

Nature of Historical Thinking and *Aitihya*

Problem of the Construction of Significance

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Broadly speaking, the paradigm of '*aitihya*' is anchored in the *nature and structure of narrative* just as the paradigm of modern history is embedded in the *autonomy of evidence*. Yet, the spectrum varying from evidence-hunting to significance-directed-narration is so wide today that the contentious enterprises of history and of *itihāsa* have arbitrarily come to be encompassed together into this. In vernacular circuits, 'history' continues to be pragmatically translated as '*itihāsa*', unmindful of the theoretical discord between the two that brews underneath. An attempt is made in this essay to articulate the gamut of issues that are involved in a discord that is apparently a puzzle of Indian modernity and to resolve it through an examination of the nature of historical thinking in the context of traditional Indian theorizing about the past.

In doing so, we intend to analyse the ontology of *objects* peculiar to general thinking about the past as also theorize on the construction of *significance* in such a thinking. The analytical tools of Vaiśeṣika and the Mīmāṃsā will be used here to offer a theory of significance. We believe that two fundamental approaches – basically asymmetrical – may be involved in such a construction of significance, and these would relate to: (i) *recollecting justice*, and (ii) *recollecting injustice*. Paradigmatically, the basic signature of history and *itihāsa* may be read respectively in the statements that, "there simply cannot be a history of justice" and that, "recollection of justice in past will take the form of *itihāsa*." Analytically, it has to be so because the evidential bearings of 'injustice' are possible to be documented and adduced but that would not be the case in respect of 'justice'. Keeping these points in mind, we propose to further explore the possibility of underscoring a new paradigm of 'historical *itihāsa*' that would integrate *actual* historicity into its narrative. This is required because theories of history are classically founded on

the premise of hopping from 'tragic to tragic', drawing strength from a Greco-European exploration into the forms of the tragic. In contrast, theories of *itihāsa* are founded on a search trajectory for 'contentment' where the 'tragic' only occasions a commencement of the trajectory, based, as they are, on the Indian quest to explore the forms of contentment. Nothing that may be vital to the enterprise of *itihāsa* will be lost if the tragic is grounded in actual history without compromising on *itihāsa's* accent towards contentment.

Let us see how this discord is ingrained in grossly inadequate interpretations of Indian accounts of the past and the ambivalent nature of historical objects.

Discord between History and Itihasa:

Open problem of Trans-Historic Content of History

Traditionally, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* are known as *itihāsa*. They are also widely believed to be authoritative,¹ though in the modernist rendering they are considered to be no more than epic stories. Judging the proclivity to take the epics and legends from the past as sources of Indian history, German historicist philosophers have theorized on the 'ahistoricity' of the Indian mind and culture.² Similarly, professional historians too have been uncomfortable in associating traditional *itihāsa* with the modern enterprise of history. In the modernists' sensibility,³ the materials that traditionally constitute *itihāsa* may surely be valuable fodder for historical analysis; but those materials would not be valid for proper 'history' since they constitute a kind of 'evidence' that is considered lacking in 'scientific' adequacy.⁴

In fact, the nature of evidence is so grounded in historical narrative that evidence *per se* tends to severely *under-determine* the latter.⁵ The content of any historical narrative, even one that is modern, is substantially more than that warranted by the facts that may be lodged in the related evidence. It may also be stressed that a historical narrative crucially, analytically and independently hangs on the somewhat elusive belief in the 'invariance' of 'human significance'.⁶ On its own, such narrative constitutionally presumes a certain *constancy of human significance*, a constancy that is shared by historians, historical personages and the consumers of history. Otherwise, the very possibility of meaningful historical narrative will not obtain. This constancy has to be *invariant* to endow such narratives with 'objective immutability' or 'emancipate it from

subjective relativity'. In the situation, it seems ironical that a historical narrative necessarily requires it to be based on some trans-historical foundation. Meaningful access to times bygone requires trans-temporal invariance apart from the evidence about the reality of those times. *Historical thinking thus moves on two legs – empirical content and trans-historic content.* And, to be able to stand on both legs, it has to search for some immutable ground. But this ground continues to remain elusive. In sum, therefore, a resolution of contentious conjugation of the enterprise of history and of *itiḥāsa* remains clouded due to ambiguities regarding the nature and form of trans-historic content.

*Ahistoricity at the Foundation of Historical Thinking:
Some Modern Indian Propositions*

Both analytically and philosophically, the foundation of trans-historic content is a more challenging problem than that of finding a secure grounding for empirical content.⁷ Any theory of history proposes and rationalizes trans-historic invariance, one way or the other. Several contending theories have been proposed since the rise of historicism in the West.⁸ The Hegelian Sphinx rises from the animal to the human to soar as a 'free spirit' through an invariant autology of dialectics between thesis and antithesis. The Marxian commune works out its checkered way through an invariance of materialist dialectics of exploitation, from the state of primitive communism to the state of ultimate communism. Discarding dynamic⁹ invariance of 'historical motion', a kinetic outlook locates the invariance in one or the other version of 'human nature'¹⁰, 'ultimate *telos*'¹¹ or 'ultimate reality' that plays itself in and through time. *Paradoxically, in all these formulations, ahistoricity seems to be at work at the very foundation of historical thinking.*

Emboldened by the analytic need for an ahistorical foundation of history, a modern Indian philosopher emphatically states that – "The general Indian view, then, is that history is but metaphysics translated into the language of time."¹² The modern enterprise of evidence-centric history is to be harnessed in the service of invariant metaphysics whose emanation it is fated to be. Another Indian historian has similarly proposed that – "The task of history is to emanate values that stem from the perennial."¹³ So, the challenge in the modern enterprise of evidential history is to recollect the perennially cohesive highpoints of cultural assent over time. An

Indian philosopher-statesman¹⁴ similarly maintained that:

India has adored and idealized, not soldiers and statesmen, not men of science and leaders of industry, not even poets and philosophers, who influenced the world by their deeds or by their words but those rarer and more chastened spirits whose greatness lies in *what they are* not in *what they do* (italics mine); men who have stamped infinity on the thoughts and life of the country, men who have added to the invisible forces of goodness in the world.

In the true spirit of changing the world rather than interpreting it, he thus declares – “Meaning of history is to make all men prophets, to establish a kingdom of free spirits.” These claims are modern and perhaps echo certain strands in the modernization of traditional Indian philosophies if not the Indian traditions of accounting for the past. However, proposals of *timeless metaphysics* or of the *perennial presence* or of *ahistorical value* have to be thematized, analysed and critically evaluated in terms of their power to yield a well-founded enterprise of history. In particular, this will require an evaluation of the manner in which conceptions of the timeless are related to the temporal?

