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Summerhill

IIAS Review
Vol. XXIV, No. 1 (Summer 2018)
ISSN: 0972-1452

General Editor
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Subscription

Single Issue	Rs. 50.00
Annual (Two Issues)	Rs. 100.00
Three Years (Six Issues)	Rs. 250.00

All correspondence regarding manuscripts, subscription, etc. may be addressed to:

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Regions, Identities and Entangled Geographies: An Introduction

Ranjeeta Dutta*

Introduction

The understanding of a region as a pre-given fixed entity with definite linguistic and territorial boundaries has dominated a large number of writings on Indian history and politics.[1]The presumption that contemporary states and political territories existed in their present forms with more or less similar characteristics in the historical past is not only teleological, accentuating a certain degree of parochial and singular attitude; but it also overlooks the changing, diverse, and interactive nature of regions. Regions are not geographical entities that pre-existed from time immemorial. Rather regions came into being due to the impact of social, political and economic processes embodied in human interactions in history, acquired distinct identities and in turn conditioned those historical processes that were instrumental in their evolution.[2]

Thus, regions are always dynamic, acted upon within the frame of time/temporality and space/spatiality. Under these circumstance, there can never be a linear and exclusive way of perceiving a region as a lived space as social, economic and political processes never have an unidimensional influence upon history. There have been multiple perceptions of a region which have been in constant dialogue with each other leading to tensions and marking of hierarchies of and within a region/s, creating a network of entangled geographies.

These networks and perceptions within the framework of time and space further form the basis of inter-relationships with and within different regions, laying the bedrock of regional histories.

The central idea of this issue of *Summerhill* is to examine different ways in which various groups, individuals, texts, communities and so on perceived a space and landscape as a region over a period of time. It is further highlighted that in the process of delineating a region the tropes they included, excluded and magnified were located in their respective cultural and socio-historical contexts. The essays, translations and the book reviews in this issue while dealing with the ways in which regions and their identities evovled over a period of time, raise some of the ideas outlined above. The essays further highlight the complexities and diversities that constitute a region, deconstructing the idea of a homogeneous regional history and a seamless regional identity. In many ways, the focus of the analyses shifts from regional histories to histories of regions.[3]The essays have a wide range and include the following: the spatial-temporal delienation in the Sangam poetry of the Tamil region; multiple ways in which Delhi was perceived in medieval and early modern period; differing ideas of hygiene that defined the Himalayas in a particularist way; historical identities of Kumaon and the North-East region; water as a physical demarcation of a composite space in Ellora-Daultabad-Khuldabad; the notion of social exclusion in creating the 'regional other' in a nation state; and finally the idea of a cultural frontier reflected in the delineation of space and regionalities in Hindi and Bhojpuri cinemas.

Regions, Space and Identities

From the middle of the twentieth century, the idea of space as a social entity became predominant in academic researches. Henri Lefebvre's famous work, *The Production of* Space (1974) clearly stated that, '(Social) space is a (social) product.'[4]According to Lefebvre, 'In reality, social space 'incorporates' social actions, the actions of subjects both individual and collective who are born and who dies, who suffer and who act.'[5]Going beyond the idea of a physical space, Lefebvre characterized the social space as 'perceived', 'conceived' and 'lived'.[6]These three concepts corresponded with the three notions of: 'spatial practice' in the form of a real physical space;

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'representations of space' in the form of an imagined space, for instance in urban planning, maps and so on; and 'spaces of representation' that invested the space with symbolism and meaning.[7]Thus a space was 'an interlinkage of geographic form, built environment, symbolic meanings, and routines of life.'[8]Lefebvre's idea of social space that prioritized spatiality over temporality and yet combined them was instrumental in developing the *spatial turn* in cultural studies and historical analysis in the twentieth century.[9]Subsequent studies associated geographic analysis with social space.[10]

The exhaustive framework for the concept of social space discussed in *The Production of Space* in many ways can be extended to the idea of a region. Since regions evolve, transgress, disintegrate and are reconstituted through historical forces located in temporality and materiality, social forces are bound to play an important role in their production. A region 'is not simply inherited from nature, or passed on by the dead hand of the past, or autonomously determined by the "laws" of spatial geometry as per conventional location theory."[11]Therefore, it cannot be taken for granted.[12]

One of the enduring characteristics of a region described by scholars is its geography and the latter's interactions with human beings. Often specific geographical features are identified exclusively with a region, according it a certain degree of exceptionalism. While it is worthwhile to relate histories of landscape with the historical production of a region and subsequently a territory, it should be noted that the man-nature interaction that is instrumental in such a production is ongoing and dynamic.[13]Regional histories should take into account this dynamism that contributes to the fluidity of the region as a geographic, political and social space.[14]

Regional identities are one of the crucial elements of politics today. Associated with the correspondence between a particular language and territoriality, these identities do not have seamless histories. Since regions were dynamic, so were these identities. As various political formations developed and states were established, the linguistic and territorial identities kept shifting, sometimes redefining and reconfiguring the regions. Thus, there was not one language but many linguistic traditions within a region.[15]Similarly there were multiple markers of culture, community and ethnicity that were changing and transformed the social space of a region over a period of time. Regional histories have often overlooked these complexities, reducing regional identities to homogeneous territorial, linguistic and cultural fixities. In fact, the social, cultural and geographic spaces in a region provided templates for the articulation of various identities with various social groups inhabiting different areas and representing different political economies. For instance, tribes relegated to the political and social margins of the 'dominant' political formations, often represented regions themselves, incorporating 'diverse smaller socio-economic systems'. [16]

Interestingly, the literary texts written in the historical past delineate the ways in which the geographical space changed over time.[17]In these texts, 'The knowledge of the Indian subcontinent also progressively increases and leads on to a conscious and specific, but at the same time flexible, construction of regions and the identities are embedded in them.'[18]In fact, most of these texts record collective historical memory contextualizing the region within the changing frame of spatiality and temporality. According to Aloka Parasher, 'Such collective memory of a society permits it to keep territorial boundaries vague and therefore, space remains inclusive over time. On the other hand, as trained historians, we wish to define territories in several ways, especially political and thereby, naturally exclude as we then tend to concomitantly but erroneously, project rigid and contained boundaries that goes counter to the way the ancient texts describe them.'[19]

The essays in this issue capture the essence of regions, space and identities. While highlighting the landscape and geographic frames in the context of a region, the essays also deal with the production of a region and its evolving identities in history. *Spatial Perceptions in Early Tamil Poetry* by V.Rajesh discusses the idea of region as an abstract cognitive category that acquired real dimensions through the poetic symbolism and conventions in the Sangam literature, which in many ways reflected the collective memory of the Tamil historical past. The essay highlights the multiple spaces in the Tamil region through metaphorical tropes of the landscape, especially flora and fauna (*tinais)*, which symbolized the emotions of love, war and heroism. The space while reflecting 'the moral of the community' was complex and nuanced with several layers of tensions and contradictions.

The two essays on the Himalayan region discuss the ways in which the state policies and issues of community identities informed the region as a lived space. Queeny Pradhan's essay, *Imperial Hygiene and Popular Culture in the Colonial Hill Stations in the Indian Himalaya* explores the connections between the creation of hill stations especially Shimla and Darjeeling, the introduction of the municipal and civic laws, and the issues of health, disease, sanitation and demographic changes of the hill regions in the nineteenth century. The English colonists initially perceived the Indian hill stations as natural health resorts, but later, influenced by the overarching concerns of cleanliness and hygiene, introduced municipal laws and regulations that controlled the movement of people and segregated them from most of the spaces in the hills. The essay highlights the tensions generated due to

the indigenous responses to this imperial surveillance and control. The hill people, according to Pradhan, considered the western medicinal practices as a British attempt to regulate their behaviour and habits and were suspicious towards the specialized demarcated spaces of hospitals, convalescent depots and sanatoriums, which according to them segregated patients from their respective families. Vasudha Pande's *Kumaon Histories and Kumaon Identities c. 1815-1990s* discusses the relation between a region, history writing, idea of a nation and regional and caste identities. The essay shows that how history writing over several generations constructed the perceptions of Kumaon as an 'imagined space' through the symbolisms of landscape, people and region. Against the background of Kumaon's transformation from a British imperial division in the nineteenth century to a separate state of Uttarakhand in the 1990s, the essay traces the development of different worldviews of history writing: the colonial perspectives that typified Kumaon as an exceptional and exotic region; the nationalist standpoint that foregrounded a separate Kumaoni identity but privileged the brahmanical distinctiveness; and finally the post-colonial writings that romanticized the region while attempting to integrate it with the idea of the nation. The essay further discusses that the writings of sociologists, anthropologists and modern writers of the 1990s presented a more nuanced and complex understanding of the region and interrogated these views that essentialized Kumaon into a particular typecast of a hill society.

Studies in the recent past have questioned the exceptionalism of hills in general and the Himalayas in particular as a distinct geographical unit that is culturally and economically homogeneous. The binaries of 'highland' and 'lowland' have been debriefed and the mystique of the Himalayas is now debunked and complexities and contradictions are highlighted.[20]Sajal Nag and Binayaka Dutta's essays reflect yet another important aspect of modern state formations in the 'region of northeast' located primarily in the mountainous landscape.[21]Sajal Nag in his essay, *Production of North Eastern Region* questions the idea of 'northeast' as a definite region and emphasizes that the region was gradually shaped by 'contingent historical events', starting from the British encounter with the tribes in the eighteenth century. The essay discusses the role of the British ethnographic accounts, census and survey reports and works of Christian missionaries in crystallizing the otherwise fluid and vague boundaries of diverse ethnic groups. According to Nag, the colonial records attributed a certain territorial and cultural definitiveness and constructed a community consciousness, which the various tribes subsequently internalized. Binayak Dutta's essay 'A Legacy of Divided Nations' discusses the role of the history of partition of the subcontinent in re-imagining the geo-political space of the northeast. According to the author, partition is a living history as it continues to influence and determine the postcolonial narratives of this region till day, especially in the context of migration and settlements that often challenge the political boundaries. The essay discusses the complex process of colonial cartography that imposed artificial borders and frontiers alien to the geography of the northeast, disturbing the fluid identities and re-configuring them into specific regional identities alien to the communities and tribes of the hills and plains in the northeast India.

Entangled Geographies: Multiple Perceptions, Contradictions and Conformities

Plural imaginaries representing different identities have always characterized a space. These imaginaries not only conceptualized the space as real and transformed it, but also interacted and negotiated with each other. In this process, some of the ideas and networks became dominant, some marginal and some disappeared, erased or preserved in historical memories. These regional and spatial diversities representing multiple imaginations of the geopolitical space created *heterotopias*, 'in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture', were 'simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted', 'juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that' were 'in themselves incompatible.'[22]

The essays in this issue engage with multiple perceptions of a region, their interactions and networks of entangled geographies. Swapna Liddle's *Idea of Delhi* discusses several conceptions of Delhi ranging from its mythic past to a historical one when its various locations became, capitals of different political dispensations and shrines of sufi *dargahas* and temples. The essay deconstructs the composite Delhi, as we know today and demonstrates that the notions of 'Old Delhi' and 'New Delhi' were always shifting as the former continuously replaced the later. Thus there was never one seamless Delhi. These multiple perceptions of the region in every period derived their respective inspirations and ideational resources, from a complex multi-layered historical past preceding them, borrowing from it *selectively* and transforming the imaginations into real lived spaces. Yaaminey Mubayi's essay, *Delineating Sacred Landscapes* uses the methods of landscape archaeology to discuss how water and its physical trajectories define Ellora-Daultabad-Khuldabad as a social and ecological region. Underscoring the relationship between man and environment, the essay highlights the multiple

voices of diverse communities, which inhabit these areas and articulate their respective relationship with water through myths, symbols, religious beliefs and institutions and memories. Through ethnographic interactions with the communities, the essay presents the multi-layered socio-economic and spiritual contexts of the sites and settlements in this region. Further, Mubayi highlights the different ways in which groups and communities in the Ellora-Khuldabad-Daultabad region interacted with each other depending upon their individual attitudes and strategies of use of water and its resources.

Space is political too, providing sites of contestations and assertions of power. Very often, states and empires define and dominate a region, exercising control through the organization of space and claiming to resolve conflicts and contradictions. However, as Lefebvre points out, 'Within the same space there are, however, other forces on boil, because the rationality of the state, of its techniques, plans and programmes, provokes opposition….These seething forces are still capable of rattling the lid of the cauldron of the state and its space, for differences can never be totally quieted. Though defeated, they live on, and from time to time they begin fighting ferociously to reassert themselves and transform themselves through struggle.'[23]Queeny Pradhan and Vasudha Pande in their respective contributions discuss the tensions between the British colonial state and the people of the Shimla and Darjeeling and Kumaon respectively. Pradhan's essay highlights the colonial mapping of the hills through municipal regulations that were infused with the ideas of racial and civilizational superiority and condemned the native settlements as unhygienic with a propensity to spread epidemics and other contagious diseases and the consequent reactions of the local populace. Vasudha Pande points out the ways in which region of Kumaon became contested in various history writings representing different political ideas and communities. The histories of the region in the writings of the various sections of the local intelligentsia were counter viewpoints not only to the British imagination of Kumaon but even to each other. Gowhar Yaqoob's essay *Social Exclusion: Historical or Colonial Legacy?* focuses on the ways in which the ideas of social exclusion have underscored policies of the colonial and post-colonial states in South and South-east Asia which have a certain degree of overlapping histories. The essay discusses specific contexts of de-colonization and nation building in these regions and their political attitudes towards social exclusion.

The historical context of time, space and social configurations thus become crucial. There is no one single identity of a region and attempts to impose one can lead to ruptures of far reaching consequences. Roger Chartier while writing on the 'various ways in which France was visualized in the past' rightly pointed out that, 'The effective exercise of power ultimately presupposes the homogeneity of the social body over which it rules, whereas the figures revealed that France was not all uniform, and that immense cultural gaps separated its provinces. Politics had to take these variations into account; they were not random, but could be shown by careful analysis to have a coherent pattern.'[24]The essays of Sajal Nag and Binayak Dutta demonstrate that the colonial attempts to impose a homogeneous identity upon the northeast region were countered with assertions of those identities that were suppressed.

While the political and economic representations of a region represents several spatial dimensions, the cultural dimensions of a region and within a region represents variegated forms of spatiality that are symbolic and highlight the ways in which a region is perceived. *Between Ramgarh and Bambai* by Akshaya Kumar reflects on the linguistic and cultural homogeneity in Hindi and Bhojpuri cinemas through an analysis of location of places and a constructed spatiality. According to Kumar, these places in the films do not have any definite geographical location, though they are supposedly situated in northern India and some metros, mainly Mumbai with a 'routine vagueness of location' that cannot be traced in the map. However, these places have acquired an iconic status of an archetypal regionality in the popular culture through constructions of imaginaries that overlook sub-regional cultural diversities. Such an artificial seamlessness, this essay points out, represents a certain regional and urban stereotype. Based upon the idea of capitalism and geography, this paper analyses the symbolism that places and locations represent in the Hindi and Bhojpuri films. The *Poems From the Malwa region of Punjab* represent yet another effort to delineate a variegated regional space and regionality within Punjab. Selected and translated by Vivek Sachdeva, the poems reflect the self-identities of the poets rooted in their respective sub-regional milieus and linguistic traditions. Despite their provincial provenance, the compositions have a universal appeal connecting with the larger literary tradition.

Conclusion

The contributions in this issue raise several questions pertinent to the understanding of regions and identities. In many ways they circumvent tracing the antecedents of present day states to the historical past so typical of regional histories and instead engage with complex histories of regions through the prism of political, economic and cultural lenses. The book reviews in this issue analyze the latest writings on the theme of *Regions, Identities and Entangled Geographies*, raising several

questions that problematize as well as appreciate the arguments presented in the books. Thus the analysis of historical processes instrumental in recasting the regions in space and time is crucial in order to comprehend the contemporary regional configurations and their associated political and social contradictions and ambiguities.

NOTES

1. Aloka Parasher-Sen, 'Perceptions of Time, Cultural Boundaries and 'Region' in Early Indian Texts', *Indian Historical Review*, 36(2), 2009, pp. 183-86.
2. Ibid, pp.183-207.
3. Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, 'From Regional Histories to Histories of the Regions and Beyond', *Social Scientist*, Vol.43, No.3/4 (March-April), 2015, pp. 33-47.
4. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. (Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith), Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1991 [1974, 1984], p. 26.
5. Ibid, p. 33.
6. Ibid., 38-40; Stuart Elden, 'There is a Politics of Space because Space is Political. Henri Lefebvre and the Production of Space,' *Radical Philosophy Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2007, pp. 110-11. Also see, Harvey Molotch, 'The Space of Lefebvre.' *Theory and Society*, Vol. 22, No. 6, (December), 1993, pp. 887-95; Łukasz Stanek, 'Methodologies and Situations of Urban Research: Re-reading Henri Lefebvre's 'The Production of Space', *Studies in Contemporary History*, no. 4, 2007, pp. 461-5.
7. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 38-40.
8. Harvey Molotch, 'The Space of Lefebvre,' p. 888.
9. Susanne Rau, *History, Space and Place*, London and New York: Routledge; Łukasz Stanek, 'Methodologies and Situations of Urban Research', pp. 461-62.
10. Similar ideas formed the central theme of the Young Scholars Conference titled, *Historicizing Space* held at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 25th-26th April 2019. For details, see, the *concept note* of the Conference.
11. Harvey Molotch, The Space of Lefebvre', p. 887. Also see, D. I. Scargill, 'Space, Place and Region: Towards a Transformed Regional Geography', *Geography*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (April), 1985, pp. 138-41.
12. For a conceptual understanding of region and regional histories, see, Chetan Singh, *Himalayan Histories. Economy, Polity, Religious Traditions.* Ranikhet: Permanent Black in Association with Ashoka University, 2018, pp. 1-33; Also see, Edward W Soja, *Post-Modern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, New York, 1989.
13. Chetan Singh, *Himalayan Histories*, p. 14.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., pp. 18-19.
16. Ibid., p. 21. Also see, Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, *The Changing Gaze. Regions and the Constructions of Early India*, New Delhi: OUP, 2013; Kesavan Veluthat, *The 'Early Medieval' in South India*, New Delhi: OUP, 2008.
17. Aloka Parasher-Sen, 'Perceptions of Time', p. 188.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p. 186.
20. Chetan Singh, *Himalayan Histories*, pp. 23-33. Also see, Jayeeta Sharma, 'Producing Himalayan Darjeeling. Mobile People and Mountain Encounters', *Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies,* Vol. 35, No. 2, 2016, pp. 87-101.
21. For a general discussion on the idea of northeast see, S. Thianlaimuan Ngaihte, 'The Reality of North-East as an Entity', *Economic Political Weekly*, Vol. XLVIII, No. 50 (December 14), 2013, pp. 13-15.
22. Michel Foucault, 'From Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias', From: *Architecture/Mouvement/ Continuité*, October, 1984; ("Des Espaces Autres", March 1967 Translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec), pp. 1-9; p. 3 and 5. http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf. Visited 12.1.19.
23. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 23.
24. Roger Chartier, 'The two Frances: The history of a geographical idea', *Social Science Information*, 17, 4/5, 1978, pp. 527-54; p. 528 and 530.

Research Articles

Spatial Perceptions in Early Tamil Poetry

V. RAJESH*

The early Tamil poetry known in literary tradition as Sangam literature are traditionally divided into two broad poetic themes – *akam* and *puram.* A range of conventions is associated with these poetic categories in the corpus. *Dravidian Etymological Dictionary* ascribes the meaning for *akam* as inside, house, place, agricultural tract, breast, and mind and for *puram* as outside, exterior.[1]Thus *akam* poems, according to Hart, view life from inside the family and *puram* poems from outside.[2] It is worth investigating what these categories meant in the context of poetic sentence. In *Purananuru* 28:11, the word *akattor* in the context of poetic sentence meant people living in a fortified region. In *Kuruntokai* 137:1 and 346:7, the word *nallakam* in the context of poetic sentence meant good heart. In *Purananuru* 238:1 the word *kuvipura* in the context of poetic sentence meant exterior. The word *puramtaruta* in *Purananuru* 312:1 in the context of poetic sentence meant giving for exterior.

In *Purananuru* 250:9 and 363:10, the word *purankatu* in the context of poetic sentence meant the burial ground. Despite the terms *akam* and *puram* emerging in a variety of context in the poems, the broad meaning of interior and exterior cannot be ruled out.

The possibility that these categories represented spatial perception for early Tamils is attested by range of examples from the poems. *Akam* poems are love poems that reflect the emotional relationship between a man and a woman. *Puram* poems are war poems that celebrated the valorism of heroes. Though it was the commentators who were responsible for the division of poetic corpus into *akam* and *puram* there are enough evidence in the poems themselves to suggest that poets too felt the necessity of division. Kailasapathy questioned this traditional classification and argued that such classification might not have been conducive for the development of bardic thought. To quote him:

> Static epithets, descriptive circumlocutions, formulae, and recurrent themes – elements, which characterize the oral literary language vivify the fundamental unity underlying these poems. An essential characteristic of formulaic style is the predominance of metrical patterns of varying lengths, but of specific and definite quantities. Since these are also syntactic patterns, they become the very basis for the functioning and development of bardic thought. Its importance cannot be overestimated. This becomes very conspicuous by the fact that the same bards of this period composed both categories of poems, using the same formulaic language. This fact calls in to question the relevance if any at all of the traditional classification for the bardic compositions under discussion. The very pervasive nature of the style would have been a restraint to say the least on any such schematic approach or grammatical differentiation. In the light of what has been observed it is difficult to believe that the bards would have seen, any generic difference between the love and the heroic poetry.[3]

Kailasapathy investigated the oral characteristics in the poems and paid less attention to the conventions that went into its production. One of the criticisms leveled against him by Ramanujan was that he rarely studied a poem in detail.[4]The *Pulavans* (Poets) strictly adhered to conventions in composing the *akam* and *puram* poems. For example, in no *akam* poems, we find the name of the hero and the heroine involved in love relationship whereas the *puram* poems explicitly mentions the name of the hero. It is difficult to come to terms with Kailasapathy's theses that the authors of the poems did not observe the generic difference.

According to Sivathamby, the spatial categories of *akam* and *puram* must have evolved at the stage of tribal state of social organization by early Tamils, since the categories reflect the activities inside and outside of the settlement.[5]A number of poems in Sangam corpus reflect body as a site of experiencing pain and pleasure. Action or *vinai*, in the poems are worldly or *alvinai* and old or *tolvinai*.[6]There is evidence in the poems to show that

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people believed and attributed particular consequences to their actions or *vinai*. Belief in the existence of spirit is also evident from reference to *nadukal* or hero stone worship in *puram* poems.[7]It can be argued that the tribal state of social organization with associated cultural belief system might have been responsible for the evolution of the spatial category *akam* and *puram*. Modern anthropological studies in a Tamil village also pointed to the fact that the relationship between body, object and time is considered to be central in making spatial distinction by villagers.[8]

Akam poems are further classified under five distinct geographical landscapes – *tinai. Tinai* are the plants and the poems were composed based on the symbolism of *kurinci, mullai, marutam, neytal* and *palai*. The poets associated a particular aspect of love relationship with particular *tinai*. Marr after investigating the linguistic and semantic cognates of the word *kurinci, mullai, marutam, neytal* and *palai* in Dravidian languages other than Tamil, had come to the conclusion that the words primarily meant the names of plants grown in the mountainous, forest, riverside, seashore and dry barren regions respectively.[9]Therefore the names of the plants were the symbols taken by poets to refer not only the spatial zones but also aspects of love relationship associated with it. The landscape that served as a background for love relationship was a functional space in the poems. The inhabitants, flora and fauna, the presiding deity are unique to each landscape. For example, the *kuravas* or hunters and *kanavars* or forest tribes were the inhabitants of the *kurinci* or mountainous landscape. Elephants, tigers, monkeys and bears figure as prominent animals in *kurinci* poems. The presiding deity of this region was Murugan. These served as a basis for the ancient Tamil grammar *Tolkappiyam* to formulate *mutarporul* or time and place, *karuporul* or things born into or native to a region and *uriporul* or aspects of love relationship as poetics associated with *akam* poems.

Let us first take *kurinci* poems to examine the nature of particular space it invokes. The poems allude to the small settlement or *cirukuti* of kuravars or hunters and *kanavars* in the mountains. *Kuti* in the context of poetic sentence meant settlement. In *Narrinai* 85, the poet Nalvilakkanar makes the heroine's girlfriend tell the heroine about the paths the hero had to cross before reaching their home. She says that in the mountains, the *kanavars* hunt the pigs and share the meat in their settlement or *cirukuti*. In Narrinai 156, the poet Kannankorranar makes the heroine's girlfriend tell the hero that the people in their small settlement or *cirukuti* were merciless hunters and hence, request the hero to come during day time. The heroine is addressed in these poems as *koticci* and *kuratti* (a female belonging to the hunter community). She is supposed to be from the *cirukuti* or the small settlement of her community. There are several allusions to the *cirukuti* in these poems.[10]In some poems, there are references to *cirur* and *ceri*. *Cirur* means small village where a number of *kutis* or settlement may exist. *Ceri* was a place where people lived together. *Ceri* is from the root *cer*, which means 'come together' or 'join together'. *Ceri* must therefore have been a place of communal living characterized by kinship ties. In modern Tamil, *ceri* is a place with derogatory connotations where polluted people are said to live. With the emergence of private property in land and ownership rights, communal living was looked down and the word *ceri* associated with it came to acquire a derogatory meaning. However, in the Sangam poems, *ceri* was not looked down, as it referred to a particular people living together. In *Narrinai* 77, the poet Kapilar makes the hero utter that his lover sleeps in the sound of waterfalls in those areas of *ur* where people lived together (*ceric cirrur*). In *Narrinai* 95, the poet Kottampalavanar makes the hero say that his lover is from that small village (*cirrurole*) where the hunters stand in the rocks and play the drums. In *Akananuru* 152, the poet Paranar makes the hero utter that the heroine saves him from his disturbed mood everyday by visiting him and returns to her small village (*cirrur*).

There are poems that refer to *ur* or village. In *Narrinai* 83, the heroine addresses the Owl in the first line (*emur vayil*) that is to say that it sits in a tree at the entrance of their village or *ur* and hoots by disturbing the people. In *Narrinai* 116, the poet Kantaratanar makes the heroine utter that women in her village did not stop their gossip of her relationship with the hero (*kurinci nallur pendir*). Poems with references to *mutur* or ancient village are only few in these *Kurinci* poems. In only one poem taken up for our study, there is an allusion to *nadu*. It is a messenger poem where the heroine addresses the Parrot to inform her lover who is in a different country about her loneliness in the millet fields of the mountainous region. This reference is found in *Narrinai102* composed by the poet Cembiyanar.

From the above, it can be gauged that there exist multiple levels of 'functional space' in *Kurinci* poems. It begins with an elaborate description of the mountainous region and then narrows down to various kinds of small and medium settlements of the hunters and other mountainous tribes.

The relation between *akam* and *puram* in *kurinci tinai* poems is one of tension and contradiction. The clandestine love relationship takes place outside the house or *manai, il*. A woman was expected to behave according to the norms set by her family. The clandestine love relationship with a man disturbs her existence inside her house. In many poems the heroine and her girlfriend fear going out due to the protection from her mother. *Irceripu* meant 'protecting the house', but it was the clandestine

love relationship that was celebrated in the poems, which emphatically took place outside the house.

The *mullai* poems describe the pastoral tracts and the flora and fauna associated with it. Patient waiting (*iruttal*) on the part of heroine due to hero's separation from her in order to serve his lord or *ventan* in war is the theme of these poems. The inhabitants of these landscapes were *itaiyars* or shepherds and *ayars* or cowherds. Cattle, deer and hare are the animals that we often find described in these poems. The presiding deity of this region was *mayon*. It is interesting to underline the perception of settlements associated with the *mullai* landscape. In *Narrinai* 59, the poet Kapilar makes the hero order the charioteer to drive the chariot towards the village of the heroine. He describes the nature of his lover's village (*ur*) in this poem. He says that his lover's village is a place surrounded by forest (*vanpulak katu*) where *vattuvans* or hunters hunt the hare and sleep by consuming alcohol. In *Narrinai* 121, the poet makes the charioteer describe the nature of heroine's village to hero. He says that her village lies in a forest region where male and female deer jump and play. In *Narrinai* 139, the poet Perumkovikanar makes the hero address the rain. He praises the rain in their village that made him and his beloved feel happy (*nallur, viravumalar utira vici*). In *Narrinai* 142, the poet Itaikkatanar makes the hero address the charioteer about the nature of his beloved's village. He says that in her village, the *itaiyars* or shepherds sell the milk in the rains.

Villages had settlements of people (*kuti*). Settlements must have been scattered in the villages and hence the connotation *cirukuti* (small settlement). In *Narrinai* 169, the poet makes the hero think about his meeting with the heroine. He imagines whether the lizard in his home, which lies in the midst of small settlements will inform of his arrival to his beloved (*cirukuti pakkatu emperu nagarane*). In *Narrinai* 367, the poet Nakkirar makes heroine's girlfriend console the heroine and her that the hero will soon arrive. She says that her friend i.e. heroine belongs to the *cirukuti* of Aruman. In *Akananuru* 204, the poet Maturai Kamakkani Nappalattanar makes the hero address his charioteer to drive the chariot towards the small settlement (*cirukuti*) of his beloved. In *Narrinai* 366, the poet makes the heroine's girlfriend tell the hero about their activities when he was away from them. She says that the heroine then spends time in *cirrur* or small village of the *itaiyars* by picking up the flowers in his absence.

The hero had to serve his lord or *ventan* in warfare and hence, he had to leave for a different country or *nadu*. In *Narrinai* 69, the poet Cekamputanar makes the heroine talk her suffering especially in the evening time. She says that the merciless evening must also be felt by her beloved who is in a different country (*natum*), so that he may come back soon.

Unlike the *kurinci* poems where the relation between *akam* and *puram* was full of tension and contradiction, the *mullai* poems reflect a more balanced relation. The hero had to earn wealth by serving his lord, as it was considered to be his *alvinai*.[11]There is also an allusion in the poems that hero serves the army or *pasarai* of the *ventan*.[12]In *Akananuru* 144, the poet makes the hero imagine how his beloved would feel happy if he showed his neighbors the booty of the battle. In all probability, the hero represented in the *mullai* poems must have been the petty chiefs or the *kurunilamannans*. Nonetheless at least a distinction was made between the heroes of *mullai* poems with their overlords or *ventans*. In all the poems, the heroine speaks only from the house or *manai*. The institution of *karpu* or chastity left no alternative for her but to confine in the house, whereas the hero in order to earn his living had to serve his lord outside his village or country. Therefore, the space inhabited by each was defined by convention and in consonance with the generally accepted moral order of the community.

Palai was not a distinct landscape but at a particular time of the year with the transformation of *mullai* and *kurinci,* it came into existence. The marital status of the lovers remains ambiguous, as the poems that describe their elopement only indicate that the relationship was pre-marital. The fauna associated with this region was wild dog, tiger, elephant and boar. The inhabitants were the *Maravar* and the *Eyinar.* The presiding deity was *Korravai.* The picture of wilderness has been beautifully captured in the poems.

The land/space captured by these poems reflect wilderness, where the terrible heat of summer was felt.[13]The description of settlement patterns in this landscape is interesting to note. In *Narrinai* 3, the poet Ilankiranar makes the hero speak of the wilderness of the landscape. He says that the hunters live together in a small village by attacking the passersby (*vemunai cirrur*). In *Narrinai* 92, a poet makes the heroine's girlfriend tell that in those barren lands where the hunters live together in a small village (*vetta cirrur*), the cattle never drink the water. In *Narrinai* 343, the poet Karuvurk Katappillai Cattanar makes the heroine say that in those small settlements of the little village (*amkuti cirrur*), the crow will fly into its nest. In *Narrinai* 346, the poet Eyintai Makan Ilankiranar makes the hero comment that in the landscape where he is, the small settlements were destroyed by the enemy chiefs (*alinta veli amkuti cirrur*). In *Narrinai* 33, the poet Ilavettanar makes heroine's girlfriend say that the hero went into those lands where near the mountains slopes, the small settlements (*cirukuti*) of hunters attack the passersby. In *Narrinai* 73, the poet Mulankiranar makes the heroine utter that the ghost that lives in their ancient village would trouble her (*mutur*), if the hero leaves her.

In *Narrinai* 143, the poet Kannakaran Korranar makes the heroine's mother say that she is disturbed by the gossip of the women in her ancient village (*muttur*) on her daughter having eloped with a man. In *Narrinai* 293, the poet Kayamanar makes the heroine's mother say that she finds it difficult to take her daughter back home, as she plays with her friends in the festival of her ancient village (*mutur*). The hero's travel to a different country (*natu*) for earning wealth represents a different kind of space in the poems. In *Narrinai* 24, a poet makes the heroine tell that hero has gone to a different country (*vettru nattritai*) where wilderness persists.[14]

The relationship between *akam* and *puram* in the *Palai* poems is ambiguous. Even though the exterior landscape was full of wilderness, the heroine always felt going with the hero. In some poems, the heroine says that it is the duty and nature of men to earn wealth by traveling to a different country where wilderness persists. If we take into consideration of the fact that it was the *kurinci* and *mullai* that transformed into *palai* tracts, then some poems at least make sense in terms of understanding the relationship between the *akam* and the *puram.* The elopement of the lovers must be seen as the climax of the clandestine love relationship of the *kurinci* poems. In *kurinci* poems we have noticed the fear of heroine and girlfriend over the protection of their house by their mothers (*ircceripp*u). When the heroine elopes with the hero in the *palai* poems, it was the mother of heroine who grieves. The colophons speak of such poems as *manaimarutci*.

In the *mullai* poems, *karpu* or chastity was an established institution and the hero's separation from the heroine was considered to be his *alvinai* or worldly act. Again in many *palai* poems, the separation of hero from heroine was for the purpose of earning wealth, which was considered to be his *alvinai*. The heroine in some poems is made to call the act of hero's separation as his *panpu* or quality.[15]Wealth was considered to be essential for their existence. Since the pre-dominant economy was structured on gift exchange, the accumulation of wealth was considered essential. Even the *kurunilamannans* or petty chiefs were expected to offer gift to bards who approached them. Failure to offer gift led to *pali* or blame from the bards. We know from the *puram* poems what constituted the bardic gifts. They were usually gold, elephants and precious metals. The separation of the hero from the heroine in the *palai* poems must be understood in this context. To plunder and accumulate wealth, the heroes of the *mullai* and *palai,* at times served their lords and attempted to make marital relations with *kurinci* and *neytal* women. Gold was available in abundance in the coastal regions where trade with the Mediterranean was carried out while elephants and spices were available at the mountainous region.

Neytal corresponds to the seashore landscape where the fishermen or *Paratavar* community lived. This community was involved in trading essential items like salt and fish. Shark, crocodile and crabs figure in the poems of *neytal.* The presiding deity of this region was *varunan.* A study of the perception of settlement patterns may be interesting. In *Narrinai* 4, the poet Ammuvanar makes the heroine's girlfriend tell that the Paratavar or fishermen community live in a small settlement on the coast (*kanan cirukuti*). There is an allusion in this poem that hero is from a different *ur* or village. This ambiguity is made clear in *Narrinai* 45, where the poet (whose name is not mentioned) makes the heroine's girlfriend describe that heroine is from the small settlement of Paratava community (*cirukuti … paratava makale*) while the hero is a son of a wealthy lord of an ancient village (*mutur …celven katalmakane*). In *Akananuru* 240, the poet Ammuvanar makes the hero describe that the Paratava community lives in a small settlement on the coast (*cirukuti paratava*).[16]Since *cirukuti* or small settlement emerges in a number of poems associated with the fishermen community, it is difficult to treat it as a simple conventional formulae employed for oral verse making. That the fishermen community lived in the coastal areas with kinship ties is clear from the word *ceri* associated with their settlement. In *Akananuru* 200, the poet Uloccanar makes the heroine describe their communal living in a small settlement of the coast (*pulan ceri*). In *Akananuru* 220, the poet Maturai Marutan Illanakanar makes heroine's girlfriend tell the hero that gossip is spreading in their village and their settlement (*urun ceriyum*) on the relationship of the heroine with him.

The perception associated with the coastal village or *ur* is interesting to note in some poems. In *Akananuru* 180, the poet Karuvurk Kannan Parannar makes the heroine's girlfriend describe their village as a gossiping village (*valunkalure*).[17] In *Akananuru* 190, the poet Ullocanar makes the heroine's girlfriend narrates to the heroine's mother about the gossip of their village (*ure… alarpatumme*). In *Akananuru* 210, the same poet makes the heroine's girlfriend recollect how the hero praised their village or *ur* when he met them first. In *Akananuru* 270, the poet Cakalacanar makes the heroine's girlfriend tell the hero not to go to his village (*numur*).[18]

The relation between the *akam* and the *puram* in the narrative of these poems is that of tension and contradiction, similar to that of *kurinci* poems. The heroine fears that the gossip or *alar* of her village on her relationship with a man. Despite her fears, she carries on her relationship with the hero. The heroine's girlfriend insists that the hero marry the heroine or invite him to talk to the heroine's family.

The *marutam* poems correspond to the river valleys of the early Tamil region. The inhabitants of this region were *ulavars* or agriculturalists. The presiding deity of this region was *Intiran* while we find the buffaloes, freshwater fish and herons in the poems. The theme of *marutam* poems is the wifely sulking or *utal* due to hero's extra-marital relationship with courtesans.

The *marutam* poems employ *ullurai uvamum* or allegory frequently than any other *tinai* poems. What is further interesting is the perception of settlements associated with its landscape. Unlike the poems of other *tinais*, in the *marutam* poems, there is no mention, either of *kuti* or, *cirukuti* and no mention of *cirrur* too. On the other hand there is reference to *teru* or street in the poems. In *Narrinai* 200, the poet Kutarurp Palkannanar makes the heroine's girlfriend tells us that *kuyavans* (those who inform festivals) inform the arrival of festival in the wide street (*akal netun teruvil*). In *Narrinai* 250, the poet Maturai Olai Kataiyattat Nelvellaiyar makes the hero tell the *panan* that the heroine is treating him as an alien. He says that his son plays in the street (*teruvil*).[19]Another 'space' that emerges often in the narrative of the *marutam* poems is the *ceri*. *Parattai* or courtesans lived together in what is called *ceri* where the hero often visited. The hero is often addressed as *uran* or the lord of the village in these poems. We do not know from these poems where the *ulavans* or agriculturalists lived.

The elaborate background landscape that is an inherent part of any *akam* narrative is absent in *puram* poems. The *pulavans* directly addressed their patrons and may invoke their genealogies. Praise of battle, victories and achievements figure pre-dominantly in the *puram* poems. In *Purananuru* 19, the poet Katapulaviyanar sings the glory of Pantiyan Netunceliyan in the following manner:

Surrounded by the roaring seas,
This dense earth has a place, Talaiyalankanam,
Where Tamils clashed.
There you showed that lives are many,
Death is one,
Celiyan of conquering spear.
…
…
Now on that field, women of ancient houses
Weep with melting hearts and they say,
"Like a flock of little birds resting together on a hill,
arrows have pierced the mortally wounded elephant.
Cut off, its strong hellow trunk and mouth
Roll on the ground like a plow.
That is how with raised swords they won the battle.
Now our sons, the hair still sparse on their faces,
Lie dead with our husbands
And we have a victory."
…
…[20]

In *Purananuru* 21, the poet Aiyur Mulankilar sings the glory of Pantya chief Ukkirapperuvaluti in the following manner:

…
There was a fortress named Kanapper.
Its moat was deeper than earth;
Its walls seemed to touch the sky;
Its bations were like flowering stars;
The forest that guarded it was so thick with trees
Strong camps surrounded it.
Yet the fortress is gone
Like water vaporized by iron
Heated in a glowing fire by a black-handed smith,
And Venkaimarpan grieves
…
…[21]

In the above two poems the 'historical space' is captured in the life history of the two prominent chiefs of early Tamilakam. The battles fought by them constituted an event that had to be celebrated by the poets. The narratives are 'episodic' articulated through the aesthetic genre of poetry.

In *Purananuru* 65, the poet Kalattalaiyar describes the war that took place between Ceraman Perunceralatan and Colan Karikar Peruvalattan in the following manner:

…
…
On the great day of the full moon,
Sun and moon face each other
And one of them vanishes behind its mountain
In the dullness of the evening.
Just so, a king like him
Aimed at his chest and threw his spear
But wounded his back.
Ashamed, that brave king faced north with his sword,
And here,
The day with its sunlight
Is not the same as the days we once knew.[22]

In the above poem, we get a historical fact that Perunceralatan died by performing the ritual of *vatakkiruttal*, in which the chief faced north with his sword and with his shield by his side, and starved himself to death. The *puram* poems thus, encapsulated the 'episodic' space, which the historians have used as a source. In some poems, the chiefs' land is described in detail. In *Purananuru* 109, the famous poet Kapilar who has to his credit a number of *kurinci* poems of *akam* genre, describes the mountain of his patron in the following manner:

You may think Pari's mountain
Is easy to conquer.
…
…
It still has four foods that no farmer needs to grow.

