

Knowledge: Fluid Cultures, Frozen Structures

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Professor Peter Ronald deSouza, Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, who has brought fresh sea air to the Himalayas. His engagement with 'unpacking puzzles of democracy' is of vital importance not only to political scientists but to all citizens of India; and

Distinguished members of the audience,

Thank you for inviting me to deliver the Fourteenth Radhakrishnan Memorial lecture. To have an occasion to pay tribute to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and to express deep appreciation for the work of the Institute is a rare privilege. I am honoured.

I am somewhat hesitant to address this audience not only because we are situated in the India International Centre, but also because many present here are long-standing friends. Some of them belong to my generation. We have been participators and witnesses to the transition from a colonial to an independent India. We are also inheritors of the vision and aspirations of those who played a seminal role in the shaping of the nation state.

In what words do I pay tribute to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, universally acknowledged as a universal man, a philosopher-statesman, who brought dignity and lustre

wherever he was? As I sit in the Rajya Sabha, I cannot help remembering each day, almost every day, how with a lifting of the pencil he would silence any attempt at disruption. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru's tribute to him on the occasion of his demitting the office of Vice-President and Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, is an eloquent testimony. He had said: 'You treated us like school children and we obeyed!'

I

Let me begin with some personal memories.

One day – it should have been sometime in the 40s – a tall man stood in the balcony of my mother's flat in Connaught Place. That was home to many political figures – Aruna Asaf Ali, Bishamber Nath Pande, Achyut Patwardhan, and others. They moved in and out, specially during the 1942 Movement. For us, it was not anything unusual to see a special person. However, here was a tall man standing in the balcony looking out as if waiting for someone. My mother ran in and said, "Kapila, I think this is Dr. Radhakrishnan! Go and speak to him. He should come in rather than stand in the balcony." Without a moment's hesitation I went and looked up to him, as I have done ever since, and said, "Sir, are you not Dr. Radhakrishnan? Why don't you come in? Are you waiting for someone?" He said, "I am waiting for my daughter-in-law to take me home from the doctor (the doctor, our neighbour, was an eye specialist). But she hasn't arrived, and I cannot get home, because I have no money." He came in, and since that moment until the

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moment of his final illness in Girija, on what is today called Radhakrishnan Salai in Chennai, there was a deep bond of affection and communication. To this Guru *tulaya*, I pay my pranams.

Dr. Radhakrishnan and UNESCO

There are other memories. Dr. Radhakrishnan had already made his presence felt in UNESCO. He was in Paris to attend a UNESCO conference in 1949. I was in London. I received a telephone call – that in those days was not altogether easy. But I did get a message through the Indian High Commission that Dr. Radhakrishnan would like to speak to me. I was as astonished as pleased. On the other side was his sonorous voice. “What are you doing in London? No doubt, wasting your time looking at museums and going to operas and symphony concerts! Come over here. You will meet very interesting people – Julian Huxley, Jean Paul Sartre. Also you might be of some assistance”. I did reach Paris and had an eventful journey. Anyhow, I found my way to Avenue Kleber. Whether I assisted or not, I learnt, and I have been learning ever since about Culture, Education and Science, and what it is to deliberate on those issues in an international forum.

Apart from meeting luminaries, it was the significance of Mahatma Gandhi’s letter, dated 25.5.1947, to Julian Huxley, which has remained in my mind. Gandhiji had said, “I learnt from my illiterate, but wise mother, that all rights to be deserved and preserved came from duty well done”. Equally significant is his message to the UNESCO’s Regional Study Conference of Fundamental Education held in Nanking, China in 1947. He had said that “real security and lasting peace cannot be secured, so long as extreme inequalities in education and culture exist as they do among the nations of the world.”¹

Dr. Radhakrishnan’s speeches still ring in my ears, specially these two—one delivered at the Sorbonne University in Paris in 1946, and the other in Beirut in 1948. They assume renewed significance today when the world is once again facing the problem of inequity and disparities amongst nation-states and within nation-states. In the Sorbonne address, he conceded that the world had become a physical unity, but not a psychological unity. In his view, “world unity can only be founded on a sense of world community, and this sense can only develop from interchange of the treasures of mind and imagination between the peoples, and a true understanding of the value of their different cultural and artistic traditions.”²

Speaking at the General Conference of UNESCO held in Beirut on November 19, 1948, Dr. Radhakrishnan

stressed the need for spiritual renewal. He said, “A spiritual renewal is necessary, if the world is to be saved. A new purpose must coordinate our Education, our Science and our Culture, make them integral elements of a worldview, which should inspire all our activities. The Qu’ran says: ‘Verily, God will not change the conditions of men till they change what is in themselves.’”³ Alas, the world does not seem anywhere near ready or aspiring for a spiritual renewal.

Another speech of Dr. Radhakrishnan, delivered in 1963, at Kabul University, Afghanistan, is significant. Would Dr. Radhakrishnan have an opportunity today to address the Kabul University and be heard with spell-bound attention? In this speech, Dr. Radhakrishnan addressed all domains of knowledge – science, religion, philosophy, culture. His thrust was on the search for truth. If science is pursuit of truth, then what is truth? he asked. “Truth is not something you manufacture from out of the resources of your mind; it is the pursuit of something which is extra-mental, which is objective, which is there for the human individual to subscribe to”. He addressed the perennial question of the relationship of the senses, body and mind. He called attention to the scriptures, and said: “When the scriptures declare that man is made in the image of God, or an Indian scripture says that *deha*, or body, is the *devalaya*, or the dwelling of God, they are trying to tell us that whereas the cosmic happenings may take place, man is not to regard himself as a mere item in a series of objective happenings”. He concluded his speech by referring to Art. What is Art? “Artistic creation is something where you feel an experience, and you impregnate that experience with your own personal spiritual intensity, and make it come alive – that is what art means. In our country, it is said, art is that which transmits to you a sense of the eternal, a sense which is beyond the merely temporal. A sense of something, which is non-temporal in this world, is conveyed to you by the achievements of the arts.”⁴

Dr. Radhakrishnan translated his ideas by conceiving specific programmes within the mandate of UNESCO. He was the chief architect of the UNESCO’s Major Project III for the Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values.

The leaders of that time were striving to bring about a change to ensure a more equitable world. The theme of the division between the Western and the Eastern world was foremost in their minds both at the intellectual as also the social, political and educational spheres. This was articulated explicitly by Maulana Azad at the UNESCO General Conference held in New Delhi in 1956, of which he was the President. He said:

I am fully aware that the historical circumstances, which in the past had created an invidious wall between the Western and the Eastern worlds, have not entirely disappeared. Vestiges of that wall still remain and are the cause of misunderstanding and tension. The old attitudes and values which made and strengthened the wall of division have, however, lost their hold in the minds of men. It is now obvious that sooner or later they must give way to truly modern and democratic values. . .⁵

I refer to these speeches only to remind ourselves that the shapers of the modern nation-state were keenly aware of the West-East divide and were anxious to have a dialogue on equal terms, and to promote better understanding at deeper levels. They sought to translate their public pronouncements into long-term schemes. Besides, there was a concerted effort to establish new institutions in independent India. Needless to remind ourselves that this India International Centre came into being at the initiative of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, as mentioned by its first Life President Dr. C. D. Deshmukh at the inauguration of the Centre in January 1962.

As students while we participated in the national movement, our intellectual equipment was conditioned by the educational system established as a result of the advocacy of Raja Rammohun Roy and the well-known Minutes of Macaulay.⁶ Understandably, we were immersed in the intellectual traditions of the West, but did not have the intellectual tools to penetrate into the complexity of the Indian, extended to Asian traditions. Nevertheless, we were enthused and had an emotive engagement in small or greater measure with aspects of the cultural fabric of India. We were acquainted with the role of the Europeans, more specifically the Orientalists, in excavating the past of India, but did not have the capacity at that time of critiquing them or sifting their contribution from possible motivation as also limitations.

The self-consciousness of all these came to me unasked, when I found myself as Joint Secretary of the XXVI International Congress of Orientalists held in Delhi in January of 1964 – which ironically had never met East of Suez earlier. My engagement with the International Congress of Orientalists continued for another decade and a half, when the Congress was dissolved and renamed as International Conference of Asian, African and Latin American Studies. This engagement with the Orientalists enabled me to both appreciate as also interrogate their contribution.

Today, as I peruse the recent critiquing of the Orientalists and Orientalism, post-Edward Said's book, *Orientalism*,⁷ I have to admit that while I concur with

this critiquing in a large measure, I have also to acknowledge the contribution of the Orientalists – as distinct from Orientalism – in bringing to light important aspects of the heritage of this country. We still refer to their works, e.g., Cunningham in Archaeology and Princep in Epigraphy, not to speak about Griffith and Wilson. The Orientalist contribution and the discourse on Orientalism may not seem directly relevant to my theme of knowledge, but indeed it is, because our understanding of the knowledge systems in India has been conditioned or certainly affected by the perceptions of the Orientalists.

Let me refresh your memory by recalling the names of some of the participants in this Congress held in 1964. The delegates to the Congress were the world's most renowned scholars in the field of Egyptology, Assyrian studies, Semitic studies, Atrac studies, Iranian studies, Islamic studies, African studies, South-East and East-Asian studies and Indology. They included A. Abu-Bakr, A. Falkenstein, Boris Piotrovsky, Zeki V. Togan, Poure-Davoud, Olivier Lacombe, Paul Thieme, Ludwik Sternbach, A. L. Basham, Hermann Berger, P. J. Zoetmulder, Kazuo Enoki, Wilfred C. Smith, R. W. Beachev and, of course, B. G. Gafurov and Norman Brown. The conference was addressed by scholars whose works are standard reading in Indian Universities even today, e.g. Paul Thieme's *Panini and the Veda: Studies in the Early History of Linguistic Science in India*, not to speak of A. L. Basham's *The Wonder that was India*.

At this conference, Dr. Radhakrishnan repeated his emphasis on the need for a deeper and meaningful dialogue between the East and the West at the level of scholarship. Naturally, integral vision was the running theme.

Of equal significance was the participation of Jawaharlal Nehru. I recall that Jawaharlal Nehru was reluctant to address the conference – I was given the task of not only persuading him, but to escort him to the meeting. Yes, he did address the conference and gave a stirring speech. As this speech is not very well known, I quote at some length:

You, ladies and gentlemen, try to discover the ancient past in various countries, and find out what it stood for. That is history; and, of course, history is interesting. That, perhaps, leads you to think of other things also, of what is there in the thinking of the old, which has still some meaning for us, whether it was Plato or somebody else, some of our ancient sages, Confucius and others – of what they said which is of value to us today. That, I suppose, is one of the chief values of these studies. Sometimes, I find that the specialists in these studies look upon them as museum pieces, unconnected with life's everyday happening, as we look at a museum as something old, unconnected with life today.

How can you bring about that connection between the two? It is a strange world we live in, with changing conditions and searching out new avenues. But with all the progress that we make, it is essentially knowledge of the external world and the forces that control it, and technology and science. It is not very much concerned with knowledge of yourself or of ourselves. We go back to the ancient saying, the Greek saying, the Indian saying, or that of any other country, where people always laid stress on a person knowing himself: "Know Thyself". The ancient way of thinking really concentrated itself on knowing oneself, and they forgot to learn about the external world in which they lived. Today, we are concentrating our minds on the external world – it is very necessary that we do it – but perhaps, we ignore the individual and what he is, and do not know much about it. The two approaches, the external approach and the internal approach, have to be, I suppose, combined in order to make us realize what we are now, how we are to face our problems. I am suggesting this to you, but I am not sure if it is not outside the scope of those who are here. But I do suggest to you that it is desirable for us to learn something of ourselves, apart from learning something of the outside world about us. Therefore, perhaps, in this era of change that is so confusing today, it would be helpful if we thought quietly about ourselves, about the world at large, and not merely be concerned with the atom bomb and how to escape it. Of course, we want to escape the atom and hydrogen bombs; we all want to have peace, without which there can be no progress. But in addition to that, it may be necessary to go a little more deeply into what we are, what the world is, and where it is taking us to.⁸

It was my task to bring out the proceedings of the conference in several volumes. The first was to record all the seminal speeches delivered.

Again a telephone call. The voice on the other side, the same sonorous, deep voice, asked: "What are you doing?" I told him that I was busy editing the papers. "Come over," he said. So, I did and proceeded to Rashtrapati Bhavan, which was without much security in those times. I went to the South Wing and here was the tall man in a functional easy chair, amidst books spread all over the floor. As I walked in, he said, "Oh, you have come. I have something to share with you." He said, "You know, I have decided to gift Teen Murti to the nation, and this will be an institution named after Jawaharlal Nehru." So, I looked at him and said, "Sir, what a wonderful idea". He had probably made up his mind what the institution would be, but was merely sharing his thoughts with a younger person. "What do you think it should be?" he asked. I said, "Well, Jawaharlal Nehru was the architect of modern India, so it should be an institution devoted to the study of modern India." He said, "Well, Kapila, you have to convert the Teen Murti, residence of the former Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, now into a public institution, which will be called the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

I am anxious that this should be inaugurated on 14th November 1964." When I looked stunned and was speechless, he said, "I am sure you can do it. I won't ask you to draft my speech." Yes, it was inaugurated on 14th November 1964. This is another story.

He continued, "You know the Viceregal Lodge in Shimla?" and chuckled. "Can you see me sitting there in that Viceregal Lodge? I think it is much better that this grand building should be gifted to the nation. I have taken that decision. Is it not a good idea? Don't you think so?" This was his way of communicating with a person who would not be spilling beans. He was only speaking aloud. He was also speaking to me as someone who had recently been involved with the world community of scholarship and those responsible for the production of knowledge. He patted me on the back, "I am glad that you think so."

He reminded me that we could not look at India and Indian civilization only as a dead past, nor could we confine ourselves to contemporary socio-political and economic issues. He stressed the need of an integral vision and naturally repeated his commitment to have an institutional base for a meaningful dialogue amongst civilizations and scholars of diverse disciplines. He also reminded me of Jawaharlal Nehru's speech, where he had stressed the need for a balance between looking at the external world and also 'knowing thyself'. I hardly had time to take in all this, when he went on to tell me, "Well, you have been acquainted with all those 1800 delegates – intellectuals from all over the world. Who do you think should be the first Director of the institution?" And with his usual wit and humour, he played around with many names, and seemed to kind of settle on Dr. Niharranjan Ray. Why? Because he wanted a person with a broad vision, who could handle both the worlds, transcending all barriers of disciplines, with ample command over languages. He was aware of Dr. Ray's interest in diverse subjects. I may add here that to a question from Professor Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (Senior) about his absorbing interest in a very wide range of intellectual disciplines, academic and professional, Dr. Ray had said: "I must try, even at the outset, to disabuse your mind of any idea of my scholastic and intellectual mastery of any of the fields you have just mentioned; indeed, I have no such mastery. But you are perhaps right that I take a great deal of interest in a fairly good number of intellectual and professional disciplines." Dr. Ray had acknowledged his debt to Stella Kramrisch in these words: "I feel proud to record that it was she, who opened my eyes to the magic and mystery of Indian Art, and inculcated in me the love and regard for the subject, which I retain to this day. My perceptions were sharpened by her, and whatever insights I have been able to develop in regard to this field

of knowledge, have been because of the initial training she imparted to me." Today, the younger generation has dismissed or critiqued the contribution of both Stella Kramrisch and A. K. Coomaraswamy calling them 'exponents of the nationalist discourse.'⁹

The institution – Indian Institute of Advanced Study – was inaugurated a year later, on 20th October 1965. Shri M. C. Chagla, the then Education Minister, made an explicit statement. At the inauguration of the Institute, he said: "We want to create here an atmosphere of real research and scholarship, where people can come, discourse with each other, and carry on the work of expanding the horizons of knowledge. Now, Sir, it is unique in another sense also. Normally, in our country, we start institutions and then we look for men to man those institutions. Here, we have not followed that practice. The first thing I tried to do was to get a proper Director. It took me a long time, and I am very happy, Sir, that at last I found in Dr. Ray the first Director of this Institute. He has vision and imagination, he has a very fine outlook, he has a dynamic personality."