Relation between the Perennial and the Temporal

In Indian philosophical traditions, the posited *relation between the perennial and the temporal* has been segregated into two groups of doctrines – (i) *vivartavāda* (emanationism), asserting that the temporal perpetually emanates from the perennial, and (ii) *pariṇāmavāda* (evolutionism), asserting that the temporal evolves in spite of the perennial. These are the two broad clusters of causal doctrines. In the first proposition, temporal sequence has no autonomy; at every point its relation with the perennial overdetermines it. Autonomous temporal sequentiality in the second proposition is linked to the perennial by upholding a *deferred unity* of seed in the beginning and fruit in the end.¹⁵ However, the state of beginning and the state of end are not identical in spite of their being the same ontologically.¹⁶ Yet, in both the propositions, there is a motion from *bandhāvasthā* (bonded state) to *mokṣāvasthā* (liberated state). It is a disputed matter in the two approaches whether this motion is of the nature of *cleaning* (of *being*) or of the nature of *constructing* (for *being*), respectively. It is the second approach that *prima facie* seems to match well in accounting for the *temporal necessity*. For, in the first approach the relation between a temporal entity and yet another temporal entity is accidental and is mediated

by the necessary relation that each temporal entity independently has with the perennial. Since any proposal for trans-historic invariance must account for temporal necessity, which history deals with, it is one or the other version of *pariṇāmavāda* (evolutionism) that *aitihya* is likely to be founded on. It may be noted that for *pariṇāmavāda* the perennial is necessarily plural whereas for *vivartavāda* the perennial is necessarily singular.

It is disheartening to note that the major modern Indian stances on ahistoricity, mentioned in the last section, draw from *vivartavāda* rather than from *pariṇāmavāda*. They strangely feel no burden to account for temporal necessity. Philosophical discourses apart, the pertinent issue is of the manner in which traditional Indian accounts of the past handled the relation between the temporal and the perennial.

Aitihya and Trans-Historic Invariance

Traditionally in India, there is a fairly rich, indigenous corpus of literature giving accounts of the past. This consists of *gāthā* (songs of achievements), *nārāśaṃsī* (praiseworthy deeds of men), *ākhyāna* (legends), *itihāsa* (grand epics), *purāṇa* (ancient lore), *vaṃśa* (moral genealogies) and *carita* (exemplary biographies) all of which render accounts of the past. We can collectively and paradigmatically refer to them as *itihāsa* or *aitihya*. We have to look for exactly what is there in this corpus in terms of the 'ahistorical' foundation of the indigenous enterprise of *itihāsa*?

In this respect, we do have some highly thoughtful and theoretically stimulating analyses of classical Indian approaches to account for the past in terms of discovering, and underscoring a *universal structure of historical narrative*.¹⁷ Pathak (1976) thus critiques different classes of the *itihāsa* corpus with the help of the classical conceptual apparatus of *nāṭya* (dramaturgy) and *kāvya śāstra* (poetics) and thereby unfolds the structure and nature of the *itihāsa* narrative. We may briefly explain this structure and the dynamics of its operation. The sequence in the framework begins with the *bīja* (seed) and ends into the *kārya* (achievement) that follows from it, thus representing a seed-to-fruit series which may be temporally spaced out or deferred if the seed got soiled with some human activity or the other. Between *bīja* and the *kārya* are embedded the three stages, namely *bindu* (expansion of seed through the world) along with *yatna* (effort), *patākā* (playing of assorted sub-episodes

implicating a variety of connected issues) with the hope of achieving the end (*prāptyāśā*) and *prakarī* (various clinching deeds and happenings) that establishes certainty of achievement (*niyatāpti*) which together inexorably and automatically lead to the last state of *kārya* (achievement), the final fruition (*phalāgama*) that inherently lay in the seed. Narration is meant to account for the 'fruition of seed' that is resisted thoroughly by the external forces but finally it is resolved despite that resistance. This five-fold structure is theorized in classical dramaturgy¹⁸ but it seems equally pertinent as a tool in historical interpretation as it analytically represents a potentially critical and significant method of approach. If such a structure and approach were applied to the vast variety of the *itihāsa* corpus¹⁹ it could engender invariant formal insights of great promise.

The *Mahābhārata* can also be analysed in terms of the amalgamation of a large number of 'seed-to-fruition' cyclic episodes. These episodes get stitched together because they are fraught with morally pregnant actions. Each such action unleashes another 'seed-to-fruition' episode. The sequence of such actions is linked to the grand overarching seed-to-fruition saga of the *Mahābhārata*. A seed-to-fruition structure admits of its embedding within itself and thus it is formally recursive as well as sequential. It seems that the *Mahābhārata* is an epic precisely because every seed-to-fruition cycle implicated in the sequence of morally pregnant actions is embedded in it even as it is also brought to conclusion. In a strict sense though, this would not be the case, since the *Mahābhārata* would then itself become a complete human universe. In that eventuality, there would remain few open cycles that would not be brought to a conclusion and would therefore be open to different critiques in different ages with different conclusions.²⁰ So, the structure of the *Mahābhārata's* narrative rests on accounting for the nest of actions that are impregnated with moral problems. Only that in this great work, the accounting is done in such a way that moral problems not only get articulated but they also get resolved in the labyrinth of the world. The *Mahābhārata* thus emerges as a time-tested grand exemplar of *itihāsa*.

Trans-historic invariance as instantiated in *itihāsa* can be explained more in terms of the *form of narrative* than in terms of any substantive or essential content, which may be extensively varied. It will indeed be futile to demonstrate that a *timeless metaphysics* or a *perennial presence* would constitute an ahistorical content of the corpus of *itihāsa*. Instead, it may be asserted that only a contentless form of

narrative can account for trans-historic invariance as well as temporal necessity. Form is vacuous and carries no ontological burden that may impel us towards the formulation of trans-historic invariance permeated with content.

Universality and Formal Grounding of the Structural Invariance

There is a deeper *formal rationale* for this structural form, which we shall digress into to impress upon the generalized underpinnings of *itihāsa* narrative. This structure has several powerful formal features: universality; necessity; closure, and recursivity.

The *universality* of the seed-to-fruit structure rests on the temporal passage from problems to solution in a manner that resolution is implicit in the impregnated seed itself. If we recast that structure in general terms as consisting of (i) the impregnated seed; (ii) difficulties in its sprouting; (iii) intricacies in its nourishment; (iv) surprises in its maturing, and; (v) eventual fruition, it sounds like a universal structure fit to underlie any saga of human affairs except that of a tragedy.²¹ The form of a seed can take a variety of content. There can be a moral dilemma in the seed that is resolved in the conclusion. There can be a resolve in the seed that is achieved in the end. There can be a contradiction in the seed that is transcended on fruition. There can be an element of the tragic in the seed that is brought to an amicable adjudication.

The formal *necessity* implicit in this structure can be witnessed in the feature that *disables* the impregnated seed to break into a ready resolution just by itself. If this were so, there would be no reason for discord to be there in the first place. For, it will be resolved at its birth instantaneously. In essence, discord implicates the rest of the world in an attempt to resolve itself. This necessity is important and is an intrinsic reason for temporal deferment or temporal passage in the fruition of seed.²² It is the external world that endows the form with the temporal necessity witnessed in a passage from the second to fourth stage. In fact, the narrative called propaganda is precisely of the type where, from the discordant seed, there is a straight jump to its resolution, without letting the seed to be polluted by the external world or getting it tested in the complexity of the outlying world.²³ Thus, *itihāsa* as a narrative would be fundamentally different from propaganda precisely because there can be no movement from seed if it is not enwrapped by pushes and pulls that lie in the world external to it.