First, the paddy like seed of small-leafed bamboo thrives there.
Second, the fruit of the sweet-pulped jack tree ripens.
Third, the tuber of the rich valli creeper grows underground.
And fourth, honey flows on its tall summits,
Its color dark and rich as the hives are opened.
…
…[23]

In another poem, Kapilar sings the glory of Pari's mountain in the following manner:

Even when black Saturn
Smouldered in the sky,
Even when comets smoked
And the Silver Star
Ran to south,
His crops would come to harvest,
The bushes would flower,
Large-eyed rows of wild cows
Would calve in the yard
And crop the grass.
Because his scepter was just,
The green land knew
No lack of rains,
There were many noble men,
Green-leaved jasmine
Flowered
Like the thorn teeth
Of young wildcats
In the country of Pari,
Father of those artfully bangled daughters.[24]

In the above poems, poet Kapilar captured the fertility of Pari's mountain. We often find in Kapilar's poems, the description of mountainous landscape as the Tamil literary tradition associated Kapilar with the mountainous region. But it is interesting to note the manner in which Kapilar could free himself off from the *akam* conventions while composing the *puram* poems.[25]In some poems we find the picture of the devastation of war and the fierceness of battle. In *Purananuru* 12, the poet Nettimaiyar sarcastically exclaims the offers of chief Peruvaluti in the following manner:

…
…
O lord rich in victories,
This ruthless taking
Of other man's lands
While being very sweet to protegees?[26]

Warfare was endemic to early Tamil society as these poems reflect. People living in villages migrated at times of war.[27]

The *puram* space was celebrated in the poems. In *Purananuru* 312, the poet narrates the list of duties to make a person *Canror* in the following manner:

To give birth and send my son outside is my duty.
To make him noble is his father's duty
To make spears for him is the blacksmith's duty
To show his moral ways is the king's duty
…
…[28]

In *Purananuru* 86, the poet Kaverpentu sings in the following manner:

You stand against the pillar
Of my hut and ask
Where is your son?
I don't really know.
This womb was once
A liar
For that tiger.
You can see him now
Only on battlefields.[29]

The *akam* and *puram* poems invoke multiple 'spaces' that went into the production of narratives. It was culture specific and historically contingent.

NOTES

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6. For *alvinai* see *Narrinai* 103: 10, 148: 3, 205: 7, 214: 3, 262: 8; *Purananuru* 196: 3; *Kuruntokai* 267: 6. For *tolvinai* see *Narrinai* 88: 1.
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10. *Narrinai* 114: 3, 122: 3, 168: 11, 204: 10, 213: 6, 232: 4; *Akananuru* 192: 12, 228: 13 and 232: 6.
11. *Narrinai* 69: 10.
12. *Narrinai* 81:10, 121:6, 161:1; *Akananuru* 124:3, 169:19, 174:1, 204:2, 214:5, 254:10, 264:15 and 294:13.

13. See also *Narrinai* 2: 1-6, 24: 1-5, 29: 1-5, 33: 1-8, 43: 1-6, 46: 5-9, 73: 1-4, 84: 5-10, 92: 2-9, 103: 1-6, 107: 2-6, 126: 1-6, 137: 5-10, 148: 4-11, 162: 9-11, 164: 1-11, 174: 1-4, 177: 1-3, 202: 1-11, 212: 1-6, 298: 1-5.
14. See also *Narrinai* 43: 4, 126: 6 and 343: 10.
15. *Narrinai* 24: 7-10, 243: 10.
16. See also *Akananuru* 250: 11, 270: 2.
17. See also *Narrinai* 15: 10, 38: 10.
18. Ibid. 49: 10.
19. See also *Narrinai* 320: 3 and *Kuruntokai* 354: 5 for an allusion to street.
20. George L. Hart, *Poets of the Tamil Anthologies: Ancient Poems of Love and War*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 139.
21. Ibid. p. 141.
22. Ibid. p. 152.
23. Ibid. p. 164.
24. A.K. Ramanujan, sel. and trans., *Poems of Love and War*: From the Eight Anthologies *and the Ten Long Poems of Classical Tamil,* Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1985, p. 149.
25. See also *Purananuru* 114, 115, 111, 113 and 118.
26. A.K. Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War*, p. 113.
27. See *Narrinai* 158: 8-10.
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The Idea of Delhi

Swapna Liddle*

The year 1911 marked an important point in the history of Britain's rule over India. It was when the colonial state took the important decision to shift the capital from Calcutta to Delhi, a move that was seen as "a bold stroke of statesmanship".[1]A recent study of the official correspondence through which this resolution was finally adopted, reveals the complex motivations that led to it, the most important being to craft an image of an empire that would be more acceptable to the Indians themselves, and thus help to counter the rising national movement.[2]

The move to Delhi, and the creation there of a new imperial capital city, was designed to place the British Empire at the end of the long line of empires that had ruled from this historic city. The symbolism of the gesture was immense. The Viceroy, Hardinge, justified it mainly in terms of what the city meant to Indians themselves, saying, "Delhi is still a name to conjure with. It is intimately associated in the minds of the Hindus with sacred legends which go back even beyond the dawn of history. ….To the Mohammedans it would be a source of unbounded gratification to see the ancient capital of the Moguls restored to its proud position as the seat of the Empire."[3]

When it came to choosing a site for the new capital that was to be built in Delhi, historical associations proved equally important. The town planning committee was explicitly told "that the new site must be Delhi – that is an area in close physical and general association with the present city of Delhi [by which they meant Shahjahanabad, or what we today call Old Delhi] and the Delhis of the past."[4]It was for this reason that an otherwise suitable site – the Naraina plain, was rejected. The latter comprised the area to the west of the Central Ridge – the tail end of the Aravali hills, an important natural feature. Though it was in many ways an ideal site, in the eyes of the Town Planning Committee, it suffered from one serious defect, "That is that this could not be considered to be Delhi. The plain is destitute of historical associations."[5]The Ridge, which flanked it, obstructed "all views of the older Delhis of the past."[6]

The site that was eventually picked was east of the Central Ridge, and an important consideration here was precisely that it was on the edge of, and overlooked, a number of Delhi's historic sites. It was pointed out that if one stood on the rocky eminence known as Raisina Hill and looked eastwards towards the Yamuna, from left to right in one sweep, one could see the seventeenth century city of Shahjahanabad; the fourteenth century city of Firozabad; the fifteenth century fortress known as Purana Qila, which was believed to be the site of the ancient city of Indraprastha; the massive fourteenth century fortress of Tughlaqabad; the cities of Jahanpanah and Siri, also of the fourteenth century; and finally the oldest extant Delhi – the eleventh century fortress of Lal Kot/Qila Rai Pithora. Apart from these historic 'cities of Delhi', there were a number of other monuments scattered between them – the shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya, Safdar Jung's mausoleum, the tombs of the Lodi dynasty, and the astronomical observatory known as Jantar Mantar.[7]

To those familiar with the geography of Delhi, this list of the sites that New Delhi would overlook, is clearly symbolic rather than realistic. It would be far-fetched to imagine that Tughlaqabad, over thirteen kilometers away as the crow flies, or even Lal Kot, nearly ten kilometers away, were exactly 'overlooked' by the new city. Moreover, in the early twentieth century, the site of Indraprastha was notional rather than real. A village called Indarpat was located in and around the Purana Qila – the villagers living in houses within the fort and cultivating the lands outside it. It was name and tradition rather than archaeological remains that linked this Indarpat to the Indraprastha of the ancient scriptures. Ancient texts spoke of a location beside the river Yamuna, where Indra, the king of the Gods, had performed sacrifices and worshiped Vishnu. It thus came to be known as Indraparastha. There was an another name

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linked with Indraprastha; it was said that this spot on the bank of the Yamuna was blessed by Vishnu, who called it 'Nigambodhak', where a knowledge of the Vedas could be gained simply by taking a dip in the waters. The sacred significance of Indraprastha was enhanced by accounts in the ancient epic, the *Mahabharata*, which told of the setting up of a city here by the Pandavas.[8]The specific identification of these locations with Delhi was strong in popular memory. Not only the village of Indarpat, but also the Nigambodh Ghat – the steps leading down to the waters of the Yamuna, which adjoined Shahjahanabad, strongly identified the neighbourhood of Delhi with the mythical past. British observers in the nineteenth century noted that the popular name for Purana Qila was *Indra ka khera*, literally, 'the plain of Indra'.[9]

The colonial rulers of the early twentieth the century saw a linear connection between the seat of the epic heroes to modern times, a trajectory of history that underlined the aura of Delhi as a centre of power. This, after all, had been the centre of power for many centuries, successively the seat of the Rajput and Tomar dynasties, followed by the Delhi Sultanate, which made it the capital of a vast empire. Finally, the Mughals too had made it their capital, particularly since the founding in 1648 of Shahjahanabad. In fact, the development of the aura of Delhi had been a long and often uneven historic process, the evidence of which can be found in a series of literary, epigraphic and numismatic sources.

For the British, an interesting aspect of the problem of identifying a site as Delhi, was the issue of the name itself. Even as the city of New Delhi was being planned, it had been pointed out by an old India hand that the spelling commonly used by the British, 'Delhi', and its consequent pronunciation, was wrong. The correct form was Dilli or Dehli. The government decided that it would continue to use Delhi, not only because there seemed to be no great public opinion against it, but also because having to make a choice between Dilli and Dehli might lead to controversy. This was because it was felt that though Persian writers invariably spelt it as Dehli, the older Indian texts and inscriptions spelt it Dilli. It was assumed that the former was a 'Muslim' preference and the latter a 'Hindu' one.[10]

The name Dilli, or actually its earlier form, 'Dhilli', is indeed older, but there is no evidence for any considerable antiquity associated with it. The suggestion that Ptolemy meant it, when he mentioned a place called 'Daidala', is nebulous. Equally so are the claims based on later traditions with unclear chronologies, that it was named after a Raja Dilip or a Raja Dhilu, during very ancient times.[11]Most sources attribute the founding of Dhilli to the Tomars, notably a Sanskrit inscription from 1328 CE (the Sarban inscription), which will be referred to later. Exactly when during the long rule of the Tomars this may be, is not clear. There are traditions that associate the founding of Dhilli with the Tomar ruler Anangpal I in the eighth century CE, but it is probable that the name specifically may not have been associated with the place till much later. Certainly the Jain texts, the earliest that deal with Delhi, often refers to it as 'Yoginipur'.[12]

The possible earliest reference to Dhilli is to be found in a Sanskrit inscription on the iron pillar of Mehrauli. This artefact, though dating from the Gupta period, has several later inscriptions. One of these is a short line, which is generally translated as "In Samvat 1109 [1052 CE], Anang Pal peopled Dilli".[13]The date is relevant, because it is generally believed that it coincides with the founding of what is taken to be the earliest fortified city of Delhi, that of Lal Kot, in Mehrauli. From this point onwards we are on firmer ground when associating the place with the name Dilli. One reason for this is the *Dilliwal* coins that are believed to have been in circulation in the twelfth century.[14]

Be that as it may, Dilli in the eleventh and twelfth centuries seems to have been politically a fairly minor town, associated with the Tomar dynasty. It had some additional importance for its connection with Jain religious teachers and patrons, since some of the Tomars and their prominent courtiers were themselves Jain patrons. One such was the rich merchant named Nattal Sahu, who may have also held an important position at the Tomar ruler's court. He is said to have commissioned a lavish temple around 1132 CE, the same time as the poet Shridhar composed a text called *Parshvanath Charit*, under his patronage. The importance of Delhi as a Jain centre increased later in the twelfth century, when the Jain preacher Jinachandra Suri's visit and death in the year 1165-66 CE, resulted in the founding of a noted shrine, known today as the Dadabari Jain temple.[15] Sometime around this time, that is, the mid-twelfth century, Delhi seems to have come under the overlordship of the Chauhan rulers, who had their capital at Ajmer.

But Delhi's rise to prominence as a centre of power can be dated from after the Turks conquered it in the last decade of the century, and then too it was a gradual process. The forces of Mohammad Ghuri, led by his general Qutbuddin Aibak, conquered Delhi in 1193 CE, sometime after the defeat of the Chauhan king Prithviraj, who had his capital at Ajmer. Both at Delhi and Ajmer, the conquering power marked its presence by the construction of monumental buildings, notably a large congregational mosque at either site. In the case of Delhi, an inscription over one of the doorways of the mosque proclaimed that it had been built partly out of the remains of a number of temples that had been destroyed in the immediate aftermath of the conquest. This mosque

was located at Mehrauli, within Anangpal's fortified city, Dhilli, which the Turks began to refer to as Dehli. They also built here another monumental structure – a large tower, more than seventy metres tall, similar to others built not long before by the Ghurids at Ghazni and Jam, in Afghanistan. Though nominally a *maznah*, a tower attached to a mosque to provide a height for the muezzin to give the call to prayer, it was in fact more by way of being a victory tower. Soon Dehli became the main headquarters of the Turk forces.

With the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, Delhi was transformed into the capital of a growing empire, particularly with the accession of Iltutmish in 1210 CE. This increased significance is quite clearly indicated by a very important epigraphic source, the so-called Palam Baoli inscription. This Sanskrit inscription, dating to August 1276 CE, was originally installed in a step well at Palam, close to Delhi's present-day airport. It commemorates the construction of the well by a local notable, and in the process, gives us some very interesting information.[16]

For one, it refers to the region as Haryana, literally, 'the land of Hariyanaka'. It informs us that this land was first ruled by the Tomars, then the Chauhans, and now is ruled by the Turks, whom it refers to as 'Sakas'. It lists some of the Sultanate rulers, and showers particular praise on the current one, Ghiyasuddin Balban (1266-1287 CE). The extent and influence of his empire is expressed in hyperbole – as encompassing territories from Afghanistan to Bengal to the far south of the subcontinent. Though these are fictitious claims, the idea simply is to suggest a mighty empire. The inscription then goes on to comment about Delhi, saying, "The metropolis of the lord of many hundred cities, the charming great city called Dhilli flourishes like a crescent-headed arrow on the side of his enemies. Like the earth, it is the storehouse of innumerable jewels; like the sky, a source of delight, ….like maya herself, the most bewitching. In that city of Dhilli renowned under the name Yoganipura…"[17]

Several conclusions can be drawn from these statements. Firstly, Delhi was simply the city, and had not yet given its name to the surrounding area, in contrast, say, to Mughal times, when there was a subah, or province, by the name too. Secondly, it hints that the significance of Delhi comes from it being the seat of an empire with great territorial extent. It is the "metropolis of the lord (the ruler, Balban) of many hundred cities"[18](presumably in the vast territories controlled by, him as enumerated earlier in the inscription). Lastly, though the city is described in suitably glowing terms, the author of the inscriptions feels the need to add that Dhilli is better known as Yoginipura. We can infer from this that the city that was growing in importance was the Delhi, which was the capital, the seat of power. Yet, this political importance was relatively new, and the place itself was probably still better known in its avatar as a Jain pilgrimage site and possibly a trade centre, Yoginipura. The Palam Baoli inscription also gives us some idea about the rather limited geographical extent of the Dhilli of its time. It informs us that Palam is five *kos* from Dhilli. This would suggest that Dhilli was viewed basically as being co-terminus with the Tomar fortification, known as Lal Kot, and the extension to it, which today goes by the name of Qila Rai Pithora (after Prithviraj Chauhan), but was probably built during early Sultanate times.

Another important Sanskrit inscription comes to us from the year 1327 CE and was originally found in Naraina, in the northwest part of modern day Delhi. Like the one at Palam, it too commemorates the construction of a well, by a prominent local merchant. In many of its details it is similar to the Palam Baoli inscription. Its preamble praises 'Dhilli' (again described as being in Hariyana) extravagantly, describing it as "covered with innumerable jewels, whence sin is expelled through the chanting of the Vedas by those who know the sacred lore which appears lovely with the tinkling of anklets of beautiful damsels."[19]Immediately after this description, the true significance of the city is emphasized, for it is said, "there is the famous king Mahammud Sahi, the crest jewel of all the rulers of the earth."[20]Clearly it is as the capital of a strong imperial ruler, in this case Muhammad Tughlaq, that Dhilli derives its importance. An interesting detail of the Naraina inscription is that it locates Naraina with respect to Indraprastha, saying that the former lies to the west of the latter.

The last of the relevant Sanskrit inscriptions dates from 1328 CE and is famous as the Sarban stone inscription, having been found in the village of Sarban Sarai, the area now covered by Rajpath in central Delhi. It again refers to the region being Hariyana, which is described as being "like heaven on earth".[21]It talks of Sarban as being located in the *pratigana* (or division) of Indraprastha. In addition, it affirms that the Tomars built the city of Dhilli.[22]It is not without interest that the references to Indraprastha in the Sarban and Naraina inscriptions are in terms that suggest that it was a relatively minor territorial/revenue division. There is certainly never any mention of its connections to the mythic past, or any indulgence of hyperbole such as is employed in the context of Delhi. It was relevant to mention Indraprastha only as a referrant for locations that lay within its jurisdiction – Sarban and Naraina. It is probably for that reason that the Palam Baoli inscription does not mention Indraprastha. Neither is it mentioned in an inscription of 1291 CE from Sonepat, which nevertheless also mentions Hariyana as the region, and Dhillika' (another variation of Dilli/Dhilli) as the capital.[23]

While Dilli or Dehli was growing in importance as a seat of power, its spiritual significance was being given a new dimension. During the early years of the Delhi Sultanate, it became the centre for the charismatic Chishti Sufis, starting with Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, the spiritual successor of Muinuddin Chisti, the founder of the order in India, who made Ajmer his base. The Chishti sources inform us that Muinuddin Chishti ordered his disciple Qutubuddin to settle himself in Delhi and minister to the people there. Incidentally, this itself gives us a clue as to growing relative importance of Delhi vis a vis Ajmer. Though the latter had been the capital of the Chauhans, and early on had merited a Jami Masjid on the same scale as that of Delhi, it was soon superseded by Delhi, which the Turks adopted as their centre of power.

Qutubuddin Kaki settled himself in Delhi in the early thirteenth century, in the neighbourhood of the capital at Mehrauli, the site of Anangpal Tomar's 'Dhilli', which had become the Turk headquarters. Over the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Sufi aura over the city grew, with spiritual descendants of Qutubuddin, viz. Nizamuddin Auliya and Nasiruddin Mahmud continuing the tradition in Delhi. The spiritual charisma of the Sufis, the Chistis and in time other orders as well, would gradually grow to the extent that the city began to be referred to by the epithet, *Hazrat e Dehli*, the 'revered' Delhi. The other term that we know of that refers to the spiritual status of Delhi is that of *Qubba e Islam*, literally, the 'sanctuary of Islam'. This was partly in view of the changes in Central and West Asia, where Mongol incursions had led to the destruction of older centres of Islamic spirituality, scholarship, and political power.[24]At the same time, Delhi's significance as a centre for Jain scholarship and worship continued, and curiously, the Jain texts, even up to the sixteenth century, continued to use the name Yoginipura in preference to Dilli.[25]

From the late thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, the concept of Delhi as capital underwent one further modification. There was an erosion of the exclusive association of 'Delhi', in the sense of the capital, with Anangpal's city at Mehrauli. An early step in this process was the founding of a new settlement around a palace built by the young ruler Qaiqubad (reigned 1287-90 CE), and his moving to this location from Mehrauli. This palace was on the banks of the Yamuna, at Kilugarhi (today the village of Kilokari). Kilugarhi's connection with imperial power was further strengthened when Jalaluddin Khilji, who was vary of opposing factions in the city, chose to be crowned at Kilugarhi and made it his capital for a while. With the ruler establishing himself there, it was not surprising that his own nobles, important personages, traders etc. were also prompted to settle here, and it began to be popularly called *sheher e nau*, the 'new city'.[26]

Jalaluddin's successor Alauddin founded another centre, Siri, where he not only quartered his army but soon made it his own capital as well. Following this, we have further cities that were founded in the course of the fourteenth century and became the capitals of successive rulers –Tughlaqabad by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, Jahanpanah by Mohammad Tughlaq, and Firozabad by Firoz Shah Tughlaq. Each of these was located in the vicinity of the original Delhi, within the geographic area known to us as the Delhi triangle – bounded on the east by the Yamuna, and on the west and the south by two distinct sections of the Ridge. Though each of these cities bore a distinct name, the original Dehli soon began, certainly by the mid-fourteenth century, to be called *Dehli e Kuhna*, i.e., 'Old Delhi'.[27]Implicit in this change of name was the idea that the name Dehli itself moved to each of these new cities, in turn as each became the capital of the empire.

The first two centuries of the Delhi Sultanate consolidated the idea of Delhi as a source of imperial power. This aura of political and spiritual potency proved to be remarkably long lasting, persisting even though the capital would shift away from Delhi for a long period in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Sikandar Lodi (reigned 1489-1517) moved the capital to Agra, but was buried in Delhi in the garden known to us today as Lodi Garden. The Lodis were soon to be replaced by a new power, the Mughals, who were to found a new, long-lived dynasty. The founder of the dynasty, Babur, wrote in his memoir soon after he had defeated Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat in 1526 CE – "the capital of all Hindustan is Delhi."[28]It is telling that soon after the decisive battle, before moving on to Ibrahim's capital, Agra, Babur visited Delhi. Here, he tells us, he paid visits to the tombs of several previous rulers – Sikandar and Bahlol Lodi, Balban, Alauddin Khilji, and it appears, those of the Tughlaq rulers, since he visited both Tughlaqabad and Hauz Khas, where they are buried. In addition to these visits, which seem like pilgrimages to political shrines, he also visited the *dargah* of Nizamuddin Auliya, and the Qutub Minar. His short stay in Delhi was concluded with an important ritual sealing his new sovereign status in north India – the inclusion of his name in the *khutba*, or sermon at the Friday prayer in the Jami Masjid, the congregational mosque.[29]

Though Babur moved on to Agra, his son and successor, Humayun, would soon base himself in Delhi, founding a new city, called Dinpanah (at the core of which was what is now called Purana Qila), in 1533 CE. For the next three decades or so Delhi would again be a capital, under Humayun, the Suri rulers, and Akbar, until the last moved the capital once again to Agra. There is important evidence that shows that Delhi's association

with imperial power did not diminish, despite the capital moving away. A Sanskrit inscription from Central India dating to 1607 CE, the reign of Jahangir, attests to this fact. This refers to the emperor's father, Akbar, as *Dillishvara*, the 'lord of Delhi', even though it had been many decades since Akbar had moved the capital away from Delhi.[30]Jahangir himself, who never reigned from Delhi, was described as *Shahanshah e Dehli*, that is, the emperor of Delhi, in a Persian inscription on the Salimgarh bridge in Delhi, dated 1621 CE.[31]

Cynthia Talbot, in a recent work tracing the origins of the dominant narrative of Prithviraj Chauhan as the 'last Hindu king' of Delhi, says, "In the Indic world, royal cities were often thought to be imbued with a special spiritual potency that conferred political strength on their ruling dynasties – accordingly, the Sisodiya kings called themselves the lords of Chittor, the centuries-old political centre of the Mewar region, long after its destruction and their relocation to the city of Udaipur."[32]This was no doubt the case in Delhi, which by Akbar's time had attained the status of the undisputed source of political legitimacy. Talbot has shown how, by the sixteenth century, Delhi was being projected as the capital of Prithviraj Chauhan, as evident in Abul Fazl's *Ain e Akbari* and the oldest extant manuscript of the *Prithviraj Raso*, the well-known epic narrative of the life of Prithviraj. This was despite the fact that the Chauhans may at best have exercised dominion over Delhi for a while, and it is certain that Ajmer was their capital.[33]

There was a reason for retrospectively substituting Delhi for Ajmer as the capital of a king who was famous for his heroic resistance to the Turk conquerors in the late twelfth century. No doubt, by the sixteenth century, such was the aura of Delhi, that it was inconceivable that any other city could have been the capital of the kingdom that was seen as the immediate predecessor of the Delhi Sultanate. Abul Fazl went one step further; not only linking Delhi to Prithviraj, but further back in time to Indraprastha. According to Talbot, this was not simply an idiosyncrasy of Abul Fazl's *Ain*. It was an integral part of the Mughals', particularly Akbar's, strategy for imperial rule over India – "The origins of the city were represented as lying in the mists of mythic time, while its modern history was traced via the king-lists up to the contemporary Mughal era. By virtue of their control over India's oldest political center, the Mughal emperor could thus be depicted as standing at the end of a long continuum of power in the Indian subcontinent."[34]In fact, probably for this very reason it is not hard to understand why Jahangir's son Shahjahan, when he wished to make a truly grand imperial gesture, chose to found a new city at Delhi and make it his capital.

Abul Fazl's understanding of the history of Delhi was to have a long legacy, one that has influenced many other later writers down to the present. Two important texts of the first half of the nineteenth century, were Sangin Beg's *Sair ul Manazil*, and Syed Ahmad Khan's *Asar us sanadid*, which were accounts of the history, and monuments of Delhi. Both began the story of Delhi's rulers with Indraprastha of the Panadavas. Syed Ahmad Khan also used the traditional respectful epithet for the city – "*khak e pak hazrat e Dehli*" – literally, 'sacred ground, the revered Delhi'.[35]

By the early nineteenth century the British East India Company was in control over Delhi as well as large parts of north India. Though the Mughal Empire had long lost any practical meaning, its symbolic significance as the source from which legitimacy to rule India flowed, was still remarkably intact. Akbar and his successors had ensured that Mughal Empire had established itself to a remarkable extent as the legitimate rulers of India, in large parts of the country, in the eyes of the people. The Company was only one among the many powers in India that continued to issue coins in the name of the Mughal emperor well into the early decades of the century. British observers noted that part of the importance of Delhi lay in it being the seat of the Mughal emperor, but it was not the only reason for it. There was an "importance attached to the name of Delhi from the estimation in which the city is held".[36]

It must of course be noted, that for the nineteenth century person, whether someone born in Delhi like Syed Ahmad Khan, or the recently arrived British, the name Delhi meant more or less the area demarcated by the walls of Shahjahan's mid-seventeenth century city, Shahjahanabad. Syed Ahmad wrote in *Asarussanadid*, '*jis jagah ke ab Dilli shahar Shahjahan ka basaya hua abaad hai*', which can be translated as, 'where now the city of Delhi, founded by Shahjahan, is located.'[37]Clearly in this sense Delhi meant the last effective capital, Shahjahanabad.

It is also worth noting that geographically speaking, the old city founded by Anangpal was not referred to by nineteenth century writers such as Syed Ahmad Khan or Sangin Beg as 'Dehli', or even *Dehli e Kuhna*, but simply as Mehrauli, the name of the locality. The implication long had been that the location of Delhi itself moved, with each new capital that was established. In addition, it seems that the idea of 'Old Delhi' was also a fluid one. In many nineteenth century British sources we find the area around Purana Qila being referred to as 'Old Delhi'. Purana Qila of course was the popular name for Humayun's fort of Dinpanah. *Purana Qila*, literally, 'Old Fort', was simply a reference to the fact that this was the fort immediately preceding the city of Shahjahanabad.

For many centuries, the conception of 'Delhi' had been different depending on context. In the ordinary sense, Delhi referred to the city, which was the current seat of power. On the other hand, as soon as one spoke of the city in a historical context, its lineage even beyond the Tomars, back to the mythical Indraprastha, was invoked. Thus, at one level, Syed Ahmad's idea of Delhi was one that included all of the 'older Delhis', even while he identified the Delhi current in his time with Shahjahanabad. This situation was the result of several factors, which have been mentioned above. In addition, there was the fact that the historic layers of the city were spread out over a fairly extensive area of the Delhi triangle. Each new era of construction began afresh in a new location, rather than adding a new layer to the existing, as is common in most other historic cities.

It was this complex legacy that the British inherited, when they first sought in the early twentieth century to move their capital in India to what was seen by many as 'the' capital of Hindustan. They knew they were building one in a long line of cities of Delhi, and therefore, chose to pragmatically name it New Delhi, in preference to 'Raisina' and 'Delhi South', which had also been suggested. It is also no surprise that as soon as the British capital in Delhi was built, Shahjahanabad, which even in maps as recent as the early twentieth century, was being referred to as 'Modern Delhi', was immediately relegated to the status of 'Old Delhi', the name by which it is known today. Even today, an ambiguity in the popular mind with regard to nomenclature exists. While we know what Old Delhi is, what exactly are the limits of New Delhi? It is ironic that listed addresses of even an official body such as the office of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Mehrauli, refers to its location as 'Mehrauli, New Delhi'.

NOTES

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Research Articles

Imperial Hygiene and Popular Culture in the Colonial Hill Stations in the Indian Himalaya

Queeny Pradhan*

Introduction

The nineteenth century European colonialism introduced wide-ranging changes in social, cultural, economic and political spheres in Asia and elsewhere.[1]Recent researches show that the hills occupied a critical position under the British Empire and their concerns on sanitation reveal the anxieties of the Empire in their Himalayan outposts. The present article primarily focuses on the introduction of western medicine and public health policies in the region of Himalaya, in particular, Indian hill stations of Simla and Darjeeling.

The article has two sections: the first section studies the introduction of the western notions of medicine, health and hygiene in the two hill stations. The second section explores the tension between western medical practices and traditional belief systems in the hills.

Hills as the Natural Hygeia Stations

These hill regions were appropriated as the places of natural health, where the Europeans would find everlasting happiness and good health. It is suggested in the naming of a few sites in the hills as 'Elysium' and constant reference to these spaces as the abodes of 'goddess Hygeia' where only the blessed few were to be allowed. The British continuously linked the Greco-Roman past to its imperial tradition.

These references provide an insight into the minds of the colonists, who seem to be clear that these mountain stations would be for a select few English or European community who would have the rights of passage to these places. For the subject population these 'hill stations', that is the prime sites of the stations, such as the 'Mall', the European residences, the official residences and offices, were out of bounds, except for menial work. A strict policy of segregation and of inclusion and exclusion was followed to provide an entry to these health stations.

The white settlers in India found the mountains to be perfect for carving out ideal spaces where the privileged ruling elite would find haven in recreating their 'home' environs in an alien habitat. Multiple imaginations, aspirations and dreams jostled for space in these hill stations creating heterotopias or the 'power of juxtaposing in a single real space diverse spaces and locations that are incompatible with each other.'[2] The arrested trajectory of the various members of the privileged class only enhanced a sense of security in the closed environs of the mountains, embedded with artificially created physical structures like the Mall, the gardens, the walks, the 'Swiss style cottages', grand public monuments, theatres, the band-stand, clubs, and so on. Indian hill stations were appropriated through an emotional language of involvement, emerging as spaces of many-sided Utopias, fantasies and myths from Europe and England in particular: an Arcadia, an Eden or an Elysium; an economic *entrepot*, a commercial and frontier outpost or a buffer; a Hygeia station or a station of health, an asylum or a refuge, an oasis amidst the parched heat and dust of the Indian plains, rife with malignant diseases; or a romantic sojourn in the panoramic and pristine landscapes, where nature's bounties abounded in full glory with an appeal of the picturesque, the sublime and the mystical omniscience. The settler colonists lapped up these utopias with a certain degree of fetish and frenzy to mark them out from the plains, in particular, the *tarai*, a malarial outpost at the foothills of the mountains – the places of dystopia. O'Malley writing on Darjeeling divided the region into two distinct tracts: the *tarai* and the hills. He describes *tarai* 'as an unhealthy marshy tract, formerly covered by dense malarious jungle'. The hills, by contrast, had beautiful scenery and the air was dry and bracing. The climate was very similar to England with two 'delightful' periods of spring and

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autumn. The European and English settlers never weary of pointing out these polarities between the plains and the hills, between the healthy and the unhealthy spaces. These may seem like simple binaries in the manner in which they were played out in the imperial records of the times, but a complicated factor emerges in the last few decades of the nineteenth century, when there seems to be a breakdown of such binaries.

It is interesting to see how the English and European travellers of the nineteenth century responded to the Indian mountains. Mountains evoked a sense of delight, primarily due to its temperate climate. There are odes to the glory of these mountainous sites. I quote:

Darjeeling, health-restoring clime !
Arcadian, Himalayan Queen!
Refreshing breezes round thee chime,
Jocundity rules thy demesne.
Elysium cure for toil-worn brain,
Emollient balm for wearied soul,
Locality where all may gain
Immunity from dull control.
Nirvana's peace these hills bestow
Give rest, like calm, Celestial Snow ![3]

The regenerative potential of the mountains underlined the limitations of the plains. J. D. Herbert emphasises both the prejudices about the climate of the orient and the images of indolence:

It is not so much the mere temperature of a mountain station (though that is a great point), that renders it [Darjeeling] so delightful a retreat to the debilitated Europeans, who for twenty years or more have suffered under the fervours of an Indian sun. There is a lightness and buoyancy in the air or rather in our spirits, in mountain regions, that to him, who has doled away years in apathetic indolence, inevitably induced by the climate of the plains, and particularly of Calcutta, feels like taking a new lease of life, or rather like passing into the new and superior state of existence. Instead of that listlessness in which we of the city of palaces pass our lives, apparently insensible even to extraordinary stimuli, the dweller in the mountains feels an energy and vigour, a power of exertion and a freshness of feeling, which is not found in the plains.[4]

In 1828, Captain Lloyd and J. W. Grant found the climate around Darjeeling ideal for a hill station. In the 1830s, Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General in Council, assigned Colonel Lloyd the task of negotiating with the Rajah of Sikkim. In exchange, the *Rajah* was offered either land or money.[5] The process of the possession of Simla was initiated during the Gorkha war in 1815-1816.[6] Simla was projected as a detached frontier of the British empire in North India, an untouched heaven isolated from the plains, in which the nineteenth-century notions of the picturesque and the romantic found complete expression: 'Here in the hills where the Gods of Nature still reign and are worshipped, the Pipes of Pan are heard calling as of old, played by herdsman or peasant.'[7]Jacquemont's representation, ninety years earlier, also underlined this vision: 'The Officer (Captain Kennedy) charged with political services of this extremity of the empire which was acquired only fifteen years ago, bethought himself, nine years since, of leaving his palace in plains during the heat of terrible summer, camping under the shade of cedars.'[8]

Health and Sanitation

From the late nineteenth century, medical science and sanitation took great strides. The interest in hygiene and sanitation and the newfound concern with public health in the metropolis found its way into the colonial policies in the hills. The emergence of such anxieties was closely related to developments in the colony. The nature of the colonial economy and the ecological changes brought about under colonialism had far-reaching effects on public health. Improvements in communications, such as the expansion of irrigation canals and the construction of railway embankments had created favourable habitat for malaria-carrying mosquitoes in India.[9]

Ideological and hegemonic considerations played a role too, in inflating preoccupation with health. Beneath the garb of medical objectivity and talk of sanitary sciences, by the late nineteenth century, the Europeans considered themselves morally and socially superior to the subject populace. Christian missionaries, in particular, embodied the social and cultural prejudices of the age, while Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest gave further credence to the idea of the 'innate' superiority of the 'white man'.[10]This aspect was linked to that of the white man's burden to civilise the rest.

Technological and scientific advancement of the Occident, with its increasing scientific understanding of the causes of the disease, bred contempt among the colonial authorities for what they perceived to be fatalism, superstition and barbarity of the indigenous populace. This prejudice is eloquently articulated in a reference in the district gazetteer about the important supplementary role of the Church of the Scottish Mission in Darjeeling in the spread of western medical aid, thereby furthering the civilizing mission of a white man and a Christian. The following statement underlines the prevailing notion of the colonial evangelists: 'This mission works among the Nepalese, both of Darjeeling district and Nepal, whose only idea of curing the body is by having the evil spirit to which illness is attributed, exorcised by a Nepali *Jhampri* or sorcerer.'[11]

There was systematic marginalisation of the traditional knowledge by the claims of superior knowledge and the power of the colonial machinery, which became the disseminator of western medical knowledge while checking the traditional healing practices. The European observers in the hills described charms, magic, incantation, sacrifice to Kali and other goddesses of malignant diseases as means of curing the sick among the indigenes. C. A. Bayly has pointed out that the Europeans 'discarded' much of religious remedies as part of the 'popular lore'. In the indigenous medical system, whether Islamic, Brahmanic or popular, 'Religious practices and bodily regimen were of as much importance as the remedies themselves.'[12]The imperial practice of abstracting and marginalising the supposedly perceived non-medical methods shows a lack of proper understanding of the indigenous medical systems. The demonic figures and chants were represented as part of the superstition and the religious belief of the Lepchas and other people residing in that area.[13]

The chants and incantations were considered to be 'bereft of medical knowledge'[14].This reflected more accurately European perceptions of what constituted 'medicine'. The local population was not educated about the efficacy of the western medical system. Instead, there were forceful impositions leading to mistrust.

Main principles of the imperial medical discourse were applied to local inhabitants and 'native' settlements between 1880 and 1930, as it was gradually realised that the security of the military and civil personnel could only be ensured by the energetic state intervention, even in the 'black' areas. Recourse to state power to enforce sanitary and health measures led to the most comprehensive legislative enactment in the colonies. The British authorities in the hill stations reflected the concern with the public health in setting up of a spate of municipal committees, improvement committees, sanitary committees, and so on. Surveillance and curbs were imposed on Indian practices. Western medicine was supplied at reduced rates to the native dispensaries to popularise its usage among the Indians: 'The Governor General is pleased to authorise the issue of European medicine to the Branch dispensary...on a much moderate scale as may be found necessary.'[15]

Source: H.H. Risley, *The Gazetteer of Sikkim*, 1894.

The general attitude of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' colonial authorities was one of an increasing suspicion and fear of catching indigenous diseases like cholera, plague and malaria. Racial segregation and location of the European residential areas away from 'native' bazaars, townships, slums and coolie lines became 'a general rubric of the sanitary administration set up by the imperial government for all [its] tropical colonies.'[16]A number of medico-topographical surveys, for instance, the account of the medical topography of Western Rajputana States written by Lieutenant Colonel Adams attempted to master the knowledge of that area in a medical context. In it sections on flora; Lieutenant Colonel Adams listed the supposed medical benefits in the hope of finding 'novel remedies'.[17]As we shall see the 1875 cholera epidemic at Simla made it imperative for the imperial medical men to break the mould of complacency and look for remedies in the indigenous medicine systems and seek the cooperation of the indigenes.[18]

The ideas of race and class marked the discourse of health. A party of sepoys under Dr. Chapman suffered from dysenteric attacks and intermittent fever in 1836. Dr. Chapman held their cultural habits responsible for these diseases:

> The Sepoys certainly appeared obnoxious to disease, but taking into consideration that these men(all Hindoos) were suddenly deprived of their usual diet, and by necessity compelled to use one of a less nutritious nature, the impossibility of varying it, their custom of cooking only once a day, their penurious habits allowing them a bare sufficiency of food, owing to the high price of their provisions, the very imperfect shelter afforded them in common with all the party, during the coldest weather, and the discontent they all manifested, sufficient cause will appear for their having been the greatest, and latterly the only sufferers.[19]

The habits of the Indians came under attack for their un-acclimatisation to the hill climes: 'Natives of the low

country, and especially Bengalees, are far from enjoying the climate as Europeans do, being liable to sharp attacks of fever and ague, from which the poorly clad natives are not exempt. It is, however, difficult to estimate the effects of exposure upon the Bengalees, who sleep on the bare and often damp ground, and adhere, with characteristic prejudice, to the attire of a torrid climate, and to a vegetarian diet, under skies to which these are least of all adapted.'[20]In comparison to the Bengalees, Hooker describes pork to be 'a staple dish' of the Lepchas, along with the dish of elephants 'and all kinds of animal food.'[21]

Some medical experts speaking in defence of 'health resorts' also used the racial-cultural explanation. The discourse is both about the difference between 'them' and 'us' as much as about the distinct demarcation between the temperate and the tropics. Diseases were identified along racial lines. The Lepchas were found to be free from the diseases like goitre that afflicted the Bhooteeas and the Bhotanese as the Lepchas used the shoulder strap and not the head in carrying loads. The use of head strap induced the 'congestion of the laryngeal vessels.'[22]Elephantiasis, ophthalmic and leprosy, 'the scourges of the hot climates are rarely known.'[23]The European complaint of the liver and bowel diseases was unknown among the hill people.[24] The 'natives' coming from the plains were found to be susceptible to fever, dysentery, rheumatism and smallpox. The Europeans identified the diseases that afflicted them frequently as anasarca, bronchitis, cynanche tonsils, diarrhea, hepatitis, paralysis and syphilis.[25]For the Europeans, Darjeeling was 'good for rheumatic affection' but not for pulmonary complaints.[26]

The Municipal Regulations

The hill stations, as recreated spaces for tightly knit and stratified ruling elite, required regulation and surveillance to maintain such an 'ideal' space where Europeans could flourish. From the middle of the nineteenth century, the Municipality played an important role in establishing the politico-moral hegemony of the British rule in the hills. Municipal governance involved control and order, both for the rulers and the ruled. It emerged most clearly in the manner in which the municipal authorities regulated the local bazaars and the inhabitants residing in them. The municipal regulations reflect the oriental discourse at the core of the policies pursued by the colonisers. We find a consciousness of the 'other' continually surfacing in the colonial texts at various levels. There was a traditional European association of blackness with filth and dirt since the medieval times.[27]By the same logic, open spaces, with plenty of air and sunlight and lush vegetation in the hill - was invested with the connotation of health, wholesomeness and security.