What Shri Chagla said has lessons for us even today. Directors make institutions, and naturally institutions outlast Directors. In this context, I cannot help mentioning Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, a great institution-builder. The Institute of Economic Growth in Delhi and the Institute of Social and Economic Change in Bangalore bear testimony to his foresight. I had the privilege of knowing him for many decades, both in the Delhi University as also as Minister of Education. One day, in his typical manner, he turned around to me and said: "Kapila, I see a potential institution-builder in you. The success of the Founder-Director lies in the fact that he or she brings up institutions to a point, when he or she can go out and drop dead, and the institution moves better'.

As someone who has known the ecstasy and agony of establishing and running institutions, I am more than ever conscious of the fact that there has to be both a continuity of the primary vision along with an in-built system of encouraging change and innovations. Forgive me for this personal digression.

II

So the Indian Institute of Advanced Study came into being. This was the concretization of Dr. Radhakrishnan's vision into an institutional structure. Its memorandum of association stated clearly that the focus of the institute would be on providing 'free and creative enquiry into fundamental themes and problems of life and thought'. An illustrative list of activities and studies was identified. The emphasis was on 'development of worldviews' and

'Indian Civilization in the context of Asian Neighbours'. The methodology: Inter-disciplinary.

Dr. Niharranjan Ray travelled widely to identify suitable scholars, who would constitute the initial academic core. It is significant that the first seminar organized by the Institute was on the theme of 'Society and Religion'. It may well be recalled that Dr. Radhakrishnan's two lectures delivered at the Universities of Calcutta and Banaras in 1942, had been published under the title, *Religion and Society* (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1947). In one of these lectures, Dr. Radhakrishnan had said, "The world stands at the crossroads, faced by two alternatives: organization of it as one whole or periodic wars. We make the society in which we live". He also added, "Science reveals identical cosmic elements as the basis of human life. Philosophy visualizes a universal consciousness at the back of nature and humanity. Religion refers to our common spiritual struggles and aspirations."

The seminar on 'Society and Religion' addressed itself to the complex issues of religion and society not only in the distant past, but those relevant to contemporary India. How does a country (now a nation-state) deal with issues of religious identity and a social order in a democratic framework? This is not the occasion to dwell further on this, but these concerns are even more pertinent now than they were in the decade of the '60s.

Seminars organized in the first decade revolved round the themes identified in the memorandum of association. Amongst these were the issues of language and modes of dissent and protest. The Institute had also identified a project on the study of Indian and Asian civilizations. The introduction to the Institute's publication, *Indian Civilization – the First Phase*, mentioned:

The advent of British suzerainty during the 18th century brought into focus three major approaches to the study of Indian society: the Orientalist, the administrative and the missionary.

The Orientalist had uncritically accepted the textual view of Indian society, which was considered to be timeless and static; the statements from the texts of the 3rd century were as good for the 18th century Indian society. Thus, there was no regional variation in this view, so that no questions were asked about the relationships between prescriptive normative statements derived from the texts, and the actual behaviour of individuals and groups. Today, this stereotype, that every Hindu follows the textual rules, seems to continue to haunt not only the academic, but also the lay.¹⁰

Had the initiatives taken by the Institute in the first decade of addressing seminal issues of religion, languages, aesthetics and art activities, or constituents of civilization and culture, been pursued, there would

have been the possibility of formulating theoretical positions, which would emerge from an in-depth study based on the insider's view with objectivity. Alas, the Institute's endeavours were given an induced shock, when the establishment of the day decided that its preoccupation with reflection and intellectual debate was unnecessary. Fortunately, it recovered, not without a rocky path of changing directions, and has embarked on a fresh, invigorating intellectual journey.

III

Friends, this is a long preface, perhaps a trifle too long. However, I speak to you as a participant-witness of an era. My endeavour is to bring home to you the fact that the establishment of this institution (and other institutions) was directly related to the aspirations of the leaders of the time I have spoken of. They emphasized the need for a new basis for East-West meaningful dialogue, the need to have a balance between our external world and 'knowing thyself'. In this vision was the hope that the Institute's intellectual enterprise would result in the evolution of new theoretical positions beyond Orientalist discourse.

It is really time for me to address the title of my talk: *Knowledge: Fluid Cultures, Frozen Structures*. I am not sure whether I should speak first about Culture and then Knowledge systems or Knowledge systems and then Culture. Let me begin with Knowledge.

Knowledge or the definitions of knowledge have engaged humanity from times immemorial. Man's capacity to be consciously aware of both the world around him, as also the world of reflection within him has been the central concern of the civilizations, East and West. We are all familiar with Plato's Dialogue, *Theatetus*. We will remember that Socrates considers a number of theories concerned as to what knowledge is, the last being that knowledge is true belief that has been 'given an account of' – meaning explained or defined in some way. According to the theory that knowledge is justified true belief, in order to know that a given proposition is true, one must not only believe the relevant true proposition, but one must also have a good reason for doing so. One implication of this would be that no one would gain knowledge just by believing something that happens to be true.

Needless to refer to the Aristotelian position about Truth. The debate continues in the West over a long period. It has a distinct history until today. Here, I do not have to add a word in regard to the continuing discussions on Ontology and Epistemology.¹¹

In Islam, knowledge (Arabic: *'ilm*) is given great

significance. The All-Knowing (*al-'Alim*) is one of the 99 names reflecting distinct attributes of God. The Qur'an asserts that knowledge comes from God (2.239) and various *hadith*, sayings of Muhammad, encourage the acquisition of knowledge. He is reported to have said, 'Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave' and 'Verily the men of knowledge are the inheritors of the prophets'. Islamic scholars, theologians, and jurists are often given the title, *Alim*, meaning 'knowledgeable'.

Turning to the Vedic tradition, there is a deep reflection on what constitutes the truth, and how the wise approach it or articulate it in multiple ways. At a fundamental level, there is the acceptance of the two levels of knowledge *para* and *apara*. One refers to a realm, which we may today identify as intuitive and beyond measure, and the other a discursive level subject to classification, multiple interpretation and multiple perspectives. This is so in the three streams – the Buddhist, the Jaina and what we may call the Vedantic. The concept of '*anekantvad*' in Jainism exemplifies the acceptance of multiple perspectives most eloquently. The different streams of Buddhist philosophy dwell on the possibility of different paths. The discourse is conducted in the language of metaphors, which permeates practically all disciplines. The metaphor of the 'inverted tree' – whose roots are in heaven and branches on the earth – is near universal. The other metaphor is 'two birds on the same branch' – *bhokta* and *drasta*, the experiencer and the observer. One metaphor refers to the transcendental and terrestrial level; the other refers to the experiencer and the observer. There is, of course, yet another major metaphor – almost a twin metaphor of the 'inverted tree' – and that is the *Asvatha*.¹²

At the level of classification, Knowledge is categorized under three broad headings – *jnana*, *vijnana* and *prajna*. It is not necessary for me to dwell on this because Professor D. P. Chattopadhyaya's Radhakrishnan Memorial Lecture (2000) on the subject, 'Consciousness and Scientific Knowledge', has dealt with this in some detail. That lecture also goes into the other category called '*vidya*' – as a loose translation we would say, 'discipline'.

Instead, I have chosen to place before you some insights in regard to the manner in which a concept is identified as a specific category; thereafter, how the category evolves and expands at multiple levels and in many disciplines. This is not perhaps the appropriate occasion to probe deeper into theories of meaning in the Indian context, but it is necessary to refer to the diversity of approaches in the linguistic traditions of India.¹³

Let me make an attempt to place the process in a simpler fashion. Once a concept is formulated in language, then its etymological and semantic dimensions are explored. Thereafter, there is a conscious effort to

address the potential of many layers of meaning. The category is considered at the macro level as also at the micro level. Also, the category is considered at its material, sociological and non-material dimensions. The same category is then considered in its aspects of externalization and internalization. Coordinates are established with different aspects of the phenomenal world. The excitement lies in exploring the possibility of reversibility and inversibility, of the different layers of meaning in different contexts. One can only describe this through a metaphor. It is like the constant movement of a coloured liquid in a glass, which goes up and down. It can be solid, liquid or gaseous – *bhautika*, *daivika* and *adhyatmika*, *sthul* (gross) and *sukshma* (refined).

The concept is further elaborated upon, discussed at the level of theory (*sastra*), as also at the level of empiricism or practice (*prayoga*). We should caution that the words '*sastra*' and '*prayoga*' are not to be considered as a literal translation of the English words, theory and practice. The discourse on knowledge and the discourse on *sastra* and *prayoga* in the Indian tradition are distinctly different and cover the three streams of knowledge production in Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit texts, as also the regional languages of India. It manifests itself in the oral traditions of India. An impressive superstructure of a knowledge system is built, which is pan-Indian.¹⁴

From the central concepts many streams of knowledge emerge. They are identified as *sastric* (not to be confused only with the written text), each with its own system or norms of verifiability (*pramanam*), as also the tools of investigation. The different systems of Indian philosophy, namely, the *darsanas*, are a proof and have been the subject of much investigation. However, what is true of the discussions and the discourse in the *darsanas* is also true in the other disciplines. What is important to note is that these are not closed systems; there is always interpenetration between and amongst the schools of philosophy, e.g., *darsanas*, grammar (*vyakaran*), mathematics (*ganit*), medicine (*Ayurveda*), *Ithihas* and *Purana*, *Sahitya*, *Shilpa* and *Kala*.

Once one enters this nature of exploration, it is clear that no single discipline stands absolutely autonomous. Cognizance is taken of other disciplines. For example, a text on music begins with a full discussion on the human body (*Sangitaratnakara*). There are many other examples. The *Ayurveda* texts cannot be fully understood without noting what is constituted in the philosophic systems, particularly *Sankhya*. The most well-known and oft-quoted dialogue between Vajra and Markandeya goes like this:

King Vajra requests the sage to accept him as his disciple and teach

him the art of icon-making, so that he may worship the deities in their proper forms. The sage replies that one cannot understand the principles of image-making without a knowledge of painting. The king wishes for instruction in this art and is told that, unless he is accomplished as a dancer, he cannot grasp even the rudiment of painting. The king requests that he be taught dancing, whereupon the sage replies that, without a keen sense of rhythm or a knowledge of instrumental music, proficiency in dance is impossible. Once again, the king requests that he be taught these subjects; to which the sage replies that a mastery of vocal music is necessary before one can be proficient in instrumental music; and so, finally, the sage takes the king through all these stages before he is taught the art of iconography.¹⁵

This dialogue is of seminal importance, because it points at the necessity of knowing other disciplines before you can master your own. A text, like *Natyasastra*, when examined minutely reveals that the author was fully conversant with the anatomical system and the biological process. The *rasa* theory, the theory of aesthetics, is and has been interpreted for its biological basis and its emphasis on metabolism. The system of medicine, i.e., *Ayurveda*, specially *Charaka*, cannot be comprehended without taking into cognizance the philosophic systems.

We have so far spoken about the evolution of a concept as a category and its permeation into different disciplines. There is another framework of identifying categories in series. There is one series with even numbers – 2, 4, 6 and 8, and another with odd numbers – 3, 5 and 7. No. 2 is common to both. This is a world unto itself. Just as an example, as far as the pairs are concerned, they are never to be considered as binary opposites. Instead, they are complementary. The great scholar Laxman Shastri Joshi made a statement once, which has been a talisman. He said, these are not *dvanda*, but these are *mithunas*. Do I have to refer to the concept of *Ardhanarisvara*?

There are countless examples of the pairs which run through the discourses in different disciplines. The most obvious are *sukha*, *dhuka*; *mana*, *apamana*; *pravritti*, *nivritti*; *bahya* (external) and *antara* (internal). *Sarira* can be *atma* and *atma* can be *sarira*. The most telling example is of the discussion on the *atman* and *brahman* in the tradition. These are reversible categories or certainly interpenetrative categories. The *Upanishads* dwell on this pair in different ways. There was a sense of wonder at the interpretative level. The *Mundaka Upanishad's* statement on the relationship of the infinite and finite, invisible and visible, the process of liquidity, is eloquently captured in the following verse.

That which is invisible, ungraspable without family without caste (*avarna*) without sight or hearing. It is without hand or foot, eternal, all-permeating, omnipresent, exceedingly subtle, that is the Imperishable, which the wise perceive as the source of being.

As a spider emits and draws in (its thread).
 As hawks arise on the earth.
 As the hairs of the head and body from a living person
 So from the imperishable arises everything here.

Important amongst the triads is the concept of the *triloka* and *trikala*. Both space and time have one dimension, which is the immeasurable and indefinable and unquantifiable. Space is both vacuity and fullness. It is *kha*, *vyoma* and *akasa*. Much has been written on the subject from A.K. Coomaraswamy to Halbfass in recent times. This dimension of infinite space is one level.

However, in the world of differentiation, there is the notion of *loka*. Here too, there is first the division between *aloka* and *loka*. The former is the sphere of direct perception. It is both space and what fills space. It is both the object of perception and the act of perception. It is the measure, as also the act of measurement. Although there is great complexity of discourse on the term, specially in Jaina philosophy, at one level it alludes to the division of the universe into three spheres. This is *triloka*. There is the *bhuloka* (the earth), the *bhuvarloka* or *antariksha* (mid-space) and *svarloka* or *vayuloka* (as the region beyond). In Vedic ritual, there is final oblation to *bhu bhuvah svah*.

Each concept is concretized in a visual image. This is the field of Indian iconography. The concept of *loka* is visualized as the *loka purusha* in Jainism; the concept of *Lokesvara* and *Avalokitesvara* in the Buddhist tradition. The category of *loka* has great significance also at the sociological level, when it is used as adjectival before *dharma* – therefore, *loka-dharma* and *loka-kalyan*. In the sociological sphere, a distinction is made between *sastracara* and *lokacara*. Dr. Niharranjan Ray has commented on this in his book, *Approach to Indian Art*.¹⁶ The term *loka* is intrinsic to aesthetics. The *Natyasastra* makes a distinction between *natya-dharmi* and *loka-dharmi*. The concept of *loka* has two clear dimensions of the immeasurable and measurable. At the measurable, i.e., *triloka*, it has many ramifications; at the level of conduct, it becomes the practice of the people, and in theatre a mode of representation.