Itihāsa also has a *closure* in terms of the eventual resolution of

the situation from which the narrative originated. This closure is important; otherwise the narrative will be merely in a perpetual motion from one discord to another. Such a narrative would have an *ad hoc* end. Without closure the infinity of discords would perpetually populate the world without a hope of resolution. The tragic would be the deepest signature of man. The account of past would then be a motion from one tragic situation to another. Thus, *itihāsa* not only presumes a movement external to the discordant origin of narrative, it also posits the closure of discord at the end of narrative. There is an internal order in the structure that stems from (i) the externality of the world *vis-é-vis* the seed-discord, and (ii) the confidence that any discord is inherently resolvable.

The actuality of human actions is rendered so not only in the impregnated conceptualization of the seed and its fruition but also in various episodic insetting that go into making of a passage. These insettings have the same structural form as would be implicit in the entire narrative. The form of the structure of narrative is *recursively* embedded within itself to create its passage. The internal sequentiality that may be necessary in a passage terminates the possibility of infinity recursive embedding as well as it allows the picking up of definite number of relevant episodes for a narrative. Thus, *temporal necessity* in the structure ensures the finite *embedding* of structure within itself and the *closure* ensures the eventual termination that was implicated and sought after from the beginning of narrative.

Itihāsa is thus a temporally discriminated stitching of events and episodes collected or construed to demonstrate the fruition of the re-recognized seed. Recognition of seed is at once old and contemporaneous. This gives immutable trans-temporal universality to the structure of narrative. Such seed-to-fruition passages discovered or invented in the past continue to inform us about the nature of present situation as well. Thus is constituted the ahistoricity of narrative that provides trans-temporal foundation to a narrative. The *resolvability of morally impregnated seeds is of trans-historical interest of man*. The past is not significant if morally impregnated seeds cannot be recognized in it.

Dukkha Nivṛtti and Variety in Contents of the Invariant Form

At the highest level of generality, the world is a passage from the beginning-less (*anādīva*) situation to the state of definite end (*sānta*). Classically, this passage is traced from *anadi dukkha* (beginning-

less suffering) to *dukkha nivṛtti* (freedom from suffering) by all the *darśana*-s.²⁴ This summary of the world is most pristine exemplar of the form of narrative. Like geometric fractals, it is the same global form that is found in various localities, both spatial and temporal, of the variegated realm of life. Any situation of *dukkha* is the content that initiates the instantiation of the form. The hauling of *dukkha* to its dissolution/resolution is the content of this vacuous form that underlies the passage from discontent to contentment.

A greater appreciation of the power and content of the seed-to-fruit form calls for a research design involving an assortment of classical Indian theories.²⁵ For, this form can be found in them instantiated in an astoundingly wide variety of ways. Even in the Indian mathematical traditions this structure is fruitfully employed.²⁶ The difference between application of the form in literary/*itihāsa* narrative and in mathematics lies only in terms of the domain where a discontented seed is planted. In the *itihāsa* narrative the seed is planted in an open domain of human activity, whereas in mathematics it is planted in restricted domain of numbers. Of course the content of seed in the two differs significantly. In *itihāsa* it has a content of moral dilemma and in mathematics it has a content of an indeterminate value or a variable. The invariant nature of the seed-to-fruit series, however, remains the same in both the domains in spite of a radical difference in their contents. Though this versatile form can harbor a variety of content, the question remains whether it can inform historically actual content as well.

Historic Factuality versus Dramatic Idealization in the Contents of Aitihya Form

When we shift our attention from the form to its content, one pertinent problem faced is regarding the distinction between imaginary (ideal) and real (actual) content. This draws us towards an ontology of content. We were able to avoid ontological issues by determining trans-historical invariance in formal terms. However, ontological issues surface when our attention shifts to contents of the form. But in the process we have gained one clear and substantive advantage – ontological issues will now get raised within the temporal realm. It is in instantiation of form that content becomes an issue. Its instantiation in *itihāsa* is clear but its instantiation in history is fraught with problems. However, we shall now invert our strategy to crack our original problem of discord between *itihāsa* and history. We

shall approach *itihāsa* through examination of the enterprise of history and tie up the two together in the end.

In the passage of the *itihāsa* narrative, the *distinction between historical factuality and dramatic idealization gets blurred*. Even if the trans-historic invariance of the narrative form is accepted, the *itihāsa* narrative seems closer in spirit to fiction rather than being sensitive to historical actuality. This issue forms the crux of the discord between the enterprise of history and the enterprise of *itihāsa*. It is said that fiction is a window to sublime reality, nonetheless, the historically actual has to be authentically accounted for in a narrative about the past. Is there an irretrievable chasm between the content of history and the content of *itihāsa*? Is it possible to conceive a ground on which the historical 'actual' and dramatic 'ideal' lie in a continuum that stretches from material reality to mental reality? If not, then, the exact partition of the diverging content of history and that of *itihāsa* will have to be articulated to understand the nature of discord between them.

It is here that we turn towards the inquiry and analysis of the nature of the historical object. Through the analysis of the objects of history we shall pave the way for an examination of the possibility of co-locating the content of *itihāsa* with historical actuality. The blurring of the boundary between dramatic idealization and historical actuality has to do with the issue of 'significance' in accounting for past actions. To meaningfully situate the issue of significance, ontology of content will have to be first sorted out.

Ontology of Historical Content

If a question were asked as to how 'history' as a modern discipline is different from other areas of human inquiry, an answer would require a clear delineation of objects peculiar to 'history'. Modern historical thinking rests on the conceptions of two complex objects inertly unique to the discipline – (i) *historical fact*, and (ii) *historical inevitability*. Apart from these distinct and characteristic objects of history, the enterprise of modern history claims to draw its strength from its disciplinary grounding on 'historical evidence'. However, the concept of 'historical evidence' is dependent, directly or indirectly, upon the kinds of objects that peculiarly characterize history. Ontological decomposition of these complex objects will reveal the furtive nature of historical thinking. That would give us a clue as to how historical content can get meaningfully associated with the enterprise of *itihāsa*.

Objects of the first class, namely, historical fact, are decomposable into *material entities that have a date-indexed human signature*, like an old artifact or an old record (an inscription or even redacted texts). Date sensitive ensemble of such entities constitutes a historical fact. Pursuits of such date-indexed entities lead to discoveries like that of Harappa, which was not part of the living memory of civilizations. Thus, there can be *new* historical facts. We can call the 'primitives' of this class as *indexical objects* of history. New historical facts may emerge in other ways too. Developments in science do periodically yield new dating techniques to investigate and to even invent such an entity for history that eventually go into making a historical fact. For instance, emerging genome research is perhaps on its way to bring in factual surprises for history through genetic archaeometric research in the years to come. Even gene will go into constituting historical facts.