The municipal authorities and the officials invariably pointed the accusing finger at the Indian settlements in the hill stations. Cunningham, the Sanitary Commissioner of India, blamed the haphazardly planned indigenous bazaars and the residential pockets of the indigenous population for spreading unhealthiness in the hill stations. In Mount Abu the British authorities complained about the 'native' habits: 'The night soil, in order to save trouble, is not un-frequently thrown into gullies and behind the rocks, and natives instead of resorting to latrines are inclined to relieve nature amongst the rocks and bushes under cover of broken ground. It is found impossible at present to keep up a staff of watchmen sufficient to prevent the committing of such nuisances.'[28]The prejudice was in keeping with the late nineteenth century notion about the indigenes as unhygienic, unkempt, dirty, used to living in cramped and over-crowded surroundings unmindful of the filth and stench, with no air and proper ventilation, in dark and dank houses that were perceived by British medical opinion to be an important source for the outbreak of epidemics like plague and cholera. The sanitary authorities constantly instructed the residents to construct buildings with spatial arrangements to 'ensure free circulation of air, or with respect to their ventilation or drainage.'[29]In the hills, the bazaar was just below the Mall and the residential settlements of the Europeans. Any outbreak of epidemic was bound to catch the Europeans in its grip, as the European enclave was not very far due to the constriction of land in the hills.

Apart from the indigenes from the plains, there was a constant attack on the Indian bazaars cum settlements in the hills. The description of the native quarters of the Chandmari bazaar in Darjeeling, occupying 44 acres of space, is as follows:

> Squalid looking huts with mat roofs, low, unsightly, and in most cases, overcrowded. Some are in a fair state of repair, others are very dilapidated, and few possess walls strong enough to bear iron or even single roofing. These dwellings in present conditions are unhealthy for the inhabitants and give the native town a discreditable appearance.[30]

The absence of the drainage in Chandmari was a source of the threat. There was a concern with the proximity of the 'native' merchant dwellings, shopkeepers and poor Europeans to the marketplaces. The local municipal authorities reasoned that any spread of epidemic would quickly engulf the whole population as the butcher shop (from where the servants of the Europeans bought meat) and the Kutchery had above them the government post-office and the telegraph office. In the level above them were the European and the 'native' dwelling houses and shops; and at the top were the houses of the wealthier European residents, in the form of covenanted service

officers and the army top brass. An epidemic in Chandmari might easily spread through the station, and also in the interest of Darjeeling as a sanatorium, the healthiness of the 'native' quarter was an object of vital importance. The construction of a new European hospital just above Chandmari would also be susceptible to infection. Many of the houses were irregularly constructed. Mat roofs and walls of dwellings were extremely prone to catch fire quickly. Both conservancy and sanitation required quick attention in Darjeeling as 'a work of public utility.'[31]

Cunningham strongly condemned the main bazaar of Simla in 1865. Later, the mushrooming of the small 'native' bazaars around its vicinity, such as Sanjauli, Kasumpti, Boileaugunj, Bara Simla Bazaar, Chota Simla Bazaar, Lakkar Bazaar, became a cause of grave concern to the well being of Simla station in the eyes of the local municipality. Although the municipal committee geared up to thwart any outbreak of an epidemic, it found to its alarm that immediately on their boundary: 'there exists in the Sanjauli bazaar a most fearfully suitable *nidus* for development of this and they greatly fear that unless stringent measures be taken to enforce sanitation there and clean the place of the great number of people now living there, huddled together in a most dangerous manner.'[32]In the Sanjauli bazaar, British authorities identified the labourers' habits as a matter of concern. A British official reveals his class snobbery and a bias against manual labourers, whose drinking of polluted water, due to water scarcity, was explained in following terms: 'Dirty and ignorant, they are the very class in which any epidemic would be likely first to develop itself and to inflict the severest injury.'[33]The labourers lived in the already crowded Sanjauli area, where the residential and the working space commingled. British officials found the area littered with filth and sweepings. In some places, the inspection team was disgusted by the habits of the people, who used the top of their dwellings for nature's purpose. The miasma from the place was felt to be the hotbed of the disease.

The Indigenous Response

A study of the epidemics significantly brings into focus the tensions that emerge between the imperial authorities and the indigenous population. It also reveals the anxieties of the Empire and the contradictions in their medical discourse. The Simla Epidemic of 1875 highlighted the 'structures' and the 'mentalite' or the 'consciousness of a society' as I. J. Catanach argues. He feels that:

> Epidemics have a dramatic quality to them. An epidemic, by definition, has to spread, often to spread rapidly, over a comparatively wide area. Communication, a 'connexion' is involved. People frequently try to flee from an epidemic; movement is involved again. An epidemic strikes with little or no warning. For this reason it always gives rise to fears, which are transmitted from one locality to another: again the element of 'connexion' is apparent. And fears generated by an epidemic often lead to a search for culprits, human and suprahuman… [34]

This fear proved correct, as we shall see below. Some issues come to the fore while going through the official records and other documents of the colonial government regarding the 1875 cholera epidemic in Simla. The cholera epidemic began in June 1875 in Simla, lasting for about 46 days (from 26th June to 11th August).[35]

A close study brings in focus various medical and imperial concerns. Nowhere in the official records is any mention made of how the indigenous populace treated and tackled the disease, except for a stray reference that the indigenous inhabitants were used to mild choleric infection and that diarrhoea seemed to be endemic. It shows British concern with the epidemic rather than endemic diseases and the stress on curative over preventive measures for diseases. The British vulnerability to the tropical illness was a source of concern, especially in the context of the claimed racial superiority of the British over the indigenous populace, typecast as inferior, indolent, and unhygienic. Western knowledge about the tropical disease was still uncertain and cholera seemed like a 'new disease'.[36]Many international conferences on cholera disease were held, at times on the initiative of the imperial authorities. The British cholera commission(*Commission Pleniers*), held in Constantinople in 1866, seriously discussed the probable invasion of the British Isles by cholera through the ports or the Europeans going back to England from the tropics. The concern with public health assumed a new dimension with the enlargement of colonial interests leading to the contact of Europeans with different and unknown habitats of the tropical colonies spread over Africa and Asia. The *Commission Pleniers* of 1866 concluded: 'With due precaution as to the ventilation, scrupulous cleanliness and attention to the disposed clothes and other effects, and of discharge of the sick, the patient can be handled without undue risk to those employed and that, therefore, nursing in cholera is less dangerous than some other diseases.'[37]The Commission strongly recommended quarantines and *cordons sanitaires*.

David Arnold is perhaps correct in inferring that the tenacity with which the Indian-British Doctors and the Sanitary Commissioner clung to the contrary opinions from those prevailing in Europe about disease emanation, had more to do with an underlying belief that India was 'distinct epidemiologically'.[38]The blame was put on the superhuman agency in the form of the idiosyncrasy in the climate and the geography of India.

Apart from the 'superhuman' agency, the indigenous

populace came under the microscopic scrutiny of the imperial eyes. Despite doubts over the contagiousness of the disease, English authorities followed strict segregation. The quarantine and the door-to-door checks for the patients by the police search parties were carried out in the bazaars and the indigenous settlements. Intrusive and oppressive state interference led to resistance on the part of the indigenes. Either the inhabitants fled, or as the Deputy Commissioner McMahon reported, the people hid the premonitory symptoms of cholera to avoid hospitals. The quarantine or the isolation in the temporary cholera hospitals, Major Adley observed, was looked upon with suspicion and "met with stubborn resistance". Rumours aggravated the tension between the people and the authorities. A cry was raised throughout the district that these arrangements had been made 'with the objective of supplying the government with Mummy Oil (*moomai ka tel*).'[39]

The tensions also surfaced between the local chiefs and the imperial authorities. The *Rana* of Kothi, under whose jurisdiction the Sanjauli bazar came, was severely indicted by the imperial authorities, to prevent overcrowded dwellings to be used as human habitation; to establish urinals and latrines in convenient places; to prevent stabling of animals in human dwellings; to ensure better supervision over the sweepers; to set apart a place for the deposit of surface sweeping and litter and see to it that the water supply was not contaminated by the 'natives'. The Lieutenant Commissioner arrogantly suggests issuing a strong warning to the *Rana* of Kothi that 'if he desires to save Kasauli from permanent annexation, he must forthwith carry out' the rules sanctioned.[40]

Dr. Adley's theory that the disease spread from the bazaar was unfounded. The bazaar was certainly filthy, and the disease hovered in its vicinity, and it would have been very reassuring to find that the disease could be traced distinctly to its bad sanitary arrangements. But the very reverse was the case. Indeed the most extraordinary feature in the whole outbreak was the comparative immunity of the bazaar. The population there could not be less than 10, 000, yet among them, only 89 cases occurred, while there were 217 cases in other areas.

How were the authorities going to explain the breakout of the epidemic in a popular health resort that was supposedly a haven from the malignant diseases of the plains? In the light of the previous discussion about the natural advantages of the hill stations, its bracing climate and the refreshingly pure air, the spread of the epidemic in the hills seemed iconsistent. It was not easy for the municipal and the central authorities to conveniently blame the climate, which they had themselves represented positively. Imperial writers like Buck came up with an ingenious explanation suggesting that the atmospheric changes in the plains rose up and combined with the miasma and effusion of the bazaar, in particular: 'At this time(May to July), Westerly winds blow from the deserts of the plains, filling the air with fine particles of dust and raising clouds of triturated filth from the bazaars underlying the Mall.'[41]

But it is likely that the epidemic originated as the adverse repercussion of the development in the hill regions from the early nineteenth century and more so from the time they became summer capitals. Development affected flora and fauna of the hills. It led to the disappearance of forests of timbre in Darjeeling and Simla to provide for the massive influx of population and cater to the needs of the imperial summer capitals. This impaired the ecological balance.

Conclusion

Arnold links the issue of medicine, disease and public sanitation in the late nineteenth century to the interests of burgeoning imperialism.[42]Developments in the field of medicine led to an increasing gulf between the indigenous practices and the new imperial knowledge about the aetiology of disease. Medicine served other purposes for the empire. Medicine, Arnold argued, became an important tool in the armoury of imperialism to legitimize themselves as paternal and benevolent rulers.[43]

By the late nineteenth century, the imperial penetration reached new heights and efforts for consolidation of the empire marked its every move. Violation of the private space of the indigenes with regular impunity by the police and the municipal search parties; the forceful segregation of the choleric and other patients suffering from contagious diseases in separate hospitals, completely disregarded the sensibilities of the subject populace. The cultural and social contrast between the colonised and the rationale of the late nineteenth-century colonial medical science was stark. For instance, Indians tended to their sick in the home, while European practice advocated their removal to the sanitised and isolated hospitals, far removed from the presence of the family.

The underlying social tensions and conflict between the state and its subject emerge during an epidemic, like the one at Simla in 1875. The Indians met the state's highhandedness in its policy of curtailment of the disease with suspicion and resistance to western medication. The imperial health and sanitary system pushed the local populace in a position of invisibility, and it is at such crisis points that the simmering undercurrents surface. One sees a clash between the modern and pre-modern healing and medical practices, but instead of persuasion and rational education, force and power were used to undermine the indigenous belief system.

NOTES

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Research Articles

Production of North Eastern Region: Colonial Construction and Nationalist Affirmation

Sajal Nag*

In the dominant discourse of the nation, India's northeast has been seen as a (a) 'tribal region… which is a far off place where some kind of trouble seems to be always brewing'[1][that] 'has faced periodic armed insurrection from the time of independence… [and] remain under a form of quasi martial law reflecting both the continuing danger of unrest and the strategically vulnerable nature of the region.'[2]The northeast was thus not only defined as a region but also ascribed markers or 'symbols to which people in the different situations identify with and thus use them for the achievement of particular purpose.'[3]Depending upon the purpose in mind completely divergent definitions of a region can emerge.[4]The region, 'a perceived segment of the time-space continuum is not static, rather a changing cognitions of different agents, inhabitants, observers, etc. [that] nationalism and the nation-building in the third world have been preoccupied for the last three decades.'[5] The traditional parameters of viewing an area as 'region' are homogeneity, nodality and polarization.[6] The northeast of India is neither a point of intersection of a network nor has any nodality in terms of relevance or importance and is socio-culturally one of the most diverse and therefore extremely heterogeneous. Viewing the northeast as a region is therefore a conceptual simplification. Sudipta Kaviraj in his theoretical intervention regarding the idea of regions and regionality in India states that the democratic structure has provided opportunity to express resentment towards the unevenness of development in the nation. Such resentment is expressed in terms of regional movement. If some linguistic religious or social groups believe that in a united India the rules of political game and economic distribution will be skewed permanently against them, they will naturally try to create political spaces where they can constitute similar majorities and practice, in retribution, similar inequity towards others. According to him there were three distinct analytical operations generally termed as generalization, fragmentation and composition, which explained the idea of the formation of regions in India.[7]Generalization basically assumed that the different regions in India had more or less similar characteristics and the idea of fragmentation focused more on the fundamental differences between the different regions, which did not give importance to the notion of the fundamental unity of the idea of India. Kaviraj questioned the limitations of both these approaches and tried to stress the understanding of the question of regionality in India through the idea of composition which gives importance to the notion of region as historical entities, shaped or reshaped through the passage of contingent historical events.[8]Kaviraj cautioned that the rising trend of regionalist movements actually signal a crisis for the Indian nation state.[9]Though there are myriad means through which the nation state negotiates these movements, the standard answer of the nation state has been a stern centralizing response. Given India's great regional diversity which is bound to express itself politically in an increasing differentiation of interests, only a transformation towards more decentralization can in principle produce a political order based on democratic consent.[10]

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'Scheduling' The Region

Contrary to popular opinion that the emergence of northeast as a region was a post-colonial, 1970's phenomenon, this essay shows that such region formation had colonial origins. In fact regionisation of northeast had begun with the colonial encounter with the tribes, which started with the grant of the *Diwani* of Bengal to the East India Company in 1765. It secured for the Company 'superintendence of all laws and the collection of revenues' in the Presidency of Bengal. As a result of this the estates bordering northeast region came under the control of the authorities at Fort William. Though the Company had its officials for the purpose of collecting the revenue, but

in practice the *zamindars* collected it, which often led to violent skirmishes between the collectors and the Garo tribe. It led to the appointment of David Scott, Magistrate of Rangpur in 1815 to inquire into the problem. According to the report of Scott some areas were separated from Rangpur and placed under the special charge of an officer to be called Civil Commissioner of North East Rangpur. Soon thereafter Regulation X of 1822 was passed which laid the foundation for the pattern of administration of the tribal areas. A beginning was made of a new form of administration, popularly known as the Non-Regulated system. The power of collectors, Magistrates and Judges were concentrated in the same hands and an intensely centralized and all powerful executive was constituted for bringing the administration within the reach of the people through simple and personal procedure.

The British had annexed Assam after the Burmese war (1824) and initially had shown no interest in venturing into the high hills, which were the abode of myriad hill tribes. But tribal raids of the plains changed the situation. The tribals were in the habit of raiding the plains for various political and commercial reasons. But the British objected to these raids, as they were violent and murderous. The violent encounter that the British had with the tribals in the form of raids and counter-raids since then ended only with the annexation of these areas to the Empire after a prolonged warfare of almost half a century. These raids changed the perception of the British about the tribal of northeast India. The British were already familiar with the tribal communities of the rest of India. The encounter with the northeastern tribal made them realize that these groups were different than those plains tribals. The scale and consistency of violence here was incomparable. Moreover here there was practice of headhunting, kidnapping, slave driving, raiding and so on, which they characterized as savagery. Often on the pretext of these savage acts tribal areas were grabbed one after another and experimentation with special administration for these areas was being conducted. Thus after the annexation of Garo hills laws were passed for the area. The Garo Hills Act 1869 provided for excluding these areas from general administration. Accordingly Garo hills would be removed from jurisdiction of the Courts and Criminal procedure and from control of the offices of revenue constituted by the revenue rules of Bengal. The Act had further provided that the Lt Governor would extend its provisions to other acquired parts of British India like Jaintia Hills, Naga Hills and such portion of Khasi Hills.

On 6 February 1874, Assam was put under a Chief Commissioner. In April same year the Scheduled District Act 1874 was enacted. The term Scheduled district was understood to mean 'those remote or backward tracts or provinces of British India which had never been brought within or had from time to time been removed from the operation of the general Acts and Regulations and jurisdictions of ordinary courts or in which that operation was not complete and officers were supposed to be guided by the spirit of indispensable laws or were actually guided by such laws has had somehow or other been considered to be in force.'[11] The Act enabled the local Government to declare what laws were in force or not in force in the areas in question and to extend any enactment, which were in force in British India. It may be stated that the entire Chief Commissionership of Assam had been included as a Scheduled District in the First Schedule of the Act, which dealt with the territories to which the Act extended to even in the first instance. In so far as the frontier tracts of Assam are concerned a power had been given to the Chief Commissioner as early as 1880 by the Assam Frontier Tract Regulation of that year to remove any part of that area from the operation of enactment in force therein. The stage of backwardness of these tracts had demanded separate treatment for them.

'Othering' The North East

After segregating Assam from other areas in Bengal Presidency and inventing a separate and different kind of administrative set up, the colonial state began to construct the otherness of the people of northeast India. It was coeval with the identity construction processes of the communities of the region. As the British enumerative methods failed to grasp the diversity of India and confused diversity with difference, they constructed difference between northeast India and the rest of India as 'otherness.' The various enumerative and survey methods of the colonial state institutionalized the otherness of these communities. There were ethnographic reports, census reports, linguistic surveys, and missionary reports established that the tribes belonged mostly to Indo-Mongoloid race, spoke the Tibeto-Burman language, did not subscribe to any of the Indian religions like Hinduism, Islam or Buddhism. C.A. Elliot (1881-1885) who succeeded S.C. Bailey as the Chief Commissioner of Assam encouraged administrators to turn towards anthropology and write monographs about tribes or sub-tribes amongst whom they worked, and most of the monographs on the Naga tribes were the results of this initiative. Such recordings transformed the tribes like Nagas from a history-less, fuzzy community into a recorded, enumerated community. Eliot's efforts developed a sense of territoriality within the Nagas, and made them conscious of their dialect, language and distinctive markers. Bampfylde Fuller (1905-1906), who assumed the office of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, subsequently carried forward Elliot's work; he proposed

and officially sanctioned the preparation of a series of monographs on the more important tribes and castes of Assam. Officers and ethnographers, who had an intimate knowledge of the people they dealt with, undertook this project of preparing the 'official ethnography'. These writers also incorporated earlier works conducted on the tribes. A uniform format was prescribed for the preparation of the series.[12]Other enumerative devices -of the colonial government: the compilation of the *Census Reports*[13] and Grierson's *Linguistic Survey*[14] -further institutionalized these attempts. Rather than being just statistical accounts of the colony, the census operation in the colonies were the result of colonial encounter of the west with the colonized, the idea of the colonial other and the administrative intention to bring to order the chaotic socio-ethnic diversity of India and the colonies for effective governance.[15]In the process, these bureaucrats systematically assigned names to the tribes, often using names given to the tribes by their neighbours or names apparently arising out of an understanding or a misunderstanding of the informants. The Census Reports, as shown by the scholars emerged as an important document of governance.[16]Indirectly then, the administrative procedures contributed to the development of a consciousness among the tribal as they internalized and adopted the descriptions assigned to them. In Mizoram, T H Lewin, Shakespeare, N E Parry were also a part of this endeavour and through their ethnographic efforts ascribed an identity to the Kuki Chin tribes. The Christian missionaries, through their efforts, strengthened the process of identity formation in various ways.[17]The missionaries contributed towards identity consciousness through a standardization of language that was required for proselytisation. A dialect was chosen as a tribal language and endowed with a written form; in the absence of a script, Bengali or Roman alphabets were used. This written form of the language was accepted by the Government, and became the language of education and administration throughout the area inhabited by a tribe. This standard language gradually displaced other dialects, especially among the literates. The census took into consideration the linguistic, caste and religious affiliations, leading to the categorization and classification of each and every individual. In the process the census, instead of being informed by the society, changed from being merely referential to instrumental in regenerating the social structure itself. It became pivotal in the emerging caste associations, tribal mobilizations and linguistic contentions between the various groups in British Assam.[18]

The Christian missionary propaganda and colonial endeavours over the decades had broken down the age-old relationships and exchanges between the tribes and plains. As the nationalist movement grew stronger in the rest of the country, the colonial effort at 'othering' the major tribes of northeast gained momentum. This was a part of an agenda of the British that given the violent nature of the tribes, if they were allowed to be a part of the intensified nationalist movement, it would become uncontrollable. Hence the British tried to keep them excluded from reforms through which the tribes could be brought under political participation by declaring them as Excluded Area, Backward area etc. and at the same time banned Indian political parties from entering and operating in these hills to pre-empt such a situation. It was institutionalized through the Government of India Act of 1919, which declared some parts of northeast India as Backward Tracts and some other parts as Partially Backward tract. The Government of India Act 1935 further consolidated these concepts by replacing the Backward Areas as Excluded Areas and Partially Excluded Areas. This is the how the colonial construction of northeast as a separate region began.

Institutionalization of Otherness Through 'Exclusion'

The following section shows the nature of colonial campaign that resulted in the institutionalization of the exclusion of tribal areas. There was hectic political activity in northeast India when the Indian Statutory Commission known as the Simon Commission visited the area. The Commission was working on the nature of polity that India was to be provided with. While some tribes made representation to the Commission on the advice of their colonial officials, colonial officers too made representation for the tribes as representatives of the region. The highlight of this representation was not just unequippedness of the tribal but harping on the 'difference' between the tribes and the Indians and therefore no united polity should be offered to them. John H. Hutton, the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills for example, presenting the case of the Nagas to the Statutory Commission had asserted that racially, linguistically, culturally, politically the tribal of northeast India were different from the Indians. The tribal would suffer by joining the people of an irreconcilable culture in an unnatural union, which would ultimately harm them. Hutton believed that tribals of the hills districts would be served best by not including them in the scheme of constitutional reforms. Therefore he was opposed to the inclusion of the hill districts in the reformed constitution.[19]

N. C. Parry, Superintendent, Lushai Hills District also shared Hutton's opinion and argued for the exclusion of the Lushais from the proposed constitutional reforms. [20]He had instead suggested the establishment of a separate North-Eastern Province comprising as many

of the Backward Tracts also including areas of Assam and Myanmar. This was the plan N. C. Parry had placed before the government for the future of the hill tribes in March 1928. The tribals who were considered suitable for inclusion into such a province were the Garo Hills, Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills, Mikir Hills, Lushai Hills, North Cachar Hills, Naga Hills, Sadiya and Balipara Frontier Tracts, Chittagong Frontier Tracts, Pokaku and other Backward Hill Tracts in Burma. It was felt that Kohima (headquarters of the Naga Hills) would be suitable headquarters as it connected with both Assam and Burma.

Hutton also in 1930 conceived a similar plan for the hill districts of the Indo-Burma frontier favouring their union under one administration. Hutton had proposed that districts in India and Burma should be combined into an agency or commission. To Parry's plan Hutton added the Arakan Hill Tracts, the Chin Hills, parts of upper Chindwin districts, the Hukong Valley and the Shan state of Thangdut in Burma, Manipur and Tripura. However he wanted the Garo Hills, the Balipara and Sadiya Frontier Tracts to continue to remain under Assam for which he did not provide any explanation. Such a province could support a cadre of its own without much difficulty for it would be extremely easy to recruit from Europe. It was felt that a consolidated treatment would benefit the tribes. It would provide an opportunity for political advancement, which could be converted into a pan-tribal sentiment covering a much wider area.[21]

When the Government of India Act, 1935 was declared, Assam was made a governor's province but Tripura and Manipur were princely states. The Khasi-Jaintia along with Garo Hills were Partially Excluded but Naga Hills, the Mizo Hills and the hills of present Arunachal Pradesh, were Excluded Areas. Though the 25 Khasi states under the administration of Syiems, Lyngdohs, Sirdar and Wahadadars were essentially princely states, some of them were treated as Partially Excluded Areas. The Excluded Areas were under the executive control of the Assam governor. The Partially Excluded Areas were under the control of the governor and subject to ministerial administration, but the governor had an overriding power when it came to exercising his discretion. No Act of Assam or Indian legislatures could be applied to the Excluded Areas unless the governor directed to do so. He was empowered to make regulations for these hills. The administration of these hills was his special responsibility. With no representatives in the Assam Assembly, (the Partially Excluded Areas sent one legislator each) political activity above the village and local level could hardly have existed. The politics of the two larger parties of the Assam, the Congress and League Legislature had minimal sffect in the hills. The Naga tribal area of the Naga Hills district and the Tirap Frontier Tract were virtually outside British India as there was a statutory boundary between them and the adjoining districts of the province. While the Government of India treated this area as tribal and un-administered, the Treaties of 1862 and 1874 with the tribes of these hills referred to them as foreign and a distinction was made between the boundary of the Queen and their country and the limits of the British territory was fixed at the foothills.

Visualizing North East as a Neo Colonial Space

With the imminence of independence the question of the future of the tribes was discussed again. There was an imminent partition of India and a number of secessionist movements amongst the princely states. In this tense political atmosphere the future of the tribals were at stake. Since the tribals were confused about their identity and political future after the British departure from India, some British officials adopted a 'paternalistic' attitude towards them. They pretended to be 'saviours' of tribals, protecting them from the absorption by Indians and tried to construct a separate political imaginations for the tribals, which had basis in the projects they had mooted earlier. As early as 1928 and 1930, Hutton and Parry had prepared a plan for a separate province to be known as the North-Eastern Frontier Province with as many of the Backward Tracts it could possibly include in Assam as well as Burma. However, the approach to this issue had to be changed in view of the constitutional developments between 1930 and 1935. Up until 1930, there were two plans to place these tribal areas under a single administration, which had not materialized. They remained under the Assam administration. Gradually, Hutton and Parry's idea of the North-Eastern Frontier Province was replaced by Reid's own idea of a Crown Colony.

The post-1935 period saw a new approach of separating these areas from India and Burma and to constitute a Crown Colony Protectorate under the direct rule of the British Crown. The most outspoken champion of this scheme was Sir Robert Reid, the then Governor of Assam (1937-42) who had a long association as an administrator with the region. He felt that the future of the tribals 'cannot be left to Indian political leaders with neither knowledge, interest nor feelings for these states.'[22]He now assumed a paternalistic attitude towards the tribals of the northeast and argued that the British Government had a responsibility towards the future welfare of 'a set of very loyal primitive people who are habituated to look to us for protection and who would not get it from any other source. It is up to us to see that they are given under our protection, a period of respite within which they will develop on their own lines and without outside influence

but if the present opportunity to give them that chance is let slip, the danger is that it will never occur.'[23] He prepared a confidential note entitled *A Note on the Future of the Present Excluded, Partially Excluded and Tribal Areas of Assam* and circulated in the administrative circles.[24]

Reid based his argument on two premises: (i) the tribals of the northeast Indian hills were not Indian and (ii) in the wake of the British departure from India, the post-colonial Indian state would not care for these tribals. Convinced by Hutton and Parry's ideas, Reid argued that 'they are not Indians in any sense of the word. Neither in origin nor in appearance, nor in habits nor in outlook and it is by historical accident that they are tagged to an Indian province.'[25] Therefore, 'We have no right to allow this great body of non-Indian animists and Christians to be drawn into the struggle between the Hindus and the Muslims which is now and will be in future with ever increasing intensity the dominating factor in India proper.'[26]

Reid found that on both sides of the so-called watershed, i.e. the frontier with Burma, there were a large number of tribes like the Nagas, Kukis, Lakhers, Chins, Khamtis and Kachins who had similarities in language, customs and social conditions. He was convinced that these tribes belonged to one broad group but had unfortunately been divided now between two administrations of India and Burma. It was, therefore, imperative that these divided people were united into two administrations, which would be ideal for their development because they had no future either in India or Burma. He reopened the issue of a separate province mooted originally by Hutton and Parry which he felt still could be implemented:

Personally, I am in favour of Hutton's idea of North Eastern Frontier Province or Agency, embracing all the hill fringes from the Lushai land on the south right up to Balipara Frontier Tract on the north embracing on the way, the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bengal and the Naga and the Chinds of Burma and perhaps the Shan state too. I will put this under a Chief Commissioner and he in turn I imagine would have to be divorced, as Burma, from the control of the Government of India and put perhaps under some appropriate department of Whitehall. [27]

Inspired by the Crown Colonies of Basutoland and Swaziland of South Africa, Reid set out to prepare a Constitution for such a colony consisting of all the tribal majority districts of the then Assam and adjoining Burma. Such a colony would be independent of both India and Burma and be under the direct rule of the British Crown. It would enable the consolidation of this 'incredibly polyglot area' into a uniform administrative unit with a common language. English could be the official language of the population, which comprised a 'solid block of animists' rapidly becoming Christians. The colony would be self-governing even though finance would be a problem after its separation from India and Burma. But this could be overcome by liberal grants from the British crown as well as grants from the governments of India and Burma. Such contribution from countries sharing their border could be taken as matter of frontier insurance against incursions and protections. The Burma Frontier Service could form the nucleus of a cadre under a chief commissioner for manning the administration of the colony.[28]Reid found a supporter of this plan in his own state, Superintendent A. G. McCall of the Lushai Hills of Assam, who wrote:

We have come to see very clearly that the Lushai is bound rather to the Mongolian than to the Aryan races. This begs the whole question as to whether it would not be better for the Lushai to seek shelter under the Colonial or Dominion Offices. While still remaining within the spheres of Mongolian influences, by a closer association with the hills of Burma, the Shan states, the Karens and others with whom the Lushai would find so much in common? The alternative is for Lushai to be handed over to the Aryan influences of India or Burma by a scarp of paper, in which they might possibly have no real understanding. Logically, the case of such territories should rest in an international keeping, applying common standards and principles of financial aids. The succoring of all such people of similar material standard in any world of a new order would seem to constitute a common and proportionate responsibility of all major powers, united in any joint undertaking to preserve law and order through the world. [29]

Reid's proposals found favour from the Secretary of State for India, L. S. Amery.[30]When Professor Reginald Coupland approached Amery for ideas on the backward tracts to be used in his third and final volume on the constitutional problem in India, Amery gave him a copy of Reid's note saying, 'I do this on a confidential basis on the understanding that they will not be quoted and do not represent the official view of Government concerned or his office. It would however, do no harm, I think, if the broad idea suggested by Reid were publicly ventilated if you feel it is attractive.'[31]Coupland found the idea of separation of the tribal areas of India and Burma and their amalgamation into a colony as quite novel. In fact, Coupland echoed Reid's words when he stated, 'The inhabitants of both (Naga Hills and the Lushai Hills) are alike in race and culture. They are not Indians or Burmans but of the Mongol stock. In no sense do they belong to the Indian or Burman nations.'[32]

Accordingly, Coupland advocated a separate administration for the tribal, which caught also the fancy of the Government of Burma operating from Shimla.[33]The proposal of amalgamating the hills areas of Burma and India was discussed at a meeting of the Committee of Scheduled Areas in December 1942.[34]While one member spoke for amalgamation and separation of tribal areas, C.W. North of the British Foreign Service

argued in support of implementing the plan. In the ensuing vote to decide 'whether the Scheduled Areas of Burma be amalgamated in whole or in part with similar areas outside Burma to form a North-East Frontier Agency,' four members voted against the amalgamation. North gave a dissenting opinion. The Chairman of the Commission of Scheduled Areas of Burma, H. J. Mitchell had earlier prepared a long confidential note on the subject where he had concluded that the proposal for amalgamating the scheduled areas of India and Burma into an agency administered from Whitehall should be dropped.[35] Dorman Smith, the Governor of Burma was personally drawn to the scheme and wished to extend it to the hill areas under his charge, despite the decision of the Commission of Scheduled Areas. He later admitted later that he was wrong in flirting with Reid's plan and this resulted in a delay in his government's exploration of the reconstruction plans for the frontier people.[36]By August 1945, the proposition for a separate agency was dropped by Burma to prepare for other plans with the return of the government to Rangoon. However, in India, the Crown Colony continued to draw the attention of the last of the British administrators.

Impressed with Reid's views, Amery sought to make some special arrangements for other backward areas in northeast India.[37]He suggested to the Viceroy, Lord Wavell that some extra constitutional arrangements for the protection of other backward tribes should be devised. He advocated that there should be a treaty between the 'new India' and the British Government for an arrangement for the Assam-Burma tracts over relations with the backward tribes, with the British High Commissioner supervising them. He even wanted that the League of Nations might be induced to undertake certain responsibilities as regards these two areas on the lines of Mandates Commission.[38]

Reid's successor as the Governor of Assam, Andrew Clow however was disinclined to show much interests in the hill areas, though he did prepare in October 1945, a *Memorandum on the Future Government of the Assam Tribal People* where he ruled out transfer of responsibility to an external authority for the tribal people. He instead recommended the merger of hills areas with Assam with special provisions of a separate hill province with a common governor and a capital.[39]Clow favoured the former alternative as not only the tribal were the most numerous but and in the long run there was no future for the Assam hill tribes in separating from the plains. While recognizing the great contribution of anthropologists towards the hill people, he was not sympathetic to their outlook, which he felt was basically negative, one of preservation and exclusion. There had been, Clow said in opposition to Reid, no attempt to bring the tribes up to a level or to equip them to meet the changing world.[40]

Despite this, there was continued circulation in early 1945 that government was holding on to a plan to create a Crown Colony.[41]In one such report, emanating from Calcutta, Wavell was credited with taking home a plan for the province to be solely ruled by the British.[42]It also appears that the Indian Central Assembly had discussed these plans, though there was no official response as to whether there was any truth in allegations that schemes were under consideration for a Crown Colony and that no such scheme was being considered prior to the convening of the Constituent Assembly.[43]J. P. Mills, advisor to the Governor for the tribal areas in one such scheme suggested three alternatives: inclusion of all the hills in Assam, the inclusion of some of the hills or the exclusion of all the hills of Assam from Reforms. He was personally in favour of the third alternative.[44]He suggested the formation of a Union in the area, which should be under the control of either His Majesty's Government or the Government of India. An undeterred Robert Reid suggested another alternative in case the scheme for a separate hill state was not acceptable. It was the formation of the province of the Assam Valley with the hills under it. There would be at least a chance that the old Assamese friendly method of dealing with the hill men might be revived. But the accepted official view is that the hills and plain of Assam could never co-exist as a single entity. [45]

In 1945, Andrew Clow considered all these schemes and thought of two possibilities: the merger of all the hill tribes of Assam, subject to the condition that the tribal customs and institutions were recognized and their outlook respected and alternately the constitution of a separate province for the hills with some links with the plains. Clow felt, that

> On a long-term view, it is difficult to see any future for the hills as a separate province. While they are by no means without resources they seem too heterogeneous to form a satisfactory unit and too small even if fully united to sustain a healthy and progressive life of their own. The ultimate interest of both hills and plains lie in fusion.
>
> Experience shows that it is much easier to divide states than to unite them and there is little doubt that the setting up of two provinces would create vested interests in both the areas which would oppose the union. Antagonisms tend to arise, economically barrier grows and the people drift apart rather than be together. The Hillman whose future depends on healthy intercourse with the wider world and who have a good deal to contribute to it might well find themselves shut up in their fastness with a petty and impoverished administration. Indeed that stage might be reached when they would like to join and would be unwelcomed. Assam is never likely to be homogeneous as other provinces. The people of the plains are

not so divided as those of the hills but they are far from being a single people such as can be found in equally larger areas in India. But the collection of the peoples in the hills and plains has been set out in a particular well demarcated corner of the world and their welfare will depend on this proving able to live together.

There is no record of the Hill people ever combining as such under one political organization at any period. Racially and linguistically, the Hill people of Assam belong to several ethnic groups like Mon-Khmer, Bodo-Kachari, Kuki, Chin, etc. with unknown sub-group. Uniformity is no doubt observable in social organization and even here there are innumerable differences in detail. The methods of organizations, customs, beliefs, and ways of life vary considerably from tribe to tribe.[46]

The Secretary of State for India, Sir Pethick Lawrence recorded in a minute on 6 May 1946, 'At the present state of proceedings agreement had been reached by the Secretary of State and the Viceroy of the impracticability of transforming responsibility for the Backward tracts from the provinces to any outside authority whether that should be a British High Commission or a United nation's Mandate.'[47]This minute sealed the fate of not only the Crown Colony scheme for the hill areas of northeast; it also sealed the fate of the special arrangements that were on the anvil for other backward areas. With the convening of the Constituent Assembly all eyes were turned towards Delhi rather than London.

Constitutionalisation of Northeast as a Region of Difference

The Constituent Assembly, which was to frame the future Constitution of India, could not ignore the special requirements of the excluded and partially excluded areas. To assist the Assembly for the purpose, a committee, popularly known as Bordoloi Committee after its chairman was formed to report on the North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas. The Committee was to work under the Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas of which Sardar Patel was the chairman. The members of the Committee were, B.N. Rau, constitutional advisor for several years in Assam, J.J.M. Nichols Roy, the leader of the Khasis and a minister in the Bordoloi Cabinet, A. V. Thakkar a Gandhian social worker, Rup Nath Brahmma, a prominent plains tribal intellectual and Mayang Nokeha. Aliba Imti Ao, the president of the Naga National Council, subsequently replaced the last member.[48]The Committee that was officially formed on 27 February 1947 extensively toured the province of Assam, which included visits to the Lushai Hills, North Cachar subdivision, Mikir Hills and the Naga Hills district. In addition the representatives of the tribes visited the headquarters. The Committee received memoranda from various representative and political organizations and also recorded evidence given by prominent citizens and officials. The Committee co-opted two members from each of the district it visited.

Following the provisions of Government of India Act 1935 for the excluded, and the partially excluded areas, the Bordoloi Sub Committee recommended the formation of the Sixth Scheduled which provided for autonomous districts and autonomous regions within those districts. Under the Government of India Act 1935, the Order-in-Council divided the Excluded and the Partially Excluded Areas of Assam. The Excluded Areas covered the following areas: the North East Frontier Tracts (Sadiya, Balipara, and Lakhimpur); the Naga Hills District;the Lushai Hills district; and the North Cachar Hills Sub-Division of the Cachar District. The Partially Excluded Areas included: the Garo Hills Districts; the Mikir Hills (In the Nawgong and Sibsagar Districts); the British portion of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District, other than the Shillong; and Municipality and Cantonment areas.

The total tribal population of Assam was 2,484,996 according to the Census Report1941, and the excluded and the partially excluded areas had a population of 863,248. The Sub-Committee recommendedthe setting up of District Councils in the Hill Districts. It was decided that the Provincial Government would manage the reserved forest, but then the needs of the Hill people would also be taken into account. The management of the mines and minerals would be centralized in the hands of the Provincial Government, but the rights of the District Council to a fair share of revenue was recognized. The Governor would generally decide the issue of the revenue between the Provincial Government and the District Council. It was also decided that there should be the creation of the Regional Council for different tribes inhabiting an autonomous district. Further, the tribal people of the Autonomous Council would decide the formation of the Regional Council, which would represent the District Council as well. However, the jurisdiction of the Regional Council would extend to the customary law, land management, the court, and the village. The Autonomous Council (ADC) of the Six Schedule was an exclusive arrangement for nearly 80 percent tribal population of the region. The ADC in this regard had the legislative, administrative, judicial as well as the financial power to a considerable extent for the enforcement of its development. ADC was empowered to make laws on subjects including land use and economic development policy, social customs, etc. Administering justice was another responsiblity of the ADC, and it was decided that the district and regional courts would be established in their respective territories. However, the

Governor may also direct the High Court of the state for the performance of the delivering justice. The ADC was vested with the responsibilities of the infrastructure improvement along with large administrative capacities. Most importantly, the ADC had the right to assess and collect certain taxes.