Similarly, 'time' too has an indefinable dimension. It is immeasurable. At another level, it is measurable as the expansive time of *mahakala*, the macro or the micro, *nimesa* (i.e. blinking of an eyelid). It can be measured as aeons, as in Indian astronomy and is subject to computation and in terms of the micro units of *kshana* (moment). The notion of *kalachakra* exemplifies, contributes to motion, and movement. In the conception of time (*kala*), there is not a single linear movement of progression. Instead, cyclicity is predominant. Time appears to coil and recoil. Linearity

can be subsumed in the cyclicity. Logically, the coiled serpent, the snake biting its tail, the continuous line of eternity, the wheel (*chakra*) with its felly and spokes becomes a pervasive common symbol of the conception of time discussed in the disciplines of philosophy, mathematics, astronomy and medicine and, of course, the arts.

The differences between these notions of space and time and those of knowledge systems, which evolved in post-Renaissance Europe and crystallized as the scientific principles of the irreversibility of time, are fundamental. They have far-reaching implications in all domains of knowledge and perception and, of course, creativity, specially in the artistic traditions of India.¹⁷

However, to move on from the fundamental questions of space and time to another series of triads: Let us take as an example, the category of *gunas*. The *gunas*, along with the two other related categories of *dravya* and *dhatu*, pervade discussions in practically all disciplines of the knowledge system. In popular discourse, we refer to the three *gunas*, the *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*. Also, the term is used for multiplication and replication. A slightly deeper attention will reveal the nature of the concept, and the division into three. In the mutual relationship of the constituents, there is possibility of reversibility. Here also, first and foremost is the acceptance of a state or stage, which is without attributes. This is the formless, it is the nascent. At the level of the tangible in its primary meaning, it is conceived as strands of thread, which are entwined as a rope. As is well known, the *gunas* are frequently discussed in the *Upanishads*. They constitute the bedrock of *darsanas*, specially *Sankhya*. They are central to the system of medicine in *Ayurveda*, are a core mathematical principle. They are alluded to in early chemistry and occupy an important place in discussions on theories of aesthetics and govern artistic praxis.

Buddhist philosophy discusses them and the *Gita* devotes considerable attention to them. Our purpose here is not to dwell on the complexity of the discussions in each of the streams of thought and philosophic schools and *Ayurvedic* texts. Instead, it is to again ask the question, whether the division of the category into a triad views each component of the triad as absolute entity, and whether the principle of reversibility applies here or not? Also, it is to ask the question, whether the category of *guna* is a material object, or whether the category alludes to process and to non-material?¹⁸

A perusal of the body of texts in different disciplines makes it clear that in the very formulation of the category of *gunas*, there is the emphasis on interlocking, if the *gunas* are considered three threads intertwined or the fold of a single cloth or robe. The primary attribute suggests

fluidity and not fixity. Further, as in the case of many other concepts, such as *loka* and *kala*, three levels are suggested, which have the intrinsic potential of reversible and inversible a priori.

Thus, the inert dark matter *tamas* can be ignited to activity and become *rajas*. The *rajas*, in turn, can be further refined and purified to become *sattva*. A reverse process is possible. Inherent is the idea of latency and potency of the unmanifest and interconnectivity of the manifest.

Whether in *Ayurveda* or *Sankhya*, there is the acceptance of a primary state of the unmanifest (*avyakta*). The latent (unmanifest) supreme nature (*prakriti*) is the progenitor of all created things. She is self-begotten and connotes the three qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The *Ayurveda* texts also speak of the three *dosas*, namely *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*, with the three *gunas*. The biological and psychical are both cause and effect.

The category of *guna* is closely linked to the categories of *dravya* (substance) and *dhatu*. *Dravya* derived from the root *dru* alludes to the essential quality of fluidity of melting and dissolving. In turn, *dravya* becomes the process of liquidification of the *gunas*. *Dravya* is also material and non-material. While the detailed discourse on *dravya* in the schools of philosophy, particularly as elucidated in the commentaries of *Vyasa* on the *Yoga-sutra* of *Patanjali*, or in *Vaisesika-sutra*, need not detain us here, it is important to note that the debate revolves around the central issue of substance perception, the act of perception and the identification of qualities and attributes.

Implied in the vast discussion on the categories of *gunas*, *dravya* and *dhatu* is the intrinsic relationship of the material and non-material, the processes of liquidity and inter-relationship, as also the aspect of primary and secondary, specially in respect of *dhatu*. While each category has sub-divisions of three, seven, etc., they also interpenetrate into each other in many meaningful ways.

Logically, the triad of the *gunas* and the cluster of *guna*, *dravya* and *dhatu*, are closely related to and even dependant on another triad, which we recognize as *sthula* (gross), *sukshma* and *para* (beyond). While liquidity and fluidity was implied in the definitions of *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*, and was explicitly stated in the case of *dravya*, the conception of *sthula*, *sukshma* and *para* gives almost a paradigmatic model of considering the process of a transformation of the world of measure to the measureless, from the solid to the liquid, to the gaseous or beyond. Naturally, *sthula* becomes a cognate of *tamas*, and *sukshma* of *sattva*. They are not identical, but comparable. Equally important is the relationship of the concept of *sthula*, *sukshma* and *para* to *avyakta* and *vyakta*, to *arupa* and *rupa*, *pratirupa* and *pararupa*, the

unmanifest and manifested. Most important is the fact that this triad now refers to the nature of knowledge. Knowledge itself is graded into the gross and the subtle, and that which is beyond discursive thought. A gradual movement from the gross to the subtle and the intuitive is implied. The *Bhagavadgita* expounds the concept of the three interconnected terms *sthula*, *sukshma* and *para*, as it does on the *gunas*. At a gross level, knowledge manifests itself in different forms – the primal elements each, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and consciousness of ego. But there is another subtler form of knowledge of the *atman*, this is supreme knowledge, and finally, there is that experience of the cosmic, which is termed as *param-purusha*. The *Kathopanishad* also gives a similar grading of the gradual movement from the gross to the subtle – from the body to mind, to intellect, to a higher consciousness.

Higher than the senses are the objects of sense
Higher than the objects of sense – the mind (*manas*)
And higher than the mind is the intellect (*buddhi*)
Higher than the intellect is the great self (*atman*)

And further

Higher than the great I the unmanifest (*avyakta*)
Higher than the unmanifest is the person (*purusa e parah*)
Higher than the person there is nothing at all.

(*Kathopanishad* III.11)

Of equal significance is the group of five. To cite only two most obvious examples: there are the five primal elements at the macro level. They are also at the micro level, since the body is composed of five primal elements. There is then another group or sub-group at the micro level of the body, namely, the five *indriyas*. Both *panchamahabhuta* and the *panchendriyas* permeate discussions in all branches of knowledge in India.¹⁹ The discussion on the concept of *indriya*, sense organs and sense perceptions, lays the foundation of an entire sub-system within these knowledge systems. The process of internalization and externalization are explored, as also the correspondences, which are built between the *indriyas* and the primal elements. For example,

<i>Elements</i>	<i>Sense Qualities</i>
Earth	smell
Water	taste
Fire or light	colour
Air	touch
<i>Akasa</i>	sound

This is only one example. There are others, which can be given from the Buddhist texts, specially *Abhidharma kosa*, as also the Jaina texts.

There is no time to comment on the group of seven – the seven seas, the seven planets. Nor have I commented on the series which run 2, 4 and 6. The series of 4 is well-known. It is in the sociological sphere, e.g., the *varna* or the *ashramas* and the four *purusharthas*.

I hope I have been able to identify some aspects of the system of classification and categorization. It will be clear even from this limited presentation that the emphasis was on process and transmutation. In short, fluidity/liquidity was the norm (*svadharmā*) rather than the exception (*svabhava*). The corollary to such a system of production and classification of knowledge would be that in the very formulation there was the acceptance of flow and change. The Orientalists spoke of a static India. Some others spoke of an inflexible hierarchy. However, if we look at a system of division of knowledge and the categories, it would appear that flexibility as also change was in-built.

Communication of Knowledge – Oral and Written

So far, I have endeavoured to focus on the system of categorization in the textual traditions of India (*sastric*) from primary sources of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit.

The next logical question is how was this knowledge communicated? First and foremost is the relationship between the oral and the written. Were they binary opposites? Was there tension between them? Was the written privileged or placed in status in a hierarchical order? The moment we address these seemingly simple questions, a complex field opens up.

As is well-known and widely accepted, the articulated word, i.e., *sruti*, was considered primary. I do not have to remind this audience of the highest place given to *vak* (speech) comparable to the concept of *logos*, i.e., 'in the beginning was the word'. Also, it is not necessary to allude to the fact that the dialogues of Socrates and Plato, and Plato and Aristotle, were literally oral communication before being transcribed to writing. The dialogical tradition in India has maintained continuity from the Upanishadic dialogue to sophisticated method of transmission of knowledge from one generation to the other, normally understood as *guru-sishya parampara*. The dialogical mode has been intrinsic to the discourses of knowledge, East and West. In the latter, it culminates, in a manner of speaking, in the work of Martin Buber – *I and Thou* – in the I-it and I-thou formulation.²⁰

In India, *sruti*, the word articulated, the word heard, was primary and was given the privileged position. This represented the immutable, close to but not absolutely

identical with the level of knowledge referred to earlier, i.e. *para*. It was with volition and self-conscious agreement that the *sruti* was not transcribed to writing. We are aware that the most refined system of intonation divided into 64 or more *sakhas* was the method by which the vedic texts were preserved and transmitted. Centuries later, when they were transcribed, there was hardly any difference except in half a dozen cases.

In contrast, *smriti* was the written and subject to variation and multiple recensions and naturally interpretations. It is not necessary to elaborate on this – both the Orientalists as also others have dwelt on this for over two hundred years. Although the branches (*sakhas*) have shrunk, their efficacy as a highly sophisticated mode of transmission of text cannot be overlooked.

Now about writing, human's capacity to transcribe thought and word through a system of sign; in short, what Derrida called the signs of writing.²¹ However, many centuries preceding the contemporary debate on the origins of writing, e.g., in the work of Andrew Robinson, entitled *The Story of Writing*,²² and Neil Postman's *Technopoly*,²³ there is reference to the very telling conversation between God Theuth and King Thamus, the Egyptian King. In the story, Theuth presents his new invention, 'writing' to King Thamus, telling Thamus that this invention 'will improve both the wisdom and the memory of the Egyptians'. King Thamus is skeptical of this new invention and rejects it as a tool of recollection rather than retained knowledge. He argues that the written word will infect the Egyptian people with fake knowledge, as they will be able to attain facts and stories from an external source, and will no longer be forced to mentally retain large quantities of knowledge themselves.

It is clear that the debates on the Oral and Written are not new.

Of relevance is the fact that prioritization of the written over the oral became an essential criterion for the classification of civilizations. Apart from others, Gordon Childe drew up a set of parameters for classification of civilizations.²⁴ Amongst these was writing and 'script'. Although he modified his position later, the criterion of the 'written' became essential for determining a scale of civilization, developed and underdeveloped. This yardstick was part and parcel of post-Enlightenment anthropology, which placed societies in the evolutionary scale of hunter-gatherers, pre-agriculture, illiterate-literate, etc., etc.

Literacy has been accepted as a fundamental criterion for assessing human development. The UNDP Human Development Reports identify literacy as an indicator. Not for a moment does one question the absolute necessity of 'literacy', but to make 'literacy' as a sole

indicator of culture and human civilization. It does not take into cognizance the fact that there are highly developed cultures, which have survived and developed on account of their oral traditions. This is acknowledged in international forums, such as UNESCO, when it launches its flagship programmes on Oral Traditions of Africa, and now Intangible Heritage of the World, including chants, oral narratives and performance. Obviously, there is a lack of refinement, if not contradictions.

Let me draw attention to the discourse that one encounters even when exploring the written (textual) traditions. Let me restrict myself to the question of determining dates and authorship in regard to the textual traditions of India.

It is universally accepted that the date of composition and date of transcribing the text to writing is never the same. There is never, if ever, a synchronicity. That is as true of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* as of the *Natyasastra*, and numerous other texts in what is called the *sastric* traditions. For example, from the internal evidence of the text, it is agreed that the date of composition of the text *Natyasastra* can be roughly placed between the 2nd century BC to 2nd century A.D. However, the written manuscripts of the texts are centuries later. In the search for manuscripts, the earliest can be roughly placed in the 13th or 14th century, and is interestingly enough in Newari script and not Devanagari. Further, the history of publication of the text so as to establish an authentic text begins only in the 18th century.²⁵

We have to ask the question, how the text was transmitted, i.e., mode of communication of knowledge, and thereafter, when and where was it transcribed? As scholars, we know that the first step for producing a definitive text is the identification and location of the manuscripts. Once the manuscripts have been located, a stemma is worked out. It has been normal to speak about a 'northern' and a 'southern' recension. The historiography of such methodology is also well-known. This was the result of the Orientalists' desire to have a definitive written text.

It becomes clear that the mode of transmission must have been oral before its being transcribed.

In the case of *Natyasastra* and others, the problems are compounded (or made easier) through the system of commentaries. From the number of manuscripts of this text in different parts of India and in a variety of scripts, it is clear that the text had mobility across regions through many centuries. Obviously, the text travelled, possibly both orally and in writing. The original text itself is a residual record of a much more vibrant and meaningful oral dialogue.

Not only the text /texts were created, but then there is a well established system of commentaries. The body of literature called commentaries are not commentaries in the popular sense. They are a systematized methodology of discourse (epistemology), e.g., *tika*, *vyakhya*, etc. All this is known, but we have not paused to think on how such a holistic, multilayered fluid and mobile system was evolved.

To go back to the *Natyasastra* as illustration, we may note that a major commentary on the *Natyasastra* is written nearly nine centuries after the composition of the text. Abhinavagupta, the commentator, a polymath scholar and universally acknowledged propounder of Kashmir Saivism, writes a most extensive commentary on the *Natyasastra* called *Abhinavabharati*. This commentary/exposition is rich, makes dense reading, but is crucial for understanding the *Natyasastra*. What is of even greater significance is the fact that although Abhinavagupta was certainly a Kashmiri, the manuscript of *Abhinavabharati* was located in Kerala in old *grantha* script. What does this indicate: (a) that the text is relevant, and is in circulation in India over a period of nearly nine centuries, (b) that it travelled to different parts, including Nepal and was transcribed in many scripts.

All this is well-known and is the primary bread and butter of the textual studies. What is overlooked is that these explicit, self-evident facts should have led to the conclusion of a static India; instead it should have led to the conclusion of a holistic tradition in its aspect of dynamic continuity and change. The commentaries were the methodology (a refined epistemology) of the knowledge system. It facilitated interpretations and reinterpretations from multiple perspectives.

On a closer look at the textual tradition, it would appear that instead of a static/solid India, it is necessary to identify the fluidity and resilience of a tradition. The textual tradition is also indicative of the fact that there was an in-built system of accepting a multi-interpretation, allowing for debate. This perception is different from another, which is often spoken of as a static, repetitive ancient system. The textual tradition is also clear proof that the tradition did not accept the principle of binary oppositions. Instead, it always spoke of and accepted the principle of complementarity. For example, the *Natyasastra* states in the very beginning, 'I am going to create a *prayoga sastra* (in short, experiment practice-theory), certainly a contradiction only superficially, in fact, alluding again to twin nature of theory and practice'.

