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EDITOR'S NOTE

When a back date issue of any academic journal is published a little later than its timeliness, the joy of its publication is overwhelming. However, it poses some critical questions: whether could this be made theme-based, works cited by the contributors later than the publishing year, its relevance on time scale and so on. This volume could not be made thematic, as it has to be evolved based on available papers of IUC associates and a few other contributions by scholars of repute. On the other hand, it provides opportunities with changing times. It is a peer review journal with its own advantages, including style of presentation and importance in ranking system of UGC. The authors had a chance to look at their papers afresh and recent work could be cited on the topics. Some contributions therefore carry references of later years than 2011.

There are nine essays belonging to different disciplines and exploring new areas or debates within the respective discipline. Essays from political thought, philosophy, political sociology, literature review on Partition, a combination of history, art, gender and sexuality, history of ideas and community identity of Sri Vaisanavas in South India, understanding tribes through popular cultural studies, and reflection on English literary study and pedagogic issues have enriched this volume. Two book reviews, one by a philosopher and the other by a development sociologist, are included.

Mangesh revisits the famous debate between Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, which was triggered by Francis Jeanson's carping review of the latter's book on political philosophy, *The Rebel* (1951). He gives an overview of the debate which addressed a wide range of issues including the meaning of history, the nature of revolution, as well as the relationship between freedom and necessity. Camus objected to Jeanson's and Sartre's uncritical attitude towards the pronouncements of Hegel and Marx. He condemned the duo's failure to decipher the Hegelian roots of communist cynicism, their refusal to acknowledge the unraveling of the Marxist prognosis and the authoritarian character of the USSR, as also their cavalier censure of all non-Marxist revolutionary traditions. In turn, his two detractors accused Camus of theoretical naiveness, indifference to history, as

well as complicity with capitalism and imperialism. The sociologist Raymond Aron was one of the prominent contemporaries who responded to the controversy. He found Camus lacking in philosophical rigour; but endorsed the latter's critique of communism. Mangesh draws on the relevant writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty to illuminate the issues raised by this debate. He points out that the philosopher eventually launched a formidable attack on the revolutionary romanticism of Sartre and Marx, which resonated with many key arguments advanced in *The Rebel*. Thus, the initially discordant positions of Camus and Merleau-Ponty converged and opened up new horizons of thought.

Ajay explores systems and lifeworlds from Habermas as well as major trends of classical Indian philosophy traditions including Bhartṛhari, mīmāmsa and Nyāyas for words and its meaning, language and knowledge and the objects. Our world exists and is expressed through language, as language is a window to the world; the world has an essential structure as a language has. If we were to ask what could have come first, the intention to speak or the language with its predefined structure, we are more likely to believe that it is the latter. But as soon as we have decided upon priority of language over intention to speak, we have another set of questions emerging from the other end. Further, purity of linguistic understanding along with the uninterrupted flow of tradition where it has to be located, leads to many questions and each tradition and philosophical thought approaches and answers the quest differently.

Kanad looks at *Rāmāyaṇa* as a tale of devoted companionship and unfair separation between couples. *Rāmakathā* or the story of Rāma, one of the most notable South Asian traditions, has different versions including Vālmīki, Kālidāsa, Bhavabhūti, Ānanda, Kampan, poet of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa,* Kṛttibāsa, Tulsīdās and many more. Scholars consider different accounts of Rāma's life equally valid and many literati, from Bhavabhūti to Rabindranath, have held different opinions about persons, situations and their doings. The article focuses on three couples — Rāma-Sītā, *krauñca* (crane-couple) and Daśaratha-Kaikeyī — and encompasses different views and interpretations of the persons and situations. He refers to 'Uttarakāṇḍa' after studying different writers' versions and argues that Vālmīki had little role to play in this gross alteration of his message. Rāma is the eye-candy of normative orthodoxy and the political right wing, and the villain in the eyes of the gender-sensitive writers, while Sītā is the ideal submissive woman or the symbol of the gender-oppressed yet strong-willed women. The association of

krauñca with Rāma-Sītā and interpretation of their relationship varies with different poets and similarly for Daśaratha-Kaikeyī and their personalities. Daśaratha's passion for Kaikeyī surfaces time and again and Kaikeyī's villainy is innovated by Vālmīki to emphasise the couple's love and companionship.

Gitika views all intellectual practice at the crossroads of traditions of thought and contemporary realities or discursively ordered. In this context, she elucidates the discursive space of political sociology in India through Frederick George Bailey's work in Orissa in post-colonial India. She has explained how Bailey worked with a very specific understanding of 'politics', as "orderly competition"; how the different arenas, such as the State, the political constituencies and the villages are connected through interaction without essentializing a particular style or idiom of Indian politics; interaction of traditional and modern political institutions based on analysis of political behaviour and processual components into political analysis to challenge the formalism of structuralist paradigms; and analysis of structure and agency. This kind of analysis has thrown light in understanding the state through the everyday, routinized practices through which individuals and groups in society make sense of the state and its institutions; and three levels of explanations of political activity, viz. cultural, structural, and external and their complementarity and conflicts in given arenas. He demonstrated that different norms constituting the different systems — a tribe, caste, or nation — are intertwined in actual social situations, and disputes arising in one system may be waged in terms of another as well as role of traditional leadership and chiefs, and intermediaries to be looked into.

Baisali reviews the role of creative literature on Partition vis-à-vis government or what institutionalised documentation or historical analysis intends to achieve, as it has a wider canvas and imaginative liberty that captures diverse themes and perspectives, from simple to complex ones. She has broadly categorised different tales on Partition into two categories, one of short fiction as the immediate response to Partition and the other that looks at Partition in retrospect and valorises survival strategies and opines that majority of the stories fall into the first category. Yet, a time like Partition helps in revealing the best as well as the worst qualities in an individual; she also elevates Partition from a merely physical experience to a metaphorical one by insinuating discussion on Hindu and Muslim nationalism. Women's experience during Partition has mostly remained unspoken and ill-documented through this

turbulent period and beyond. Bengali Partition tales constitute a remarkable but little-discussed segment of narratives, and strike a distinct note in representing the emotional/psychological setback the divide created. The paper also covers stories which show that for the second and third generation population growing up without a first-hand knowledge of Partition, memory has very little to offer.

Preeti examines erotic representations of female bodies, amorous behaviour and heterosexual practices in diverse patterns of cultural articulation. She urges that there is a strong need for examining patriarchal hegemony and its institutional practices that have portrayed different aspects of women's life from the prism of male suitability in the name of culture. The paper undertakes an epistemological inquiry regarding female sexuality represented in architecture embodied in Hindu templesand attempts to map the genealogies of feminine sexuality, as archaically imbricated in the Indian psyche. She contends that social, cultural and political climate of the time encouraged the use of erotic motif in religious art in given times, such as female figures in form of *parichārikā*, *abhisārikā*, *kāmini*, *shukasārikā*, *shalabhanjikā*, *mithuna*, and *maithuna* are sculpted since fourth-fifth centuries in shrines of different cults. As a paradox, religion and sexuality have shared certain characteristics from the beginning of human history. Feminine sexuality itself is subjected to arbitrary positioning into the dichotomous notions of morally good or bad. In Indian traditions, overt feminine sexuality is a characteristic often seen with the demonic women, mostly portrayed as inherently depraved and dangerous, and needs masculine control in order to protect social morality. This is how through art, literature and films the masculine order manipulates the agency of femininity and constructs feminine sexuality. She concludes saying that the massification of ignorance through religion facilitates a male-centric order to get massive credence to its attempts at perpetuating the cultural difference based on gender.

Banibrata traces the history of English literary studies and explores epistemological space of the studies in India. India has twin legacies of English language and literature to contend with– the colonial legacy of English language *per se* and focusing on its functionality. As such, many academics have scrutinised the growth and development of English studies in England as well as in India and have provided perceptive accounts of the institutionalization of English studies in India, and have shown how it was causally linked to the corresponding process in England through colonialism. The paper overviews work done on the topic and shows how the idea of

pedagogical practices for English is mechanically implanted through the education system in general and the university system in particular with a historical, political and cultural baggage. Students gain degrees in English Literature without being aware of how the subject was instituted in colonial times and the circumstances under which it is studied today. The paper refers to the UGC's *Model Curriculum for English and other Western Languages* of 2001 and identifies areas of intervention as well as spells out some grey areas in its recommendations.

Ranjeeta juxtaposes the emergence of multiple identities and the formation of the community vis-à-vis a uniform identity and sectarian affiliations articulated in the texts, tradition and practice. The paper delves into the ideas of history of the Shrivaishnava of South India from the thirteenth century onwards and the ways in which modern representations were informed by the texts and contexts. Shrivaishnavas are a Vaishnava community that considers Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi as their supreme godhead, and regards the Sanskrit Vedas and the *Nālāyira Divya Prabandham.* It has two distinct groups, the Vadakalais and Tenkalais, that maintain their identity through affiliation with the temples and *mathas.* The paper describes how inscriptions available belonging to different temples show schism developed during thirteenth and seventeenth centuries and over look the historical processes of the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries AD, how a plurality of identities based on multiple traditions emerged that did not coalesce around the Sanskritic and Tamil traditions to form a distinct Sanskritic or Tamil sect, how formation of political and linguistic zones, new social class and expansion of social base of Shrivaishnavism contributed to its changing form, and despite efforts to include non-brahmanas in the ritual activities, Shrivaishnavism remained highly brahmmanical in its outlook, and how sectarian interests and behaviour have shaped up multiple identities, which are mutually interactive.

Sayantoni explores the less travelled area of popular cultural studies through this paper. She describes inner life of the Santals and their spatial tactics and idea of environment and justice through a retrospective look into the past, based on available descriptions in folktales documented between 1890 and 1929. Santal Revolt of 1855 against oppressive laws related to land, forest and revenue is a crucial event in the environmental history of this region, dominant spatial practices as well as justice as their leaders were arrested and sentenced to death. As tales reveal, for the Santals the inner and the outer world, the house and the world they inhabited including

water bodies, were equally important. The tree acts as a space for solace, forgiveness and redemption, and the carved nichés in the walls offer protection and a place of refuge. Some of the stories reflect shifts in agricultural practices, dilemmas on conservation, or the flux that the community was facing due to migration, or how the Santals chose coping mechanisms around the atrocities of *Zamindars* (landlords) and moneylenders, or the simple changes in technology, some that the Santals willingly took on for their own betterment at that time. Jackals and termites occupy importance and stories on jackal are analysed from moral and culture perspective.

Two books are reviewed. The book *Contrary to Thoughtlessness* reopens an examination, evaluation and critique of contemporary American theorists writing on Aristotle's ethics and is reviewed by an educator, an associate to inter-university centre. The book *Revolution from Above: India's Future and Citizen's Elite* enunciates the role of citizen elites to revolutionise the Indian scenario, instead of getting bogged down with dystopia and accepting the reality as 'given'. The education, health care, energy resources sectors and process of urbanisation have been elaborated as priority sectors to bring about change in India.

The space of acknowledgement is important towards the end of introduction of the volume, as it has provided opportunity, autonomy and joy for the publication of academic writing to the editor as well as the contributors. I am very happy that within a span of six months, we all together are able to bring out this volume. My experience of editing the volume of 2008 helped me in maintaining quality of an academic journal of high repute as well as in academic enrichment.

I am grateful to the peer reviewers for insightful comments and feedback on each paper within a short time. I had a chance to interact with some of them personally which has enlightened me on many counts. This volume could not have been possible without contributors' will, efforts and cooperation. The book reviewer needs special mention, as reviewing a book within a short time needs dedication and an inclination of a special kind. I pay due respect to all the contributors for their contribution and bearing with me for demands of being an editor.

In the process of editing the volume, support of the fellow colleagues, Publication Department, Academic Resource Office and the Director of the Institute needs special mention and appreciation. I'm thankful to Prof Chetan Singh for sharing his experiences and

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In acknowledgement, though many names are not spelt out individually, each one of the person and the process are acknowledged respectfully, as such ventures are collaborative, team efforts. With this spirit, I thank all those whose names are not specially mentioned but they have been co-travellers in the journey of this publication.

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1 June 2014 *Fellow, IIAS*

REVISITING THE
CAMUS-SARTRE DEBATE

Mangesh Kulkarni

The publication of *L'Homme révolté/The Rebel (1951/1956)*–Albert Camus's best-known work pertaining to political thought–triggered an intellectual battle royal that was joined by polemicists of every conceivable ideological hue. A scathing review of the book by Francis Jeanson (1922-2009) in *Les Temps Modernes* provoked Camus (1913-1960) into writing a stiff rejoinder which he directly addressed to the reviewer's mentor, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), who in turn responded vehemently. The acrimonious debate between Camus and Sartre became something of a *cause célèbre*, ended their friendship, and signaled the growing polarization of French intellectuals in the Cold War era. My paper revisits this debate by focusing on the important philosophical and political questions which it raised. I seek to illuminate the issues at stake by positing Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) as another interlocutor in this debate. Merleau-Ponty was a major French philosopher who had been close to Sartre, but grew critical of him and eventually articulated a position akin to the one advanced by Camus.

FIRST BLOOD

Due to the massive presence of the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF), communism had emerged as a major axis of ideological and political life in post-World War II France. Moreover, Marxism had made a vigorous appearance on the French intellectual scene. Throughout the late 1940s, Camus had been engaged in polemics with pro-Communist intellectuals like Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Emmanuel d'Astier.[1] It was therefore natural that his critique of Marxism and Soviet communism should become the focus of the critical reception accorded to *The Rebel*. This aspect of the book predictably received lavish praise from the anti-Stalinist Left, liberals and conservatives. The reviews in *Le Monde*, *Combat* and *Le Figaro* alike described *The Rebel* as a major landmark; while the rightwing extremist *Action*

Française saw it as a welcome return to nationalism and piety (Lottman, 1979: 496).

Equally predictable was the hostile reaction of the communist press, especially since the PCF was then staunchly pro-Soviet and Stalinist. Pierre Hervé, a party critic, wrote disparagingly about Camus' ignorance of harsh political realities such as colonial oppression, and described the anarcho-syndicalists extolled by him, as agents of American capital (Thody, 1961: 147). Such mindless hostility annoyed Camus, but hardly occasioned much surprise or bitterness. What did come as a bitter surprise to him was a virulent attack launched by Sartre's *Les Temps Modernes* in the form of Francis Jeanson's lengthy review, '*Albert Camus ou l'āme révoltée*'[2] (Jeanson, 1952a)–a pun on the title of Camus' book, *L'Homme révolté.*

Jeanson found the popularity of *The Rebel* suspicious. He attributed it to the malleability of Camus' thought and to his vague humanism. He saw in the 'excessively perfect' style of the book a cloak that concealed the poverty of its content. Camus' Mediterranean mind, passionately fond of intellectual transparency, could not come to terms with the human contradictions and suffering of the real world. This explained his tendency–prefigured in the novel *La Peste/The Plague* (1947/1982)–to take a detached view of the human condition and to expound a 'Red Cross morality'. In *The Rebel*, it led him to reject the role of history and economics in the genesis of revolutions, and to reduce the concept of revolution to that of man's divinization. Hence, the book's curious "... silence about the essence of the revolutionary phenomenon – the conditions in which it arises, its real dynamics, and the forms of human behaviour that constitute it" (Jeanson, 1952a: 2078).

Jeanson accused Camus of caricaturing Hegel and Marx. Thus, Camus heedlessly hurled the charge of nihilism at Hegel, labelled Marx as a determinist, and treated Stalinism as a logical outcome of Marxism, without bothering to prove his contention. He did not situate Stalinism historically and instead converted it into a bogey to underscore the relative superiority of capitalism–a ploy, which would utterly fail to convince the proletarian and colonial victims of the latter. Camus' most fundamental weakness was his inability to grasp the dialectic of history. This led him to insist dogmatically on the inevitable miscarriage of all revolutionary projects, and to the advocacy of an inefficacious ethic of revolt. Therefore, *The Rebel* turned out to be "...a pseudo-philosophical pseudo-history of 'revolutions' ...a failed great book..." (Jeanson, 1952a: 2090).

COUNTERBLAST

The review took Camus unawares as his relations with Sartre's group had been on the whole cordial. A recent issue of the journal had, in fact, carried his essay on Nietzsche, which formed a part of *The Rebel*. Camus was particularly hurt by Jeanson's egregious intellectual arrogance and his callous caricaturing of the book's argument and style (Brée, 1979: 247). He also felt badly let down by Sartre and sent an indignant rebuttal to *Les Temps Modernes*, addressing him formally as '*Monsieur le Directeur*' ('Dear Editor'). Together with Sartre's and Jeanson's equally spirited replies, it was published in the August 1952 issue of the journal.

Camus accused Jeanson (throughout referred to as Sartre's collaborator) of making a travesty of *The Rebel*, and of inventing a fanciful biography for its author. Responding to the charge that the book had been warmly received by the Right, which supposedly indicated its dubious character, he wrote: "The veracity of a thought is not determined by whether it belongs to the Right or the Left and even less by what they decide to make of it.... If, finally, the truth appeared to me to be on the Right, I would be there" (Camus, 1952: 317). Moreover, the charge was factually inaccurate, as many Right-wing critics like Claude Mauriac had expressed serious reservations about the book. Camus decried Jeanson's silly assumption that fine style necessarily indicated a conservative sensibility, as also his insinuation that anyone critical of Marxism was *ipso facto* reactionary.

Responding to Jeanson's criticism of *The Plague*, Camus argued that the former confused the modesty displayed by the narrator of the novel with disengagement and failed to explain how a contemplative attitude could give rise to a 'Red Cross morality'. Moreover, such a reading completely missed the obvious fact that the movement from *L'étranger/The Outsider* (1942/1982) to *The Plague* was in the direction of solidarity and participation. Even as Jeanson misread the context of *The Rebel*, he stubbornly refused to discuss its central theses: "the definition of a limit disclosed by the very movement of revolt, the critique of post-Hegelian nihilism and Marxist prophecy, the analysis of the dialectical contradictions regarding the end of history, the critique of the notion of objective culpability" (Camus, 1952: 321). Instead, he found in the book a non-existent thesis and took Camus to task for denying any role to history and economics in the genesis of revolutions, though the latter had explicitly stated that the focus of the book was on the

ideological dimension of revolutions.

Camus chided Jeanson for attributing to him a position he did not defend: "all evil is located in history and all good outside of it" (Camus, 1952: 323). In fact, *The Rebel* sought to demonstrate that pure anti-historicism was as harmful as pure historicism: whether one put values above history or absolutely identified them with it, the result was nihilism. Not satisfied with misinterpreting the text, Jeanson went on to provide a fictitious biographical explanation of Camus' alleged antipathy to history. On this account, the latter had first encountered history only after leaving the Algerian idyll and participating in the Resistance. As the hopes he had pinned on the Resistance failed to materialise, he got disillusioned with history and withdrew into a shell. Camus pointed out that in Algeria, he had been engaged in a struggle against colonial injustice, that he had never treated the Resistance as a happy or easy form of history, and that he had no intention of retiring to a life of artistic leisure.

Camus then went on the offensive: "[I will demonstrate] that the attitude to which your article testifies is philosophically founded on contradiction and nihilism, and is historically ineffectual" (Camus, 1952: 326). His first charge was that Jeanson (and by implication, Sartre) was defending "...Marxism as an implicit dogma without being able to assert it as an explicit political position" (Camus, 1952: 326). All criticism of Marxism was labelled as Right wing, Marx and Hegel were constantly invoked as authorities, and non-Marxist revolutionary traditions were treated with derision. And yet, nothing was said about the unravelling of the Marxist prophecy, the Hegelian sources of the political cynicism afflicting communism, and the misfortunes of authoritarian socialism.

To Camus, this contradiction was symptomatic of a deeper malaise. On the one hand, it revealed the pathetic passions of the repentant bourgeois, and on the other, the futile attempt to reconcile the existentialist vision of human freedom with the Marxist doctrine of historical necessity. Through his passage from extreme freedom to extreme necessity, and his acquiescence in the despotism of the communist state, Jeanson exposed his capitulation to nihilism: "As long as you have not clarified or refuted this contradiction, defined your conception of history, colonised or banished Marxism... you cannot get out of nihilism" (Camus, 1952: 331).

Camus pointed out that while Jeanson had accused him of preaching inefficaciousness, the latter's position amounted to doing nothing by undertaking everything. Moreover, he was tired of receiving "...lessons in efficacy from critics, who have never placed

anything other than their armchair in the direction of history..." (Camus, 1952: 332). Finally, he admonished his interlocutors not "...to jeer at all that makes the rebellion fecund and gives it a future in the name of everything in it that courts submission" (Camus, 1952: 333).

ENDGAME

Sartre's angry rejoinder began by announcing the end of his friendship with Camus: "Our friendship was not easy, but I will miss it. If you end it today, that doubtless means that it had to end... you have so deliberately put me on trial, and in such an ugly tone of voice, that I can no longer remain silent without losing face" (Sartre, 1965: 71). He accused Camus of practising self-righteousness, dissimulation and didacticism: "While doing us the honour of joining this issue of *Les Temps Modernes*, you bring a portable altar with you." (Sartre, 1965: 72). He particularly condemned the latter's 'dirty device' which involved addressing Sartre to criticise Jeanson, who was superciliously treated as a non-entity. Camus was further held guilty of justifying quietism on account of his alleged refusal to make a distinction between the masters and the slaves and his consequent failure to clearly side with the oppressed.

Turning to Camus' arguments, Sartre found fault with his contention that the existentialists heedlessly advocated absolute liberty. Charging his detractor with philosophical incompetence, Sartre pointed out that liberty was not a physical force, hence no brakes could be applied to it: "[liberty] is determined by its undertakings, it finds its limits in the positive but necessarily completed character of the former" (Sartre, 1965: 89). Even in the domain of politics, as the architects of the French revolution clearly understood: "...the limits of a right (that is to say, a liberty) is another right (that is to say, still another liberty) and not some 'human nature'..." (Sartre, 1965: 89). The existentialists had not endowed human beings with limitless liberty in order next to throw them in chains: "...I see around me only liberties already enslaved and which are trying to tear themselves from their congenital slavery. Our liberty today is nothing except *the free choice to fight in order to become free*" (Sartre, 1965: 90).

Sartre then focused on what he saw as Camus' inability to come to terms with the dynamics of History. He attributed this to the latter's captivation by the anti-historical cast of classical French thought and his obsessively anti-theistic preoccupation with

metaphysical injustice: "...you didn't reject History through having suffered from it and because you discovered its face with horror. You rejected it, previous to all experience, because our culture rejects it, and because you once placed human values in the struggle of man 'against heaven'" (Sartre, 1965: 94). Even Camus' participation in the historic Resistance could be explained by the fortuitous coincidence that the fight against the Germans epitomised the union of men against inhuman fatalities. His failure to realise that the struggle against nature is at once a cause and effect of man's struggle against man led him to advocate a return to the status-quo after the War: "In short, for a period of several years, you were what could be called the symbol and the proof of class solidarity" (Sartre, 1965: 97).

Sartre dismissed as meaningless Camus' questions as to the meaning and objective of History: "...the problem is not to know its objective, but to give it one...if there are any transcendent values to History, they are manifested through human actions which are, by definition, historical" (Sartre, 1965: 103). Camus had wrongly accused Marx of teleology, for the latter had only spoken of an objective to prehistory, an objective, which would be attained in the womb of History itself, and then surpassed. On account of his failure to understand History, Camus had effectively placed himself outside it. He had thus come to personify an abstract notion of revolt, futilely "...comparing a world without justice to a Justice without content." (Sartre, 1965: 104).

In his response, Jeanson too assailed the Camusian notion of revolt, which he thought was founded on a wrong-headed rejection of the most emancipatory philosophy (Marxism) and the most revolutionary movement (Communism/Stalinism) of the era. While Camus castigated Marxism as being either "an impotent science or a romantic folly", [it actually represented a] "a sublation of both scientific positivism and historical fatalism" (Jeanson, 1952b: 377). The Stalinist movement, despite all its failings, remained "the only one claiming to be revolutionary, and mobilising, especially in our country, the vast majority of the proletariat" (Jeanson, 1952b: 378).

Thus sundered from both critical thought and progressive politics, Camus' supposedly radical exhortations paradoxically promulgated a reactionary creed:

> You christen Revolt with the name of consent... simultaneously, you change indifference into courage, inaction into lucidity, and complicity into innocence.... This common revolt does not lead you to solidarity, it merely designates a juxtaposition of solitudes... you overplay the role of Moderator;

> only you are able to know how far their Revolt must go.... Your pompous lessons of average humanity thus achieve a perfect recuperation of the Absolute through your condescension with regard to the relative (Jeanson, 1952b: 381-382).

Jeanson saw this descent into magniloquent conformism as the pathetic denouement of Camus, "the High Priest of absolute Morality" (Jeanson, 1952b: 382).

Camus did not publicly respond to the torrent of criticism let loose by Sartre and Jeanson. He did write a text in defence of *The Rebel* in late 1952; but it was published posthumously (Camus, 1965: 1702-1716). In his moving obituary on Camus, Sartre described the end of their dialogue as "just another way of living *together* without losing sight of each other in the small, strait world that has fallen to our lot" (Sartre, 1964a: 126).

RESONANCE

Commenting on the Jeanson-Camus-Sartre exchange in his book *L'Opium des intellectuels/The Opium of the Intellectuals* (1955/1957), the liberal French thinker Raymond Aron (1905-1983) wryly noted that only in the Parisian air thick with metaphysical miasma could such a controversy take place; if one were to get rid of Hegelianism, all speculation as to whether the USSR embodied the Revolution would become superfluous (Aron, 1957: 57). He nevertheless supported Camus for his forthright if somewhat unoriginal and philosophically inexact critique of communism and blamed Sartre for politically supporting that ideology without offering a coherent argument in its defence.

It was, however, Maurice Merleau-Ponty who indirectly provided an interesting perspective on the debate in his essay 'Sartre and Ultra-Bolshevism' (Merleau-Ponty, 1995). The essay was written in response to Sartre's strident championship of the Communist Party in '*Les Communistes et la paix*'/'*The Communists and Peace*'—a series of articles published in *Les Temps Modernes* during 1952 (Sartre, 1964b). In this influential series of articles that marked an important stage in the crystallization of Sartre's Marxism, he modified the earlier existentialist notion of individual liberty by locating it in the historical situation. The class asymmetry generated by capitalism was seen as a major hindrance to the realisation of human freedom. Only a working class constituted through and led by the Communist Party could transcend the capitalist society.

'Sartre and Ultra-Bolshevism' contains a little-noticed, passing

reference to the debate on *The Rebel*.[3] However, its relevance stems from the fact that Merleau-Ponty–an outstanding philosopher and pioneering theorist of phenomenology in France, who had earlier championed the communist cause and had in fact played an important role in drawing Sartre to Marxism–wrote it to voice his disillusionment with communism and his critique of Sartre's existentialist Marxism, both of which were crucially implicated in the debate. Merleau-Ponty's break with communism was ostensibly triggered by his negative response to what he perceived as the Soviet Union's imperialist role in the Korean War. However, more fundamental theoretical issues lay at its root and it was through an articulation of these in his polemic contra Sartre that he arrived at a position, which Camus, his former detractor, would have found congenial.

Merleau-Ponty opens the essay with a melancholy account of the historical trajectory of communist praxis:

> [The] dialectic in action responds to adversity either by means of terror exercised in the name of a hidden truth or by opportunism.... But it is one thing to experience this and yet another to recognise and formulate it. It was only implicitly that Trotsky resigned himself to this when, in his last years, he said that the course of things would perhaps call into question the Marxist thesis of the proletariat as the ruling class and of socialism as heir to capitalism. The communists are very far from this admission (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 95).

The dialectic thus serves communism merely as an ideology. Sartre himself denounces the dialectic, but nevertheless seeks to salvage the communist project by resorting to "...ultrabolshevism, in which communism no longer justifies itself by truth, the philosophy of history, and the dialectic but by their negation" (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 100).

Sartre's defence of communism is founded on an idiosyncratic voluntarism which is completely alien to the spirit of classical Marxism. This is evident in his understanding of key concepts such as history, class, party and revolution. Whereas Marx understood communism as the realisation of history, Sartre sees it as an entirely voluntary effort to go beyond, destroy and recreate history. When he turns to history, it is not to secure an objective understanding, but to look at man and society (as Sartre himself puts it) 'with the eyes of the least-favoured'. Merleau-Ponty argues that such "...extreme personalism makes history into a melodrama smeared with crude colors, where individuals are types" (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 147). Merleau-Ponty finds the same arbitrariness in Sartre's

conception of the party and the working class which are conjured up as responses of an anchorless will to the trap of events. The party, once established, acquires a supreme status in the Sartrean scheme. It is in and through the party that the workers establish their existence, identity and agency. Its unity must be preserved at any cost. Therefore, there is no space for pluralism or the accountability of the leadership. The party's decisions cannot be questioned, as by definition, they translate the movement of history.

Sartre has little to say about the revolution because he knows that it has no basis in reality. As Merleau-Ponty points out, the revolution "...is no longer the truth of the existing society and of every society; it is a dream which passes itself off as truth.... In a word, it is a myth." (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 135). Yet, Sartre tenaciously clings to the myth, while turning a purblind eye to the history of the revolution and to the blows inflicted by Stalin on the revolutionary project. This tunnel vision may be partly explained by Sartre's violent dislike of the very real defects of capitalism, which makes him accept non-capitalism in whatever form. His fascination with the revolution leads him to treat even literature in a purely instrumental manner. But such a position is contrary to Marxism: "A Marxist does not expect literature to be the consciousness of the revolution, and this is exactly why he will not admit in principle that it be made a means of action...[writers] are men of speech and experience; one should not ask of them to think 'objectively' the historical totality" (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 157).

Merleau-Ponty argues that the antinomies of Sartre's politics stem from his flawed ontological premises. This argument draws together the threads of his larger critique, and deserves to be quoted at length:

> In social life [à la Sartre], there are no things done together. They must be invented. One must here create from nothing the milieu of a common enterprise or history, and one must even create the subject of this enterprise: the Party. There is no point in demanding here that each consciousness find itself through common action: it must transform itself and be converted into action. The "I think" was able to recover itself through the common life with the other; but where this common life does not exist, the "I think" must explode, it must first create the common life. Thus, in Sartre, what gives to the gaze of the least-favored its absolute authority and to the Party its historical monopoly, and consequently the duty of absolutely respecting communism, is the fact that the initial discord of the other with me and of me with myself lives again undisguisedly and imperiously in the discord between the bourgeoisie and the proletarians and that it demands a solution for which this time the elements are not

> given. It is Sartre's ontology that determines that history as a common
> future be sustained by the pure action of a few, which is identical to the
> obedience of the others. Choice, freedom, and effort become conquest
> and violence in order to become everyone's affair. (Merleau-Ponty, 1995:
> 163).

In other words, it is the desperately agonistic marxisant Cartesianism
of Sartre, which drives him into the embrace of a discredited and
dangerous ideology.

Whereas Sartre posits a rigid dichotomy of men and things,
Merleau-Ponty emphasises the significance of 'the interworld' where
personal relationships are mediated through human symbols. It is
only by acknowledging that all actions are symbolic actions and
renouncing the myth of 'pure action' that one could meaningfully
attempt to change the world. Moreover, one ought to recognise
that contemporary symbolic life was out of joint and that the Marxist
dialectic was incapable of uniting it: "One must then go back, attack
obliquely what could not be changed frontally, and look for an action
other than communist action" (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 201).

Merleau-Ponty's essay on Sartre forms part of his book *Les
Aventures de la dialectique/ Adventures of the Dialectic* (1955/1995). The
book carries an epilogue, where the author clarifies his own political
stance. He makes no bones about his disillusionment with the myth
of the revolution: "There is no dialectic without opposition and
freedom, and in a revolution opposition and freedom do not last
for long. It is no accident that all known revolutions have
degenerated... revolutions are true as movements and false as
regimes" (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 207). This disillusionment is
expressed even more categorically in his critique of the Marxist
historian Daniel Guérin (1904-1988): "The abortion of the French
Revolution, and of all the others, is thus not an accident... the failure
of the revolution is revolution itself. Revolution and its failure are
one and the same thing." (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 219). We must
therefore refuse to reenter the circle of revolution, and instead
seek a regime that does not aim at remaking history, but only at
changing it.

The way to such a desirable regime lies through a radical critique
of Marxism, which in the case of Merleau-Ponty, is also an
autocritique:

> To say as we did that Marxism remains true as critique or negation without
> being true as an action or positively was to place ourselves outside history....
> There must be something in the critique itself that germinates the defects
> in the action. We found this ferment in the Marxist idea of a critique

historically embodied, of a class which is the suppression of itself, which, in its representatives, results in the conviction of being the universal in action, in the right to assert oneself without restriction, and in unverifiable violence. It is the certitude of judging history in the name of history, of saying nothing that history itself does not say [that] makes the Marxist critique a dogma and prevents it from being self-criticism. (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 231).

These innate contradictions have paradoxically turned the emancipatory Marxist project into a source of new oppressions.

Such a critical attitude towards Marxism and communism, however, does not prevent Merleau-Ponty from emphasising the serious defects of capitalism. Hence, he underscores the necessity of an autonomous non-communist Left. While promoting coexistence between communism and capitalism to safeguard peace, the independent Left would conduct a sustained critique and comparison of the two systems, in the process disclosing "...a generalized economy of which they are particular cases" (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 225) and opening up the possibility of transcending them. It would engage in a transparent and moderate pursuit of freedom as well as justice via both parliamentary politics and social struggle.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The foregoing discussion highlights the remarkable convergence between the originally antagonistic trajectories of Merleau-Ponty and Camus, which the latter explicity appreciated. At a conference on 'The Future of the European Civilization', held in Athens in 1955, Camus approvingly cited *Adventures of the Dialectic* as evidence of Merleau-Ponty's liberation from the shackles of the Marxist ideology. He made a pointed reference to the chapter entitled 'Sartre and Ultra-Bolshevism', seeing it as a vindication of his own analogous arguments in *The Rebel*. (Weyembergh, 2009: 541-542).