The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution didnot have a smooth passage. It was severely criticised by some members. The draft was debated for three long days (September 5th ,6th and 7th, 949). Kuladhar Chaliha, a Constituent Assembly member and one of the very strong opposition voice of the Sixth Schedule argued on essentially two points. Firstly, he considered that the Nagas were primitive tribe who had been still following their traditional way of doing justice. Chaliha, therefore alleged that it is not desirable to allow them to rule the other people of the region as at the end of the day there would be anarchy.[49]He again pointed out that the creation of the Sixth Schedule would promote and justify a separatist tendency. He argued that the region had a diverse identity and thus one could not consign them to misrule. Considering the state of the development of Nagaland, Chaliha in no way was ready to extend the responsibility of law and order in the hands of the Naga people. He questioned the very justice system that had been practiced by the Naga people, i.e., head hunting. Both Kuladhar Chaliha and Rohini Choudhury were against 'too much autonomy to the tribal and' and felt that this 'would result in the creation of tribalistan just as Pakistan had been created.'[50]Choudhury asked, 'Do you want an assimilation of the tribal and non tribal people or do you want to keep them separate? If you want to keep them separate they will join with Burma. They will never join with rest of India.'[51]He argued, 'We should not be frightened by these threats of some people who say that they will come down on us. This is intended to be imposed on us by the threats of some people, and we should be aware of these interested persons. There is no need to keep any Tribalstan away from us so that in times of trouble they will be helpful to our enemies.'[52]Chaliha pointed out that the provision of the Sixth Schedule was an arrangement to keep the tribal people away from the rest of the population. He cited the conspiracy of the Communist in the entire matter and emphasized that the result would be that there would be a Communisthan there. He strongly felt that the Communists would come and they would have a free hand, as in Manipur one of the Ministers was already a Communist. 'Your Governor will not be able to act, your Parliament will not be able to act. If you go on like this we will have no government there. The whole Schedule is conceived in a way which is a negation of government.'[53]

Bordoloi in response clarified that the reason behind many members not appreciating the Advisory Sub Committee was the fact that many members were not cognizant of the prevailing tribal situation in Assam. He explained that there were three categories of tribal in Assam. The plains tribal, classified as the Scheduled Classes. They were the original inhabitants with their own culture and civilization. They were gradually absorbed into the culture of the plains people, to put it more appropriately the Aryan culture. Then there were the hill tribes, divided into two groups, i.e., the hill tribe administered by the Governor as the agent of the Governor-General of India and the other tribe coming under the Sixth Schedule. He explained that the first category in the Sixth Schedule was not a matter of concern. He stated that areas administered by the Governor as the agent of the Governor-General could be autonomous districts in certain situations only. In response to the areas under autonomous district, he explained that those districts that inhabit the southern bank of the river bordering Burma and Pakistan were under the category of the autonomous districts. Other tribes had no self-governing institutions of their own. Bordoloi argued that the rule of the British Government and the activities of the Foreign Mission happened side by side. These areas were under the category of excluded until 15thAugust 1947. Since some of those areas were a war zone, there was a sense of isolation and separation among tribal people. The colonial government assured the tribes at the end of the war, that the respective tribal group would be an independent state managing its own affairs. The fact that was presented before the Committee was whether the process of integration would be by using force or through co-operation. Bordoloi referred that some of the institutions among the hill tribal were very important and unique and it would be wrong to destroy them. Especially their dispute settlement mechanism and village assembly were unique. Referring to the headhunting practice of some tribal groups, he argued that it happened only when there was enmity of one clan against another. It is the choice between the spirits of hatred and enmity with the use of force or the government through cooperation and goodwill. Bordoloi stressed on the adoption of the latter course. Despite the attacks on the provisions of the Sixth Schedule, the latter was adopted by the Constituent Assembly. On independence, it was adopted as a part of the Indian Constitution which recognised northeast India as a region requiring special provisions (as provided in the Sixth Schedule).

NOTES

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Kumaun Histories and Kumauni Identities c.1815–1990's

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The emergence of 'History' as a practice and as a discipline, which transformed inherited oral traditions into textual products, has to be located in the modern period.[1] I. Chambers says that history transcribed all human practice- 'it registered, transmitted and translated the past, and it reordered and rewrote the world.'[2] The discipline, as it emerged in Europe, was predicated upon an understanding of the past as a period when men were not free, whereas the 'modern' present was considered emancipatory because in modernity, 'identity becomes more mobile, multiple, personal, self-reflexive and subject to change and innovation.'[3] The modern was therefore understood as rupture, which made the writing of history possible.[4] The extension of this project to the colonies also generated a history of the colonial peoples. The emergence of Kumauni history and identity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is located in this context.

The East India Company acquired control over Kumaun after the defeat of the Gorkhas in 1815. The Kumaun Division was made into a separate administrative unit, which included the present day districts of Pauri, Tehri, Chamoli, Uttarkashi, Rudraprayag, Dehradun, Haridwar (Garhwal) and Almora, Nainital, Bageshwar, Champawat, Uddham Singh Nagar and Pithoragarh (Kumaun). Though administrative boundaries were subject to change during the period, colonial administrators recognised that the Kumaun Division included two distinct cultural units- Garhwal and Kumaun. By the 1930s, this was also recognised and endorsed by the people of the region who identified themselves as Kumauni.[5]

Colonial rule provided Kumaun with its first textual account which appears in the great tradition of Imperial Gazetteer writing, in the six volume work of E.T Atkinson entitled, *The Himalayan Districts Gazetteer.*[6] These six volumes provided information about geology, flora, fauna, geography, religious beliefs and caste practices. Atkinson's understanding of the history of the region was foundational and continues to resonate in histories of Kumaun even today. It may be summarised as follows:- the original residents of the hills were the *Dasyus*, also referred to as *Doms*, (aboriginal) 'the Doms in the hills are not a local race peculiar to Kumaun, but the remains of an aboriginal tribe conquered and enslaved by the immigrant Khasas.'[7] The Khasas were of, 'an Aryan descent in the widest sense of that term much modified by local influences, but whether they are to be attributed to the Vedic immigration itself or to an earlier or later movement of tribes having a similar origin, there is little to show. It is probable, however, that they belong to a nation which has left its name in various parts of the Himalaya.'[8] The Khasas though Aryans, 'did not follow caste injunctions and were eventually defeated and relegated to inferior status by more evolved upper caste Brahmans and Kshatriyas who came to Kumaun from the southern reaches of the Indo-Gangetic plains.'[9] Eventually, Atkinsonian history asserts that Europeans, superior in culture and technology acquired ascendance over the upper castes of Kumaun. The evolutionary telos of Atkinson's history narrative began in a primitive past that unfolded towards a present, which brought Kumaun into the ambit of the British empire.

In its attempt to explicate the present domination of local upper caste elites and imperial authorities, this narrative promoted a selection between what, 'must be *understood* and what must be *forgotten* in order to obtain the representation of a present intelligibility, ' to make contemporary stratification credible and intelligible.[10] In the particular context of Kumaun, the Brahmans had to be understood and Khasa history forgotten for the credibility of the imperial power structure. Upper caste genealogies in manuscript form were accepted but local legends figured in the narrative only for corroboration of events. The term Khasa was consigned to hoary antiquity and the period of Khasa rule, outlined in the

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oral tradition, was submerged. The Khasas were fixed in Kumaun history as an immutable category, as part of the ethnographic archive. Similarly, the Bhotias who connected the Himalyas and the Trans-Himalyas (Tibet) through trade were also placed in an ethnographic past which explained their subordination.

Atkinson's delineation was primarily based upon published texts, manuscripts, copper plate inscriptions, genealogies and information given by local brahmins which viewed the oral bardic tradition with suspicion. Atkinson's work also relied on the writings of the early administrators of Kumaun who believed that British rule would benefit the people and sought to validate imperial domination. This domination was presented as inevitable, and did not mark discontinuity and rupture in the manner in which European history marked the modern. The trans-Himalyan connection lost its significance and the sacred geography of the region, by emphasizing pilgrimage, located the Himalayan Districts in the larger context of the North Western Provinces and the British Empire.[11]

This particular interpretation of Kumaun history established an orthodoxy which dominated historical writings during the colonial period. The emergence of print and better rail and road communications aligned Kumaun with North India. The *Samai Vinod* newspaper dominated Kumaun during 1870s, [12]whereas the *Almora Akhbar* structured the vision of the Kumaun intelligentsia from the 1870s to the second decade of the twentieth century.[13]Its declared object was 'in order successfully to carry out the important reforms which at present form the principal topics of discussion viz. the education of women, the remarriage of widows, the curtailment of marriage expenses, the removal of native prejudices against visiting England the abolition of the practice of early marriage, polygamy, the practice of receiving money from the girls parents in marriage ..... cooperation is necessary.'[14]The *Almora Akhbar* was later replaced by the *Shakti*, which maintained and supported the claims of the Kumaun intelligentsia to represent the Kumaun tradition.[15] The brahman ascendancy was also legitimated by references to works in Sanskrit. Work of Gumani were published, and scholars referred to a large number of unpublished Sanskrit works such as the *Manaskhand*, [16]*Kurmanchal kavya* or *Kalyanchandrodaya kavya*[17] and *Traivarnik Nyaya*.[18]The *Almora Akhbar* and *Shakti* carried a large number of articles devoted to Sanskrit texts written by Kumauni scholars. Ram Dutt Jyotirvid, Shridhar Pathak, Mathura Dutt Trivedi, Rudra Dev Joshi and others emphasised this aspect of Kumaun's intellectual tradition. The high tradition of the Kumauni language was underlined, and initially the Kumaun intelligentsia did not encourage the publication of ballads and folk songs, it did collate a Kumauni literary tradition by publishing copper plate inscriptions along with local adages and proverbs. It also made an effort to compile a Kumauni dictionary.

Tara Dutt Gairola collaborated with the Christian missionary E.S Oakley and published *Himalayan Folklore*, a translation into English of Kumaun and Garhwal legends.[19]In retrospect and in comparison with later collections, this anthology has many references to *sati* and is silent about polyandry. Gauri Dutt Pande, popularly known as Gaurda was also published and quoted in the local papers. His writings depict a modern sensibility and cover a wide range of issues about caste, celebration of festivals, about local movements against *begar* and *utar* and poems in support of the national movement. The publication of the journal *Achal* devoted entirely to Kumauni culture was published for some years between 1938 and 1939.[20]It was published by Dharma Nand Pant and was edited by Jivan Chandra Joshi and Tara Dutt Pande. Its contributors were primarily upper caste and its construction of Kumaun culture was therefore from a brahmanical perspective.

The Atkinsonian formulation which supported brahmanical superiority was further embellished and elaborated by sections of the intelligentsia. This construction led to a growing corpus of genealogical literature known as the *vanshavalis*. Rudra Dutt Pant's *vanshavalis* had been cited by Atkinson and genealogies documenting migration of the brahmans were now published and historical writings depicted the upper caste traditions as the Kumaun culture. This was also favoured by the Census operations, which were unable to recognise and categorise the specificity of Kumaun's stratification. The importance of Census modalities can be understood by the manner in which Kumaun society articulated a caste hierarchy during the nineteenth century which was in consonance with the *varna* system.[21]This understanding of Kumaun society therefore repressed the Khasa element, and did not grant it visibility either in contemporary or historical representation.

Yet, the exigencies of imperialist administration also engendered an entirely different perspective of Kumaun history, which interrogated Atkinson's account and emphasised other aspects of its contemporary life. Administrative strategies produced a perspective on Kumaun which was at odds with the evolutionary teleology of Atkinson's account. The compilation of colonial records like the *Settlement Reports*, [22]V. A Stowell's *A Manual Of The Land Tenures Of The Kumaun Division*[23]and Tara Dutt Gairola's *Selected Revenue Decisions Of Kumaun*, recognised Kumaun as a distinct administrative unit.[24]Over the nineteenth century, British administrators recognised the particularity of Kumaun's

mountain topography, the difficulty of communication within the region and decided to put it under a special dispensation. Kumaun was administered initially as an extra-regulation tract, and later as a Scheduled District till the 1920s.[25]An essential feature of this was a rough and ready administration, not bound by rules and regulations. This comes through in the much celebrated accounts of administrators such as G.W.Traill and H. Ramsay.[26]The official recognition of the distinctness of the Kumaun Division, fostered an understanding of its specificity in the context of the British empire. The boundaries of Kumaun on the northern and the eastern frontier demarcated it from Tibet and Nepal. The integration of the Kumaun into the empire therefore defined not only its geographical limits, but also its economic and social connection with the imperial dominions.

The *Almora Akhbar* noted the economic changes that had occurred in Kumaun during British rule and articles in *Shakti, Kumaun Kumud* and *Tarun Kumaun* also documented these changes. A well researched perspective was provided by S. D Pant in his book *The Social Economy of the Himalayans*. He provided a detailed picture of the Almora region- its agriculture, industries, trade, implements, cattle, commercial crops, manures, marketing and transport. The thrust of the book was towards indicating the initiative and energy of the hill folk in their adaptation to the rigors of life in the Himalayas. This was represented as the indomitable urge of man towards mastery over nature. S. D Pant emphasised the fact that, 'the picturesque terraces of the Himalayan slopes that greet the eyes of the traveller represent an extraordinary degree of strenuous toil and resourcefulness, such as have been surpassed in few regions of the world.'[27]

Improvement in communications and the arrival of the railways to the foot hills of the Kumaun Himalayas led to an increasing influx of visitors. After 1858, the Kumaun was developed for its summer resorts where English families could replicate British life styles in temperate climates. Over the nineteenth century, Nainital developed as a salubrious hill station, and as a summer capital of the provinicial government and Kumaun began to attract a variety of travellers. *Almoriana* celebrated this aspect of life in Almora, which was made even more comfortable by the large number of domestics that could be employed.[28]

The Tarai and the Himalayan forests also attracted a large number of hunting groups, the *shikaris*. This interest generated a number of travelogues and other colonial accounts about Kumaun which also provided ethnographic profiles.[29]Mountaineer in his memoirs reports on the large number of *shikaris* who were considered poor marksmen.[30]By the early years of the twentieth century, the Tarai had become an ideal spot for hunting expeditions and G. R Kala describes one such trip which he had to organise in his official capacity during the difficult years of non-cooperation.[31]These accounts celebrated the simplicity, honesty, unspoilt and child-like quality of the Kumauni 'native'. Colonial authorities and visitors remarked upon the harsh conditions of peasant life. This also reenforced the British patrimonialism.

It is interesting to note that during the last decades of the nineteenth century, when the Kumaun intelligentsia enthused by nationalist aspirations began to express dissent, this perspective discouraged such assertions in the name of a special relationship between the British officials and the common peasant folk. The growing menace of man eating tigers in the colonial period because of agricultural extension and hunting expeditions made the Kumaun peasantry dependent on individuals like Jim Corbett. His writings about Kumaun provide a vivid, detailed and yet nuanced picture of Kumaun society which documents his intimate knowledge not only of Kumaun's flora and fauna, but also its language and culture. He started his career in the early decades of the twentieth century and by the time *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* was published, he was a household name in Kumaun.[32]British officials were also naturalists and in their accounts we find a passing reference to the region's forest tribes but a silence about the intelligentsia [33]

British administration sought to legitimise itself by emphasising difference and insisting on the colonised's need for governance and guidance. The universal humanism of European history was undercut by the sub-text of imperialism which represented the colonised as the 'other', the binary opposite of the reflexive self. Edward Said has referred to this discursive regime as Orientalism. The people of Kumaun were considered different (from the British and from other Indians), because of 'backward customs'. Emergent anthropology carried forward the binary typology of evolved and primitive races, cultures and societies. It noted that 'the distinctive differences between races, civilisations and languages was radical and ineradicable. It went to the bottom of things, it asserted that there was no escape from origins and the types these origins enabled.'[34]The history of origins, chose to essentialise characteristics of nations and explain domination by imperial powers in the colonies. According to this reckoning the backward races of Kumaun, because of their origins, required the British for the articulation of their self-interest. This perspective also resisted the nationalist aspirations of the Kumaun intelligentsia, who claimed to speak on behalf of the people.

Over the nineteenth century, as British officials familiarised themselves with marriage and family customs of the local people such as-brideprice, levirate,

polyandry and widow remarriage, they overcame their initial incomprehension and contextualised these practices as traces of primitivism and backwardness.[35]Colonial administrators tended to view colonial society as static, frozen and fixed and felt that codification of customary law would reduce judicial litigation and facilitate administration. This aspect is amply borne out by a story narrated by Jim Corbett in *My India*, where he depicts the benefits that accrue to the Kumaun peasant because of the rough and ready justice provided by British administrators who travel to the villages and set up court there and adjudicate according to immemorial custom.[36]The codification of *Kumaun Local Custom* by the government in 1920, emphasised the 'backward' Khasa traditions, as truely Kumauni and refused to grant weight to the brahmanical tradition in Kumaun.[37]Panna Lall's work granted upper caste immigrant status to a miniscule minority, who would not come under the purview of customary law. The numerical preponderance of those who followed Khasa custom, justified its designation not as Khasa but as Kumaun customary law. The Kumauni intelligentsia contested its relegation to customary law and 'noble savage' status by assiduously fostering a Hindu identity which was premised upon caste prescription. Its refusal to accept Kumaun customary law for the people of Kumaun was vigorously articulated. L. D Joshi wrote and published a voluminous rejoinder to colonial codification. He rejected the premise of Panna Lall, who had excluded from its purview few upper caste lineages, and argued that a *large* number did not follow *Khasa Family Law*. In his critique of Panna Lall he noted that the officer had missed, 'the fundamental difference in the religious and ethical evolution of the two classes of people (the immigrant Brahamans and Rajputs and the Khasa Brahmans and Rajputs).'[38]

L. D Joshi, inspite of his resistance to imperialist ethnography, also followed the evolutionary trajectory of historical growth and attempted to argue that Khasa family law, 'represents legal ideas of family and property rights which are much older than the Brahmanised treatises. It is a simpler version of Hindu law, earlier in date, and free from the religious innovations of the Brahmans.... to the student of the evolution of Hindu law the Khasa customary law is an important link in the process of growth'[39]The process of codification brought to centre stage the issue of Khasa identity and its coordinates. The colonial state questioned the high cultural tradition emphasised by the Kumaun intelligensia, and countered the vision of local elites by highlighting difference.

Whereas the local elites inspired by the nationalist vision focussed upon a contemporary Kumaun/pan-Indian identity, colonial ethnography continued to emphasise the village oriented, communitarian, egalitarian and non-urbane, local aspects. This ethnography chose to ignore the literate, articulate, hierarchical and upper caste, nationalist elites of Kumaun society. It supported the articulation of a local Kumaun identity as the product of a particular geography and specific history. British officials encouraged Kumaunis who highlighted the particularity of Kumaun. In the foreward to S.D Pant's book, E. A.H Blunt noted that 'Kumaun is perhaps the most interesting tract in the United Provinces. Its people, its social system, its customs, its methods of agriculture, even its language differ as greatly as its climate from those of the plains. Advance but a mile or two from the foothills into the Himalayas, and you will quickly realise that you are not only in a different country, but in the midst of a different people and a different civilization, -an older and simpler civilization, but all the more attractive, and not necessarily the worse, for its age and simplicity.'[40]

We noted that the Atkinson model of history was accepted by the Kumauni elites, because it explained their dominance, but they resisted British patrimonialism which treated all the people of Kumaun as inferior and unevolved. They endorsed British/European civilisation's support of reason, freedom and democracy, but were critical of British rule for violating its own canons of universal humanism by institutionalising racial difference. The racial superiority of the English administrators was resisted, and the intelligentsia demanded representative forms of governance. The debate between the intelligentsia and the colonial state has to be located in the articulation of an imperial ethnography which sought to represent the colonised as the other, different in origin from European nations and peoples and incapable of emulating them.

Though elite/upper caste version of Kumaun premised upon brahmanical Hindu predominance preferred to repress local, nonbrahmanical, and non Hindu aspects, yet it had to contend with a colonial state which emphasised the 'low' tradition of Kumaun culture. How did the local elites respond to the articlation of this difference within their ranks? They adopted various strategies-initially they attempted to change local customs, but this was resisted, then they posited civilizational and cultural unity, and thirdly they chose to underplay difference. This process generated a counter explanation to the evolutionary one, which argued that the Khasas were originally kshatriyas, demoted because they did not conform to brahmanical ritual. The Kumaun elites refused to accept a different theory of racial origins for the Khasa, and attempted to incorporate them into their vision of Kumaun as Rajputs. This helped because though the colonial state could grant visibility to the Khasa it could not grant it dominance in the public sphere, and gradually the term Khasa went out of common parlance and in the 1990s, it was impossible to

find any individual who responded to the self ascription of Khasa.[41]

Kumauni nationalism asserted the self-governability of all communities and nations. Nationalist aspiration also contested differences institutionalised by the colonial state. The first history of Kumaun, in Hindi, was nationalist in inspiration. B. D Pande's *Kumaun Ka Itihas* understood nationalism of the colonial peoples as part of the historical project of modernity. He cited John Stuart Mill on the principle of nationality and argued that nations could be organised around five cardinal principles- racial or ethnic unity, political organisation, common language, common state and similarity of culture.[42]He contested the notion of difference between Europeans and Indians postulated by the colonial state. He argued that Kumaun culture was not distinct from the culture of the north Indian plains. The book was successful in generating a discursive field in the language of the people and can be viewed as the acquistion of a vocabulary of power, that enabled the nationalist elites to arrogate to themselves the right to represent the people of Kumaun. It brought 'the people' as represented by the elites, into the domain of Kumaun politics and granted them a visibility and agency which it had not been possible to conceptualise earlier.After independence, the displacement of colonial authority produced a shift in the constellation of power which granted prominence to local elites but it did not produce a foundational shift in the writing of Kumaun history.

The making of the narrative of Kumaun, was now part of the larger history of Indian nationhood. Some of the nationalist histories, particularly those which were official depicted this phase of Kumaun history as 'glorious' in its resistance to colonialism. Even scholarly texts like the *Archaeology of Kumaun*, were infused with the nationalist ethic and represented the early history of Kumaun as part of the history of the Indian sub-continent. The author concluded that, 'this indicates that Kumaun blossomed various cultural flowers from time to time and in its turn enlightened the adjacent lands always keeping closer contacts with the Indian plains.'[43]K.P Nautiyal used E.T.Atkinson extensively, and though Nautiyal historicised the theories of origin, he was not able to, nor did he attempt to reconstitute a past which was radically different from that elaborated by Atkinson.

Shiv Prasad Dabral's monumental research on Garhwal and Kumaun history (Uttarakhand), from antiquity to the modern period was the result of a keen commitment to the spirit of historical inquiry.[44]Written in Hindi, citing an extensive array of material, it embellishing Atkinson's history with fresh evidence. The emphasis on printed texts for the reconstruction of pre-modern history meant that upper caste version of history remained dominant and Dabral's work was unable to interrogate the Atkinsonian paradigm. His work, which runs into many volumes, continued to underline the sub-continental dimension of local Himalayan culture and overlooked the significance of the Khasa interregnum and though it invoked the oral tradition it was unable to fully historicise it.

Shekhar Pathak's account in Hindi of the *Coolie Utar* movement in Kumaun is also nationalist in inspiration.[45]It located Kumaun on the national map, expressed the spirited anti-colonial tradition of Kumaun, and represented it as part of the meta-narrative of Indian nationalism. It documented in great detail, the resistance of the Kumaun peasantry, under the leadership of the intelligentsia, to the labour levies imposed by the colonial state. He regarded the *coolie utar* and *begar* as feudal remnants, which continued even under the colonial dispensation, because of the exigencies of British administration. The movement against these pre-modern vestiges appeared to fit in with the evolutionary perspective which would regard such practices as barbaric and uncivilised. The Kumaun intelligentsia was therefore fulfilling its modern role, by resisting the colonial state on the issue of *coolie utar* and *begar*. Shekhar Pathak visualised the self-identity of the intelligentsia as progressive and forward looking. He also reiterated the understanding that the intelligentsia represented and spoke on behalf of the people of Kumaun.

In retrospect, imperialist and nationalist histories can be seen as products of a particular historical conjuncture, which generated a dichotomy between the 'local' and 'nationalist' versions of Kumaun culture. Colonial agency accented the local, disparate elements of Kumaun culture, whereas nationalist agency sought to highlight and make visible the homogeneous, nationalist and unitary aspects. The establishment of the Indian state did not radically alter the perspective of Kumaun 'backwardness'. Located on the margins of the sub-continent, the Kumaun was increasingly viewed as peripheral. Sociologists and anthropologists evinced a keen interest in the region, which was recognisably local and different.

Yet, these perspectives were subject to change, constrained by emergent configurations of knowledge and power. Ram Guha's work on peasant resistance to the forest policies of the colonial and the post-colonial state amplifies this perspective. His attempt to speak on behalf of the peasantry and provide them a voice in history, so as to prevent the appropriation of their discontent by modern, nationalist politics, has 'romantic' overtones. He thinks that the cohesion and collective spirit of the village community provided the mainspring of political action, and he looks at earlier forms of social protest for explanation. Ram Guha regards the peasant movement as, 'different from a modern social movement

in its aims and methods' and as 'not merely a defence of the little community and its values, but also an affirmation of a way of life more harmoniously adjusted with natural processes. At one level they are defensive, seeking to escape the tentacles of the commercial economy and the centralizing state; at yet another level they are assertive actively challenging the ruling-class vision of a homogenizing urban-industrial culture.'[46]This narrative of Kumauni and Garhwali (Uttarakhand) men and women valiantly resisting colonial and post -colonial regimes resonated well with environmental concerns in the 1980's about the Himalayas as part of the global commons.

The increasing problems of mountain people because of decline in agricultural yields and out migration generated the idea of a separate hill state, leading to the demand for Uttarakhand. As the demand for Uttarakhand acquired prominence, [47]it underlined the hill identty, and substantiated the idea that, 'modernity is a matter of movement, of flux, of change and of unpredictability.'[48]The articulation of 'Uttarakhand' opened up the possibility of a different retrieval of the past, because changing constellations of power interrogated the legitimacy of brahman/upper caste domination and contested it in the domain of state policy and politics. Colonial ethnography despite its fragmentary, local, temporally limited, contextual character provided clues for the construction of another past. The efficacy of a counter juxtapositioning was limited, but it provided the possibility of the return of repressed elements. 'But whatever this new understanding of the past holds to be irrelevant--shards created by the selection of materials, remainders left aside by an explication--comes back, despite everything, on the edges of discourse or in its rifts and crannies : 'resistance', 'survivals', or delays discreetly perturb the pretty order of a line of 'progress' or a system of interpretation. These are lapses in the syntax constructed by the law of a place. Therein they symbolize a return of the repressed, that is, a return of what, at a given moment, has become unthinkable in order for a new identity to become thinkable.'[49]

Though some accounts of Uttarakhand continued to replicate Atkinson's history of Kumaun, nevertheless, certain aspects of imperial and nationalist history were interrogated. M.P Joshi deconstructed the myth that brahmans had migrated to Kumaun in the eighth and tenth centuries.[50]By studying a large number of copper plate inscriptions, along with the genealogies of eminent brahman families he was able to expose the mythical character of the *vanshavalis* and was able to question the historicity of Som Chand. The importance of Som Chand in Atkinson's history was that a large number of brahman families claimed to have come to Kumaun with Som Chand. For example, Manorath Pande's genealogy dates itself to the period of Shankarcharya, in the eighth century when Vedic brahmanism triumphed over decadent Buddhism. M. P Joshi's questioning of the Vanshavalis indicated that Brahman legitimacy based upon Shankar's visit to the region could also be questioned. Rahul Sankrityayan had already questioned the historicity of Shankar's pilgrimage.[51]Similarly, the relegation of the Manaskhand to an ancient pre-historic period by Atkinson and his Brahman informants was not borne out by a close textual reading. Folk ballads of the Katyuris, collected and published by Prayag Joshi and Urba Dutt Upadhyaya depicted a society in which caste was not pervasive.[52]Shailesh Matyani's novels set in rural Kumaun represented a Kumaun which was different from the brahmanical constructions and which suggested the possibility of a different historical trajectory.[53]It appeared then that the position of brahmans in pre-colonial Kumaun was not as dominant as it had been portrayed, and that clearly it could not be dated as far back as the eighth century.

Similarly, the relegation of Khasa history to hoary antiquity was also examined. M. C. Joshi argued that the Khasa period could not be traced to a date before the second century.[54] Khasa history was also illumined by studying Kumaun outside the imperial context, in juxtaposition with the history of its neighbours, Nepal and Tibet. Atkinson had noted the connection with Nepal and Tibet in the pre-colonial period, but had emphasised the southern connection because of its contemporary relevance. Badri Shah Thulgharia in his historical work Kurmanchal Kanti, published in the late 1930s had elaborated the relationship of Kumaun with the Mansarovar region.[55]Rahul Sankrityayan and G.Tucci, who travelled in the central and western Himalayas during the 1950s also noticed submergened traces of a more significant relationship between the various sub-cultures of this section of the Himalayas.

G. Tucci noticed the connectedness of Western Nepal, Western Tibet, Kumaun and Garhwal from the tenth century.[56]The publication of a history of the Khasa kingdom in Nepal, based on inscriptions, copper and gold plates, and Tibetan scrolls provided evidence that the Khasas had initiated the agricultural transformation of the middle Himalayas and that the Khasas were dominant in the power structure from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries.[57]The division of the Khasa kingdom into separate units, laid the foundation for the emergence of 'Kamadesh' under the Chand kings in the fourteenth century. The *Kalyan Chandrodaya Kavya* (Sanskrit) also questioned the notion of the Khasa interregnum as a period of chaos and anarchy.[58]

These studies pointed towards a historical tradition which could counter brahman domination and which could posit a history of the Khasas which was not frozen or static, but part of a making of Kumaun. It also suggested a different approach to historical writing, which was not 'essentialist' and which did not reduce historical complexity by positing either the national or the local, the brahmanical or the Khasa but regarded culture as emergent, contested, conjunctural, constrained by material factors, and affected by power constellations and knowledge structures. Such a perspective about Kumaun history was emerging not within the discipline, which continued to perpetuate the essentialist dichotomies but in the works of sociologists and anthropologists.

R. D Sanwal noted the contested nature of stratification in rural Kumaun: 'the most important and far-reaching effect which the establishment of British rule in Kumaun had for the status structure was to convert latent inter-caste hostility into open conflict and competition for the control of such resources as wealth, education, political and administrative office and orthodox life style in order to gain status superiority in the hierarchy.'[59]C. W. Brown questioned Atkinson and noted that, 'we must remain aware of the extent to which it was the result of circumstances primarily characteristic of British colonial thought.'[60]A. Fanger also expressed his discomfort with Khasa ethnography, 'as an anthropologist I have noticed the Jimadaras of Kumaon as a category conforming to the image of a Khasa as described by Atkinson, L.D Joshi, Berreman, and Sanwal. However, I must admit that in the present state of my knowledge it is difficult to challenge the views of both M.C Joshi and M.P Joshi.'[61]W. S. Sax in his study of the Nanda Devi pilgrimage attempted to 'specify both a level of shared cultural assumptions and another level at which these assumptions are subject to variant interpretations. Cultural assumptions about the mutual determination of places and persons are exemplified in classical Sanskrit law treatises as well as the 'customary law' of the central Himalayas ; ..... while the categories themselves are fluid and rarely questioned, interpretations and applications of them are subject to challenge, especially in situations of interest and desire.'[62]

A study of Kumaun, post Uttarakhand has to be located in this context, and has to focus upon elements which were repressed in the earlier narratives. In opposition to imperial conventions about evolutionary continuity, it has to emphasise the tranformative agency of imperialism, which marked a rupture in the history of Kumaun. To elaborate the discontinuity it has to document not only the contests over culture in the colonial period, but also has to contextualise 'modernity', by delineating the manner in which it affects any recovery of the pre-modern. It has to explore not only colonial history but also examine understanding of the pre-colonial past. As T.S Eliot noted, 'the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past.'[63]The realignment of historical traces and residues to explain the contemporary present is therefore part of the making of modern Kumaun. It has to counter nationalist historiography which attempts to overlook hierarchy and unequal access to education, land, control over public property, print media and visibility. It endorses the understanding that 'modernity was a contextually located and enormously contested idea.'[64]

The disputed nature of modernity helps articulate an ethnography which can explore, 'the uncompromising sense of paradox in the intertwining of diversity and homogeneity that will not allow an easy parsing of these two terms.'[65]It has to record the situation which facilitates individuation, but also constructs communal configurations. It has to delineate not only the construction of Kumauni identities, (in its communitarian and segmented aspects) but also the fact that 'constructed and migrating through a grid of sites that constitute fragments rather than a community of any sort, an identity is a disseminating phenomenon that has a life of its own beyond the simple literal sense of inhering in particular human agents at a particular site and time.'[66]It has to document the simultaneity of many identities-caste, religious, regional and national, which emerged during the colonial period, and also has to explain why *particular* identities acquired significance, because, 'modernity is a condition that at once empowers people and constrains them.'[67]

NOTES

1. Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*¸Tom Conley trans., New York: Columbia University Press 1988, pp. 5-6, "it appears to me that in the West, for the last four centuries, "the making of history" has referred to writing. Little by little it has replaced the myths of yesterday with a practice of meaning. As a practice (and not by virtue of the discourses that are its result) it symbolizes a society capable of managing the space that it provides for itself of replacing the obscurity of the lived body with the expression of a "will to know" or a "will to act or, in short, of being turned into a blank page that it should itself be able to write. This practice of history is an ambitious, progressive, also utopian practice that is linked to the endless institution of areas "proper", where a will to power can be inscribed in terms of reason."
2. Iain Chambers, 'Migrancy, Culture, Identity', K. Jenkins ed., *The Postmodern History Reader* London & New York: Routledge, 1997, p. 77-81.
3. D. Kellner, 'Popular Culture and the Construction of Postmodern Identities', Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman ed., Oxford: Wily-Blackwell, 1992, p. 141-177.

4. Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*¸1988, p. 2.
5. For the purpose of this essay, Kumaun consists of present day districts of Almora, Nainital, Champawat, Bageshwar, Pithoragarh, and Uddham Singh Nagar in Uttarakhand.
6. E. T Atkinson, *The Himalayan Gazetteer* (1882), Delhi: Cosmo, 1981(Reprint).
7. E. T Atkinson, Vol. II, part I, p.370.
8. Ibid., p.440.
9. Ibid., Vol. III, part II, pp. 421-427.
10. Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*¸1988, p.4.
11. In this context it is important to remember that Atkinson's compilation of information about the Himalayan Districts was part of the larger enterprise of compiling the Gazetteers of the North Western Provinces.
12. Cited in *Vernacular Newspaper Reports* of the 1870s, it began publication in 1868, was published by the Nainital Press and its editor and proprietor was J. D. Joshi.
13. *Almora Akhbar* cited *Vernacular Newspaper Reports* 15 June 1871.
14. The *Almora Akhbar* started publication in 1871, it was published by the Almora Debating Club Press and represented a wide cross section of local society.Its members were B. D Pant, M. Pande, R Dutt, L. N Joshi, B. D Joshi, Lall Ganga Ram and Babu D. D Sanwal.
15. The *Shakti* Newspaper was published by the Deshbhakt Press, and started publication in 1918, when the *Almora Akhbar* had to stop publication. It therefore inherited not only the editor but also the readership of the *Almora Akhbar*.
16. Not published during the colonial period, copies of the unpublished manuscript were available with local brahmans. G. D Pande, ed., *Manaskhand*, Varanasi: Shri Nityanand Smarak Samiti, 1989.
17. Shivanand Pande, *Kalyan Chandrodaya Kavya* manuscript courtesy G. D. Pande. Subsequently published and edited by N. N. Mishra .
18. Rudra Chandra Dev, *Traivarnik Dharma Nirnayanan*, manuscript attributed to the sixteenth century, Calcutta: Government Collection of the Asiatic Society.
19. E.S. Oakley and T.D. Gairola, 'Introduction', *Himalayan Folklore*, Allahabad: Government Press 1935. pp.1-32.
20. *Achal* published by Dharma Nand Pant and edited by Jivan Chand Joshi.
21. Vasudha Pande, *Stratification in Kumaun*, *circa 1815-1930,* NMML Occasional Papers, History and Society, New Series, No. 37, New Delhi:NMML, 2013.
22. G. W Traill, 'Statistical Sketch of Kumaun', *Asiatic Researches* Vol. XVI 1828; J. H Batten ed., *Official Reports on the Province of Kumaun*, Agra 1851; J O B' Beckett, *Settlement Report of Kumaun*, 1874, J. E Goudge, *Final Report on the Assessment of the Almora District and Hill Pattis,* 1903.
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24. T. D Gairola , *Selected Revenue Decisions of Kumaun,* Allahabad: Government Press, 1938.
25. P. Whalley, *The Law of the Extra Regulation Tracts,* (1897), Varanasi: Vishwavidyalaya Prakashan, 1991(Reprint).
26. A.K Mittal, *British Administration in Kumaun 1815-1947*, Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1986; R.S Tolia, *British Kumaun Garhwal: An Administrative History of a Non-regulation Province 1815-1835*, Almora: Shree Almore Book Depot, 1996.
27. S. D Pant, *The Social Economy of the Himalayans,* London: George Allen &Unwin 1935, p. 10.
28. *Almoriana* (1901), Nainital: Gyanodaya Prakashan, 1991, p. 15.
29. *Pilgrim Wandering in the Himmala* (1844), Nainital: Gyanodaya Prakashan, 1990(Reprint); F. Parks, *Wanderings of A Pilgrim During Four-and-Twenty years in the East with Revelations of life in the Zenana*, 2 vols, London: Pelham Richardson, 1850; R. Heber, *Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India 1824-25*, Vol. I, Philadelphia: Lea &Carey 1829; John Hewett, *Jungle Trails in Northern India,* London: Methuen and Company Limited, 1938.
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31. G. R Kala, *Memoirs of the Raj*, Delhi: Mukul Prakashan, 1974, pp.41-49.
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33. Sir J. E. Hewett, *Jungle Traills in Northern India*, London: Methuen &Co., 1938, pp.30-31; F.W. Champion, *The Jungle in Sunlight and Shadow*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1934, pp.120-122.
34. Edward Said, *Orientalism,* London: Routledge &Kegan Paul, 1978, p. 24.
35. Vasudha Pande, Law, 'Women and Family in Colonial Kumaun', *I. I. C Quarterly,* Vol. 23, 1996, pp. 106-120.
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37. *Hindu Customary Law,* Allhahbad: Government Press, 1942. Originally published as *Kumaun Local Custom* Allahabad, 1920.
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46. R. Guha, *The Unquiet Woods*. *Ecological Change and Resistance in the Himalayas*, Delhi: OUP, 1989, p. 196.
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61. A.C Fanger, 'Caste and Economic Exchange in a Traditional Himalayan Village', idem., *Himalaya Past and Present*, 1992, pp. 271-290.
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Research Articles

'A Legacy of Divided Nations': Partitions and the Making of North-Eastern India from Colonial to Post- Colonial Times

Binayak Dutta*

Introduction

It has been since a decade now that north-east India has become the focus of India's Look East Policy – a policy perspective that sought to re-define India's engagement with her south-Asian neighbourhood based, among others, on the pillars of connectivity and tourism. This re-imagination of a region that had become synonymous with politics over immigration, insurgency and insularity for decades, was at the core of the new thrust in India's foreign policy in the new century. Encapsulated in the idea of Look-East Policy was an engagement with the history of partition of the the eastern part of the sub-continent as well as the regional identity of this geo-political space that had become proverbial as the land of Seven Sisters- a tag-line to denote the seven states of the north-east.[1]The publication of the North Eastern Region Vision 2020, published and circulated by the DONER Ministry succeeded in generating renewed interest and ideation in academic and administrative circles on this geo-political space and the re-imagination of its regional identity at the turn of the twenty-first century. At the core of this re-imagination was the engagement with the history of north-eastern partition. The Vision document, published in 2008, was quick to point out that:

> it is recognized that the Partition of India and the denial, since the India-Pakistan War of 1965, of transit facilities to physically link all but 29 kilometres of the north-east to the rest of India has severely limited the prospects of the North-East.

The Look-East Policy was therefore an 'imaginative leap in foreign policy, defence policy and internal security policy … to end the region's geopolitical isolation and put it on the path to activated and inclusive growth."[2]Few studies have actually gone into the cultural and historical roots of the regional identity of north-east India and fewer still have made attempts to relate colonial cartography with the making of the regional identity of this peripheral region of modern India. This paper seeks to explore some of these gaps.

Map making has been an integral part of the colonial strategy stretching over more than one and half centuries. In fact, this has been an acknowledged part of the colonial policy in the Indian subcontinent. Today, when India is engaged in a renewed debate on the twin issues of nationalism and integration, reflected in public practices associated with the national anthem and the national flag, discourses on national and regional cartography and identities have assumed more significance than in a long time. B. D. Chattopadhyaya in a recent book argues that,[3]'the nation of India is of course, a recent unity'. ... Two points that emerge from the voluminous contributions of geographers and anthropologists towards the understanding of diversities are: (i) centres as nodes for network and (ii) the implied relationship between spatial hierarchies which are conditioned geographically.

From the perspective of historical time spans, the points, although 'of heuristic value, have to be checked against historical evidence…' It is important therefore to also interrogate the antiquity of the north-eastern region in the context of the above discussed hierarchy between the nation-state and the region and often argued in politics and debated in historical studies.[4]As it exists today, northeast India is a land which is at the cusp of India's borders with countries of south and south-east Asia. Sharing boundaries with Bangladesh, Myanmar, China and Bhutan, the region, till today, is ethnically divided and territorially contested. The roots of this contested reality of north-east India based on international and ethnic claims and assertions perhaps is coterminous with the long history of Indian map-making which is founded on the conscious disruptions of traditional and pre-colonial connectivities in south-Asia. This story was acknowledged by none other than Lord Curzon himself

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in 1907, at a lecture at Oxford, fresh from his return from India. Curzon observed that:

> …In the first place the idea of a demarcated frontier is itself an essentially modern conception and finds little or no place in the ancient world. In Asia, the oldest inhabited continent there has always been a strong instinctive aversion to the acceptance of fixed boundaries, arising partly from the nomadic habits of people, partly from the dislike of precise arrangements that is typical of the oriental mind, but more still from the idea that in the vicissitudes of fortune more is to be expected from an unsettled than from a settled frontier. … In Asiatic countries it would be true to say that demarcation has never taken place except under European pressure and by the intervention of European agents. …[5]

Though this assertion is founded on Curzon's experience of drawing the Durand line, the narrative of the making of north-east India is also essentially reflective of this disruptive philosophy and practice of map making.