The textual tradition (i.e., *sastric*) is one major stream. We

have already alluded to the system of classification and evolution of categories. We have also given an indication of the relationship of the oral and the written in what had been termed as *sastric* traditions in India (e.g., *Natyasastra*). However, there is the group or clusters recognized as *ithihasa*, *purana* and *kavya* (or *sahitya*). Here, it is not a question of evolving a classificatory system and investigating the categories of knowledge, or a refined system of interpretation through commentaries. Instead, it is the creation of a flowing narrative. It is not necessary to comment on the lively debate on *ithihasa* or *purana*, specially in the disciplines of history and sociology. Let me confine myself to placing before you just some outstanding examples of the genre of literature identified as *kavya* in the larger background of *sahitya*.²⁶

A most obvious example is *Ramayana* attributed to Valmiki. There is an impressive historiography of scholarship in regard to arriving at a definitive text. A critical edition of the *Ramayana* brought out by the M. S. University of Baroda²⁷ is a landmark, and yet, there are many questions, which have been asked and are still being asked.

In our context, we have to mention another self-evident phenomenon, viz., the many hundreds of *Ramayanas*. Even a superficial perusal of some of these *Ramayanas*, or more correctly speaking *Ramkathas*, makes it amply clear that all these cannot be considered versions of Valmiki's *Ramayana*. Valmiki's *Ramayana*, therefore, is not comparable to a oeuvre text. Instead, one has to acknowledge that a core theme, almost as a genetic seed, was sown in a vast geographical area resulting in different flowerings. The span comprises *Ramayanas* or *Ramkathas* known to Mongolia, Khotan, Nepal, all of India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Japan and Korea. How and why did this happen? And what were the modes of communication, which facilitated the spread as also the emergence of distinctive narratives?

This is indicative not only of the preoccupation with one theme, but also the capacity of cultures to explore a core idea, which manifests itself in a plurality of forms, verbal, visual and performative texts. This is the nature of fluid cultures.

Ramayana has been central to the history of literary criticism, as also the history of history. Besides, there have been many efforts to draw up inventories of the many *Ramayanas* or the *Ramkathas*. *Ramayana* or *Ramkatha* is one among the many examples of change and continuity, flexibility and multivalence.²⁸

It will be observed that in these hundreds of *Ramayanas*, practically every character undergoes a transformation, yet these are all *Ramayanas*. The fact is so well-known and commented upon that it is not necessary to illustrate

further except to point out that no region or class of people can claim fundamental proprietary rights to either Ram or the *Ramayana*.

The *Ramayana* is not restricted to the verbal, either the textual or the oral, but permeates the visual art tradition of entire Asia, not to speak of the amazing diversity of their content, approach, formal elements and techniques in the performing arts. The story of *Ramayana/Ramkatha* is like an accordion – it can be enlarged, it can be compressed. There are one-*sloka* *Ramayana* and multivolume *Ramayanas*.

What is true of *Ramayana* is also true of the other *kavyas* (epics), particularly the *Mahabharata*. The variations of the *Mahabharata* are almost comparable to those of the *Ramayana*, and they are significant. The *Mahabharata* receives the greatest attention in the literatures of the regional languages of India, in part or in full it sails to Southeast Asia, is interpreted and re-interpreted. It is visually captured through line and paint in the murals, and like *Ramayana*, episodes from the *Mahabharata* are performed in traditional theatre, and of course, reinterpreted in modern contemporary theatre. Can we restrict our gaze only to a written text? It is imperative to take into account the dexterous communication between the written, the oral, the visual and the performative.

The same phenomenon can be observed in regard to the *Jatakas*. Any attempt to contain this fluidity as a one-time frozen text or texts has not been successful or, one may say, has not done justice to the nature of the systems of communication of narrative literature.

Apart from the epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, there is another category of literature, which we may call floating texts of Asia. Who does not know the *Panchatantra*? These fabled tales are as ancient as they are modern. The origins of the *Panchatantra* are attributed to a Sanskrit text, now considered long lost. There is a rough consensus of opinion that the text was composed some time in the 3rd century BC. As usual, one knows very little about the author, but it is attributed to Vishnu Sharma, just as the *Natyasastra* is attributed to Bharata, *Ramayana* to Valmiki, *Mahabharata* to Vyasa. The genre identified as the fable is a phenomenon common across many cultures.

The genre of the fables *Panchatantra* and much later the *Hitopadesa* is like a system of Russian dolls called Babushka – one doll carried within the other. They have been called the 'frame-stories'. The Orientalists were attracted to this. A famous German Indologist, Dr. Johannes Hertel thought that the *Panchatantra* had a Machiavellian character; others disagree. The interest never flagged. An Orientalist scholar, Professor Edgerton (1924), gave the appellation of the frame-stories the

Embox story. Be that as it may, there have been critical discourses on the frame-stories, whether they are Machiavellian or they are didactic, or they are pure children's animal stories, or they are texts of *dharmā*, or *niti*, and of course, whether they are stories of romance. In short, a single text or a group of texts through the device of animal stories contains the potency of multiple interpretations.

Texts, such as *Panchatantra* also, cannot be categorized as allegories. They point at the efficacy of different modes of communication of knowledge and creativity embodying value or values. The phenomenon is not restricted to texts, such as *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesa*. It is explicit in the pan-Asian fascination with a fabled tale in many languages.

The *Arabian Nights* or *1001 Nights* is a case in point. It would appear as a floating text, it floats all over Asia, and assumes different shapes and forms but still remains the *Arabian Nights*! One does not know where the original concept emerged. Perhaps, the concept is most likely derived from the ancient Persian source having Indian elements in it. However, the *Arabian Nights* were written over many centuries by various translators and scholars across the Middle East and North Africa. The tales trace their roots back to ancient and medieval Arabic, Persian, Indian, Egyptian and Mesopotamian folklore and literature, or the Sassarian prototype, but there can be no doubt that that the corpus of stories identified as *Arabian Nights* can be traced back to the 9th century, although the first Arabic manuscript dates only to the 14th century.

As in the case of the *Panchatantra*, the *Arabian Nights* and its stories have been and can be interpreted in different ways from different perspectives. These stories capture the imagination of children. We have all lived with Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, and the Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor, and many more.

The category of literature known as fables – *Panchatantra*, *Hitopadesa* and the *Arabian Nights* – are noted examples of fluid/floating texts, which move from region to region, culture to culture. They invariably have many dimensions – the pure literary, moral, the social and the religious. Into these stories has permeated the sensibility of the Sufis. The Voyages of the Sinbad are not simple voyages. Some amongst these are direct or oblique statements of deeper experiences of the Sufis.²⁹

In contrast, diametrically opposed is another related phenomenon. Now, a text remains constant. There are hardly any changes in the text. The most outstanding

example is *Gita-Govinda*, a text written at the end of the 12th century, composed either in Orissa or in Bengal. It is attributed to a real person, Jayadeva. *Gita-Govinda* has been found in over a thousand manuscripts in different parts of India in 14 or 16 scripts. There are also two recensions, one which is known as a short recension, perhaps more authentic, and the other with an additional 14 verses.

As regards the manuscripts, in all the scripts, there is no change excepting for a word here or there. The text travels from Orissa to Gujarat in the course of fifty years, and already by the 13th century, it has established as a ritual text to be sung in the temples of Patan. The inscription is dated 1291. The earliest written manuscript is again in Newari, approximately dated 14th century. It is clear that this seemingly fixed or frozen text is, in fact, not frozen, from the fact that there are nearly 29 commentaries. Not one is in any way a repetition of the other. Each commentary interprets the text from his (or perhaps her) point of view. It has been analyzed as a text of *alamkara*, of *nayaka-nayika beda*, of *rasa* theory, an exposition of *sangeeta* and *tala*, a text on visual imagery (*chitra*). The spectrum extends to its being interpreted as a text on erotics, as mysticism and *bhakti*. It is sung in temples inside the *garbagriha*, it is sung while sweeping the floors of temple precincts, it is a congregational marriage song in Bihar. It is essentially a part of the annual calendar in Tamil Nadu (in the *Radhakalyanam* tradition). It is an initiatory text before a *Kathakali* performance, it is sung and danced in the temples of Orissa. It takes a group performance shape in Manipur, and many, many other variations. There is an impressive tradition of weaving the text of the *Gita-Govinda* on cloth.

The diversity of interpretations is staggering. It belies any categorization on the basis of a lyrical poem (*laghu kavya*) – a love story, a mystical story, a sacred text, a profane text. Texts, such as *Gita-Govinda*, clearly interrogate not only the Orientalists' assumptions, but also the neo-Orientalists' deduction that throughout tradition is in binary opposition between the sacred and the profane.³⁰

At this point, it is necessary to explicitly state that both the *sastra* as also the *sahitya* recognize regional distinctiveness. While a body of *sastras* was known in different parts of India, post-7th or 8th century, Bharata (2nd BC to 2nd AD) already recognized the concept of *pravritti*, roughly translated regional distinctiveness, in the matter of verbal and body language or gestures and costuming (Chapter XIV). Bharata also recognized a

group of languages, which we today call oral languages or dialects (Chapter XV).

What are today called regional literatures in 22 or 24 languages has a long, continuous history, which can be traced back in some cases to two millennia, in other cases to one millennia. It is said that Indian literature is one written in many languages or many literatures written in many languages. It is obvious that while there is distinctiveness, there is no insulation. There are many overlaps, interpenetrations, and sometimes a self-conscious effort to create a new language through a judicious mixture.

As we reflect on the area of the oral and written as an intrinsic component of culture, it is impossible not to make at least a passing reference to the variegated and inter-connected dynamics of regional languages. Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, as also Arabic and Persian may constitute one group, but the 22 or 24 regional languages of India are an incontrovertible proof of a cultural entity bound together through different modes of communication - oral, written, visual and performative. As regards the regional languages, they cannot be considered only as off-shoots of Sanskrit, Pali or Prakrit, and yet cannot be dissociated from the literatures in these languages. Simultaneously, these languages and literatures, while not breaking the link with the past, address contemporary issues in their distinct ways. Also, it is through these languages and their literatures that they interrogated aspects of social and cultural traditions, which were either rigid, or which became fossilized.

A significant portion, of the literature is as interrogative as devotional. Besides, these languages also evolve new genres of language, e.g., Manipravalam.

There is another aspect of medieval Indian literature. This is in regard to the fluidity of literature across what we would today call States. The most commonly acknowledged example is that of Mirabai, who is claimed by Gujarat, UP and Rajasthan. Situating Kabir in a specific locale, or identifying him with a particular religion, is almost impossible. When Kabir passed away, it is said that both Hindus and Muslims claimed him!

There is yet a third phenomenon. One can give a single example. Tyagaraja, whose Telugu-speaking ancestors had settled down in Tamil Nadu, composed his famous *kritis* in Telugu, but was considerably influenced by the Tamil *bhakti* tradition. There are many other examples.

From the above, it would be clear that while there was pride in local distinctiveness and awareness of regional particularities, there was a mechanism of absorbing and reinterpreting influences from other regions. Thus, there

was a twin phenomenon of local identity, as also pan-Indian awareness.

Speaking of regional languages and literatures, specially post-8th century, we see a fascinating phenomenon of emergence of multiple forms of theatre in all parts of India. The genre, called the traditional Indian theatre, ranging from *Kutiyattam*, *Yakshagana*, *Bhagavatamela*, *Veetinatakam*, *Tamasha*, various *Ram Lilas* and *Ras Lilas*, *Bhaona*, *Mach*, *Khyala*, *Nautanki*, *Jatra*, *Sahijatra*, *Bhavai*, three *Chau* forms (*Mayurbhanj*, *Purulia* and *Saraikala*), is a rich and variegated world of diversity, dialogue and distinctiveness. Also, it is through the performative act that with effortless ease, multiple languages and dialects are employed.

These forms are the site of a plurality of interpretations of myths, epics, oral narratives and much else. Through particular characters, such as *Viveka* in the *Jatra* and the *Vidushak* in *Kutiyattam*, many messages are conveyed. It is in the open space or in the covered theatrical structures, such as in *Kutiyattam*, that the mythical could be profitably employed to bring home messages of the here and now, contemporaneity.

A *Kutiyattam* performance includes the uses of Sanskrit and Malayalam. *Kutiyattam* is considered the earliest. It has been acknowledged as the closest approximation to ancient Sanskrit theatre. While Kulasekhara (8th century AD) followed the precepts of Bharata's *Natyasastra*, he introduced Malayalam and other theatrical devices. It was on account of the potentiality of containing both the past and the present, that it has had an unbroken continuity of performance for nearly 12 centuries. It is not uncommon to hear, for instance, a scathing criticism on modern educational system, while Krishna is speaking to Arjuna to have courage as part of a dialogue in a play *Subhadrabharanam*.

These theatrical traditions are significant indicators of the dialectics of the Indian cultural traditions. In a seemingly unstructured form, there is both system and implicit structure. One has only to watch the *Yakshagana* performance, where through the characters of *Mahabharata* comments are made on the local issues as also national issues. Naturally, it is through this that moral and ethical messages of the epics are sought to be communicated. It is common to see in a performance, like *Yakshagana*, multiple interpretations done concurrently on three platforms. Countless other examples could be given on the fluidity and mobility of cultural expressions.

In the case of *Chau* forms, another strategy is evident. It is employed to bring about new societal equilibrium. The performers of the *Saraikala Chau* in sociological terms belong to lower strata. The performance takes place once a year in *Chaitra* to coincide with *Vaisakhi*, which is celebrated as a solar festival all over India. For the time and duration of the festival lasting for 14 days, these performers have a higher status. Once the transformation takes place, the entire community recognizes them as leaders. For that time and duration, they are empowered not only to perform, but also to comment on social issues and to suggest correctives. Since their empowerment is through a ritual, the community listens. Once the ritual and the performance is over, they return to their original sociological status. Thus, the ritual and the performance have a role to play in bringing about a new balance in societal order. We note that at textual level, there was reversibility and inversibility in categories. At the performance level, the same is evident in the device for reversal and inversal of status during the performance.³¹

Besides, there is another group of largely solo performers - singers, puppeteers, scroll narrators, etc. They cannot be categorized in terms of either caste structures or religious affiliation. They may be within the social order, but largely they are outside the social order; they are often itinerants. They range from single performances, such as *Chakyarkoothu* and the *Ottan Thullal* of Kerala, to group performance like *Therukoothu* of Tamil Nadu, the scroll narrators of Bengal (*patuas*) and many others. They are traditional, they are innovative, and they are modern. The *patuas* can make a narrative from the *puranas*, Sufi stories, on Indo-Bangladesh war, on Tsunami. They are empowered to speak candidly on matters of the past, and the here and now. They have immunity, and yet, they have the capacity of forging communication. Altogether, the traditional theatre forms were and are a strategy to bring the community together, articulate dissent, become a method of protest, and thus, serve as an emotional safety valve.