The Sartre group took serious note of Merleau-Ponty's critique and Simone de Beauvoir published a stinging rebuttal in *Les Temps Modernes* (Beauvoir, 1955). Sartre's own defence of his brand of Marxism appeared in the form of his magnum opus, *Critique de la raison dialectique/Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960/1991). Interestingly, the latter testifies to the continued importance of an agonistic ontology within the Sartrean worldview (Kulkarni, 2011: 139-141).

At least in the world of Anglophone scholarship, the eventual

concordance between Camus and Merleau-Ponty does not seem to have received the attention it deserves. Thus, even a recent, comprehensive book like *Sartre and Camus: A Historic Confrontation*, which takes into account Merleau-Ponty's writings of the 1940s, contains only a passing, perfunctory reference to his later work discussed above (Sprintzen and van den Hoven, 2004). That Camus' assessment of Marxism and of its Sartrean inflection should find an echo in Merleau-Ponty's critique is particularly significant, for the latter could hardly be charged with philosophical incompetence or political woolliness–accusations frequently hurled at Camus by his detractors. The two thinkers' common emphasis on the need for an independent Left is also noteworthy. They thus steered clear of the Cold War ideological polarisation[4] and opened up new horizons of thought.

Note on translation: Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the French are mine.

NOTES

1. In post-World War II France, the euphoria of Liberation had evaporated and the dream of ushering in a peaceful revolution had turned sour. The contentious and divisive politics of the Third Republic had returned with a vengeance to haunt the new regime. In January 1946, General de Gaulle, the head of the government, resigned in exasperation and in May 1947,

the Communist ministers were dismissed for their refusal to support the government's wages policy. Henceforth, the Gaullist Right and the Communists were bent on wrecking the Fourth Republic. To these domestic divisions were added others resulting from the onset of the Cold War in the international arena and the intensification of nationalist struggles in the colonies of France. Together, they inevitably caused realignments among the politically active intellectuals who formed opposing groups. Camus preferred to plough his lonely furrow, and was often caught in the cross-fire.

Meanwhile, the Sartre group was moving closer to the Communists. In 1946, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a prominent member of this group, published a series of articles in *Les Temps Modernes* defending the Moscow Trials and the use of revolutionary violence by the Communist Party on the ground that the working class was the only bearer of an emancipatory future and the Party was its sole spokesman. Merleau-Ponty's articles were intended as a refutation of Arthur Koestler's critique of the Soviet regime in his novel *Darkness at Noon* (1940). Camus was then in touch with Koestler, and gave credence to the latter's firsthand knowledge of Stalinist excesses. An outspoken opponent of Spanish fascism, Camus became increasingly critical of Soviet communism. These regimes' scant regard for human life led him to stress its inviolable sanctity. In November 1946, he wrote a series of articles under the title *Ni victimes ni bourreaux* expressing his opposition to totalitarian ideologies which bred terror and oppression.

2. The title of the review obliquely alludes to the Hegelian critique of the 'beautiful soul' [*belle âme*]. Hegel deploys this notion to describe a person who is excessively conscientious and so refuses to dirty his hands by acting in a decisive manner; instead, he self-righteously denounces the actions of others on supposedly moral grounds. To Hegel, all action leads to the loss of innocence; but it is reprehensible to refrain from action and to attribute base motives to others (Inwood, 1992: 190).

3. The reference is to Jeanson's position regarding the Stalinist movement:

    [It] does not appear to us to be authentically revolutionary. Yet it is the only one which claims to be revolutionary.... We are therefore at one and the same time against it, since we are critical of its methods, and for it, since we do not know whether the authentic revolution is not a chimera...(quoted in Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 166).

    Merleau-Ponty, who was a cofounder and editor of *Les Temps Modernes*, clarifies that despite the "we", he never agreed with this text. He then denounces it in no uncertain terms: "These lines give the entire essence of 'progressivism', its dreamy sweetness, its incurable bullheadedness, and its padded violence" (Ibid.).

4. It was Camus who coined the seminal phrase 'end of ideologies' to envisage a situation where people would reject murderous political projects geared to the realisation of absolute utopias. In 'Neither Victims nor Executioners' (1946), he wrote:

There is indeed hope in this contradiction, for it forces, or will force, the Socialists to make a choice. They will admit that the ends justify the means, which is to say that murder can be legitimized; or they will reject Marxism as an absolute philosophy, confining themselves to its critical aspect, which is often still valuable. If they choose the first, they will end their moral crisis, and their position will be unambiguous. If they choose the second, they will show that our time marks *the end of ideologies*, that is, absolute utopias which in reality destroy themselves through their enormous costs. Then it will be necessary to choose a new kind of utopia – one that is more modest and less destructive (Camus, 1991: 125; emphasis added)

The subsequent trajectory of the 'end of ideology' thesis is, however, another story.

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SYSTEMS AND LIFEWORLDS: A HABERMASIAN OVERVIEW OF MAJOR TRENDS IN CLASSICAL INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Ajay Verma

One of the foremost tasks of philosophers is to look for order in the way things are or suggest ways that may make a better order possible among things. Habermas takes up the same old cause of philosophy and looks afresh at the question of social order specially in the wake of post- Heideggerian hermeneutical turn in answer to this question. But the question – how are things ordered? – is subsequent to the question – what is the actual nature of things? In general 'what' questions are always prior to 'how' questions since order of things (how) cannot be studied in isolation from our ontological presumptions (what) regarding those things. Similarly it is important to first study the ontological nature of society to theorize about the order of society. Habermas' views on these issues have already been a subject of vast discussions among scholars, but Habermas' theory of social ontology and its metaphysics is important not only from the socio- political point of view but also from the point of view of how it throws into relief the link between ontological presumptions and ethical beliefs within a particular philosophical system. In this regard Habermas' distinction between Lifeworld and Systems is crucial. The distinction between lifeworld and systems is built upon a further distinction between instrumental or strategic actions on one hand and communicative actions on the other. In the present paper I would give a brief exposition of the distinctions between lifeworld and systems as expounded by Habermas. In the backdrop of this distinction I would present a philosophical review of some of the epistemological and ontological theories propounded by the chief proponents of realist (Nyāya), idealist (Buddhist) and linguistic/ grammarian (Bhartṛhari) schools of thought in Indian philosophy. In this project I would be guided by an interest to discover if there were any schools of thought in classical India which had tenets supportive of a Lifeworld rather than a System.

HABERMAS' CONCEPTION OF SYSTEM AND LIFEWORLD

That the things should be intelligible to us is not only a philosophical incumbency but a psychological need as well. If things make sense to us then our actions directed towards those things also make sense. That means to say that our actions depend upon how we look at the objects around us. This further implies that one of the ways to justify our actions could be to give a cognitive explanation of the world around us. But this is only the empirical part of the issue. Our judgments and cognitions are not value free. We have no direct value free pre-linguistic connection with the world. The ways things seem to us are also the ways we have chosen to see them. Our language provides us pre-determined choices regarding how we could see the world. Since we share the language with the community, we share our ways of acting towards the world as well. Thus actions are communicative just like language essentially is at least in its free speech use.

Habermas maintains that a correct understanding of meaning of an action is tantamount to correct grasp of the reasons for which it is performed. Further he argues that these reasons are embedded in the linguisticality of our being. Since language is a shared phenomenon the action and its meaning and reasons for which it is performed should in principle be accessible both to the interpreter and the agent, rather than being in the domain of agent alone. Thus in Habermas' philosophy the problem of understanding the meaning of an action depends upon the understanding of the reasons for which it is performed all of which are subject to public domain. One could take it a step further from here and argue that the problem of how the meaning generating process becomes possible in language has an intimate connection with the question – how does knowledge become possible in language. Further fallout of this conception would be that our ideas regarding knowledge and language have an important bearing upon how we act and how we understand actions. If the problem of understanding actions rests upon problems of meaning and language then the arena of our inquiry into meaning of actions becomes much wider. We have to remember that Habermas is writing in Post-Heideggerian period and is greatly influenced by philosophical hermeneutical tradition of Heidegger and Gadamer. The gamut of language as we all know is too vast. We give command in language so do we denote and in the same act connote. Above all we understand and articulate questions regarding language and subsequent answers to them also

in language. Depending upon which aspect of language we give primacy over others our view regarding actions would also differ. Habermas gives primacy to what he calls pragmatic function of speech over its denotative and imperative roles. According to Habermas primary function of language is to bring interlocutors to a shared understanding and to facilitate an intersubjective consensus among them. Habermas argues that this function of language should always have priority over its function of denoting the way the world is. Habermas writes:

> One simply would not know what it is to understand the meaning of a single linguistic expression if one did not know how one could make use of it in order to reach understanding with someone about something. (Habermas, 1998: 228)

There is teleological strand running within this conception of speech. When two or more persons enter into a dialogue then it is through the tracks and path thus revealed to them within the gamut of language that they discover a common ground to meet what Habermas calls '*rationales einverständis*' which means consensus reached on the basis of rationality. He uses the word '*verständingung*' to denote the process of reaching the consensus. Thus when we participate in a dialogue, we do so with a view to reach a common ground on an issue. This could be viewed as the *telos* which propels the dialogue towards itself. Bringing out this teleological structure of dialogue, Habermas writes, "reaching understanding inhabits human-speech as its telos." (1984: 287)

Unlike Heidegger and Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics which locates the possibility of dialogue in individual's effective historical consciousness driven towards fusion of horizon, Habermas locates them in shared reason. Thus he maintains that the meaning of what we say and what we do is shared and public because meaning depends on reason and reason on Habermas' account is shared and public. As we have seen in the preceding paragraphs that for Habermas meaning of action is founded upon the reasons adduced for it, accordingly under this scheme of things, when we make a free speech act, implicit and embedded in it are the following two different kinds of validity claims namely, epistemological claim to truth, and ethical claim to rightness. Validity claim to truth only means that whenever I make a proposition and claim it to be true, then what I am implicitly saying is that I have good enough conscious reasons to believe it to be true, and since reason is a shared phenomenon I am prepared to convince the interlocutor with the

same set of reasons. Similarly in an analogous way validity claim to rightness and truthfulness only means that when I make these claims I rationally subscribe to the norms underlying that statement. To put it simply, it only means that when I utter a moral statement in a dialogue, I am committed to provide rational justification for that norm.

The important point that one must note here is that in Habermasian scheme of things truth is viewed as depending upon reason and validity and not vice-versa. Another important point that emerges from the above discussion is that according to Habermas meaning is an intersubjective affair rather than an objective one. This indicates his hermeneutical legacy. Habermas in contrast to some of the realist theories of meaning suggests that meanings are not determined by the speaker's relation to the external world but emerges from the relationship between things and words. But all in all one of the most important contributions of Habermas to the history of ideas is the link he has explicated between language and ethics. How we know or rather how we think we know has inevitable bearing upon how we look at our ethical and subsequently socio-political predicaments.

Apart from Habermas' views on language we should also examine how he tries to link it with questions concerning ethics and polity. In this regard it is important to understand Habermas' distinction between instrumental and communicative action. If we were to understand this distinction generally then we could understand it in terms of means and end relationship. Most of us would agree that discovering the goals and ends of our life is a long and arduous process and most of the times it is as long as it is important. Since all understanding including the knowledge of our ends in life is within the arena of language and dialogue, these goals cannot be extrinsic to or outside of linguisticality of our being. The discovery of these goals is actually a part of the dialogical process. But often at times it so happens that motives behind a dialogue are already defined and strategies to realize them are already operational in the dialogue process. In these cases the aim of the interlocutors is not to discover the shared goals, rather their aim is to coerce the others in the dialogue towards a pre-conceived end. Broadly speaking in a dialogue such actions where the end is already pre-conceived are called by Habermas as instrumental or strategic actions. In communicative actions on the other hand interlocutors participate in a dialogue with a view to discover shared goals and means such that the ends gradually emerge from the means.

According to Habermas the way we look at other interlocutors in a dialogue shapes up our view towards the society. Habermas argues that depending upon our ethical outlook in terms of instrumental or communicative actions, two different kinds of social ontologies come into picture. The ontological conceptions of society resulting from instrumental and communicative actions are termed as 'lifeworld' and 'system' respectively by Habermas. Lifeworld according to Habermas is vast expanse of space posited with shared meanings and values in which communicative action of the interlocutors in a dialogue become possible. No lifeworld can have a definite, fully formed structure. It rather exists like an ongoing play (*spiel*) always evolving as it goes on. Its inner movement albeit communicative is its life, as it goes through changes, revisions and onward growth, all of which are necessarily discreet, piecemeal and gradual. The structure of the lifeworld is such that the meanings and understanding emerging within it are thematized in individual instances of dialogue but it cannot be thematized all at once in a totality. Thus lifeworld has an inner bursting movement but it never moves outside of itself and in that sense does not really have an outside of itself. What Habermas calls 'system' on the other hand is repertory of reified social structures and established patterns of instrumental actions. As we have already discussed in cases of strategic actions, agents conceal their aims and try to steer the dialogue process towards a pre-conceived end. Such patterns of actions are institutionalized and reified in Systems. Further these actions are conceived and projected as actual or natural ways of looking at things. Thus systems work on projection of themselves as what Habermas calls a 'block of quasi-natural reality' (1987: 32), as if these structures are beyond revision and human control.

LANGUAGE AND ETHICS IN NYĀYA, MĪMĀṂSĀ AND
GRAMMARIAN SCHOOL OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Philosophical systems of classical India are conventionally divided into two groups viz. orthodox (*āstika*) and heterodox (*nāstika*). Orthodox schools are named so because they believe in the scriptural authority of the Vedas. Vedas are mainly a set of injunctions which prescribe certain actions in order to achieve certain desired results. Mīmāṃsā school of Indian philosophy maintains that the scriptural authority of Vedas is binding because these are authorless (*apauruśey*) texts. These texts could be viewed as a set of meaningful words and sentences that do not have an outside of themselves in a strictly

hermeneutical sense because they are never written or intended by any author at any point of time. This means to say that the authority of Vedas and what is intended to be prescribed in them is non-contingent upon time and space and therefore absolute.

The only sure sign of life on earth is change which presupposes some activity. Activities presuppose a potent desire for change. Mīmāṃsakas thus would imagine the world as emerging from a matrix of desires, actions and their fruits. If we arrange the co-ordinates of this matrix in a chronological order it would appear like this – there are desires prompting us to perform actions which are followed by results or their fruits. Thus there are desires first, followed by action propelled by them with attainment of fruit as the ultimate result.

Now if the human world is viewed as governed by this matrix, then we need to look at the starting point of the chain namely desire or inclination. This would also explain to us where the role of words comes into picture in the mīmāmsakas scheme of things. In other words the whole issue boils down to what triggers the inclination in us to produce a specific result. Answer to this question differs depending upon the other tenets of the particular thought system. For example, Naiyāyikas, the realist, pluralist school of Indian philosophy, would contend that inclination in the sense of a psychological response is originated in us depending upon the nature *(svabhāva)* of the object in question and how that object fits into an aggregate of other extraneous conditions which together trigger a specific psychological response in the human subject. Naiyāyikas recognize only three kinds of psychological responses namely like or dislike for the object or indifference towards it. Depending upon the psychological response the action of either procuring the object or avoiding it or letting it be ensues in the ethical subject. Another notable response in this regard comes from the Indian Grammarian Bhartṛhari. According to him desires and inclinations as a part of indepth grammar of our linguistic understanding of things is something genetically inherently given to us. Explaining it through an analogy of cuckoo bird, Bhartṛhari states:

> The whole world considers that to be the authority (in daily life). Even the activities of animals develop because of that.

> Just as some substances acquire the power to intoxicate and the like by mere maturity, without the help of any special effort, in the same way are intuitions produced in those that possess them.

Who transforms the voice of the male cuckoo in spring? Who teaches living beings to build nests etc. Who goads beasts and birds on to actions like eating, loving, hating, swimming etc. associated with particular species and pedigrees?

This intuition is the result of Tradition (āgama) accompanied by *bhāvana*. The Tradition is differentiated in as much as it is proximate or remote. (Verses 147-151, 1977: 61-62)[1]

Thus as evident from these verses human dispositions on Bhartṛhari's account are entirely a product of our overall linguistic constitution. All understanding is linguistic understanding and language has its own unalterable, pre-given grammar which conditions our thoughts and subsequently our actions. But through the passage of time the grammar ingrained in the tradition gets corrupted and so do our dispositions towards the world. Therefore getting the pure originary form of grammar back in place would put our actions in place too.

Bhartṛhari resorts to the beiginninglessness of the word in defense of the authority of scriptural words. On his view, since there is no beginning of the word, they could be held to be uncaused and something that is uncaused and eternal lies outside the realm of intellect and thus the authority thereof is not liable to any reasoning or examination. But this is only half the answer to the actual problem. Even if the word is without a beginning and is necessarily immutable, it has its existential value only in so far as it has speakers, writers and readers and so far as this contingency is inevitable, there is always a possibility of the incorrect usage and coercive acceptance of that incorrect usage. Similarly correct grammar is also contingent upon user-community. How does one make sure that there are no deviations within the user-community? Further, how do we know whether the language we are using has correct grammar or not. Who points this out? Further, if our word usage is not correct then how or wherefrom do we know the correct grammar? Bhartṛhari in answer to these problems points out that there are two communities in a society viz. user- community and the learned-community. The community of the learned knows both the incorrect grammar in use and the correct grammar. The onus is upon them to point out the incorrect usage wherever possible and the correct usage thereof as well. Bhartṛhari calls this community of the learned as cultured people *(śiṣta)*. On Bhartṛhari's view, because of this group of cultured people and the passing-on of knowledge or learning through them, a continuity of system is formed which he calls *vyavasthā-nityatā*.

He writes:

> Whether words be eternal or otherwise, their beginning is not known. As in the case of living beings, there is what is called continuity of tradition *(vyavasthā-nityatā)* (ibid., verse 28).

The element of unbroken continuity in tradition is an important point that Bhartṛhari invokes in support of the authority of tradition. According to him:

> Nobody can violate, on the basis of reasoning, those paths of dharma which have come down without a break, because they are accepted in the world. (ibid., verse 31)

So tradition on this account being characterized by continuous uninterrupted flow has to be accepted because it has always been accepted by people without a break in time. But is this a good enough reason to undermine reason vis-à-vis authority of tradition. Bhartṛhari offers arguments against the limitations or reasoning as a tool to understand our ethical predicaments.

In sharp contrast to Naiyāyika's belief Bhartṛhari maintains:

> It is extremely difficult to establish by reasoning the nature of objects, because their properties differ according to difference in circumstances, place and time. (ibid., verse 32)

Therefore reasoning cannot yield to us any uniform, universal understanding about the objects in the world and therefore no corresponding knowledge regarding how to act towards those objects. Not only this:

> Whatever is inferred with great effort by clever reasoners is explained otherwise by the cleverer ones. (ibid. Verse 34)

To the contrary knowledge attained through tradition like skills is only further and further enhanced with the passage of time. It is never contradicted or disproved and does not know an end in time even as a theoretical possibility:

Bhartṛhari states:

> The experts' knowledge of the genuineness of precious stones and coins, uncommunicable to others, is born of practice and not of reasoning. (ibid., verse 35)

Therefore Bhartṛhari concludes:

> One who has recourse to Tradition which shines uninterruptedly like the 'I' consciousness cannot be diverted therefrom by mere reasoning. (ibid., verse 41)

Whether this last sentence actually follows from the previous ones or not, it is nonetheless a strong claim. What Bhartṛhari seems to mean here is that tradition is an *apriori* element in all our judgments like 'I' consciousness where all judgments have to belong in order to have unity of apperception. Reasoning on the other hand being contingent upon particular conditions and circumstances can never supersede the authority of tradition. Thus *vyavasthā-nityatā* or unbroken flow of tradition ensures the existence of the original beginningless pure form of grammar and knowledge of that alone on Bhartṛhari's account can ensure a correct linguistic understanding of the Vedas.

On mīmāṃsaka's account on the other hand words are the trigger point of the whole chain. Vedic words are authorless and without a beginning in time and as such they have priority over anything that has a beginning and an end. Vedic words furthermore are essentially prescriptive in nature. If we view words in terms of actions and results then words can only have prescriptive role to play in such a worldview. The reflexive psychological mechanism of a human person is taken as given and natural and never put into question by the mīmāṃsakas. Vedas also similarly could be viewed as a set of procedures conducive to the perfection of human desire principles. There is a bit of circularity also involved here. Vedas presuppose human desire principles and suggest themselves as an instrument towards their fulfillment. At the same time onus of triggering the right thought towards the appropriate action directed towards the specific desired result lies with the vedic word and not with the human subject.

The first verse of Jaimini's Mīmāṃsā-sūtras lays bare the very aim of Mīmāṃsā enquiry. Literally translated this Sutra *(athāto dharma jiñyāsa)* would mean "therefore an enquiry into duty." (Jaimini's Mimāmsā Sutras verse I.1.1.). As indicated here, the primary aim of Mīmāṃsā enquiry seems to be to analyze the notion of duty and its concomitant obligation. Vedic sentences on mimamsakas account do not tell that so and so is the case but rather their function is to produce an obligation in the reader to act in certain ways so as to make something the case. But then how could words produce in us a sense of obligation and subsequently propel us to action? The problem becomes further complicated when words under consideration are neither spoken words nor the written ones. They are rather words not born out of human effort *(apauruśey)*. Notwithstanding they are supposed to have an intended meaning. An answer to this question is indicated if not explicitly answered in

the fifth verse of Mīmāṃsā-sutrās, where Jaimini says:

> The connection between a word and its meaning is natural. The (vedic) injunctions are, therefore, the only means of knowing duty (dharma).

Further he writes,

> Duty consists of a total obedience to all the injunctions that can be found in the Vedas. *(Codana lakśaṇo artho dharmah)*. (ibid., I. 1.5)

As hinted in this sūtra the ethics of Mīmāṃsā rests on their theory of meaning. As noted in the earlier cited sūtra, the relationship between the word and its meaning is *autpattika* which is generally translated as natural but also has a sense of pre-ordained, inborn or innate. The main purport of this conception is that the meaning in language is prior to human understanding. In other words it is not a result of some later implicit accord or a convention agreed upon by the users of the language as maintained by some Naiyāyikas. This insinuates an understanding of the relationship between the word and its meaning already suggested by Bhartṛhari that the ways we use language and our ability to make connection with the meaning in language is prior to human understanding.

Expression and communication in a language is a miniscule part of the total gamut and influence of language. The main and substantive part of linguistic understanding lies in the process of imbuing meaning and its dissemination in the reader or the listener. Thus just like for Bhartṛhari language is the origin of all that exists, material or immaterial; for mīmāṃsakas too there is an organic link between language and human conduct. Human conduct has to be in strict correspondence with the structure of language if it has to qualify as ethical. Language on this account is merely a manifestation of an inborn capacity among language users which determinates the relationship between words and their meaning. Language therefore cannot be explained only as a means of achieving tasks like communication nor can the structure of language be viewed as a set of rules which regulate some pre-existing activity. Rather, the inherent, innate or inborn structure of language constitutes and governs our linguistic activity which in the case of Mīmāṃsā is confined to producing obligation in the hearer to act or not to act in specific ways in adherence to *dharma* or duty. One of the important fallout of such view would be that under this scheme of things ethics has to be regarded as direct act-manifestation of structure of language. Conversely an action has to be in strict congruence with this structure if it has to qualify as ethical. One of

the implications of such view would be that ethics as a mode of structure of language has to be viewed as having pre-determined, unalterable, self-sacrosanct structure. This also gives us a cue to understand why Vedic words are held to be unwritten or without an author. Author being herself a product of the very structures of language in use is thus as good as dead. Thus to sum up the discussion one could say that since Vedic words are regarded as eternal and infallible and since they have no author or arbiter, they have no purpose extrinsic to themselves and also their obligatory force cannot be explained in any extraneous terms.

This idea could also be understood in terms of some later developments in the study of language. There is no denying to the fact that a human subject is born into a language. If we were to ask what could have come first, the intention to speak or the language with its predefined structure, we are more likely to believe that it is the latter. The most plausible reason for it would be that the language arranges and structures the world for us. We have no way to understand what we could mean by non-verbal apprehension. Furthermore, non-verbal apprehension even if it exists would be an empty world or a world that is vain and devoid of values. No intention to speak could emerge from such a world. Therefore it is more plausible to believe that language comes prior to our intention to speak. But as soon as we have decided upon priority of language over intention to speak we have another set of questions emerging from the other end. Some of these questions that concern us in the present context are as follows:

If the language is *a priori*, then our judgments about the world are *a priori* structured for us too. Now if this conclusion is followed seriously it would lead to host of unavoidable problems which as we would see later seem impossible to recover from. What I am trying to hint at is that both the realist schools of classical Indian philosophy, Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā, maintain that structure of language has a strict correspondence with the structure of the world and therefore to knowledge and actions. Whereas for Bhartṛhari the two are organically suffused together into Śabda Brahman (*a priori* linguistic principle), for Naiyāyika's and mīmāṃsakas the two are separate but reflect a strict structural unity. Given this presumption about language, simple ethical questions like how to act in a given situation? Or ethical commands or Vedic injunctions for that matter are also shaped within the same *a priori* structure and would thus require strictly one correct answer. But this plain looking outcome of the realist presumption is infested with a host of inextricably mixed

problems. Ethics is about deciding right from wrong. It is about dilemmas and ambiguities. But the realist account of knowledge (their theory of knowledge) leaves a little scope for such ambiguities. Therefore if we assume that language reveals the world to us to its fullest extent and if we further believe that language has no ambiguities about itself, then the need for ethical considerations and judgment would be forever lost. If the meaning is fixed, then also there would be fixed ways of acting towards the world. In other words there would not be right or wrong ways of acting but only the correct or incorrect ones. As a matter of fact any perspective towards the study of language which advocates the fixity of meaning would do so in an endeavor to steer its overall philosophical program towards certain orthodoxy. But it does not require much philosophical reflection to understand that nature and scope of ethics as a sub-discipline of philosophy would lose much of its richness in its realist orthodox garb. Orthodox philosophies relying on scriptural authority of certain texts and tradition leave hardly any scope for ethical dilemmas. Ethical failure for such philosophies would be tantamount to cognitive failure in terms of grasping of actual linguistic meaning of the Vedic injunction or the authority of tradition.

It should be pointed out here that reasons adduced by mīmāmsakas in favor of authority of tradition are not entirely of the same kind as Bhartṛhari. Mimaṃsaka's insistence on the exclusive authority of the Vedas with regard to *dharma* is based on his belief in human inability to know independently what is right or wrong. According to him, human beings have sense perception as the most authoritative source of knowledge but most of the judgments that concern our ethical predicaments are extra-sensory. For instance our senses do not tell us what would be the right course of action in a given situation because an ordinary human being cannot look into the future instances. "In particular there is no direct knowledge of what effect an action will have at a future time – perhaps after death – hence, of its value to the agent, i.e. whether it is ultimately conducive to heaven or prosperity." (Ślokavarttika, Pratyakśa, 26-32). Most of the arguments adduced by Mīmāṃsā writers are indirect in nature. According to them we should believe in the authority of the Vedic words because of the sense of conviction with which they were originally received never diminishes while all other means of knowledge are questionable. Conversely, vedic judgments are not negated by human judgments based on their reason, conscience or sentiments because we know that as human beings we are fallible in our use of these faculties. Vedic sentences

or tradition on the other hand has an appearance of impersonal objectivity. Their credibility is enhanced by their lack of contingencies that attaches to other judgments. Vedic words are in a sense immediately there as seemingly timeless commands not belonging to a particular individual or group of people but as a part of the timeless historicity of our being.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

There are mainly three main strands of ideas regarding the word and its meaning found among the Classical Indian schools of philosophy. First suggestion regarding this comes from Bhartṛhari according to whom language has a purely natural form which is prior to us but due to corrupting influence of time (*kāla*), we need the help of tradition to get back to the original form. Thus meaning generating process under this scheme is far from dialogical. Second suggestion comes from mīmāṃsakas who believe that the job of the words is not to describe the way the world is but rather to produce right inclination in the subject in consonance with *dharma* which is already inspirited in the words of the Vedas. Here again relation between the word and meaning is not a subject of human negotiations. It is already preordained therefore the role of reason again is not to come to consensus regarding what kind of world we want to be but rather its role is merely philological and scholastic. Nyāya school present an interesting case in this regard. According to them we live in an un-liberated state because we do not have knowledge of the actual nature of things. When we are confused about or ignorant of the actual nature of things then we act towards them in wrong way which further results in consequences unintended by the doers. This finally results in human misery and bondage. Therefore we must enquire into the actual nature of things. This way overall Nyaya school is much more positive and optimistic about the philosophical and logical role of reason. They imagine a world with three co-ordinates of language, knowledge and the objects. These three co-ordinates have a direct congruence with other. Therefore to know the actual nature of things we should go into an enquiry into the language because that is our only window to the world. This school looks closest in spirit to the role of reason envisaged by Habermas among the three schools we have examined so far. But Naiyayikas further argue that all the objects in the world have an essential nature (*svabhāva*). They present themselves along with their actual nature. This could subsequently mean that the

world has an essential structure too. But if this is so then the task of the philosopher is reduced to giving us a correct picture of the world. Therefore their task is not to argue about what kind of world we want to rather live in but rather what kind of world we are actually living in. Thus the hermeneutical gap between the language and the world that post-Heideggerian hermeneutics assumes is not available in Nyāya scheme of things.

Further, purity of linguistic understanding along with the uninterrupted flow of tradition where it has to be located, leads to many questions. The idea of *Vyavasthā nityatā* that Bhartṛhari has presented to us looks monolithic, sacrosanct and too self-referential. Any such theory would hold only on the assumption that "there is indeed a single mainstream tradition; that all valid works participate in it; that history forms an unbroken continuum free of decisive rupture conflict and contradiction and that the prejudices that we have inherited from tradition are always to be cherished. It assumes that in other words, history is a place where 'we' can always and everywhere be at home; that the work of the past would always deepen rather than say decimate our present self-understanding; and that alien is always secretly familiar." (Eagleton, 1992: 195) History for Bhartṛhari "is not a place for struggle, discontinuity and exclusion but a continuing "chain", an ever flowing river, almost one can say a club of like-minded."(ibid.)

Furthermore, Grammarian's inquiry seems to be triggered by the same old concern that propels most of the philosophers of language, namely the possible and often observed misunderstanding in language. Bhartṛhari seems to think that it happens because through the passage of time we tend to lose our grasp over the pure and pristine form of grammar usage *(vyākaraṇa)* and we must consult or learn the original primitive use of grammatical rules from the cultured few to prevent it.

But Bhartṛhari if looked at closely turns to ontology in order to avoid any theorization of language which builds upon viewing the world in terms of objects that language merely serves to name. He finds an alternative to this objectification by postulating a prior correspondence or rather an organic conceptual unity between the language potency or language principle and the world which is absolutely prior to any understanding of or in language. But the point one should not fail to notice here is that in the act of establishing what is prior to the world of objects and to the human understanding of that world, Bhartṛhari irrevocably reifies language. Bhartṛhari while treating language as completely an objective

transcendental principle, rather than as a product of interaction among people which is both logically and factually the presupposition of language, chooses to gloss over certain problems that any such view of language might involve. As Ricoeur quotes Marx in his Rule of the Metaphor, "language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity of intercourse" with other people[2] He further states - "Language is only the locus for the articulation of an experience which supports it and... everything consequently does not arrive in language but only comes to language." (Ricour, 1973: 162)

One should note here that Bhartṛhari's postulation of language principle as prior or transcendental to specific relations in the human community glosses over the fact that one's access to language and the content of one's discourse are themselves shaped by existing relations of power as suggested by Habermas. Thus, my main observation regarding Bhartṛhari's notion of *vāk* or Mīmāṃsāka's notion of *apauruṣeyatva* as the ultimate linguistic *a priori* is that there seems to be here an omission to ask who historically has been entitled to participate in what he calls continuity of tradition (*vyavasthā nityatā*) or beginningless authority of vedic words which locates any ontological discourse including the ethical, and whether its content justifies ideologically particular interests in the historical world.

Further, the point that Bhartṛhari and mīmāmsakas seem to be making with regard to authority of Vedas vis-à-vis timeless flow of tradition can be understood with the help of the following passage from Gadamer's *Truth and Method*:

> We stand always within a tradition, and this is no objectifying process, i.e. we do not conceive of what tradition says as something other, something alien. It is always a part of us, a model or exemplar, a recognition of ourselves, which our later historical judgments would hardly see as a kind of knowledge, but as a simplest passage of tradition. (Gadamer, 1953: 250)

Therefore one of the reasons for granting supremacy to tradition over other means of knowledge is that it can never be an object of reflection. Our language being already structured through tradition the influence of the latter over the former cannot be extricated, it can though be explicated. On such orthodox account of tradition, we are always a participant as long as we move within a natural language and we cannot step outside it as a reflective partner. There is therefore no general criterion ever available to us which would allow us to determine when we are subject to false consciousness of a pseudo-normal understanding under the influence of

unexamined tradition and consider something as a difficulty that could be resolved by rational means through what Habermas calls communicative action. Therefore a modern reader of Bhartṛhari and Jaimini would be at a loss to understand as to how they preclude the possibility of conscious or even subliminal distortions within the apparently smooth surface of tradition which could prevent us from a reasoned out understanding of the real and the actual. The so called passage or 'continuity of tradition' *(vyavasthā nityatā)* may already be guided by conscious attempts to set it adrift towards a pre-conceived end. To diagnose and eradicate such possibilities one needs to act as an observer outside the passage of tradition as suggested by Habermas in his theory of communicative action. My submission here in this context is that any universal claim of linguistic understanding through tradition as we saw above is argued by some major orthodox schools of Indian philosophy, can only be maintained if it is realized that the context of tradition as a focal point of possible truth and factual agreement could as well be at the locus of factual untruth and continued force. My further contention is that given the skepticism regarding the role of reason vis-à-vis Vedic tradition in Mimaṃsa and Bhartṛhari's philosophy, there is no possibility of imaging a lifeworld under these systems. Even in Nyaya philosophy which shows a certain level of commitment towards role of reason, the hermeneutical gap between the language and the shared expression is not available. Nyāya philosophy presupposes that all the objects in the world are available for understanding along with their immutable essence. If the nature of world is already defined for us then the task assigned to reason would be more cognitive rather than communicative in nature in the Habermasian sense of the term. Thus the kind of social ontologies that could possibly emerge from the tenets of the above discussed schools of Indian philosophy could never be of the nature of the lifeworld since there is no possibility of communicative actions under the tenets of these thought systems.