The Early Colonial Antecedents

Colonial exercise of map-making in northeast India is perhaps the most prolonged and complex which has not been analyzed by academics and policy makers as yet. Despite the passage of seven decades since the formal transfer of power by the British Government in India, boundaries between countries that emerged in the wake of India's colonial experience continue to be in a state of flux as the identities of people who came to ethnically divided by political boundaries of state-nations continue to be fluid and contested. This is visible now, than ever before, in what is understood as India's north-eastern region where till very recent times, the governments of India and Bangladesh had to grapple with the process of demarcation of boundaries.[6]The visit of two Indian prime ministers to Bangladesh between 2011 and 2015 and the fanfare around the signing of the land-boundary agreements notwithstanding, the situation is no better today than it was seventy years ago. While one can probably appreciate the tumult in the lives of the people and the nations and the unsettling situation at the moment of partition, it is bewildering to see lingering chaos that persist even as we write this paper. The porous borders, the un-demarcated boundaries between India and Bangladesh and the politics over citizenship and uncertainties and insecurities that afflict the lives of the Assamese, the Chakma, Hajong and the Khasi communities across the borders are grim reminders of the fact that the subcontinent's 'tryst with destiny' is far from over. Despite the claims of the Indian state in its Look-East and Act-East/ Neighborhood First policy seeking to move beyond the disruptive histories of partition of India, the attitudes on the ground have been far from positive towards that direction. Politics in this region seem to carry the burden of history and the legacy of suspicion and antagonisms that characterized the early decades of the twentieth century. In northeast India, the idea of borders and borderlands is more nuanced and complex as they impact both national and regional politics in many diverse ways. Often the ideas of borders and borderlands with their elaborate paraphernalia for nation states mean little within the region and without understanding of the people who live within it. Nations therefore are as much a concern of the state as it is an engagement of the community of people who reside within the territory of the nation state. Partition, understood in international relations as dividing or tearing apart a unified territory, has its impact on relations between communities and regions and also seek to assert an inflexible character against any scope of porosity and fluidity. This idea is more important to appreciate both popular and statist response to human mobility, migration and settlement in areas which at some point of modern historical experience were a contiguous region till boundary lines split up the lands to constitute nation states.[7]

The genesis of partition as the corner-stone of political map-making can be traced to the inception of colonial rule in eastern India. The arrival of colonial rule in India in Bengal and the *diwani* attracted the attention of the English East India Company officers and servants to the region located on the northeast of Bengal. In fact, the name northeast, which in its ordinary sense indicates a direction on the compass, came to mean a geo-spatial location in relation to the Company headquarter at Fort William. With the political expansion of the colonial rule, this geo-spatial reference acquired a political entity which has been shaped by many partitions beyond the more recent experiences of 1947 partitions. One of the earliest experiences of partition, drawing up of borders and mapmaking having its impact on the making of northeast India was on the borders between colonial Bengal and the Khasi-Jaintia foothills close on the heels of the East India Company acquiring the Dewani of Bengal. First such initiative can be traced to 1772 when an expedition was launched against the Khasi-Jaintia as the Company officers realized the value of 'monopoly of the lime quaries'. An important outcome of this expedition was the survey and demarcation of the boundaries between the Company controlled Sylhet and the Khasi-Jaintia territories ruled by indigenous chiefs. The outocme of the expedition also confined the Khasi chiefs to the mountains and left the plains and foothills of Sylhet free for colonial exploitation.[8]This was only the beginning of a long process as many such demarcations were to follow as colonial interests expanded into areas which were not exactly in the vicinity of Bengal. The visit of the Company

officers into the Naga hills in the early 1820s was an interesting precursor of expanding colonial interest and interference over areas there. These areas would become a contested frontier space and borderland of British northeastern frontier as the Patkai range watershed came to be recognized by the colonial state as the boundary of control, running across Naga inhabited areas since 1834. Such cartographic exercises were also rampant in the Manipur frontier as the defeat of the Burmese forces by the Company in the First Anglo-Burmese War brought about British colonial hegemony over Manipur. As Pradip Phanjoubam points out,

> …….in the Manipur sector the border was officially made in 1834. After ending Ava(Burmese) occupation of Manipur and Assam in 1826 at the end of the first Anglo-Burmese War and the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo, the Chindwin river was deemed the boundary of the British protectorate Manipur, putting the Kabaw valley under Manipur. But in 1834, … the British persuaded the Manipuri king that a new boundary should be negotiated and Captain R. Boileau Pemberton as Boundary Commissioner drew what came to be known as the Pemberton Line along the foot of the 'Murring Hills' on the western edge of the Kabaw valley… In 1881, this boundary was realigned by the then British Political agent in Manipur, Major James Johnstone. …In 1896, another British political agent in Manipur, Colonel Maxwell put 38 boundary pillars along this boundary which then came to be known as the Pemberton-Johnstone-Maxwell line[9].

This was subsequently was ratified by India and Burma as the international borders in 1967. Such processes of map-making was also evident in tha case of Tripura where scholars have shown how the idea of a colonial frontier subsequently transformed itself into an international boundary. The process of boundary demarcation in Tripura was, as in Manipur a long affair. In Tripura, the colonial interests of revenue and resource appropriation combined itself with demands of law and order and succession conflicts to culminate in an elaborate process of boundary demarcation which 'worked with contrasting dimensions.'[10]Therefore in 1782, 'when the Rani of Tripura asked the Tippera Collector to assist her son's succession, the Collector obliged, and in return, secured a new boundary at the base of the hills, inducing the Raja to move his capital to Agartala. The Raja kept private landholdings in Tippera District, but in 1782, his royal authority had officially retreated to mountains east of Comilla'.[11]The Company was therefore now free to constitute the district of Tippera in 1790. But subsequent disputes between the English East India Company and the Maharaja of Tripura over *khas* lands located in the bordering *pargana* led the English Company Government to appoint Mr. Henry Rickett to demarcate the boundary between Tripura and Tippera in 1846.The process was a long drawn affair, with Mr. Rickett ordering a couple of surveys in 1848. But it was only by 1854 that the boundary between the hill state of Tripura and the British district of Tippera came to be settled after survey by the arbitrators Messers Leycester and Campbell. Brick pillars were erected in 1866 at the angles of the boundary and these were maintained by the colonial government. This boundary was not only the district boundary but also the imperial frontier line of British India.[12]The process of boundary demarcation cutting across the Zo territories was concluded in 1901 as the colonial state drew a boundary between the Lushai hills and the Chin hills. This boundary has also persisted and has since been legitimized as the boundary between the Mizo Hills District/ Mizoram and the Chin State of Myanmar. The process of boundary demarcations was not limited to the eastern borders of northeast India alone. In the north, the boundary between Tibet and India in the eastern Himalayas came to be formalized with an agreement signed between the representatives of British and Tibet in July 1914. This boundary came to be known as the McMahon line, named after the man who negotiated the treaty on behalf of the British government of India. The result of this exercise was the drawing of an 850 mile long line which ran from the northern edge of Bhutan to upper Burma and 'reflected the colonial concerns for a militarily defensible boundary alignment.'[13]The Bengal Boundary Award made on the eve of transfer of power in India demarcating the boundary between India and East Pakistan in 1947 by Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the barrister who headed the Commission, was the culmination of this process of cartographic manoeuvres by the colonial state in India. The political scientist and policy maker Sanjoy Hazarika sums up the situation well when he points out that 'what is not often understood is that the North-East suffered the impact of not one but two partitions.'[14]The First was the 1937 separation of Burma which split up the Nagas, Mizos, the Manipuris and the tribes of Arunachal between two sovereignties, devastating kinship relations and trade connectivities and the second was the partition of Bengal and Assam in 1947, culminating in the Radcliffe Line of 1947 which not only divided the Hindus and Muslims of this region on religious and ethnic ines, it also divided the smaller ethnic communities like the Khasis, Garos, Hajongs, Rabhas, Karbis Koch-Rajbongshis, the Reangs and the Chakmas, to name a few. These cartographic alignments though initially introduced with the philosophy of colonial exploitation, culminated in the drawing of many lines which till today, constitute to divide people and create disputed borders both internally and internationally shaping this region and determining India's relations with its immediate neighbours.

The coming of the English East India rule in Assam in 1826 was also therefore the beginning of a series of partitions and mapmaking in the region in the hills and the plains. In sharp contrast to the area being at the centre of connectivity between East Asia and South –East Asia, the region was transformed initially into a borderland of an expanding colonial empire and subsequently into bordered lands as economic and administrative frontier lines came to acquire the shape of international borders since the twentieth century. Thus the making of northeast India was endemic to the British colonial project of contested expansion and hegemony over the subcontinent which has to be appreciated through a reappraisal of colonial cartographic imagination and projects in South Asia.

Partition of Assam and Tripura and the Making of Northeast India In 1947

Among the numerous partition initiatives that came to affect the northeast, one of the most profound was the Radcliffe Award. Though drawn up in less than forty days, it had a shattering impact on the ground, disrupting livelihoods and uprooting lives that had grown roots in the region over centuries. When the partition proposals came in June 1947, it was decided that if Bengal was to be partitioned, a referendum would be organized under the aegis of the Central government to decide whether Sylhet which was a predominantly Bengali speaking district of South Assam was to remain in Assam or to merge with East Bengal.[15]This pronouncement not only brought Assam as yet another colonial province into the vortex of partition politics and along with it, brought communities of the hills and plains of north-east India, who otherwise had no direct connection with the declaration on the proposed partition of the Indian sub-continent, into the partition discourse,.

When the result of the Referendum was made public, it came to light that a majority of the votes were in favour of amalgamation with East Pakistan. Sylhet was put on the dissection table of the Boundary Commission. Therefore in the post-Referendum situation, the Sylhet question was placed before the Bengal Boundary Commission with the contending sides making detailed presentations. On the August14th , Sylhet except three and a half *thanas*became a part of East Pakistan.[16]What remained in India became a part of the Cachar district of the composite state of Assam in post-colonial India.

Beyond the narratives of the administrative history of partition politics, when partition finally took place, it affected politics and the lives of the people in Assam in many ways. It physically separated northeast India from the rest of the country save through a small passage of 22 kilometres commonly known as the *chicken neck*. Assam lost 4,769 square miles of territory and a population of 2,825,282 persons. But the loss of territory was not as significant as was the loss in paddy fields, lime and cement industries and tea gardens of Sylhet.[17]The adverse impact of the transfer of the Sylhet district to East Pakistan was noted in the Census Report of 1951 which observed that: 'the far reaching effects of this loss will continue to be felt by Assam as well as India for many years to come.'[18]Partition disrupted the natural channels of riverine communication, rail and roads networks that linked the hill areas of colonial Assam through the Surma valley. One of the scholars crisply noted that, 'Assam's rail link with the rest of the country was snapped following the Partition. It was only in January, 1950 that the rail-link was restored by a metre-gauge line through the narrow chicken-neck corridor of north Bengal. The disruption of the rail link had a very adverse effect on Assam's economy. Partition also resulted in the loss of Chittagong port which was a major outlet for Assam tea.'[19]Partition of Assam and the loss of Sylhet[20]made Assam a land locked province as its outlet to the sea since 1904[21] was through the port of Chittagong, which became a part of East Pakistan.

Partition of colonial Assam in 1947 also adversely affected the social and economic lives of the various tribal communities residing within colonial Assam. It disrupted the traditional links that the tribal communities such as the Khasis, Jaintias and the Garos had with the East Pakistani districts of Sylhet and Mymensingh respectively. These tribes were settled not only in the hill districts of Assam but also in the plains of Sylhet and Mymensingh. At the stroke of a pen these people were internally split into Indians and Pakistanis depending on their residence. The traditional inter-community linkages in the area was so strong that these hill tribes 'for ages depended on their trade with the plains…'[22] Centuries old prosperous border-trade based economy was killed by closing the borders and erecting check-posts.[23]In the pre-partition scenario, the plains of Sylhet used to be the main market for the produce of the hills and foothills of the Khasi Jaintia lands. As a result of the partition of Sylhet, a border of about 150 miles in length was created across the Khasi –Jaintia hills. The boundary of the new state of East Pakistan partitioned the lands inhabited by the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo as boundary came to be demarcated 'from boundary pillar no 1071 located at the tri-junction of Rangpur district of Bangladesh, west Garo Hills district of Meghalaya and Goalpara district of Assam and ends at the boundary pillar no 1338 at the tri-junction of Sylhet district of Bangladesh, Jaintia Hills district and Cachar district of Assam.'[24]Partition and the amalgamation of Sylhet with East Pakistan caused 'a virtual economic blockade of

the Khasi hills.'[25]The movement of goods were initially discouraged and subsequently stopped from moving between Khasi-Jaintia hills and East Pakistan. While the Khasi- Jaintia people of the hills found themselves cut away from their kinsmen in the plains they were also reduced to penury without a market for their agricultural produce and mineral resources. Trade which amounted to more than three crores of rupees annually in the pre-partition days came to a standstill which resulted in the tribal communities residing at the borders between Khasi Hills and Sylhet reaching the brink of starvation.[26]The affected in the Khasi Hills district amounted to about 80,000 people and about 16,000 households This resulted in largescale migration of people from these border areas to new settlements selected for their relocation in the Ri-Bhoi region of present day Meghalaya.[27]

The greatest impact of partition was clearly through migration of population from one region to another, both within the country and across newly created international borders and the resulting demographic transformation. Partition changed the way politics came to be perceived not only in Assam but in the entire northeastern India. While interprovincial borders of colonial era became international boundaries, perceptions about population migration also underwent a change. Inter-provincial migration which was easy and mostly unrestricted became restricted by the legal regimes governing international population movement. Though there was no restriction of people migrating from East Pakistan to Assam in the initial years after Independence, gradually the provincial governments and the Government of India began to discourage migration from East Pakistan to India by 1950. Partition introduced the 'foreigners' dimension into politics of northeast India with the introduction of the passport system in 1952. The situation became critical as the initial trickle of people wanting to migrate to India from East Pakistan rose dramatically by 1950 as the political atmosphere in East Pakistan became increasingly hostile to the minority communities. The Census Report for Assam, Manipur and Tripura, 1951 observed, that 'the recent influx of Hindu refugees from Pakistan constitutes the biggest migration stream into Assam during the last decade.' Following the partition, there has been an almost steady and continuous exodus of the Hindus of Pakistan into Assam. The number of displaced almost touched about half a million people by April 1950. The grave situation led the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan to meet in April and come up with an agreement, popularly known as the Nehru - Liaquat Pact. But despite the pact there was no improvement in the situation on the ground and a large number of displaced preferred to settle down in Assam. The Census of 1951 revealed that as many as 274,455 persons were settled in Assam, predominantly in the plains. Partition of Sylhet from Assam and its amalgamation with East Pakistan had a major impact on the flow of refugees from East Pakistan to Assam. The Census Report pointed out that 'most of the refugees come from the bordering district of Sylhet.'[28]As community lives were disrupted in post-colonial Assam by the operation of partition, migration of refugees from East Pakistan had an adverse impact on community relations both in the plains and the hills of Assam. Settlement of these refugees in the various districts of Assam was viewed as a threat to the idea of political homogenization of spaces. In Shillong, in the Khasi Hills District where about 66 acres of land was requisitioned by the Government of Assam in two blocks of Bhagyakul estate and Umpling village for the settlement of 351 families, tribal- non tribal relations deteriorated as the non-tribals came to be perceived as '*dkhars*' or foreigners for the first time. Inclusion of non-Tribals in the District Council established under the 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution led to staging of black flag demonstrations on 27th June, 1952 and attempts to obstruct the inaugural ceremony.[29]The protests were accompanied by processions which were 'dispersed by the police with tear gas which was used for the first time in Khasi and Jaintia Hills to break a political procession.'[30]It was almost prophetically noted in the Census Report of 1951 that, 'the far reaching effects of this loss will continue to be felt by Assam as well as India for many years to come.'[31]

The partition and the making of present Tripura, unlike Assam was unique as it was a princely state. Comprising the hills and plains, Tripura presented for the historians of partition an unprecedented situation. Contrary to the claims made in most standard texts, the princely state of Tripura was also partitioned as the lands held by the Maharaja in the plains of East Bengal were taken away from his control and with the creation of East Pakistan. The kings of Tripura since the fifteenth century were the rulers of both the hills and some areas in the plains of eastern Bengal especially Comilla and parts of Sylhet, Noakhali and Chittagong districts. These plains areas came under the sway of the colonial control in 1761 after an operation led by Lieutenant Mathews on behalf of the Chittagong Council. 'Marriot the collector was sent from the Chittagong Council on 15th March to settle and receive the revenues of Tripura…the paying part of Tripura lay on plains and was known as Chakla Roshnabad,'[32] a total area of 555 square miles. A reference to the plains is significant in the context of partition as hills of Tripura became the home for a multitude of people who migrated to from their homes in East Bengal since the eve of partition till 1970s. Though the Maharani, as the President of the Regency Council signed the Instrument

of Accession to the Indian Union on the 13th August, 1947[33] the award of the Boundary commission formalized the process of partition. Accordingly the estates of Chakla Roshnabad which belonged to the Maharaja of Tripura as a *zamindari* now came to be located within East Pakistan. Thus with the Partition of India, princely Tripura, along with Punjab, Bengal and Assam also experienced the process of Partition and the people living in the princely state of Tripura were also exposed to the vicissitudes of post partition politics. Confident about the wisdom of the rulers, the Hindu subjects of Chakla Roshnabad did not submit any memorandum to the Radcliffe Commission for inclusion of the *zamindari* into the post partition Tripura though they were an inalienable part of the territorial possessions of the king of Tripura much before the onset of colonial rule. After 1949 Tripura was made a Chief Commissioner's province and Chakla Roshnabad became 'the absolute private property'[34] of the Tripura royal family. With the formation of East Pakistan, Chakla Roshnabad was lost on transfer of power to East Pakistan despite the protests by the Hindu subjects and the subordinate zamindars, thus completing the partition of Tripura as well. [35]

Partition's Post-Script in Northeast India

The situation became critical due to large scale migration to India from East Pakistan by 1950. The Census Report 1951 for Assam, Manipur and Tripura, observed, that, 'the recent influx of Hindu refugees from Pakistan constitutes the biggest migration stream into Assam during the last decade.' The Census Report 1951, observed that:

> Soon after the 1949 Refugee Census occurred the incidences of Soneswar and Habiganj, the oppression of the Hajongs in Northern Mymensingh and the atrocities committed on the Santhals in Rajshahi, in East Dinajpur, etc. Then came the gruesome incidents over large areas of East Pakistan in February-March 1950, especially Dacca. These led to the inevitable result, viz, the desertion by hundreds and thousands of Hindus in East Pakistan of their hearths and homes to seek shelter in the neighboring districts of West Bengal and Assam whichever was nearer...[36]

The number of displaced almost touched about half a million people by April, 1950. A large number of displaced preferred to settle down in Assam. The Census of 1951 revealed that 259,946 persons were settled in plains areas, only 14,509 persons moved into the hill areas.[37]The political situation in East Pakistan only contributed to the inflow of more Hindu refugees into Assam. As against 273,000 refugees in the Census of 1951, the number of refugees returned was 628,000 in the Census of 1961. The influx of refugees contributed to social tension in Assam. Assamese elites feared danger to their economic, political and cultural life. Situation became more critical by 1961.[38]The culture conscious Assamese middle class who initially welcomed these immigrants subsequently began to be wary of them as these immigrants became vote-banks of the ruling party in power.[39]The birth of Bangladesh on the Partition of Pakistan in 1971 made the situation worse. It added the 'Bangladeshi' dimension to the 'foreigners' imbroglio. The Assam Anti-Foreigners Agitations were launched in 1978. It came to a close with the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985. Despite the signing of the accord the threat of migrants from across the borders never dissipated from Assamese popular imagination, taking the form of anti-Foreigner demonstrations from time to time.

In Tripura, the partition of Tripura and the loss of Chakla Roshnabad only contributed to the aggravation of a social and political crisis. One of the pioneering scholars, Tripur Chandra Sen, in his *Tripura in Transition*, pointed out that '[h]ad the zamindary been included in the State of Tripura, the refugee problem would not have been so acute and injurious to the people of this country.'[40]This was similar to the situation in Assam where the loss of Sylhet deprived the Brahmaputra Valley of a buffer zone for absorbing the partition displaced from East Pakistan and exposed the Brahmaputra valley to refugee inflow. Partition also exposed Tripura to an enormous inflow of refugees. As a relatively peaceful state contiguous to East Pakistan and as an area that had welcomed the settlement of Bengalis from East Bengal under the patronage of the Maharajas, Tripura was perceived as a safe haven for the displaced Bengali Hindus from the various districts of East Pakistan after the Partition as east Pakistan witnessed a spurt in communal violence, especially after 1950. Most of the displaced hailed from those areas which formed the *zamindari* of the Maharaja. In 1950-51, the number of refugees who migrated to Tripura was as high as 1,84,000. With violent anti-minority movements breaking out in East Pakistan, the second high point of inflow of refugees was in 1964-65, when the Census data recorded the inflow of as many as 1,00,340 persons. Gayatri Bhattacharyya very aptly summed up the post Partition scenario when she recorded that, '[b]efore the partition the progress of settlement of the Bengalees was slow and steady. But after partition especially from 1951 there was a sudden spurt in immigration of the minority community of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. At times the inflow of displaced persons slowed down but following communal troubles in East Pakistan and introduction of the passport system it again quickened… Today the displaced persons far outnumber the Tribal population.'[41]

Though some attempts have been made in recent times for an academic engagement with partition, these have been far from adequate and lack a comprehensive

character. The most significant gap in such studies is the inability to reconcile the history of Partition with the rise of insular regionalism and identity politics. There has been no attempt to overcome the limitations of partitioned lives and explore the pre-colonial connectivity across community lines. In this sense, there has been no decolonization in northeast India as communities have not only accepted their partitioned lives as a given-ness, they still refuse to rise above the colonial cartographic project on the ground and in their minds. We can only conclude by emphasising that the partition story in northeast India is a complex story far from the possibility of a definitive conclusion. Here, 'partition is a living history...yet to be recovered but which we are still only beginning to come to terms with.'

NOTES

1. Now Sikkim also has been included in this formulation by the Government of India.
2. *North Eastern Region VISION 2020*, 2008
3. B.D,Chattopadhyaya, *The Concept of Bharatavarsha And Other Essays*, Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2017, 35-6.
4. P. Chatterjee, 'Claims on the Past: The Geneology of Modern History', David Arnold and David Hardiman, eds., *Subaltern Studies, Vol. VIII*, New Delhi: OUP,1-49.
5. Lord Curzon of Kedleston, The Romanes Lecture*, Frontiers*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907, 48-9.
6. Land Boundary Agreement was signed between India and Bangladesh in 2015, which affected almost all the states of northeastern India.
7. Northeast India was a part of the large political unit often referred to as the Indian sub-continent constituting India, Burma, eastern Bengal which later became East Pakistan (later on Bangladesh).
8. H. Giri, *The Khasis Under British Rule*, New Delhi: Regency Publications, 36.
9. Pradip Phanjoubam, 'India's War Against Itself: A View From Manipur', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50 (25), 20 Jun. 2015,12-15 .
10. Anandaroop Sen, 'Conquest and The Quotidian: Violence and the Making of Tripura (1760-1793)', Lipokmar Dzuvichu and Manjeet Baruah, eds., *Modern Practices in North East India: History, Culture, Representation*, London: Routledge, 2018, 56-88.
11. Ibid. 80-1; also see, David Ludden, 'The First Boundary of Bangladesh' Journal of the royal Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 48(1), jun 2003, 1-54.
12. W. W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. VI, London: Trubner &Co, 1876, 356.
13. Berenice Guyot-Rechard, *Shadow States: India, China and the Himalayas*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, 51.
14. Sanjoy Hazarika, *Strangers No More*, New Delhi: Aleph, 2018, xi.
15. Bidyut Chakrabarty, *The Partition of Bengal and Assam*, London: Routledge, 2004, 177.
16. *Thana* means a police outpost. In administrative parlance it is often understood as the administrative area under an outpost.
17. *Censusof India*,1951, Vol.XII, Part I-A, 2-3.
18. Ibid, 3.
19. Udayon Misra, *The Periphery Strikes Back*, Shimla: IIAS, 2000, 148, ft.nt. no.2.
20. Almost the entire district of Sylhet was transferred to East Pakistan except only an area of 709 square miles and a population of 291,320 persons in the three *thanas* of Bararpur, Ratabari, Patharkandi and a part of the Karimganj *thana* which was joined with the district of Cachar and formed a new subdivision. See the *Census of India*,1951, Vol. XII, Part I-A, 2.
21. Since 1904, a rail link linking Dibrugarh with Chittagong was set up to carry the bulk of the tea trade from Assam. See Udayon Misra, *The Periphery Strikes Back*, 2000, 115.
22. Ibid,115.
23. Ibid, 115-16 and149; ft.nt.3.
24. Statement of the then Chief Minister of Meghalaya Donkupar Roy in the Assembly, *Oneindia News,* May 6, 2008, www.oneindia.com/2008/05/06/border-fencing-with-bangladesh-in-meghalaya-sector-stalled-1210068341.html accessed on 03.05.017.
25. Nari K. Rustomji, *Enchanted Frontiers*, Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1973, 110-11.
26. O.L. Snaitang, *Memoirs of Life and Political Writings of the Hon'ble Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy*, Vol.1, Shillong: Shrolenson Marbaniang, 1997, 170.
27. Ibid, 175.
28. Ibid, 358.
29. *The Chronicle*, 25th July, 1952 (an English Daily).
30. R.T. Rymbai, 'Integration of the Khasi States', *The Shillong Times,* 25th Apr., 1997.
31. Ibid, 3.
32. N.R. Roy Choudhury, *Tripura Through The Ages*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1983, 37-8.
33. S.P De, *Illegal Migrations and the North East*, New Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors, (2005), 106
34. M. Chakravarti, 'Documentation of the Process of Integration of Princely Tripura with the Indian Union' S.Nag, T. Gurung and A. Choudhury, *Making of The Indian Union*, New Delhi:Akansha Publishing House, 2007, 321.
35. R.K. De, 'Merger and Princely Tripura's Political Transition: 1947-1949' S.Nag, T. Gurung and A. Choudhury, *Making of The Indian Union*, 2007, 351.
36. *Census of India,1951*, Vol.XII, Part I-A, 356-57.
37. Ibid.
38. *Census of India 1961*, Vol III, Assam Part I-A, 204.
39. Nirode K. Barooah, *Gopinath Bordoloi, 'The Assam Problem' and Nehru's Centre*, Guwahati: Bhabani Print and Publications, 2010, 393.
40. Tripur Chandra Sen, *Tripura in Transition*, Agartala: Times Press, 1970, 7.
41. Gayatri Bhattacharyya, *Refugee Rehabilitation and its Impact on Tripura's Economy*,New Delhi: Omsons Publication, 1988, 5.

Delineating Sacred Landscapes: Community Voices from Ellora-Khuldabad-Daulatabad

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The story of Ellora-Khuldabad-Daulatabad is about water and history. It is about the manner in which the presence of water underwrites the existence of historic sites, settlements and communities in this arid region of Marathwada, deep within the Deccan plateau. Water, through its quicksilver ability to change form while retaining its essential nature, is a common thread moving across the land, underground and overground, crossing the boundaries of the sacred and the profane, traversing the margins of religion and community. It defines the landscape of Ellora-Khuldabad-Daulatabad.

This essay explores the role of water in the making of a historic landscape from different perspectives, as an essential resource present in nature, as an instrument for the application of evolving technologies of management and as a ritual element, embodying sacredness through its power to heal and cleanse. The voices of the local communities express their relationship with water through beliefs and practices, myths and memories that identify the particular role the element played in their lives over centuries. Section I outlines the landscape at Ellora-Khuldabad-Daulatabad and introduces Landscape Archaeology as an appropriate approach to exploring the themes of the study. Section II provides an overview of historical events and process that have unfolded in the region over the past millennium. Section III examines the role played by two institutions, the Grishneshwara temple and Takaswami ashrama, in highlighting the aspirations of community members. Water is an important trope in defining local identities as they enmesh and separate within the social fabric. Section IV explores the role of myths and legends in generating trans-regional linkages as also fixing primordial identities of sacred sites. Finally, Section V deals with a deep and detailed interaction with a knowledgeable community member, who uncovers multiple layers of the regional landscape and reveals ways of knowing and understanding the technological, political, social and spiritual context of the sites and their setting. Water is a vehicle for carrying forward this understanding through generations, an instrument for defining the region's identity.

Ellora-Khuldabad-Daulatabad has been a historically active region for well over a millennium, infused with the dynamism of changing dynasties, the convergence and interaction of diverse communities, energised by myths and miracles, made lively by the streams of pilgrims that flowed in and out of the temples and *dargahs*. The presence of water has formed a backdrop for these political and cultural phenomena, a necessary resource to sustain the region's dynamism. The interplay between water and people has manifested in the form of myths, rituals, structures, architecture, institutions and belief systems. These are the 'texts' that enable us to read the 'Water History' of Ellora-Khuldabad-Daulatabad.

I. The Landscape at Ellora-Khuldabad-Daulatabad

The district of Aurangabad is situated in north-central Maharashtra, in the Marathwada region, covering an area of about 10,100 sq. kms . It is bordered by Nashik to the west, Jalgaon to the north, Jalna to the east and Ahmednagar to the south and comprises twelve *talukas*, of which Khuldabad, within which lie the historic sites of Ellora and Daulatabad, is one. The district is part of the Upper Godavari river basin and drained by two major tributaries of the Godavari, the Shivna and the Purna. It slopes towards the south east, consisting of plateau highlands in the north, evolving into gently undulating plains to the south finally reaching the riverine plains of the Godavari. The land is covered by a rock type known as Deccan Trap, a form of basalt composed of pre-historic lava flows resulting from ancient volcanic activity. Rainwater collects in the vesicles and joints that are plentiful in this

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rock, forming the essential reserve of groundwater that has sustained settlements over millennia. (The rock-cut cisterns of the historic caves is simply a human device to emulate the natural process).In addition, the slope and contours of the hills and plateaus create catchment areas for collection as well as replenishment of ground water, leading to specific patterns of irrigation and water usage by local human settlements through history. This arrangement of geological, geographical and climatic processes is a finely balanced bio-network involving a fundamental interaction between human activity and the environment.

How do we approach the landscape of Ellora-Khuldabad-Daulatabad? How do we define its spatial boundaries, its core(s) and hinterlands and the political, social and religious networks that connected it with other parts of the sub-continent and beyond? How do we study the historical transformation of settlements in the region, their structural remains depicting evolving technologies and usage patterns in alignment with political and cultural changes over time? The answers to such questions may open more avenues of enquiry than they may lead to conclusions. However, the constant process of questioning the notion of landscape and its manifest physical characteristics is important as it will initiate an approach and methodology for contextual studies of the Indian historic sites.

The idea of landscape has undergone considerable evolution since its earliest roots in agricultural history in Europe, in which it denoted a defined space acted on by human agency, developing as a man-made system functioning to serve human communities.

Landscape as a representational form in literature and painting still depicts a space that is acted on and lived within, but can be viewed in more abstract terms. Its significance in terms of local ecologies and human economic endeavours remains, but is overlaid by a history of human engagement with physical, ecological and ritual elements in the environment. Such a record of human interactions through space and time can be viewed as a palimpsest, where material and cultural transformations carry the imprint of past associations and activities. In other words, Cultural Landscapes are spaces focused on people, and the experiential, social, epistemological and emotional dimensions of their existence. An archaeology of Cultural Landscapes, or Landscape Archaeology, is an emerging field concerned with how people visualised the world, how they engaged with one another across spaces, how they chose to manipulate their surroundings and how they were subliminally driven to do things in accordance with their locational surroundings.[1]Landscapes can be *ecological*, as in people construct frames of knowledge to know the world that they inhabit, *institutional,* wherein space is structured and behaviour normalised through codified social practices, and *territorial,* as spaces for contestation.

Adopting the Landscape Archaeology approach enables a multi-dimensional understanding of the rich and textured landscape of Ellora-Khuldabad-Daultabad. It allows an examination of the numerous sites, settlements and structures that dot the countryside as well as the historical events, myths, legends, community memories and oral traditions that link them in a dynamic narrative. The vertical unfolding of historical processes, dynastic succession, inflows of communities, ideas and technologies over nearly two millennia has resulted in the horizontal growth of layers of human remains, villages, temples, dargahs, fortifications and wells, tanks, *baolis*, taking shape as a palimpsest. Such a layered record of human activity, underwritten by the relationship between time and space, can only be captured on the scale of a landscape. The material and structural remains must be read as historical layers, in relation to one another along with their connectivities and disjunctures.

Viewing the landscape through the lens of water, one is able to identify the vocabulary that enabled communities to engage with their environment. Water as an essential resource requiring technological innovations of management, as a ritual element possessing the ability to heal and cleanse, it is an embodiment of community memory and identity in the region.

II. Evolution of the Ellora Micro-Region: Factors Underpinning Historical Development

The Ellora cave complex may be dated between the sixth and thirteenth centuries AD. By this time, there had been considerable stylistic and doctrinal evolution within the sphere of Buddhism. A seven hundred year old tradition of rock-cut Buddhist monasteries and *chaityas* culminated in the Mahayana phase at Ajantha. After the decline of Ajantha, Ellora rose to prominence as a thriving nucleus of artistic, religious, political and economic life.[2] The Buddhist structures at Ellora, excavated between early seventh-end eighth centuries AD, depict a high level of evolution of technique and philosophy, consisting of institutions of learning and *viharas* for habitation. The paucity of inscriptions indicates patronage by non-local entities like merchant guilds and commercial networks, on whose map Ellora was certainly located. [3]

Simultaneously, from the sixth century onwards, the increased political significance of local ruling dynasties and feudatory chiefdoms (*samantarajas*) as part of the process, termed by Kulke, Burton Stein and others as 'forming nuclear areas of sub-regional power'[4] led to a resurgence of Puranic Hinduism that absorbed local

autochthonous cults and placed them in the Brahmanical pantheon. Berkson informs us that Cave 21, built around 550 AD, is the first structure symbolizing resurgent Hinduism in the complex. The regional rulers thus legitimized their authority by building monumental structures at key places of pilgrimage. Thus while Ellora grew in significance between the sixth and tenth centuries AD, its development indicates multiple interconnected processes of interaction between the different faiths.

The patronage of these excavations is interesting in its multidimensionality. Ellora's location along an important trade route of the Deccan, the Dakshinapatha, made it an important region for merchants and traders, many of whom belonged to the Buddhist community. Hence, it is no coincidence that Buddhist merchant guilds were important donors for the Buddhist caves. The scarcity of inscriptions in the caves also indicates the lack of patronage by local rulers and their feudatories, and indicates far-flung patterns of patronage such as by the Palas of Bengal, famous for their sponsorship of Buddhist sites. The appearance of donative inscriptions appears during the reign of the Rashtrakutas, especially with respect to the building of Kailasa and the mobilization of Brahmins and other social groups to gain political legitimacy for the dynasty.

Thus Ellora as a site and a micro-region evolved as a result of three influential processes: merchant guilds providing support and patronage for the Buddhist structures, the consolidation of their authority by the Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas through patronage to local cults and pilgrimage places, and the geo-political significance of the site along important trade routes.[5]

In 1296 AD, Alauddin Khilji's Deccan campaign was aimed at procuring tribute and enabling political alliances with the Deccan dynasties, including the Yadava ruler of Daulatabad, Rai Ramchandra. Amir Khusro wrote extensive eulogies of the wealth acquired from the Deccan by the Delhi Sultan. The shift of the Delhi Sultanate capital from Delhi to Devagiri/Daulatabad by Muhammad bin Tughlaq in 1327 AD caused a significant demographic shift in the region. Approximately one thousand four hundred Sufi saints are believed to have arrived and settled in and around Daulatabad during this period. Despite the Sultan's decision to reverse his move and return to Delhi, many families chose to remain or move to other Deccan cities like Gulbarga. Amongst them were several Sufis who had accompanied the Sultan's entourage and had decided to put down their roots in the Deccan. The event facilitated the spread of North Indian culture, language and lifestyles into the south. It also enabled the greatest influx of Islam that the region had witnessed thus far, and established cultural and political connectivities between Western and Central Asia and the Southern states via the corridor of Delhi.[6]

Ellora also had strong associations with the family of Shivaji, the Maratha leader. Verul village was significant as the home base for the family of Shahji Bhonsle, as the latter's father Maloji was the village Patel under the Nizamshahis of Ahmadnagar. The Bhonsles migrated here from Pune, and through agricultural revenues, became wealthy enough to own horses and arms, which enabled them to enter the service of the Ahmednagar Nizam.

The plateau overlooking the Ellora caves was possibly a site for a pre-Yadava township that included the settlements of Sulibhanjan and Kagzipura. There are a number of tanks like the Surya Kund, Pariyon ka Talab, Pangra Talab and Dharma Talab in the area, as well as temples and the remains of edifices from the Chalukya, Rashtrakuta and Yadava periods. Under Aurangzeb, the town of Khuldabad (meaning "heavenly abode") was fortified and became a major Sufi centre; the Mughal emperor is buried there along with his family, within the tomb complex of his spiritual teacher, Pir Zainuddin Shirazi.

The Holkars of Indore controlled the region of Ellora including the caves till they were taken over by the Nizam of Hyderabad in the middle of nineteenth century. During the rule of the Holkar queen Ahilyabai, various public works were carried out including the restoration of Ghrishneshwar temple. This placed Grishneshwar on a common platform along with other important temple sites including Varanasi and Bodh Gaya, and built up its significance as a site of national significance, simultaneously reinforcing the status of the Holkars as a pan-Indian power.

According to J.B. Seely, an early British traveler in the region, the Holkars maintained a large establishment at Ellora in the nineteenth century.[7]They used to rent the caves for religious purposes and raised funds by collecting an entrance fee. This practice seems to have continued till the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1951 the Government of India declared the Ellora caves to be monuments of 'national importance'; two years later they came under the control and supervision of the Archeological Survey of India.[8]

III. Birth of a River: Sustaining the Community

The four of us were huddled in a gutter beside the winding road that led to the great reservoir on top of the hill of Mhaismal. Yusuf pressed his hand against a dark patch on the earthen wall of the bund. A few drops of moisture trickled through his fingers, joining a thin stream that ran through the gutter. He turned a sweaty face towards

me. 'Madam idhar haath rakhneka.' (Madam, keep your hands here). I placed my hand upon the imprint of his. A few seconds later, I felt it. A faint beat under my fingers as drop after drop trickled out – the earth's pulse. 'Ahaa! Dekha? Pataa laga na?'(Ahaa! See? Now you know). Sabir laughed as he scooped a handful of cool clear water from the gutter and splashed his face. 'This stream will join others as it comes down the rocky slopes of Jogeshwari,' Yusuf pointed out. 'By the time it drops over cave 28 and falls into the Sita ki Nahani (the local name for a pool near the Ellora caves), it has become the Yelganga.'

The Yelganga, the eponymously named river after which the settlement, and the caves at Ellora/Yelura are named, is more than a local water body. It is a major artery conveying the lifeblood of the community's identity. As it flows past the *ghats* (series of concrete steps leading to a water body) of the Grishneshwar temple in Ellora village[9], its water sanctifies the *jyotirlinga* (radiant representation of Shiva) in countless *abhisheka* (ritual washing/consecration/anointment) ceremonies, being considered to be as pure as the Ganga. Funereal ceremonies are performed on the *ghats* of the Yelganga, considered to be equal in sacredness to the *ghats* of Kashi[10]. It joins the river Shivna, a major tributary of the Godavari, at Lakhni village in Khuldabad.

Today, the Yelganga resembles a sewer, comprising a chain of festering pools covered with green scum and overflowing with garbage as it meanders through the village. Kachru Jadhav and his friend and neighbour, Yusuf Shaikh, both residents of Verul village, inform me that as children, they used to swim across the river at the Grishneshwar *ghats*, the water was deep enough to cover their shoulders. They complain bitterly about the present dessication of the river channel. The reason for this could be an *ashram* (hermitage) that has recently appeared upstream of the village. This establishment known as Shantigiri *ashram*, consumes large quantities of river water to irrigate its kitchen gardens and orchards. It is believed have the patronage of political leaders as well as a large group of well-connected devotees. The appropriation of essential water resources by powerful and politically connected institutions, *ashrams* and temples among them, is a common practice particularly in regions of endemic water scarcity such as Ellora.