There are two sub-types of indexical objects – (i) with the primacy of material content (like an artifact or even gene), and (ii) with the primacy of signate content (like a text). Indexing of the first kind borrows its methodology from science whereas indexing of second kind borrows its methodology from literary criticism (like in segregating layers of text and in cross-identifying personage or events recorded in different texts). Modern historical thinking involves a variety of entities and events, all anchored in an ensemble of date-indexed objects. Only such an anchorage endows the enterprise of history with critical verifiability. Typically, embodied personages (such as kings and other historical figures), cities, ruins, deeds extracted from texts, etc. go into the construction of historical facts.

The objects of the second class, namely, historical inevitability, are conceived as a kind of 'force' disclosing what is fated. Nation, class, race, etc. are such objects embodying historical fate or inevitability. Events in the past are seen as expressing the sub-text of such a force embodying historical necessity. 'Force-objects' actively persist over time; they have temporal extension unlike the point-like indexical objects. We shall call the 'primitives' of this class as *vital objects* of history.

Open-ended empirical history (insistently based on indexical objects) apart, it is the theory of historical forces that constitutes the foundations of modern historical thinking, explanation and causation. Indexical objects are only fodder for sorting, arranging and cross-verifying claims issuing from vital objects. They are involved in accounting for or anchoring of vital objects. The theory of history

essentially deals with historical inevitability constituted by objects such as nation, class, race, clan, office, state, gods, seers, ancestors, family, personality, character, teacher, duty, deed, etc. *Historical fact is involved only in the evidential underpinnings of the theory of vital objects of history.* It is important to deconstruct the nature of 'historical force', especially since extreme and injurious polity has been erected on certain conceptions of historical force or vitality in history.

The objects peculiar to history as a discipline are constructed from two elementary types of objects:

1. *Indexical objects*: They are invariably *material entities* that can be spatio-temporally indexed.²⁷ This includes embodied-self apart from inanimate matter. These are point-like objects that ride on date stratification schema, which in turn are ontologically anchored on spatio-temporal materiality. Not all indexical objects, relevant to history, are available today. Thus, there is always scope for the discovery of such objects.
2. *Vital objects*: They are invariably *mental entities* that not only endure beyond material changes (like aging or death of a living body or even eras) but also embed signature on matter to create 'signate matter' which can be date-indexed. However, 'signate matter' always underdetermines vital historical objects, because signate matter is only its point-like product that time oversteps even as vital objects continue to persist. Vital objects have recursion and reiteration capability unlike date-indexed objects. *All vital objects, by their nature, are accessible today, some in active state and other in dormant state.*

Problem of Significance in History

Not all of the material entities are historically significant. Similarly, not all the mental entities are significant for the enterprise of history. Material and mental entities that go in constituting historical fact or historical inevitability are gathered in a historical narrative on the basis of their significance. *The question that what goes in the construction of historical significance is a central one, in this connection.* Material significance and mental significance are two differential aspects of historical significance. Material significance may be important for the evidential bearing of history but mental significance is important for historical causation and vitality. And, mental significance is most difficult to unravel. Vital objects are erected on the basis of mental significance.

Since vital objects can be freely reiterated, all vital objects, in a sense, are contemporary. It is interesting to note that although indexical as well as vital objects belong to the temporal realm, vital objects are significantly contemporary. The core of the problem of significance lies in the *being* of vital objects.

Armed with a brief analysis of the ontology of objects we can now proceed to define the enterprise of history. As an analytic enterprise, history can be defined as – *temporally-discriminated significant-account of past human-activity*. There are three elements in the definition –

1. *Temporal discrimination*: It is the material entities alone that yield to spatio-temporal characterization and differentiation. By itself material characteristics can only be a partial content of any historical object since material entity has to await interpretation of human touch that piggy-rides on it. However, human signatures on material entities can, by implication, be temporally discriminated precisely because of the underlying materiality of such objects. Temporal discrimination through depth of deposition, carbon dating, etc. helps the date-indexed material entities in which human signature is bound or encapsulated. Correlative indexing on calendar/clock time can only work for material entities including the embodied mind. Human touch as such does not yield itself to a calendar-like temporal discrimination. However, there is another form of temporal discrimination based on the internal order of mental entities. For example, we may refer here to temporal discrimination that is ascertained through the analysis of layers or references in texts²⁸ or, more truly to temporal discrimination of un-indexed deeds that gets imputed for the sake of narration. Discrimination of mental entities is a kind of non-indexical discrimination. Historical thinking insists that mental entities should also be anchored on indexical discrimination. However, in a narrative, dramatization necessarily involves non-indexical temporal discrimination as in *itihāsa*. Such dramatization is related to the open problem of historical 'significance'. Absolute temporal discrimination of material as well as relative (or mutual) temporal discrimination of mental entities is possible. Material entities have an additional content of spatial or locational discrimination that endows them with firmness and temporal absoluteness. Temporal discrimination of mental entities is an open-ended problem that is directly related to the question of historical significance.

2. *Significant Account*: Signs and language are means of historical account. Possibility of an account of temporally spread out events presumes one or the other trans-temporal stance. A certain constancy of human constitution and resources is involved in making a historical account possible. Such an invariance of human-ness allows the historian to impersonate, analyse and portray happenings in the past and to construct consistent account that is understandable today. It is for this reason that we do not have in any normal sense a 'history of cats' since the invariance of human-ness does not obtain here which leads to the loss of access to cat's mental entities.²⁹ There is stability of human nature through all periods and regions of which we may have knowledge. Man with his reason and passion, virtue and vices, suffering and ecstasy, has remained more or less the same. There simply is no history of the mental capacities of man, though there have been conjectural attempts at its pre-history. There can be descriptive account of indexical objects as in empirical history. But it is vital objects that yield a significant account with live moral content of relevance to the present. It is, thus, often said that 'all history is contemporary history'. Abstraction of historic significance that has contemporary relevance is still an open question. In *itihāsa*, significant account simply overlooks indexicality.
3. *Human activity*: Human action is a universal anchor for history. However, the nature of human activity that would have historical significance is far from clear. The key question is whether one can identify historically significant activity from the infinite details of human activity. A historical account fundamentally presumes such a reduction or summation. Which account of human activity becomes historically relevant? In the next section of the essay we make an analysis of this reduction or summation, for, in the absence of a theory of such reduction, history will remain just an *ad hoc* discipline.

In the definition of history, all the three elements, mentioned above, have open-ended problems that are related to what goes in the construction of *historical-cum-contemporary significance*. Temporal discrimination of mental entities, choice of significance in narrative account, and definitive reduction or summation of human activity, these are all related to man's ahistorical access to the past while accounting for past. This access has so far been traced to (i) trans-temporal formal invariance, and (ii) temporal content as vital objects.

The key to these problems is in the *nature of summation of activity* that man constantly engages in. For, it is in this summation that construction of vital objects and instantiation of universal form can both be understood.