NOTES

1. Verses 147-151 Vākyapadīya of Bhartṛhari Kāṇḍa II (trans. K. A. Subramania Iyer). 1977, p. 61-62.
2. cf. Ricoeur, Paul. *The Rule of Metaphor*, Toronto University Press, Toronto, 1979.

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A TALE OF THREE COUPLES AND THEIR POET: *RĀMAKATHĀ*, LOVE AND VĀLMĪKI IN SOUTH ASIAN TRADITION

Kanad Sinha

Rāmakathā or the story of Rāma is one of the most notable South Asian traditions. As R.P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman have described, it stands for the collectivity of oral, literary, folk, performative and artistic representations of the ancient tale of Rāma and Sītā(Goldman, 2004: 75). However, the same authors also accept the central position of the Sanskrit epic, the *Rāmāyaṇa,* attributed to the poet Vālmīki, within that tradition (ibid.: 75). The relationship between Vālmīki's epic and the entire *Rāmakathā* tradition is therefore quite intriguing. The prevalent belief usually holds Vālmīki's epic as the supreme, original, authentic and, at times, 'historical' account of the life of Rāma. On the other hand, scholars like A.K. Ramanujan, Paula Richman and Romila Thapar have shown that there are numerous accounts of Rāma's life, across different forms, languages, religious affiliations and regions throughout South and Southeast Asia.[1] All these accounts do not necessarily conform to any single text and each of them has its independent following. Therefore, these scholars tend to accept each account as equally valid. Richman writes:

> "The 'Many Ramayanas' model assumes that each telling of Rama's story is equally valid in its own right: Tulsidas, the (original) Southall Black Sisters in Greater London, the domestic servants singing in Bhojpuri dialect, Valmiki, the artisan priests of northern Kerala, and the anonymous author of *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa* all recount Rama's story, but they do so in their own ways." (2000: 5)

However, Richman accepts that equal validity does not necessarily mean equal influence. So, she marks out four retellings of the *Rāmakathā* as 'authoritative'. These are Vālmīki's epic, Kamban's *Irāmāvatāram*, Tulsīdās's *Rāmacaritamānas*, and Ramanand Sagar's Hindi teleserial (ibid.: 9).

This approach, though largely convincing, seems to be a bit unfair

on Vālmīki. Vālmīki's epic is not only the oldest full literary telling
of the *Rāmakathā*, but also held as the first literary creation – *ādikāvya*
– in the Indian tradition. As a result, most (though not all) of the
other *Rāmakathās* somehow either derive their material from
Vālmīki or interact with his text. Vālmīki's epic is neither the only
nor the most influential *Rāmakathā* (its actual following cannot
match that of Tulsīdās or Ramanand Sagar). But it is no doubt the
central text of the tradition.

However, by claiming the centrality of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, we
are not making any claim for its greater authenticity or historicity.
The Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* has been interpreted by various scholars in
various manners. Weber saw in it a nature-myth influenced by the
Homeric epics; Victor Henry viewed in it the allegorical
representations of a solar myth; James Talboys-Wheeler perceived a
struggle of the Buddhists of Ceylon against the *brāhmaṇas*; Jacobi
tried to reveal the transposition of the Vedic Indra-Vṛtra myth; Lassen
explained it as an Aryan advance on South India; and Arthur Lillee
marked it out as the source of the Homeric epics![2] B.B. Lal has
tried hard to substantiate the epic's historicity with archaeological
findings, but without much success (Lal, 1981). Thapar views in it
the conflict between the monarchical state society and the clan
society (Thapar, 2013: 27-34). Though we cannot totally negate
the possibility of the existence of some historical kernel behind the
traditions about Rāma – a personality acknowledged in Brahmanical,
Buddhist, Jaina and many other traditions so unanimously – there
is hardly any reliable breakthrough yet to discover that historicity.
Therefore, it is pointless to claim one text as historically more
authentic than the others.

We must remember that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is usually considered in
the Indian tradition a *kāvya* (literary work), unlike the other great
Sanskrit epic, the *Mahābhārata*, which is known to be a traditional
history — *itihāsa*. Thus, the *Rāmāyaṇa* is, above all, a piece of poetry.
Vālmīki, as its poet, also occupies a very special position — the
position of the first great poet. Goldman has noted that Vālmīki
himself does not claim to be the originator of the *Rāmakathā*
tradition. Rather, his contribution is noted as principally of form
rather than substance, his creation being an oral performative and
musical piece poetically rendering a historical event (Goldman,
1997: 224).

This paper tries to explore the relationship between Vālmīki's
poem and the *Rāmakathā* traditions from this perspective. At first,
we will try to understand the meaning of Vālmīki's poetry, which

seems to be a tale of love and separation of three couples. Then we will try to see how the 'Uttarakāṇḍa', decidedly a later addition to Vālmīki's text, altered the message of the epic, accounting for much misunderstanding of Vālmīki's poetry. Finally, we will show how the various ancient, medieval and modern poets of the *Rāmakathā* perceived this problem, how they engaged with both Vālmīki and the poet of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa', and how they mostly sided with the poetic standpoint of Vālmīki and his story of the three couples.

VĀLMĪKI AND HIS THREE COUPLES

Speaking of Vālmīki, the first question we have to encounter is who he was. Goldman rightly says that there is no reason to contradict that the central portion of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the work of a single author and to accept the unanimous tradition that the name of that author is Vālmīki.[3] However, there are few personal details known about this author. The 'Bālakāṇḍa' and the 'Uttarakāṇḍa', the first and last books of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, provide some information about the author. But these two books are generally considered later additions to Vālmīki's text.[4]

The 'Uttarakāṇḍa' is no doubt a later addition. However, regarding the 'Bālakāṇḍa', we have reasons to disagree with the standard view. Certainly, there are sections in the 'Bālakāṇḍa' which were added later to the text. But the entire 'Bālakāṇḍa cannot be a later addition. It is in the 'Bālakāṇḍa' that the chief protagonists of the epic are introduced and the marriage of Rāma and Sītā takes place, without which the epic cannot move on. Moreover, the 'Bālakāṇḍa' contains vividly pre-Buddhist geography. The text neglects Pāṭaliputra in its description of Magadha, distinguishes Mithilā and Viśālā as separate towns not yet integrated in the city of Vaiśālī, and presents Ayodhyā – not Sāketa or Śrāvastī – as the principal city of Kosala. These being the reasons for Goldman's dating of the earliest strata of the *Rāmāyaṇa* to c. 750-500 BCE, a substantial section of the 'Bālakāṇḍa' must be part of that earliest core (Vālmīki 1984, vol. I: 14-23). More importantly, the deification of Rāma being one of the principal causes for considering the 'Bālakāṇḍa' and the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' as later additions, it is noteworthy that in the first three introductory *sargas* of the 'Bālakāṇḍa', Rāma is particularly noted as human. Therefore, we may agree with Bulcke that the introduction, description of Ayodhyā, the horse-sacrifice, Rāma's birth and youthful exploits, the breaking of the bow, the marriage, and the return to Ayodhyā are original contents in the

'Bālakāṇḍa', whereas the Putreṣṭi, the Puranic stories, and Rāma's encounter with Paraśurāma are definitely later additions (Bulcke, 1952-1953: 327-331).

Thus, we can start with the information on Vālmīki, provided by the introductory *sargas* of the 'Bālakāṇḍa'. Vālmīki is said to have asked the wandering sage Nārada about a man who is truly virtuous, mighty, righteous, truthful, steadfast in his vows, of exemplary conduct, benevolent to all creatures, learned, capable, good-looking, self-controlled, of proper temperament, judicious, envy-free, and fearsome in a battle (Vālmīki 1984: I.1-5). Nārada answers that so many qualities were hard to find in one person, but Rāma, born in the Ikṣvāku lineage, is known among the people as one such person (*ikṣvākuvaṃśa prabhavo rāmo nāma janaiḥ śrutaḥ*) (Vālmīki 1984: I.7-8). Then, Vālmīki heard the gist of the *Rāmakathā* from Nārada. Later on, he was aggrieved to see the death of a crane in copulation, killed by a hunter, and the lamentation of its partner. In grief, Vālmīki uttered a curse in a rhythmic meter. Thus, Vālmīki's grief (*śoka*) was turned into a poetic meter (*śloka*). Ordered by Brahmā, Vālmīki composed the *Rāmāyaṇa* in his new-invented *śloka* (ibid.: I.2). When his composition was over he taught it to two *kuśīlavas* (wandering balladists) who came to his hermitage, learnt his poetry by heart, and sang it in different places, including Rāma's horse-sacrifice (ibid.: I.4).

This entire narrative makes certain points clear. Firstly, it shows that Rāma was considered by Vālmīki a man having many qualities, not a deity. Secondly, it acknowledges that Vālmīki was not the originator of the *Rāmakathā,* which was preexistent as a popular oral tradition. Thirdly, it represents the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a tradition of the *kuśīlava* bards.

But, who was Vālmīki? The 'Uttarakāṇḍa' calls Vālmīki a Bhārgava *brāhmaṇa*.[5] A similar claim is made by the *Mahābhārata,* which speaks of a *Rāmacarita* being composed by a Bhārgava.[6] However, Goldman rightly prefers not to give much attention to these references, though many later Purāṇas accept this (Goldman, 1976: 97-101). Both the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' and the 'Śāntiparvan' of the *Mahābhārata* are known as Bhārgavized interpolations added to the respective epics. Moreover, the Mahābhāratan statement does not make it clear which Bhārgava and which *Rāmacarita* are being referred to. The *Mahābhārata* itself contains a 'Rāmopākhyāna' attributed to the Bhārgava sage Mārkaṇḍeya. Therefore, the Bhārgava identity of Vālmīki is not very well-established in early tradition.

Charlotte Vaudeville assumes that Vālmīki might have been the court-poet of the Ikṣvāus, who composed the *Rāmāyaṇa* after Rāma's coronation (Vaudeville 1963: 329). However, this seems unlikely. Had Vālmīki been the Ikṣvāku court-poet, he would not have needed to know the *Rāmakathā* as an oral tradition narrated to him by a wandering sage.

Thus we come to Bulcke's suggestion. Could not Vālmīki, who taught his composition to the *kuśīlavas*, himself be a wandering balladist? (Bulcke, 1958: 123) The possibility seems high. Interestingly, unlike the *sūta* bards (who were generally royal eulogists), the *kuśīlavas* had a very low status in the society. The *Arthaśāstra* describes them as professional actors, often the sons of courtesans, who should be paid a wage so that they do not take to robbery.[7] Both the *Arthaśāstra* and the 'Śāntiparvan' of the *Mahābhārata* describe them as very low-born *śūdras*. Possibly because of their inclinations towards robbery, it has been advised to banish them from the towns (Kauṭīlya, III.7.32; Vyāsa (Vol.XIII), XII.69.49). It is highly significant that long after the Bhārgavization of Vālmīki's text and identity, the Purāṇas remembered some remnants of Vālmīki's lowly origin. Various accounts of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* (c. fourteenth century), the *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa* (c. fifteenth century), the Bengali *Śrī Rāmapā(n)cālī* of Kṛttibāsa Ojha (c. fifteenth century) and the *Tattvasaṃgraha Rāmāyaṇa* of Rāmabrahmānanda (seventeenth century) present variants of the same story where Vālmīki, a *brāhmaṇa* by birth, was a robber in his early life before being turned into a sage-poet by rigorous asceticism during which an anthill was formed around his body.[8] Thus, even after being Brahmanized and Bhārgavized (in course of which he hijacked the anthill legend which the *Mahābhārata* narrated about Cyavana),[9] Vālmīki retained the flavour of the miserable *kuśīlava* who would sing his ballads in normal circumstances but would take to robbery if impoverished. It seems that Vālmīki was an unsuccessful *kuśīlava* who might have taken to part-time robbery as well, before he heard the story of Rāma from Nārada. This story brought out his poetic potential and turned the miserable balladist into a celebrity poet. The *kuśīlava* disciples of Vālmīki sang his composition and received royal patronage.

But what was the core of Vālmīki's poetry? Was it just the story of an ideal man, as indicated in the very first verses? Vālmīki himself indicates otherwise. Here the story of the cranes, narrated in *Sarga 2,* becomes crucial. It is not the story of Rāma's achievements narrated

by Nārada, but the wailings of a female crane, which brought the poetry out of Vālmīki.

Let us now focus on the story of the crane-couple in detail. The poet, while going for a bath, saw a pair of *krauñca* birds in copulation. Suddenly, a Niṣāda hunter struck down the male of the pair. Seeing this, the female uttered a piteous cry. Filled with pity and compassion, the poet uttered his first poetic verse to curse the Niṣāda for killing one of a pair absorbed in passion (*kāmamohitam*) (Vālmīki, I.2.9-14). His composition was fixed in metrical quarters each having a like number of syllables and fit for the accompaniment of stringed and percussion instruments. This meter he named *śloka* after his *śoka* (grief) (Ibid., I.2.17). He composed the *Rāmāyaṇa* in this meter and mood.

This anecdote has enormous significance in setting the tone for the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It clearly indicates that the essence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* was not to be the heroic one of Nārada's narration, but the pity of the *krauñca*-couple. As Vaudeville indicates, Vālmīki's *śloka* is the song of that lamenting bird (Vaudeville, 1963: 333).

The specific bird is highly significant here. Julia Leslie has masterly shown that Vālmīki's *krauñca* is nothing but the Indian Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone antigone*) (Leslie, 1998). Ornithologists Salim Ali and S. Dillon Ripley have noted that the bird is famous for the life-long faithfulness and devotion between the partners (Ali and Ripley, 1983: 130). A more notable point comes from the description given by Hugh Whistler:

> "The birds pair for life, and are very devoted and close companions... So obvious is their affection that the legend has arisen, that if one of the pair is killed the other dies of a broken heart."(Whistler, 1986: 445)

This parable therefore denotes the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a tale of devoted companionship and unfair separation between couples. But which couple is being indicated?

Barbara Stoler Miller thinks that the crane-parable allegorically represents the killing of Rāma's trust in Sītā by the unfair act of her abduction by Rāvaṇa (Miller, 1973: 166). But the suggestion is not very convincing. The crane-parable does not denote loss of trust, but actual separation. No doubt, the *Rāmāyaṇa* contains such separations between Rāma and Sītā thrice–after Sītā's abduction by Rāvaṇa, after her banishment to the forest by Rāma, and after Sītā's suicidal entrance into the earth. However, in all these cases, it was either both of them or Rāma alone who had been left to lament. But, in the crane-parable, it is the female crane which is

left to mourn her deceased partner. This aspect has troubled the medieval commentators and the modern scholars alike. Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, the commentators who focus on Rāma's despair after Sītā's disappearance, tried to alter the crane-parable altogether by opining that actually the female crane died and the male mourned (Leslie, 1998: 476). On the other hand, scholars like Vaudeville and Leslie, on the basis of the crane-parable, argue that Sītā, not Rāma, was the central figure of the original *Rāmāyaṇa*.[10] Both the views, therefore, try to alter some fundamental tenets of the text to suit their respective interpretations. However, the apparent contradiction can easily be sorted out by recognizing the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a tale of three couples, with Daśaratha and Kaikeyī intervening as the second couple between the crane-couple and the Rāma-Sītā duo.

Daśaratha in Vālmīki's text is a highly polygamous man with three principal wives, Kauśalyā, Sumitrā and Kaikeyī. Kauśalyā, the mother of Rāma, is the chief queen. But, Kaikeyī, the youngest, appears to be the most beloved of the king. The central problem of the *Rāmāyaṇa* starts when Daśaratha decides to coronate his favourite and eldest son, Rāma, as the crown prince. Kaikeyī, initially happy about the decision, is maneuvered by her favourite maid Mantharā to ask Daśaratha to grant two wishes to her, citing an earlier pledge. Kaikeyī asks Daśaratha to make Bharata, her own son, the crown prince, and to banish Rāma to the forest for fourteen years. Daśaratha is grief-stricken by the unjust demand, but Rāma decides to go to the forest to fulfill his father's pledge. Sītā, his wife, and Lakśmaṇa, Sumitrā's son, follow Rāma. Daśaratha dies of the shock. When Bharata, who was staying in his maternal uncle's house, receives this news, he is terribly upset and reviles his mother for the entire calamity. He goes to the forest to bring Rāma back. Rāma remains steadfast to keep his father's truthfulness. So, Bharata returns with the sandals of Rāma to rule as Rāma's regent.

In this entire story of remarkable truthfulness, sacrifice and fraternal love, Kaikeyī stands as the typical villainess. However, despite her villainy, it is Daśaratha's passion for her which surfaces time and again. It is possible that Kaikeyī's villainy is innovated by Vālmīki to emphasise the couple's love and companionship. Sheldon Pollock has pointed out that the two boons pledged by Daśaratha seem to be Vālmīki's own innovation over the *Rāmakathā* he received.[11] Otherwise, Vālmīki's own text testifies that Daśaratha had already promised Kaikeyī's father to make Kaikeyī's son the next king, while asking for Kaikeyī's hand (Vālmīki, II.99.3).

Therefore, Kaikeyī did not need to ask for two boons to demand her justified marriage-pledge.

Then why did Vālmīki insert the two boons? Pollock thinks that it is to preserve the honesty and integrity of Daśaratha (ibid.: 28). However, that purpose is hardly served. Daśaratha, in any case, was going to break his marriage-pledge. But the story of the boon has another dimension to it. These boons were pledged for the excellent services given by Kaikeyī to Daśaratha when the latter was in danger in a battle (Ibid., II.9.12-13). It is not a usual thing for an early Indian queen to be present on a battlefield to save her husband in crisis. Therefore, the story also emphasizes Kaikeyī's relationship with Daśaratha, which seems beyond a traditional husband-wife relationship. It is a companionship and love-relationship for which Kaikeyī could break the norms and endanger her life to save her beloved. Daśaratha's pledges to Kaikeyī are the tokens of that love. Therefore, Mantharā, who had taken care of Kaikeyī since her birth (Vālmīki, II.7.1), views Rāma's coronation as a deception to Kaikeyī, a defrauding of her innocent love (Ibid., II.7.20-22).

So when Kaikeyī demands the boons, Daśaratha faces a test of his love. He proves his love for Kaikeyī, the woman who had once risked her life for his sake, with his life. Even Mantharā knows that Daśaratha will 'go through fire' for Kaikeyī's sake (Ibid., II.9.17). The king cannot bring himself to anger Kaikeyī nor even bear to look at her when she is angry. He is powerless to refuse her, and will give up his life to please her (Ibid., II.9.17-19). Daśaratha does exactly that.

Coming to share the joy of Rāma's coronation with his beloved, Daśaratha finds her lying on the ground. Caressing her, he emphatically declares that there is nobody but Rāma who is dearer than Kaikeyī to him (Ibid., II.10.1-17). The king's passion transcends his kingly ethics:

"*kasya vā te priyaṃ kāryaṃ kena vā vipriyaṃ kṛtam/*

kaḥ priyaṃ labhatām adya ko vā sumahad apriyam//

avadhyo vadhyatāṃ ko vā vadhyaḥ ko vā vimucyatām/

daridraḥ ko bhavatyāḍhyo dravyavān vapy akiñcana//

(Is there someone to whom you would have favour shown, or has someone aroused your disfavour? The one shall find favour at once, the other incur my lasting disfavour.

> Is there some guilty man who should be freed, or some innocent man I should execute? What poor man should I enrich, what rich man impoverish?) (Ibid., II.10.9-10)

This uncontrolled passion of Daśaratha is noted and criticized by everybody around. The angry Lakṣmaṇa goes to the extent of calling the king 'perverse, old and debauched by pleasures' (*viparītaś ca vṛddhaś ca viṣayaiś ca viḍamvitaḥ*) (Ibid., II.18.3). Bharata thinks that the king committed this great evil under the constraints of a woman (Ibid., II.97.6). The ever-composed Rāma says that because of his desire, Daśaratha is completely in Kaikeyī's power (Ibid., II.47.8). Even Daśaratha himself admits that he has done a rash thing for a woman's sake (Ibid., II.53.16). But still he does not break his pledge to his lover. He cannot believe the sudden transformation in his lover. He reviles her (Ibid., II.10.33-35), begs to her and touches her feet (Vālmīki, II.10.40-41), appeals to her heart which he knows to be there (Ibid., II.11.3), even repudiates her (Ibid., II.12.11). But he still maintains his pledge as the token of their love. With his life, Daśaratha proves his words:

> "*bhadre hṛdayam apy etat anumṛśyoddharasva me/*
>
> *etat samīkṣya kaikeyi brūhi yat sādhu manyase.*"
>
> (Take hold of my heart, rip it out, and examine it closely, my lovely Kaikeyī; then tell me if you do not find it true.") (Ibid., II.10.18)

What happens to Kaikeyī then? How does she react to the death of the lover for whom she had once risked entering the battlefield? How does she react after being held responsible for his death unanimously? What happens to her after being repudiated by even the son for whose sake she did all these? After Bharata's rejection, she must have realized her mistake. But by then Daśaratha was dead. There was no way back. The *Rāmāyaṇa* does not say anything directly. But is it very difficult to identify in Daśaratha the *krauñca* absorbed in passion, not noticing even the approaching death? If Vālmīki's *krauñcī* represents the 'uncontrolled sexual female', as Sutherland Goldman thinks, is Kaikeyī not her exact successor? (Goldman, 2004: 51) Kaikeyī's lamentations are not recorded by Vālmīki. They seem to have been absorbed in the wailings of the *krauñcī* mourning her mate, through the first poet's voice.

The story of Rāma and Sītā has to be understood with this background in mind. In the halo of Rāma the ideal man, ideal king, ideal son, and ideal brother, Rāma the lover has been overshadowed.

So has been the case of Sītā epitomized as the ideal, devoted, submissive, chaste wife. However, the first six books of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the compositions of Vālmīki, reveal a different picture. Keeping the tradition of the two couples discussed above, the story of Rāma and Sītā develops as a pure and simple love story. Vālmīki introduces the couple as one of profound mutual love, pointing out that their relationship is beyond the traditional husband-wife relationship:

> *"priyā tu sītā rāmasya dārā pitṛkṛtā iti/*
>
> *guṇāt rūpaguṇāc cāpi prītir bhūyo vyavardhata//*
>
> *tasyāś ca bhartā dviguṇaṃ hṛdaye parivartate/*
>
> *antarjātam api vyaktam ākhyāti hṛdayaṃ hṛdā//"*

> (Sītā was naturally dear to Rāma, for she was the wife his father gave him. Yet because of her virtue and beauty, his love grew greater still.)

> And yet in her heart she cherished her husband twice as much. Even their innermost hearts spoke clearly one to the other.) (Vālmīki, I.76.15-16).

Sītā does not make many appearances in the main narrative of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. But, whenever she does, she appears as a vocal, confident woman. We hardly see Vālmīki's Sītā speak in the voice of a normative submissive woman. Therefore, when Rāma decides to go to the forest, he manages to dissuade his mother Kausalyā from accompanying him, by giving her discourses on the normative duties of a woman. But, this ploy fails in front of Sītā. Sīta's passionate pleadings for accompanying Rāma to the forest are not only remarkable for poetic grace, but also for their significant contents. Sītā, the passionate lover, strongly argues that the conjugal relationship between a man and a woman transcends all other human relationships, including those with the parents, siblings, children, friends and in-laws. Therefore, a wife has a right to share all the joys and sorrows of her husband (Vālmīki, II.24.2-4). Sītā does not want to follow in her husband's footsteps like a traditional submissive wife. She wants to walk in front of Rāma to soften the thorns and sharp grasses for him (Ibid., II.24.5).The exile to the forest will be a sweet honeymoon for her, since she will be able to enjoy the streams and mountains, ponds and forests, geese and ducks, in her lover's company (Ibid., II.24.13-14).Sītā perceives her relationship with Rāma only in terms of love, which means sharing

each other's joys and sorrows (Ibid., II.26.18). In her anxiety to accompany Rāma, she does not refrain from reviling him (Ibid., II.27.3-8). However, she also makes it clear how all the hardships, in Rāma's company, will turn into pleasure, because her heaven is in his company and her hell in his absence (Ibid., II.27.10-17). As a result, Rāma agrees to take her along, declaring that he will refuse even heaven if it comes at the cost of Sītā's sorrows (Ibid., II.27.25). Subsequently, it turns out that their promises to each other are not empty. The time Rāma and Sītā spend together turns out to be a romantic outing rather than an exile in Vālmīki's description.

Similarly, she also vehemently expresses her disapproval when Rāma, requested by some sages, starts killing some Rākṣasas without provocation. She chastises Rāma for getting diverted from his path, and reminds him that bows are only for protecting those in distress.[12] Rāma's passion for Sītā hardly falls short of his father's passion for Kaikeyī when he chases the illusion of a golden deer, partly knowing it as unreal, to gratify Sīta's whim. We witness Sītā at her reviling worst just after that episode, when she – alarmed by the imitation of Rāma's voice by the Rākṣasa wizard Mārīca – forces Lakṣmaṇa to go in search of Rāma, accusing Lakṣmaṇa of plotting with Bharata to get her (Vālmīki, III.43.22).

It is the absence of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa that Rāvaṇa uses to abduct Sītā. However, in the face of certain abduction, Sītā displays her confidence in both Rāma and herself. Unafraid, she abuses Rāvaṇa continuously in words steeped in her love for Rāma:

> *"mahāgirim ivākampyaṃ mahendrasadṛśaṃ patim/*
>
> *mahodadhim ivākṣobhyaṃ ahaṃ rāmam anuvratā//*
>
> *mahābāhuṃ mahoraskaṃ siṃhavikrāntagāminam/*
>
> *nṛsiṃhaṃ siṃhasaṃkāśam ahaṃ rāmam anuvratā//*
>
> *pūrṇacandrānanaṃ vīraṃ rājavatsaṃ jitendriyam/*
>
> *pṛthukīrtiṃ mahābāhum ahaṃ rāmam anuvratā//"*
>
> *tvaṃ punar jambukaḥ siṃhīṃ māmihecchasi durlabhām/*
>
> *nāhaṃ śakyā tvayā spraṣṭum ādityasya prabhā yathā."*

(I am faithful to Rāma, my husband, the equal of great Indra, unshakable as a great mountain, imperturbable as the great sea. I am faithful to Rāma,

the great-armed, great-chested prince, who moves with the boldness of a lion, a lionlike man, a lion among men. I am faithful to Rāma, the king's most cherished son, a great-armed mighty prince of wide-renown and strict self-control, whose face is like the full moon. As for you, you are a jackal in the presence of a lioness, to come here seeking me, whom you can never have. You could no more touch me than touch the radiance of the sun.) (Ibid., III.45.29-32 (diacritics added))

If this defiance exemplifies Sītā's love for Rāma, the heart-wrenching lamentation of Rāma after Sītā's abduction shows the other side of the story. This paper cannot afford the space needed for quoting the entire passage, one of the best displays of Vālmīki's poetic capacity, where Rāma asks every tree, plant and animal about Sītā's whereabouts, like a madman (Ibid., III.58.12-22). In course of his lamentation at Sītā's loss, Vālmīki's Rāma reiterates those points which constructed the core of their companionship:

> "prasthitaṃ daṇḍakāraṇyaṃ yā māṃ anujagāma ha/
>
> kva sā lakṣmaṇa vaidehī yāṃ hitvā tvam ihāgataḥ//
>
> rājyabhraṣṭasya dīnasya daṇḍakān paridhāvataḥ/
>
> kva sā duḥkhasahāyā me vaidehī tanumadhyamā//
>
> yāṃ vinā notsahe vīra mūhurtam api jīvitum/
>
> kva sā prāṇasahāyā me sītā surasutopamā//"

(Where is Vaidehī, Lakṣmaṇa? Could you have left her behind to come here, the woman who accompanied me when I set forth to Daṇḍaka wilderness? Where is fair-waisted Vaidehī, the woman who shares my sorrow as I run wretchedly through Daṇḍaka, driven from my kingdom? Where is Sītā, a woman like a daughter of the gods, the woman who shares my life?) (Vālmīki, III.56.2-4 (diacritics added))

Thus, with the abduction of Sītā, the third passionate couple in Vālmīki's epic faces separation. However, Vālmīki, who had cursed the Niṣāda for causing the first separation, and showed the same tragedy in the second couple's life, now begins to rectify the unfairness in the third case. Rāma's quest for Sītā starts. After a series of events, at last Hanumān reaches Laṅkā with Rāma's message. There he meets Sītā in a miserable condition, being wooed by Rāvaṇa and terrorized by her guards, yet steadfast in her love for Rāma. Even after the long separation, Sītā not only resists Rāvaṇa's advances with dignity, but retains her confidence that she had while

arguing for accompanying Rāma to the forest: no one is dearer to Rāma than her, not even his mother, father or anyone else.[13]

Sukumari Bhattacharji, showing Rāma as an unworthy and bad lover, argues that while Sītā's condition was miserable because of the separation, it did not affect Rāma at all (Bhattacharji 2002: 37). However, what Vālmīki says through Hanumān's voice is utterly different:

"*naiva daṃśān na maśakān na kīṭān na sarīsṛpān/*

rāghavo'panayed gātrāt tadgatenāntarātmanā//

nityaṃ dhyānaparo rāmo nityaṃ śokaparāyaṇaḥ/

nānyac cintayate kiñcit sa tu kāmavaśaṃ gataḥ//

anidraḥ satataṃ rāmaḥ supto'pi ca narottamaḥ/

sīteti madhurāṃ vāṇīṃ vyāharan pratibudhyate//

dṛṣṭvā phalaṃ vā puṣpaṃ vā yac cānyat strīmanoharam/

bahuśo hā priyetyevaṃ śvasaṃstvām abhibhāṣate//

sa devi nityaṃ paritapyamānasa tvām eva sītetyabhibhāṣyamāṇaḥ/

dhṛtavrato rājasuto mahātmā tavaiva lābhāya kṛtaprayatnaḥ.//"

(His mind is so completely fixed on you that he does not even brush the flies, mosquitoes, insects, and snakes away from his body. Rāma is constantly obsessed with brooding, constantly absorbed in grief, completely under the power of love. He cannot think of anyone else. Rāma almost never sleeps, but even when that best of men does fall asleep, he wakes up murmuring 'Sītā' in a sweet voice. Whenever he sees some fruit or flower or anything else that women like, he sighs and calls out for you over and over again, crying 'alas! my darling!'. In constant agony, my lady, the great prince, firm in ascetic vows, calls out to you, crying 'Sītā!' He is making every effort to get you back.) (Vālmīki, V.34.40-44) (diacritics added)

However, this fine love-story stumbles at its climax, after Rāma kills Rāvaṇa. Suddenly suspicious, Rāma refuses to take Sītā back, saying:

"Bless you, but let it be understood that it was not on your account that I undertook the effort of this war... Instead, I did all this in order to protect my reputation and in every way to wipe clean the insult and disgrace to my illustrious lineage.

Since, however, your virtue is now in doubt, your presence has become as profoundly disagreeable to me as is a bright lamp to a man afflicted with a disease of the eye.

Go, therefore, as you please, daughter of Janaka. You have my permission...I have no further use for you, my good woman.

For what powerful man born in a respectable family – his heart tinged with affection – would take back a woman who had lived in the house of another man?

How could I who boast of my noble lineage possibly take you back — just risen from Rāvaṇa's lap and gazed upon by his lustful eyes?

I have recovered my reputation, and that is the purpose for which I won you back. I do not love you anymore. Go hence wherever you like...Turn your thoughts toward Lakṣmaṇa or Bharata as you please.

Or Sītā, set your mind on Sugrīva, lord of the monkeys or on whoever you please.

For surely, Sītā, once Rāvaṇa had seen you, so enchanting with your heavenly beauty, he would not long have you left unmolested while you were dwelling in his house"[14]

How to account for this sudden change in Rāma? Bhattacharji opines that this incident makes all his earlier lamentations after Sītā's abduction seem like mere rhetorical flourishes. However, the matter can also be viewed from the reverse angle. The journey of Rāma and Sītā throughout the epic, the lamentations of Rāma after Sītā's abduction, Hanumān's report of Rāma's condition — everything makes the event most unnatural. Still, the episode is there, and it has a role to play.

Here we see Rāma the king to be. Nrisinhaprasad Bhaduri has pointed out that probably Rāma is now being overconscious of his image as a king. He had seen the image of his father being tarnished because of his excessive passion for a woman. He himself had joined the critics then. What if Rāma himself is labelled as the same, like Daśaratha, like the *krauñca, kāmamohita*? (Bhaduri, 2004)

The episode also falls within the scope of the love-story. If we follow Rāma's statement, we can see that it is more the aberration of a lover's ultra-possessiveness than a king's concern for his subject's opinion. Even Sītā, at least once, shows a similar insecurity and

anxiety, though in a more civil form, when she – captivated by Rāvaṇa – assumes that Rāma is to forget her and make love with other women (Vālmīki, V.26.14).