An alternative practice for the redistribution of water is seen in the Takaswami *ashram*, an establishment adjacent to the Ellora cave complex. Kachru informs me that about seventy-eighty years ago, a *sadhu* arrived in Ellora from Cuddappah in Andhra Pradesh.[11]

Finding an abandoned unfinished cave with a large cistern attached to it, he revived the water body and maintained it, providing drinking water to the pilgrims that passed by on the pedestrian path up the escarpment to Mhaismal. In time the cave complex became known as the *ashram* of 'Takaswami', the master of the *taka* (cave cistern or tank). The *sadhu* has long since passed on, but the *ashram*, now a large and well-endowed establishment run by his disciples, is very popular amongst the residents of Ellora village. Many residents of Ellora, including Kachru, are associated with it, offering '*shram dana*' (manual labour) in the fields and gardens of the *ashram*, or by taking care of the numerous cattle that have been donated by devotees. 'I feel very peaceful while working here,' Kachru tells me. "Every morning I reach here by 5 o'clock and work in the fields for two hours. It makes me feel wonderful all day!"

The two *ashrams* depict contrasting relations with the local community, primarily on account of the nature of their usage of local water resources. The Shantigiri establishment consumes the upstream waters of the Yelganga but is not so well networked within the social and cultural life of the village. The Takaswami *ashram*, on the other hand, appears to have reached deeper into the daily functioning and lives of the residents by mobilising them to participate in various activities. Furthermore, the philanthropic nature of the swami's *sewa* (voluntary service) in providing drinking water to pilgrims via his maintenance of the abandoned cistern, answers a felt need in the arid region, regarded as a supreme service. This quality resonates in all the *ashram's* activities, and has built up a substantial reserve of goodwill in the community, which extends its support to the establishment.

IV. The Ability to Heal and Cleanse: The Curative Properties of Water

'One day the Sheikh saw a group of fairies flying overhead. Owing to their arrogance, they did not bow down before Hazrat and continued on their way. The Sheikh decided to punish them and, using the force of his power (*taaqat*), captured them and imprisoned them in the waters of the lake (*talaab*). Their essence infused the water, imparting healing properties to it. It came to be called *Pariyon ka Talaab* (the lake of the fairies) after the fairies imprisoned in the water. Barren women, after a dip in the lake, become fertile…'[12]

Sheikh Jalaluddin Ganj-e-Rawan is believed to have been the first Sufi saint to have settled in Khuldabad, about eight hundred years ago. Originally from Baghdad, he was given an *asa* (walking stick) by his teacher, Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi, who asked him to keep walking eastwards. 'You will reach your *muqam* (destination) when the *asa* sprouts leaves,' the teacher said. Sheikh Jalaluddin walked all the way to India and when he reached Sulibhanjan, the miracle occurred and the stick sprouted leaves. A gigantic tree, believed

to be the descendant of the miraculous *asa*, is found in the courtyard of the *dargah*. Thousands of devotees, Hindus and Muslims, throng the compound during the annual *Urs* (death anniversary) of the saint in February. Hundreds of women bathe in the Pariyon ka Talaab in the hope of offspring. Legend has it that once a eunuch mocked the saint and bathed in the lake. A son was born to him, and to prove the veracity of the story, the *khadims* point out the graves of both the eunuch and his son in the *dargah* (shrine/tomb) compound.

The motif of the healing power of water is also present in the numerous myths surrounding the Sivalaya *tirtha*, the sacred pool near Grishneshwar temple in Ellora village. The pool is believed to pre-date the temple structure, and is referred to in an eighth century Rashtrakuta inscription[13], a historic allusion that enables us to locate it within the complex narrative of the region's past. In fact, it is possible that the pool, with its association with the healing properties of its waters, is the source of the region's link with sacrality. Other sectarian structures, including the temple and the cave complex, may have coalesced around this primordial sacred water body subsequently. Over time, the entire region could have grown and acquired the persona of a pilgrimage centre, sacred to the multiple diverse communities that settled there.

The *Verul Mahatmya*[14], a ninettenth century text encompassing much older myths and legends, narrates the story of a king named Ela, who was afflicted by a terrible skin disease owing to Rishi Gautama's curse. His wife, queen Manikavati, begged the sage to withdraw his curse. Relenting, Gautama advised the king to seek out a pool in the forest where water flowed from the hooves of a cow, and on its banks, pray to Lord Brahma. When the king found the pool he bathed in it and found his skin condition much improved. After praying to Brahma, he was completely cured. He named the pool Brahmasarovar and the region, under Ela's patronage, came to be known as Elura.

Another myth relates the story of Ghusma, a Brahmin's wife, who was a devotee of Lord Shiva, and daily offered 101 clay *lingams* to the deity. When her co-wife, Sudeha, murdered her young son and flung his body into the Brahmasarovar, even then Ghusma did not interrupt her daily prayers. Pleased by her devotion, Shiva restored the boy to life and he emerged from the waters of the Brahmasarovar, alive and well. The *tirtha*, thus, is associated with miraculous life-giving powers and even today, is an important focal point of the pilgrimage centre that is Grishneshwar.

The two sacred water bodies, Pariyon ka Talaab and the Shivalaya *tirtha*, draw thousands of pilgrims from across the country and beyond. The presence of water, as a miraculous element with healing properties in this case, imparts a sense of sacrality to the land that permeates the identities of the communities living in their vicinity, regardless of their religious affiliations. For instance, both Kachru and Yusuf, Hindu and Muslim, are equally knowledgeable about the myths, legends and ritual practices associated with the *talaabs*, temples, *ashrams* and *dargahs*. In addition, pilgrimage is a primary economic driver in the region, and the livelihoods generated through association with sacred activities and institutions benefit all communities.

V. Discovering Malik Ambar's 'Pipeline': Community Knowledge in Daulatabad

He sat at the edge of Mavsala *talaab* (pond/reservoir), tinkering with a motor that he was using to pump water through a pipe that extended into a small settlement about five hundred metres away. I walked past him on the embankment, searching for any historic structure that would indicate the use of medieval water technology and support my research on the water catchment areas that fed into the hydraulic systems of Daulatabad fort, two kilometres away. Feeling the futility of my search, I was about to give up, when I heard him call out. 'What are you looking for?' Surprised, and a little irritated, I turned around, ready to start patiently explaining, in simple Hindustani, that I was searching for 'old structures' for collecting water… *'Malik Ambar ki pipeline dhoondh rahi hain na, Madam?'* (Are you searching for Malik Ambar's pipeline, Madam?) I stared at him in amazement. How could he know who Malik Ambar was, much less his hydraulic initiatives? B.D. Shah rose to his feet, a tall stooping farmer in a faded *kurta pyjama*, a thatch of white hair above a weatherbeaten face. 'Come. I will show you.'

Over the next three hours, under the spell of his rich Dakhani Urdu accent, the dry, rocky, featureless countryside around us slowly transformed into a technologically structured, strategically designed system for collecting and transporting water from the Mavsala reservoir to Daulatabad fort. Every slope had a role to play, piles of rocks revealed themselves to be hydraulic valves with larger inlets and smaller outlets to generate water pressure, random-looking streamlets and gutters aligned themselves seamlessly into a surface water collection arrangement. Scattered lumps of lime concrete turned out to be the remains of ceramic pipes embedded in a stone wall hidden from sight by thorny bushes. An innocuous looking waterfall fed into a system of aqueducts and emptied into the Abpashdara, an enormous reservoir created by a check dam at the edge of the Daulatabad fort wall. The icing on the cake was a tiered pavilion built into the stone scarp adjacent to the waterfall – images of royal

ladies sitting there enjoying the spray from the cascading water, rose before me.

The entire system was embedded in a sloping dyke, about five hundred metres wide, with tall rocky escarpments that ran from Mavsala to Daulatabad. As we walked across the floor of the dyke, Shah pointed to the trees. 'Look, these are fruit trees. Mango and Sitaphal, Jamun and Guava…' Sure enough, the little jungle that we were in was actually an orchard, a *Bagh*, planted by Malik Ambar to protect his water system. As we munched on a few stray guavas from the three hundred year old garden, Mr. Shah went on in a gentle monotone. 'The *marfat* (caretaker) for the upkeep of this orchard was given to the ancestors of my neighbour, Murlidhar Sonavale. No one comes here. Only some Bhils with their buffaloes. They dig a hole next to that stream over there. In an hour or so, the hole gets filled with clear water from the stream (percolating through the soil). They drink the water and move on, leaving the rest for others who will come. You see the holes? We call them Jheeras.'

How did he know so much about this place, I asked him. 'This is my home. When I was a boy, my friends and I used to play in the waterfall. We used to climb up to the top and come sliding down through the water. We believed that behind the water was a cave full of the Nizamshahi sultan's treasure. It was protected by thorny bushes and poisonous snakes,' he smiled. 'You see that big *Pipal* tree over there? The Bhils believe it is the *dargah* of Jalali Baba. The Baba's shadow (*saaya*) protects this place. Sometimes when you pass the tree, you get the fragrance of flowers. That means the Baba has blessed you.'

Shah's knowledge of the region's history was impressive, full of facts and information that was associated with textual knowledge and professional expertise. Standing on the banks of Mavsala reservoir, he stated that the tank had been built by the Yadavas when they ruled in Devagiri (Daulatabad), and the steps or *ghats* dated to that period. He affirmed that the first stage of fortification at Devagiri was by the Yadavas, for which purpose craftsmen were brought in from Iran. He recounted the legend of the siege of Daulatabad Fort by Alauddin Khalji during the reign of Raja Ramachandra Rai, wherein the latter finally capitulated following the capture of his son, Sankara Deva by the Khalji forces. According to him, the Talab was built to provide water to Devagiri Fort.

One may argue that B.D. Shah was an exceptionally knowledgeable source of information about local history, and that his interest and ability to process and analyse historic phenomena was unparalleled amongst community members. The experience opened certain doors to understanding the significance of a shared past to the residents of a historic region. It demolished a certain academic arrogance that was inherent in my approach as a researcher, premised on the fact that access to textual sources and publications would impart greater analytical depth and clarity to my arguments. The ability to holistically view landscapes and functioning systems within the context of layers of usage, effects of scarcity, changing patterns of practice and behaviour, is what Mr Shah revealed to me. Additionally, he had a fine understanding of the workings of technology and could see the systemic functioning of disparate parts of a whole. Finally, he had the rare ability to communicate his vision, enriching it with his lived experience and understanding of the landscape. I was indeed lucky to find him on the bank of the reservoir that morning.

Conclusion

A contextual understanding of the landscape is the most valuable contribution that local communities bring to the table. Often, individual views have to be understood in terms of particular agendas and associations and cannot be generalised to speak for all. For instance, Kachru is associated with the Takaswami *ashram* and therefore is positively disposed towards it. However, the larger pattern to be seen here is that the *ashram* is known for a seminal act of charity, that of the conservation and distribution of water to pilgrims. That is the primary factor underpinning its general goodwill amongst the community.

Myths and legends may be read as expressions of community memory, aspects of a regional identity that define the area's significance vis-à-vis wider networks of sacrality linking pilgrimage centres across national and even continental boundaries. The myth of Sheikh Jalaluddin Ganj-e-Rawan creates linkages with Baghdad, considered one of the epicentres of Sufi Islam. The Yelganga is compared to the Ganga, the epitome of sacred waters. The trope of the magical healing properties of water in the case of the Sivalaya *tirtha*, however, depicts a more localised version of sacrality that is primordial in nature. Thus, water as an element, a symbol and a carrier of memory is an apt medium of expression of community identities as also an instrument for defining a landscape.

NOTES

1. Bruno David and Julian Thomas, eds., *Handbook of Landscape Archaeology*, New York: Routledge, 2016, "Introduction": 'Landscape archaeology concerns the intentional and the unintentional, the physical and the spiritual, human agency and the subliminal…Landscapes implicate social order and gender…rhythms of work and play, daily routines'.
2. Carmel Berkson, *Ellora: Concept and Style*, New Delhi:Abhinav Publications, 1992.

3. There is a reference to Ellora merchants in a donative inscription at Sanchi, see Geri Malandra, *Unfolding a Mandala: Buddhist Cave Temples of Ellora*, New York: SUNY Press, 1993.
4. Eschmann, Kulke and Tripathi *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, New Delhi: Manohar,1981.
5. Carmel Berkson, *Ellora: Concept*, 1992, pp. 31-32.
6. Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden. Mysticism, History and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Centre* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 114-118.
7. J.B.Seely, *The Wonders of Ellora or the Narrative of a Journey to the Temples or Dwellings Excavated out of a Mountain of Granite at Ellora in the East Indies.* London, 1824.
8. T.V.Pathy, *Elura: Art and Culture,* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, New Delhi. 1980, p. 5.
9. Grishneshwar is one of the twelve *jyotirlingas*, most sacred of Saivite pilgrimage places. Its presence on this pan-regional pilgrimage network makes this a significant sacred site with an area of influence extending well beyond state and regional boundaries.
10. Conversation with Pandit Deepak Mishra, priest and trustee at Grishneshwar temple, 2009.
11. Prior to improved railway and air connectivity and the building of modern highways, Ellora was well integrated with a peninsular network of routes and circuits linking the various pilgrimage centres with one another. The route from Simhachalam in Andhra Pradesh to Ellora was a well-established path traversed by pilgrims, sadhus and other travellers that constituted the regional traffic in these areas. Travel was mainly done on foot, thus making the pilgrimage an arduous experience. Interestingly, a large population of regional tourists that come to Ellora today are from similar regions in Andhra and Telengana, indicating that the old pilgrimage circuits are still alive and flourishing.
12. Conversation with *khadims* at the Dargah of Sheikh Jalaluddin Ganj-e-Rawan in Sulibhanjan, Khuldabad
13. S.K. Dikshit, 'Ellora Plates of Dantidurga', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXV, 1940, pp.25-31.
14. *Verul Mahatmya of Vinayakbuwa Topre*(1902), Aurangabad: Shri Hari Ganesh Bapat Publishers, (Reprint 1971)

Between *Ramgarh* and *Bambai*
The Leftover Geography of Bhojpuri Cinema

Akshaya Kumar*

In the days of All India Radio's *farmaish* program, Jhumri Telaiya –a small town in what is now Jharkhand had acquired mythical status for sending in relentless song requests. For most of the listeners of the program, it may not have been a real place on the actual map. Why would such a remote small town be so overenthusiastic in its participation on a 'national' radio program? What does it mean to be addressed on behalf of a place, somewhere far away, that one cannot even place approximately? What sort of national-regional community does such an address tie us within? Could the mythical place, and its resident body within an imagined map, help overwrite/redraw the 'actual' map and places one knows the location of, but not much beyond it? What if we were to concede that it is a mere coincidence that Jhumri Telaiya is an actual place? The idea of Jhumri Telaiya, in any case, referred to a provincial remoteness of the kind that anchors the cartography of the nation constituted by great civilizational diversity. The only information one could vaguely infer from the name would be that it should be located somewhere around the Gangetic plains.

For a long time, this routine vagueness of location has anchored the provincial configurations of Hindi cinema, as in *Sholay's* (1975) Ramgarh. It is not essential to identify Ramgarh at length, which resonates with the generic north Indian village of *Ganga Jamuna* (1961) and *Mother India* (1957). For a long time, the audience of Hindi cinema has been served an idea of provincial north India which draws upon certain generic constituents, representing a vast region, collapsing the difference among sub-regional cultures and suggesting the cultural contiguity of north Indian floodplains. Even in a Bhojpuri film *Bidesiya* (1963), the site of unfolding action seems indistinguishable from that of *Ganga Jamuna* or *Mother India*, except via registers of language. More crucially, though, the films are not preoccupied by the specifics of their regionality, landscape or geography. This is however not to discredit the films' a-specific location and their attendant inexactitude of 'realism', but to point out a broad regional sweep which never quite needed to be broken down into its specifics. What distinguishes contemporary Bhojpuri cinema, then, is its explicit desire to address its regionality under a specific nomenclature, however difficult or impossible that quest may be.

What I thus want to pose is the address to a region as a political formation to address a political purpose. Jhumri Telaiya and Ramgarh were never places on the political map as much as generic sites of affective solidarity under certain specifics of demographic community – in this case, the north Indian village. Lalganj of *Dabangg* (2010) could be mentioned in the same vein, as a non-place, which serves the purpose of aggregating a region, signifying a geography– not only physical geography but a geography of mannerisms, habits and temperaments. Unlike the process of region-formation in peninsular India, where British Presidencies and Princely states went through linguistic reorganization, north India escaped any commensurate churning on account of which the administrative and cultural regionality would converge upon similarly meaningful boundaries. Also, in peninsular India, the regionalist configurations of male stardom, aesthetic as well as political representation via cinema, developed in concurrent historical shifts with the new states.

In this process, which is fascinatingly analyzed by Madhava Prasad in his book *Cine-Politics* (2014), administrative reorganization of political regions had to be reaffirmed by the aesthetic-political configuration of film stardom, which deployed the linguistic resources of an imagined region within a consistent formal vocabulary. Srinivas (2013) makes a similar point about Telugu films produced in Madras (now Chennai), which were instrumental in the emergence of an integrated film market. The films thus produced in Tamil Nadu made cinema the 'first cultural form in modern times to

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be made at least notionally available to Telugu speakers across social and regional divides' (2013: 12). This meant that the market 'laid the grounds for the emergence of a populist aesthetics'; of which the unintended consequence was that cinema could 'claim to speak for the Telugu nation' (ibid.). Radhakrishnan (2015) also discusses the Malayalam film industry's reconstitution from a southern focus (Thiru-Kochi) towards addressing the Kerala state (particularly, by including Malabar) and its 'mass' audience.

On the contrary, apart from Punjab, north Indian states (Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh and Jharkhand) have been aggregated by an imagined Hindi in spite of their significant linguistic and geographical variations. In this vast region, which contains great diversity, Hindi has been a placeholder, not very different from Ramgarh or Lalganj. Not quite an actual language, but a language-complex – which could appropriate Awadhi as well as Urdu – to suggest a universalizing force far too significant to be diminished by 'minor' particularities. This constitutes a particular inflection of regionality, which cuts across variations instead of amplifying them, deploys vague signatures instead of identifying with particular tonalities. However, a reference to the generic north Indian village has no urban equivalent. The grid of intelligibility in which Ramgarh, Lalganj or Jhumri Telaiya were woven, was anchored by its urban counterpart in nowhere but Bambai (Bombay/Mumbai). One could instantly recall Amitabh Bachchan in *Don* (1978), dressed as a provincial urchin with distinctly oily hair, dancing in front of the iconic Taj Hotel and at Juhu beach in Mumbai, singing *E hai Bambai nagariya tu dekh babua* [This is Bombay city, watch out kid]. This Bambai is Bombay as refracted via provincial north India, a non-place within a place – Bombay, later renamed as Mumbai. Bambai is a subjective reassembly of iconic Bombay, cleansed of an everyday banality, and marked by extremes of wealth and squalor. This mythical Bombay continues to survive to this day, as in even a web-series released on Netflix, *Sacred Games* (2018), which features several characters repeating that 'anything can happen in this city' because this is Mumbai, and this sudden turnaround is its enduring charm, character, and promise.

It may be useful to revisit *Don* to consider how the figure of Bachchan, playing a gangster called Don, fuses the provincial urchin with a suave gangster in a double role. The film effectively begins after the gangster's death,when the migrant slum-dweller is borrowed by Bambai and is trained and re-dressed into the dead Bombay gangster. Fusing the two, the film presents Bombay city as split between the provincial imaginary and the dark metropolitan world of smuggling, fashion and parties. Yet, it offers the slum-dweller a shot at transformation for the sake of his lucky resemblance. *Don* magnified the symptoms of a possibility that anchored much of Hindi cinema before the new millennium – the possibility of provincial access to Bambai, so that the place and non-place would converge upon each other. The slums and the high-rises would thus discover an otherwise invisible bridge between provincial north India and its urban counterpart – Bombay city, as iconized by its permanent ally, Hindi cinema. At the point of inflection in the film, the provincial urchin is made to keenly observe Don's archival footage in a dark room – as if in a film theatre – so as to train himself in the mannerisms and rhythms of high society life. The moment captures a desire far more pervasive than its narrative inflection. Indeed, the history of cinema is saturated with films implying the journey from provincial north India to Bombay, in search of mythical Bambai, whether it is *Shree 420* (1955) or *Gaman* (1978). Yet, it is not so much a quest originating in provincial north India as much as the film industry's own quest for a doubling effect which has crystallized this arc of interest from one mythical place to another.

In contrast, let us consider *Dhoom* (2004), also set in Mumbai, but not the city of *Don* split by inequities of access which may yet be glossed over, but a city consolidated by the thrills of speed, style and fashion. *Dhoom* shares a lot with *Don* – both the films revolve around a similar plot about the Mumbai police trying to nail down a criminal gang via spectacular trickery. The plots are designed in such a way as to force the state to converge upon role-playing the criminal – not only does it evaporate the distinction between right and wrong, but also, in effect, fetishizes the attributes of the criminal protagonist. Remorseless, unsparing and singularly committed to the tricks of his trade, the protagonists represent a value system untethered to emotional belonging of any sort. In a similar way, then, the two films of different eras, foreground the fantasy of capitalism: that the freedoms of capital must be endless and unregulated, while personnel remain tied to emotional entanglements of many hues. The criminal, therefore, is not so much an outlaw as beyond the grip of the state apparatus because he transforms into the purest form of thuggery – capital itself. Provinciality, in this grid of social relations, is one of the many afflictions of the traditional social order. Yet, while *Don* endorses the capacity of the provincial urchin to relinquish his mannerisms without conceding its moral essence to the contingent and strategic occupation of the ruthless capital-form, *Dhoom* exceeds the final frontier of hesitation and celebrates this capital-form, particularly in the climactic sequence where the criminal biker protagonist flies off the cliff into the unknown waters. *Dhoom* underlines repeatedly that the purest object of our

fetish must be the fugitive force unchained from any of its locations, for it truly belongs everywhere and nowhere in particular.

The mist of capitalist utopia into which the capital-form vanishes is at critical variance from the universality of *Don*'s Bambai, I would argue. The trope of a boundless and hyper-libidinal capital-form that was inaugurated by *Dhoom* later became the signature of the franchise, which particularly exploded on the transnational stage with *Dhoom 3* (2013). However, *Dhoom* was the inaugural moment of the hubris of capital, finally unchained and thus unleashed upon the world, as it were. Its consistent nemesis within the porous contiguity of the *Dhoom* franchise remains an abstracted state-form, diminished by its technological destitution and provincial/national hang-ups. As opposed to this, *Don* celebrated the fugitive and transnational capacities of the capital-form it fetishized, but the mighty defiance of the gangster was yet far too discreet. Don is a smuggler, after all, who defies the control of a weak and ineffective state over trade tariffs across its borders. The capital-form tricks the state, exposes the porosity of its information network and its inability to rein in the desire of capital to break free. My argument is that we witness across these two moments, between late 1970s and early 2000s, a landmark shift in the tussle between capitalism and geography. This is not an innocent tussle primarily because it entirely reworks the dominant imaginary of regionality – along with its attendant inflections which frame clusters of communal affect – within popular culture.

Capitalism and Geography

Capitalism thrives on the conquest of space, as laid out in historical geography, for an aggregate economic model deeply invested in the temporal regulation of labour (Harvey 1997). This conquest then renders space in the new units of differentials that constitute an aggregated system of exchange. For capital, therefore, geography as a generative force poses a problem, which needs to be reconfigured. The abstractions of the sort we discussed above – Jhumri Telaiya, Lalganj, Ramgarh and so on – constituted a sign system with limited capitalist penetration, where places, as archetypes, signified a cohesive order of social relations spread across a vast geographical expanse. Bambai, on the contrary, was the fixed lens via which this sign system was anchored and mobilized within popular culture. The vague open-ended geographies of this sign system were predicated upon a paucity of conviction as well as resources. The somewhat disinterested allusions to a town located nowhere but everywhere served the lazy aggregations of an industry tethered to the spectre of the 'mass audience'. This vagueness without well-defined bearings was antithetical to advanced capitalism. For the Mumbai based industry, after being granted 'industry status' in 2001, capitalist reorganization was critically linked to the production of new differentials, to offer new genres conventions, stylistic modulations and geographical vistas (Kumar 2017).

What emerged alongside the capitalist reconfiguration of film business within Mumbai based media industries is the increasing penetration of cultural analytics. The data from television rating points (TRPs), measured primarily for the advertising revenue dependent television industry, began to segment Hindi television dramas across its regional inflections (Gujarati, Marwari, Bihari and Punjabi being the key segments). This was a new segmentation of 'national' regionality – not necessarily based on exactitude or sophisticated detailing, but deploying certain signatures of interior domesticity to establish differentials. The development and spread of these cultural analytics, and their tethering to revenue generation via quantified consumer attention data sold to advertisers, introduced new capacities within the media industry (Kumar 2018). However, the representation of geographical differentials in capitalism, as discussed above, is never innocent of the vagaries of monetization. While television thrived on the bouquet of regional differentials, for cinema they were relayed not via middle class domesticity – the site of the televisual apparatus – but the multiplex-mall, the incumbent site of urban leisure (Athique and Hill 2010). Two kinds of relay of regional inflections found roots in the multiplex – i) transnational flows of capital, personnel, style and leisure, as explored by the *Dhoom* franchise, among various others; and ii) a marked provincial imaginary offered in the service of north Indian migrants of the Information Technology industry, mainly based in peninsular Indian metros (Kumar 2013).

Both the luxurious and stylish vistas of Western modernity and the rundown, lawless and endlessly rapturous eccentricities of north Indian 'small towns' are therefore woven together in an economy of strategic differentials. The represented difference between Cape Town and Mauritius remains as minor as that between Bareilly and Dhanbad, because what anchors them is not so much the materiality of everyday life as the gigantic desire of a capitalist re-aggregation anchored by the relay of locales at the multiplex. This may not appear to be fundamentally different from the earlier moment, but there are certain key distinctions we must grapple with. In the most popular moment of *Don*, Bachchan dances memorably on the Awadhi song *Khaike paan banaras wala* (Chewing the betel-nut from Benaras), which marks the restoration of Don's lookalike to the audiences,

reaffirming that the makeover is only performative and his provincial credentials are firmly in place in spite of the makeover. The song stages the overlap between provincial and cosmopolitan personas as mere inflections. The reference to Benaras here is to a placeholder for north Indian provinciality. It is a performative reference for consuming *bhang* (cannabis-laced milkshake) and shaking a leg with utmost abandon with a 'village in the city' sort of provincial community, as in the song *Ramaiya Vastawaiya* of Shree 420 (1955). To that extent, it is evidently the Benaras as seen and imagined in Bambai, akin to Ramgarh being depicted as a prototypical north Indian village.

The disinterest in the specificity of the material environment of the town or village is also a way of making a generic reference, alluding more to the regional vessel addressed via a vague nomenclature than the town/village itself. In the transnational or small-town genres of this millennium, however, the specific material environment of Bareilly, Dhanbad, Lucknow, Allahabad, Mauritius, Cape Town, Sydney or Berlin is indeed the object of fetish. The multiplex audience is thus served a new cuisine on the vast geographical menu every weekend; also, in numerous films – such as *Agent Vinod* (2012) – we are served a dizzying whirlpool of geographical reassembly, a collage-like spatial order in which whole cities or nations are squeezed into a fleeting image of a bazaar or a roadside café (see Kumar 2017). What is the locus of this spinning wheel of geographies dunked in the speculative frenzy of finance capitalism? I would argue that the collage of geographies is propelled by the fugitive horizons of neoliberal capital, making a relentless bid for de-regulation of state control and showcasing its defiance by shrinking lived geographies to their fleeting footprints.

However, even as the Mumbai based industry made increasing geographical concessions to accommodate this hypermobile capital-form, the revulsion of the latter for stubborn neighbourhoods of relative insularity complicated affairs. In the realm of sonic practices too, resonant patterns could be identified with respect to voice. Particularly in film songs, there was a remarkable shift between the mid 1990s and mid 2000s – the clear declaratory voice was gradually submerged within a metallic soundscape relaying the heavy orchestration of Western pop music. The vicissitudes of voice also reflected the shifts within language practices of the time, as an Urdu-inflected Hindi was conceding space to Hinglish. In this period of capital's measured but sustained conquest of imagined geographies, as relayed by the Mumbai-based media industry, provincial north India in particular began to re-order its own destiny.

Bhojpuri Cinema and the Soft Underbelly

I discuss the case of Bhojpuri cinema for it exemplifies the most formidable constellation of popular culture addressing provincial north India. Indeed, the rise of Bhojpuri films within the rundown exhibition sector began as an extension of the roaring success of Bhojpuri songs and music videos, which became popular since the late 1980s via audiocassettes and later VCDs and DVDs. The films were also able to enter theatrical exhibition because of the emergence of the multiplex as a privileged site of Hindi film exhibition, and the resultant textual reorientation of genre films. However, even as Bhojpuri films have continued to flourish outside the rundown theatres' dwindling audience, whether on original as well as pirated DVDs, or on YouTube, or as offline data downloads onto SD cards, their enduring form remains epic melodrama lasting over 150 minutes, drawing upon the cinematic idiom Hindi cinema abandoned in the late 1990s. The bulk of Bhojpuri film audience comprises of construction labourers, rickshaw pullers, coolies, loaders, and various other hues of the working class trades, whether in metropolises of towns across India, particularly those with a thriving industrial sector (Ludhiana, Nashik, Haldwani, Noida, Siwan, Ballia, Gorakhpur, Vapi, Surat etc.). The spectre of working class 'Biharis' – a casual reference to classify the poor north Indian migrants – thus anchors a peculiar crisscrossing of the geographies of labour migration and those of rundown film exhibition. Therefore, Bhojpuri film industry rose within peculiar folds of time: the rundown single-screen theatres in the heart of old towns, as residues of an older form of capital – when jewelers, small industrialists or transporters invested money in a film theatre to showcase their wealth – investing in the residues of an 'expired' film form in a language, which is acknowledged merely as a 'mother tongue' by the Census of India – not quite a language, as those listed in the eighth schedule.

Bhojpuri cinema alerts us to the underbelly of neoliberal capital, where the spinning wheel of geographies as an endless menu celebrating consumer choices is halted. This is where, yet again, we are brought back to a world in which Mumbai becomes the only city worth sincere representation. The idea of the city otherwise tethered to the imaginary of Bhojpuri cinema is that of an antagonistic space of moral destitution and emasculation. The city is thus a placeholder for modernity and individuality, not an actual geographical space with its own complications. The route from rural Bihar to Mumbai may pass via a Patna college or a street in Chhapra, but this is most often to stage the unlimited libidinal prowess of the rural Bhojpuriya, before moving on to realize his true potential in Mumbai (Kumar 2016). However, the Bhojpuri

speaking region is not convergent upon an existing political-administrative unit. Bhojpuri is spoken across parts of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Nepal, and Chhattisgarh, and with the migrant labourers, it travels to every nook and corner of India. Political identification is thus an extremely slippery task for Bhojpuri cinema. If one were to ask which cultural unit Bhojpuri films appear to address – then the answers vary from *uttar bhartiya* (north Indians), *Biharis, UP-Bihar-wale* to *poorvanchali/ purabiye* (easterners). The regionalism of Bhojpuri cinema turns further skewed when we consider that many working class people from outside the Bhojpuri speaking region are its regular consumers, particularly Awadhi, Magahi, Santhali and Maithili speakers. The inability to pin down its narrative and political geography also has a lot to do with the fact that Bhojpuri films are produced in Mumbai, shot mostly in and around Maharashtra and Gujarat, and funded by numerous non-native financiers.

How do we then settle the question of geography for Bhojpuri film and media? I would argue that on one end, it remains tethered to the old Mumbai-based Hindi film industry and its floating references to Ramgarh or Lalganj anchored in Bambai; at the other end however, Bhojpuri cinema struggles to find a stable plane of political self-identification, on behalf of which its addressees could be summoned as a community. Yet, the shifting address to an imagined Bhojpuri public takes place in the shadow of the spinning wheel of neoliberal capital. It is important to acknowledge that even if the actual geographies are abandoned in representation, media itself constitutes a relatively contiguous realm of languages, platforms, genres, technologies and devices. One of the most popular Bhojpuri songs, therefore, offers an insightful arrangement of these tendencies. The song *Lollypop Lagelu* (You look like a lollypop) makes a mention of most of the districts in the Bhojpuri speaking region (Ara, Mohania, Deoria, Balia, Gorakhpur etc.), which have been enthralled by the beauty of the female dancer. The song thus stages a reassembling of the geographies of Bhojpuri media audience without naming it as such. Even though a riot of 'contemporary' aural and visual effects is mounted on the video, it draws upon the idiom of a so-called folk classic *Ara hile Chhapra hile, Ballia hilela* (Ara shakes, Chhapra shakes, Ballia is also shaken). The artists of the region have variously covered the song in numerous films and stage performances. Here too, the female dancer's waist anchors the reconstitution of the Bhojpuri community by identifying the integral political-administrative units of its unstable geography.

The boundaries, after all, mean little unless affirmed by the political sanction of statehood. The formless, shapeless administrative absence of a Bhojpuri communal geography thus remains speculative outside of the recursive ratification of capital as well as state. The trap of an unstable geography for provincial north India in general, and the Bhojpuri speaking region in particular, is so acute because it finds no direct attention. The references to Ramgarh, Lalganj or Jhumri Telaiya actually reveal that provincial north India can only be addressed indirectly, as a vessel for general tendencies and afflictions. Both the state and the marketplace of high-bandwidth popular culture can only afford this shapeless province a generic gaze of mis-identification, which it duly returns in its own fascination with Bambai. Even when the migrant working class interest upholds the vernacular underbelly of the state-capital alliance operative exclusively for the urban pockets – where multiplexes mushroomed on account of tax exemptions – the mode of production of the Bhojpuri film industry disables any possible investment in the material life of provincial north India; instead, we witness an apparent assertion of 'traditional' society at the most perfunctory level of engagement. This assertion may revolve around an endorsement of banal objects – such as *gamchha* (stole), *litti-chokha* (roasted bread and mashed vegetables), or *ghoonghat* (veil) – as if they were central to the emotional cartography of the Bhojpuri community. I would suggest looking at such assertions as constituents of a scaffolding, while the main structure itself is closed off for being under repair.

Conclusion

Let us consolidate our case of capitalism and geography. One of the enduring promises of capitalism has been to enable us to escape the geographical and cultural constraints of our world, either by remaking it or transporting us elsewhere. It is not my argument that contemporary Bhojpuri cinema displays a fundamental aversion to the charms of capitalism or to moving away from its own quest for a political geography. For decades, Hindi cinema offered most of provincial north India a coalitional form, which may not have paid any particular attention to geographical, ecological or cultural specificities, but it gestured towards an inclusion, however hollow. The rigging of this coalition by the fugitive capital-form nullified the gesture and discredited the coalition. The soft underbelly began to find its own feet as a regional-political counter culture not because it aspired to give a voice to an existing political regionality, but because geographies can come into existence by obliteration. The story we have hurriedly recounted in this essay alerts us to the production of an unstable geography of the Bhojpuri speaking region, which began to reassemble itself on account of its erasure from the inexact but coalitional imaginary of Hindi cinema.

One of the key sites of digital media is the Google-owned free online supermarket of YouTube, which remains a flourishing archive of Bhojpuri songs, music videos, films and various concert recordings. Increasingly, the world of Bhojpuri cinema, among various other vernacular media industries, has been aggregated at YouTube. From cassettes, VCDs/DVDs and offline data downloads, we have now stumbled upon the new bargains of neoliberal capital. If the user is connected to the Internet, access to a 1980s song or a 2007 film would most likely be as easy as accessing a new release, without having to negotiate the infrastructural constraints of lived geographies. To that extent, YouTube marks the ultimate triumph of capitalism over geography, by not only obliterating its material limitations, but also offering such an unprecedented freedom at no cost. Has capital then poached the assertive quest for Bhojpuri cinema's political geography? Not quite, but herein lies a critical concession that we must attend to.

For the longest time, the working class migrants bought portable media from the thriving media markets, and later downloaded songs, videos and films onto the SD cards at mobile shops (Mukherjee and Singh 2017). The crucial turnaround happened 2015 onwards when Reliance Jio entered the telecommunication market as a network operator with rather generous Internet data pricing. Not only did it force other market players to drastically reduce costs, it revolutionized the market in the low-income segment. Online video watching became a habit overnight and YouTube was one of its biggest beneficiaries. Capital may appear to be acting against its own interests here, but it is compensated by a long-term perspective: i) Jio is harvesting a mountain of consumer data, to build its own empire within what Pasquale calls the black box society (2015); and ii) Google has been greedily hoarding a major chunk of the overall advertising revenues from across the world, which allows it to accumulate enormous consumer analytics and an endless pile of freely uploaded content (producers trade attention for copyright). The algorithmic prowess of capital demands big data accumulation – with their focus on complete monopoly, Google and Jio offer a case study in how neoliberal capital's 'generous' belligerence propels it. The last leg in the story of Bhojpuri media, unfolding within a long-term battle between capital and geography, therefore alert us to a digital variant of primitive accumulation – a story better told at length, elsewhere.

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Research Articles

Social Exclusion: Historical or Colonial Legacy?

Gowhar Yaqoob*

Introduction

Through the constructs of political systems in South Asia, the subject of exclusion has a close corollary with policy perspectives. This paper looks at the paradigm of exclusion in South Asia and seeks to explore the relationship between 'exclusion' and 'political bidding', notably, reading through the 'colonial legacy'. One of the striking features in the emergence of South Asia is the pattern on which states emerged- former colonies of the same 'imperial power'. Thus, arrival of modern nation-states following de-colonization spearheaded the transition of colonial states under the British Empire into different political systems and patterns in South Asia. The nation-welding process, to stabilize socio-economic and political conditions, following protracted struggle for independence was thought to become a lynchpin between pre- and post- independent periods.

This paper has two broad fault-lines to look through. First explicates the irony in nation-building processes and the other tracks vernacular antagonism; to bring to light incompatibility and ambiguity in employing a concept like 'social exclusion'. The concept being ubiquitous beseeches to turn to specific contexts and policy initiatives. This is explored by drawing comparison with different experiences of colonialism and de-colonization in south and southeast Asia. The discussion of the nation-building processes in India and Pakistan are in tandem with the continuing dilemma of post-colonial conditioning and often the policy initiatives in case of Sri Lanka and Malaysia underwrite the process in which policies largely conform to the political bidding. These comparisons shall also bring to light more complex processes that weave the geo-political fabric in South and Southeast Asia, primarily in international relations.

Ideologically, social exclusion constitutes specific forms of approach towards participation in the construction of both social problems and policy responses. The coinage of the term is attributed to Rene Lenoir. Appearing in Lenoir's work, *Les Exclus: Un Francais sur dix* in 1974, the term gained wide acceptance since 1980's and has grown wider since then; adhering to different situations (Blanc: 1998). Peter Hall's (1993) widely cited work on policy paradigms and degrees of institutional change is 'a framework of ideas and standards that specifies not only the goals of policy and kind of instruments that can be used to attain them, but also the very nature of the problems they are meant to be addressing.'[1]Arjan de Haan in his article *Social Exclusion: Enriching the Understanding of Deprivation* makes a strong plea for the use of the concept of social exclusion and argues that it has relevance for richer as well as poorer countries. However, social exclusion in South Asia and Southeast Asia, largely a policy instrument for reform, encompasses the entwined relationship between policy paradigms and inconspicuous political objectives of welfare state reforms.

Legacies from the Imperial

South Asian geo-politics with its contact with the European powers particularly through the British Empire developed a political order, which altered both traditional regimes and territorial boundaries. In the South Asian context, de-colonization (quite often interchangeable with Independence) synonymous with the departure of the British is crucially an important time period of reference. The importance of the period lies in understanding the distinction between de-colonization and independence; since the two are distinct in so far sustaining power structures in South Asia are concerned. The concession to contain nationalism was assumed as an over-arching bi-polar contest, one of the indirect goals during the Cold War (Martin Griffith & Sullivan: 1997). One is enmeshed in redundant arguments regarding the British recognition of American support during the post war period that

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was instrumental to a great extent in patterning nation-states in South Asia-a strategy to combat the communist bloc (Singh: 1993). It is important to mention here that I have adapted the terms 'nationalism' and 'nation-states' as discussed through modernist paradigm of European nationalist movements largely spun out of a fabric of European cultural notions.

Prior to the departure of the British, political systems derived from European nationalist movements were instituted so as to keep the disruptive tensions, in successive state building at minimal. The rhetoric of modern nationalist movement as it traversed the colonial landscapes, especially in South Asia added to unprecedented aggression across the state frontiers. In drawing familiarity with colonial legacy, the relationship between power- sharing and policy initiatives are significant to understand while addressing some crucial questions: How authorities took over the instrument of power in each of the countries freed by Britain? What were the terms of negotiation, during the transfer of power, between 'nationalists' and imperial power? Whether nationalism substituted imperial power? Was the freedom announced in return for nationalists becoming pawns in larger rhetoric? Were the policy patterns coerced before the transfer of power anticipating Communism, with greater success and appeal in China, Korea, Vietnam, and U.S.S.R., as stable alternate political system in South Asia? The nation-states were heavily mortgaged to 'urbanization'. 'Democracy' became a mobilizing tool to subvert the political expectations and demands of the citizens (Crouch: 1996). The English-educated class recruited from members of elite classes filled up the echelons of bureaucracy and administration after independence. This does entice a tautological conclusion of a colonial legacy that was partly coercive and partly flexible in negotiation of power.