Nature of Significance: Summation of Human Action

Any human action, even the simplest of actions like the 'lifting of a finger', implicates trillions of actions at the molecular and atomic level. If one goes to the sub-atomic level, numbers of these actions go up to mind boggling figures. In fact, infinitely large or indefinite numbers of actions go in constituting even a simple motion of a finger. The brevity inducing cognitive and linguistic capacity of man renders such infinitude into a definite summary of actions in the form of a simple cognition or in the form of a sentence. "Lifting of a finger" is such a simple sentence and is based on a straight uncomplicated cognition about an action. If there were no summarization of action, a single cognition will be clogged with an infinitude of actions or a simple sentence will have an infinitude of verbs. How does summarization of action in cognition and language occur? This is the lowest level of signification that happens. *Coalescing of actions in aggregated simple 'action' and its rendering with simple verbs* are the real phenomena that terminates indefiniteness into definite significance: This is a *natural* summarization that we witness in everyday cognition and language. Indefinite particularity of micro actions gets simplified and signified in determinate and definite cognition and language.

Physical actions are infinitely dense so long as substances remain decomposable into the indefinitely minutest of physical parts. Even if there are indivisible and finite active components, it is only the assorted 'whole'³⁰ on which unison of action can be located. Such a 'whole' survives through the action that gets located into it and remains equipped for harboring another action. The minute actions of parts can coalesce only because of the reality of the 'whole'. Such a 'whole' gets cognized with minute actions of its parts aggregated into the action of a 'whole'. There is thus a summation of the actions of a part into an action of a physical 'whole'. Such 'wholes' are ontologically real entities and are more than aggregates of parts. It is only if their reality is accepted that the indefinite actions of parts can be conceived as the simple action of a 'whole'. The reality of the 'whole' makes significance and summation of actions

possible.³¹ However, macro components of the wholes can have independent inherence of actions. Such will be the case when the arm or tongue moves without a moving of the whole body. The cognitive faculty of man is such that these summations of micro actions in wholes or their macro components are readily cognized as simple aggregated actions. In the Vaiṣeṣika philosophical vision, the mechanics of such 'whole' based summation of actions has been worked out in unambiguous details.³² Such significant action is cognized and can get articulated in language too.

The rendering of actions in language is obtained in terms of verbs. A particular actional behavior can be rendered with the help of a variety of verbs. For instance, while I *type*, I *move* fingers, I *hit* the keyboard, I *touch* the keys, I *enter* the characters, I *insert* letters, I *delete* letters, I *compose* words/phrases and so on. One action, which is ontologically a simple and particular action, can get rendered in a language by using many verbs. Such linguistic fecundity³³ spreads out, swells and fractures a simple ontic unity of action. Same action is more than often read in a variety of ways with the help of many verbs. Moreover, a particular action in a particular verb form also can get variedly paraphrased in language, thanks to the help lent by a variety of nominal determinants of action. The rendering of an action with the use of a particular verb can be done in several ways by using different nominal relations. The simplicity of an ontological summation of action is lost in its accounting through language. In the Mīmāṃsā philosophical vision this language-specific phenomenon of de-centering and fracturing ontic action is reclaimed at another level of summation. This doctrine of summation and significance is known as *arthavāda*.³⁴ And it deals specifically with human actions.

When it comes to reading human action, the issues are much more complex compared to the readings of physical action. The unit of human action not only involves a physical aspect but also mental effort and the intended purpose. The unit of the 'purposive action' of humans is 'deed' or *karma*. Human action has a structure that involves a purposive end and an initiating effort besides the in-between motor activities. Behind the action initiating effort is a disquiet that is supposedly resolved by the accomplishment of action. The beginning and the end of human action are mental constructions though their passage is physical. The human being is not a simple physical whole but is a *tied up* composite of self and body. The deed as a unit embodies that tie-up. Thus, human activities are read,

evaluated and reinterpreted in the units of deeds. A reading of each other's deeds is a pet and compulsive engagement of man. *It is deed that is a most primitive of vital object in the sense that other vital objects can be composed out of them.*

The deed is simpler than the fertile language used for rendering it. The deed is even simpler than cognized activities because a single deed may involve a series of actions. A summation of human action from its serially cognized actional components is done in deed. A deed also represents the summation of cognized human actions on the basis of its rendering in language. Humans perform deeds and humans read deed. A deed is a signified unit of human actions spreading over a variety of motor activities, including speech and their corresponding mental content. A unit of a deed has a structure of intention-action-fruit. The reading of a deed summarizes human activity the way that a reading of action summarizes physical processes. Deed is a second level of natural construction of significance. The first level of natural construction of significance lies in action. Actions are read in physical wholes and in the motor activity of humans but deeds are read only in human activity (or even in the activity of other living beings). Actions are found only in physical 'wholes' including the human body whereas deeds are found in non-whole composite, the human being, which is 'body tied up or bound with conscious self'.

Human deeds often clash and create disquiet or discord. A significant volume of such clashes is witnessed in the community of humans who are engaged in reading about each other's deeds. Such a fractured universe of deeds creates a spread that calls for another level of summation or construction of significance. This summation is reckoned in terms of 'judicious deed' that resolves discord between different deeds. We prefer to call 'judicious deed' by another term 'feat' or *vidhi*. Feat has the same structure as deed, except that the physical aspect of motor activity in a deed is reduced to a mere remediation of injunctive content. When deeds clash, the resolving 'judicious deed' takes the disquiet between deeds as its initiating effort and formulates a judicious resolution as its end. The summation into a feat is an active summation based on the possibility of adjudicating discord among deeds. This summation is implicit in injunctive content because deeds do in fact coalesce around injunctive force points. Deeds are repeatable. Deeds can be reiterated. Discord of deeds also gets recreated. So also the judicious deeds get repeated, reiterated and recreated except that judicious deeds represent a dead

end, which requires no further summarization. Construction of significance automatically comes to a halt there. Feat is an embodiment of closure. And there are good reasons to believe, in accordance with the Mīmāṃsā tradition, that such feats are plural.

We have, through the analysis of human action, shown that three natural reductions are involved before human action acquires historical significance for narration –

1. First reduction of infinitely dense material action to pronounceable linguistic summation of action.
2. Second reduction of prosperous linguistic summation of human actions to deed-centric summation.
3. Third reduction of discord in human deeds to resolution in judicious deeds or feats.

Constitution of Vital Objects: Natural Phenomena of Temporal Indiscrimination

There is another aspect to the second reduction that needs to be stressed here. Deed-centric summation of human activity, when accounted, involves trans-temporal readability and repeatability of deeds. Thus, we land up with yet another paradoxical situation, which makes strict temporal discrimination of past deeds unfeasible. If an account of the past is indeed an account of human deeds, the temporal discrimination of deeds will get compromised because there is a natural phenomena of temporal indiscrimination that is operative in the continuum from deeds to feats.

Indian theoretical traditions addressed this paradox by positing stratification, function and ontology of past human deeds. The distinction between judicious deeds and injurious deeds, as pointed out earlier, is fundamental to this onto-typology. The distinction between the material body and the body of deeds is also fundamental to this ontology. This is an interesting idea of *dvija* (dual birth) that is involved here. A living person in the course of life performs many actions, which get summarized in deeds and feats. This summary happens in an ontologically real locus, which is different from the real locus of that living person. This is a vital locus. This locus is accessible to the minds of the person who know of the deeds of this person. Knowledge regarding deeds of that living person is derived from this vital locus, which is a cluster of his/her deeds, even if that person is not perceptually present. Even when that person dies, this vital locus stays as his/her deeds and can still be recalled. Thus,

every person has two births, one is a physical birth and the other is when that person initiates performance of morally relevant deeds. When a child grows up fully, to act on his/her own, he/she takes this second birth as well. The body of second birth grows with the performance of deeds by the living person, but it survives even after his/her physical body dies. The second body is a cluster of deeds summarized using natural reductions. Natural reductions provide the physiology of this new vital locus. The fact that we can recall a dead person is an evidence of the being of the vital birth of that person.