Rāma's possessiveness and anxiety are expressed in a much more vulgar manner. As a result, Sītā decides to kill herself by entering fire. With Sītā's death, the third love-story would also end in eternal separation and lamentation. However, that could not be the purpose of the poet who had cursed the Niṣāda and vilified Mantharā, who had made Rāma come up to Laṅkā and kill Rāvaṇa for Sītā. Already with the imagery of a lamp hurting the person with diseased eyes, Vālmīki made it clear who is the lamp and in whom the disease is. Now, as Sītā jumps into the fire, the Fire-god himself comes out with her, proclaiming her chastity. With divine intervention, the third couple is saved from eternal separation. Vālmīki's *śloka* could ultimately remedy the wrong which caused his *śoka*. The Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* ended in the union of Rāma and Sītā.

THE 'UTTARAKĀṆḌA' AND THE EPIC TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

The 'Uttarakāṇḍa', the seventh book of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, is a very late addition to the text. Its composition might have occurred as late as the third century C.E., since its contents do not seem to be known to the early *Rāmakathās* like the Buddhist *Dasaratha Jātaka* (c. mid first millennium BCE), the Jaina *Paumacariyam* (c. first century CE), the 'Rāmopākhyāna' in the *Mahābhārata* (possibly inserted between second century BCE and second century CE), and the *Pratimānāṭakam* and the *Abhiṣekanāṭakam* of Bhāsa (c. second century CE). The identity of the poet of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' is not known. But, there is a possibility that he belonged to the Bhārgava family, who are largely responsible for Brahmanizing the *Mahābhārata* and composing the normative Brahmanical law-book *Manu Smṛti*.[14] Their zealously Brahmanizing tendency reshaped the *Rāmāyaṇa* as well.

Therefore, in the 'Uttarakāṇḍa', Rāma is no more the protagonist of a heroic romance, but the ideal king protecting the *varṇāśramadharma*. The text no more remains poetry of love and separation, but – like the other Bhārgava texts – a manifesto for an ideal Brahmanical society where the women and the lower castes are at the receiving end. Rāma therefore banishes the pregnant and helpless Sītā to the forest for no fault of hers, only to please his subjects who are suspicious of her chastity. We also see Rāma slaying

a *śūdra* ascetic Śambūka who dares to transgress the *varṇa*-order by performing austerities, a transgression leading to the untimely death of a *brāhmaṇa*'s son.

These incidents have influenced the reception of the *Rāmāyaṇa* so much that the message of the six earlier books is almost entirely overpowered. The orthodoxy professes Rāma as the ideal king. '*Rāmarājya*' has become the utopian epitome of a normatively perfect kingdom. Sītā has been idealized as the ideal, submissive, chaste wife who remains silent and devoted to her husband despite being unfairly treated by him.

On the other hand, the critiques of the *Rāmāyaṇa* have also directed their attacks mainly against the Rāma of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa'. Bhattacharji, for instance, attacks *Rāmarājya* as a kingdom based on oppression of the women and the lower castes.[15] As early as in the sixteenth century, Candrāvatī, a woman deceived by her lover Jayānanda, composed a *Rāmakathā* in Bengali, in which the story is viewed from Sītā's perspective, showing Rāma as a cruel and deceiving husband.[16] In his Assamese *Rāmakathā* composed in the seventeenth century, Śaṅkaradeva speaks through the mouth of Sītā:

> "He (Rāma) wanted to kill the two boys in my womb. When they speak of my husband's virtue, my body burns. He sought to take the lives of my boys and me. Tell me where else is there such a cruel husband?"[17]

The Telugu folk-songs sung by the women question Rāma's integrity and foreground the theme of the suffering that husbandly neglect causes a wife.[18] The Kahar and Barber women make Sītā one of them in their songs — a woman found in a field, of unknown parentage, suffering injustice at the hand of Rāma, silenced even when she tries to uphold her virtue.[19] Madhu Kishwar (2000) has shown how Sītā has become a more powerful symbol than Rāma in Indian popular culture, as a woman wronged yet not doing any wrong. Sītā has resurfaced time and again in various modern Indian compositions as the symbol of the deprived and maltreated woman, Rāma being the evil of patriarchy personified. Kumaran Asan's *The Brooding Sītā*, M.Geetha's poem *Agni Pariksha* and Bina Agarwal's poem *Sita Speak* are classic examples. In her one-act play 'Sita', Snehalata Reddy makes Sītā reject Rāma as a cruel, heartless tyrant, and condemn *Rāmarājya* as a male-dominated fraud.[20]

However, as we have seen, Vālmīki had little role to play in this gross alteration of his message. Rāma, the eye-candy of normative

orthodoxy and the political right wing, and the villain in the eyes of the gender-sensitive writers, is largely a product of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa'. So is Sītā, the ideal submissive woman or the symbol of the gender-oppressed yet strong-willed women.

The poet of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' seems to be well aware of the injustice he has done to Vālmīki's text. Performing his social obligation, the poet asks for forgiveness of the first poet, through the voice of Rāma:

> "*seyaṃ lokabhayāt brahman napayety abhijānataḥ/*
>
> *parityaktā mayā sītā tadbhavān kṣantum arhasi//*"
>
> (Please forgive me, Brahmin, for having renounced Sītā out of fear of the people even though I knew that she was innocent.) (*The Uttarakāṇḍa*, VII.88.3)

However, a more interesting strategy adopted by him to interact with his predecessor is introducing Vālmīki as a character. In the 'Bālakāṇḍa', Vālmīki had no personal affinity with Rāma, but heard the oral tradition about him from Nārada. However, when Sīta, banished unfairly by Rāma, was wailing alone, the poet of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' could not find any other way to tackle her than to bring back the poet who was once moved by the wailings of a female crane unfairly separated from her husband. In the case of the crane, Vālmīki failed to mitigate the injustice. However, in the 'Uttarakāṇḍa', Vālmīki becomes the refuge of Sītā. The *kuśīlava* disciples of Vālmīki are now turned into Kuśa and Lava, the sons of Rāma, born in Vālmīki's hermitage. However, despite Vālmīki's assurance, Rāma refuses to take back Sītā without convincing the public of her chastity. Registering her passive protest, Sītā enters the earth forever, proving her chastity but leaving Rāma alone.

Vālmīki's message also got transformed forever. Rāma and Sītā were separated for eternity. The 'uncontrolled sexual female' now gave way to – if we use Sutherland's words – the 'masochistic counter-aggression of the powerless woman' (Goldman, 1989). Yet, the homage to the first poet is paid. Even in the altered narrative of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa', Vālmīki remains the ultimate refuge of the wailing heroine. Vālmīki is the voice assuring her chastity and protesting the separation. It is in Vālmīki's hermitage, through his *kuśīlava* disciples, that the lineage of Rāma is shown to have continued.

YES TO VĀLMĪKI, NO TO THE 'UTTARAKĀṆḌA': CRITIQUES OF THE
ALTERED NARRATIVE FROM BHAVABHŪTI TO RABINDRANATH

We have seen how Vālmīki's story has been grossly transformed by
the poet of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' and how that affected the popular
receptions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. However, it will be interesting to check
how this alteration has been perceived within the *Rāmakathā* tradition
itself. As already mentioned, some texts within the tradition had
been composed possibly before the insertion of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa'.
However, even these texts interact with Vālmīki and often go along
his story of the three couples (the *Dasaratha Jātaka* is a notable
exception). Vimala Sūri, the poet of the *Paumacariyam*, a Jaina
Rāmakathā composed in c. first century CE, does not mention
Vālmīki by name. However, it claims to present the 'true history of
Rāma' that has been tampered and fantasized in the hands of a
'stupid, bad poet' (*mūrkhakukavi*) (Sūrī, 1962: III.14-15). The poet
indicated is not difficult to identify. When the *Paumacariyam* points
out that the Rākṣasas were not actually demons, the Vānaras were
not monkeys, or Rāvaṇa did not really have ten heads, and presents
more realistic explanations for each of these notions, his engagement
with Vālmīki's account becomes apparent. However, interestingly,
Vimala Sūri retains the story of Daśaratha promising a boon to Kaikeyī,
which we have seen to be actually an innovation of Vālmīki into the
tradition he had heard. Rather, making Kaikeyī even less villainous,
Vimala Sūri writes that Kaikeyī demanded only the throne for her
son, not Rāma's exile. She even tried to dissuade Rāma from going
into exile (Ibid., XXIX-XXXI).Thus, the Daśaratha-Kaikeyī love-
story, foundational to Vālmīki's story of the three couples, found a
place even in the poetry of the poet most antagonistic to Vālmīki.

Similarly, even the highly Brahmanized 'Rāmopākhyāna' of the
Mahābhārata retains the boon story and repeats the passion of
Daśaratha who – echoing Vālmīki's text – is ready to kill an innocent
man or free a guilty, give or take away wealth from anybody, just to
please Kaikeyī. (Vyāsa, III.261: 15-25) It also retains Vālmīki's original
ending, the happy union of Rāma and Sītā after the temporary
anxiety of the fire ordeal.

In Bhāsa's *Pratimānaṭakam* (c. second century CE), the handling
is even more sensitive. Kaikeyī, here, emerges as the highly
misunderstood heroine. Even Rāma accepts in the drama that the
kingdom belonged to Bharata, being promised as a marriage gift to
Kaikeyī (Bhāsa, 1998: 9-11). However, Kaikeyī does nothing for the
sake of the kingdom. Rather, she wants Daśaratha to keep his truthful

promise (Ibid.: 30). She exposes herself to blame, only to keep intact the reputation of Daśaratha who needed to perform a penance of separation from his beloved son, as a punishment for killing the son of a blind sage (Ibid.: 55). The story of killing the blind sage's son is there in Vālmīki, as a secret revealed by Daśaratha to Kausalyā before his death. However, Bhāsa shows that Kaikeyī was in full knowledge of the situation, and sacrificed her own reputation to protect the righteousness of her lover. Thus, from Bhāsa, we hear the unheard words of Vālmīki's Kaikeyī, the woman who had entered a battlefield to save Daśaratha, the woman who was considered by Daśaratha – until the final bitterness – as not just a wife, but a friend (*bāndhavī*) (Vālmīki, II.37.6).

What happens after the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' is composed is a question worth exploring. Do the later poets notice the mismatch between Vālmīki's books and the last book or is it only the modern Sanskritists and historians who enforce this distinction? If the distinction is recognized, how do the later authors react to it?

We may start off with Kālidāsa's *Raghuvaṃśa* (c. fourth-fifth centuries CE). Kālidāsa begins with homage to Vālmīki that he dares to explore the difficult epic theme only because 'a gateway in the form of poetic speech to this royal lineage has already been opened by the first poet.' (Kālidāsa, 2005: I.4) The poet retells the entire *Rāmāyaṇa,*including the 'Uttarakāṇḍa', but retains the flavour of Vālmīki. In a single sentence, he represents Vālmīki's treatment of the Daśaratha-Kaikeyī relationship, saying that the king highly esteemed Kauśalyā, but loved Kaikeyī — "*arcitā tasya kausalyā priyā kekayavaṃśajā.*" (Ibid., X.55) However, Kālidāsa's treatment of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' is highly interesting. He keeps the narrative intact, but in a couplet exposes the strategy of Vālmīki's sudden appearance as a character in the 'Uttarakāṇḍa':

> *"tām abhyagacchad ruditānusārī kaviḥ kuśedhmāharaṇāya yātaḥ/*
>
> *niṣādabiddhāṇḍajadarśanotthaḥ ślokatvam āpadyata yasya śokaḥ//"*
>
> (Following the wailing (of Sītā), there came to her the poet who had been out for collecting Kuśa grass and sacred faggot — the poet whose grief on beholding a bird shot by a huntsman burst into heroic verse.) (Ibid., XIV.70)

In this way, pointing out the essence of Vālmīki's poetry in the crane-parable, Kālidāsa resorts to restore the love-relationship of Rāma and Sītā. Therefore, his emphasis comes on the fact that

despite sending Sītā to the forest, Rāma took no second wife as his consort in the horse sacrifice, but used an effigy of Sītā for the purpose. This comforts Kālidāsa's Sītā amidst the unbearable grief of separation (Ibid., XIV.87). This also becomes an opportunity for Kālidāsa to assert how, despite the 'Uttarakāṇḍa', the *Rāmāyaṇa* remains a tale of the love between Rāma and Sītā, for Rāma, afraid of scandal, could thrust his Sītā out from his home only, but not from his heart (*kaulīnabhītena gṛhān nirastā na tena vaidehasūtā manastaḥ*) (Ibid., XIV.84).

If Kālidāsa's disfavour to the rejection of Sītā, and his support for Vālmīki's love-story, appears mild and subtle, Bhavabhūti represents the extreme case. This great dramatist, who flourished possibly in the seventh century CE, composed two dramas on the *Rāmāyaṇa* theme. The first, the *Mahāvīracarita*, deals with Rāma's entire career up to the killing of Rāvaṇa. The second, the *Uttararāmacarita,* deals with the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' episode only. Therefore, already in his selection of themes, Bhavabhūti indicates that he considers the *Rāmāyaṇa*, up to the 'Yuddhakāṇḍa', and the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' as two separate pieces of literature. Beginning his *Uttararāmacarita* with homage to the poets of old (Bhavabhuti, 2007: 64), he makes his stand on the subsequent theme clear in an early verse:

> "*sarvathā vyāvahartavyaṃ kuto hy avacanīyatā/*
>
> *yathā strīṇāṃ tathā vācāṃ sādhutve durjano janaḥ//*"
>
> (It is our duty to act no matter what,
>
> There is no escaping criticism,
>
> However pure the words – or the woman –
>
> There are always people who'll be malicious.") (Ibid.: 68-69)

Though it is apparent that the unjust criticism of Sītā is being addressed here, Bhavabhūti trickily connects the purity of the woman with that of words. Is it just a statement of the purity of Bhavabhūti's words and a dig at his critics? The implication seems to be more complex. The slandering about Sītā's character, leading to her exile, seems to be equated with the violation of words, possibly the tampering of the first poet's words! The *durjana* is thus not only the random Ayodhyan questioning Sītā's chastity, but also probably the poet of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' tampering with Vālmīki's poetry.

Almost as a second Vālmīki, Bhavabhūti undertakes to restore the poetry.

Therefore, the drama is a complex one. Its metanarrative refers back and forth to several texts, Vālmīki's poetry, the 'Uttarakāṇḍa', Bhavabhūti's drama, and a drama performed within it. In an obvious attempt to remind the audience of Vālmīki's message, Bhavabhūti takes his protagonists to a gallery of paintings on Rāma's life, displaying the various significant moments and moods from the love-relationship of Rāma and Sītā in Vālmīki's text. Cherishing the moments of such lovely companionship, Sītā falls asleep on Rāma's lap and Rāma mutters his innermost feelings of love:

"viniścituṃ śakyo na sukham iti vā duḥkham iti vā/

pramoho nidrā vā kimuviśasarpaḥ kimu madaḥ/

tava sparśe sparśe mama hi parimūḍhendriyagaṇo/

vikāraś caitanyaṃ bhramayati ca sammīlayati ca."

(Every single time you touch me

A kind of transformation–

It can't be described as joy or sorrow,

Ecstasy or sleep,

A state of intoxication

Or all-suffusing poison–

Confuses my sense at once

Excites and dulls my awareness.) (Bhavabhuti, 2007: 104-105)

Creating this climax of love, Bhavabhūti brings the ultimate anti-climax. Suddenly, the envoy Durmukha reports the slandering about Sītā's character and Rāma decides to banish her. In this way, Rāma keeps his promise of letting go his affection, mercy, happiness, even Sītā, for the sake of serving his people (*snehaṃ dayāṃ ca saukhyaṃ ca yadi vā jānakīm api/ ārādhanāya lokasya muñcato nāsti me vyāthā*) (Ibid.: 80-81). But what does it leave of Vālmīki's Rāma? He considers himself an outcaste and untouchable, unworthy of Sītā's touch (Ibid.: 116-117). He feels that it was only to register pain that

Rāma was endowed consciousness: "*duḥkhasaṃvedanāyaiva rāme caitanyam āhitam.*" (Ibid.: 116-117) Touching Sītā's feet with his head, Rāma banishes her love to the forest (Ibid.: 118-119).

From here, the drama moves on as a commentary on how unfair the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' has been, with Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* as a constant reference point. Through Vālmīki's disciple Ātreyī, Bhavabhūti retells the crane-parable and Vālmīki's composition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Ibid.: 132-133). The killing of Śambūka is provided with a dramatic edge, as the incident is placed at Janasthāna, the very place where Rāma and Sītā dwelled together during their exile. The site of those very forests reminds Rāma, and the audience, how Sītā had accompanied Rāma in his exile and how she had enjoyed the hardships for the sake of his company. Rāma now realizes what a gift it was to have someone who truly loved him (Ibid.: 150-151). With both Rāma and Sītā (present on the spot in an invisible form) cherishing their memories, any reader of Vālmīki would unmistakably remember Rāma's mad quest after Sītā's abduction in Vālmīki's text, when Rāma was roaming the very forest, frantically asking each plant and animal about Sītā's whereabouts. At last, Rāma bitterly realizes that he has been separated from Sītā by a device beyond Vālmīki's text. Here, friendship with the Vānaras or Jāmbavān's advice would be no help, Nala would not be able to build any road, Hanumān's efforts or Lakṣmaṇa's arrows would not be enough to regain Sītā (Ibid.: 224-225).

In this situation, suddenly comes the news of Rāma's sacrificial horse being tied up in Vālmīki's hermitage. Rāma reaches the hermitage where he views his own sons, Lava and Kuśa, unknown to him, ravaging his army. The youngsters seem familiar with Vālmīki's new composition, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and appeal to the audience's (and Rāma's) memory yet again by quoting exact verses from Vālmīki about the mutual love of Rāma and Sītā (Bhavabhuti, 2007: 348-351; 352-353). The last part of the epic is reported to be unpublished, which Vālmīki has sent to the divine director Bharata for the composition of a play. Here again, there is a clear indication that the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' is not treated as a part of Vālmīki's original composition.

The play reaches its climax in the last Act when Vālmīki's latest composition, the concluding part of Rāma's story, is performed in front of Rāma. The drama within the drama ends with Sītā's suicidal entrance into the earth, watching which Rāma loses his consciousness. Then Lakṣmaṇa cries out to Vālmīki in shock:

"Help, Vālmīki, help! Is this the moral of your poem?"(Ibid.: 381)

The keyquestion is ultimately asked. Can the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' be the moral of Vālmīki's poem? Bhavabhūti replies in the negative, making Vālmīki modify the work and end it with the ultimate unity of Rāma and Sītā. The unfair treatment to both Sītā and poetry is mitigated. Bhavabhūti makes Vālmīki restore both to their deserved purity. The restored virtue of poetry is sanctified through Rāma's statement:

> "*tām etāṃ paribhāvayantvabhinayair vinyastarūpāṃ budhāḥ/*
>
> *śabdabrahmavidaḥ kaveḥ pariṇata prajñānasya vāṇīm imāṃ//*"
>
> (May the learned come to relish it
>
> Embodied in dramatic performance,
>
> The verbal art of a seasoned poet, a master
>
> Of the sacred mystery of language.) (Ibid.: 388-389)

Who is this seasoned poet celebrated here? Is it Vālmīki, the composer of the play within the play, or Bhavabhūti the composer of the real play? The right answer is probably both of them, unified in the Poet Universal restoring poetry to its proper purity and rectifying the aberrations. The playwright Girish Karnad rightly observes:

> "The tragedy inflicted upon Sītā by her villifiers objectifies what is being done to language itself in the same process. This is a crisis that only the Poet can resolve. 'Rama's Last Act' celebrates the Poet as one who bears the central responsibility of maintaining the purity of speech and who, when that turns turbid, can restore it to its unclouded state." (Ibid.: 24)

Therefore, we can see that the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been primarily understood as a love-story within Indian literary tradition, and the modification made in the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' was not very welcome to many poets. Bhavabhūti, though most powerful of them, was not the only one in this regard.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, a *bhakti* text composed between c. seventh and ninth centuries CE, with love as its dominant theme, therefore remembers Rāma neither as an ideal king nor as the killer of Rāvaṇa, but as a great lover who, despite being so much free of greed that he could renounce his deserved royal wealth at once, chased an illusion of a golden deer to please his beloved's whim:

> "*tyaktvā sudustyajya surairipsita rājyalakṣmī/*

dharmiṣṭha āryavacasā yad agād araṇyam/

māyāmṛgaṃ dayitayepsitam anvadhāvan/

vande mahāpuruṣa te caraṇāravindam."

(I worship the lotus foot of that great man who went to the forest for the sake of the words of his righteous noble father, leaving the royal wealth coveted by even the deities and difficult to forsake, yet chased the magic deer desired by his beloved one.) (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa,* XI.5.34)

The companionship of Rāma and Sītā became such a consistent theme within the *Rāmakathā* tradition that the poet of the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* (c. fourteenth century CE) could make Sītā plead with Rāma to take her to the forest on the basis of that authority:

"anyat kiñcit pravakṣyāmi śrutvā māṃ naya kānanam/

rāmāyaṇani bahuśaḥ śrutāni bahubhir dvijaiḥ/

sītāṃ vinā vanaṃ rāmo gataḥ kiṃ kutracid vada/

atas tvayā gamiṣyāmi sarvathā tvatsahāyinī."

(I am telling you something else listening to which you may take me to the forest. There are several *Rāmayaṇas* heard from different twice-borns. Tell me if anywhere Rāma has gone to the forest without Sītā. Therefore, I shall go with you, as your helper forever.) (*Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa,* II.4.33-34)

If Bhavabhūti united with Vālmīki in the person of the Poet Universal, the anonymous author of the *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa* (c. fifteenth century) goes one step further. He knows of the existence of hundreds of *Rāmāyaṇas,* but declares his own as the very best (*Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa,* Manohara Kāṇḍa 17.115). However, he prefers to remain anonymous and presents his work as Vālmīki's, for he believes that the only poet able to capture fully the beauty and the extent of the Rāma-story is Vālmīki (*Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa,* Janma Kāṇḍa 2. 13-15). However, the *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa* is the best of his creations, the cream on the top of Vālmīki's full cup (Ibid., Manohara Kāṇḍa, 8.69-71). How is this possible? How can a text acknowledging the knowledge of the hundreds of post-Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇas* still claim to be a composition of Vālmīki? Vidyut Aklujkar shows that the answer is provided in an interesting story (Akujkar, 2000).

The story shows Rāma, secretly traumatized by the memory of Rāvaṇa's laughter, banning laughing aloud. It creates an imbalance in the kingdom, leading Brahmā to assume the form of a laughing tree to restore equilibrium. When Rāma is troubled by the epidemic of laughter spread by the laughing tree, Vālmīki reveals to him the secret. Here, Vālmīki appears as the Poet Universal, the source of all poetry. He created a billion verses to describe Rāma's life, which Vyāsa had divided into various texts. So, the text still bearing Vālmīki's name is its sorrow-centric part, the poetry on war and strife is known as Vyāsa's *Mahābhārata*, and the poetry on the theme of love has become the *Bhāgavata.* All of them are important, but the best is the *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa,* which focuses on Rāma's real nature, the joyful and blissful one (*Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa*, Rājya Kāṇḍa, 13.1-137).

Therefore, no poetry exists out of Vālmīki. However, the essence of Vālmīki's poetry cannot be sorrow, but joy, and the joy in the *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa* represents the happy conjugal life of Rāma and Sītā, undoing the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' altogether. However, in doing this, the author hides himself behind Vālmīki, whose essence he only rediscovers:

> "Blessed is the Muni Vālmīki, the lord of all poets, who composed the billion-fold Rāmāyaṇa long ago, the extensive and auspicious Rāmāyaṇa, of which I told you only the essence." (Ibid, Pūrṇa Kāṇḍa, 9.63, Rājya Kāṇḍa 14.173-74)

Tony K. Stewart and Edward C. Dimock have pointed out that an even more serious critique of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' comes from the Bengali *Śrīrāmapā(n)cālī* of Kṛttibāsa (c. fifteenth century CE) where the famous notion of *Rāmarājya* is questioned by the repeated statement that Daśaratha's reign was better than Rāma's (Stewart and Dimock, 2000). The untimely death taking place in Rāma's kingdom represents Rāma's misrule, and Rāma's arbitrary decision to kill Śambūka, the *śūdra* ascetic, is not a clear solution. Therefore, to atone for his sin, Rāma organizes a horse-sacrifice. However, what created the imbalance in Rāma's kingdom, if the transgression of the caste norms by Śambūka was not the real factor? It must have been a sin committed by the king. The possibility is high that Rāma's unfair judgment in banishing Sītā is indicated. The indication turns into a statement in the calamity brought by Rāma's horse-sacrifice. Lava and Kuśa, not knowing their parentage, and brought up in the innocence of Vālmīki's hermitage, not only capture Rāma's sacrificial horse, but kill Rāma along with his brothers in the

subsequent war. No composer of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, except Kṛttibāsa, has gone to the extent of killing Rāma in a battle. Rāma and his brothers are revived by the magic spell of Vālmīki. Still, despite Vālmīki's protest, Rāma asks for a second fire-ordeal of Sītā, leading to her suicidal entrance into the earth after which Rāma does not live long either.

Thus, Kṛttibāsa, devoted and respectful to Rāma in his first six books, voices his strong disapproval of the Rāma of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa'. Daśaratha, who sacrificed his life for his love, turns out to be a better king than the cold-hearted Rāma. Rāma's character has been desecrated to such an extent in the last book that the character's death in the hands of his more virtuous and innocent sons became necessary. It is only Vālmīki who has the power to revive his hero after that.

Therefore, the love of Rāma and Sītā, following the love of the crane-couple and the Daśaratha-Kaikeyī duo, remained the dominant theme of the *Rāmakathā* tradition. Even the most normative and Brahmanized *Rāmakathās* could not ignore it. Kampan, in his twelfth century Tamil text *Irāmāvatāram*, thus makes Sītā have a glance of Rāma from her window, to introduce a love at first sight.[21] Similarly, he makes the fire-ordeal of Sītā a nastier encounter, with Rāma slandering Sītā's birth and foodhabit in Laṅkā. However, Sītā does not merely emerge out of the fire, but scorches the fire, after which Agni reviles Rāma for abandoning *dharma* (Shulman, 2012). Thus, the love-story is developed, brought to extreme anticlimax, and restored to normalcy, just like in Vālmīki, for Kampan also knows Rāma and Sītā to be 'one breath of life in two different bodies' (ibid.: 99).

Similarly, Tulsīdās, the author of the Awadhi *Rāmacaritamānas* (sixteenth century), the most conservative, normative and Brahmanical of all the *Rāmāyaṇas*, retains Kampan's theme of love at first sight. He leaves out the fire-ordeal to save Rāma's embarrassment, but even his Rāma expresses his love for Sītā in the words not much different from Vālmīki, Kālidāsa, Bhavabhūti and Kampan:

> *"tattwa prema kara mama aru torā/*
>
> *jānata priyā eka manu morā//*
>
> *so manu sadā rahata tohi pāhī(n)/*
>
> *jānu prīti rasu eta nehī māhī."*

(Darling! It is only my mind that knows the secrets of my love and yours too. However, even that mind stays always with you.)[22]

In fact, despite the overwhelming hold of 'Uttarakāṇḍa' on both the orthodox appropriations of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and its iconoclastic criticisms, it is Vālmīki's theme that has often dominated even the modern *Rāmakathās*. I will conclude this essay with two such significant examples from modern Bengali literature: Michael Madhusudan Dutt, often considered the first modern poet of India, and Rabindranath Tagore, the most celebrated literary figure of modern India.

Dutt is largely known for his *Meghanādavadha Kāvya*, a radical reversal of the *Rāmāyaṇa* with Rāvaṇa and his heroic son Meghanāda as the chief protagonists. However, Dutt's use of the epic themes was not limited to this monumental work only. His *Bīrāṅgaṇā* is a collection of eleven imaginary letters written by different epic heroines to their respective lovers. In one of these, *Daśarather Prati Kekayī*, we hear for the first time after Bhāsa the open statement of Kaikeyī's love. Here, Kaikeyī demands the kingdom for Bharata not for the sake of the kingdom, but for the sake of the pledge made as a token of Daśaratha's love for her. It is the insult of her love, by Daśaratha's false promise, which offends Kaikeyī:

"No more I'm bent by weighty buttocks!

Thighs are not plump like plantains,

Rounded! The waist, which you would

Grip in love and demean lions,

No more is slender! Those high breasts

Are shaggy! Tasteless lips! Time has

Robbed crookedly all jewels which

Adorned youth's stock; Summer has robbed

Forest-flower's grace, drying it up!

But think of old days, My Gem,

When I saved you, in youth's bloom,

The vow you made, Lord, virtue itself

Being its witness; if in lust

You had given a false hope, tell —

Silently I'll then bear the pain.

I have heard how men in lust

Often steal the hearts of women,

Trickily, leaving virtue, free of fear,

Mixing with honey deceit's ashes!

Sun King, have you, too, stooped that low?

I have written this letter in blood

Of my breast! If sinless I'm,

Devoted still to the husband's feet,

Let Virtue decide, let Virtue speak." (Dutt, 1999: 141-142, Tr. by author)

If Dutt recovered the voice of Vālmīki's Kaikeyī, Tagore – engaged very closely with the *Rāmakathā* tradition – focused more on Rāma and Sītā and their poet. He opines that the glory of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is not in the battle of Rāma and Rāvaṇa. Rather, the battle is only a device to highlight the love of Rāma and Sītā (Tagore, 1961c: 662). Therefore, Vālmīki's crane-parable lies at the heart of Tagore's understanding of the *Rāmāyaṇa*:

> "The legend prevalent about Vālmīki will not be considered history by anybody. But we consider that as the real history of the poet. The biography created by Vālmīki's readers from Vālmīki's poetry is truer than Vālmīki's real life. Which impact made the source of poetry flow out of Vālmīki's heart? The impact of compassion. The *Rāmāyaṇa* is a stream of the tears of compassion. The grief-stricken wailing of the separated crane is sounded in the core of the *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition... The parable of the crane-couple is a concise metaphor of the essence of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Flatly saying, the people have no doubt discovered the truth that the pure stream of the great poet's *anuṣṭubh* meter has flown, being melted by the very warmth of

compassion. The untimely and permanent separation of conjugal love has churned out the poetry in the compassionate sage."(Tagore 1961b: 881-882, Tr. by author)

This belief was so deeply embedded in Tagore, that it became the theme of one of his earliest creations, *Vālmīki Pratibhā*.

Being so much sensitive to Vālmīki's poetry, Tagore did not fail to recognize and criticize the 'Uttarakāṇḍa', which tampered with the essence of the epic:

"The poet of the *Rāmāyaṇa* has not constructed Rāma's character with the logic of any normative coherence. Thus the character is natural and literary, not advocatory. But the Uttarakāṇḍa came with the message of its particular time; it killed the character just as a glassworm kills a cockroach. The serious concern of the social necessity occurred, i.e. the problem of that time. In that period of codifying the behaviours, it was no more feasible to accept Sītā back into the house without protest, after her long stay in Rāvaṇa's house. That it would be wrong to do so, and that it was necessary to send her to the forest and (to ask for) a fire-ordeal at the end, giving priority to the public opinion–this ghost of a solution to the social problem possessed the character. The common audience of that time had appreciated the poet by considering the whole episode a high-quality production. By the power of that appreciation, this makeshift book is still attached to the living body of the original *Rāmāyaṇa*."(Tagore, 1961f: 514-515, Tr. by author)

Elsewhere, Tagore condemns the 'Uttarakāṇḍa', saying that this single book ruthlessly destroyed the story of joy and sorrow completely developed over the first six books. Up to the war, everybody considered Rāvaṇa as the greatest enemy of Sītā. But when Sītā had been rescued from Rāvaṇa after a long struggle, it is shown that the ultimate enemy of Sītā is not the unrighteous Rāvaṇa, but Rāma and his righteousness. Tagore thinks that anybody with the slightest sensitivity to the story cannot tolerate this sudden torture (Tagore, 1961e: 662 Tr. by author). Naturally, the sensitive authors like Bhavabhūti, Kālidāsa and Tagore could not tolerate it. In his longest poem, *Puraskār*, Tagore echoes Bhavabhūti's concern that Rāma's life has been turned into one that only registered pain:

"etek baliā kṣaṇa pare kabi/

karuṇa kathāi prakāśila chabi/

puṇyakāhinī raghukūlarabi/

rāghaber itihās,/

asaha duḥkha sahi nirabadhi/

kemane janam giyeche dagadhi/

 jībaner śeṣ dibas abadhi/

asīm nirāśvās."

(The poet narrated in pitiful words that sacred lore – the tradition from
the past about Rāghava, the best among the Raghus. (He stated) how his
life was spent in unbearable agony and endless despair until the last day
of his life.) (Tagore 1961d: 426, Tr. by author)

Thus, Tagore goes on to express his understanding of the *Rāmāyaṇa*
in his poem *Bhāṣā o Chanda*. With this poem, we shall go back to
the very first scene of the *Rāmāyaṇa* with which we started our survey
of the *Rāmakathā* tradition. In the poem, Vālmīki asks Nārada:

"*bhagavan, tribhuvan tomāder pratyakṣe birāje*

kaho more kār nāme amar bīṇār chanda bāje.

kaho more bīrya kār kṣamāre kare nā atikram

kāhār caritra gheri sukaṭhin dharmer niyam

dhareche sundar śobhā māṇikyer aṅgader moto,

mahaiśvarye thāke namra mahādainye ke hay na nata,

sampade ke thake bhaye, bipade ke ekānta nirbhīk,

ke peyeche sab ceye, ke diyeche tahar adhik,

ke niyeche nija śire rājbhāle mukuṭer sama

sabinaye sagourabe dharā mājhe duḥkha mahattama —

kaha more sarbadarśī he debarṣi tār puṇya nām.

nārad kahilā dhīre, 'ayodhyār raghupati rām.'"