There is yet another form of collective performance in different parts of India, where the entire community takes part. This is a ritual in an annual calendar. For that time and duration, the cosmos is made, represented and dissolved. A very moving and telling example is from Manipur. The *Lai Haroba* of Manipur is a 40-day collective ritual and festival, when life comes into being from the eternal waters, the whole life cycle is recreated in collective performance. The *Lai Haroba* is tightly sequenced. From the invocation to the spirits of gods and goddesses, who remain in water to the birth of life and

its growth through various stages, it is performed through a minimum of symbols and without any description or narration. This is a ritual to keep the pure water resources clean and unsullied. Not only this particular community, i.e., Meiteis, participate, but all the Naga tribes – the Kukis and the Kabuis – are also the participants.³²

An equally powerful with a didactic message is the ritual called *Kolams* in Kerala. In the case of one, i.e., *Mudiyettu*, an enclosure or a *mandapa* is temporarily set up, a centre is established and a line is drawn. The *kurup* master, with lightness of touch, brings to life, with amazing swiftness, a figure of *Bhadrakali*. Once the image is completed, the *Tantri* (priest) sits to worship this goddess, who is his creation. The idea, given 'form', is brought to life through the *mantras* and the recitations of the *Tantri*. The drumming becomes louder, and gradually a dance begins, not in and around the figure, but over the figure. In wild frenzy, almost as if possessed by the spirit of the goddess, the *Tantri* now moves first carefully, and then madly over the entire figure. In a trance, the figure is desecrated. There is no painting left, no image, only the idea and the light of the lamp, against a static icon. But 'energy' released is symbolized in the lighted lamp, which is carried to the second arena of the actual performance. Now, it is the *Marars*, not the *Kurups*, who perform the drama. The singing, the recitation to the performance, is the ritual enactment of the myth of the killing of the *asura* *Darika* by *Kali*.

Mudiyettu culminates in a moment of trance, when the actor, who plays the role of *Kali*, is possessed with this divine power of the goddess. Cosmic balances are restored; from the 'chaos' a new order – physical and psychical – is ushered. Consecrated space returns to 'mundane space', but not without being electrically charged with explosion of energies of the night before.

Another significant example of such a ritual act, which has multiple dimensions and interpretations, is the ritual of making the *Sand Mandala* – *Kaalachakra* in the Himalayan-Tibetan traditions.³³ This is not an esoteric activity. It is an act of representing the cosmos and the dissolving of the cosmos. It is not possible to give an elaborate account, or to analyze different levels of meaning and significance of these ritual acts.

The traditional theatre forms and the rituals, as also the festivals connected with them serve a triple purpose. They bring different sections of the community together. They allow for free and frank communication amongst the privileged and the under-privileged, the old and the young, men and women. They provide an opportunity for social comment and thus epitomize the voice of the

civil society in relation to the power centres. All these have a therapeutical function in bringing about a new balance and harmony in the social order. They are the safety valve of the society.

Cumulatively, the languages, literatures, theatrical forms and the many genres of visual and performative had a regional distinctiveness, but they were never insulated; there was a network of communication. One principal reason for this fluidity was that the written word was not the only instrument; the spoken word, the visual, and the kinetic facilitated flows and confluences.

I referred to the written word, specially literacy, having been identified as an indicator of civilization in post-Enlightenment discourse. From the above narration, the need to modify this perception may have become apparent: Written and Oral are complementary. This is not to negate the fundamental importance of literacy.

There can be no discussion on culture of the subcontinent without taking into account the rich and vibrant storehouse of knowledge and linguistic diversity of a section of the people, whom in anthropological terms we have called tribals.³⁴ The very semantics has a historiography. The appellations – 'tribal', 'indigenous' – embody a point of view and a tacit acceptance of hierarchy. I have already referred to literacy *qua* literacy as having been identified as an absolute indicator of making a graph for evaluating civilization, 'higher' or 'lower'. Concurrently, and sequentially, there have been definitions regarding those who live with nature, belong to a cohesive society, who have a definite worldview and a language, which may or may not have a script. There is a body of literature on the subject in the disciplines of conventional anthropology, sociology and linguistics. While anthropology and sociology make one classification, the discipline of linguistics makes a complementary classification. In passing, perhaps this is the occasion to remind ourselves of the work of Claude Levi-Strauss.³⁵

In our context, we have only to note that the percentage of the Indian population identified as ST (8.2 per cent) and SC (16.2 per cent), as per the 2001 Census – has provided the foundations of Indian culture and Indian cultural traditions in more ways than one. There is incontrovertible evidence of tribal rituals, which have provided the basis of some major religious institutions. The Jagannath Puri is an outstanding example. There can

be no Jagannath without the role of the Savaras. Also, Indian history has known the tradition of many regional tribal principalities. The case of Gurjara-Pratihara is an example.³⁶

There are other examples. Also, let us not forget that these groups were never totally isolated, nor can they be compared with those who are called indigenous Native Americans, or First Nationals in the continent of North America (USA and Canada), or Aborigines in Australia. In India, while they have had a distinct identity, their culture and creativity has been intrinsic to the totality of Indian culture. Amongst other distinctive cultural traits of the section of population of India categorized as Tribals, may I draw attention to two features? (1) In very few cases, can one say that a particular tribe is confined to a particular region. To mention only two instances, the Gonds are in three regions, and so are the Santhals – in West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. (2) The tribal population of the country is a very rich reservoir of oral languages. Their languages are the repositories of most valuable knowledge in regard to environment, herbs, plants, flora and fauna, mangroves, water resources and much else. They have known and learnt to live with nature and not against nature.

Their cultural expressions, the distinctive architecture, musical instruments, collective dances, rituals are all integral to each other. Together they embody in the subscription to a holistic worldview. Their cosmologies both embody this worldview, as also articulate it through its myriad cultural expressions and their exquisite skills in wood or metal sculpture, textiles, etc. No component can be viewed in isolation. The dwellings of the Todas, for example, symbolize the relationship of the earth and the sky. The measured steps and the solemnity and exactness of the dances of several groups called by the generic term Nagas have a complex structure embodying feeling, form and significance. Their rituals – certainly not 'primitive'; there is a well conceived structure. The rituals and the collective dances are acts of community participation, as also statements of the sacredness, comparable to the rituals of the *Sastric* traditions.³⁷

An important feature of these cultural traditions is the rich vocabulary, which indicates their sensitive and insightful knowledge of conservation of water resources, mangroves, recycling of organic material, techniques in construction of dwellings suitable for special environment, such as bamboo houses, habitats on stilts, etc. – all ingredients waiting for inclusion in the policies of sustainable development. There are lessons to be learnt from them – rather than pushing them to become a part of a standardized, uniform, yet undefined 'mainstream' – and to ensure the use of this knowledge for a more

equitable world in the future. Also, we cannot overlook the fact that they have been the owners of forest lands of the country. Many of the regions are the richest in mineral resources. In our anxiety to become a major player in a global market economy, there is the real and impending prospect of our losing, if not depleting, a fundamental level of Indian culture.

Before I turn my attention to the last section, structures and institutionalization, perhaps an explanatory note is necessary in regard to all that I have tried to place before you. As participator and witness, and today as someone overviewing and reviewing, nothing has been said as an advocate of a particular point of view and certainly not an ideology. Also, one is conscious of the polarity of ideological stance taken on Indian culture, be it from extreme Right or Left. Instead, the plea here is for a more balanced view for comprehending the intrinsic holistic nature of Indian culture. For me, it is akin to a body system where the major and minor limbs, the organs, the body, mind and soul, are parts of a whole. Did Dr. Radhakrishnan not speak about *deha*, or body, as *devalaya*, or the dwelling of God?

Admittedly, my narration makes no mention of the political and social strife, nor does it speak of the rise and fall of kingdoms and principalities. My intention was to draw attention to some very explicit and obvious features of this culture, which have been often overlooked either by concentrating on political history, or social formations, or only looking at the textual traditions, or viewing cultural expressions as ancillary as adornment, and at best concentrating on monumental architecture.

I hope I have been able to communicate to you the fluidity of cultural expressions, which has transcended political boundaries, survived despite battles, wars and invasions. A practically unbroken continuity, with of course, significant discontinuities, can be identified in the literary, visual, and performative traditions.

IV

15th August 1947. India attains freedom. Concomitant was the trauma of partition. The subcontinent with a holistic worldview and a cultural ethos of plurality and multiple identities was cut asunder. Gandhiji had said, and so did Maulana: 'Freedom not at the cost of a divided India'.

The achievements of India as a secular democracy have

been monumental. Sustaining a nation-state over the last six decades with a staggering cultural plurality has been a model lesson. Nevertheless, the issues of religion, language and social and economic disparities have not vanished. Instead, they have surfaced as contentious issues. Regulatory measures and institutional structures were intended to facilitate and promote national integration. Instead, in some cases, the structures have been rigid, frozen and not facilitated the natural rhythm of multi-identities, overlap of languages, literatures, and the modes of communication between and amongst different levels of society.

Fundamental is the issue of religious identity in a secular democracy. We have referred to the views of Gandhiji and Maulana; also to Dr. Radhakrishnan's lectures published under the title, *Religion and Society*. Appropriately, the Indian Institute of Advanced Study's first seminar was on 'Society and Religion'. Basic questions were raised. These questions have since become even more valid today. Political scientists, parliamentarians and civic groups are all concerned. Professor Peter deSouza's very insightful article entitled, 'What would Azad have said to the Angel now?' (*Summerhill: IAS Review*, Vol. XV, No. 1, Summer 2009), poignantly points out the complexity of the issues at many levels.

Multi-religious reality of India has a long history. The interaction as also conflict between and amongst religions has been the subject of much critical writing. However, there has not been enough recognition or reflection on the fact that in the cultural sphere it was possible, acceptable and unquestionable, that a person could hold multi-religious identities. Only a few examples from the living traditions of Hindustani music will make this clear.

The great masters of the contemporary Hindustani music have been Muslims. They have been responsible for conserving and developing many schools of Hindustani classical music. The Dagar *bani* of Dhrupad has been the special preserve of a long and continuous transmission system. The text of the music often revolves round hymns to Shiva; the musicians speak a language of music as Yoga, music as the primordial sound *Nada*, and much else. One has only to listen to the musician Fahimuddin Dagar on the subject. How does a musician then hold multi-religious identities? Besides, the Ustads of living musicians, like Gangubhai Hangal and Hirabai Barodekar, were Muslims. The teacher of Shri Ravi Shankar, the great Allaaddin Khan, was a devout Muslim and Namazi, and as devout a devotee of Sarasvati. It was essential for Sheikh Chinnamoulana, the Nadaswaram artist, to play in the outer enclosure of the Brihadesvara temple before the commencement of a Shaivite puja in

the *garbagraha*. It was, and is, customary for all Hindus to place a *chadhar* on the Muslim shrine before taking the journey to the Hariparvata in Srinagar (a *devi* shrine). All Hindu musicians and dancers take a trip even today to the famous *pir* in Bareilly before commencement of any auspicious journey.

In contrast, there is the regrettable phenomenon of assertion of single religious identities resulting in social and political tensions. The situation has become complex, because religious identities have become entangled with the economic rights and political processes.

Constitutional Provisions

We have to remind ourselves of the immediate preceding legacies in regard to governance of the country. The Raj had passed the Government of India Act 1935. The Constituent Assembly debated the draft Constitution for India. There were differences of opinion. All this is recorded. What is of relevance for us is the acceptance of some of the provisions of the Government of India Act 1935, in the matter of classifying particular sections of the Indian population, the languages of India and the institutions in the field of education and culture. This classificatory system indicates a tacit acceptance of hierarchies.

Since I have been referring to the dynamics of Indian cultural traditions in their aspect of fluidity and mobility, irrespective of social hierarchies and complementary nature of the oral and the written system of knowledge, it becomes almost incumbent upon me to draw attention to certain articles in the Constitution, which pertain to certain sections of people, languages and institutions recognized by it.

I began my narration speaking of the knowledge and knowledge systems in the Sastric traditions. In this section, I would inverse my sequence and speak about the cultural richness of these sections of the Indian society. Did the Constitution of India and the system of governance address this question?

Articles 341-342, Part XVI, of the Constitution, which deals with special provisions relating to certain classes of the population, provided as follows:

Article 341 states: The President may, . . . by public notification, specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes, which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes . . .

Article 342 states: The President may, . . . by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities, which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes . . .

The appellation 'Scheduled Castes' was first used in the Government of India Act 1935. The Act defined the group as including "such castes, races or tribes or parts of groups within castes, races or tribes, which appear to His Majesty in Council to correspond to the classes of persons formerly known as the 'Depressed Classes', as His Majesty in Council may prefer." It is not clear whether there was any serious discussion in regard to who belonged to the Depressed Classes, and what would be the criteria to designate them under the category of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It seems that from 1850s onwards certain communities were loosely referred to as the 'Depressed Classes'. The Government of India Act 1935 provided for reservation of seats for the Depressed Classes. The Act brought the term 'Scheduled Castes' into use.

Articles 341 and 342 called for notifications in respect of both Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Notifications were issued. These notifications gave a location to each tribe – thus a particular tribe had to be listed in a particular State territory. Now a problem arose, because some large tribal groups have from time immemorial spread out in fairly large geographical area. Only two instances may be given. One, Santhals, and the other, Gonds. Santhals have spread out in Bihar, Orissa and Bengal. While they do have a location, they also have a very tightly knit cultural communication system and cultural mores across States. By listing them in specific States, they were subjected to the administrative norms of only that State, and this did restrict to an extent their ability for mobility and communication. Even more obvious is the case of the Gonds. The Gonds are a very large tribe, and they had to be listed in several States in Central India, as also parts of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. This has caused and continues to cause problems.

Article 338, in Part XVI of the Constitution, was formulated in order to give special attention to this section of the society, first through the appointment of a Special Officer and subsequently (in 2003) by the setting up of a National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST).

The NCST was responsible for overseeing the welfare of the people called Scheduled Tribes. It is interesting as also puzzling to find the following reference in an official document of this Commission, in a preliminary paragraph in the section on 'Socio-Economic Development':

Primitive, geographically isolated, shy, and socially, educationally and economically backward, these are the traits that distinguish Scheduled Tribes of our country from other communities. . . Tribal

groups are at different stages of social, economic, and educational development. While some tribal communities have adopted a mainstream way of life at one end of the spectrum, there are 75 Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs), at the other, who are characterized by (a) a pre-agriculture level of technology, (b) a stagnant or declining population, (c) extremely low literacy and (d) a subsistence level of economy.

I have been perplexed and saddened by the use of the term 'primitive' in such a document. The word brings up associations with the use of this term in a colonial era with all its connotations, notwithstanding the etymology, which only refer to 'primary' and not crude. It also suggests a tacit acceptance of a uniform model of development, juxtaposing the word 'primitive' with that other category, not defined here, namely, 'mainstream'.

Here is a paradox. On the one hand, the State is anxious to protect those who live with nature, are holders of rare knowledge, may or may not be literate; on the other hand, legitimizing them only if they enter what has been called the 'mainstream'. Significantly, there is no mention of their languages, oral literatures, their cultural expressions or the knowledge that they hold on the fragile ecological systems. Thus by implication, there is a tacit acceptance of a hierarchy, and denial of their cultural identity and knowledge systems, while inviting them to participate in the democratic processes.

Understandably, the Government of India took steps to ensure the socio-economic welfare of this section. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs was set up for this purpose. Understandably, its focus has been on issues of health, primary education, construction of roads; in short, infrastructure. Simultaneously, but unconnected with the Ministries are institutions, which give attention to the creativity of this group of people through their specific response. As we know, the tribal institutions in the States present crafts in national and international forums. The emphasis is on product and not on processes. The Zonal Cultural Centres under the administrative control of the Ministry of Culture focus attention on manifold artistic forms of tribal India, specially music and dance. They have assembled and organized shows for the purpose of tourism in their regions. Also, they have arranged events and performances in other regions with the 'intention' of promoting 'national integration'.