Traditionally the vital locus of this second birth is called *pitr yoni* (ancestral womb). There exists a realm of such vital loci accessible to humans. This realm is populated with all possible vital objects, which get born in this realm. These vital objects become dormant or active in different minds at different times. But they never disappear. They do, however, coalesce among each other. This realm is accessible through the instrument of memory. The second birth is the lowest level of this realm. Second-birth loci can coalesce into other such loci whose feats include their deeds. These constitute a second level of vital objects and are classically known as *ṛṣi yoni* (prophet womb). Persons who have performed 'judicious deeds' have a second-birth in the *ṛṣi yoni*. An exemplary personage can coalesce many lives. Seers, prophets, theorists, teachers, etc. have such birth as well. There is a third level of vital objects that are created by the collective deeds of many people. These are objects like nation, class, family, etc. The loci of this third class are classically called *deva yoni* (god womb). Reborn loci of deeds coalesce and split in three-fold ways, populating the universe of deeds and creating three classes of vital objects.

This disembodied realm of deeds and feats has injunctive content that is operative in living persons today. This realm has its own dynamics of coalescing and partitioning of cluster of deeds and thus it forms a continuum with life of its own. The ontological stance regarding this realm can be referred to as injunctive realism. Vital objects are constituted, decomposed, reconfigured and invented in this realm. This realm is a reality and it represents the structure of the reduced/summarized memory of humanity even as it constitutes a fodder for the construction of historical significance. This is prime stuff for *itihāsa* that is ever reconstituting itself not on the basis of temporal discrimination but on the basis of *adhikāra bheda* (dominion discrimination). We shall not go into the principle of *adhikāra bheda*

here, though it is of utmost importance for the subject. Dominion discrimination becomes a principle because of the natural phenomena of temporal indiscrimination that we witness in the continuum of deeds and feats of past.

Recollecting Justice versus Recollecting Injustice

It is the second and the third reductions that constitute the baseline of significance in accounting for the human past. The first reduction allows for a pure descriptive rendering in language. Even the second reduction allows for a pure descriptive rendering of the past in as much as it allows for a pure descriptive rendering of contemporaneous deeds. Pure descriptive rendering requires an eliminative choice in respect of subject matter, which is perspectival matter and not really matter related to the construction of significance. Ideological or perspectival bearings of choice are external to the natural construction of significance.³⁵ However, injunctive content can be found in the second reduction, which brings in 'prescriptive content' at this level. It is with the third reduction that significance for history or *itihāsa* gets constituted. Failure in the operation of the third reduction leaves us with discordant deeds. Accounting for discordant deeds amounts to recollecting and reading injustice. Success in the operation and recognition of the third reduction leads to accounting for feats. Accounting for feats amounts to recollecting and reading justice. Usually, history, if not limited to pure description, is a narrative of recollecting injustice, whereas *itihāsa* is a narrative of recollecting justice. A moral burden is involved in a feat but not necessarily so in a simple deed. From deeds to feat is an injunctive continuum and in their recollection and operation is situated the enterprise of history and of *itihāsa*.

However, the apexes of feats are such that even temporal discrimination found in the continuum of deeds disappears, not to speak of spatio-temporal discrimination of physical actions. Feats are radically contemporary; they do not admit temporal indexicality at all. Temporality halts at their doorstep even if they are found instantiated in the memory of the past. For this reason, the Mīmāṃsā tradition characterizes them as 'independent of human situations' (*apauruṣeya*) and uncreated (*anādi*). Deeds are created and as such can be temporally indexed, if not spatio-temporally indexed like physical actions. Justice as such cannot be temporally discriminated whereas injustice seen in discordant deeds can be temporally

discriminated. As can be seen in an ordinary human situation, the acts of justice are not recalled but those of injustice are rapidly recalled. Acts of justice seems to radically coalesce onto each other, leaving no individuated material signature or temporal record. Acts of injustice on the other hand get frozen in the event itself till justice dissolves it. Thus, by the nature of historical enterprise, the *history of justice is the impossibility*. This is a strong limitation that lies at the heart of the very paradigm of history, which insists that indexicality cannot be abandoned. There can be a history of judiciary or a history of institutions of judicial administration but not history or chronicle of justice as such. On the contrary, the history of injustice is what we can readily expect from the enterprise of history. This is because injustice gets frozen into events that can be indexed. The history of injurious deeds is plausible and has been even theorized by Marx with a promise of a just society at the end of history.

But the history of injustice, with an absolute externalization of justice from history, would lead to a fatally incomplete and inaccurate chronicle or account of past. For, acts of justice did take place in the past and they continue to occur today. Only the history of justice, not reality and the actuality of justice is the impossibility. Accounting for justice, thus, should be possible, though it may not be possible within the paradigm of history. A way has to be found to integrate both, accounting for injustice and accounting for justice together. *itihāsa* is an enterprise that precisely does that. In doing so, it has to bank on the invariant form of passage from discontentment to contentment and not on the form of tragedy. In doing so, historical indexicality will have to be necessarily sacrificed. The narrative of *itihāsa*, thus, would resemble literature more.

There is a relational temporal indexicality in the narrative but it is bereft of spatio-temporal indexicality as demanded by the modern enterprise of history. However, *itihāsa* can be historically authentic in the sense that the rendering of injustice in its body (in *bīja*-s of various formal cycles) is regarded and acknowledged as a summary of the real situations in the past. All historically actual and significant discordant situations relatable to the fruition of a seed should be implicated in *itihāsa* for it to become historically authentic. Thus, historical knowledge has a role in the constitution of *itihāsa*. Since all indexical objects are not available at present, there is the active possibility of the discovery of new indexical objects. Historical knowledge prides itself in bringing to light such new indexical objects whose interpretation may lead to the discovery of new historical

fact. If that has any moral implications, there is no reason that the *itihāsa* narrative will not directly benefit from it. The authenticity of *itihāsa* narrative lies in the inclusion of all relevant injunctive and moral situations in its body. A poor the *itihāsa* would be the one in which the embodiment of injunctive and moral content summarized from the past is minimal.

It seems plausible to embed new insights from history within *itihāsa*, not as a contender of injunctive realism on which *itihāsa* is based, but as an augments of the indexical underbelly of injunctive realism, which we know is associated with even physical actions at its base. The discord between the enterprises of history and of *itihāsa* flattens if the proposition about injunctive realism is accepted. A major advantage of injunctive realism is that the construction of signification can be naturally founded and not left to the vagaries of subjectivity or *ad hoc* choices or ideological dispositions. This will have some merit since there is no adequate theory of historical significance in the modern philosophy of history discourse. These possibilities will get teeth only if there is a contemporary creation of 'historical *itihāsa*', otherwise it will remain a conjectural suggestion yet to be tested.