(My Lord, you have witnessed the three worlds. Tell me of a person whose
name is echoed in the chords of eternal lute, whose might never transcends
the limits of his mercy, whose character is graced by the uncompromising
virtue of *dharma*. (Tell me) who stays modest in great affluence but is not

overwhelmed by adversity, who remains restrained in wealth but is fearless in danger, who has received most and yet has given away more than what he has got, who has welcomed on his head in humility and glory — like the crown of a king — the greatest suffering in the world. Tell me, o all-witnessing divine sage, the holy name of a person such as this. Nārada said slowly, 'Rāma, the Raghu king of Ayodhyā.') (Tagore, 1961a: 916, Tr. by author)

However, asked to compose the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Vālmīki gets apprehensive to compose Rāma's history without knowing all the details. Nārada's reassurance follows:

"*nārad kahilā hāsi, 'sei satya jā racibe tumi,*

ghaṭe jā tā sab satya nahe. kabi taba manobhūmi

rāmer janamsthān ayodhyār ceye satya jeno."

(Nārada chuckled, "Truth is for you to create.

Facts are not all True, but know, o poet,

Your mind is truer than the birthplace

Of Rāma–Ayodhyā.) (ibid.)

With this message, we can conclude our survey. The 'Uttarakāṇḍa' created an image of Rāma, the ideal king, and Sītā, the ideal submissive wife. This image turned Rāma into the hero of Brahmanical orthodoxy and the political right wing has gone to the extent of destroying a mosque in Ayodhya to retrace the 'history' of their idol! On the other hand, this notion of *Rāmarājya* and the character of Rāma have been variously condemned by the feminists, and the gender-sensitive, caste-sensitive thinkers, who also gave more importance to the 'Uttarakāṇḍa'. However, in both the cases, it is often unrecognized that the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' is a later interpolation in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, inconsistent with the essence of Vālmīki's poetry and disapproved by various authors within the *Rāmakathā* tradition. Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* is essentially a poem of love and separation involving three couples. It has been understood as such by the many poets following Vālmīki, who expressed their sympathies with the Vālmīkian, not the 'Uttarakāṇḍa', tradition. Rāma and Sītā are the protagonists of a classic heroic romance. No proof for a historical Rāma whose adventures were fashioned into poetry by Vālmīki, the *kuśīlava* bard, has been found yet. But what we have for sure is the

immortal poetry of Vālmīki about the three couples discussed. As Tagore writes, the real birthplace of Rāma is not Ayodhya, but the very mind of Vālmīki. The real story of Rāma is no historical adventure, but the resonances of that mind still echoing the mourning of a female crane for her deceased lover.

NOTES

1. See A.K. Ramanujan, 'Three Hundred Rāmāyaṇas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation' in Paula Richman (ed.), *Many Rāmāyaṇas* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2012), pp.22-49; Paula Richman, 'Introduction: The Diversity of the *Ramayana* Tradition' in Paula Richman (ed.), *Many Rāmāyaṇas* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2012), pp.3-21; Paula Richman, 'Questioning and Multiplicity within the *Ramayana* Tradition' in Paula Richman (ed.), *Questioning Ramayanas* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000), pp.1-21; Romila Thapar, 'Foreword' in Paula Richman (ed.), *Questioning Ramayanas* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000), pp. vii-xii.

2. See a historiographical discussion on all these positions in John Brockington, *The Sanskrit Epics* (Brill, Leiden, 1998), pp.50-1.

3. Vālmīki, *The Rāmāyaṇa* (Vol.I), 'Balakanda' translated by Robert P. Goldman (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1984), pp.29-31. All the translations quoted from the 'Bālakāṇḍa' are from this volume, whereas all the verses quoted in original are from the same translation published with the original text from the New York University Press, New York, 2005.

4. See, for instance, M. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature* (Vols. 1-3) (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1985-93); N.J. Shende, 'The Authorship of the Rāmāyaṇa', *Journal of the University of Bombay,* Vol.12, No.2, 1943a, pp.19-24; Brockington (1998); John Brockington, *Righteous Rāma* (OUP, Delhi, 1984).

5. *The Uttarakāṇḍa: The Seventh Book of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa.* Critically edited by Umakant Premchand Shah (Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1975), VII.94.26.

6. Vyāsa, *The Mahābhārata* (Vol.XIII), critically edited by Shripad Krishna Belvalkar (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona), XII.57.40.

7. Kauṭīlya, *Arthaśāstra*, critically edited and translated by R.P. Kangle (University of Bombay, Bombay, 1960-65), II.27.6-7; IV.1.58-65.

8. See Bulcke (1958) for details of all these narratives.

9. To Vyāsa, *The Mahābhārata* (Vol.II), translated by J.A.B. van Buitenen (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981) III.122. All the references to Vyāsa's *Mahābhārata* II and III are from this volume.

10. Leslie, p.477; Charlotte Vaudeville, 'A Further Note on *Krauñcavadha* in *Dhvanyāloka* and *Kāvyamīmāṃsa*' in *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda*, Vol. 11, pp.122-128.

11. Vālmīki, *The Rāmāyaṇa*, 'Ayodhyākāṇḍa' translated by Sheldon Pollock (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1986), pp.25-28. All the translated

references to the 'Ayodhyākāṇḍa' are from this volume. All the references in original Sanskrit are from the same translation published with the original text from the New York University Press, New York, 2005.

12. Vālmīki, *The Rāmāyaṇa*, 'Araṇyakāṇḍa' (The Forest) translated by Sheldon Pollock (New York University Press, New York, 2006), III.8.6-22. All further references to the 'Araṇyakāṇḍa', in both original and translation, are from this volume.

13. Vālmīki, *The Rāmāyaṇa* (Vol.V), 'Sundarakāṇḍa' (Sundara) translated by Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman (New York University Press, New York, 2005), V.34.29. All further references to the 'Sundarakāṇḍa', both in original and translation, are from this volume.

14. See Shende (1943a); N.J. Shende, 'The Authorship of the *Mahābhārata*' in *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol.24, 1943b, pp.67-82; V.S. Sukthankar, *Critical Studies in the Mahābhārata*, (V.S.Sukthankar Memorial Edition Committee, Poona, 1944); R.P. Goldman, *Gods, Priests and Warriors* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1977); R.P. Goldman, 'Akṛtavarṇa vs Śrīkṛṣṇa as Narrator of the Legend of the Bhārgava Rāma: Apropos Some Observations of Dr.V.S.Sukthankar' in *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol.53, 1972, pp.161-173.

15. See Bhattacharji.

16. See Nabanita Deb Sen, 'Nārīr Mahākāvya, Rāmakathār Punaḥkathan: Candrāvati Rāmāyaṇa' in Tapas Bhowmik (ed.), *Rāmāyaṇa Carcā: Bhārate o Bahirbhārate*' (Korak, Kolkata, 2010), pp. 256-266.

17. Cited in Linda Hess, 'Rejecting Sītā: Indian Responses to the Ideal Man's Cruel Treatment of His Ideal Wife' in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol.67, No.1, Mar 1999, p.21.

18. See Velcheru Narayana Rao, 'A *Rāmāyaṇa* of their Own: Women's Oral Tradition in Telugu' in Paula Richman (ed.), *Many Rāmāyaṇas* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2012), pp. 114-136.

19. See Usha Nilsson, 'Grinding Millet But Singing Of Sita: Power and Domination in Awadhi and Bhojpuri Women's Songs' in Paula Richman (ed.), *Questioning Ramayanas* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000), pp.137-151.

20. See Hess, p.18.

21. See Bhaduri, p.24.

22. Cited in Rambahal Tiwary, 'Tulsīdāser *Rāmacaritamānas*-er Ekdik' in Tapas Bhowmik (ed.),*Rāmāyaṇa Carcā: Bhārate o Bahirbhārate* (Korak, Kolkata, 2010).

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A PARADIGM RECONSIDERED:
F.G. BAILEY AND THE STUDY
OF POLITICS IN INDIA

Gitika De

All intellectual practice is, consciously or unconsciously, at the crossroads of traditions of thought and contemporary realities; in other words, our intellectual practices are discursively ordered. The present paper is a part of an endeavour to elucidate the discursive space of political sociology in India. Discourses are constituted through a totality of language and combine themes, times, places, and persons. I have chosen to address the discourse on the study of politics in India with a person. I believe, read with a sociological perspective, a person could represent times, places and themes. Frederick George Bailey, whose works I have chosen to appraise, is one of the central figures of the Manchester school of British social anthropology,[1] who had carried out pioneering studies of politics in early post-colonial India and went on to deploy the insights of these studies to advance several theoretical and methodological formulations and produce a vocabulary for the comparative analyses of politics.

In this paper, I have undertaken a reading of the ethnographic works of Bailey to identify how political action—accounts of ideas, beliefs and arguments from particular situations — were translated into conceptualizations and abstractions, to generate a vocabulary of political analysis with specific ideas about human nature and political man.[2] Beginning in the early 1950s, Bailey undertook ethnographic studies in the eastern Indian state of Orissa, producing three monographs[3], and generating concepts and models for analyzing newly emerging post-colonial societies. Although his main concern was to analyze the changes brought about by colonial political and administrative apparatuses in a "traditional" social organization, the theoretical and methodological import of his work went much beyond his chosen objective. As is the nature of an appraisal, the following exposition weaves together the continuing

significance, various critiques and possible drawbacks of his paradigm.

PROCESS AND CHANGE: 'POLITICS' IN THE ORISSA ETHNOGRAPHIES

Bailey's Orissa studies were an attempt to understand changing patterns of relationships between older and newer forms of social and political institutions. Be it the relationship between village as a category of "traditional" social organization and the modern world of mercantile economy (in *Caste and the Economic Frontier, 1958*) or the relationship between primordial identities and the norms of the national polity (in *Tribe, Caste and Nation, 1960*) or the relationship between "parliamentary democracy and the older traditional forms of social and political organization" (p.vii, in *Politics and Social Change, 1963*), this theme of the articulation between the 'given' and 'emerging' is the guiding thread of these studies. Analyses in the three monographs proposes a schema to understand how colonial institutions have been transforming the extant social and political organization of Indian society through an investigation of the relationship between institutional politics of political parties, parliamentary processes like periodic elections and the rich context of everyday politics.

In these monographs, Bailey works with a very specific understanding of 'politics', as "*orderly competition*" for power as a scarce political resource. He defines the "political as that aspect of *any act* which concerns the *distribution of power,* provided that there is competition for this power, and provided secondly, that the competition takes place under a set of rules which the competitors observe and which ensure that the competition is orderly" (1963: 223; emphasis added). He further distinguishes between a situation which is political by the logic of orderly competition and situations where action ceases to be political and becomes merely administrative in the absence of competition, and actions where "competitors do not agree upon rules and institutions... and resort to violence" (ibid.). It is the rules of political engagement that define *"arenas"* of political competition, characterized by legal rules and statutes as well as customs and conventions.

Thus defined, the notion of "arenas" assumes great significance in Bailey's characterization of politics as orderly competition as "they regulate political conflict by laying down who is eligible to compete, what are the prizes for the winner, and what the competitors may do and what they must not do in their efforts to gain the prizes"

(ibid.). Thus, Bailey "expressed a personal preference for compromise rather than passionate politics and so to repugnance for disorder" (Vincent, 1990: 346). Within political arenas are *"teams"* defined as coalitions having transactional linkages based on asymmetrical social relationships; a patron with his clients is an example of such a team. Given this emphasis on the linkages and network of social relationships, this approach is often termed *network analysis.*[4] Orderly competition within discrete encapsulated boundaries and teams bound by rules of politicking are integral to Bailey's version of what constitutes politics. This concept of politics and attendant notions of act, rules, and arenas are part of the tool-kit for *processual political analysis* that he advocated. Clearly, Bailey's tool-kit is better suited for a study of "middle-class, gentlemanly politics", "in which the rules of the game did indeed, *on the surface at least*, set boundaries for political action; it was less useful for other purposes" (ibid.: 350, emphasis added).

The substantive problematic that animates Bailey's ethnographies of politics is to arrive at an understanding through empirical enquiries, how the representative institutions of a nascent political democracy were spreading their influence and thereby changing the ways in which politics was practised in earlier times. In order to understand the relationship between specialized political roles fostered by representative politics and the "undifferentiated roles of traditional society" (ibid.: 221), Bailey argued for an "interactional approach" which would view "the several fields of political activity as if they were joined systematically to one another" through social interaction (ibid.: 222-223). The attempt here was to establish how the different arenas, such as the State, the political constituencies and the villages are connected through interaction without essentializing a particular style or idiom of Indian politics. Thus, what was often criticized within this paradigm, viz. the lack of attention to the so-called 'real seat of power' and sovereignty, the state, is perhaps his most innovative contribution to understand political action as embedded within both local levels of power and larger encapsulating state structures.

This also led him to distinguish three levels of explanations of political activity–*cultural,* defined as the actor's own model of his political actions; *structural,* characterized by the interrelationships between groups within structures of power, such as castes and villages; and *external,* comprising the interaction between local levels of power and their encapsulating structures. In Bailey's analysis, these three levels of explanations of political action are

complementary, as political conflicts at the three levels are comprehensible only when they are translated into the respective idioms in conformity with rules applicable to the specific arenas. As Bailey demonstrates in his ethnographic study of the 1957 general elections in Bisipara and Mohanpur villages in Orissa, "the issues which are at stake in State politics have to be translated into something else at constituency level and have to be translated yet again at village level. For example, the Ganatantra-Congress conflict at State level appears in the guise of rival policies (or, in another form, of regional rivalries–Hill against Coast); in the constituencies of Kalahandi district, it appeared as a dynastic dispute; in Bisipara, it was translated into caste conflict" (1963: 232). Bailey could thus be seen as giving flesh and blood to the *practical logic* of democratic institutions by examining how elections signify much more than formal issues on which they are purportedly contested, as political interactions in the final analysis are framed by the social interactions of the protagonists. Thus, it might be argued, that Bailey's analytical apparatus gives the lie to the burgeoning genre of election studies, which tend to treat elections as episodic events devoid of the rich and enduring social context in which they are embedded. To that extent, lessons from Bailey's Orissa studies provide pioneering and path-breaking insights for a currently ascendant genre of anthropology of democracy. Again, in *Tribe, Caste and Nation*, Bailey advances a similar analysis and demonstrates that different norms constituting the different systems — a tribe, caste, or nation — are intertwined in actual social situations, and disputes arising in one system may be waged in terms of another. Individuals and groups, in seeking to maximize their political gains, utilize the norms of that system which affords them greater advantage in a given situation. Consistent preference for one system over another, Bailey argues, is likely to lead to the superseding of one system over the others, thus leading to normative change.

Bailey was clearly a part of the thriving moment of modernization theory with its implicit and not-so-implicit value biases and teleological schema. His interest in the interaction of traditional and modern political institutions is part of the scholarly agenda pursued in several studies undertaken in newly-independent nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America in the '50s and '60s, to assess the suitability and sustainability of democratic and parliamentary institutions in these societies, by social scientists of various hues, like political scientists, economists, sociologists and social anthropologists[5]. Though these studies share several features that are justly critiqued

for their ethnocentrism and imperialist politics, Bailey strikes a distinct note that makes aspects of his work more enduring. For instance, he clearly states and tries to adhere to the research objective that it is not his concern to adjudge the "merits and failings of parliamentary democracy", but to comprehend how "ordinary people acting within the framework of representative institutions" were adjusting themselves vis-à-vis "indigenous customs, levels of cultural attainment, and membership of such traditional groups as villages or castes, or in the light of traditional roles like landlord, tenant, prince, priest, and so forth" (1963: 4). For achieving this, Bailey resorted to hard-nosed, empirical, descriptive analysis, a procedure which entailed "building up the structure and functioning of the community through intensive examination of some of its parts in action,...relating the parts together through observing events between groups and between group leaders and members of the larger institutional structures, ...seeking to build a sociology upon observed interpersonal events" (Whyte, 1943, cited in Vincent, 1990, p.304). This method of studying political behaviour distinguished a generation of Harvard and Manchester political ethnographers and as Vincent has noted, "revealed the methodological distinctiveness of political anthropology vis-à-vis the science of politics — a contrast that stands to this day" (ibid.: 305). This way of analyzing political behaviour proved compelling as it challenged the formalism of structuralist paradigms and infused realism and processual components into political analysis.

Processes, contradictions, choices, and above all, *purposive goal-oriented action,* was the staple of the realist analysis of politics undertaken by Bailey. Such analysis called attention to "practical politicking" that sought to uncover not only how ideologies are perceived in actual political contestations, but how political power is ultimately achieved *by strategies, tactics and manipulations.* In the context of Bisipara, Bailey showed how morality of political positions is seen vested in individual politicians and judgments of political choices manifested in votes is determined by such considerations as contiguity of caste, village, or kin identities. Thus, "...the story of Bisipara brings out most clearly that what the villager sees most directly in politics is the nearest politician and that his acceptance of the new institutions as legitimate does not rest only on the efficiency with which they work, but also on moral judgments about the persons associated with the new institutions" (1963: 68). Bailey's paradigm is thus most useful in unraveling *routine politics*, and not grand political events such as wars or revolutions, as he himself avers

in his 1969 book, *Stratagems and Spoils*. He writes, "Coups and revolutions are certainly more violent and more dramatic than the Westminster routine. But surely it is impossible to assert, in any absolute sense, that they are more important. Importance is relative to the values of whoever is making the judgment: it is not an attribute of events themselves" (Bailey 1969: 2). By this statement, Bailey also clearly sets out what a political anthropologist's task should be– to understand politics as quotidian and mundane, and systematically resist the grand statist visions of politics, an understanding that "has a wider reference than merely to the activities of those who are ordinarily considered politicians" (ibid.: 223). This kind of analysis has the added merit of understanding the state through the everyday, routinized practices through which individuals and groups in society make sense of the state and its institutions, a concern that has been renewed in recent ethnographies.[6]

The processual element in Bailey's political ethnography is brought out in his discussion of several themes–the nature of traditional leadership and its continuities within a new mode of administration and new rules of the game; the transformation of caste understood as a category with common attributes (*jati*) into its modern form of caste associations (a group defined by interaction) leading to much wider forms of social stratification; and the organizational bases of political parties in terms of "movement" elements and "machine" elements. These transformations, in Bailey's argument, show the interrelationship between political change and social change. For instance, one of the ways in which the institutional structures of representative government sought to influence traditional social units was by innovations such as creating new groups and new ways of communicating with those groups. Bailey persuasively argues that the old structure of allegiances has only remained as sentiment and was reactivated in the new form of democratic action, such as processions and hunger strikes, and new men have emerged in politics alongside traditional chiefs, such as schoolmasters, caste leaders, petty businessmen. Similarly, the formation of caste associations as horizontal groupings also facilitated politicians with an effective means of getting votes, as caste provides the politician "with a ready-made moral element on which he can draw to form associations, without the members of those associations calculating at every step what they are going to get out of it" (ibid.: 135). Bailey's observation that caste associations "may become, for a time, a main organizing factor and a main cleavage in the new political system"

(ibid: 134) would seem rather commonplace in contemporary India, but in highlighting the moral element of caste, he had signalled the enduring significance that caste would have in the Indian political landscape. Besides the utilization of caste associations during elections, parliamentary politics with periodic elections also necessitated that "small, parochial, and elusive" groups within traditional society are politically persuaded. Bailey contends that the politician's task was to create a new group in the form of the political party, thus making a distinction between the "movement" and "machine" elements of political parties. The fact that parties essentially exhibited both movement and machine elements, Bailey argues, demonstrates that politics is not sustained essentially and at all times by moral fervour alone, and party as a political machine gives rise to intermediaries such as brokers, touts, bosses, and agitators–"a network of key individuals, hierarchically organized, but undisciplined and unstable" (ibid.: 152). Bailey's theoretical paradigm thus contributed in delineating forms of competitive political organization in complex societies, which subsequently led to studies of modern, industrial capitalist and socialist states.

The theoretical and methodological implications of Bailey's paradigm have come under disrepute on account of its putative conservative bias in his definition of politics as orderly competition and his eschewing of violence as disorderly. However, his emphasis on routine politics, on the rules of politics, on pragmatic and realist politics, on extra-systemic features of politics, and on political behaviour, outlined a comprehensive systems analysis of political action within the nation-state and elaborated principles of competitive political behaviour in discrete arenas. The main concern of this tradition of political analysis was to address the substantive conditions of societal change, where the face-to-face encounters of particular individuals within encapsulated settings was prioritized. Although critics have pointed that this tradition of sociological analysis suffered from an overdependence on individual actors and "rational" man, by focusing on purposive action, Bailey noted, "social organization... is best perceived by considering the actors not to be so many faceless automata, moving to and fro at the behest of structural rules, but as manipulators choosing within a range of possible tactics and asking themselves not only what they ought to do, but also what they can do" (Bailey, 1968, cited in Vincent). This takes us to the second prominent theme in Bailey's work, i.e. the relationship between structure and agency as constituted through Bailey's articulation of political structure.

STRUCTURE AND AGENCY: THE CONTINGENT
NATURE OF POLITICAL PRACTICE

The focus on individuals, agency and process was the hallmark of
the action paradigm of which Bailey was one of the early adherents.
The larger methodological implications of a processual approach–
a political anthropology of action or agency–lay in locating the
"interstitial spaces" of the social structure, i.e. the interpersonal
relations between the human beings who make up the society and
the everyday interactions and communications through which
institutions, associations and the like operate. The relation between
structure and process had always been contentious in political
anthropology, but the Manchester school's emphasis firmly lay with
the latter, where the structures of social relations, ideas, and values
were delineated, but in relation to processes of which they were
both the products and regulators.

Action theory in anthropology began by locating the individual
within the framework of both formal and interstitial social
organization and then proceeded to the analysis of political action
and interaction. The theory, backed by fine-grained ethnographic
practice, generated a set of related concepts–on political forms
generated out of the coalescence of individual actors, such as clique,
gang, faction, coalition, interest group and the political party; on
modes of political behaviour, such as decision-making, strategizing,
transacting, manipulating, manoeuvring, competing, persuading;
and the context of political action (both spatial and temporal), such
as event, situation, arena, field, environment, power structure.
Although the individual was the starting point of enquiry, the
paradigm placed sufficient emphasis on the spatial and temporal
dimensions within which actions of individuals take place. Thus,
Bailey observed in a later work[7], "At one level we will be discussing
specific communities (even specific people in them) at a specific
period. But to do this and nothing else is to fail. We want to raise
questions (and answer some of them) which far transcend villages
in Europe in the middle of the twentieth century, because they are
questions which can be asked about change and development in
many parts of the world, at all periods in history, and about human
assemblages of other kinds besides the peasant village" (Bailey, 1971:
27). This line of enquiry clearly shows that the criticisms leveled
against action theory in general and Bailey in particular for
overemphasizing individuals' actions was somewhat misplaced, as
Bailey placed a lot of emphasis on contexts and cross-cultural and
trans-historical comparisons.

Further, the apprehension that face-to-face political interaction might be powerless to reflect the wider structural features of society was allayed by studies which moved from examining manipulative strategies of a narrow range of political actors to a greater clarification of the particular settings and circumstances in which they operated. For instance, Bailey's own synoptic statement of his vision of political sociology, *Stratagems and Spoils,* set the task of political sociology as unearthing structural regularities underlying political behaviour, beneath contextual variations and cultural differences. Thus, in Bailey's understanding, social structure and social organization are complementary, standing respectively for form and process in social life. While structure involved role-playing, organization involved both roles and more spontaneous, decisive activity that did not follow simply from role-playing. Moreover, Bailey's conceptualization of structure takes into account sub-structures, which are simply defined as one portion of a structure, made up of groups and institutions classified by their activity content. Thus, in *Tribe, Caste and Nation*, Bailey shows that society among the Konds of the Kondhmal region of Orissa comprise a number of separate structures of relationships–the tribal structure, the caste structure and the administrative structure. Individuals play roles in all these structures, choosing (not always correctly), one or the other role system through which to gain their personal ends. This also highlights that norms of one structure might be only partially imbibed or incorrectly realized, thus pointing to the contingent nature of interactions through which individuals continuously negotiate with structures and in that process come to realize their agential capacities. In his later work, *The Kingdom of Individuals*, Bailey puts forth his viewpoint on the structure-agency debate in more mature and sophisticated terms. He observes, "...in practice (as well as in logic), the paired concepts [structure-agency] require each other. A theory of institutions leaves much unexplained if it is not matched with a theory of agency; and vice versa. Without attention to agency, there is no way to explain how social formations ever change as conditions external to them change; without the concept of structure or institution, there is no way of describing what is changing" (Bailey, 1993, p.ix).

What comes through in Bailey's perspective on the structure-agency debate, mainly in his studies of political processes, is the contingent nature of both structural constraints and agential possibilities. His argument that individuals inhabit more than one structure may sound obvious, but Bailey's analysis goes beyond that to show that while individuals may be constrained in one structure,

say the caste structure in the case of the untouchable caste in Bisipara, they may be enabled in another structure, say the institutional structures of the modern state. Changes within structures thus come about by the possibilities of individual actions, thereby creating newer structures of constraints and possibilities. Bailey writes, "Structures control agency but also are themselves open to being changed by agents. The goal of an agent is to define the situation, to say what structures will organize political interaction" (Bailey, 2001: 30).

This endless dialectic between structure and agency has been variously conceptualized and refined in later ethnographies by other anthropologists, some from the stable of Manchester school and others from different sociological traditions. For instance, Jeremy Boissevain in his classic study, *Friends of Friends: Network Manipulations and Coalitions* (1974), uses the idea of network and argues that the individual was structured not by role playing, but by the structural and interactional character of his network. Similarly, Victor Turner in his *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* (1974) deploys the idea of political field defined as "the totality of relationships between actors oriented to the same prizes or values" made up of "purposive goal-directed group action" (Turner, 1974: 127-28). Elucidating his idea of practice, Pierre Bourdieu in his classic, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), calls for seeking an alternative to a pattern of rules, which drew attention to the fact that what defines practices is the "uncertainty and 'fuzziness' resulting from the fact that they have as their principle not a set of conscious, constant rules, but practical schemes, opaque to their possessors, varying according to the logic of the situation..." (Bourdieu, 1990: 12). These later conceptual innovations have much in common with Bailey's processual analysis, especially his notion of strategies, which captures "the complex interplay among designed order, individual initiatives and a natural order" (Bailey, 2001: xiii).

Process, agency and action also inform how Bailey perceived the values of individualism and collectivism/holism, materialism and spiritualism, and questions of morality and expediency. These grand debates of Indian sociology were nascent when Bailey was carrying out his researches in the 1950s. But, there are some indications of where his sympathies lay in his Orissa studies. In the following section, I outline some of these concerns and show the implications of his stance for countering certain dominant assumptions about the nature of Indian society and polity.

A REALIST ANALYSIS OF POLITICS OR STUDYING 'POLITICS AS USUAL'

Bailey's emphasis on the individual as an acting agent placed him in a contrarian position vis-à-vis culturological conceptions of Indian society, engendered by holism and characterized by civilizational essence. Bailey understands holism as a philosophy that 'places the collectivity, logically and morally, before the individual' and 'asserts that the properties of a whole cannot be deduced from the properties of its parts'. He firmly discounts this ideological over-determination of individual action and emphasizes the primacy of observed behaviour over any statement of values. He submits that no society can be understood only as an internally coherent set of ideas, for it is people who hold ideas, and the anthropologists' job is to ask who holds what ideas and why? He notes that even Louis Dumont in his *Homo Hierarchicus: Caste System and Its Implications* (1970), the locus classicus on holism, acknowledges that it is necessary to maintain "a demonstrably close connection with *observed behaviour*, for we are too much exposed in that case to gross misunderstanding, if we do not give full weight to the control through '*what actually happens*'" (Bailey, 1991: 221; emphasis in original). True to this emphasis on observed behaviour over stated values, in *Politics and Social Change* (1963), Bailey sets out his problem and the techniques of enquiry in categories that are observable in terms of their political behaviour: "One examines the behaviour of politicians or of ordinary people acting within the framework of representative institutions and asks how far this behaviour seems comprehensible in the light of indigenous customs, levels of cultural attainment, and ...so forth" (Bailey, 1963: 2), and selects the Orissa state, the constituencies and the villages as the units of observation.

According to Bailey, holism as an ideology which directs action is at odds with notions of human action, creativity and individuality and precludes the possibility of observing all pervasive innovation and improvisation in human actions. Moreover, methodological holism as an ideology has the tendency to become an orthodoxy. Bailey contends that this tendency could be countered by observed behaviour within any social group. Forms of political behaviour such as manipulating, strategizing, persuading, manoeuvring can only be explained if individual action is viewed not as encompassed by an ideology commonly prevalent throughout a society, but having an autonomous social or ideological existence. This is, however, not

to postulate, as Bailey makes it clear, that an individual "exists apart from the social person" as "society shapes the moral individual and therefore, logically comes first" (Bailey, 1993: 6).

Bailey, in his more recent methodological treatise, *The Saving Lie* (2003), submits that "this apparently straightforward contrast between" methodological holism and methodological individualism "is a source of confusion and a prompter of pointless altercation, because people uphold one or other side of the contrast as a concrete reality, as the unique truth about how the world works" (Bailey, 2003: xi). Instead, he offers, the two positions should be treated as "methods (...) and as weapons", or as he calls them "saving lies" that enable us to make sense of human society and not as contraries and therefore incompatible. Thus, unlike Dumont, Bailey treats holism and individualism as methodological tools rather than giving them an ontological status, thereby doing away with essentializations about people, cultures and societies. Instead, Bailey sought to ask and answer, "how and why, in a particular situation, one ideology...comes to prevail over the rest; and about the consequences of that prevalence" (Bailey, 1991: 222).

Connected to holism is yet another dominant characterization of Indian society in terms of religiosity and spiritualism. Bailey's detailed ethnography of Orissa sought to belie this claim. Thus, in contrast to those who regard religion as constitutive of society, i.e., providing a "seamless moral sensibility", Bailey's Orissa studies present a world inhabited by "an underlying, shared, mostly tacit, and uncontested conception of reality, a notion of how things really did (and should) work" (ibid.: 170). He terms it as "quiet pragmatism" that lies just beneath the skin of so-called Indian religiosity. For Bailey, the religiously ordained moral righteousness was never an absolute. Thus, in a conflict situation, the contending parties usually tend to do "the smart thing to do" (ibid.: 164) and avoid the excess. He attributes the behaviour of the two rival groups to "expediency" and not higher morals of "unexamined righteousness" (ibid.: 165; x).

To sum up, Bailey's India material amply demonstrates that in outlining the political landscape of early post-colonial India, Bailey firmly anchored himself in a clear-cut pragmatic view of politics based on the understanding of purposive action and refused to succumb to any culturological explanations that sought to mobilize civilizational essences. For Bailey, the people of Orissa whom he studied "were calculators, pragmatists, quotidian thinkers, in the habit of working out consequences when they made decisions" (ibid:

xii). In this sense, it may be argued that to characterize a whole society in terms of overarching ideologies does violence to an understanding of individual intentions and purposes, decisions and choices and individual's capability for self-development.

There is little doubt that some of the positions he held were open to very legitimate criticisms as alluded to at various points in the paper. But his steadfast refusal to mystify the everyday conduct of communities, his hardnosed adherence to observed realities of a society, a fairly comprehensive and precisely defined tool-kit that he developed are a useful legacy that one has to appropriate in order to analyze many of the current concerns that animate Indian social and political reality.

Some of the concerns that he attended to in these ethnographies of Orissa such as the interface of patronage and clientelism with class, organizational and interpersonal strategies that inform everyday political interactions in varied settings, coalescence of various types of groupings in the arena of representative politics, are finding renewed resonance in contemporary studies of Indian politics. In outlining these concerns, it became apparent that the singular contribution of Bailey's analysis is to understand "small politics" or "politics as usual" in the interstitial spaces of societies.

Bailey's vocabulary of political analysis was shared by a like-minded group of anthropologists writing about new nations in the 1950s and 1960s. Although those contexts have greatly altered now, Bailey has been consistent in outlining a theoretical and methodological paradigm in his subsequent work, which engaged various developments in sociology for the next five decades. He kept on revising and fine-tuning his positions as he moved along, remaining loyal to the authenticity of his original Orissa ethnographies, yet asking newer methodological and empirical questions to understand why people behaved in the way they did when he studied them and their society.

However, more importantly, we live in a world that seems to have temporarily lost its taste for epic battles and momentous transformations. Even the most coercive of the oppressions of this world seems to be routine and mundane, as are the resistances and everyday defiances. In all situations, manipulation, tactics, treasons, strategies have acquired an unprecedented salience[8]. Thus, the paradigm that Bailey fashioned in political anthropology remains significant for a realist analysis of politics, which not only restores the balance in favour of thinking, acting individuals, but also infuses political analysis with a possibility of actually locating what 'doing

politics' really means.