This backdrop and conceptual similarity in patterning nation-states encourages considering all nations alike. However, the question of emergence of independent states in South and Southeast Asia on divergent patterns as argued by Asma Barlas (1995), was due to the differing roles dispensed to the Muslim and the Hindu communities by the British and explicit divisive policies which colonial administrators perpetrated. Sudipta Kaviraj (2000) argues that modernity must not be taken as homogenous, resulting in the same kind of social processes and reconstitutions in all historical and cultural contexts. Unlike Barlas, his reasoning for modernity as a non-monolithic character follows from pluralism in Europe, whose extensions to different cultures and historical circumstances could not have produced uniform historical results. Kaviraj adheres to the notion of the 'de-centered empire', which questioned the homogeneity of the Empire and acknowledged overlapping conditions in which both the colonizers and the colonized were mutually engaged. Sumantra Bose (2004) emphasizes the importance of political organizations as a broad legitimacy in the society capable of aggregating interest and identity groups. It follows from Sumantra's emphasis that the consequences of modernization are likely to be associated with the legacy inherent in the social regimes of the society; wherefrom the political organization strengthen those patterns. However, it cannot be over looked that socio- cultural entitlements and political regimes in South Asia led to critical imbroglio. The introduction of Imperial Legislative Council by the British that laid out foundations of All Indian National Congress in 1885 and later separate electorate for All India Muslim League in 1909 carried forward respective protocols into the post-independence chapter (Ahsan: 2003).

Ironies of Nation-Building: Transition and After

At the dissolution of the British Empire in South Asia, the major challenge was settling the political volatility and reorganization of statesmanship. The foremost discontent came through economic and spatial instability; apart from littered groups, which were sifted by language, religion, region and caste differences. Notwithstanding the religious-political spiral; most brutal communal riots and deathly violence substantially polarized state policies and legal provisions in India and Pakistan.

All Indian National Congress and All India Muslim League, two main political parties, in India and Pakistan; respectively were leading two newly independent nations. The interplay between modernizing and nation building shaped up the post independent nationalist discourse and later the transnational identity politics (Barabantseva: 2010). The tide of anti-colonial nationalism was resistant in nature, which eventually turned coercive by the end of colonial authority and played dominant role in border demarcations across the sub-continent. It is important for understanding of the post-independent era that how self-conscious nationalist movements shaped up distinct national culture and identity, overtly forged by language-based territorial yearnings. The polity coalition of Indian National Congress featured regional patriotism; whereas Nehruvian ideals of secular-democratic nation appeared at variance with the Party agenda. Anti-colonial nationalism saw Indian polity becoming communalized. (Vinaik: 1992).

The "Untouchable" communities, relatively not so straightforward to classify, attracted the attention of British Officials for administrative purposes, which initiated listing and clubbing them together as 'depressed classes'. As part of administration, the British proposal

to create separate electorates in 1932 rallied support from the leader of then 'depressed classes' Dr. B. R. Ambedker. This was strongly resisted by the leader of the Congress Party, Mohandas Gandhi, who undertook a fast unto death to have it revoked. Ambedkar had to withdraw his campaign to create separate electorates for the untouchables. Marc Galanter (1984) argues that 'it is evident that Congress opposition, if not Gandhi's personally, was inspired by fear that the great Hindu base of Congress support would be weakened.' The threat to Hindu electoral unity was clearly foreseen with the separation. However, the safeguarding the 'depressed classes' was needed to be ensured for which the legal status (Scheduled Caste) was introduced in the Indian Constitution.

Initially, for the first decade, Congress showed resistance to the overwhelming claims to the Hindu nationhood. Though, constitutionally India remained a secular state based on equality for all citizens and religions, nonetheless discrimination of and violence towards vulnerable groups and religious minorities became increasingly explicit. The nation envisioned in territorial form was forged through language that served to be the binding thread. The option of Hindi as the national language provoked debates in the Constituent Assembly that were resolved by re-organizing territorial lines on the basis of 'dominant' language group in the regions (Report of the States Reorganisation: 1955). Nationalism did not replace religion, instead sought its origin in religion and marked its development by nationalizing the religion (der Veer: 1996). Over the period "intermediate castes" (much confusing and vague category largely referring to the OBC's) called for legal safeguards and advantages. The dominance of caste identity altered electoral coalition and politics with unexpected consequences (Kaviraj: 2000).

While Nicholas Dirks (2001) has discussed 'caste as a politically modern [c]onstruction (emphasis mine) that served to categorize and delimit previously more fluid social organization throughout India', he argues that it was the British imperialist who, 'made caste what it is today'. The engagements of colonial power to foment Hinduism - otherwise fragmented and diverse, had been instrumental in creating communal divide apart from constructing caste as the rigid category. Ambedkar's prognosis of irrevocable dangers to democracy from the conceptual *Hindu Rajya* into a reality stands true till date; of late in the reactionary attempts of the Hindutva forces. The cooption by absorbing into its organizational structures as well as state controlled opportunity structures has largely driven Dalits into alliance with BJP (Guru: 1991). Nevertheless, one is drawn to question the ascendency of new 'nomenclature' by the avatars endorsing constitutional safeguards; since the horizontal array of over-lapping sub-group(s) was not to be unexpected. The features of caste highlighting fluidity during pre-colonial times and officially imposed rigidity in colonial era are premises on which post-colonial theorists analyze the colonial administration. Peter van der Veer argues that the importance of former untouchable participation achieved significance in the light of Hindu-Muslim conflict.

As caste became a springboard for mobilizing fierce rhetoric in identity politics, former untouchables were brought under the fore fold of the Hindu as 'internal other'. Simultaneously the Muslims more of an immediate threat to the integrity of a nation became 'external other'.[2]More surprisingly, the politics of caste reservations, strongly opposed by BJP till early 1980's was played out successfully in later years of the decade. Here, I would briefly reflect on the much-discussed transformation of the Hindutva politics, noticeably forging an ally with Dalits. The right wing supporting reservations for the OBCs and wooing them to affiliate with the BJP and the systematic campaign to include Dalits are crucial aspects one confronts with, in engaging with trajectory of contemporary Indian politics. A curious parallelism has emerged between Dalits and Hindutva politics; and Adivasi populations increasingly binding into political alliances.[3]

The configuration of Indian nation has been ironical, especially in the polarization of communities largely based on religion as against regional and linguistic differences. The polarization based on regional differences and inter-ethnic differences or linguistic affiliations led to coercive nation-building transition in Pakistan. After Pakistan came into existence, the All India Muslim League became the Pakistan Muslim League. The country did not experience transition; indeed a newly formed state posed with challenging situation. The fundamental issue at hand was to frame a new constitution and strike balance at various levels. Pakistan although from its inception defined itself as a religious (Islamic) nation, the makers of the constitution encountered major challenges in fulfilling the commitment of enforcing the Islamic Law. The Muslim League failed to weld together the nation. The ideology to weld the country posed a challenge and difficulty in nation building because in principle nationalism rooted in the concept of modernization was in many ways contradictory to the idea of an Islamic Republic. The coalescence of diverse identities and interests of the League for Muslim self-rule dissolved into a chaotic squabble.

On the ground, Pakistan inherited the British constitution and legal systems with the Parliament as the sovereign institution in 1947. A military coup by general Ayub Khan abolished the Constitution by overthrowing

civilian governance and declared martial law in October 1958, to address the political and economic crisis of the state (Allen: 1992). This saw the collapse of and moving away from the British parliamentary system.

The question of regional representation and power sharing was strategically very crucial as the disruptions in the country were rooted in ethnic and tribal differences. Stephen Rittenberg (1988), in his study of the independence movement of the North-West Frontier Province, discusses how the Sindhis, Baluchis, and Pashtun leaders forming the major minority groups have had uneasy and most often hostile relationship with the central authority, which anticipated an impediment to the state building by those in power. On the other hand, Punjabis who were a politically active group dominated to a great extent both bureaucracy and military; also the Urdu-speaking emigrants from India ever since exercised influence in the national politics. 'Urdu' was recognized as the official language of the country against majority Punjabi-speaking populace. The recognition of Urdu as the national language was challenged and this changed the political space by separating East Pakistan that led to the formation of Bangladesh in 1971.

The military administrators framed a new constitution in 1962, which was abolished with the restoration of civilian government in 1970. The civilian government that succeeded dictatorial rule received its third constitution in 1973 under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. However, the elections of 1977 having been rigged resulted in huge demonstrations and the army under General Zia ul Haq intervened to take over the administration of the country (Embree: 1997). Ayesha Jalal's reading of the military rule in Pakistan suggests that 'the alliance of civil bureaucrats and the military was stretching the (ambit of central authority in order to give a long delayed impetus to their ambitious plans to industrialize and militarize Pakistan, while at the same time nurturing their own recently forged links in the international arena).' The formation of Bangladesh, anti-Bhutto movement, Islamic Revolution in Iran, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and Kashmir conflict- all drove the state into vulnerable conditions to uphold the diktats of modern nation-state.

In the case of Pakistan, the military rulers aspired to create modern states with an exclusive monopoly of coercive authority and control over the territories including the ones having international judicial authority. Banuazizi and Myron (1986) have brought to light this intricate trans-border ethnic mosaic of Pakistan (including Afghanistan and Iran). The Pashtuns are a majority in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province, but a majority of the Pashtun- speakers live in neighbouring Afghanistan. The Baluch population is divided among Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. A majority of the Baluchis live in Pakistan, but substantial minorities live in Iran and in southern Afghanistan.

The British had described the frontiers of northwest as 'un-administered' areas, where tribal chiefs or *sardars* of ethnic groups exercised power independent of the central government, thus constantly defying the state power). In an effort to strengthen the central authority and hegemonic position, the state pursued coercion. Consequently, one or more ethnic groups ahs constantly challenged the state authority (Hewitt: 1996). The ethnic minorities - Pashtuns, Baluchis, and Sindhis contested the Punjabi-Muhajir domination; the political parties rejected the military rule and the claim of the military rule to Islamise the country met with resistance from a substantial segment of the middle class. Islam was seen as an overarching ideological link between the state and the people and amongst the people. John Esposito in *Islam: Ideology and Politics in Pakistan* discusses how successive governing elites sought to harness Islam as an instrument for strengthening the state and legitimizing their power. The attempts of the secular Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto failed and the efforts of the martial-law government of President Zia ul-Haq mobilized the sectarian schism amongst the Sunnis, Shi'ites and Ahmadiyas. This however could not bridge the cleavages between the country's ethnic groups and between state and the community. Instead, it created more complexity, giving rise to sectarian polity. Leonard Binder stresses that 'the Punjabi- dominated Pakistan government has denied the legitimacy of politicized ethnicity while insisting upon the legitimacy of politicized Islam, viewing the former as subversive force and the latter as an instrument of integration and legitimacy'. The religious nationalism proved to be a weaker force in Pakistan.

In one, military intervention curbed democracy and in another the elected government sabotaged opposition time and again to hold on to power. India legitimized antagonisms through 'cosmetic'[4]democratic institutions and later explicit contestation of neutrality towards religious difference, which over the period became detrimental for religious minorities; whereas the suppression of tribal and ethno-linguistic diversity escalated violent military and dictatorial leadership in Pakistan. Nevertheless, in both cases, the ideological cloak of modern nation-state could not stop the state-system to be hegemonic and the aggression that rallied from time to time. The nation-states in the west associated nationalism with one language, one country, one state; separation between religious authority and political institutions. On the contrary, religion and political apparatus were not separated in Asia; hence the secular agendas fell into dilapidated structures with serious flaws in the economic strategies. This consequently distorted both economic

resources and sharing of social benefits. The burden of economic discontent among different strata of the society and different regions of the countries has drawn larger population into extreme poverty. Though the percolation of resources down to the provinces and local bodies remained on agenda; however the implementation of the same has never come to its realistic orientation.

Casket of Vernaculars: Toward Antagonism

'Often the demotic 'vertical' ethnies are forged into ethnic nations through vernacular mobilization of the masses. Ethnic nationalists politicize its culture and are drawn into purifying the community of the 'outsider within'.'[5]

In this section I shall look through the following theme: how ethnic nationalism functions closely with power and involves subtle, and not so subtle, policy initiatives for mobilisation. As a part of development, the policies unfurling consequences in terms of advantages to some and disadvantages to too many have led to the coinage of 'shared deprivation'. It is here how one can largely engage critically with the shibboleth of 'participatory development', that is, participation and reliance (on vernaculars), which while imagined to melt down the grievances in terms of disadvantages became antagonist, both in the Sri Lankan and Malaysian context.

The panorama of modern transformations in Sri Lanka unlike other states in South Asia took place peacefully, and it was declared a free country in 1948. The postcolonial transition to nationhood instituted 'modern-secular-democracy', which could not escape for long the ensuing political crisis. Quite often discussed in historical discourse of the nineteenth-century British and South Asia, the coffee plantations established by the British in Sri Lanka and Malaysia brought people from South Asia. The coffee plantations established in Sri Lanka brought more than a million Tamil workers from South India to plantation as labour migrants. Initially they were seasonal migrants, but eventually as the plantations developed, majority of these opted to settle permanently and became permanently domiciled on the plantations.[6]The Tamil migrants settled mainly in Jaffna and the growth of educational facility in English was quite popular.

The legislation passed in late 1940s, under 'rights-and-entitlement' had somewhat deep-rooted political implications for the minority discourse as certain groups became stultified as minorities (Wickramasinghe: 1995). The three Constitutions of post-independence Sri Lanka helped to demarcate and define a majority from within the citizens, pitting non-Buddhists and non-Sinhala speaking minority communities against Sinhala-Buddhist majority. In the fractured polity, question of language was the most vulnerable one, largely to be seen as disadvantage and discriminatory (closely related to power-sharing). The English educated Tamilians were at an advantage to avail the benefits during colonial administration and after de-colonization occupied all important positions in the state. The majority Sinhala-Buddhists voiced their grievances that despite having a majority status in the country, they were disadvantaged. In order to cure the disproportionate advantages, Sinhalese was declared as the national language; which meant English language was relegated to the spheres of government, education and business. These, however, led to further endorsements such as re-instituting the sacred history and mythology and declare Sri Lanka as a Buddhist country (Allen: 1992). The republican Constitution of 1972, while proclaiming 'Sinhala' as the official language also declared Buddhism as the state religion.

The Tamil-speaking communities that had moved into Sri Lanka centuries back and later during the nineteenth century (altogether constituting twenty per cent of the population) formed the majority in Jaffna. The Tamilians strongly contested the politics of state language and claimed economic equality. In the course of language grievances and discrimination, the articulation turned violent leading to an on-going armed struggle under the auspices of LTTE (Embree: 1997). The fierce ethnic antagonism was strengthened by nationalist myth making, 'Dravidian Drive' to mobilize support for the armed struggle and later the demand for a separate region. Sri Lanka's long agony continues despite all efforts at the peace process. On one hand, re- instituting Sinhalese as the only official language was supported as the democratic and egalitarian move for majority (Buddhist Sinhala constituting seventy per cent of the population), which had unfortunate consequences for non-Sinhalese speakers. As Subrata K. Mitra and R. Alison Lewis in their concluding section (*Subnational Movements in South Asia* 1996) remark that, 'the role of cultural self-assertion in stimulating sub-nationalism can be greatly over-emphasized for obvious reasons since the cultural agenda of Dravidianism was directed both at internal adversaries as well as external, and the cultural group being defended changed over time". More importantly, "such sentiments by themselves were incapable of acquiring a mass base, although their presence may well have given a distinct coloration to phenomena that elsewhere in India were expressed simply as backward class or other kinds of movements.'

In mapping the political history of the Malaya, Freedman Amy has tracked a diverse trajectory and categorised it into pre-colonial Malay states, British Malaya, independent Malaya, Malaysia between 1963 and 1965, and post-1965 Malaysia. These categorizations

explain the policy implications from time to time and clearly outline the consequences thereof. During the de-colonization in 1946-47, one of the alternate proposals from the British was to form a Federal system of Malay sovereignty. The United Malays National Organization accepted this and thereafter only the de-colonization was allowed to proceed smoothly.

After its independence in 1957, Malaysia enforced strict measures with regard to non-Malays' citizenship. The British actively had encouraged mass Asian immigration into the Malay Peninsula. The immigrants had been mostly Chinese and Indian, recruited for various purposes. The immigrants from India and China flooded the Malay Peninsula and provided cheap labour for tin mines and rubber plantation respectively.[7]The immigration of Indians was promoted and facilitated by establishing the 'Indian Immigration Fund' in 1907 so that labourers were given accommodation and free passage to the place of employment in Malaya.

It is interesting to see the settlement patterns of migrants for understanding the community formations along ethnic lines. Broadly speaking, the main ethnic groups that exist in Malaysia are Malays, Chinese and Indians. *Bumiputera* (indigenous groups) engaged in rice cultivation, fishing, and rubber tapping developed distinctly and away from the emerging urban centres. These urban centres were potent sites of trade and commerce that were wholly dominated by the Chinese. Since the Chinese were mostly involved with tin mining and commercial agriculture, the urban centres came under the Chinese domination; whereas Indian population mainly engaged on rubber estates and plantations settled in towns and the indigenous Malay population engaged with paddy plantation was concentrated in rural areas. Initially labourers stayed in the Malay Peninsula for shorter periods before they returned to India either on 'home vacation' or for permanent retirement. Over a period of time provision for 'permanent domicile' encouraged the otherwise known 'transients' to settle permanently on the Peninsula. In the shift from transitory to permanent settlements, groups are and in this case were usually drawn into the political fray as the process of exclusion became overt (Freedman: 2000).

The large number of non-Malays with increasing control on the economy created resentment amongst the Malay population (largely engaged in paddy plantations). The patterns of uneven development, economic disparities and social stratification started surfacing. In addition to the resentment against the British, the insecurity against non-Malays mobilized the Malay nationalism that became instrumental in organizing the Malays politically. Harold Crouch in his analysis of government and society in Malaysia looks at the variations in political systems during the transitions of regime and finds that the categorization of Malaysian polity was rather ambiguous. However, there is no denial of the fact how the ethnic demography has been altered from time to time, which led the drive to 'Malayanise' the Peninsular composition. When Malaya became independent in 1957, its constitution was modeled on British democracy in which a national Parliament was constituted after elections at least in once every five years. Malaysian ethnic diversity coincided with linguistic, cultural, religious and economic differences. In 1957, demographic divisions were almost even between the indigenous and the immigrant communities; slightly less than 50% Malays, 37% Chinese and 12% Indians (Hirchman: 1994). In 1963, Singapore joined the Malay federation and that resulted in increase in the proportion of Chinese population. However, secession of Singapore in 1965 was very critical in that it altered the demographic proportion resulting in higher percentage of the indigenous or *Bumiputera* (sons of the soil or ethnic Malays) communities.

Following the ethnic riots in 1969, the development strategy in Malaysia underwent an intensive review to ensure and achieve growth proportionally. By 1970 poverty was markedly higher among the *Bumiputeras* than other ethnic communities. Therefore the National Vision Policy (NVP) built upon the New Economic Policy (NEP) and National Development Policy (NDP) incorporated Vision 2020 as an objective for transforming Malaysia into the developed nation by the year 2020 (Embong 2000). The NEP and NDP aimed at bringing the *Bumiputras* into economically dominant sectors, previously dominated by the Chinese. Apart from according preferential policies for the Malays in job allocations, scholarships, and university seats, *Bahasa Malaysia* was declared as the national language.

From independence in 1950 until 1990s, the drive to 'Malayanise' the country had pervasive impact on the Chinese and the Indian in being incorporated into a larger polity and social matrix. Political rhetoric and economic development as national goals reinforced ethnic segregation and inequalities. The New Economic Policy (1971–90), which saw rapid industrialization and subsequent historical developments, was accompanied by cultural policies to symbolize ascendancy of the Malays (Embong: 2000). English no longer served to be the language of administration and education; instead *Bahasa Malaysia* became the lingua franca and the only official language. (Pong: 1995). Noticeably, the proportion of managers, professionals and administrators among the Malays/*Bumiputera* increased six fold. Apart from class analysis, state intervention in various socio-economic sectors directly affected ethnic structures and patterns of inequalities during the NEP period; particularly the

direct imposition upon division of labour, corporate wealth and professionals (Embong: 2000). Over the years, through the operation of the Malay special rights in recruitment and promotions, the whole structure of government services turned into a bastion of Malay power particularly at higher administrative and policy making levels where Malay dominance came closer to reality (Means & Gordon: 1991).

Discussing politics in plural society, Harold Crouch throws light on the United Malays National Organization's call for Malay unity to preserve the community position, which has had a strong appeal on the west coast and in the south where the Malays were faced with large non-Malay communities. Reading through Harold's analysis one can come to see how the non-Malay partners, especially the representatives of the Chinese and Indian communities in organizations like UMNO, MCA and MIC experienced steady erosion of credibility. Also the dependence of MCA and MIC on UMNO could not advance the non-Malay cause beyond securing certain popular demands. Both MCA and MIC were headed by the English-educated; whereas at the grassroots level both were dominated by vernaculars, local Chinese business men (not well conversant with English, who patronized Chinese medium schools and cultural associations) and MIC was dependent on local leaders with influence over plantation workers, Tamil school teachers, clerical workers on plantations and shopkeepers patronizing Tamil. MCA and MIC attempted to promote the interests of their respective communities by raising vernacular issues, education, citizenship, and recruitment to the civil service. But the failure to achieve clear-cut progress led both MCA and MIC leaders vulnerable to selling out to the Malays. The parties mobilized patronage to the middle class, especially businessmen and access to Malay-dominated government and bureaucracy. This certainly offered little or no benefits to the supporters and community members at the lower levels.

Here it is quite interesting to note the fact that despite the support from, below from the grass root level, the economically dominant communities failed to promote policies and advocacy in their favour; whereas the policy initiatives from above largely benefitted Malay population of all classes. It does not necessarily mean power operations via top to bottom, or minority as powerless. One can look at how negotiations are largely catalyzed through 'bidding' in political institutions to secure respective benefits.

Conclusion: Exclusion and Everyday Experiences

As the nexus of power embroiders moral and ethical mandates of 'justness', policy benefits for one or another group become largely 'Janus-faced'. Consequently one groups' advance and rapid growth (according to modernization theory and practice) tends to cause deprivation to other groups. The consequences of disproportionate distribution of resources cannot be understated.

The former British colonies in South Asia were not patterned on European structure and the state-power was shared by English-educated administrative class, including those, who received education in Britain and on returning back filled up the echelons of bureaucracy and administration. The mobility during the nineteenth century, largely a complex process of movements of people from South Asia, has been interpreted as geographical and social interaction between peoples. Though cross community migrations were considered as the apparatus of social, economic and cultural interaction; the migration during the nineteenth century both free and coerced motivated by modernization and urban-centricism created sharply uneven developments. The emigration into Sri Lanka and Malaysia encouraged by the British officials on plantation sites began showing crisis of mobility patterns later towards the twentieth century.

When the post-independent governments sought to empower indigenous populations as the major objective of development public policy, the rise of *Bumiputera* culture in Malaysia and Sinhala culture in Sri Lanka surfaced largely based on ethnic and vernacular stratification. This eventually turned to be a convenient apparatus in the hands and minds of politicians and administrators. Over the period, the complex relationship of ethnicity in Sri Lanka as interlocking markers of discrimination having taken violent forms became one of the major conflict zone of the contemporary world. The caste-based discrimination in India framed the discourse on and about Dalits, which underwent a major shuffle with the rise of contemporary identity discourses. The ossification of identities not only pitted Dalits as the 'internal other' but ostracized the Muslims from the mainstream by 'Othering'. The religious ideologue failed to weld together diverse populace of Pakistan and level out grievances in the country. The country's politics has been oscillating often between civilian governance and military rule since its emergence.

This does not mean that disadvantages cannot be redressed or disadvantaged groups may not be prioritized. The intent of the paper is to argue that academic discourses (apart from state policies and legal provisions) on South and Southeast Asia continue along the legacy of colonial constructs; perpetuated along 'I/Thou' paradigm in which groups successfully played the role to produce (us/them, we/they, our/their) binaries.

Whether historically antagonist or fluid in nature, the phenomenon of social exclusion in the South Asian context demands a reading of the inter-related and inter-locked contestations for benefits by different groups more closely structured and theorized as colonial constructs. State policies have played a critical role in mobilizing political identities to a large extent in these countries.

The Muslim League in Pakistan and Indian National Congress in India got their hands on nation-welding roles; whereas Sinhalese and *Bahasa Malaysia* were endorsed as weapons of vernaculars to ensure relative balance between different ethnic groups. India and Pakistan envisaged nationalism beyond real (utopian semblance); whereas Sri Lanka and Malaysia interlocked antagonism of power sharing with participation.

Social exclusion and political discourses are essentially linked through social crisis and policy responses, enabling to create compatibility between social systems and policies aimed at resolving social problems. Nevertheless, the focuses on certain social problems relegate others to periphery on policy agenda. In the South Asian context the blind spots in policy paradigms are inherently a part of the colonial legacy and social stratification is practiced along multiple lines. Also, this paper has argued at length the failures to establish stable state authority, constantly engaged in resolving political crisis and violent ruptures. The colonial policies and legal instruments to maintain the social patterns well suited the imperial needs. The coming of South Asia into global academic discourses was to a large extent consequence of critical power shuffle and to some extent post-cold war polity. The states in South Asia emerged on distinct tracks. Nevertheless South Asia as a geographical block has come to mean important political and economic entity crucially pivotal in international arena, so to say, in laying the geo-political strategies. Unlike other policy initiatives and paradigms, social exclusion can engage in certain crucial issues, but one must not lose sight of the fact that proportionate distribution and participation has limitations in so far the overlapping differences and stratifications co-exist.

Having discussed the corollary of political rhetoric and social exclusion, there is much ambiguity than assumed in social exclusion becoming a policy paradigm to encompass overlapping notions and fluidity of group identities. While promoting specific policy alternative reform, there is a critical need to understand the relative context in which such needs surface and the manner in which benefits are diffused.

NOTES

1. Social Exclusion has become central to British policies and debates. The concept across Europe differs significantly. Of late, the most notable by Lenoir has become popular as a social paradigm in the time of crisis of the welfare state. For discursive analysis and an in-depth study on social exclusion, see, Rene Lenoir, *Les Exclus: Un franc¸ais sur dix*, Seuil, Paris, 1974, Ruth Levitas, *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; M. Blanc, 'Social Integration and Exclusion in France: Some Introductory Remarks from a Social Transaction Perspective', *Housing Studies*, 13 (6), 1998, 781-92; H. Silver, 'Social Exclusion and Social Solidarity: Three Paradigms', *International Labour Review*, 133, 1994, 531-78.
2. To use terms used and discussed by Dilip Menon as to how the Muslims considered as outsiders were classified clearly as 'external Other' and the lower caste Hindus or former untouchables were brought under the fold of Hindu religion by classifying the same as 'internal other'. For details, see, Dilip Menon, *The Blindness of Insight*. *Essays on Caste in Modern India*, Chennai: Navayana Publications, 2004.
3. Citations and a comprehensive analysis on Hindutva Politics: Dipankar Gupta, Limits of Tolerance Prospects of Secularism in India after Gujarat', *Economic Political Weekly*, Nov. 16, 2002, 4615-20; Amita Baviskar,'Adivasi Encounters with Hindu Nationalism in MP', *Economic Political Weekly* Nov. 26, 2005, 5105-13; Prakash Louis, 'Gujarat Earthquake and After', March 17, *Economic Political Weekly*, 2001, 908-10.
   One may not draw straightforward conclusions yet, the enigma of modern Indian politics has come to a critically complex condition, as of existentialist dilemma of identities. The routes to adivasi power have come to coincide with expanding Hindu nationalism in a potent mix of religious faith, cultural aspirations and economic opportunity. On Hindutva' agenda of the 'Sangh Parivar' alliances like the one between *Bhim Shakti* and *Shiv Shakti* in Maharasthra, Bhilala adivasis in western MP joining the battle for Hindu supremacy, attacking Christian adivasis and later, the Muslims are re-defining roles. In 2001 Luthra Earth Quake, RSS cadres effectively engaged in relocating victims to safer places which was well received by the Dalits who could foresee chances for social mobility in physically moving out of the former spaces. Nonetheless, rehabilitation packages brought along the patterns which led to the building of physical ghettoes. The trend of " only Dalit residential societies" was evidently growing, around 300 alone in Ahemadabad. Whereas displaced Muslim families relocated to religiously homogeneous settlements. This physical ghettoization easily enabled RSS to spot and mobilise Dalits against the Muslims during 2002 post-Godhra carnage.
4. Borrowing John M. Richardson's term from, John and Shinjinee Sen, *Ethnic Conflict and Economic Development: A Policy Oriented Analysis*, School of International Services: American University, 1996.
5. For a discursive explanation, see, Thomas Engelbert and Andreas Schneider, eds, *Ethnic Minorities and Nationalism in South Asia*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000.

6. The extensive literature on the labour history of the nineteenth century has comprehensively dealt with issues such as indentured labour, coerced migration, slave trade, etc. See, Filippo Osella and Katy Gardner, eds., *Migration, Modernity and Social Transformation in South Asia*, New Delhi: Sage, 2004; Sasil Lubbock, *Collie Ships and Oil Sailors*, Glasgow: Brown, Son and Ferguson, 1935; Marina Carter,*Voices from Indenture: Experiences of Indian Migrants in the British Empire*, London, New York: Leicester University Press, 1996; David Etlis, ed., *Coerced and Free Migration: Global Perspectives,* California: Stanford University Press, 2004.
7. Studies on migration, displacement, diaspora are bringing in new insight, Judith M. Brown, *Global South-Asians, Introducing the Modern Diaspora*, Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2007; Michael Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*. *Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain 1600-1857,* New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004.

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In Translation: Poems From the Malwa Region of Punjab

Vivek Sachdeva*

Malwa is the southeastern region of modern Punjab and constitutes a major part of it. The word Malwa is supposed to be a distorted form of Mallava, the name of an ancient tribe, which unsuccessfully challenged Alexander. It is separated from other regions of Punjab by river Sutlej. The region occupies an important position in the Sikh history because of its association with Guru Angad and Guru Gobind Singh. But for along the river Sutlej, the landscape of Malwa is marked with semi-arid land, slow growing trees and thorny bushes.

Besides economic challenges and hardships, the region of Malwa in Punjab is also known for legends, heroes and number of writers. The writer Gurdial Singh, Punjab's only Jnanpith Award winner belongs to this region. Balwant Gargi, Ajmer Singh Aulakh, Gurbhachan Singh, Sujit Pattar, Ram Sarup Ankhi, Santram Udaasi are a few to mention among many. In their writings, they have given voice to the concerns of the poor, the low caste, Dalits and farmers in the wake of the changing socio-economic conditions of Punjab. The four poets, whose select poetical works have been translated here, belong to different areas of the region of Malwa. Their writings highlight the concerns of the next generation of Punjabi writers.

Paul Kaur, a senior poet, and Neetu Arora, a young poet are two important women poets in Punjabi poetry; while Anil Aadam and Gagandeep Sharma are two important male poets to reckon with from Punjab.Their poetry also shows the myriad forms of contemporary Punjabi poetry. In their works, angst, anger and philosophical reflections in Punjabi poetry, across identities, can be heard.

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PAUL KAUR (1956-)

Born at Kalomajra, near Banur in district Patiala, Paul Kaur is one of the strongest feminist voices in contemporary Punjabi poetry. Besides commenting on patriarchal structures in her poetry, she reflects on fundamental questions of life like a philosopher with a gendered perspective. She has authored several books of poetry; has published a work on non-fiction and one work of criticism. A recipient of several awards, she has published widely in the field of Punjabi poetry. From the credo of the personal is political and Paul Kaur became overtly a political poet in the later years of her career. She taught Punjabi language and literature at S.A. Jain College, Ambala and is currently settled there. The Government of Punjab has conferred her with Shiromini Punjabi Kavi Samman. Her poetry has been prescribed in courses taught at Panjab University, Punjabi University, Kurukshetra University and Jammu University. Kaur was conferred upon with *Bhai Santokh Singh Puruskar* for her contribution to Punjabi poetry.

NEETU ARORA (1978-)

Neetu Arora is a young feminist Punjabi poet born at the village Bhullar located in district Muktsar. She re-imagines the ordinary, everyday happenings, domestic space and reinvents them from her perspective. Her poetry is marked with angst of a woman in the contemporary Punjabi society. She is currently teaching at Punjabi University College, Bathinda. Arora's doctoral thesis was on "Resistance in Punjabi Poetry". She has published in Punjabi two volumes of poetry, *Sawalan De Sanmukh* and *Main Ithe Kithe*. Arora has also translated her poems into Hindi titled *Khaali Haathon Mein Kavita*. She has also translated Sapna Chamdia's *Ek Aurat Ki Diary* into Punjabi and published a critical work. Her poetry is marked with strong voice of resistance against the patriarchal structure.

ANIL AADAM (1974-)

Anil Aadam is a Firozpur based young Punjabi poet. He has published two anthologies of poetry and translated one book of Punjabi poetry into Hindi. He also writes children's literature. Aadam touches upon issues of immediate concern in his poetry and reflects on the questions of human existence in contemporary times. He has been awarded by Punjabi Academy, Ludhiana for his contribution to Punjabi language and poetry. Some of his poems have been prescribed in the course curriculum of the Punjab School Education Board.

GAGANDEEP SHARMA (1980-)

Gagandeep Sharma is a young and promising Punjabi poet. He was born at Rampur in district Ludhiana, which is known as the Mecca of Punjabi literature. This village has given more than twenty writers and poets to Punjabi literature. Gagandeep has published two works of poetry and has also published short stories in leading Punjabi journals and magazines. Punjabi Sahit Sabha, Ludhiana awarded Gangandeep with Prof. Kulwant Jagraon Memorial Award and Sahitya Akademy, Delhi awarded him with *Yuva Puruskar* for his writings in the Punjabi language.

PAUL KAUR[1] (1956-)

Now Ends Are Open

There were so many knots
In different parts of my body
There were knots
In my head, in my neck and in my forehead
In my wrists and in my ankles.

From one dot to another
There is but a line –
Limited, confined
Or it starts from one point
And traversing through –
A triangle, square, or rectangle
Comes back and meets its starting point…

Fearing I may scatter
I was tying more knots
While opening them
I ended up tightening them more!
Slowly and gradually
I got tied with them.

I never knew that the Judgment Day
Was my constant companion
From one point to another!
Finally came the Final Day
With huge gigantic effort
With my teeth and with my nails
Pulling them hard, cutting them with force
I executed them
While trying to find freedom of them.

Whatever was kept safe inside
Finally spread out on the floor
Everything was thrown open in a vacuum
Whatever I was given as my share –
Neither a vessel, nor a trunk
Neither a shield, nor a gun!

Inside
Everything is inside
Even what seems to exist outside –
Whatever is spread outside
Exists inside
In a compressed condensed form

The cloak is open
The hair is open
Winds have taken everything to their guard!

I take full steps now
My destinations are within the reach of my strides
The ends of the knots have opened
And have become my wings!

Translated from Punjabi by Vivek Sachdeva

Kaafir- the Rebel

Testing its wings
Disregarding and ignoring the cage
When a bird takes its flight
The cage owner's heart
Sinks.

They keep the cage secretly with them
Wearing a garb they sit with the bait
When the bird falls for it
They give the wings of the bird
Their own colour
And put the bird in the cage.

In case the bait fails to tempt
The bird in its high flight

[1] Paul Kaur is a Punjabi poet based in Ambala, Haryana.

Then caged birds
Craving for flight
Hit their beaks against the cage ferociously
Till they bleed –
Look fiercely at the winds
Make a huge
Hue and cry.

They love all those signs
For which they disgorge poison
And when they do not find them
Whenever they look into the mirror
They smash it.

We are safe in a crowd
For when we come out of it
Crowd fulfills its duty
Sometimes by hurling stones and
Sometimes, Shibli joins the crowd
By throwing a flower.

Those who breathe freely
And take their own path
Always meet the same fate.
You are hurled stones
You get wounds from flowers
You carry your own cross on your shoulders
And are also called
Kaafir- the Rebel.

Translated from Punjabi by Vivek Sachdeva

NEETU ARORA[2] (1978-)

When the Poets Fail to Grow

When the poets of a language
Fail to grow
And end up being pygmies
People in that society
Forsake plucking stars from the sky
Moon ceases to be their *Chanda Mama*
And children,
Making the sun their football,
Do not play with it
In the sweltering streets.

When the poets of a language
Fail to grow
And end up being pygmies
Their people
Dance on their own requiems
Applaud the death of art in cinema halls
Eating popcorns and drinking Pepsi
Go back to their houses

When the poets of a language
Fail to grow
And end up being pygmies
Stories there
Are sold in the market
People clap
When history is made a joke
Heroes and villains
Everything changes
And living human beings
Become ghosts.

When the poets of a language
Fail to grow
And end up being pygmies
The rulers become fearless
And God serves them rulers
People shut not only their doors
But they also seal their lips.

When the poets of a language
Fail to grow
And end up being pygmies
Courage also remains dwarf there
Reality and imagination
Even men and women
Fail to grow.

When the poets of a language
Fail to grow
And end up being pygmies
There
Women go mad.

Translated from Punjabi by Vivek Sachdeva

WE- who sleep not

Our grandma
Does not lie to us
She just does not know
That the tale never ends
With the death of
The King and the Queen.
It goes on.

[2] Neetu Arora is based in Bhathinda, Punjab.

Now
Even if this story is told
On a perfect still quiet night
We will not simply agree with it
We will question
We will ask our grandma
Why did the story end
With the King's death?
We will ask
Who ascended the throne?
We will ask
What happened to the crown?

We will ask
Why did people
Listening to such false incomplete stories
Fall asleep?

We will ask
How did the king
Control the telling of his tale?
Why was grandma's own story
Dumb?
How come the courtyard
Where the tale lived and thrived
Was not found in the tale?
How come
Those tellers and listeners of the tale
Who shared it and made the tale flourish
Remained absent from the tale?

We will ask
And break the belief
That children
While listening to stories
Fall asleep.

TRANSLATED FROM PUNJABI BY VIVEK SACHDEVA

ANIL AADAM[3] (1974-)

Appeal

Before
Even our tears are declared absconders
And are murdered in a fake encounter
Let us sit together and think, my dear comrade.

We live in a world
Where but to heave a sigh
Is like shouting a slogan of anarchy
What to speak of bread
Even dreaming about bread is
A rebellion
And to sleep on your empty stomach
Silently, without making a fuss
Is the central clause of the Constitution.

We live in such a world
Where we love secretly
As if it were
A clandestine winery
Dreams are like our illegitimate children
Who must be aborted
If we want to live

Who will in this world
Indulge into the loving business of hearts
In this world
You cannot marry off your darling daughter
Even if you sell your kidneys
Where brides are burnt alive
Women cannot celebrate *Tiyaan*[4]

Who should I speak to
If I wish to talk about
Compassion that dwells in human heart
In this world
Rape scene is the best scene in a film

Every moment
A bullet is going
Deeper into my head
Here
Every moment
Is a trial
Every moment
Is an encounter

Before
Even our tears are declared absconders
And are murdered in a fake encounter
Let us sit together and think, my dear comrade.

TRANSLATED FROM PUNJABI BY VIVEK SACHDEVA

We have not Fallen Yet

I agree
That the victory flag that hoists

[3] Anil Aadam is a Punjabi poet. He is based in Ferozepur, Punjab.

[4] *Tiyaan* is a festival celebrated by married women in the month of Saavan.

From a high position
Is not ours

But the colour of my blood
Is far deeper
Than its bright colours

What if
We could not win
This is no less achievement
That we haven't lost.

Translated from Punjabi by Vivek Sachdeva

GAGANDEEP SHARMA[5] (1980-)

We Are Never Alone

When we walk
We never walk alone
There is a lot more
That walks besides us
Something fleeting, yet enduring
Something ephemeral, yet eternal
Like our laughters and sorrows
Momentary, yet constant.

When we fly
Like a bird
With us also fly
Our kith and kin
Friends and dear ones
Making
Our wings their flights
Our words their voice
They also
Laugh, smile and cackle
With us
Celebrating in every victory of ours.

When we fall
We don't fall alone
With us also falls
Our family, our village and our community
They stand with us
When the world may betray and cuss,
Sadness on our faces smothers
Smiles on so many other faces
The world which was shaping up
Shatters
A deep silence strikes all around.

When the life becomes an epic struggle
And we fight
It is not only our feet
That march vigorously,
With us
Marches Fights
Something else too
With our feet also stride
Other familiar feet
So many hopes,
When we pick up swords
Guarding deep emotions
Holding shields in our hands
When from all sides we are attacked.