It will be obvious that one set of institutions seeks to 'develop' them from their state of being 'primitive' to equip them to enter the 'mainstream', while the other presents their artistry de-contextualized. Lack of synergy at the policy level is clear.

At the academic level, this section of the society grouped together as ST has been the subject of much research. The Anthropological Survey of India observes

them, draws up physical and cultural parameters. But how much of their work has penetrated into other institutions of governance is a question mark? Additionally, the Central Institute of Modern Indian Languages in Mysore studies the oral languages from linguistic point of view, and also attempts to find particular scripts for them.

Equally well intentioned has been the initiative to set up a living museum or museum of living cultures, viz., the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya in Bhopal. Its vision and also its programmes have had a role to play. It has brought before the audiences the staggering diversity and richness of tribal India. It sought to present this diversity in replicated form, in what would be called a Museum of Living Cultures.

From the above outline, even if sketchy, it will be evident that well-motivated but, alas, not with an integral vision, have been the multiple stand-alone structures, which have sought to give attention to the pulsating wholeness. Good intentions, but fragmentary approaches can be reasons for serious psychological disjunctions, which erupt as violence.

Reluctantly, one has to point out glaring disjunctions in approach towards these rich cultures by the empowered. It is fashionable to have Bastar bronzes adorn public places, wear Naga shawls and jewellery for evening parties, and *warli* mud paintings transferred to the designs of designer sarees. In short, the empowered wear tribal creativity as signatures of Indian identity. This journey of the products of this creativity to affluent national and international markets is, however, not the upward mobility of the creators of these arts. Few have paused to ask the question, whether articles 341 and 342, which identify a particular section of Indian society, have acknowledged them for their optimum creativity, as also the relevance of their knowledge systems for a modern nation-state?

These are the vexed questions becoming more complex by the day. By and large, it is this section of society, which faces the travails of dislocation, loss of livelihood, and exploitation of their natural resources. Unless there is an acceptance of the possibility and efficacy of developing plural models of development, obviously no long-term solutions can be found.

Linguistic Diversity and Richness

Let me restrict myself to the treasure of linguistic richness of the people, who are identified as Scheduled Tribes. The Indian Institute of Advanced Study had a valuable seminar on 'Tribal Languages'. Since the holding of this seminar, there has been a further shrinking of

'indigenous' languages, now 'endangered.'

The shrinking of indigenous endangered languages has been a cause of concern at international forums. There have been thematic debates and UNESCO has brought out an 'Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, 2009'. According to this map, India has as many as 196 endangered languages. The prospect of losing a linguistic richness of this country has engaged both academicians as also activists. The models of development, which have been adopted, do not allow for the evolution of plural models – structures in 'development'. However, it is heartening that the UNESCO and other international organizations have set up a programme of Local Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS). Launched by UNESCO in 2002, the LINKS project works with local knowledge holders to promote recognition of their expertise about the local environment, and reinforce their role in biodiversity governance. It also recognizes the importance of keeping indigenous knowledge alive within local communities by reinforcing its transmission from elders to youth, and strengthening its presence in the classroom.³⁸

It is through this programme that there is today an awareness of the fundamental importance of the knowledge system, as also the languages of these communities, if the fragile eco-system of the earth has to be sustained. Most welcome has been the dedicated work of some Indians, particularly P. S. Ramakrishnan's work on bio-diversity and cultural diversity,³⁹ and of Madhav Gadgil in terms of mangroves. They have clearly brought out that negation and denial of the knowledge and languages of this group of people would not only be a disservice to them, but would affect policies of all India. Also, the reservoir of their cultural knowledge is crucial, if the nation-state wishes to realize the rhetoric of sustainable development. Sometimes, there are echoes of the words 'primitive' and 'depressed', while reviewing the attitudinal stands of development agencies.

Scheduled Castes

What is true of the Schedules Tribes is as nearly true of the group of people identified as Scheduled Castes. As has been mentioned, there is a separate National Commission for Scheduled Castes (Article 338, Part XVI). Without repeating and labouring on issues that I have already spoken about, let me concentrate on the creativity of a significant percentage of the Scheduled Castes, which has provided us the beautiful materials that signify our Indian identity. As in the case of the creativity of ST, but much more in our daily life, we wear the saris, which a SC weaver weaves, the chappals that a SC leather worker

makes, the household utensils, which a brass or ironsmith moulds.

Most of these artisans belong to the Scheduled Castes and minority communities, and have lived in penury for decades. Some rural crafts have provided livelihood opportunities to this population during the non-farming seasons. Most of India's craft traditions are located where the normal socio-economic development activities have been minimal. While the craft sector is the second largest export earning activity of the country, the people are poor and, more importantly, they have been grouped together as if they were in the unorganized sector. The greatest concern is that, although the consumers admire their creativity, and also have been instrumental in enhancing the standard of their livelihood – in some cases through market – yet none amongst the creators in the SC can hope to have 'status', unless they have been through a formal system of education. In this process, they give up their ancestral skills, and are likely to lose their cultural identity.

Here is another disjunction in perception. All efforts to give them status by recognizing their optimum skills and creativity within the modern educational structures, e.g., even polytechnics or vocational institutions, have failed. Despite advocacy for decades, it was not possible to include the skills of the great glass-makers into formal vocational schools. Why? Because the organized institutional structures insist on formal paper certification. And this cannot be provided, for these skills and technologies are evaluated by the exquisiteness of the products. Also, many of the traditional technologies and skills are community-based with the cooperation of family members. A formal, almost frozen, structure cannot take cognizance of these fluid organizational systems. Thus, even when a skilled and highly creative member of a particular scheduled caste enters the institutional structure, he is unable to perform at the optimum level, because he is isolated from the community. This has happened in the case of potters, weavers, bell metal workers, and others. Should new structures be developed to contain the reality or the fluid reality be fitted into boxed structures?

As in the case of STs, the SCs are looked after by many agencies. As mentioned earlier, a very large percentage of the SCs are in the rural sector. Their needs are met through the programmes of rural development administered by the Ministry of Rural Development. As in the case of the STs, another institutional structure looks after their creativity in the matter of crafts and

handlooms: the Development Commissioner of Handlooms and Development Commissioner of Handicrafts – both are Subordinate Offices under the administrative control of the large Ministry of Textiles. Naturally, this Ministry gives precedence to major industries, and the Handloom and Handicraft sectors cannot receive the attention that they deserve. Besides, even the NGOs, who are patrons of their productivity, have not been able to ensure prestige and status to the makers in the environs of affluent urban social circles. Understandably, the artisan/craftsman is in a dilemma, whether to continue with his or her special craft, or abandon this in preference to a career through the formal educational system, which will equip him or her to enter the other world of urban India.

There is yet another organization, Khadi and Village Industries Commission, a statutory body created by an Act of Parliament, which seeks to promote a rural community spirit. It has done so, but with the limitation that it is administered by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, which obviously cannot promote rural community cohesiveness, it can only do marketing.

My list of paradoxes is increasing. I have already referred to the fact that most of the crafts are community-based, even when there is individual excellence. I have also referred to the fact that the younger generation is pulled in two opposing directions, whether to continue their skills or to enter the formal system of education, where the crafts are not part and parcel of the curricula. The paradox is that although the Constitution identifies a group of people as SCs, neither the Constitution nor any notifications speak of special skills specific to particular communities.

The reality is that the craft traditions of India have a long tradition of continuity, both because they were community-based and largely hereditary, and continue to be so. This continuity facilitated transmission from one generation to another. This is true of weavers, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, potters and many others. There is an all-India network of communication across state boundaries. They have a very definite system of knowledge and traditional technologies. However, neither the promoters of the crafts nor the other developmental agencies wish to take cognizance of their social identity. The educational system gives them concessions only if they enter as aspirants for inclusion for white collar jobs.

Not one more word needs to be said how basic and

intrinsic are the skills and knowledge of this section of society in the dynamics of Indian cultural history. Marketing their products, nationally and internationally, may contribute to enhancing their livelihood. The promoters have contributed in redesigning their products. However, as mentioned before, not only aspiration but the allurements of achieving 'status' through entry into the formal system of education, i.e., the 'mainstream', will lead and has led to the shrinking and shrivelling of this unique human resource of India.

LINGUISTIC STATES

The Constitution of India took cognizance of the multi-lingual reality of India. Consequently, linguistic states were carved. A natural corollary of linguistic states was that a particular territory was demarcated on the basis of the predominance of a language. The principle of the linguistic states had many advantages, but led to some negative consequences. It is patently clear that no Indian state can be called a uni-lingual territory. Also, Indians are often bi-lingual or tri-lingual. In particular states, there are pockets or areas, where a language of another state is spoken, e.g. Palghat Iyers in Kerala, who speak Tamil and Malayalam. There was rarely any tension in such areas in the past, barring a few notable exceptions, but this issue has now become a matter of contention (e.g., recent assertion for Marathi or Kannada). Directly or obliquely, the formation of linguistic states has meant assertion of a particular language in a particular state in exclusivity and not inclusivity.

There is another dimension. This is in relation to variations in language, or what was called in the large Hindi belt *boli*, belonging to different areas in the same State. The education system prioritizes only a standard form of Hindi. This has meant a shrinking of the richness and diversity of the *boli*. For example, Braj, Bhojpuri and Avadhi have a distinct identity. However, not only the emergence of what is called as *khari boli*, but also the insistence of a standard Hindi in the education system will increasingly lead to the shrinking of the particular flavour of the *bolis*. The possibility of a rich and developed body of literatures in these *bolis* (e.g., Bhojpuri, Avadhi or Braj) is becoming bleaker and bleaker. We will recall Professor Ananthamurthy's formulation of the language of the inner courtyard and the outer courtyard. Personally, I recall the great Hindi writer Hazari Prasad Dwivedi's insistence on speaking Bhojpuri in the inner courtyard and teaching Hindi in the outer courtyard!

The question of language thus is not and cannot be restricted to the carving of linguistic states and declaration of official languages. It cannot be separated

from ground realities. What is worrisome is that the school-going child does not wish to speak in the *boli*, because the *boli* becomes a marker of a rural culture. Coupled with positive side of schooling, there has been a negative aspect of de-culturalization.

Language and Society – Schedule 8

The Indian Institute of Advanced Study organized a seminar on 'Language and Society in India'. The issues discussed were very important, as is evident from the inaugural address of the eminent linguist Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji, as also other essays presented in the seminar. Professor Chatterji raised the fundamental question of the need of acceptance of linguistic plurality in the body polity. He also warned against the possibility of using language and linguistic identity for political purpose. Some of the issues he raised are even more relevant today. As we all know, language and linguistic identity has entered the political arena.⁴⁰

Linguistic Plurality – Schedule 8

The linguistic plurality of India was recognized by the nation-state in Schedule 8 of the Constitution. Fifteen languages were initially listed; the list has been enlarged to 22. The Sahitya Akademi, the National Academy of Letters, was obliged to recognize 24 languages with rich literary traditions. A question arose about the distinction between language and literature. Actually, no listing and no rigid structures have been able to contain the diversity, the local or regional specificity, as also the mobility and overlapping in the matter of languages and literatures in this country. Also, none of the notifications of listing could take care of some other aspects – for example, whether Punjabi should be written only in Gurmukhi, or whether the speakers of Punjabi could also use Devnagari or Persian? There are other examples. Tensions have arisen when only one script is allowed in the educational institutions. Flexibility had to give way to fixity.

Akademies

Leaders of independent India were anxious to translate their vision into reality. This was through a concerted effort of institutionalization. New institutions were created in practically all domains – scientific, economic and education. In the field of culture, a number of institutions were established for promotion of languages, literature, arts and the humanities. We have already spoken about the Sahitya Akademi in the field of literature. Lalit Kala Akademi and Sangeet Natak

Akademi were established with great idealism. The Lalit Kala Akademi sought to reorient the study and promotion of visual arts beyond the Raj's initiative to set up the four Schools of Art to teach Indians the fundamentals of European art. The history of the reorientation of these Schools is yet another story.⁴¹

The achievements of the Lalit Kala Akademi through its promotion of artists, support to artists, exhibitions, Triennale have been laudable. There are some lurking regrets. Have the programmes of the central Lalit Kala Akademi and the State Lalit Kala Akademies integrated with the departments of Visual Arts in the University system, or was there a consistency of policy in the matter of administration? The most obvious example is that the Schools of Planning and Architecture and the Arts are under the administrative control of the Bureau of Technical Education in the Ministry of HRD. The Departments of Visual Arts are under the administrative control of the respective Universities and at coordination level by the committees of the University Grants Commission. Of course, the Lalit Kala Akademi has its own Executive Board, and the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) is a Subordinate Office of the Ministry of Culture. Is there a coordination mechanism, or even any active dialogue amongst and between these different institutional structures?

All these concerns would seem irrelevant, when seen in the context of a breathtaking phenomenon of the soaring prices of the works of the visual artists in national and global art market. The professional artist has become captive to the pulls of the attraction for getting national prestige, on the one hand, and the allurements to be a competitor in the global art market, on the other.

There are lessons to be learnt here. Very briefly, one may ask some questions. There are Schools of Art, the Lalit Kala Akademi, and other national institutions, such as the NGMA, but were the traditions of the visual arts of the tribal, rural India, given attention? Were there concerted attempts at the formulation in the curricula of the institutional framework to take into account the excellence of the visual language in the prehistoric or historical period (*bhimbetka*) or *phads* of Devanarayan, and or the creativity of the contemporary tribal artists, e.g., Jaya Soma, Warli painter or Gangadevi, Mithila painter? Besides, did the visual artists not, by volition or habit, accept tradition and modernity as irreconcilable binary opposites? Even when a 'modern' artist turns to the tradition for inspiration and succour, he is largely ill-equipped to do so, because he has lost the ability to communicate.

These questions cannot be answered easily. Our concern is with the institutional structures, which foster

training and impart education to those aspiring to become visual artists. The institutional structures, be they in the University system or in the polytechnics or in the Schools of Planning and Architecture and the Arts, and the all-India bodies, like the Lalit Kala Akademi and the National Gallery of Modern Art, have been responsible for presentation and dissemination, but alas not, with the same rigour, for developing a discipline of art history. There seems to have been an isolation between art history and art criticism, or practitioners of the visual language. This may appear to be an extreme statement, but is, in fact, not. The world of visual language has to transcend the boundaries of time, space, place - all great art has.

The Sangeet Natak Akademi was a self-conscious attempt to give recognition and status to the performing arts in the hope that the national institutions would fill in the lacunae created by the shrinking of patronage to these arts by the princely states of India. Also, in recognizing these arts, it was an explicit statement of an attitudinal corrective of the previous eras, where dance was only *nach* and *pakka gana* for the *tawaifs*.

To coincide with other movements of freedom struggle, there were valuable initiatives to re-establish these arts for the middle class beyond the *gharana* system, e.g., Vishnu Digambar, in North India and Rukminidevi in South India. But the State had never given recognition to these arts. The establishment of the Sangeet Natak Akademi was an explicit statement. Its work over these decades as a promoter and as patron through systems of awards, etc., has certainly played a very important role in the re-establishment of the prestige of these arts in urban civil society. Gone are the days when music and dance was not only out of bounds, unmentionable (my own personal history); now it is accomplishment. Also, there are avenues and opportunities for national and international presentations.