NOTES

1. The eponymous Manchester "school" of British social anthropology arose in the 1950s, with a close-knit group of anthropologists and sociologists who worked around Max Gluckman. In contrast to the reigning theoretical paradigm of that period, structural-functionalism, they emphasized on the precariousness of the notion of stability, and instead focused attention on the processual and situational dimensions of societies. Micro-processes in small localities were given more significance in their analyses and equilibrium was treated as unstable and transitory. F. G. Bailey was one of the earliest members of the "school", focusing on India, and as Joan Vincent has argued, heralded the Machiavellian moment in political anthropological analysis, taking up "the *routine* of political strategizing, manipulation, and the advancement of interests" (Vincent, 1990: 338, emphasis in original).

2. The task of appraisal of a body of work necessarily entails locating that work within its intellectual and philosophical context. This I have undertaken in a second paper written during my Associateship at the IIAS, Shimla in October 2013. However, that discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.

3. *Caste and the Economic Frontier, Oxford University Press: Bombay, 1958; Tribe, Caste and Nation, Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1960; and Politics and Social Change: Orissa in 1959, University of California Press: California, 1963*

4. The idea of networks and their interaction was used in anthropological analysis beginning in the 1950s to go beyond the structural-functional framework used by anthropologists to understand the processual aspects of change and transformation in "rapidly changing complex societies" in both the western and the third worlds. Along with such pioneers of the network analysis such as J.A. Barnes, Anton Blok, V. Turner, M. Swartz, J. Boissevain, Clyde Mitchell and others, Bailey used this framework to underline the dissatisfaction with the structural-functional paradigm of studying simple societies, exemplified in the seminal volume, *African*

Political Systems by M. Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard. The significant departure from Fortes' and Evans-Pritchards' analysis was to show that rules of politics are not consistent at all levels of a political system, which is the basic assumption of any structural-functional argument. Thus, Bailey argues in the context of Orissa, that in the three levels of political activity, i.e. the State, the constituencies and the villages, "there is an evident conflict of rules between the village arenas and arenas at higher levels... the rules of representative democracy, as applied at State and constituency levels, are trying to put the village rules out of business and to 'digest' and transform the village arenas" (Bailey, 1963: 225-26).

5. Representative works in this genre are those of Myron Weiner, Clifford Geertz, Lloyd and Suzanne Rudolph, Edward Shils, among many others.

6. See, for instance, Fuller, C.J. & V. Benei (eds.), *The Everyday State and Society in India*, New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2000

7. *Gifts and Poison: The Politics of Reputation,* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971

8. Whether in coups, revolutions, or diplomacy, stratagems, tactics and manipulations play a central role, and even the grand ideological battles are covertly fought on the strength of these mundane, routine idioms of doing politics. In a recent article, Slavoj Zizek narrates incidents from Western political history to show how discretion, compromise and tact were often used to strike deals where the real motives of the protagonists remained hidden from public discourse. Zizek argues: "Insofar as one can reconstruct the events today, it appears that the happy outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis, too, was managed through tact, *the polite rituals of pretended ignorance.* Kennedy's stroke of genius was to pretend that a letter had not arrived, a stratagem that worked only because the sender (Khrushchev) went along with it". For the fascinating account of the whole story of intrigue and manipulation, see, Slavoj Zizek, '*Tact in the Age of Wikileaks',* Harper's Magazine (New York, 2011, p.16; emphasis added).

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RECONSTRUCTING HISTORY AND MEMORY: PARTITION NARRATIVES IN TRANSLATION

Baisali Hui

These savageries pass as much in the outside world as in India under the name of communal trouble or Hindu-Muslim rioting. But these expressions have become the clichés of a stale journalese, which convey no real sensation of the phenomenon they purport to describe. Nor am I able to suggest a better alternative. I have weighed nearly all the words and phrases which the murderous ferocity of man, as distinct from his warlike ferocity, has contributed to the vocabulary of European peoples: massacre, pogrom, lynching, fusillade, noyade, St Bartholomew, Sicilian Vespers, Bloodbath of Stockholm, Bulgarian atrocities, Armenian massacres, Belsen, genocide, etc., etc., but find all of them inadequate. Their vividness has worn off. Instead of evoking horror, they would rather throw a veil of historical respectability on spectacles of mass murder, rotting corpses, gutters choked with human bodies emitting stomach-turning stench.

<div align="right">

NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI
Thy Hand, Great Anarch! (835)

</div>

Apart from its apparent socio-economic and political implications, the 1947 Partition of India carried with it germs of further change and deeper alterations. It turned the triumphant jubilation of Indian independence into an eerie experience of lament and anguish–of suffering at the loss of innumerable lives, homes and unrealised hopes, of dishonour and shame, of the pain of exile and forced mass migration, of emotional and psychological trauma that a whole generation could not overcome.

Naturally, for creative literature to capture the nuanced complexities of the experience of Partition both at personal and collective levels is a different proposition altogether from what government/institutionalised documentation or historical analysis

intends to achieve. It has a wider canvas and a greater imaginative liberty not only to depict how something happened but also to intuit, assume and predict the multilayered meanings, influences, inferences of the event from different perspectives. The short stories dealing with the various thematic concerns of Partition are, likewise, diverse in nature. They are short and pungent in thrust, focusing more on the immediate and the now–horror, bewilderment, incomprehension, sterile anger and exhausted resignation marking the passage from ignorance to self-knowledge, faith to disillusionment, disintegration to reconciliation.

Stories of Partition range from simple to complex–tales of communal riots, rape and butchering, of courage and cowardice, of loss and repentance gradually make room for stories trying to answer fundamental philosophical questions about life and death, about violence and humanity, about remembrance and forgetting, as Gyanendra Pandey (2001) succinctly sums up:

> What the violence of 1947 did was to create new subjects and subject positions... After Partition, individuals, families and communities in the subcontinent remade themselves in radically altered settings. They had to struggle to overcome new fear, to gradually rebuild faith and trust and hope and had to conceive new histories–and new 'memories' that are in some reckonings, 'best forgotten'. (15-16)

Temporal and psychological distancing seems to add a different edge and perspective in narration. These tales, therefore, may be broadly categorized as:

(a) short fiction of immediate response–violence and violation find expression in these stories; anger and retribution, fear and vengeance reign supreme in these tales of communal hatred, mass insanity, individual acts of kindness or degeneration; and

(b) short fiction that looks at Partition in retrospect and valorizes survival strategies–these are tales of acceptance, compromise and coping and dealing with the survivors of Partition atrocities who try to come to terms with the past in order to build a future for themselves.

Moving somewhat away from the categorization of Partition short stories by Alok Bhalla [in his introduction to *Stories about the Partition of India* (1999)], these two strands of stories focus primarily on the immediacy of the response they generate. The first strand foregrounds violence and its resultant emotions of terror, panic

and a blind prayer for safe escape deriving out of indiscriminate killing, looting and destruction of 'enemy' property, butchering of children, abduction and rape of women whose bodies became a site for communal contestation, mass exodus and a frenzied flight for safety across the border.

Though the larger section of the stories in the first category portrays the inhumanity latent in carnage and genocide, a handful of them such as Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi's 'Parmeshwar Singh', Ghulam Abbas' 'Avtar: A Hindu Myth', Krishna Sobti's 'Where is My Mother?', 'The Coin was Transformed', Azeez Ahmad's 'Dark Nights' or Hayat Ullah Ansari's 'Grateful Eyes' direct their sympathy towards a particular community. The structural-thematic orientation of these tales foregrounds the pain and sufferings of a particular community, thereby marginalizing the 'other' community. The child protagonist Akhtar in Qasmi's 'Parmeshwar Singh' is projected as a naturally pious boy whose Muslim ideology wins over Parmeshwar Singh, whose name and figure both caricature the strength and faith of a Sikh gentleman. The story reserves its sympathy exclusively for Akhtar who, in the face of cruelty and mockery from his Sikh neighbours and friends, moves on to the Pakistan border–resplendent in the glory of Islam, alone but brave. Ghulam Abbas' 'Avtar: A Hindu Myth', similarly, shows how the Hindu Lord Vishnu, the preserver, decides to take his last Kalki incarnation as a Muslim youth to shield the minority community's interest in the immediate post-Partition period in and around Moradabad district. The perpetuation of anti-Muslim feelings by Hindu rioters and their superstitious beliefs are justifiably criticized by the resplendent figure of Kalki–on a white horse, wielding a bright sword. In these stories, Qasmi and Abbas redirect readers' sympathy to the victimized Muslim masses against Sikh or Hindu atrocities through the use of prayers from the Koran and the subversion of Hindu mythology itself.

In an exactly reversed pattern, Krishna Sobti's 'Where is My Mother?' and 'The Coin was Transformed' draw Muslim faith and integrity into question. Yunus Khan, the fearless Pathan protagonist of 'Where is My Mother?' who has witnessed the bloodbath with exultation and has participated in it, is haunted by the queries of the little Hindu girl, just as the figure of the old hapless lady of the other story, betrayed by her Muslim neighbours, continues to haunt the readers' memory.

These stories, thus, tend to overlook the fact that hatred, cruelty and self-interest are not to be associated with a specific religious

faith and its teachings, because all religions are founded on the principle of love and sharing. Rather, times like Partition help in revealing the best as well as the worst qualities in an individual. Thus, the larger section of stories in this category attempts to capture the immediate gravity of a situation and time that have thrown to the winds all order, morality and sanctity of relationship. Khushwant Singh, Saadat Hasan Manto, Ibn-e-Insha, Ibrahim Jalees, S.H. Vatsayan, Kamleshwar, Umm-e-Ummara, Kulwant Singh Virk, K.S. Duggal, Bhisham Sahni narrate with righteous anger and disbelief the horrors of the times. A cryptic use of language, a note of dark humour, a structured pattern of irony and sarcasm mark the style of these writers. Besides condemning shameless human conduct, these authors also harp on the insensitivity of a thoroughly orthodox society. Manto's stories, especially, are full of incisive directness and self-criticism that often leads to fearful realization about the hidden human propensity for evil and violence. M. Asaduddin, in his introduction to *Black Margins: Sa'adat Hasan Manto Stories,* comments on Manto, the storyteller:

> The areas of human experience and the liminal spaces that he focused on relentlessly, shocked people out of their complacency into a new awareness of the reality around them. This is particularly true in the context of his writings about the partition of India...he alone had the capacity to take a hard, impassioned look at the slaughter and senseless violence let loose on the eve of India's independence, without ideological blinkers, pious posturing or the slightest trace of communal prejudice. And that is why, after half a century of independence and partition, when history is being rewritten from new perspectives and magisterial nationalist narratives are being deconstructed, the creative writer most frequently alluded to is Manto. (Memon, 2001: 9-10)

Manto's continued preoccupation with the female body, its abuse and dismembering brings the focus back to one of the major thematic concerns in these tales, namely the vulnerability of and easy access to the female body and its commoditization during periods of sporadic violence. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin in their *Borders and Boundaries* (1998) and Urvashi Butalia in her *The Other Side of Silence* (1998) discuss the process of women's victimization during and after Partition. How the veiled but pre-possessive male gaze on the female body, guarded and curbed as it is otherwise by the legal, moral, social or hierarchical bounds of a society, might turn vicious at such outbursts of lawlessness is touchingly narrated in stories like 'Mozel', 'Open it' ('Khol Do') 'Cold Meat' ('Thanda Gosht') and the small skits in *Siyah Hashye.*

'Open It' is a story of pain and helplessness of an old father who kept faith in a group of young rescue volunteers to find his lost daughter Sakina during Partition-time upheavals. The grim reality suddenly unfolds as the bruised and tortured body of the unconscious girl is found nearby and brought to the camp hospital. The apparently trustworthy rescue volunteers had actually picked the girl up a long time back, raped and abused her and then left her to die by the roadside. The direct, precise narration with least authorial intrusion or comments, the structural irony invested in depicting the course of events develops a scathing edge:

> One day, as they were returning to Amritsar to help a few more refugees, they saw a girl standing by the roadside. The moment she heard the truck, she began to run.
>
> The social workers stopped the truck and ran after her.
>
> They caught her in a field–she was beautiful and had a large mole on her right cheek.
>
> One of the young men said to her, "Don't be frightened. Is your name Sakina?"
>
> Her face became even paler. She didn't reply. The other young men reassured her, only then did she admit that she was indeed Sirajuddin's daughter.
>
> The eight young men were very kind to Sakina. They fed her, offered her milk, helped her into the truck...
>
> Many days passed–Sirajuddin received no news about Sakina... Sirajuddin again prayed for the success of the young men, and felt a little relieved. (Bhalla, 1999: 360-361)

Before the unbelieving eyes of the distraught father Sirajuddin and the bewildered doctor, the sound of male voices, especially the words 'khol do' (the doctor asking the window to be opened) makes the body move and the girl opens her legs, her almost lifeless hand moving to untie the cord of her salwar. The other story 'Mozel' is about a loud, liberal-minded, inhibition-free Jewish girl who helps the Sikh narrator save his beloved Kirpal Kaur in a Muslim-dominated neighbourhood. She had often made fun of the Sikh religion–the turban and the beard, but at the time of crisis doesn't think twice to sacrifice her own life for that of an unknown girl. 'Cold Meat', on the other hand, is a brutal story of aberrant action affecting

human psychology. In this story, Ishwar Singh (the name is as ironic as Manto's Tirlochen Singh in 'Mozel' or Qasmi's Parmeshwar Singh) is almost driven mad by his memory of dishonouring a girl already dead. However, Manto's most acclaimed short story 'Toba Tek Singh' looks at Partition-time madness through the eyes of the so-called insane inmates of a mental asylum. The irony in this story works through the various layers of allegory–the fluidity of a territorial border to demarcate and ward off emotional attachment to one's 'homeland', the 'madness' for power and authority that led to the division of the country and the symbolism of the No Man's Land where Bishen Singh breathes his last. The story raises doubts and queries regarding the judiciousness and sanity involved in partitioning India.

Yashpal's 'A Holy War', K.S. Duggal's 'Kulsum', Khwaja Ahmed Abbas' 'Revenge', S.H. Vatsayan 'Ajneya's 'Postbox', Kamleshwar's 'How Many Pakistans?' and Qudrat Ullah Shahab's 'Ya Khuda' unravel other facets of anger, pain, suffering and humiliation with reference to women and children. Questions of faith, trust, staunch religious belief, failure of inter-community communication and revenge as a means of getting even are foregrounded again and again. Moolan Tai in Yashpal's tale is killed by her Muslim neighbours as she tries to flee Lahore with the stone idol of her god. Kulsum in Duggal's story or the little boy Roshan in 'Postbox' waits expectantly for deliverance but are brutally disillusioned at the end. Bano in Kamleshwar's story remains a shadow from the narrator's past who continues to haunt his memory as her helpless suffering changes first to anger and then to contempt. The chance meeting of the narrator with his once-beloved Bano at a Bombay brothel makes him realize, "Pakistan is everywhere. It inflicts wounds on you and me. It humiliates us. It defeats us everytime..." (500) Avenging the past, for many of the Partition victims, thus, turned out to be a process of self-deprecation and self-denial.

Bhisham Sahni's 'The Train has Reached Amritsar' and 'Pali', K.A. Abbas' 'The Death of Sheikh Burhanuddin', Ibrahim Jalees' 'Grave Turned Inside-Out', Umm-e-Ummara's 'More Sinned Against than Sinning' and Attia Hosain's 'After the Storm' attempt to depict the earnest need for dialogue, negotiation and understanding between warring religious communities and their sectarian/regional identities. These stories derive their significance from a worthwhile understanding of justice, morality, the sense of right and wrong at the personal/individual level. Though often incapable of turning the tide of hatred, such subjective assessment

can rise above mass fanaticism and show jingoism, communal extremism, forced conversion, hatred for and suspicion of the 'other' community in true light. Bhisham Sahni's 'Pali' is about a little child who becomes a pawn in the hands of religious fanatics who convert him back and forth from Hinduism to Islam at their own sweet will. His Hindu parents and adopted Muslim family are touched by the trauma the child has to go through though they must submit to the whimsical diktat.

K.A. Abbas' story narrates in first person the unreasonable, almost pathological aversion of Sheikh Burhanuddin for Sikhs. The reader comes to realize that the seed for this contempt for the 'filthy' bearded clan was sown in his mind by a Punjabi friend from Rawalpindi called Ghulam Rasul. Burhanuddin, in his zeal for his new country Pakistan and his 'great leader Jinnah', keeps a safe distance from this 'stupid and idiotic' race. But ironically enough, during a riot in New Delhi, a Sikh neighbour saves the life of Burhanuddin and his family members. A repentant and deflated Burhanuddin discovers to his shame and discomfiture that the Sardarji has given up his own life for a Muslim because he wanted to repay the kindness of a Muslim called Ghulam Rasul back in Rawalpindi who protected the life and honour of his family. It reminds one of Jason Francisco's classification of Partition stories into *rupture and loss–betrayal and protest–repair and memory* (Hasan 2000: 371-393) format. He too realizes that literature is necessary because it performs the function of defeating 'the urge to lay blame, which keeps animosity alive...The literary work on the partition affirms that the subject of the partition was first the human being– not the Hindu human being, nor the Muslim, not the Sikh.'(ibid.: 392)

The stories of Ibrahim Jalees and Umm-e-Ummara focus on the difficulty of acculturation which, irrespective of a family's religious affiliation, is rooted in the soil and tradition of a place and ambience one is brought up in. The Bihari Muslim families which migrated to Bengali-speaking East Pakistan after Partition were shocked as the ideal of holy Islamic brotherhood fell to pieces and they, even after years of migration, are persecuted as outsiders. Like Munni, Ayesha too in Jalees' story realizes that "she was not really Bengali–that she was a Bihari–that she was not the daughter of the soil–that even after twenty-four years, she didn't belong there–that she was stateless." Laws and rules are found not to be the same for Bengali Muslims and their Bihari counterparts. In *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom* (1995), Mushirul Hasan also refers to an incident

from *Hindustan Times* to substantiate the allegation of ethnic tension among Bengali and non-Bengali Muslims during the phase of post-Partition migration of Muslims from different parts of the country to Dhaka and other parts of East Pakistan.

Ibn-e-Insha's writing, on the other hand, is fragmentary and visionary in nature. It elevates Partition from a merely physical experience to a metaphorical one by insinuating discussion on Hindu and Muslim nationalism, the 'Hindi, Hindu and Hindustan' propaganda as opposed to Jinnah's forceful declamation that the state language in Pakistan is going to be Urdu. Ibn-e-Insha's short stories (significantly enough, the anthology is called *Urdu Ki Akhari Kitab*) such as 'Our Country' and 'Pakistan' point at the futility of all attempts to separate the different communities in India who are so inextricably intermingled in the cultural, socio-political, territorial, historical and even linguistic texture of the nation.

The second category of tales shifts the focus from what happened during Partition to the memory of the survivors and the past as it is filtered through time and place. These tales, therefore, emphasize ways of remembering and strategies of forgetting Partition not merely as a lived experience but as reconstructed and etched in the mind of a generation scarred by it. Whereas some try to come to terms with the sense of loss through intentional forgetting, others brood and ruminate–comparing and contrasting the good, old days to the changed circumstances of the post-Partition reality. The complexities of a composite cultural milieu in the Indian subcontinent have been historically located by Asim Roy (2004) in his Introduction to *Living Together Separately*:

> A close examination of the historiography of composite culture reveals its strong linkage and responsiveness to its changing political contexts. Clearest evidence of this political relevance lies in the fact that the bulk of its literature belonged to the last six or seven decades, when nascent Indian nationalism, liberalism, and secularism had been seriously engaged and challenged, both intellectually and politically, by religious nationalists anchored in either political Islam or political Hinduism or other religious faiths...It is not surprising, therefore, that the year before India's Partition saw the publication, in 1946, of the two most powerful articulations and defences of the composite culture, namely Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India* and Humayun Kabir's *The Indian Heritage.* (2-3)

'Exile' by Jamila Hashmi, 'I shall Live' by Vishnu Prabhakar, 'Lajwanti' by Rajinder Singh Bedi, 'Separated from the Flock' by Syed Mohammad Ashraf, 'Weeds' by Kulwant Singh Virk and stories

by Ismat Chughtai try to envisage the implications of Partition on the life and mind of the survivors beyond the days of carnage and bloodbath.

'Exile' by Jamila Hashmi employs the epic tale of the abduction of Sita by Ravana as its overarching narrative framework. The long exile of the epic heroine, the closely-guarded pain of displacement, dishonor and loss of trust seem to become a metaphor for the life of the female protagonist of the story. As the once-abducted Muslim woman looks back at her past, she can neither forget nor forgive the cruelty involved in her abduction, rape and consequent keeping in the house of Gurpal without any social/religious sanction. Years later, now accepted as the accomplished daughter-in-law in her abductor-turned-husband's family, as she moves about in the Dussehra (interestingly, signifying the conquest of good over evil) fair in company of her little daughter, she is still haunted by images from the past. Time seems to stand still with the woman to whom the mother-in-law's endearing 'bahu' still remains a term of abuse and who still hopes that her brothers would come to rescue her and take her back home. In Rajinder Singh Bedi's story, the abducted Lajwanti or Lajo's rehabilitation into the family of Sunderlal, likewise, is fraught with symbolic nuances. She is venerated as devi by her husband Sunderlal, who zealously preaches in favour of accepting the abducted womenfolk into the fold of the traditional Hindu families once again. But Lajo finds her new role suffocating as Sunderlal, in spite of his studiedly polite behaviour to his wife, refrains from listening to her experience and suffering. Women's experience during Partition has, thus, mostly remained unspoken and ill-documented through this turbulent period and beyond, as Urvashi Butalia (1993) points out:

> A resounding silence surrounds the question of women and Partition. It may seem a truism to say this, but it bears remembering that at least half of the millions who were dislocated, killed, uprooted were women. A substantial portion of the task of reconstruction and rebuilding fell on women...many women figured in the negotiations that preceded and followed the breakup of India into two countries... in particular Mridula Sarabhai, Premvati Thapar, Rameswari Nehru and others. In addition, women experienced this event in particular ways: thousands of women on both sides of the newly-formed borders (estimates range from 25,000 to 29,000 Hindu and Sikh women and 12,000 to 15,000 Muslim women) were abducted, raped forced to convert, forced into marriage, forced back into what the two states defined as 'their proper homes', torn apart from their families once during Partition by those who abducted them, and

again, after Partition, by the state which tried to 'recover' and 'rehabilitate' them. (WS 13-14)

Syed Mohammad Ashraf's story 'Separated from the Flock', on the other hand, utilizes both as background and a symbolic paradigm the analogy of duck-shooting at a lake in Pakistan where two old friends, long uprooted from their native village in India, meet again. They traverse down the memory lane to discover with pleasant astonishment their shared interests and friendship holding them in strong bonding. Their acquired identity, however, holds them back. Though they wistfully hope, they can now no longer go back to their roots. They continue to live at dual planes–the outward worldly self cleverly concealing the longing for the motherland and the romantic nostalgia of the inner self.

Intizar Husain, Qurratulain Hyder, Asif Aslam Farrukhi look further into the vortex of time and keep faith with the reconstructive power of memory. A lingering faith in human understanding and realization, recognition of guilt and repentance would restore the order in an old country, beginning its new journey afresh. Laments are to be replaced by new allegiances, sympathy for the weak and the victimized be consolidated into active rebuilding of the nation. Intizar Husain, for example, falls back upon the myths and legends of the undivided India enriched by the vision and creative passion of Abul Fazl, Amir Khusrau, Dara Shikoh, Kabir, Mirabai and the prophetic Sufis to direct us to sanity and rationality once again.

His 'An Unwritten Epic' is about the headstrong wrestler Pichwa of Qadirpur who was motivated into action by the idea of a separate Muslim state–Pakistan. Pichwa, a formidable figure for his strength and fan-following, starts patronizing the idea of Pakistan with the secret hope that Qadirpur (given its name) should go to Pakistan. When his hopes do not materialize, the world crumbles for him. The picture of Pichwa on the Pakistani soil–pleading for a job and a roof over his head–is a sorry one. Pichwa comes back to Qadirpur and commits suicide by hanging himself from the peepal tree where years ago he tried to raise the Pakistani flag. Asif Aslam Farrukhi's 'The Land of Memories' is pitched on the generation gap between the aged Abbajan and his two sons as they go to India to visit their father's birthplace at Fatehgarh. They can neither share the rapture nor the dejection of the old man as he continues to discover old acquaintances and friends and comes across favourite haunts of childhood that have drastically changed. Surendra Prakash's 'Dream Images' like the tale of Farrukhi gives us an impressionistic account of the narrator's journey (though in a dream) to the past, to the

Pakistan of his childhood. He tries to contact old acquaintances, wants to go back to the ancient family home but cannot recognize the way. This reminds one of Gani Miyan in Mohan Rakesh's 'The Owner of Rubble' coming back to that lane in Amritsar where seven-and-a-half years ago his whole family was killed and his house burnt down to a heap of rubble during Partition violence. Ashfaq Ahmad's 'The Shepherd' again celebrates the spirit of goodness, kindliness and enlightenment in the figure of the old, benevolent Dauji whose goodwill cuts across all religious borders and boundaries.

Bengali Partition tales constitute a remarkable but little-discussed segment of narratives. Salil Chaudhury, Manik Bandyopadhyaya, Samaresh Basu, Narendranath Mitra as well as Prafulla Roy have analyzed the Partition experience and the widening breach in Hindu-Muslim relationship from a culture-specific perspective, with the astonished gaze of an onlooker who remembered only too clearly the united effort of both communities in freeing the country from foreign rule and the long history of religious coexistence. A feeling of anguish at the betrayal of trust and the consequent sense of being forlorn and lost pervade the short story scenario. But the loss is not without an aspiration of reclaiming what is past and gone by.

The times when Rajmohan and Maqbool were an ideal master-servant pair (in 'The Four-Poster Bed' by Narendranath Mitra), Rahim and Amal were good friends (in Salil Chaudhury's 'Dressing Table') or Indira and Halima were loving neighbours (in Manik Bandyopadhyaya's 'Childishness') change swiftly but also imperceptibly with the gradual but steady visualization of the segregation of Bengal into a 'Muslim' east and a 'Hindu' west. Rajmohan, once blind with his position of power and jealousy, tries to snatch away the four-poster bed he had once given away to Maqbool but later realizes the meanness of it all. Maqbool's two emaciated children sleeping on the bed fills the old man with love and humility and he finally decides to drop his claim to it. Samaresh Basu's 'Adab' also focuses on Partition atrocities in which neither Hindu nor Muslim, but humanity is defeated. In Salil Chaudhury's tale, the sensitive painter Rahim goes mad after losing his wife Amina, unable any longer to tolerate the communal frenzy raging everywhere. One is astonished to read the newspaper report on the mad painter who moves about aimlessly at the Howrah station in search of a human being. Was not Rahim a painter too? Is not this whole attempt at initiating a discourse on Partition through literary endeavour aimed at salvaging the 'humanity' of man? Dipesh

Chakrabarty, in an article on the nature of the plight in Bengal during Partition as depicted in a set of essays, locates the trauma of the experience at the inexplicable breaking down of the emotional bonding; that is precisely how literature captures the emotive-psychological implications of historical events that history fails to fathom:

> The authors express a sense of stunned disbelief at the fact that it could happen at all, that they could cut adrift in this sudden and cruel manner from the familiar worlds of their childhood. There is nothing here of the explanations of Hindu-Muslim conflicts that we are used to conceive from historians–no traces of the by-now familiar tales of landlord-peasant or peasant-moneylender conflicts through which historians of 'communalism' in the subcontinent have normally answered the question. Why did the Muslim population of East Bengal turn against their Hindu neighbours? Here the claim is that this indeed is what cannot be explained. (111)

Bengali short stories, thus, strike a distinct note in representing the emotional/psychological setback the divide created. The Hindu-Muslim anxiety and suspicion pervade the atmosphere but there were lucid intervals when the hatred appears to be futile and meaningless. Manik Bandyopadhyaya in his short story 'Childishness' (like Khushwant Singh in 'The Riot') shows how trivial, otherwise negligible, incidents often assume inordinate proportions at such times. Tarapada's household is not much different from Nasiruddin's. As neighbours they had long shared their anxiety, hope and aspiration with each other. But the uncertainties, hardships and constraints of the time of Partition embitter their friendship. As the two children from these two families secretly continue playing with each other, unperturbed by these developments, the relation between the families starts declining. The sudden disappearance of the children leads to an eruption of violence and each family starts accusing the other of abducting their child. The late discovery of the children playing peacefully on the terrace helps one see the essential 'childishness' of the whole affair.

These short stories on Partition continue to remain preoccupied with the realities of Partition and its after-effect. For the second and third generation population, growing up without a first-hand knowledge of Partition, memory has very little to offer. So Lilia, in Jhumpa Lahiri's 'When Mr Pirzada Came to Dine', born and brought up in America, does not understand how Mr Pirzada, though Bengali like her father, belongs to a different country Pakistan and not India:

> "Mr Pirzada is Bengali, but he is a Muslim," my father informed me. "Therefore he lives in East Pakistan, not India." His finger trailed across the Atlantic, through Europe, the Mediterranean... "As you see, Lilia, it is a different country, a different color," my father said. Pakistan was yellow, not orange...

> "Lilia has plenty to learn at school," my mother said. "We live here now, she was born here." She seemed genuinely proud of the fact, as if it were a reflection of my character. ... "How can you possibly expect her to know about Partition?" (26-27)

Still, humanism wins over and Lilia prays for the well-being of Mr Pirzada's family during the turbulent years of East Pakistan's War of Liberation; she is jubilant to get the news of their safe tiding over. The young Sikh brothers in Bapsi Sidhwa's story 'Defend yourself against Me', the narrator in Qurratulain Hyder's 'When the Prisoners were Released, the Times had Changed' or the young Bibi in Attia Hosain's 'After the Storm' decide to move ahead, leaving behind the dark stigma of Partition days. Lilia's story, similarly, shows how the basic human feelings of sharing others' sorrow, extending a helping hand to people in distress or being able to forgive others' shortcomings make the younger generation an integral part of the older generation's feelings and experiences.

Thus, these stories in translation portray Partition as a historically-defined event with far-fetched influences on both individual and collective life of the Indians. It not only changed the course of life in the subcontinent but even modified the standards by which we judge or understand such changes. Morality and understanding, rationality and the social values, customs, beliefs–everything has undergone changes in the post-Partition decades. These stories give us a picture of these changes coming over the society during and after Partition.

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GENDERING OF ART THROUGH RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM: MAPPING DEPICTIONS OF FEMININE SEXUALITY IN HINDU TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

Preeti Sharma

I

INTRODUCTION

> There always exists a strong male desideratum to force women into a theoretical space from where they are forced to reproduce the masculine (Irigaray, 1983: 117).

It is from this very conceptual position that we can trace the attribution of patriarchic hegemony. Male superiority has persisted, somewhat as a universal phenomenon, throughout the ages and manifests itself in different forms of intellectual endeavours and institutional practices that a patriarchic society engages in. These practices, by portraying different aspects of women's life from the prism of male suitability, tend to inflate patriarchy in such a manner that even a de-sexualized subject appears to be submitting to the cultural space created by the masculine re-construction of itself and the feminine. The attempt, thus, has been to conceptualize the feminine in the service of masculine self-representation and women so projected emerge as a figure of male desire, a phantasm of the male imaginary, who is appropriated in order to perpetuate male superiority (Robinson, 1989: 306).

One prominent mode of doing this has been the erotic representations of female bodies, amorous behaviour and heterosexual practices in diverse patterns of cultural articulation. The projection of a woman's body and passion as a commodity, and/or a seductive instrument, in the intellectual products emanating out of developed mental faculty of civilized human beings, be it in the form of material culture, or non-material forms of cultural expression, to instigate male gaze exemplifies this phenomenon.

In this regard, there arises a strong need for examining as to how the visual culture embodies women's sexual identity and also the necessity of analyzing the extent of culture's use and abuse of women's bodies (Breazeale 1986: 56). In view of this, the aim of this paper has been to make an epistemological inquiry into the ways in which the architectural representations embodied in Hindu temples have emerged as sites depicting aspects of female sexuality in the service of male gaze. Through this, the attempt here has been to map the genealogies of feminine sexuality, as archaically imbricated in the Indian psyche. The paper seeks to demonstrate as to how the archaeologies of patriarchy can manifest themselves through temple architecture wherein feminine sexuality is located in apparent masculine ontology. It is in the framework of this ontology, the paper argues, that feminine sexuality is pictured as being subservient to the male interests and woman's identity itself conditioned in the Manichean divide between a good household woman and a bad whore. The paper concludes by stating that Hindu temples, by virtue of being agencies of religion, tend to provide sacrolized spaces to stage such patriarchic endeavours and in this way, impart a ritualistic legitimacy to the entire process.

II

ARTISTIC DEPICTIONS IN HINDU TEMPLES

Every religion is engaged in misogyny in one way or the other. 'Many of the world's traditions, cultures, including those practised within formerly conquered or colonized nation-states, are quiet distinctly patriarchal' (Okin, 1999: 14; 17). Hinduism is not an exception in this regard. The epitomes of Hindu religiosity, evident in the specifically Hinduised literature, art and architecture, are replete with misogynous representations. They constitute crucial sub-structures of the larger social framework that have subverted the agency of women. Exhibiting this tendency, the *Manu Smriti*, the ancient Indian Hindu code of law, has stereotyped women as soft and supine, justifying the masculine control over their socio-cultural behaviour as well as their constant surveillance by male kinsmen, whether father (childhood), husband (youth) or son (old age). It has essentialised women into mere domesticated selves. Treating women at par with property, it laid great restrictions on their sexuality by increased emphasis on feminine chastity. Pre-puberty marriage for the girls was one way of ensuring this. This is also indicative of the gaping age difference between the couple as

prescribed by Manu (9.94) that a 30-year-old man should marry a 12-year-old girl while a 24-year-old man should marry an eight-year-old girl.

