters splashing,
Like a lute that, smitten, sings,
The rainy music rings. (stanza 52)

Women say of men that what you see is what you get; there is not much more inside of men than outside. Hence, it is no surprise that we see more of Vasantasena's inner self than that of Charudatta or the Vita in this scene. In fact, Shudraka reveals in Act V more facets of Vasantasena's personality with all her charm, anxieties, vulnerabilities, and sensuousness than anywhere else in the play, and all of this through her poetic description of the storm. As a result, we, the receptive and

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appreciative (*rasik* and *sabrudaya*) audience, know her, love her, empathize with her and cherish her all the more. The scene demonstrates how lyrical poetry can be employed, as in this case, for another more germane objective, for the dramatic purpose of affording the audience a direct and intimate insight into Vasantasena's character and, although indirectly, also into Charudatta's character through his provisional stand-in or alter ego, the Vita. This is also how Shudraka blends form and content, style and character, in *The Little Clay Cart*.

Another example from another poet-dramatist, Kalidasa, comes to mind. Toward the end of his play, *Shakuntala*, just one stanza of extraordinary poetic beauty offers in three vivid images a glimpse of the immense silent suffering of Shakuntala, the heroine, repudiated by her husband and hence an "outcast" in the eyes of society. "Here comes Lady Shakuntala, with a face wan and pale due to her many fasts, wearing tawny clothes and a single braid of unadorned hair. See how she, spotlessly pure, is suffering pangs of long separation from me" (*Shakuntala*, Act VII, stanza 21, translation mine). Examples of such lyrical power triumphantly serving an intense dramatic purpose can be easily multiplied (not only in Sanskrit drama but also, say, in Shakespeare). This is the dramatic and aesthetic significance of the innovative duet between Vasantasena and her Vita as they describe in verse the raging storm in Act V, thus heightening and intensifying the appropriateness of this scene to the play as a whole.

Notes

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2. Vasantasena's sophisticated male companion, a courtier. He escorts her to Charudatta's house during the storm in this act. Like Vasantasena, he too is

an accomplished poet. By the way, “Vita” is not the name of a person; it denotes an “occupation.” A vita is often a companion to a wealthy person—a prince or, as in this case, a courtesan. Incidentally, the King’s brother-in-law also has a vita. Vitas are well-bred townsmen, who as cultured hangers-on, entertain their patrons, but not as jesters or clowns.

3. “But often in an exaggerated fashion, as in the fifth act of the *Cart*, lyrical verses are introduced for the good reason that the author feels inspired to them, and they remind us that the Indian drama—is also a feast for the ear.” Van Beuitenen, J.A.B. *Two Plays of Ancient India: The Little Clay Cart and The Minister’s Seal* (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1968), 16-7.
 4. Prof. Ryder cites as one example stanza 33 of this act in his Introduction to the play; indeed, there are so many that it is hard to choose. Ryder, Arthur W. and Charles R. Lanman. Kessinger Publishing’s reprint of *The Little Clay Cart: A Hindu Drama Attributed to King Shudraka*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 1905).
 5. “This long description [of the storm]—may be [a] blemish in the dramatic art of Sudraka.” Chakrabarti, Prakashchandra. *A Treatise on Sudraka’s Mrcchakatika* (Delhi: Pilgrims Book Pvt Ltd., 1999), 55. “At a few places we do find needless elaboration and verbosity, as in the description of the storm in Act V.” Bhat, G.K. *Preface to Mrcchakatika—The Little Clay Cart* (Ahmedabad, India: The New Order Book Co., 1953), 170. Just as van Buitenen does not explain what he means by “in an exaggerated fashion,” similarly, neither does Bhat tell the reader what portions of the storm poetry are “needless (italics mine) elaboration.” This entire paper attempts to demonstrate that the detail in the description is necessary to set up a contrast between the two gendered perspectives on the storm—one Vasantasena’s and the other the Vita’s.
- Another scholar believes that the description of the storm in Act V “has the form of a dialogue” between Vasantasena and her Vita and “must be considered a blemish on the author’s workmanship as a dramatist, though on the whole it may be good poetry.” Devasthali, G.V. *Introduction to the Study of Mrcchakatika* (Poona, India: Poona Oriental Book House, 1951), 64. A positive comment I’ve found in this context is by Prof. Oliver: “Although poetic ornament is used in *The Little Clay Cart* quite freely, especially in Act V, this element is always subordinated and made to conform to the dramatic structure of the play,” 11. Oliver does not, however, elaborate on how the poetry duet serves a dramatic purpose in *The Little Clay Cart*, or in what way it conforms “to the dramatic structure of the play,” 11. Oliver, Revilo Pendleton. *Mrcchakatika: The Little Clay Cart, A Reprint* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1975), originally published by the University of Illinois Press, Urbana in 1938.
6. I have used Ryder for the translations of the original Sanskrit stanzas, except in some cases as noted in parentheses.
 7. Kale, M.R. *The Mricchakatika of Sudraka* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1994 reprint; First Ed., 1924). Whenever I felt a need for a literal translation, I employed Prof. Kale’s translation.

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8. Charudatta expresses this misgiving to his friend Maitreya partly to assuage him. Prof. Robert E. Goodwin alludes to the ambivalence Charudatta feels toward Vasantasena because he cannot quite make out who she really is “the fellow *sabrdaya* or the venal prostitute who belongs to the power structure from which he is barred,” 4. Goodwin, Robert E. “Introduction: Carudatta in Love, or, How to Appreciate *The Little Clay Cart*” 1-15 in Sharma, Arvind (Ed.) *The Little Clay Cart, An English Translation of the Mrcchakatika of Sudraka as adapted for the stage by A. L. Basham* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994).