This needs elaboration. What has happened is that in this great enthusiasm to re-establish the prestige of the arts, traditional theatres of which I have spoken about earlier, such forms as *Saralkala*, *Yakshagana* and even a form like *Kutiyattam*, have been made into a stage spectacle. These forms are no longer an intrinsic part of community life. Aspiration for recognition in urban milieu has replaced the communicative power at the local level. This has been elaborated in the Epilogue to my book *Traditional Indian Theatre: Multiple Streams*. One has a lurking feeling that in the anxiety for representation of these arts in urban milieu there has been a loss of the deeper levels of the content and context of these arts.

Of course, any music, dance or theatre can be nourished only by nourishing oral languages. Promoters of music, dance and theatre were concerned with the spectacle, not with the text, written or oral. Few realized that the text they were using for performances had an unbroken tradition of transmission, both through the written and the oral word. In no other sphere does this interpenetration of the written and the oral become as important and crucial as in the case of the performing arts. Neither structures nor the policies have paid attention to this. Consequently, the textual base of the arts, whether written or oral, has diminished. These are serious concerns.

Promoting Languages

The Government made a concerted effort to set up institutions for the promotion of Indian languages, specially for a few languages, which included Urdu and Sindhi, and more importantly, the Central Hindi Directorate. The latter was established as a direct result of declaring Hindi as the official language of India. The Government of India was aware that if Hindi was to be used as official language, then there was also a need for the evolution of a corpus of technical terminologies across many Indian languages. For this purpose, a special Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology was set up. I happened to be associated with this institute and learnt much from its Director, Dr. Siddheshwar Varma. Through this institution and its work, it would have been possible to create an effective multilingual communication system even in the administrative domain. Alas, this was given up.

The promotion of regional languages and literatures was the responsibility of the State governments. Each of the States of the Republic of India set up institutions in the field of both language and literature. Sahitya Akademies were replicated in the States and institutions were set up for the promotion of particular languages. The work of some of these institutions deserves admiration. The institutional framework promoted research and was responsible for the publication of major encyclopedias. The Tamil Encyclopedia project of the Government of Tamil Nadu was a landmark. So also was the Marathi Encyclopedia under the leadership of Laxman Shastri Joshi. There was yet another Encyclopedia under the editorship of Binode Kanungo in Orissa.

SANSKRIT STUDIES

Sanskrit is the mother of languages. How could it be

ignored? The Orientalists could not ignore it. The search for the Indo-European mother tongue had propelled them to study its linguistic structures. Already, in the 17th century, John Abraham had written a remarkable book, *An Open Door to Heathendom*. This 'Open Door' opened the doors for the study of Sanskrit. In no small measure, the International Congress of Orientalists in Europe paid special attention. It was not only William Jones, who was encouraged by Samuel Johnson to read the *Manusmriti*, the manuscript of the *Gita-Govinda* came to him as fortuitous from the Pandits. The administrators of the Raj had realized that the Sanskrit Pandits and their knowledge was a necessity, if they wished to govern effectively. There have been many accounts of this, the latest being the book by Michael S. Dodson, *Orientalism, Empire, and National Culture – India, 1770-1880*.¹²

Despite the tension between the Orientalists and the Anglicans, the administrators knew that Sanskrit had to be recognized, even given an institutional framework. Thus, with purpose, they set up Banaras Sanskrit College. This college or institution was a tool to mobilize pandits in an institutional framework and to clearly distinguish, even distance this institution from those other institutions with the institutions of modern learning, such as the Calcutta Presidency College and the Madras Presidency College.

The effort of the Orientalists, e.g., William Jones (1784), was to establish the Asiatic Society in Calcutta, to be followed by the Asiatic Society of Bombay. One is puzzled at the exclusion of either the Asiatic Society at Calcutta or the Asiatic Society of Bombay, the two institutions which were in the vanguard of the Orientalist discourse, in the articles of the Indian Constitution or Schedule VII. In fact, the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, was declared an institution of national importance many decades later. One has to ask the question, whether the makers or drafters of the lists in the Constitution were keenly and self-consciously aware of the polarity between the Orientalists and the Anglicans, and the institutional structures that were set up as a result.

The nation-state also looked at Sanskrit studies and, for this purpose, it set up the Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya in 1958, later to be renamed as Sampurnanand Sanskrit University. (In 1970, the Government established the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, and a chain of *Vidyapeethas* to impart learning in the diverse fields of Sanskrit studies.)

BUDDHIST STUDIES

The Government, in the first decade after Independence, made a concerted effort to set up institutions in the field

of Buddhist, Arabic and Pali studies. As far as these are concerned, they followed immediately after the holding of two important events in 1956, viz., the UNESCO General Conference and the celebrations of the 2000 anniversary of the Buddha. It was at the direct initiative of the former Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru that a chain of centres of Buddhist studies was established – the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Leh, as also in Sikkim and Nalanda. The Institute in Sarnath was set up with the responsibility for restoring a vast number of texts, which were lost to India, but which were preserved in their Tibetan version. It has not been easy to have a balance between the knowledge, the system of knowledge, the methodologies of communication of this knowledge, and the requirements of structures. And yet, there has been an achievement.

The nation-state naturally recognized institutions, which were set up by leaders of civic society, i.e., national leaders, such as Madan Mohan Malviya (Banaras Hindu University) and Syed Ahmed Khan (Aligarh Muslim University (Seventh Schedule I-63).

The institutions, which were recognized as institutions of national importance, specially in the field of education, were then declared as Central Universities through Acts of Parliament. The BHU, AMU and later the Visva-Bharati were declared as Central Universities. Well intentioned, but, again, the structures which were adopted for the governance of these institutions of higher learning could not contain the catholicity of vision of the founders of these institutions. For example, Madan Mohan Malviya in the case of the BHU, and later his son Govind Malviya made a heroic effort to bring together specialists of different branches of knowledge under one roof without insisting on formal degrees and certifications. Their expertise was recognized by their peers and their contemporaries. It was the foresight, initiative and sensitivity, which made it possible to invite a Pt. Onkar Nath Thakur (perhaps someone who had not gone to school beyond the 6th standard) as the Dean of Musicology, or invite the connoisseur Rai Krishnadas to be the Head of the Bharat Kala Bhavan, and also invite him to donate his unique collection to the university. There were many other instances. Banaras had become a centre of knowledge production, traditional and modern, attracting Indians and foreigners. The succeeding Vice-Chancellors – C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Dr. Radhakrishnan and others – carried the vision of the founders forward. However, gradually but surely the structures, rules,

regulations and the inflexible statutes have led to insulation of one discipline from the other.

Structures of uniform and rather inflexible rules and regulations in the statutes of the University have led to a shrinking space for inter-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary dialogues. For example, a School of Medicine and a School of Ayurveda were set up as twin institutions to facilitate creative dialogue between the systems of allopathy and ayurveda. This dialogue did take place despite restrictions of the regulatory system. A School of Indology was set up as a centre of multi-disciplinary studies within the broad field of Indian studies. In course of time, the term 'Indology' became obsolete, and in the bargain the centre was dismantled. And now, there is no centre for study of India as a whole. The university made a pioneering effort for ensuring a creative dialogue between tradition and modernity, between the fundamental sciences, humanities and the arts. An institutional framework still exists, but there seems to be unclarity, even confusion.

The case of Santiniketan being declared a Central University, i.e., Visva-Bharati University, is another instance, where the vision of the conceiver was fragmented, because the structures did not allow for inclusivity of a group of people called tribals. The poet Rabindranath Tagore had seen Sriniketan and Santiniketan as two arms of the same body. For him, these two institutions were as important as the great scholars and artists whom he invited to be on the faculty, e.g., scholars and artists, such as Nandlal Bose, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Okakura from Japan, or Professor Tan Yun-shan from China. He was not looking for formal degrees as an objective criteria for appointment. However, gradually and surely, this inclusive vision had to be compromised to suit frozen structures.

Visva-Bharati could never, nor can it today, be dissociated from the vision and perception of its founder – poet, painter, musician, universal being – Rabindranath Tagore. But when the flying robes of the poet have to be retailored to suit the demands of regulations, formal qualifications, etc., etc, there is bound to be fracturing. This has been commented upon by many. There was a time when artistes and scholars from all parts of the world flocked to Santiniketan – Stella Kramrisch, Elizabeth Sass Brunner and Elizabeth Brunner, A. K. Coomaraswamy and C. F. Andrews, only to name a few. Santiniketan was the haven for creativity. It achieved the status of a Central University no doubt, but did this status allow it draw upon the knowledge, which lay near at home in the artistes of Birbhum or others from continents afar? Can a University have potential (as Santiniketan still has) to facilitate a creative dialogue between a Tagore and

Einstein? Perhaps yes, perhaps no!

Now the production of knowledge began to be restricted to suit the institutional framework. There was little or no scope for recognition or certification of another group of scholars in the Indian landscape, who were in a system, but in a modern institutional structure - in today's parlance they would be called producers of knowledge in the unorganized sector. They are given a place of eminence only when scholars with international reputation come and sit at their feet.

Post-Independence Initiatives in Conserving & Promoting Knowledge

The Constitution of India recognized other institutions, which had been set up by the preceding Government. Schedule 7 listed some of these, specially the National Library and the Indian Museum.

It may be pointed out that each of these institutions has a history in pre-independent India. The Indian Museum came into being as a result of not only the Orientalist advocacy, but also as a result of the archaeological finds and the work of the Archaeological Survey of India, to which we shall return. The National Library was formerly the Imperial Library. It is significant that while the National Library was declared as an institution of national importance, in actual working it continued - as it continues to be, ironically – a Subordinate Office of the Ministry of Culture.

The subject of the National Library cannot be dissociated from those other institutions set up largely through voluntary effort, and who concentrated their energies in collecting the vast and dispersed corpus of unpublished manuscripts of this country. It is surprising to note that some very old and distinguished libraries called Oriental Libraries, for the dissemination of knowledge, were not listed in the Schedule, and languished for lack of patronage and recognition. An outstanding case is the great library in Hoshiarpur, as also the Adyar Library.

Not only were these libraries not listed, but they continued to be outside the vision of state support, and were not given the attention they deserved within the modern university system. In the university system itself, the libraries did not receive the appropriate attention or prioritization. A heroic effort was necessary to bring at par the pay scales of librarians with academicians. There was thus disconnection at three levels: Oriental Libraries from the National Library, even the National Archives; Oriental Libraries from the university libraries; and within the university system, a deprioritization of the role of libraries in facilitating and ensuring production and

dissemination of knowledge.

This is an area full of complexities, which have yet to be addressed with both objectivity and commitment. The insularity between the institutions of conserving the written word (manuscripts) in the Oriental libraries and those promoting the study of what would be called modern knowledge, has continued.

Running parallel, from the mid-'60s to the mid-'70s, the State was anxious to give fillip to research in the humanities and the social sciences. Towards this goal, it set up a number of institutions in the '60s, principally the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in 1964, and the Indian Institute of Advanced Study in 1965. Have I to tell you more?

In the late '60s and in '70s, three other institutions were established, the Indian Council of Historical Research, the Indian Council of Social Science Research, and the Indian Council of Philosophical Research. At the policy level, these institutions were established to facilitate research, which would supplement research in the university system. Also, it was hoped that these institutions would facilitate inter-disciplinary research.

Undoubtedly, some outstanding research has been conducted through pursuing long-term projects, such as the History of Freedom Movement. However, it would appear from the outside that these institutions in course of time became largely fund-giving institutions to individual scholars. This was, perhaps, the result of the State financing the 'autonomous bodies', who in turn disbursed funds on the basis of individual applications, as also trying to maintain a balance of equal distribution of different interests and predilections. Also, the institutions were subject to the norms and regulations of an administrative system – one could add an anachronistic system. We shall return to this when speaking of autonomous bodies set up by the government of India under the administrative control of particular Ministries.

More is the consciousness that though the institutions of both science and humanities have been in the vanguard of the production of knowledge, no structural bridges have been built between the domains of the fundamental sciences and the humanities at the policy level. India had this unique potential to make this bridge between the frontier areas of science and the metaphysical and philosophic systems of this country. The work of scientists, like Sudarshan, Raja Ramanna, and Subhash Kak are exceptional instances.

From recent policy statements, it would appear that there has been an explicit preference for supporting the sector of applied technologies, and ICT. To some of us, it would appear that this will create a precedence for

prioritizing applied technology over fundamental sciences on the one hand, and the humanities on the other. All the structures at least point towards this, notwithstanding the achievements of the flagship institutions of technology, the IITs.

A dispassionate, retrospective reflection would reveal that although well intentioned, cumulatively, even if not explicitly stated, the State appears to have become captive to the syndrome of making divisions between what is called traditional knowledge and modern knowledge. This is now a case of freezing knowledge in structures, which emerged out of a post-Enlightenment discourse in regard to disciplines. The hiatus between the keepers of what may be called traditional or Oriental knowledge, and those who subscribe to modernity, but as followers of Macaulay's vision, has not been bridged. We are still left with it.

Let me now turn attention to another group of institutions. These institutions were also the legacy of the Raj. They have a long history, as important a history of why they were set up and what work they have done, and what their position is today as institutions of surveys, documentation, knowledge production, and interpretation of the natural and cultural heritage of this country.

We know the history of the establishment of the first of these, i.e., the Survey of India in 1767. There is a body of literature on the motivation of this Survey and the work of this Survey, its relevance in the past and its relevance and achievements of the present. The same is true of the Geological Survey of India (1851), Archeological Survey of India (1861), Botanical Survey of India (1887), Zoological Survey of India (1916), and the Anthropological Survey of India (1945). The Constitution of India took note of these institutions and included them in Schedule 7, list I-68.

The work of each of these Surveys has been appreciated and evaluated and none can question their achievements in respect of surveying, documentation and collection of specimens. Also, one is not blind to the motivations of setting up of these Surveys and the policy of equal division of the funds and documentation between India and Britain, e.g., Indian Museum, Calcutta, Mackenzie Collection, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, and India Office Library in UK. Our concern here is not with the history, but with the single fact that have these Surveys worked

in isolation or insulation from the institutions of modern learning, or those concerned with the production of knowledge at the tertiary level? Without making final evaluative statements, it would appear that there is not a structural linking between the work of these institutions and the institutions of higher learning, specially modern learning. They have provided the basis for data, but have not been involved as closely, as they may have been with issues of theory and interpretation in the frontier areas of natural sciences, as also the cultures. Why?

A superficial glance at the working reveals that since these institutions were in the charge of different Ministries, there was little scope of synergy or integration. For example, in the field of Archaeology and Museums, while archaeology and museum are under the administrative control of the Ministry of Culture, the departments in these very disciplines are naturally under the University system. The University system has a regulatory body – the University Grants Commission – which, in turn, is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Distancing took place, because it is the university system which is the catchment area for specialists in the Departments of Archaeology. Consequently, there is a dearth of archaeologists, and those who are proficient in reading ancient scripts, such as Khroستی, Brahmi, old Grantha, Burunchi, Modi, Nastaliq, Sharda, Telgari, etc.

What is true of the field of Archaeology is also true of the field of institutions called Museums. The Constitution of India recognized in the Seventh Schedule List I-62 the Indian Museum, as also the National Library, as mentioned earlier. In addition, it set up the National Museum and declared the Salarjang Museum as an institution of national importance. However, the distance between the museums as institutions and the University system increased and did not diminish despite the voices to the contrary. Reasons: Administrative allocation of business rules, rigid procedures, inflexible norms. Coupled with this was the desire to represent Indian culture for foreign and Indian tourists. Welcome, but more welcome would have been if these institutions and the institutions of higher learning in the disciplines were integral to each other.