More crucial demonstration of the misogynous tendency apparent in the symbols of Hindu religiosity is the bold depiction of feminine sexuality in temple architecture. The prolific use of female motif, especially with explicit sexual overture, on both exteriors and interiors of the Indian Hindu temple precincts, largely created during 500 AD to 1300 AD provides credence to this phenomenon. Although these sculptures accord 'visibility' to women, yet their content betrays the male-centric nature of social and cultural formations by presenting in full view females' complicity in such a private activity as sex.

The cited representations have been largely sculpted in the Hindu temples located in Central, Eastern, Western, and Northern as well as South India, created under various dynasties, in the form of structural or rock-cut shrines. To mention a few instances, sexually evocative forms are extant in the South Indian Chalukyan and Rashtrakuta monuments (Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh); Jagannath Puri, Bhubnesvara (Orissa); Modhera, Siddhapur (Gujarat); Ambernath, Sinnar (Maharashtra), Belur, Halebid (Karnataka), etc. However, the most renowned erotic temple sculptures are concentrated in the Khajuraho group (Central India), and the Konarak Sun temple (Eastern India).

The representation of female sexuality lends itself into diverse patterns, ranging from an attendant (*paricharika*), anointing her body form (*abhisarika*), in amorous postures (*kamini*) inciting passions, playful with parrot (*shukasarika*), leaning on a creeper (*shalabhanjika*), with a male companion (*mithuna*), and indulgent in sexually explicit activities (*maithuna*). The last category includes coital and orgiastic acts and reveals the partners as engaged in copulation, masturbation, cunnilingus, fellatio, fondling, kissing and enticing. The female is primarily shown as a delicate and sensual accomplice of the male, yielding, responding and providing him pleasure, and as a synonym of beauty and nature, hanging like a vine upon him. In several of the sculptures, female attendants are assisting the couple involved in the process of intercourse, a possible marker of their subservient status. The image of *shardula* - modified lion form (Khajuraho) pouncing upon a female may also be viewed as representing masculine power dominating feminine nature.

Looking into the specificities of the depictions, some examples of their occurrences on Hindu shrines may be cited. The earliest

Hindu temple remains belong to fourth-fifth centuries AD. Among these, the Gupta period Dasavatara temple (Deogarh) represents pre-coital amatory couples. Southwards at Aihole, an important site nurtured with religious affiliations under the Chalukyas, comprising nearly seventy temples in a cluster, erotic sculptures carved in bold relief and highly sensuous poses indicate that the sculptors, donors, temple priests or worshippers did not object to the presence of such representations on their religious edifices. By this time, the temple was emerging as a significant socio-religious centre, employing a variety of professionals, celebrating periodical festivals in its precincts, developing various performing arts, and ensuring regular free feeding of scholars and holy men. Thus, such erotic figures were carved at a social centre related to cross-sections of the society.

Representations at Aihole include two couples engaged in mouth congress and a couple copulating in the sitting position (Kontigudi temple door jamb); a woman coyly resisting her partner who tries to reach her girdle (Lad Khan Temple); and love play scenes (Durga and Hachchhappaya temples). The Badami cave temple sculptures also show attendants with the couples. For instance, in cave I, the couple is in close embrace while an attendant with a jar stands with her face averted. In similar scenes at Nagda, Sinnar and Modhera (Gujarat), the attendants are shown with palms put across their eyes. Badami cave I has nine couples in copulation depiction. In Mandapesvara caves, several scenes show the woman sitting on her partner's lap. The Yeni temple has an orgiastic scene exhibiting oral-genital congress, frontal congress, and congress from rear. Orgiastic scenes were depicted in Pattadakal and Ellora cave shrines also. Thus, during fifth to ninth centuries AD, the erotic motif was initiated in the Hindu religious monuments, both Vaisnavite and Saivite (sects affiliated with Visnu and Siva, supreme Hindu deities) and assumed a somewhat standardised and conventionalised character in the succeeding period.

The earlier reticent expression of sex burst into an ostentatious display in the religious architecture following the ninth century. With the crystallising of feudalistic tendencies, social and cultural life witnessed a pervasion. During this phase, temple building was continuous and prolific. It was the royal and aristocratic class which commissioned the religious edifices and its tastes and outlook were reflected in the creations. The patrons rather vied with each other to build more magnificent and larger shrines. This led to an expanded size of the structures and ensured availability of more

space for embellishment and decoration. Erotic motifs, whether placed boldly on exteriors or projected within recesses, remained integral constituents of the temple ornamentation schemes.

Prominent instances may be cited from the Rajarani and the Lingaraja temples (Orissa) exhibiting amorous couples in copulating and precoital poses. Sex was very boldly depicted on the twelfth century temple at JagannathPuri. This famous Hindu shrine was one of the most venerated *tirthas* of India, visited by millions of Hindu pilgrims and the likes of Sankaracharya, Ramanujan, Jayadeva and Chaitanya. The depictions herein clearly expose the females' private parts. Mouth congress - both done by woman (fellatio) and done mutually (*kakila*) - and frontal congress poses were popular motifs with Puri artists. The depictions reached their acme in the monumental Konarak temple, designed as a chariot of the Sun God. The general effect around it is expression of joy of life in various phases. All the varieties of erotic motifs - couples in various poses, one man with two women, one woman with two men, attendant helping lovers in their sexual act, orgiastic scene; frontal, rear, and oral types of congress, in standing, sitting and sleeping attitudes; ascetics in sexual acts - have been carved amidst luxuriant foliage.

Khajuraho, an important political and religious site under the Chandella dynasty, emerged as a hub of developed Hindu temple architecture, with nearly eighty-five temple clusters. Herein, the erotic motif, placed on the prominent as well as recessed parts, including the exteriors, pillars, lintels, door jambs, cornices, sanctum wall, etc, was given prime importance in the sculptural schemes of Lakshmana, Visvanatha, Chitragupta and Kandariya Mahadeva temples. Alongside the usual projections, even the attendants helping the central couple are themselves shown in an excited state, with their own hands on their private parts. Pot-bellied ascetics participate in orgiastic scenes. Quite interestingly, a frieze in Lakshmana temple depicts numerous couples involved in a wild orgy while three persons may be seen pounding something in a vessel. Goetz has suggested this thumping as the preparation of an elixir, 'for a sort of hormone treatment and which as far as the informations are available seem to have been quite effective' (1961: 67).

Several scenes of chain orgy are extant at Khajuraho, Modhera, Ambernath, etc. Therein, one man excites a woman, who mates with another man and he, in turn, excites another woman, and so on. At Bavka, about fifteen people participate in the orgy. Amongst bestiality scenes, a woman mating with donkey, boar (Khajuraho),

dog or deer (Konarak), and rodent (Belgamve) licking the woman's private parts have also been sculpted.

<div align="center">III</div>

USUAL EXPLANATIONS

It is feasible to consider the usually forwarded explanations of the motif to assess its proposed symbolism. Stella Kramrischbased her interpretation of the *mithuna* sculptures upon *Upanisadic* references and defined such sculptures as symbols of cosmic re-integration (*Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* IV, 3. 21 cited in 1946: 346-47). They are deemed as mere types, therefore, there is no attitudeof secretiveness in doing openly what should be done privately. Kramrisch has further likened the female figures to celestial beauties (*surasundari*), or manifestations of working energies subservient to the primordial power and energy (*Maha-Sakti*) (Ibid.: 341).

The erotic aspect has also been assigned theistic affiliation such as influence of the *Kaula-Kapalika* sect[1] (Auboyer and Zannas 1960: 80). Even Mulk Raj Anand observed: 'It is true that these temples of Khajuraho cannot be explained except as part of the manifestation of the *Śiva-Śakti* cult ...' (Anand and Kramrisch, 1962: 3).

Explanations for the erotic sculptures have also been alluded to in texts dealing with the architecture and sculpture of Hindu temples. In texts such as the *Brhat Samhita*, *Agni Purana*, *Hayasirsapancharatra*, *Silpa Prakasa*, etc, to cite a few, male-female sculptures are referred to as decorative elements in temple architecture, to be positioned on the sanctum door frames. They are suggested to portray in stone various sexual poses (*bandhas*), for embracing and coitus,prescribed in works on erotics like the *Kamasutra*.[2] The erotic sculptures, as suggested by the Buddhist text *Utkalakhanda* XI, were also intended to ward off evil, and to prevent the building being struck by lightning.[3]

However, considering their erotic nature and religious placement, these art manifestations cannot be comprehended merely as some ritualistic symbols or archaic attitudes to life. Rather, their understanding necessitates adoption of a more comprehensive approach.

IV

SYMBOLS OF MASCULINE CONTROL OVER FEMININE SEXUALITY?

The sculptures representing Hindu religiosity were aimed at catering to the voyeuristic pleasures of men and arousing their passions. In this sense, they have a bearing upon the prevailing socio-cultural milieu. The very fact that they are not carved in all Hindu temples invalidates their ritualistic symbolism. Or else they would have been mandatorily sculpted in all religious shrines. If they were illustrative of cosmic integration as suggested by Kramrisch, then why were they shown with the luscious and exuberant sensuality? If they intended to serve as types and shadows of cosmic unity, then why were they portrayed with the multiplicity of postures, the attendants, and the detailed variations of genital play – all serving as frills? The fact is that although they would not fit in the essence of spirituality, through their placement on sacred edifices, which served as an instrument of hegemony, they carried definite religious symbolism.

It would also be erroneous to ascribe the erotic sculptures solely to the *Śaivite* cult of *Kaula-Kapalikas* as they are found more on non-Saiva Brahmanical that is Visnu, Brahma, Surya and Jaina shrines. Regarding their decorative role, the overtly sexual depictions reveal that they could not be merely/purely decorative motifs. Besides, the cited texts like the *Agni Purana* and *Brhat Samhita* recommended carvings of couple (*mithuna*) and not erotic couple (*maithuna*). As an exception, only one verse in the eleventh century text *Samaranaganasutradhara* (XXXIV: 33) hints upon men and women, engaged in love play (*rati-krida*) under the branches of trees, to be exhibited on the temple structure. Furthermore, the figures' placement is also all around the temple body rather than just the prescribed door frames, thus ruling out their decorative purpose.

As to their being projections from erotic texts, the *Kamasutra* clearly forbade performance of sexual act in a holy place and enjoined that those who have intercourse in such places attract evil beings, causing illness. Instead, it prescribed a bedchamber within a private house as the best place. Considering these injunctions, temples sculptures could not have been mere textual illustrations. Their evil warding 'scare-crow' role is also nullified as their location is not merely on the specified spire (the *shikhara* and *kirtimukha*).

Likewise, if they symbolise ascetic practices (*yoga*), neither the

represented males appear as highly evolved ascetics (*yogis*), who alone were entitled to practise the symbolic union in the flesh with the assistance of female energy (*sakti*), nor do the seemingly ascetics exhibit yogic poses.

Thematically, the sculptures vary from normal sexual activity to a depiction of certain aberrations and this again renders any symbolic religious or philosophical interpretation inadmissible. Sometimes dwarfs or monkeys are shown as pulling off the female's drapery. What spirituality such scenes may convey is hard to conjecture. Or else what religious imagery may be advanced for bestiality scenes, that is, female mating with donkey, boar, dog or deer? The fact that the tendency found acceptance even under the Buddhist faith is indicative that sectarian affiliation of temple was not relevant for erotic representation and it could not have been religious in intent or purposes. If we accept the female figures as visualising celestial dancers in the service of the deity, then why have they been engraved on the exteriors and not inside the main sanctum, in direct view of the enshrined deity? Moreover, even in that capacity, the *sakti*'s relation with God (male) remained that of the 'enjoyed' and the 'enjoyer' (*bhogya* and *bhokta*), and she served him through her beauty, music, dance and energies.

Historically, it is quite significant to note that the temples in which they are sculpted are largely products of times of opulence and affluence or turbulence or else marking phases of social transition. Under such situations, the urge to proclaim suzerainty over subjects and domination over territory becomes more pronounced. In the same context, the temple, as a royal assertion of personal power, is also believed to pronounce or underline a political statement. However, it serves a greater symbolism than mere religious or political in the sense that religion in India, as elsewhere, has always been a powerful ideological force. Therefore, as a sacred and organised space for worship of the divine, the temple served as the super ordinate institution of societal organisation.

If we analyse the historical circumstances during which the above cited temples and their sculptures were created, it is significant to infer that during sixth-seventh centuries the age of centralised monarchy in North India was over with the demise of the Gupta Empire. Instead, petty states were raised by the warlike, feudalistic clans of the Rajputs who were constantly indulgent in mutual strife, creating a sort of instability of political order. Socially, their women were confined to the households while the men rejoiced in war, wine and women.

As already stated, the subjugation of woman remained a constant trait in Indian society, since early times. More specifically, economic dependence on male relatives always made her position vulnerable. Her independent identity was seldom cultivated and she was more often acknowledged as an adjunct. At times, even in the philosophical sense, she was likened to enjoyable objects, both animate and inanimate, as a thing to be relished (*bhogya*). For instance, as given in the *Chhandogya Upanishad*:

> "Man issues forth from bodily identification to assume his real form upon attainment of the great illumination. Such a man is best among men. He lives like a king - eating, playing, and *enjoying women or chariots or friends*, without identification with the (idea of the) body" (8.12.3).

In a way, pleasure (*bhoga*) and ornamentation (*sringara*) were glorified under the prevailing cultural conditions. It may be suggested that social forces were primarily responsible for the frequency or intensity of erotic representations. The comparatively lesser emphasis on erotic display at Khajuraho towards weakening of the Chandella dynasty may be cited to prove this assertion.

Southwards, the established Brahmanical order of the early *Sangam* ages was disrupted and dismantled in wake of the incursions made by the *Kalabhra* tribe with Buddhist theistic inclinations. Their succeeding periods witnessed the rise to power of the Chalukyas, Pallava, Pandya, Rashtrakuta and finally the Chola dynasties. The incumbent dynasties, not always with the best of lineages, got involved with the erection of religious edifices and extended generous patronage for their maintenance, in order to gain ascendancy in the social ladder. However, as in North India, in South Indian politics also feudalistic trends emerged with the aristocratic lifestyle and infringement of woman's freedom and subsequent commodification of feminine sexuality, as indicated by the erotic sculptures and the institutionalisation of *devadasi* practice, both surviving within religious precincts.

The *devadasi* cult of sacred prostitution may be seen as a flagrant violation of a woman's identity and sexuality, determined from the very time of her birth or sometimes even before it. The magnitude of the practice can be gauged from the fact that four hundred *devadasis* from ninety-one shrines all over the Chola Empire were brought to serve in the *Rajarajesvara* temple, Tanjore (Dehejia, 1988: 4). This was, in a way, a method of preserving power in the society through exploiting feminine sexuality for male pleasure which Foucault termed bio-power. In this context, he indicated

that prostitution is an explicit male construct, aided by the State for fostering masculine sexual interests; hence, it is the source of male domination (Foucault, 1984).Seen in this perspective, we may regard the institutionalisation of *devadasi* practice from early medieval times as a mode of controlling feminine sexuality. That the cult survives from pre-Christian centuries (200 BCE) to even current times, despite severe social protest and legal interventions, all in the name of god and religiosity, itself betrays the connection between religion and sexuality.

Thus, quite apparently, the temple had become a monument influenced by the ambience of the royal court. Abundance of donations converted it into sort of a feudal organisation and entailed consequent decadence in its functions. Its precincts were not necessarily used solely for religious purposes and it incorporated more and more sensuous and secular aspects in its activities (Desai, 1975: 165).

There must have been something in the social climate of the times that permitted, rather encouraged, the use of the erotic motif in religious art. The shift from sacred to erotic themes suggests enhancement in sensuality during the period under consideration. Thus, while the influence of prevalent religious cults and beliefs in such building activities cannot be denied, the role of the social environment and realities should not be underplayed when discussing their sculptural motifs. Whatever the represented female forms, they primarily manifest the roles and responsibilities assigned to them by the normative setup and internalised through the very process of socialisation by means of the twin constructs of sex and gender, one biologically and the other socially-determined. It is well apparent that sex is the raw material upon which culture operates in the form of gender attributes (Giddens 1996; Ferrante 1995). While sex is the pre-social, biological body, gender is the cultural script that socialises the body and thereby produces women and men, in a given socio-cultural context. The content of sexuality, it seems, demands and eroticises the subordination of women. For men, this subordination coupled with women's collusive acceptance of male sexual authority feeds into their sense of themselves as essentially and powerfully virile and dominant. Depictions of one man with three or more women partners seem to substantiate this notion. Thus, pleasure is always feminine, while power is masculine.

The ways in which men have forced women into oppressive gender roles and sexual behaviour have been discussed by scholars at length. For instance, Kate Millett (1970: 23-58) held that sex is

primarily political because the male-female relationship is the paradigm for all power relationships. Sexual politics obtains consent through the 'socialisation' of both the sexes to basic male-dominated polities with regard to their temperament, role and status. Ideologically the human personality is formed along stereotyped lines of sex category of 'masculine' and 'feminine' based on the needs and values of the dominant group and dictated by what the members cherish in themselves and find convenient in subordinates. Such ideology, thus, exaggerates biological differences between men-women by basing psycho-social distinctions upon them. In a similar type of expression, the coy female in the temple depictions is often suggested as surrendering to the urge of the excited male, who is often shown in a commanding position. These vivid demonstrations may be deemed symbolic of her subservient status and as her possible identity markers defined/determined by hegemonic codes of the society. Thus, the sacred temple representations epitomise extra-religious and sensuous interests and rather betray the background of the male-dominated society making art reflective of gender-specific entities.

<div align="center">V</div>

ART AND FEMININE SEXUALITY

In this specific milieu, it is significant to note that the female body and feminine sexuality have been the subjects of immense interest for not merely the feminists and the social scientists, but they have also attracted serious attention of the scientists, play writers, novelists, storytellers, poets, painters and other artists. Discourses related to the sexual behaviour of women and its influence upon external environment are often incited by feminine visual representations, scientific theorizing of femininity, conceptualization of the intricate interaction between space, feminine sexuality and heterosexual practices of women, etc.

In this context, if we problematise the artistic depictions of a woman's body as an object of erotic instigation (the Indian notion of *kamini* or instigator of sensual desires), the indication is towards the need for a deeper examination of the motif of art, architecture, paintings, literature, popular myths and scientific enquiries behind the portrayal of the nature of a woman's body and feminine sexuality. In any case, the gendered ways of imaging the world has been a crucial part of the cognitive processes among human beings. Its apparent manifestation has been visible in the rich artistic pedigree

manufactured by different civilisations which, through the objectification of women as symbols of pleasure for the purpose of male gaze, tended to perpetuate the gendered ways of visualising the world and also led to the masculinising of the sphere of femininity and feminine sexuality. In contemporary times, such a tendency manifests itself through the films and posters. Such objectification may also be discerned in the ancient times, wherein places associated with religious activities became safe haven for such practices. The ancient Indian visual arts, which played the role of a cultural signifier, manifest in the temple architecture may, in this regard, be seen at times as latent symbols of masculine hegemony and sanctification of feminine sexuality under the pretence of divinity.

The portrayal of feminine motifs and actions, especially erotic, on the temple walls and pillars imparted a sense of being sacrosanct, to the theme of feminine sexuality which was otherwise proscribed as cultural degeneration by the hegemonic social order. Hence, in this context, art must not merely be seen as a product of human creativity; rather, the socially fine-spun cultural symbolism entrenched in every artistic piece needs to be unearthed. The epitomes of architectural magnificence, in this sense, tend to transgress the spatio-temporal boundaries within which they were created and express profound cultural symbolism that also seeps into the contemporary domain of our understanding of the dominant culture.

Therefore, representations of femininity and feminine sexuality in the temple architecture facilitated the hegemonic gripping of such artistic depictions over social attitudes and contributed in legitimising the existing social structures of power. This resulted in the reduction of women into passive objects for display and appropriation and it also became a signifier of certain broader notions of culture and tradition (Uberoi 1990). Thus, the cultural symbolism of art is entirely subverted when it is subdued into the dynamics of power equations in the society and its role is forced into mere exhibition and popularising of the existing socio-cultural power structures. The representation of women as material expression of sensual desires and feminine sexuality as an uncontrollable river, in art and literature, clearly signifies the male construction of femininity and women's sexuality and indicates towards the attempts at undermining the agency of women.

Putting things in this perspective, the portrayal of feminine sexuality in visual arts must not merely be examined from a sheer historical analysis of artistic constructs. A broad socio-cultural

explanation of the very agency of woman needs to be problematised here when we discuss about exhibitions of female bodies and their bold representations in heterosexual practices. Besides, the very concept of art, dealing with an otherwise censured subject like the nude projections of female bodies and an activity strictly confined to the private domain of an individual(his/her sexual activity), must bring in a normative debate over the question whether art and obscenity can go hand in hand. In exploring the relation between art and obscenity, it is easy to stray into a whole labyrinth of disconnected issues. The problem lends itself to examination through a variety of viewpoints. The purely analytic, the pragmatic, moral, religious, or political angle, for example, or a combination of the two, when it is hoped that theoretical enquiry will yield guidance for a working strategy. There are a number of avenues to choose from, for instance, Sociology or in broader terms, Culturology, Psychology, Ethics, Aesthetics, etc. Finally, this issue may be observed from a wider perspective, not so much scientific in the strictest sense as philosophical. The questions involved in such a field of enquiry may be: (1) Can art be pornographic, or in other words, is the aesthetic phenomenon compatible with those products of culture commonly branded as filth? (2) If the answer is no, can obscenity arise in art and if so, what place does it occupy in the artistic structure as a whole? (Morawski, 1967: 193). Furthermore, what if the art form is religious in character?

<div align="center">VI</div>

RELIGION AND FEAR OF FEMININE SEXUALITY

Religion can act as an instrument at the disposal of the dominant class for hegemonising the society. Therefore, it would not be out of context there to overview the relation/attitude of religion towards sexuality. For centuries, the church in the West defined passion as a sin even for the husband and wife (See Boswell, 1980) and, religiousness has commonly been associated with limited sexual activity (Burris *et.al.,* 2009: 282). However, as a paradox, religion and sexuality have shared certain characteristics from the beginning of human history. Experiences in both the aspects are conveyed through words such as 'desire', 'mystery', 'ritual', 'passion', 'ecstasy', and 'union'. The early historical periods witnessed rise of the goddess-based religions in which human sexuality centered on the female. But the intrinsic linguistic and liturgical marriage between these two activities (religion/sexuality) with certain common

emotional, psychological and even physical goals, prevailing in early history ended up in defaming sexuality in most of the 'great religions' centuries ago, through divorces propelled by patriarchal fear and prejudice.

Culturally, the process by which sexuality began to get a bad name in religion and myth seems to coincide with the demise of female power and political importance due to the rise of a male-dominated, warrior-based system. The stories of Adam and Eve; Samson and Delilah; Greek goddesses like Hera, Athena, Artemis, Aphrodite; the Pandora myth, etc., represent the Western society's views in which sexuality acquired a bad name even if still associated with religious figures. In a way, the females were considered synonymous with sensual distraction and therefore, creators of impediments for higher worldly feats as well as spiritual pursuits. Consequently, the male hero was represented as refusing the sensual advances of the henceforth suspect and strength draining female that could deviate him from his chosen path. The Indian mythology presents similar instances wherein the females were represented as distractions. Mythical tales abound in the imagery of celestial maids (*apsaras*) like Urvashi, Rambha, Maneka, deputed by the god king Indra to distract renowned sages like Vishwamitra from pursuing their austerities (*sadhana*) by luring them through dances and sensual temptations. God Siva initially spurned the persuasions of Parvati to marry her. Even Buddhism furnishes an instance of the alienation between religion and women. Therein, the Buddha, for long, disfavoured entry of women and when finally they joined the congregation (*saṃgha*), he predicted perishing of Buddhism within a thousand years.

Thus, feminine sexuality itself is subjected to arbitrary positioning into the dichotomous notions of morally good or bad. Feminine sexuality obtains moral justification if it is passive and responsive to masculine desire, while it becomes morally bad if it involves women's initiation or active participation in sexual relations (Briant and Schofield, 2007: 324). In this line, women are categorised into the binary classification of wife or mistress, virgin or whore and Mary or Eve (Hollway, 1984: 232). In Indian traditions, overt feminine sexuality is a characteristic often seen with the demonic women, for instance the sexual advances of Hidimba for Bhima in the *Mahabharata* or those of Shurpankha towards Lakshmana in the *Ramayana.*

Therefore, feminine sexuality is considered to be inherently depraved and dangerous and needs masculine control in order to

protect social morality. This is how through art, literature and films the masculine order manipulates the agency of femininity and constructs feminine sexuality. Feminine sexual identity seen in this way does not possess any ontological substance (Butler, 1990: 173). Representations of sexuality, in particular erotics, serve as 'a prime connecting point between body, self-identity and social norms' (Giddens, 1992: 14). Hence, art furnishes interpretive layers to the ways in which gender relations may be mapped out and how exhibitionism under normative cultural representations emphasises masculine determination of feminine gender and regulation over feminine sexuality.

VIII

CONCLUSION

The erotic representations of feminine sexuality in the Indian temple architecture appear to be serving binary objectives: representing women grossly in a misogynist form and celebrating masculine sexual ascendancy by veiling it with the tapestry of religiosity. In this regard, it may be argued here that the gynocentric depictions of eroticism in Indian Hindu temple architecture mainly seems to have been directed towards providing a sense of sacredness to the nudity of the figures, and also camouflaging the mass reproval of the male gaze. Here, the role of popular culture in promoting cultural difference in the name of divinity may be accented. The massification of ignorance through religion facilitates a male-centric order to get massive credence to its attempts at perpetuating the cultural difference based on gender. Female erotic representations, through art, thus served the purpose of facilitating the dominant male interests to stereotype women as objects of pleasure for men and essentialise their personality into a non-autonomous entity. The identity of woman was itself engulfed in the name of divinity expressed through art. Hence, art as a social structure tended to supplant the agency of femininity.

NOTES

1. *Kaula-Kapalika* is a *Śaivite* sect whose followers indulge in five *makaras*: flesh (*maṃsa*), fish (*matsya*), wine (*madya*), sexual indulgence (*maithuna*), and mystical poses (*mudrā*).They also perform their rituals over dead bodies in cemeteries and practise observances in solitude.

2. Authored by Vatsyayana, the *Kāmasutra* is perceived as a sex manual. However, it is a complex treatise on pleasure (*kāma*) with seven sections - general practices and precepts, heterosexual intercourse, obtaining a bride, duties of a wife, relations with wives of other men, courtesans, and secret formulae to ensure sexual success.

3. 'No lightning will strike the building where the union (*mithuna*) is imaged'. - Quoted in Guru Das Sarkar, *Alleged Buddhist Influence in the Sun Temple at Konarak*, in *Indian Antiquary* XLVII, p. 347.

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DISCIPLINING ENGLISH LITERARY STUDIES IN INDIA: A CRITIQUE

Banibrata Mahanta

The present paper traces the history of English literary studies in India through an interrogation of the disciplinary formation of the subject in the country of its origin, the British intervention in the area of education in India in terms of implementing English literature as a subject for study and the contours of how their course of action impacted the developmental trajectory of the subject in India. The paper examines how, even as academics engage in ideological thrust and parry with colonization and its fallouts, the epistemological space of English literary studies in the country continues to reflect its colonized character. Even as we debate the future of English literary studies in India today, an appraisal of the syllabi of Indian universities, as well as the recommendations of the UGC Curriculum Development Council (2001) regarding how undergraduate and postgraduate level syllabi in English Literature are to be framed, reflect the fact that, by and large, these courses use the word English more as a synonym for British instead of using it to represent the present-day global character of the language. The prescribed texts are usually canonical as is the list of recommended secondary scholarship that, by and large, consolidates the hegemony of these texts. The paper, through a detailed examination of the points raised here, puts forth a critique of the predicament.

I

Whenever, in the English Literature classroom, we talk of Shakespeare as the greatest dramatist that the world has ever produced, we are engaging with the dramatist on two possible levels: an "operation of belief" or an "operation of examination"[1]. If we consider the proposition closely, it can be clearly discerned that we as students and teachers of English Literature are entrenched in the former position rather than the latter. The corpus of literature

that talks of Shakespeare in superlative terms has been unambiguously accepted as true to the extent that right from school boards that prescribe abridged versions of his plays to postgraduate courses in universities that have entire paper/s on Shakespeare, the "operation of belief" is continually replicated to the extent that it has become axiomatic. Without detracting from Shakespeare's position as a dramatist, and conceding space for the historical accident that led to studying English Literature in India becoming an eventuality, a few issues still need to be resolved in this context. An idea with a historical, political and cultural baggage is mechanically implanted, through the education system in general and the university system in particular, perpetrating an epistemological assault on unsuspecting minds. This is not to argue for a nationalist or nativist assertion in terms of reductive binary oppositions of the self/other. However, it does call for an interrogation of prevailing pedagogical practices and argues for an affirmative and critical understanding of one's own legacy and also that of others.

Since the last few decades of the previous century, there has been a lot of work scrutinizing the growth and development of English studies in England as well as in India. Critics like Chris Baldick, Peter Widdowson, Terry Eagleton, Gerard Graff and D. J. Palmer[2] have provided important perspectives about English studies in the country of its origin. As these works demonstrate, the institutional origin of English Studies as a discipline is largely uncertain and indeterminate; its historical genesis cannot be traced with a great degree of certitude. Graff does talk of the development of English studies in England, but his primary focus is on the development of the subject in America. Palmer gives a detailed account of the development of the discipline up to the twentieth century. Baldick underscores the imperative of interrogating the assumptions of timelessness and naturalness that are associated with what we study in the subject in order to understand the social and cultural intricacies that shaped it. Eagleton and Widdowson interpret the historical evidence as being ideologically motivated. From its early modern beginnings where it was imbricated in social life, to the eighteenth century position where it was viewed as an isolatable entity worth being analyzed in its own right, English literature finally came to occupy central position with the failure of religion in the nineteenth century:

> "England is sick, and ... English literature must save it. The Churches (as I understand) having failed, and social remedies being slow, English

literature has now a triple function: still, I suppose, to delight and instruct us, but also, and above all, to save our souls and heal the State" (George Gordon quoted in Eagleton, 2008: 20).

Higher education in England at that time was controlled by the Church of England, and the colleges under the two extant universities at that time, Oxford and Cambridge, were run like monastic institutions. It was accessible only to Anglican Christian males who were taught the classics, divinity and mathematics by churchmen, the whole situation reminiscent of the "organization of higher education ... since the middle ages" (Barry, 2010: 12). Religious, class and gender barriers were done away with in 1826, and English was offered as a subject of study for the first time around 1828. This was in part because literature was a private and introspective activity, and its experiential and emotional characteristics could operate across every group distinction as a stabilizing factor. English literature as we know it was first institutionalized in the Mechanics' Institutes and working men's colleges of England around 1831; it was introduced in Oxford for the first time in 1894 and in Cambridge in 1911.

C. D. Narasimhaiah, Gauri Vishwanathan, Rajeshwari Sundar Rajan, Susie Tharu and Svati Joshi[3] among many others have provided perceptive accounts of the institutionalization of English studies in India and how it was causally linked to the corresponding process in England through colonialism. Narasimhaiah stressed the lack of "Indianness" in our responses to English literature. Tharu emphasized the need for factoring in contextual and experiential specificities. Vishwanathan's work extends the genealogy from England to the colonies, pointing out that the discipline came into its own during colonial times, its humanistic underpinnings being ideologically deployed for sociopolitical control. Both Rajeshwari Sundar Rajan and Svati Joshi also delve into the institutionalization of English studies in India in order to bring out how the originary antecedents of the discipline have remained largely intact, leading to the discipline being fossilized and outdated, and emphasize the need to re-examine the logic of the study of English Literature in India.

The British East India Company came to India in 1600. Their initial engagement was with trade, but in order to augment their position, they gradually entered the realm of the political and subsequently, the educational. If the Battle of Plassey is a watershed in terms of British political engagement with India, Wood's Despatch of 1854, Macaulay's infamous "Minute on Education in

India" and the English Education Act of 1835 are the defining moments of how British involvement gave a new direction to education in India.

The proposal for diffusion of Western education was first proposed when the East India Company's Charter was to be renewed in 1793. It was turned down on that occasion, one of the members of the Court of Directors declaring that England had lost America because of the "folly, in having allowed the establishment of Schools and Colleges", and that "it would not do for [them] to repeat the same act of folly in regard to India" (Marshman quoted in Basu, 1867: 5). It would be another twenty years before the Company decided to set aside a sum of "not less than one lac rupees" for educational purposes during the renewal of the Charter Act in 1813, outlining two "distinct propositions" for consideration: "first, the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and the revival and improvement of literature; secondly, the promotion of a knowledge of the sciences amongst the inhabitants of the country" (Basu, 1867: 14). This clause in the Charter Act opened up the debate between the advocates of traditional and modern education. The Orientalists advocated indigenous systems and methods of education, while the Anglicists opposed this on the grounds that it was not equipped to deal with the changed social circumstances, and felt that there was a genuine need for a radical Western orientation in the field of education, and that there was a distinct mandate in favour of this change. The Wood's Despatch was issued after Charter Act was renewed in 1853. It proposed European knowledge and a higher education system modelled on the London University as correctives to the flawed learning systems and literature of the East. English was to be promoted as the medium of instruction, and English Literature was to be the vanguard of this enterprise.