We never live alone
Our share of life,
With us also breathe
Our circumstances,
In our hearts also beat
Unwanted yet loveable emotions,,
The melodious sound of giggling children
Also lives along,
And in the warmth of her *Phulkari*
The woman also embraces
All joys and sorrows alike.

When we die
We don't die alone
With us also die
Our dreams, and their untold stories,
The running train of the family
Derails
Wrinkles on the faces of our fathers and mothers
Deepen
Toys from the hands of small children
Are forsaken.

However alone a man may be
We are never alone.

Translated from Punjabi by Vivek Sachdeva

A Gardener, A Sage and A Poet

Leaves falling from the tree
Are spreading all around
Dry yellow leaves
Are falling from the tree
Gasping gardener
Gathers leaves scattered around him

[5] Gagan Sharma is a Punjabi poet. Presently, he is based in New Delhi.

He makes a pile
Then drops it in a crater
Panting gardener –
Short of breath –
Starts gathering leaves again
Scattered around him

A sage smiles
With his eyes closed
While sitting in meditation
The wind is gathering pace
The scent of falling leaves
Leaves gathering gardener's footsteps
Everything is happening
Near the sage
Smiling while sitting in meditation

Leaves fall
The gardener gathers the leaves
The sage is lost in deep meditation
At times
A poet finds his poem like this too.

TRANSLATED FROM PUNJABI BY VIVEK SACHDEVA

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Book Review

In Praise of Kings: Rajputs, Sultans and Poets in Fifteenth-century Gujarat

Aparna Kapadia
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, New Delhi, Singapore: Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp 183 +xii.
Price not mentioned. ISBN: 9781107153318 (Hardcover)

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Contemporary society's obsession with fixed categories and unwarranted binaries has resulted in numerous unwanted incidents and problematic interpretations of history. It has been observed that common citizens have not only fallen prey to narratives that defy historical logic, they have also been lured by deliberate mischievous insistence on the unchanging character of categories. Professional historians have for long challenged the problematic historicity of the binaries which are in contrast to the fluid and evolutionary character of various categories. However, despite these efforts, one notices an unfortunate disconnect with the larger society and its imaginations. Aparna Kapadia developing upon the rich and emerging historiography on the medieval and early modern period and the region of Gujarat makes an emphatic intervention to challenge the society's fixation with Rajputs as a timeless category. More importantly, Kapadia problematizes the religious binaries of the Hindu- kings and Muslim-sultans on one hand and linguistic binaries of the Hindu-Hindi/Sanskrit and Persian-Muslim/Sultanate on the other, during the fifteenth century in Gujarat. Another important contribution of this book lies in the author's efforts to showcase the geographical expanse of Sanskrit cosmopolitan culture and the corresponding reach of the Dingal literary traditions.

Regional histories more often than not have been dynasty-centric. Moreover, there has been a greater emphasis either on Persian chronicles or on archival sources and this has been reflected in the unfortunate marginalization of literary evidences available in other languages, be it cosmopolitan Sanskrit or vernacular dialects of the early modern era. (p.73) Aparna Kapadia without undermining the significance of histories available in the Persian sources argues that more comprehensive picture of literary culture can be documented if sources in other languages are also examined. To substantiate her argument this monograph engages with five important non-Persian sources: *Ranmallachanda* a fifteenth century literary work partially composed in Sanskrit and partially in Dingal; *Gangadasapratapavilasanataka*, a play in nine acts that makes use of both prose and poetry and is composed primarily in Sanskrit but the Sanskrit is interspersed with a form of Prakrit, a style used traditionally in Sanskrit classical drama by the court jester (*Vidusaka)* and female characters; *Mandalikanrpacarita*, a Sanskrit epic poem in ten *sargas*, or chapters, composed as a traditional *carita* or biographical eulogy; *Rajavinoda* also known as *Srimahamudasuratranacarita*, an epic poem/*mahakavya* written in Sanskrit; and finally *Ras Mala* written by Forbes in the tradition of James Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. Except *Rasa Mala*, which is nineteenth century text, all other are fifteenth century texts.

Reflecting on the regional influences on the literary traditions of Sanskrit, the author makes a couple of important observations, opining that 'In *Ranmallachanda*, its Brahmin poet displays his knowledge of classical Sanskrit with the opening verse but compose the bulk of his work in the oral tradition of Dingal *virakavya*, the heroic poetry that was gaining popularity and prestige in western India among warrior class.' (p.48). Not only Sufi saints borrowed from local-regional traditions and weaved them into their *masnavis* to expand their reach, even Sanskrit cosmopolitan tradition was always mediated by local traditions. Similarly, 'in the absence of an illustrious lineage or an army as strong and powerful

as the sultan's, Ranmal, the sole defender of his fort, must display his own prowess as a great warrior.' (p.64). Thus cosmopolitan Sanskrit had to adapt to the local conditions, rather than highlighting the genealogical emphasis upon heroic deeds. To the extent that: 'In this unusual representation, the narrative overturns the traditional *deva-asura* or god-demon dichotomy. It was indeed conventional to describe the Muslim enemies as demons or *asuras* in the Indic literary traditions of the time. The representation of the protagonist as Ravana, an *asura* in the epic tradition however, appears to turn the traditional rivalry on its head. Here the poet only seems to evoke the demon king in his aspect as a warrior hero.' (p.66).

By offering critical engagements with *Rajavinoda* or *Srimahamudasuratranacarita,* Aparna Kapadia succeeds in her efforts to expose the limitations of unfounded binaries. Quite similar to but in a role reversal when compared with the Vijayanagara rulers who portrayed themselves as 'Sultan among Hindu Kings', this 'epic poem or *mahakavya* presents him (Sultan Mahmud Begada) as a paramount or universal ruler with links to a prestigious solar dynasty, or *suryavamsa*, a link traditionally claimed by the Kshatriya kings of the subcontinent.' (p.104). Furthermore, she points out that though Sultans of Gujarat 'From the inception of their reign…had patronized Arabic and Persian, consciously linking themselves to a wider cosmopolitan literary world within and beyond the subcontinent', (p.110) we find that 'Sanskrit inscriptions from north India, and particularly from Gujarat testify to the fact that the language continued to be in use after the establishment of Muslim rule in India'. (p.111) Irrelevance of religious binary could be seen when the Sultan of Gujarat was forced to withdraw his siege of 'Hindu' fortress Champaner due to the presence of the Sultan of Mandapa/Malwa (p.85). Further, the author has emphatically pointed out the cultural borrowings, between the so-called 'Indic' and 'Islamicate' traditions, otherwise celebrated for the Mughal period, to be quite prevalent during the fifteenth century in this region.

As pointed out above, this book critically highlights the fallacies of a single specific 'Rajput' identity, as we understand today. The research engages with the evolutionary processes, which led to the consolidation of the Rajput identities. The author critically examines Forbes' *Ras Mala* and suggests that 'Here, the Rajputs, are akin to the open-ended social category that constituted the military labour market in which marriage alliances and military service propelled the rise in status of these upwardly mobile groups. Furthermore, in this view, the Rajputs and Sultans are not always at odds but in fact part of the evolving system of patronage in the fifteenth century.' (p.156)

While appreciative of most of the formulations suggested by author, let me share some of my reservations, which emanate not so much out of criticism but more out of my apprehensions about the potential misuse of certain analytical categories. The historians continuously face the dilemma of relying on categories to define the specific. Categorization as a process is exclusionary, creating problems for historians who deal more with the continuities and less with ruptures and changes. For instance, the use of the term 'Indic' can be a double-edged sword. While the author makes earnest efforts to highlight the long-term continuities and challenge the binaries of religion, language and associated characterizations, the use of 'Indic' in the book unfortunately tends to reiterate the binaries. What makes a language or culture 'Indic'? When are we going to call a group Indic? How much time do we need to call a period Indic? Where will we place Urdu?

There are some typographical mistakes, which are regrettable, especially on the part of the publishers. However, such mistakes cannot undermine the contribution of the monograph. This monograph goes beyond simplistic explanations and points out the complexities involved in examining the socio-cultural-linguistic dynamics of the region. The significance of the monograph can be summarized as "The collection of narratives brought together in this reflects crucial aspects of the ways in which the warrior ethos and identities were creatively developing, but had not entirely become set in stone, in the fifteenth-century milieu' (p.11). This book will interest specialists of social and cultural histories of South Asia during the early modern period.

Book Review

Archives of Empire

Barbara Harlow and Mia Carter Edited
New Delhi, Primus Books, 2018, [London, Duke University Durham, 2003], pp.828. Rs.1995.
ISBN 10:9386552574/ISBN 13: 9789386552570 (Hardcover)

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Agreement between the Nabob Nudjum-ul-Dowlah and the Company, 12 August,1765

"The King having been graciously pleased to grant to the English Company the Dewanny of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa,with the revenues thereof, as a free gift for ever, on certain conditions, whereof one is that there shall be a sufficient allowance out of the said revenues for……….the Nizamut…….I hope will be inviolably observed…….Bengal"

Fort William, 30th September 1765.
Alexander Campbell, S.S.C

This excerpt from one of the numerous original documents reproduced in the *Archives of Empire* lends it a certain flavour and an importance making it one of the most significant interventions in South Asian Studies in recent times. Harlow and Carter seek to convey a certain sense of History by carefully selecting original documents and extracts from novels by those Britishers who often had a first-hand experience of the East, particularly the Indian subcontinent. In their selection of documents and extracts from these novels, Harlow and Carter lend a certain teleology to the book as they subscribe to certain themes which would otherwise impart a certain time-span and chronology to the work.

For instance the book begins by reproducing the texts of the early treaties between the East India Company and Indian Powers, initial acts passed by the East India Company like the Regulating Act of 1773 and minutes by subsequent Company ideologues such as James Mill and Thomas Macaulay. These ideologues sought to create a certain legitimacy for the Company rule in India on behalf of the Crown. In this case, they attempted to understand the essence of Indian civilization in their own ways and accordingly prescribed the kind of British rule in the sub-continent . Naturally some of the early architects of colonial rule in the subcontinent like Clive got a prominent space. For instance, the book presents an extract from Henty George Alfred's novel on Clive. In this extract, Clive is presented as a notoriously free spirited lad and his mother as a despaired woman who had recently lost her husband and was barely left with anything. Struggling to find means for his further education, the extract tells us that a cadetship with the East India Company in India seemed like a last resort. The rest as we know is history. Clive in all his follies and avowed greatness is also colourfully depicted in an extract from Macaulay's essay on Clive in the book. While Clive is presented as one of those personalities who fashioned and shaped history by the force of their personalities and genius in the face of indomitable odds, there is also a prolonged discussion on Clive's alleged treachery towards Omichand, one of the key figures in the conspiracy against Siraj-Ud-Daulah, the then Nawab of Bengal.While Macaulay deems Clive's unfaithfulness as very un-British, he sums up the argument by pronouncing that Clive's accomplishments were far greater than his follies. In any case Macaulay concurs that Clive had no choice but to deceive Omichand who sought to engage in an elaborate deception game of his own, a game of treachery, typically Oriental in its nature.

Having dwelt on Clive extensively, the reader would expect similar generous space allotted to the other important personalities of this period. Curiously Warren Hastings does not figure in the first section but the reader need not be disappointed. An entire section, namely the third section is devoted to the impeachment of Warren

Hastings. Possibly Harlow and Carter feel that larger moral questions were centered on the impeachment of Hastings. The debates surrounding the impeachment proceedings against Hastings were about the fundamental nature of British rule in India, the sources from which it supposedly drew legitimacy, the moral constraints to which it was subject to, the checks and balances which should impinge on the functioning of the Company and a host of other issues.

While Hastings is indeed bestowed the honour of an entire section devoted to him for reasons understandable, it is ironical that the another important personality has an entire section devoted to him despite the fact that he was one of the most formidable foes the Company ever faced. This figure was none other than Tipu Sultan, a man admired, feared and reviled in his times and in contemporary India. By allocating considerable space to Tipu, Harlow and Carter seem to suggest that Tipu indeed was the greatest challenge that the Company ever faced possibly in the pre-1857 period.Tipu indeed assumes an image larger than life in the book.

The reviewer for one would be slightly circumspect about the centrality imparted to Tipu. Undoubtedly Tipu was a farsighted ruler in many respects who understood the many sided aspects of the Company's power. He stove manfully to counter the broad plane from which the Company derived its formidable resources and capacity to project power. In the end superior diplomacy of his enemies and the contradictions of his own position felled him, much to the relief of the British who feared, detested and possibly had a grudging admiration for him which they had for no other Indian ruler.

Yet Mysore as a rival was possibly not the greatest challenge the English faced from a native power. The Marathas and the Sikhs were perhaps the more formidable foes. Again it was in the end superior diplomacy which enabled the British to triumph over them. In both cases the margin between victory and defeat was narrow. Strangely the struggle against the Marathas and the Sikhs does not get a mention in this work. However an entire section is devoted to the *thuggees*. This section has extracts from Philip Meadows Taylor's novel on the *thugees* and Colonel Sleeman's extensive writings on them. Due to ostensible reasons, suppression of the *thuggees* presented a fundamental challenge to the British who attempted to decriminalize the landscape and project themselves as a power which followed and upheld the universal rule of law meant for all. What could be the reason for the omission of the Marathas and the Sikhs? According to Harlow and Carter, one of the reasons could be that the struggle between Tipu and the Company was an intense ideological struggle, a struggle which the Company had to win at any cost if they intended to achieve hegemony in the subcontinent. Here was an Indian ruler who dared to counter the British over a broad canvas. The battlefield for Tipu was one of the many fronts on which he sought to challenge the British, and he was ultimately offering a broader ideological challenge.

On the issue of ideology, it would be apt to mention that the book devotes an entire chapter on Orientalism. One though finds it strange that the section on Orientalism precedes the section on Warren Hastings who for the reviewer was the fountainhead of Orientalism, especially in the realm of policy making in British India. Casting this anomaly aside one would infer that the book rightly gives Orientalism and the notion of Oriental despotism a centrality in the scheme of things. Orientalism and Orientalists would impact the nature of Company rule in the subcontinent in a fundamental manner till the early decades of the nineteenth century. Indeed they would set the basis for the Company rule, notwithstanding the interventions by early Anglicists like Cornwallis. Therefore minutes and treatises by Oriental scholars and administrators seeking to understand and locate Indian civilization and accordingly tailor Company rule and policy in tune with the religious and social customs of the sub-continent deserve a detailed treatment.

Strangely though Harlow and Carter do not cover the transition from Orientalism to Utilitarianism directly. The section on law contains a detailed analysis of various minutes on *sati* by colonial scholars and officials. And it is here that Utilitarianism creeps in surreptiously in the book. Strangely there is no direct mention of the role that Utilitarianism plays in the British deciding to legislate on Indian customs and traditions and bring in reforms. The British were now prepared to interfere in the religious and social customs of Indians provided they had scriptural backing, a fact amply brought out in Bentinck's minute on *sati* which is faithfully reproduced in this work. Though this kind of Utilitarian thinking was not a major break from the Orientalist thinking as is commonly evinced. But it undoubtedly marked a departure from the Orientalist phase in which the the British would not interfere in the social and religious life of natives at any cost, irrespective of any scriptural backing.

Indeed the British interventions on education should also be viewed in the light of the overall pressure exerted by the Utilitarians, Anglicists, Missionaries, free-traders in the early nineteenth century. Strangely Macaulay's minute on Indian education is included in the section on Orientalism. His minute on Indian Education would have been consigned to the dustbins even in the early years of the nineteenth century when Orientalists still held sway, thus meeting the same fate as Charles Grant's minute on education in 1793.

The sections on the Indian Mutiny and Suez Canal are adequate. The extracts from excerpts by colonial administrators, officials, novelists, historians, and first-hand accounts- all portray the essence of 1857 thus avoiding a monotonous and flat picture of 1857 from the view point of the British. Notwithstanding the richness of the documents on 1857 represented in the book an added flavour could have been lent by printing some of the native tracts, first-hand accounts, proclamations by various native rulers, and so on during the uprising of 1857 as has been attempted in the sections on *sati* and the *thuggees*.

The book ends with a detailed section on the multi-faceted circumstances leading to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.One can hardly find issue with the authors regarding the importance they attach to the opening of the Suez Canal. For it was the beginning of a new era. Overall, notwithstanding certain disagreements this is a fundamental work which should be read by all scholars of South Asian history.

Book Review

Visual Histories of South Asia

Annamaria Motrescu-Mayes and Marcus Banks

Delhi: Primus Books, 2018, pp. xxviii+314, Rs. 1495. ISBN: 9789386552440 (Hardcover).

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The book under review has thirteen well-edited and compact chapters along with an *Introduction*, which are bound together with common themes of interpretation and representation of visuals like photographs, cartoons, and video compact discs (VCDs) through history. This book is in many ways a continuation of the themes and questions that Christopher Pinny's famous work *Camera Indica* had already raised.[1]Therefore Pinny's short preface to this volume is a befitting initiation in setting the tone of the volume.

Pinny in the *Preface* emphasizes that visual histories should engage with velocity and imagination of travel. He further questions the binary of seeing and un-seeing and considers such a binary fallacious because these two activities are not mutually exclusive. They interact and complementarily determine the nature of the visual text. Almost all the essays in the volume meticulously follow this line of argument and in the process help to make, what can be easily and in somewhat definitive ways be called a global history of visual representation.

The book covers an expansive domain. And to do justice to the rich discussion that subsequently enfolds, one needs to visit the nitty-gritties of the chapters separately, for each chapter is a separate window to the varied ideas that visual histories are capable of capturing. Marcus Bank explores the role of visual methodologies in long-term research on the basis of the rich visual archives. In addition, the article also explores the ways in which a photograph should be allowed to 'breathe', 'perform', and transform relationships or even converse with the changing relationships of power and governance. These ideas are important to comprehensively capture and incorporate its potential within the entire range of research. Bank also highlights the problems of implementing these ideas within a particular research, especially, after the funding period of the research is over. This particular intervening and at times decisive role of the money and market is also the focal point of analysis in Denis Vidal's article where the effects of market commercialization are discussed with respect to tribal art forms. Through an engaging discussion about the life and works of Jangarh Singh Shyam, a talented tribal Indian artist, the chapter tries to understand the nature of incorporation of 'ethnic' art forms into the globalized art world.

Market and commerce is also the theme for Josephine Bark's chapter although with a slight difference. The chapter focuses upon the role of iconography in the Maratha Durbar at Thanjavur and important clues it provided about the roles of the European traders, in this case, the Danes on the Maratha ruler's jurisdiction. The chapter highlights the interesting point about multicultural visual diplomacy regarding the European traders in India who became visually prominent in both political and aesthetic contexts even before their economic success in Europe or their colonial enterprises.

The theme of iconography continues to be a part of the chapter by Imma Ramos. Ramos discusses iconography in the context of temple politics and its representation in the architecture of the Kamakhya temple in Assam. The article extensively explores the changing visual politics of menstruation, birth and devotion through the centuries ranging from the rule of the Pala, the Koch and finally the colonial rule. Ramos suggests that sculptures of the temple represent layers of relationship between the fertility and apotropaic. This combination provides power to the meanings of the temple sculptures, an aspect that has remained consistent through the ages.

But are representations bereft of inconsistencies and anxieties? Thomas Simpson in his essay through the analysis of the visual representation of the people of the

frontier provinces of India asserts that they are not. His work is a clear indication that the photographs about representing the various aspects of the people of frontier India were often without any definite plan and varied according to the local and personal circumstances of the reporting officers. The article, in this context, analyses Robert Woodthorpe's representation of the inhabitants of the frontier regions of the country between 1844 and 1898.

Annamaria Motrescu-Mayes also explores similar politics of representation in the following essay in the context of visual representation of the landscape of Ceylon. The focal point of her analysis is 'how the process of visual printing informed, impacted on, and inscribed the photographic representation of antiquity in Ceylon' within the framework of travel photography of the present times. (p.94). The answer lies, argues Motrescu-Mayes in the ways and consistent methods in which the photographs were taken, especially those of ruins, to ascribe a permanent idea of antiquity of Ceylon. But if photographs can impose the tone of static antiquity on a geographical location, they can also enhance the status of a king and help him to stand tall amongst his subjects in the domestic as well as the international arena. Teresa Segura-Garcia's chapter exhibits the process as to how the mechanically reproduced photographs of Maharaja Sayaji Rao III of Baroda from 1919 enhanced the Maharaja's image as a modern ruler suited to handle the exigencies of the colonial rule.

Such representations, however, were not limited to the royals. The common people were also represented likewise and that had deep political and cultural repercussions as is exhibited in the subsequent three essays. Xavier Guegan's chapter, the first one in this series, is also my personal favorite in the book and it is not possible to do justice to its extensive thematic coverage in this limited space. The chapter is about Samuel Bourne, a young British photographer who portrayed India in the 1860s with the help of his business partner, Charles Shepherd. It explores the ways in which the photographs of priests, soldiers, bankers, merchants and workers were taken, their contexts, interventions of ideas of caste and class in these photographies, the process of the creation of the ethnographical albums and so on. Similarly in the following essay, Adrian Peter Ruprecht illustrates the way in which colonial India became tightly integrated into a new global humanitarian initiative of the Red Cross movement after the First World War, which was in fact aimed at preventing the occurrence of diseases and pandemics by educating the masses across the world. The chapter also discusses the ways in which the War itself helped in the almost 'spectacular ascent of photography and cinema as the prime propaganda media to reach and educate the masses'. (p. 172). Aaron Bryant's chapter, the third in this line-up, continues with the theme of masses and their politics with the focus on the tour of Martin Luther King, Jr. to India in 1959. Providing interesting glimpses of the tour details of Martin Luther King, Bryant discusses at length the gradual influence that Gandhi and Nehru's politics had on King. In fact, the chapter discusses the global context of mass resistance, in this case, the epistemological model that the politics of Gandhi provided to the civil rights movement in the United States of America.

The last three chapters by Souvik Naha, Siddharth Pandey, Ronie Parciack respectively explore themes of representation of politics through, sports cartoons, photographs and VCDs over a long historical span. While Naha's article navigates through the colonial and post-colonial times using the various sports cartoons metaphors to read through the various political developments, Pandey's analytical scape is Shimla and he talks about the politics of official representation underlining the many site points of this pristine hill station. Parciack uses the unusual and the interesting medium of Video Compact Discs or the VCDs to look into the subaltern politics amongst the Indian Muslims. Parciack's essay give us a peek in to the Indo-Islamic historiography of political representation which is constructed through these alternative mediums of representation vis-à-vis the dominant Hindutva narratives.

Overall, the book is a treat for readers not only interested in the history of visual studies but also for a larger reading community, an asset that is a rare quality of academic books.

NOTE

1. Christopher Pinny, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*, London: Reaktion, 1997.

Book Review

Urban Spaces in Modern India

Narayani Gupta and Partho Datta Edited
Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2018, pp. v + 354, Rs.600/-, ISBN: 9789382396598 (Hardcover).

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Among other disciplines, urban studies has adopted an interdisciplinary approach where scholars have benefited from the synergy of eclectic ideas blended in a concerted way. This book is an addition and a valuable contribution to the field of urban studies where academicians and practitioners from diverse backgrounds gathered (in a seminar in IIAS Shimla, 2015) to gauge the impact of urbanism on contemporary Indian cities. The protean intellectual churning, as expected, resulted in a wide range of papers which prise open new debates on Indian cities and towns. The relevant themes which emerged from the presentations are grouped in four sections namely 'spaces carved out by the planners', 'people-generated spaces', 'reshaping city spaces' and 'representation of spaces'.

Sukanta Chaudhuri's keynote address at the conference features as the first essay titled as "Improbable Realities: Urban Spaces in India". It draws attention to the challenges countenanced by people inhabiting the towns and cities in a post independent nation where the "notions of urban growth and urban culture" are based on models that may be outdated in the West but remain "premature, if not radically inappropriate" when applied here. It sets the momentum for other papers in the section as it ends on a cautious note stating that one cannot "leapfrog" over the "basic challenges to embrace the urban models spawned by Western post-industrialism". Shweta Wagh's essay on "Resources, Livelihoods and Spatial Control" probes into one such concern incidentally laid out in the keynote address by locating it in the context of "urban commons" in Mumbai where the communities are resisting its appropriation and commodification in a neoliberal scenario. Hussain Indorewala's paper on "Housing and Dishousing in Mumbai" historically traces the discourse and policy on slums from nineteenth century till date. Snehanshu Mukherjee's article "Taking the City Back from Planners to People" reiterates the need to focus on the subaltern roots of urban planning to counteract the maladies produced by the master plan. Pradipto Roy's essay "Locating Hospitals In and Out of City" brings forth the debate on epidemics, sanitary reforms and town planning in the context of medical institutions. This section of the book is largely devoted to the colonial and post colonial urban experience in the metropolis cities of Mumbai, Calcutta and Delhi.

The second section brings together four essays where the experience of denizens in the urban underbelly is reified in the informal or transitory spaces inhabited by them. Dipti Bapat's article on "Emerging from the Rags" discusses the trade practises of Waghris, a nomadic community from Gujarat practising the itinerant trade of exchanging old clothes for new utensils since five generations and Waddars from Maharashtra who exchange waste hair for new utensils. The frictional encounter between street vendors and permanent residents in a locality is a subject matter of this paper. Bhushan Arekar's "Heterotopia: Dalits, Citizenship and Urban Spaces" brings out the perennially festering and unresolved question of caste in the context of annual public gathering in Shivaji Park in Mumbai to commemorate the death anniversary of Bhim Rao Ambedkar. Pradeep Nayak's work on vending zone in Bhubaneshwar analyses the stiffly contested right to the city's public space for vending in opposition to the state government's attempt to showcase Bhubaneshwar as an "investment destination" under the fanfare of development paradigm. Devesh Vijay's article is an interesting ethnographic deviation in the section as it compares two slums in the peripheries of Delhi. The micro study of a jhuggi cluster Aradhaknagar and Dhantala opens the window to the cyclical experience of

migration, settlement and unsettlement occurring in the mundane lives of slum dwellers.

The third section in the book ties together sundry set of concerns. Malavika Kasturi's insightful foray to the inner world of Nath Yogis in Goraknath Math unearths the deeply enmeshed world of sacred and secular as evident from the litigation related to land disputes. The close connection of Mahants to the Sangh Parivar has augmented their political sway over the city of Gorakhpur. Garima Dhabai resurrects the long drawn debate on renaming places/spaces through her work on rechristening the Amani Shah Nallah to Dravyawati river. However, this time it is the unique story of claiming and reinscribing a languishing putrid creek which brings out the intersection between a variety of concerns revolving around bureaucratic policy, legal orders, popular narratives and politics of land and heritage in Jaipur. P Arun in "Surveilling Space: Punitive or Preventive?" uses the Lefebvrian lens of understanding everyday life through the produced social space. The case study of pervasive CCTV surveillance in Delhi Metro raises the irreconcilable concern over scrutinizing flaneur on the one hand and the invasion of privacy owing to technological innovations on the other. Rohit K. Gulati in his article "Transforming Urban Spaces for Citizens" restates the need to make the citizens, who are the eventual stakeholders become active co-producers in shaping the cities which are otherwise designed by architects, planners and engineers.

The last section in the book on the representation of spaces is quite stimulating as it weaves together more compatible set of essays by Saba M Bashir, "Vignettes of the 'Urban' in Hindustani Cinema", Ella Datta's "Imagining the City in Modern and Contemporary Art" and Swathi Shivanand's well researched essay on "practices of governance" through Delhi's Urban Art Commission (hereafter DUAC). Bashir's piece depicts the struggles of a migrant to Mumbai (where he encounters issues of housing, unemployment etc.) through the empathetic canvas of Hindi Cinema. Ella Datta discusses the visual representation of city as illustrated in the Indian Art in the twentieth century. It fuses the despair, dereliction and hope of lived and imagined realities. Swathi's essay on DUAC strings together the dual responsibility of the institution in ensuring aesthetic order along with bringing about development of sorts in post colonial Delhi. It traces the historical four decade course charted by DUAC from 1974-2010 with specific mention to key moments related to urbanization such as Emergency (1977), Asian Games (1982) and Commonwealth games (2010).

The book is an interesting potpourri of varied experiences related to spaces in a city. One wishes that it had addressed the issue of modernity in contemporary urbanism so as to complicate the positivist notions embedded in coeval existence. Nonetheless this empirically rich work will whet the appetite of research scholars, social scientists, urban designers, conservationists, administrators and laymen alike. Some essays are illustrated with maps and photographs which enhance its appeal to the readers. It goes without saying that the book is indispensable for those interested or working on issues related to urbanism and urbanization in the Indian cities.

Book Review

Himalayan Histories: Economy, Polity, Religious Traditions

Chetan Singh

Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2018, pp. xi +303, Rs. 895. ISBN: 978-81-7824-530-0 (Hardcover)

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This book brings together a range of essays that argue for the complexity of political, economic and social processes among the agro-pastoralists of the Himalayan region. Chetan Singh picks up the gauntlet against discourses of power/knowledge of colonial and post-colonial states that have interpreted their difference from agrarian societies as a sign of "backwardness" on the part of the latter, as well as against the supposedly "sympathetic" historical narrative of Zomia, in which mobile life-ways are celebrated as a form of deep resistance to state society. Instead Singh demonstrates that pastoral communities participate with considerable agency and a high degree of self-reflexivity in complex economic and state-making processes.

Re-appropriating the link between people and environment simplistically presented in state discourses, Singh argues quoting Baker and Gregory that being shaped by mountain landscapes is an act of social and cultural appropriation, through "memory, myth, value and symbolism" (p. 19).[1] The essays amply elaborate the idea that a region is not defined by geographical and linguistic parameters alone but "comes into being" through human interaction with geography and the social construction of identity through language and symbols. Nor, according to Singh, is memory or social value some fixed reified cultural construct. Rather, it is constantly re-negotiated in a rational and deliberate pursuit of self-interest by agro-pastoral communities. Even kinship, in this case polyandry, is not left in the sphere of an archaic social but is interpreted by him as a strategic economic choice.

Singh's focus is on livelihoods constituted by a mixed portfolio of subsistence strategies including agriculture, transhumant pastoralism and trade. He has discussed the material history of this economy in his previous work, *Natural Premises*.[2]In the current set of essays his emphasis is more on political economy, the power relations and institutions in which resources are enmeshed and which communities of agro-pastoralists have to negotiate with. Pastures in the highlands and lowlands, for example, did not exist in a non-social space of pure nature but had to be accessed through formal agreements with local residents. These overlapping usages moreover had to be repeatedly re-negotiated over time with communities and the princely states in whose domains they were located.

Trans-Himalayan trade was regulated by formal institutional mechanisms, both state and non-state, in Tibet and in the cis-Himalayas. Engaging with these mechanisms across political, linguistic and cultural boundaries, Singh argues, required cultural skills that some communities like the Kinnauras successfully developed. The strength of highland pastoralists, according to him, was their ability to negotiate the Tibetan and the Hindu brahmanical cultural orders dominating either end of the trade routes and to make deals without compromising their own normative system.

Singh questions the view held by the colonial and post-colonial officials that the agrarian and transhumant economies are incompatible. Pre-colonial rulers he argues understood the symbiotic nature of the relationship and its importance for raising revenues. They therefore regulated potential conflict over resources whereas subsequent regimes have been significantly more hostile towards the claims of mobile people.

These complexities of the political economy suggest that though the social structure of pastoralists was flexible, it was neither as simple nor as opportunistic as James Scott attributed to the highland communities of Zomia. Instead they seem to have worked hard to accumulate and hold on to privileges by negotiating with other communities

and institutions and wherever possible, having them ratified by the local rulers.

While Singh does not entirely dismiss the theoretical construct of Zomia as a non-state space, his chapters on Himalayan polity chronicle a zestful engagement by smaller societies and chieftains with monarchical systems of Himachal. If on the one hand, the 'Dum' represents an ethically informed struggle for autonomy with the state led by the local *deota*, there are many examples of seeking strategic integration with the state on the other. The Kanets of the Kinnaur highlands for example, ensured their dominance over the richer agrarian communities downstream by holding on to two out of three positions of *wazirs* or high-ranking political advisers in the royal state of Bashahar. Singh asserts that while state control was strongly developed along the central river valleys, they had to grant greater autonomy to the *thakurais* or chieftainships of the less accessible valleys and uplands.

The *thakurais* were political formations that preceded monarchical states. Control over local religious cults was crucial in establishing their authority. Singh suggests that the close association of religion with local forms of power in *thakurais* may have compelled monarchies to also develop their hegemony through the strategic use of religion. Following McKim Marriott's formulation of great and little traditions, Singh argues that the Brahmanical pantheon of Vishnu and Shiva or a *kul devi* represented the monarchy while *deotas* representing folk cults were drawn into the ruling pantheon as subordinate deities. Their subjugation was reaffirmed by periodical enactment of rituals of political incorporation such as renewal of feudatory ties and payment of "taxes" by *deotas* to the dominant deity.

In his interpretation of oral narratives then, Singh does not reduce them merely to narratives of political resistance, as the Subaltern Studies have tended to do. Rather he also traces narratives of political integration. Tracing another example of this process through myth, he shows how later versions of the origin stories of two ruling clans conform more closely to the brahmanical paradigms than earlier versions, reflecting the incorporation of local polities into Hindu states. Thus shared notions of political legitimacy evolved between local leaders and princely states and smaller communities came to represent their claims in the language of the world at large.

Singh's discussion of the social largely revolves around village communities and polyandrous marriage. He interprets polyandry as a form that enabled the domestic economy to maximize control over male labour by prohibiting partitioning of the family landholding in each generation. This pooling of labour he argues increased the opportunity for each household to exploit diverse livelihoods. While typically one brother and his wife cultivated the agricultural holding and maintained social obligations in the village community, other brothers could take large flocks to seasonal pastures, with the sheep and goat doubling as pack animals to facilitate Tibetan and cis-Himalayan trade.

However, it is pertinent to ask why then was partitioning among brothers more common than polyandry as a form of marriage across the Western Himalayas. From Himachal across Garhwal and Kumaon to Nepal, even specifically pastoral-trading communities like the Bhotias subscribe to polyandrous marriage. Normative injunctions against polyandry are strong. It may be useful to look beyond forms of marriage, format of the family at practices of work sharing between related households. These practices might well show that the process of economic individuation initiated by partitioning is offset by practices of cooperation and resource sharing between related households to understand that work related mobility could be facilitated through other strategies.

Surprisingly, Chetan Singh's re-interpretation of agro-pastoral history does not draw particularly on fresh primary data from an archive or fieldwork. The essays rely largely on published records, ethnographies and travelogues of the colonial period. Singh is able to read this material insightfully because he has spent years developing a perspective on pastoralism that is absolutely central for the reconstruction of a regional history of the Himalayas.

Notes

1. Alan, Baker, 'Reflections on the Relations of Historical Geography and the Annales School of History', A.R.H. Baker and D. Gregory eds., *Explorations in Historical Geography*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984
2. Chetan Singh, *Natural Premises: Ecology and Peasant Life in the Western Himalaya, 1800-1950*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998

Book Review

Claiming Space for Australian Women's Writing

Devleena Das and Sanjukta Dasgupta Edited
Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp.xv+353, Price not stated, ISBN: 978-3-319-50399-8 (Hardcover)

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Claiming Space for Australian Women's Writing edited by Devleena Das and Sanjukta Dasgupta is a significant contribution to the subject (as the title itself suggests) of Australian studies as well as women's studies. Although there are numerous literary works on and by women, this book stand apart from the rest because it explores and establishes the "exclusion of home writers from a predominantly phallocentric" literary scene wherein the issues of women of colour together with white women come to the fore while studying their respective literary pieces. The book focuses on attributing visibility to Australian women's writing by highlighting them globally, outside the "confines of Australian academia" as the editors vociferously point out.

The editors in an adroitly written introduction trace the position of women's writings in Australia today, the global outreach of these writings, varied experiences of patriarchy and many such issues, all situated in the context of pastoral history, aboriginal-convict conflict, the "mateship", World wars, depression and naturalist fervour. Major writings, both fiction and non-fiction, like Mary Broome's 'Letters to Guy', Annie Beater's 'Memories of Past', Catherine Maslim's 'An Australian Girl', Greer's 'The Female Eunuch' to name a few have been discussed in detail. The *Introduction* while summarizing and commenting upon each essay also mentions pointedly that the purpose of the book is "how Australian women writers have crossed canonical, cultural and racial boundaries in search of identity and meaning" (p 4). There is also an engaging discussion on wide ranging themes like war, expatiation, nationality, identity, and so on, stressing on no single unilateral Australia woman tradition and "contesting androcentric hegemony".

There are eighteen essays in the book that are divided into four parts, viz.,"Breaking the Silence", "A Space of Her Own", "Scripting the Body and Sexuality" and "From the Margins" as respective titles. Part I aptly reflects on the subject of silence and its connotations. Ffion Murphy and Richard Nile while critiquing the position of Government in the times of war in Europe (1914- 1918) to silence the agony brilliantly put forth the maternal lament. Susan Sheridan explores the perennial dilemma of women artists- rigid order of family life or indiscipline of bohemian creativity especially within the unyielding structure of patriarchy. Devleena's essay ponders over gender equality while dwelling on rivalry, personal as well as artistic between Luisa Lawson and Mary Gilmore and also problematizes the term feminism. Next essay by Victoria Reeve like the earlier ones, addresses the complexities of women's writing's through Beatrice Grimshaw's travelogue and highlights the earlier white woman's perspective that reflected the stereotypical white male gawk on natives.

Part II begins with a magnificent essay by Sanjukta Das Gupta on writing as a part of activism Das Gupta traces the feminist writing of Australia from 1901 till contemporary times. Five women writers influenced by Marxist ideology are especially mentioned to highlight gender politics as well as aboriginal issues. Sue Kasson in the next essay discusses the social history of Australia while outlining the literary career of Kate Gremille focusing on Grenville's colonial history and fictional format. Taking this further Raymond Evan's "Disparate Visions" on Fath Richmond, Gwen Hasmood and Judith Wright deals with class issues, education and the public domain. In an interesting essay, Belina Burns places the suburbia vis-à-vis city centric imagined narratives wherein feminine discontent in domestic realm is voiced. Jerrica White concentrates on letter writing traditions of Australian women- as their diaries, memoirs and verses.

She has stressed the role of these women as preservers of traditions, environment and regulators of alien cultures.

Part III focuses on challenging matters such as lesbianism, drug addiction and acceptance of one's sexuality without guilt and fear. Susan Hawthorne, in her essay while candidly professing about her own alternate sexuality critically reviews heterosexuality and demands latitude for them as they have been always commented and looked down upon disparagingly. Nyole Peouse in her essay worries about the urban young of Australia while dealing with drug abuse, cultural feminization and indeterminism reflective of certain sections of Australian society in Helen Garner's works. Damien Barlow while writing about Barbara Hanharan's autobiographical writings focuses on women's needs and desires in sexual relations. Barlow significantly foregrounds the naturalist myth with themes of female bonding that rejected the patriarchal control.

Part IV juxtaposes the writings of immigrant and Aboriginal Australian women writers. Six essays in this section seek riposte to trauma, miscegenation and nostalgia in the works of re-habilitated women. Anne Brewster, an established aboriginal writer while focusing upon the rage of aboriginals and their politico-aesthetics as dissent in her protest poetry raises a certain consciousness. Simultaneously the complex relationship of the white and aboriginal women is analyzed in relation to the domestic foray. Sibandu Chakraborty gives another perspective to Aboriginal poetry focusing upon Romaine Moreton's view on feminism especially the Aboriginal viewpoint. Chakraborty critiques the Pan Australian cohesive patriarchal system (white as well as Aboriginal) and "Eurocentric material feminism" and compares them to the "organic feminism" of Aboriginals. Ishmeet Kaur sensitively analyzes the role of oral traditions in articulating the joys of struggles and victories of Aboriginal women. Kaur also analyzes their autobiographical and biographical narratives in this context. Her analysis of Jackie Huggin's *Aunty Rita* and Jeanine Leane's *Purple Thread* gives an unsullied view on the lines of considering mothers and grandmothers as subjects of their own discourse. Sanghamitra Dalal touches the complexities of 'being' and 'belonging' in a land adopted as a home in the Anglo- Indian Australian writer Patricia Pengillley's autobiographical reflections on gender, race, carnality, ethnicity, culture and religion. Ispita Sengupta brings to the fore Mary Luisa Skinner's ideas of identity politics and existential feminism. Finally the essay by Sharon Rondle discusses Chandani Lokuge's works wherein she defines transcultural space of Australia and emphasizes upon Australian women's writings that transcend all the borders of nation.

The book also gives a brief review of select writings of Australian women. *Australian Studies Now* edited by Andrew Hassam and Amit Sarwal, *Australian Studies: Reading History, Culture and Identity* edited by David Rustam, Deb Narayan Bandopadhyay and Shibnath Banerjee to name a few are analyzed. Definitely this assembled volume contributes significantly to research on Australian writings and is valuable for teaching too. Each essay makes a pertinent argument regarding varied concerns of Australian writings making this collected work a serious academic endeavor. In addition, credit goes to the publisher Palgrave Macmillan for an excellent production in terms of the cover page and the paper quality that made it a joy to read the book.