It is interesting to note that the nation-state recognized the institutions which were set up both by the Raj as also the nationalists, and also as a result of advocacy of the Orientalists. In retrospect, we have to ask the question, whether there was a self-conscious awareness of the polarity of views in the debates of the 19th century between the Anglicans and the Orientalists, which had a direct bearing on the institutional framework which came into being in independent India. A perusal of the

literature reveals that there was an urgency to adopt a Constitution and to begin systems of self-governance. Perhaps well-intentioned, but not as sharply self-conscious. Independent India became the recipient of two opposing legacies, of Macaulay and William Jones. At the policy level there appears to have been no explicit statement of how these two legacies would be reconciled.

I had begun by speaking about Orientalists and the Orientalist Conference of 1964. Over these decades, the longer I have lived the more I have been conscious of these concurrent and opposing legacies, which are often irreconcilable.

And finally, there is even more mundane question of the relationship of the executive or administration, and the very autonomous bodies that it sets up. This would appear to be inconsequential and a small matter of regulation. In fact, it is not. The acceptance of the Registration of Societies Act of 1860, without amendments despite advocacy to the contrary has very wide ramifications. The Act and its Memorandum of Association has worked as a steel-frame. Into this steel-frame is fitted in everything. Voluntary organizations have to register under this Act. Autonomous bodies established by the Government of India in a variety of disciplines, specially in the social sector, are all registered under the Registration of Societies Act 1860. This includes the research organizations, the academies, the libraries and many others. There are built-in deterrents for the very production of knowledge and inflexible mechanisms for regulating creative work. There has been advocacy for allowing autonomous bodies to raise part of their own funds, but the anachronistic financial systems do not allow it. There is an application of rules under what is called grants-in-aid and other anachronistic mechanisms. There is the accountability of the executive to the legislature. This is also an area of serious reflection. The entire question of 'autonomy' and 'accountability' needs a fresh look. Elsewhere, I have written on this with my limited knowledge.⁴³

Trends in the Academia

Let me turn my attention to some recent trends within the academia, some welcome, others disturbing. As one knows, knowledge is generated in all parts of the world, but especially in the Western hemisphere. While we decry the Orientalist discourse and Orientalism, it would appear that there's a neo-Orientalism, which is in operation. Theoretical positions have been taken up in

the study of Indian civilization or culture, and these are internalized by the Indian academia. This may not be entirely true, but there's a sizeable body of critical knowledge, which is relying heavily on theories evolved in another milieu that may not be applicable to the phenomenon here.

There is a prioritization of positions taken, what is termed as objectivity, and this is preferred to any other discourse, which emerges from either experience, or what may be called local knowledge or native categories. So, instead of tension between tradition and modernity, there's a tension between the local and the global. There's no time to elaborate on this, but many examples could be given.

In response, even as a defensive position, there have been voices, such as the one of Bhalchandra Nemade, national fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study. And in the *Summerhill: IAS Review*, Volume XV, No.1 (Summer 2009), he addresses the question of modernity, globalization and advocates nativism. I found myself resonating with a great deal of what he said, if not entirely. I also perused the book review by Kapil Kapoor in the same number. His views are valid, because Shri Nemade does take up some extreme positions, especially in regard to the social identity of the producer of knowledge. My comment is that in the matter of the production of knowledge, India has a great tradition of anonymity, where individual identities are submerged and irrelevant. For me, these are very healthy trends of a discourse, which will induce us to think out of frozen structures.

So also was a book review by Arjun Ghosh, fellow of the Institute, who critiqued Pradeep Trikha's book, *Multiple Celebrations, Celebrating Multiplicity*. This book moves away from the paradigms of high and low culture, of tradition and modernity, or mainstream or substream, and explores the multiple levels of understanding of Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq*.

It is not for me, nor was it my intention, to refer to the dark side of what happens in the academia. But A. R. Vasavi's article, 'Academics As Missing Intellectuals: Some Reflections' in *Summerhill: IAS Review*, Vol XIV, Nos. 1-2, 2008, says it all. I have been a witness to the pulls and pressures, as also the temptations of being in the globe-trotting circuit of international conferences.

And finally, about society and religion. That was the first seminar held at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study. All I can say, as I referred earlier, is that please again read the insightful article of the Director, Professor deSouza, in the *Summerhill*, entitled, 'What would Azad

have said to the Angel now?' In this article, Professor deSouza has said it all. The nation-state's predicament lies in identifying religious identities for the process of democracy, whereas democratic state recognizes only individual identity.

Friends, I've taxed your patience beyond endurance. However, it was absolutely necessary to include as many aspects as I could of this culture and the modes of nurturing or regulating it, as also the knowledge systems. Also, I have wondered whether Gandhiji's words to Julian Huxley, 'that I've learnt from my illiterate mother,' Dr Radhakrishnan's insistence on 'an integral vision', Jawaharlal Nehru's call for 'knowing the external world and knowing thyself', and Maulana's 'aspiration for inclusivity', have been realized?

Perhaps, there is room for introspection!

But, how can I end here? A Knowledge Commission has been set up. Three hundred recommendations have been made. The document has been placed in the Parliament. Amongst these recommendations, is one to which I might draw attention. This relates to language. The Knowledge Commission recommends that English should become the medium of instruction from class II or III onwards. Of course, English is absolutely necessary for what is today called 'knowledge economy,' but in the process, are we going to deprioritize the essential, multilingual capacities of the Indian? The Knowledge Commission has recommended strongly, and rightly so, the setting up of a mission for libraries. It is hoped that it will not only look into the libraries of modern learning, but also the Oriental learning. Perusing documents and the recommendations of the professional librarians themselves, I see no reference to the special attention that should be accorded to private libraries set up by voluntary efforts and in particular those who have conserved the manuscripts going into millions. Have we decided not to look at these reservoirs without perusing their contents or their value for 'modern' India?

And last, how will we nurture the oral traditions through policy decisions? At this moment when India is taking pride in becoming a global economic power, do we not have to address the real apprehension of a holistic worldview based on the principles of plurality, multiplicity and flowing interconnectivity, in danger of being splintered and boxed into inflexible frozen structures?

NOTES

1. *Paths to Peace – India's Voice in UNESCO*, New Delhi: UNESCO, 2009, pp.4-5.
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3. *Paths to Peace – India's Voices in UNESCO. Op. Cit.*, p. 11.
4. *President Radhakrishnan's Speeches and Writings, May 1962 to May 1964*. pp. 135-136. New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1965.
5. *Paths to Peace – India's Voices in UNESCO. Op. Cit.*, p.21.
6. T. M. Macaulay, *Macaulay's minutes on education in India* (signed on 2.2.1835). Calcutta: Printed by C. B. Lewis at the Baptist Mission Press, 1862. Vatsyayan, Kapila, 'Reconstruction or Rejuvenation of a Tradition' - Raja Rammohun Roy Memorial Lecture. 1999: *Grantha*, Indian Journal of Library Studies (Vol. VI Nos. 1 and 2). Calcutta: Raja Rammohun Roy Foundation, 1999.
7. Edward William Said, *Orientalism*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.
8. *Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth International Congress of Orientalists*, New Delhi, 4-10 January 1964, Volume I, pp. 53-54. New Delhi: Organising Committee, XXVI International Congress of Orientalists, 1966.
9. Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New 'Indian' Art: Artists, aesthetics and nationalism in Bengal, c.1850-1920*. Chapter 6: 'The Contest over Tradition and Nationalism', Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1992, pp. 185-225. Also see Introduction by Mukherji, Parul Dave (Editor) and Foreword by Vatsyayan, Kapila, in *The Citrasutra of the Visnudharmotara Puran*. Delhi: IGNC and Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2001
10. S. C. Malik, (ed.) *Indian Civilization – the First Phase- Problems of a Sourcebook*. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1971, p.xiii.
11. The debates between philosophers on the subject have been discussed both at the primary and secondary levels. The diversity and polarities of views have preoccupied scholars. In our context Ludwig Wittgenstein's essays on Culture and Value are relevant. See *Culture and Value - Ludwig Wittgenstein*. (ed) G. H. von Wright. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.
12. Kapila Vatsyayan, 'Metaphors of the Indian Arts' (Chapter 13) in *Aesthetic Theories and Forms in Indian Tradition*, Vol. VI, Part I. (Eds.) Vatsyayan, Kapila and Chattopadhyaya, D.P. New Delhi: Centre for the Study of Civilizations, PHISPC, 2008.
13. Mrinal Kaul and Ashok Aklujkar, (ed.) Preface to *Linguistic Traditions of Kashmir*. Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2008.
14. Kapila Vatsyayan, Inaugural address, in *Shastric Traditions in Indian Arts*. Anna Libera Dallapiccola (ed.) University of Heidelberg series no. 125. Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1989, pp. 1-5.
15. Pandit Madhusudana and Madhavaprasada Sarma (eds.) *Visnudharmottara Purana*, Khanda III, Chapter 2, Bombay: Venkatesvara Press, 1912.
16. Niharranjan Ray, *An Approach to Indian Art*. (Chapter IX – 'Ethnic Background of Indian Art'). Chandigarh: Panjab University, 1974.
17. Kapila Vatsyayan, (ed.) See Introductions to the volumes *Concept of Space: Ancient and Modern* (IGNCA and Abhinav Publications) and *Concept of Time: Ancient and Modern* (IGNCA and Sterling Publishers). 1991. Essays in these volumes address questions of perceptions of Concept and Time in different cultures as also disciplines.
18. The exposition on the categories of *guna* elucidated differs from reflections on categories by other eminent scholars. McKim Marriott's position in a way comes closest but not identical. See 'Constructing an Indian ethnosociology' and specially his formulation of the cubes and the categories (pp.11-22) as also figures 1 and 2. Also see the perceptive essay by Ramanujam, A.K., 'Is there an Indian way of thinking? An informal essay' in the same volume *India through Hindu Categories* (ed.) Marriott, McKim. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1990.
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21. Jacques Derrida. *Of Grammatology*. First published in French in 1967; English translation by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak published by John Hopkins University Press in 1976 and a corrected edition in 1988.
22. Andrew Robinson, *The Story of Writing*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995.
23. Neil Postman, *Technopoly – The Surrender of Culture to Technology*. London: Alfred Knopf, 1993. The conversation between God Theuth and King Thamus of Egypt quoted by Postman is originally mentioned in *Plato: Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Eds). Hamilton, Edith and Cairns, Huntington. (See Conversation between Socrates and Phaedrus in Chapter: Phaedrus. (tr.) Hackforth). Bollington Series LXXI, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961, p.250.
24. Gordon V Childe, 'The Urban Revolution' in *Town Planning Review*, Vol. 21, No. 1, Liverpool University, 1950, pp. 3-17. Also see a contrary view by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Am I My Brother's Keeper?*, New York: The John Day Company, 1947, pp. 19-36.
25. Kapila Vatsyayan, *Bharata: The Natyasastra*, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1996. Also see Kapila Vatsyayana, 'A history of criticism of the Natyasastra,' *Shastric Traditions in Indian Arts*, (ed) Anna Libera Dallapiccola, University of Heidelberg series No. 125. Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1989, pp. 333-339.
26. Vidya Nivas Misra, 'Sahitya, Vak, Rasa – Literature, Logos and Rasa', Chapter 2 in *Aesthetic Theories and Forms in Indian Tradition*, Vol. VI, Part I. Op. Cit.
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28. Dr. V. Raghavan, (ed.) *The Ramayana Tradition in Asia*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1980. Also: Srinivasa Iyengar, K.R. (ed.) *Asian Variations in Ramayana*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2007. Ramanujan, A.K., 'Three Hundred Ramayanas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on

- Translation' in Richman Paula (ed.), *Many Ramayanas – The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992.
29. Jean-Jacques Thibon, Talk on 'Presence of Sufi Teachings and Practices in Some Tales of the Arabian Nights' given at the International Symposium on 'Reception of Arabian Nights in World Literature', held in Delhi on 21-23 February 2010 organized by JNU and IIC-Asia Project. (Under print)
 30. Kapila Vatsyayan, 'Gita-Govinda and its Influence on Indian Art,' in *Chhavi – 2 Rai Krishnadasa Felicitation Volume*. Banaras: Bharat Kala Bhavan, 1981, pp.252-258. Also, Vatsyayan, Kapila, Introduction to *Mewari Gita-Govinda*. New Delhi, National Museum, 1987.
 31. Kapila Vatsyayan, *Traditional Indian Theatre: Multiple Streams*. See Chapter V on *Chau*. New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2007 (Third edition) (First edition 1980 and second edition 2005). Specially see the Epilogue.
 32. Kapila Vatsyayan, *Traditions of Indian Folk Dance*. New Delhi: Clarion Books, 2010. (First edition 1976 and second edition 1977)
 33. David N Gellner, *Monk, Householder and Tantric Priest – Newar Buddhism and its Hierarchy of Ritual*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992.
 34. My involvement with the International Congress of Orientalists began in the 1960s, but my engagement with what may be called 'tribal India' began a decade earlier. It was the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru who asked me to assist in making selections for the first two or three Republic Day parades. This gave an opportunity to live with, appreciate and admire the accomplishments of these communities. I learnt from this experience as much or more than from what formal education has taught me. What I have stated is on the basis of experience rather than reading from books or formal field studies. However, I am not sure whether they should continue to be showcased at Republic Day functions as representing national culture.
 35. Claude Levi-Strauss, See *Structural Anthropology*, specially his Introduction on *History and Anthropology*, as also *Structural Analysis in Linguistics and in Anthropology and Language and the Analysis of Social Laws*. London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press (Reprinted), 1969.
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 37. Kapila Vatsyayan, *Traditions of Indian Folk Dance*. Op.Cit, pp. 72-86.
 38. See *International Social Science Journal*,
 - (i) 'Cultural Diversity and Biodiversity', in *International Social Science Journal* No. 187, published by Blackwell Publishing for UNESCO, 2006, dedicated to *Epistemologies of Knowledge and Cultural Landscapes*.
 - (ii) *Learning and Knowledge – Indigenous Societies Today*, edited by Bates Chris and Douglas Nakashima, UNESCO, Paris, 2009.
 - (iii) *The Jarawa Tribal Reserve Dossier – Cultural and Biological Diversities in the Andaman Islands*, edited by Pankaj Sekhsaria and Vishvajit Pandya. Also see Kapila Vatsyayan's Foreword. Paris: UNESCO, 2010.
 39. P. S. Ramakrishnan, *One Sun, Two Worlds: an Ecological Journey* (Conversation between a villager - Traditional Knowledge and a scientist - Formal Knowledge). New Delhi: UNESCO, 2005. Also, *The Cultural Cradle of Biodiversity*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, India (rpt.) 2008.
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 41. See Kapila Vatsyayan, 'B. C. Sanyal and His Times,' lecture delivered in the Lalit Kala Akademi (under print)
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 43. Kapila Vatsyayan, 'Institutionalizing Culture: Contemporary Issues of Administrative Systems' in the volume *Pursuit of Institutional Excellence*, P. L. Sanjeev Reddy, Jaideep Singh and R. K. Tiwari (eds.), New Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Administration, 2004.