In sum, any attempt to integrate justice and injustice in a chronicle would necessarily lead to the enterprise of *itihāsa*, which is different from the partial enterprise of modern history driven by the partial theories of history promulgated in the last two hundred years. *itihāsa* is *adhikāra bhedī* (dominion discriminating), *ākhyāna* (account) of *manuṣya karma* (human deeds) done in *atīta* (past). In contrast, history is a spatio-temporally discriminated account of human activity done in past.

Conclusion

Kalhaṇa in *Rājataranginī* raises the problematic of '*bhūtārtha kathana*' ('narration of the objects of past'), which has engaged us in this essay. We began with a *bīja*, namely, the problem of contentious conjugation of the enterprise of history and of *itihāsa*. It's resolution was conceived in an option – whether the horizon of the contemporary reality of the past is a tragedy or contentment. Accounting for the past necessarily implicates trans-temporal invariance. Indian traditions of accounting for the past reveal the formal structure of the narrative, which is a plausible candidate for such invariance. Not only that this structure has powerful formal features, which endows it with universality, but also it has the capacity to harbor the contents of the age-old human

quest for contentment as well as discords that fuel the quest for contentment.

Contents of the past are bifurcated in terms of *indexical* and *vital* objects. The most important feature of these objects that have been identified are – (i) All relevant indexical objects are not accessible at present, thus, the discovery of new objects is always possible, and (ii) All vital objects are accessible at present, though there can be a shuffling between their dormant and active role. A major issue here is that no adequate theory of vital objects is readily available. We have proposed the same in terms of the theory of a *natural summation* of actions into the significant objects. The three-tier summation into the reading and doing of *action*, *deed* and *feat* goes into the construction of significant vital objects from the past. These objects populate the form of the narrative in an appropriately rich plot. There is a line of inquiry not pursued here, that I would just mention since I believe it would yield a positive result. And it relates to the hypothesis that it is possible to derive the form of narration from the form of deed. This would bring us to an exact delineation of the laws of metamorphosis that the realm of vital objects undergoes.

In the construction of significance there is a continuum from deeds to feats. The existence of such a continuum from the past amounts to proposing a kind of injunctive realism. At the bottom of this continuum are spatio-temporally indexed actions and at the top are plural feats, which admit of no temporal discrimination, and in the middle are deeds that mediate between the two. A recollection of vital objects from this continuum is a function of these levels. The insistence on indexicality entails a narrative that recollects injustice. Recollection of justice necessarily takes the form of *itihāsa*. The purpose of *itihāsa* is to reconfigure, recast, reorganize, reinvent and resurrect an injunctive continuum. In this sense, *aitihya* is active in ordinary people.

Lastly, we believe, on the strength of the theory of natural summation and injunctive realism, it is possible to conceive 'historical *itihāsa*'. 'Historical *itihāsa*' allows for the possibility of the creation of new *itihāsa*.

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NOTES AND REFERENCE

1. In contemporary Indian society there are numerous *kathā vācaka*-s, who expound and innovate on *itihāsa*. *itihāsa* is popularly recalled in ordinary everyday human interaction and not particularly for religious reasons. Further, no noticeable relevance of historical scholarship can be found in such recollections and their use.
2. Marx even proposed the historyless character of India as its unique reality – “Indian society has no history at all, at least no known history. What we call its history, is but the history of successive intruders who founded their empire on the passive basis of that unresisting and unchanging society.” Quoted by D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956, p. 11. Echoing this feature as a civilizational virtue, Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vols. I-VIII, Almora, Advaita Ashrama, 1968, Vol. V, p.190, exalted the Indian spirit that enabled “to be conquered, and in turn, to conquer her conquerors.”
3. In the modernist perception therefore, *itihāsa* may be embedded in the living memory of people but it is veritably different from ‘the modern enterprise of history’. This being so because it is not infused with critical and autonomous spirit of evidence, which may turn vulnerable and not be able to withstand critical verification. In contrast, historical evidence is believed to be radically independent of legends.
4. The test case of discord between popular opinion and the modernists is on the question whether the *Rāmāyana* is earlier than the *Mahābhārata* or is it the other way round. In contravention of popular belief, modern historians take the *Mahābhārata* to be older. M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature: Introduction, Veda, National Epics, Puranas and Tantras*, Vol.1 Section II, Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1978, p. 416, first raised the dating issue. Kosambi, op. cit., justified it from the perspective of the Marxist theory of history and B.B. Lal attempted to legitimize the same on the basis of archeological research.
5. In recent years, Hayden White (*Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973 and Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987) has forcefully argued that historical narrative constitutes a meaning not reducible to the factual content it engages with. Proposing narrative realism as a deep structure of historical imagination he questions whether non-narrative history is possible at all. Among philosophers Paul Ricoeur (*Time and Narrative*, Vol. 3, translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988, pp. 99-274) develops an analysis along this line.
6. Such invariance can be defined in modal terms as – “necessary unity of

the 'historically significant' with the 'contemporaneously significant' but disunity of any particular 'contemporaneously significant' with some possible 'historically significant'." This entails the existence of the 'contemporaneously significant' without explicitly discerned roots in the 'historically significant'. For, the present is existentially independent of the past.

7. The empirical aspect is well founded in so far as scientific methodologies are rigorously applicable to material objects of history as is the case in archaeology, numismatics and palaeology.
8. The birth of historicism in the West is traced in Friedrich Meinecke, *Historicism: The Rise of the New Historical Outlook*, translated by J.E. Anderson, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972, and its philosophical ramifications are evaluated in John Edward Sullivan, *Prophets of the West: An Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970, and William H. Dray, *On History and Philosophers of History*, Brill Academic Publishers, 1989.
9. *Dynamis* versus *kinesis* has been a contentious philosophical issue in the Greco-European thought right from the antiquity of Greek times. In nineteenth century Europe, the materialist versus idealist outlook in history overshadowed it. However, there can be an idealist dynamical outlook like that of Hegel or there can be a materialist static/kinetic outlook like that of mechanist determinists. Modern historical analogues of the *dynamis* versus *kinesis* can be contrasted as one inclined towards history of 'having' and other inclined towards history of 'being', respectively.
10. R.C. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1946, proposes thinking itself as a real subject matter of history.
11. Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Vols. I-VI, London, Oxford University Press, 1961, proposes that redemptive religion is a real purpose of history.
12. Kalidas Bhattacharya, "The Meaning and Significance of Social Revolution and of the Idea of Progress in Hegelian, Marxian and Indian Philosophies of History", in T.M.P. Mahadevan and Crace E. Cairna, Eds., *Contemporary Indian Philosophers of History*, Calcutta, The World Press Private Ltd., 1977, p. 89.
13. This quote is my rendering of the project of history implicit in Govind Chandra Pande, *Bhartiya Samaj: Tattvik aur Aitihasic Vivechan*, (in Hindi), New Delhi, National Publishing House, 1994.
14. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 35.
15. The invariance of *deferred unity* can be defined in modal terms as – "necessary unity of seed with fruit but disunity of every evident fruit with some possible seed." This entails existence of accidental fruits without known seeds. In other words, this entails evident present that is historically indeterminate; this entails realm of happenings that are not entailed in

- seed but on which effort for fruition of seed is impressed. The deferred unity necessitates temporal spread between seed and fruit; it necessitates invasion of rest of the world in the carrier of seed.
16. Ontological sameness is in terms of same stuff being ultimate constituent elements of both seed and fruit. Ontological identity does not mean identity of the state or mode of reality. The same stuff can undergo change if the reality of structural and modal novelty is accepted. This novelty is responsible for evolution. In fact, two opposed causal doctrines, *satkāryavāda* (old reality comes into being anew) of Sāṃkhya and *ārambhavāda* (fundamentally new reality, such as that of a 'whole', can come into being) of Vaiśeṣika, are both evolutionary.
 17. Vishwambhar Sharan Pathak, *Ancient Historians of India*, Gorakhpur, Purva Prakashan, 1984, in a pioneering work, has historically and historiographically analysed classical Indian accounts of the past in terms of the universal structure of narrative.
 18. Dhanañjaya, *Daśarūpakam with Dhanika's Commentary*, Ed. F.E. Hall, Calcutta, The Asiatic Society, 1989, 1.17.
 19. It is yet to be seen if the same structure obtains in later Indian historical writing like that of Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅginī*. Such an inquiry is interesting because Kalhaṇa outlines the task of history as *bhūtārtha kathana* (narration of the objects of past), which on face value sounds very close to history rather than *itihāsa*.
 20. For instance, story of Ekalavya is of that kind. His teacher asked him to offer his thumb as price for learning archery, fully aware that this would disable his skill forever. This action, done to blatantly favor another pupil Arjuna, is pregnant with a seed of injustice that is not resolved or brought to fruition within the *Mahābhārata*.
 21. In contrast to this structure of quest for contentment, tragedy is a narrative form where conclusion is not a resolution but a moral dilemma. Tragedy ends with a locking of two facets, both of them being right and morally justified, even then one has to suffer condemnation and the other endurance. The Greek tradition developed this form which was resurrected during European enlightenment. In the Indian tradition there is a notable absence of the tragic form of narrative; instead the contentment form of narrative is extensively explored.
 22. However, the way the world comes forth is rather tangential to the seed as can be seen in various strands of *itihāsa* literature. A surprise turn of events occurs when the seed pushes itself for being tested in the world for fruition. It is through the width of tangential events that inching ahead may occur with a hope of resolution. Even mystery is sustained regarding whether the seed will ever reach fruition or resolution. Off the track events may overtake; natural calamities or an unfortunate twist in fate may occur. Events that clinch resolution are required to bring in a closure to the discord-resolution passage. Otherwise, the deferment between seed and fruition will become perpetual.

23. Karl Popper, 1944, *The Poverty of Historicism*, London, Routledge, (2nd. Edition), 1961, had singled out the theories of Plato, Hegel, Marx and Freud precisely on this ground. Their unscientific nature he had traced to paradigmatic deep-seated immunity from eliminative reason or unfalsifiability. A propagandist jump from seed to fruition is unfalsifiable and over-justified if there is no occasion, that too by design, for it to be soiled with the real world that incessantly infuses susceptibility to eliminative reason. Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 2 Vols., London, Routledge, 1945, had generalized this feature as a basic architecture of a totalitarian political outlook.
24. Analysis of the state of *dukkha nivṛtti* varies from one *darśana* to another. It is important to notice that there is basic disputation regarding the nature of end in Indian philosophical thinking. In characterization of beginning-less-ness also there are differences but no disputation as such.
25. Seeding a problem (or resolve) and working out a solution seems to be a universal structure elsewhere too in numerous *prajñāna śāstra*-s (sciences) and *pariṣkāra śāstra*-s (philosophies). Each of them begins by articulating purpose (*uddeśa*) to overcome the specified domain of *dukkha, nivṛtti* from which is worked out using eliminative reason (*tarka*). The passage from the declaration of *uddeśa* (purpose) to the *nirṇaya* (conclusion), is marked by stitching *tattva* with the help of all kinds of *parīkṣā* (examination). In contrast to these *śāstra*-s, *itihāsa* literature seems to stitch together the episodes, which it shares with *kāvya* (poetics). *Itihāsa* differs from *kāvya* in its claim to be historically authentic if not historically actual and which is not entirely imaginary.
26. In Bhāskaračārya's *Bījagaṇita* (lit., mathematics of seed), the central imagery is that of a mathematical 'variable' as seed (*bīja*) and mathematical 'solution' as fruit (*phala*). This text specializes in mathematics using variables, where a solution to the problem is hammered out by determining the value of the variable. Given a mathematical problem – the variable or *bīja* is formulated from the problem. Then, the variable is planted (*bindu*) with some effort (*prayatna*) in the *kṣetra* or domain of numbers to get equations. Various known and secure mathematical operations are then brought in (*patākā*) with the hope of determining the end (*prāptyāśā*). The sequence of mathematical operations is thus brought to a situation where a clinching step (*prakarī*) with certainty of solution is undertaken (*niyatāpti*), and a final solution is achieved by getting the value of the variable and applying it to solve (*phalāgama*) the problem.
27. Idealist philosophers of history do not attach any fundamental significance to indexical objects at all. For instance, Collingwood, op. cit., p. 305, even maintains – "Historical knowledge has for its proper object thought: Not things thought about, but the act of thinking itself."
28. In textual interpretation, there is some degree of spatio-temporal discrimination involved with respect to questions regarding dating.

29. It is possible to have a genotype and phenotype evolutionary story of cats that does not refer to the mind of cat at all. It is also possible to have a history of the domestication of cats on the basis of cat human interaction. It is not possible to have a vital history of cats.
30. In the Vaiśeṣika tradition, the 'whole' is technically defined as the 'last of the part-full' or *antaḥ avayavī*. It is significant that entire universe is not a 'whole' that acts on its own. Otherwise, a summary of all actions will be one action and significant action will be just that one action at a moment.
31. In Vaiśeṣika tradition, the doctrine that 'whole is more than its parts' makes possible such a summation of actions of parts into significant action.
32. In Navjyoti Singh, *Antaḥkaraṇa: Motion of Mind*, Shimla: IAS, forthcoming, 2003, ch. 5, has a formally developed theory of summation of action in physical wholes.
33. The phenomena of coalescing and partitioning of verbs was used by Bhartṛhari to build a strong argument for *śabda brahma* whose *vivarta* or emanation a language is.
34. *Arthavāda* is a Mīmāṃsā doctrine that summarizes 'linguistic fecundity' and 'fracturing of action' into wholesome 'deeds'.
35. There can be a counter-argument, pointing towards circularity, that even historical personage made these choices and if a historian has to study history of such choices the question of historical significance gets invoked through hindsight. Thus, the distinction cannot be rigorously maintained. The way out of this paradox is by segregating failure or success of the operation of third reduction. History of 'failure in historical personage' is possible if in historian there obtains success in the third reduction.