Macaulay's "Minute" reiterated the same position and the English Education Act was the culmination of this process. The events of 1835 and their implications are too well-documented to merit repetition. However, the change in policy that resulted from the 1835 English Education Act was not entirely motivated by altruistic and philanthropic motives based on the notion of the superiority of the Western institutions and mode of learning as public documents would lead us to believe, but also by more pragmatic considerations like ease of governmental functioning, distrust of alien religions and people and the need to hegemonize the discursive space of knowledge. Revealing insights can be found in private

dialogues on this matter. In 1836, Macaulay's wrote to his father:

> The effect of this education on the Hindus is prodigious. No Hindu who has received an English education ever remains sincerely attached to his religion. Some continue to profess it as a matter of policy, but many profess themselves pure Deists and some embrace Christianity. *It is my firm belief that if our plans of education are followed up there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence.* (quoted in Basu, 1867: 105, emphasis in original)

Alexander Duff, writing in *English National Education*, emphasizes the "vast influence of language in moulding national feelings and habits, more especially if fraught with superior stores of knowledge" and then goes on to highlight how the Romans, in course of their conquest of Europe, succeeded in "Romanising" Europe. Then, drawing upon the example of Akbar's establishment of Persian and how it led to "a kind of intuitive veneration" for the Emperor, Duff says:

> Lord W. Bentinck's double Act for the encouragement and diffusion of the English language and English Literature in the East, will ... be hailed by a grateful and benefited posterity as the grandest master-stroke of sound policy that has yet characterized the administration of the British Government in India. (quoted in Basu, 1867: 108-109)

It is evident that religious, social and cultural agendas were very much on the minds of the British when they implemented English education and subsequently English Literature. The latter, which started out as a "Church of England monopoly", was thus modified to suit this end (Barry, 2010: 12). The interplay of British involvement in Indian education and their awareness of the sensitive nature of the religious reality here resulted in the "dramatic disavowal of English Literature's association with Christianity" in India (Vishwanathan, 1989: 21). As interference in matters religious was proscribed, "[t]his tension between increasing involvement in Indian education and enforced non-interference in religion was productively resolved through the introduction of English literature" as a surrogate (Vishwanathan, 1987: 432). Had that not been the case, instead of a secular or even religious version of the discipline, the Bible would have sufficed to achieve what the discipline covertly aimed at in surrogacy, as is evident from the colonial manoeuvres in Africa.

There is of course another side to the story, symbolized by the setting up of the Hindu College (now Presidency University) in

1817. One the oldest educational institutes in the region, its date of establishment and its aim of providing Western education were significant in demonstrating that a part of the Indian population was also rooting for change.

II

We thus have the twin legacies of English language and literature to contend with. The colonial legacy of English language per se has been effectively addressed by divesting the language of its imperial baggage and focusing on its functionality. The strategic placement of English as a skill to be acquired for the betterment of the individual and the nation marks a change in its positioning, accessibility and political implications, in part due to governmental decisions and directed largely by global realities and public need. There are quite a few caveats in terms of equity of access to quality and benefits, but by and large there is no baggage in terms of accessibility to the language.

In case of English Literature though, even today, the British literary canon which was introduced in the colonial era has by and large remained frozen except for a few additions and alterations and still forms the core content of most university syllabi in the subject. For most part, English literary education in this country has perpetrated a split identity which is in keeping with this distance that most English literature texts have with immediate realities. This leads to the structuring of interpretation by critics who locate these texts within transcendental values couched within a liberal humanist frame of reference. This pedagogic approach, which glosses over existing realities, is still largely followed in many English departments all over India, thus perpetrating the notion that the text and culture of the English is something superior and is invested with a value (and finality) that is not there in other literatures and cultures (Sengupta, 1994: 279). This static reality also reinforces the assumptions and understanding of students, who believe that in spite of all the changes around them, the unchangeability and monolithic permanence of the syllabus is a mark of authenticity and superiority. This is largely in part due to the rigidity of the many English Literature departments in the country, in which the University Grants Commission[4] also has a role.

The increasing sense of unease faced by many academics teaching English in the Indian universities – particularly the more traditional ones – where courses are rigidly drawn up and

implemented, has to do with the complex set of problems that go with teaching English in a postcolonial reality. Students gain degrees in English Literature without being aware of how the subject was instituted in colonial times and the circumstances under which it is studied today. It is as if the study of the subject is conducted in a sanitized space divested of historical as well as contemporary socio-political underpinnings. The circumstances and factors that have led to English Literature becoming a subject of study have largely been obscured from Honours and postgraduate students of the discipline. The battles and wars behind it, and the debates and discussions related to it have been conveniently brushed under the carpet, leaving behind an apparently representative set of masterpieces that suggest consent and conclusiveness rather than deliberation and contestation. This kind of approach pre-empts the pedagogical potential of the background behind the formation of the English Literature curriculums and syllabuses that are current today. The design of prescribing texts and authors without focusing on the controversies and background that led to their being there gives an impression of order and agreement, but students are divested of a significant reality, thus diminishing the worth of their study. Is it necessary to give an idea of concurrence? Cannot disagreements serve us equally well? And is it not better to have an understanding of the dissensus rather than not?

For a more dynamic and rewarding study of English Literature in India, the student should thus be conscious of the history of English Studies in India as well as the antecedents of the conceptualization of this discipline – its initiation, growth and development in England. Concomitantly, all these issues have to be assessed in terms of the changed global and academic realities. The empire has crumbled, and contemporary geopolitical circumstances have relegated England to lesser importance. English Literature is no more the exclusive preserve of England; its literary primacy is successfully contested by former colonies having become rich sites from where a multiplicity of literature written in English is being produced, England accounting for just a miniscule part of the entire output. Literature itself has undergone a radical paradigm shift, and it has been re-sited as a "historically informed and politically conscious" engagement moving on from the liberal humanist position of English literature as "'universal' and 'normative'" (Joshi, 1991: 1). It is therefore imperative that we go back to the origins of this discipline in India vis-à-vis Britain, and understand the implications of studying/teaching English Literature in India today. In order to

accomplish this, it is necessary to debate the subject in its present disciplinary formationfrom within the discipline itself. It is therefore necessary to address the curricular vacuum of a comprehensive research and critique of the disciplinary role of English in our historical and cultural formation, and a comprehensive institutional revamp of our teaching of English literature.

One attempt in this direction is seen in The UGC *Model Curriculum for English and other Western Languages* of 2001, which was framed by an eminent assemblage of scholars under the nomenclature Curriculum Development Committee. It comprised such stalwarts as Sukanta Chaudhuri (Jadavpur University, who was the Convener of the CDC), C. T. Indra (University of Madras), Prashant K. Sinha (University of Pune) and Rajiva Verma (University of Delhi). The Committee put forward two models for subscribers of English Literature programmes: "English Language and Literature" which foregrounds and privileges English language and literature, and "Literatures in English" which could be of more general nature and would be at liberty to "adopt broader cultural and comparativist approaches" and in which English language texts would be at par with texts translated from various languages into English. The document further states that the latter could, in due course, be oriented towards more general programmes like "Literature and Culture" or "Literary Studies" (which would do away with the appellation "English") and these putative programmes would be at liberty to use texts not only translated into English but into Indian languages as well (16 *Model Curriculum*)[5].

The document argues for evolving programmes that could use English translations of texts of European, Indian or any other provenance, and for more flexible courses as well, highlighting, in an obverse manner, the rigidity of current university syllabi in the subject as well as the need to "[u]ltimately... break quite free of traditional 'Eng. Lit.', and move into totally new areas with appropriate new titles eschewing the word 'English' (17 *Model Curriculum*, emphasis added), thus acknowledgingthat most Indian Universities in India, till 2001 (and even now), had not yet "broken free".

There are a few grey areas in the CDC recommendations though. While there are detailed optional papers in the CDC recommendations that add to the background knowledge of British and continental literature, there is only the single paper on Indian Literature, with no additional paper to flesh out the contesting and contradictory ideological positions with respect to Indian Writing

in English. There are suggestions for exclusive papers at the undergraduate level that deal with the background to English Literature, and similar background components in many papers at the postgraduate level, but this background is not in any way a history of the institutionalization of the curriculum but what is termed as "literary history". These literary histories merely confirm the paramountcy of the texts prescribed[6]. Nowhere is the sordid history of colonialism in India referred to in the courses. Ironically, the usual practice is to refer to historical events like the War of Roses and the French Revolution to specify historical space and time, thus creating further insulation. This insular universalist space imbued with liberal humanist values precludes any attempt at explaining the course in terms of historical markers from *our* indigenous experience, resulting in serious students of the discipline being more familiar with when the Puritans came to power in England but having no knowledge of when the English Education Act was enforced in India. The acknowledgement of the closed and exclusionist positions of most literary histories is one more step towards opening up the field for contestation. We have to move ahead from the practice of studying half a dozen canonical texts in each paper which are discussed in the classroom and regurgitated in the examinations, the basis of all discussions being standard books on criticism produced by Western scholars (Sundar Rajan, 1992: 7).

The UGC CDC has no doubt brought in some fresh perspectives, from gradually diversifying into continental literature to including translations into English to finally developing a course which includes translations into other Indian languages as well. But universities, which are supposed to revise their syllabus every three years, are pre-empted from making any changes because the British Literature heavy NET examination has been following the same syllabus since its institution more than two decades ago, replicating a pattern that was enforced more than a century ago. As a result, perspectives based on today's culture, which is a culture without consensus, do bring in new areas of study, but are ultimately proscribed by the range that is relevant to students, and that according to the UGC, still remains British Literature. The other coordinates bring in fresh dimensions, but when we look at the monolith, we find fresh perspectives but cannot include new things because of the closed manner in which it is constructed.

It is therefore necessary to interrogate what we engage with when we are teaching/learning English Literature in terms of who

are teaching, who are learning, and what is being imparted and for what purpose, framed within the broader context of institutional settings and intellectual concerns. The challenge, then, is to review the borders of the discipline and map a new terrain factoring in issues that have been insufficiently addressed. Within these redrawn boundaries, there is, further, a need to approach texts apart from and in conjunction with its con-texts, leading to more reflective practices of learning and teaching the discipline.

NOTES

1. The phrases were used by Prof. Aniket Jaaware, University of Pune, in his keynote address at the International Conference on *Research Trends in English Studies*, Department of English, University College of Arts and Centre for Education and Research, Tumkur University, Tumkur, delivered on 26 July 2013.

2. The major works dealing with English studies are Chris Baldick's *The Social Mission of English Studies 1848-1932* (London: OUP, 1983), *Re-Reading English* edited by Peter Widdowson (London: Methuen, 1982), Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory: An* Introduction (London: Blackwell, 1983), Gerard Graff's *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1987), Francis Mulhern's *The Moment of Scrutiny* (London: New Left Books, 1979), D. J. Palmer's *The Rise of English Studies* (London: OUP, 1965) and E. M. W. Tillyard's *The Muse Unchained: An Intimate Account of the Revolution in English Studied at Cambridge* (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1958).

3. The works dealing with English studies in India include C. D. Narasimhaiah's *Moving Frontiers of English Studies in India* (New Delhi: S. Chand, 1977) and *English Studies in India: Widening* Horizons (New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2002), Gauri Vishwanathan's *Masks of Conquest* (New York: Columbia Univ Press, 1989), *The Lie of the Land: English Literary Studies in India* edited by Rajeshwari Sundar Rajan (Delhi: OUP, 1992), *Subject to Change: Teaching Literatures in the Nineties*, edited by Susie Tharu (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1998) and *Rethinking English: Essays in Literature, Language and History* edited by Svati Joshi (New Delhi: Trianka, 1991).

4. Even if the individual departments of English Literature were to enforce some changes on the lines suggested above, they would place their own students at a distinct disadvantage, since the questions asked in the National Eligibility Test for lectureship in the country are also based primarily on British Literature, with European, American and Indian English Literature and contemporary theory forming a minor part of the questions. Questions about the disciplinary background of English studies in India are seldom asked while questions relating to the backgrounds of prescribed canonical texts are ubiquitous.

5. The UGC CDC has drawn up a fairly representative and exhaustive list of literature from various Indian languages, which creates a ready corpus of

texts that could be used in the transition from "English Language and Literature" through "Literatures in English" to programmes like "Literature and Culture" or "Literary Studies", and which would highlight the decolonizing process.

6. Interestingly, most texts dealing with the history of English Literature were written in the last two centuries, overlapping with the period of colonial expansionism.

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READING COMMUNITY IDENTITIES AND TRADITIONS: THE HISTORY AND REPRESENTATION OF THE SHRIVAISHNAVAS OF SOUTH INDIA

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> The History of Vaiṣṇavism in South India falls naturally into three divisions. The first covering the period from the earliest times upto Ramanuja (1017-1137) would deal with the origin of Vaiṣṇavism, the age of the Ālvārs, and the age of the Ācāryas from Nāthamuni to Ramanuja. The second division covering a period of nearly three centuries–the 11th, 12th and 13th from Ramanuja to Piḷḷailokācārya and Veṅkaṭanātha (1286-1370) may be described as the period of the unity of Vaiṣṇavism. The third and the last division comprising the period after the 13th century may be described as the schismatic and therefore, the least creative period of its history.
>
> B.V. RAMANUJAM (1973: 3)

Writing in 1970s, Ramanujam was restating the central idea of the researches on the history of Shrivaishnavism that had preceded him.[1] Primarily written from the beginning of the twentieth century, the history presented in these works mostly identified a history of the Shrivaishnava community that was uniform and consistently unanimous in its projection of identity. Any occurrence of contradictions especially after the thirteenth century was treated with discomfort. Either they were ignored or marginalized in these researches or presented in a polemical manner depending on the ideological and sectarian affiliations of the writer as a Vadakalai or Tenkalai- two groups that the Shrivaishnava community was divided into.[2] However, an analysis of the Shrivaishnava historical past in its textual tradition, practice and the context in which they evolved and were located did not sustain any claims to uniformity nor supported the modern interpretations of the schism of the community into Vadakalai or Tenkalai groups. Rather, the resources from the past represented multiple identities in the form of caste,

occupation and regional affiliations and the interaction with the textual normative that acted upon the latter making the evolution of the tradition a dynamic process. The textual and liturgical strategies adopted for disseminating the religious ideas constantly attempted to negotiate with the tensions and contradictions often by accommodating them in the Shrivaishnava temple organizations and ritual activities. Consequently, a multiplicity of identities emerged that mirrored the multiple perceptions of the community amongst its believers.

This paper will attempt to juxtapose the ideas of history of the Shrivaishnava community in the modern works with the analysis of the historical past especially from the thirteenth century onwards and examine the ways in which modern representations were informed by the context in which they were situated. Section I will discuss the modern twentieth century works on the history of the Shrivaishnavas in which the notion of a homogeneous community identity was emphatically put forth that defined the successive researches on this subject. It will also discuss the ways in which the split into Vadakalai and Tenkalai was represented in such histories. Section II will provide a historical survey of the Shrivaishnava community in its textual tradition, the context in which it was evolving and the emerging multiple identities and the formation of the community. Section III will discuss the ways in which the notion of an uniform identity and sectarian affiliations were articulated in the texts, tradition and practice.

<center>I</center>

Who are the Shrivaishnavas and according to them what is their history? Shrivaishnavas are a Vaishnava community of South India. The community considers Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi as their supreme godhead, and regards the Sanskrit Vedas and the *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* (the 4000 Tamil hymns of the Alvars, the early Vaishnava saints) as its main scriptures. It has two distinct groups, the Vadakalais and Tenkalais. The Vadakalais regard the Varadarajaswami temple at Kanchipuram as their institutional centre and give preference to the Sanskrit *Vedas* over the Tamil ones and therefore are considered to be conservative in outlook. The Tenkalais represent the Tamil tradition with Shrirangam as their institutional centre and regard the *Draviḍa Vedas* or the Tamil hymns of the early Vaishnava saints, the Alvars (sixth to ninth centuries) as their scripture and are considered to be more broad based with a large

non-brahmana following. There are three religious figures or *acharyas* whom the Shrivaishnavas regard as most reverent, Ramanuja who belonged to eleventh and twelfth century and is credited with bringing together the social basis and the intellectual philosophy together into one organization and one community, and is therefore considered the most important *acharya*, Vedantadesika, (traditional dates: c. 1268-1369 CE) located in the thirteenth century, is considered to have established the ideas and practices of the Vadakalai sub-tradition and finally Manavalamamuni, located in the fourteenth century is considered as the founding *acharya* of the Tenkalai sub-tradition. Both the Vadakalais and Tenkalais believe that the lineages of their respective *acharyas* were derived from the direct 'legitimate' descendants of Ramanuja.

From where does one get this information? The hagiographies or the *guruparamparas*, which began to be composed approximately from thirteenth century onwards undoubtedly, provided us with such a history, but they did not speak in the same voice. We have some hagiographies that presented the history of the community from the Alvars to Ramanuja and the others that presented the history of the community starting from the Alvars, to Ramanuja, to Vedantadesika or Manavalamamuni, the life stories of both of them seldom appearing together in any of these texts. The subsequent successors of both of them were rarely mentioned in the hagiographies.[3] But did the hagiographical representation comprise the only delineation of the history of Shrivaishnavas? There were varieties of sources in the historical past that documented the history or rather the histories of the Shrivaishnavas through the eyes of different groups situated within the temples, including the non-brahmanas like the *Sattadas, kaikkolas,* different *mathas* or monastic organizations and individuals, the *brahmana acharyapurushas.* While the consciousness of belonging to a distinct Shrivaishnava community can be traced back to historical past in the textual traditions and the institutional structures of the temples and the *mathas*, the modern writings, on it that started emerging around late nineteenth and especially early twentieth century presented a consolidated and seamless history that in many ways diluted the multiple traditions of caste and regions existing within the Shrivaishnava community and a created a new exclusive homogeneous modern self. The varied documentations were either hardly registered or completely ignored. The works of several scholars on the history of the Shrivaishnava community like Alakondavilli Govindacharya, C.R. Srinivasa Aiyengar, S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, V.Rangachari and so

on focussed on the Alvars, and *acharyas* till Ramanuja and few till Vedantadesika and Manavalamamuni.[4] However, independent documentations of the temples and the *mathas* existed but they were not a part of the histories that were being written. Finally, virtually the non-brahmanas like the *Sattadas* Shrivaishnava, who had a significant share in the temple authorities in the sixteenth century, were almost erased from this delineation of the past.[5] Hence the identity of a Shrivaishnava in the late nineteenth and twentieth century in the public domain meant essentially being a *brahmana* adhering to the reverential lineage of the Alvars and *acharyas* till Ramanuja. Consequently, such an interaction led to the thematic accent on the homogeneous delineation of the past, in which the Alvar phase and the life of the *acharyas* till Ramanuja received prominence; the subsequent phase in which the split into Vadakalai and Tenkalai was one of the crucial developments was muted and finally the notion of social reform by projecting the avowed dissent of the Alvars and Ramanuja against the caste hierarchy was highlighted.

Another area on which these scholars focused upon to accentuate the notion of a homogeneous community was the biography of Ramanuja. The perspectives in these biographies influenced the development of some of the enduring imagings of Ramanuja that not only circulated within the South Indian context but also became the basis of understanding and perceiving him at the pan-Indian level- an image of a benign saint who was not only a great exegete, but also a champion of the oppressed and the poor, stridently arguing against the caste hierarchy. His philosophy of the Vishishtadvaita was perceived to have had a seminal impact on the medieval *bhakti*, for it made the act of *prapatti* or spiritual salvation through surrender to God accessible to everybody, irrespective of the individual's caste status. The writings considered this idea revolutionary and radical. The larger frame of reference that resonated in these writings was that Ramanuja was a "social reformer". It needs to be stated that while using the textual sources, especially the *guruparamparas* and the *stotras* (praise-poems), these modern writings often overlooked the variations in the narratives and the complexities arising from them. For instance, Ramanuja is said to have shouted out the *Dvaya mantra*, exclusively meant for *brahmanas,* from the top of the temple tower at Tirukottiiyur so that everyone, irrespective of caste status, could hear, learn and recite it. Though censured by the Shrivaishnava *brahmana* community, that included his own *guru,* Ramanuja was undeterred.

This account along with such other narratives, accepted as historical reality has been documented as a radical step taken by Ramanuja, who the writings have felt deserve to be upheld as a 'social reformer'- a point that is overstressed considering that this narrative was not so dramatic as the modern representations would like us to believe.[6] Interestingly, in two of the hagiographies, viz., the *Divyasuricharitam* that has two long chapters on Ramanuja and *Yatiraja Vaibhavam*, that deals exclusively with Ramanuja's life, it is not the *Dvaya mantra*, but *Carama Śloka* that Ramanuja learnt from his *guru* and revealed to everybody.

Why was such a unilinear homogeneous identity delineated? To look for answers to this question, it is crucial that one examines the audience which such writings were addressing and the contexts in which they were articulating. It needs to be stated here that while the project of history writing had become an integral part of the nationalistic agenda, there were parallel specific history writings that on one hand reformulated the definite religious identities, on the other repositioned them within the larger, universalistic historical narratives of Hinduism and the nation. Therefore, the authors of such particular histories were products of a historical process that attributed to them their lineage, in this case the Shrivaishnavas. But this was now being refashioned and written in a manner so that they could become a part of the larger nationalist discourse and discursive dialogues related to the ideas of Hinduism- two aspects that were crucial in this period. Hence, the focus on composing uniform seamless histories that obliterated multiple voices and in this case, these voices were often at variance with each other.

How was the process of relating the particular to the universal achieved by the Shrivaishnavas? The writings of Alkondavilli Govindacharya, S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar and so on, who were nationalistic in their outlook and also Shrivaishnava *brahmanas* wrote the history of Shrivaishnavism, articulating for the first time a modern community consciousness that linked the larger discourse of the Tamil tradition to Hinduism and the nation with the modern agenda of social reforms. Thus the attempt to be an integral part was in two ways: one, secularizing the history writings and two, focusing on the themes of social reform and protest against the caste hierarchy. The colonial state's takeover of the temple managements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, opposed strongly by the British missionaries was an attempt to secularize and push religious control to the margins of the political and public sphere. The principles

that determined the management of the temple and control and authority within it underwent a process of transformation with the British expanding their involvement in the temple on one hand, but refused to mediate in the disputes, preferring the help of the natives as intermediaries and arbitrators.[7] Such an ambivalent attitude on the part of the colonial state created complexities leading to situations of disputes over the temple rights. Subsequently, the Shrivaishnavas, one of the groups affected by these measures found themselves administratively and in terms of authority marginalized in their very own institutions. The *mathas*, *acharyapurusas*, the Vadakalais and Tenkalais now had to reorient their interactions and claims to privileges vis-á-vis the colonial state that was diluting the religious control. The classic universal modernity separating the sacred and the secular was at work here, though it needs to be stated that colonial modernity was a dynamic process that negotiated with and was influenced by its interaction with the Indian context. Thus the traditional religious consciousness articulated mainly through the institutional frame of the temple was now being reconfigured and reformulated.

The division into Vadakalai and Tenkalai sects is the most dominant form of identity for the Shrivaishnava community today. Temples and *mathas* are affiliated to a distinct Vadakalai or Tenkalai tradition. The attempt to articulate and reiterate these boundaries was made in the colonial context of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when a new political formation emerged and the temples and the sectarian leaders had no role in the establishment and the manifestation of the duality of the Sanskrit and the Tamil tradition, which had previously provided the ideological contexts for various sectarian leaders. Therefore, contradictions were always present in the history of Shrivaishnava philosophy and community before the eighteenth century but the forms of articulation were at the level of intellectual and theological disputes.

The basic difference between the Vadakalai and the Tenkalai sects lie in their respective *acharyic* lineage immediately after Ramanuja. For the Vadakalai, Vedantadesika systematized and interpreted the philosophy of Ramanuja and hence was the *acharyic* head of the Vadakalai lineage. For the Tenkalai lineage, Manavalamamuni was the *acharyic* head. The importance of these two *acharyic* heads for their respective sects lie in the fact that they were in direct line of descent from Ramanuja onwards and hence claimed to be his legitimate successors. Therefore, it followed that, the interpretations of Ramanuja's teachings by Vedantadesika and

Manavalamamuni were a logical continuation to Ramanuja's teachings and were valid.

Much has been written about the meanings of the terms Vadakalai and Tenkalai. It is in the hymns of Tirumangaialvar, one of the Alvars that a duality was first indicated in the reference to the Sanskrit and Tamil language (Jagdeesan, 1977: 45).[8] However, in the context of community identity, the implications go beyond the linguistic affiliations. Vadakalai means north, i.e. northern part of the Tamil country with Kanchipuram as its cultural centre and Tenkalai means south of Tamil country with Shrirangam and Kaveri delta as the cultural center although in both these centers, the Vedic (i.e. Sanskritic) and Prabandhic (i.e. Tamil) tradition flourished.[9] Today, the Vadakalais are projected as adhering to the Vedic tradition and are therefore linked to Kanchipuram.[10] The Tenkalais emphasizing on the Prabandhic traditions are inevitably linked to Shrirangam. The historiography on the schism has followed two broad trends. The first reflected the sectarian bias of the historians who belonged to either of the two sects.[11] According to them, the schism was an unfortunate development in the history of Shrivaishnavism. These historians hold *others* responsible for the split, thereby exonerating their own sects of any responsibility. Hence, fixing the onus of the split has always been a major historiographical preoccupation. According to the Tenkalais, since Vedantadesika was chronologically before Manavalamamuni, therefore, the Vadakalais generated the schism. The Vadakalais counteracted this by tracing the genesis of the schism not to Manavalamamuni, but to Pillai Lokacharya (traditional dates: c.1264-1372 CE), who was a Tenkalai leader and a senior contemporary of Vedantadesika. There is another interpretation to this chronological difference. Since Vedantadesika was placed before Manavalamamuni, the Vadakalais asserted that they were more ancient than the Tenkalais. Hence, it followed that Ramanuja was a Vadakalai and the Tenkalai system being a later development was an aberration.[12] Conversely, Tenkalais feel that since they were always larger in number, the Vadakalais developed as an opposition and until day are consolidating themselves. The implication of these interpretations is that both the Vadakalais and Tenkalais have always asserted that they are the true representatives of Shrivaishnavism.

Another dimension to this sectarian viewpoint is the pride of place given to the respective *acharyas* of both the sects on the basis of their contributions towards Shrivaishnavism. For instance, V.Rangachari's essay on Vedantadesika portrayed the latter in

eulogistic terms whose achievements even the Tenkalais acknowledged. K.V. Raman's monograph on Varadarajasvami temple at Kanchipuram put forth the valuable contributions made by Tenkalais towards the development of the temple as the center of Shrivaishnavism. (Raman, 1975) In this context, Raman referred to one of the influential Shrivaishnavas of fifteenth century, Alagiyamanavala Jiyar (1420-1468 A.D.) as the most significant religious leader at Kanchi Varadarajasvami temple. In Raman's words:

> Several inscriptions datable to the latter half of the fifteenth century and the earlier half of the sixteenth century speak of his (i.e. Alagiya Manavalamamuni's) services to the temple and his eminent position in the temple affairs at Kanchipuram (ibid.: 76).

The epigraphical evidences from which Raman drew his conclusions however, pointed towards a different situation. Of approximately sixty-two inscription of Varadarajasvami temple, only three belong to Alagiya Manavalamamuni who was the *koyil-kelvi*, i.e. the 'overseer' of the temple-undoubtedly an important position. However, his contributions appeared to have been just some gifts of land to the temple.[14] Epigraphical evidence refers to the Tatacharyas, a powerful Shrivaishnava *brahmana* group as the major functionaries involved in the temple activities.[15] The forty-five inscriptions in which they appear prominently were ignored by Raman evidently as he wanted to highlight the Tenkalai leaders' importance. The Vadakalai response to Raman's understanding and highlighting the role of the Tenkalais was hostile and alternatively highlighted the contribution of the Tatacharyas.[16] However, it is difficult to conclude whether Tatacharyas were representing the Vadakalais. For epigraphical evidences, do not refer to this affiliation. Rather, it appears that the Tatacharya emphasized their independent identity.

The second historiographical viewpoint is a simplistic unilinear view where the twentieth century understanding of the Vadakalais and Tenkalais was extrapolated to the historical development of sectarianism in Shrivaishnavism from the twelfth to the seventeenth century A.D. According to K.A.Nilakantha Sastri, in the post-Ramanuja period differences in interpretations arose which were instrumental in creating doctrinal differences under Vedantadesika and Manavalamamunigal (Sastri, 1963: 82-85). N. Jagadeesan takes the antecedents of the schism further back to a tenth century *acharya*, Nathamuni (Jagdeesan, 1977: 182). According to him, after Nathamuni, schismatic tendencies developed amongst the

immediate disciples, Yamuna and then Ramanuja. The philosophies of Pillai Lokacarya and Vedantadesika, which evolved consequently, were stabilized by Manavalamamuni and Brahmatantra Svatantra Jiyar (traditional dates: c.1545 A.D.-1595 CE), head of an important Shrivaishnava *matha,* the Parakala *matha* respectively. Further he says: 'When the schism weakened the Vadakalai developed subdivisions like the *Munitreyam,* Ahobilam *matha* and Parakala-*matha* and Tenkalai Kandadais, Telugu- Shrivaishnavas, the *Soliyar,* the *Sikkiliyar.'*[17] However, while referring to the weakening of the schism, Jagadeesan does not explain how and when the process took place, nor has he been able to appreciate the independent developments of some sects (which he has referred to) without any affiliation to the Vadakalai-Tenkalai paradigm. Therefore, both Sastri and Jagadeesan failed to analyze the diachronic history of development of sectarianism.

However, the above views of schism overlook the historical processes of the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries AD. Within the Shrivaishnava tradition, the notion of duality was established in the texts and in the philosophy of *ubhaya-vedanta,* i.e. Tamil *Veda* (i.e. the *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*) and Sanskrit *Vedas.* This notion of duality crystallized into Tamil tradition and Sanskritic tradition that was reflected in the hagiographical texts which were constructing a lineage for their respective sects. Hence, some of the *acharyas,* their *guruparamparas,* the *mathas* and temple that were the centres of *acharyic* and community activities acquired a Tamil or a Sanskritic identity as the case may be. Interestingly, the *acharyic* lineages emerging from Vedantadesika and Manavalamamuni associated the two *acharyas* with the Sanskritic and Tamil traditions respectively. Therefore, multiple affiliations emerged between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries that did not coalesce around the Sanskritic and Tamil traditions to form a distinct Sanskritic or Tamil sect.

II

From the thirteenth century, a plurality of identities based on multiple traditions emerged within the Shrivaishnava community. Each of these traditions preserved the names of all its *acharyas* in a succession list and attributed several *taniyans* (i.e. praise poems) to them. These *acharyas* were either independent *acharyapurushas* (influential Shrivaishnava *brahmana* individuals) or *mathadhipatis* (heads of the *mathas*). However, both these categories were

associated with the brahmanical temples and *mathas,* which emerged as the convergence points of the Shrivaishnava community and its activities.

The basis of the multiple traditions and therefore identities based on the institution of *acharyas* and temples was the caste and the regional affiliations of a Shrivaishnava individual. These were primary affiliations of an individual, formed the core of an individual's identity and were linked in a complex manner with the religious identity. Despite the overarching community, sectarian and institutional affiliations, the caste and the regional identities never got marginalized and remained integral to the entire social set up.

The changing socio-context in which such identities were evolving, especially with the establishment of the Vijayanagar Empire in the fourteenth century was instrumental in generating a complex community consciousness. Further, the political integration of three different linguistic zones-viz, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh led to several trans-regional migrations. The rise of new social classes as well as the rising prominence of the old ones led to regrouping of the social identities that negotiated with the *varna* framework for a superior position within the hierarchy. Such negotiations accommodated these newly oriented groups in the temples by providing them new ritual spaces and incorporating their participation in the temple activities. The emergence of the non-brahmana landed class and new mercantile communities and the migration of the Telugu warriors and landed magnates to the Tamil region led to the evolution of a distinct Shrivaishnava non-brahmana identity. Since these groups were powerful and influential, they emerged as major benefactors of the temples and the sectarian leaders. A network of redistribution and exchange between the non-brahmana and *brahmana* elite groups developed that brought into the temple arena the former and provided a regular channel for patronage to the latter. Tradition attributes Ramanuja with the introduction of certain 'social reforms', including participation by the non-brahmanas. These 'reforms' aimed to broaden the social basis of the community.

Consequently, Shrivaishnavism not only had to expand its social base, but also its regional base beyond the Tamil region. Therefore, local variants of Shrivaishnavism and Shrivaishnava communities with coherent regional affiliations emerged. For example, Mandyattars, Hebbars and many others from Karnataka were prominent regional Shrivaishnava groups. The textual tradition of the Shrivaishnavas

began to be articulated in regional languages like Kannada and Telugu. Some of these works contributed towards enriching the ideas and the general Shrivaishnava community consciousness. Regional affiliations were further asserted when migrants to the Tamil region preserved their regional identities, such as the Telugu warrior-class and landed communities who migrated from the Andhra region. However, conversely the *brahmana* migrants from Tamil Nadu to Andhra and Karnataka region often were assimilated completely into the regional setup, thereby subsuming their Tamil identity. These regional *brahmana* and non-brahmana Shrivaishnava groups of the Karnataka and Andhra region were usually named after the *gurus,* place of settlements or place of origin. The regional identity did have considerable importance, as seen from the hagiographical texts which always mentioned the place of origin, the migratory pattern and the place of settlement of a Shrivaishnava *acharya.* This is best illustrated in the case of Tatacharyas, whose different stages of migration before settling down at Kanchipuram is a subject of the hagiographies.

Hence, caste affiliations got interwoven with the community-class and regional paradigms. That is Shrivaishnavism became the integrative factor between the *brahmana* and the non-brahmanas*,* when powerful sections of both the castes groups joined in an interactive/productive relationship. This was reflected in the philosophy too. The presence of non-brahmanas in the community influenced the Shrivaishnava discourse on society. New concepts like *ubhaya vedanta* and *prapatti* were evolved, which were all inclusive. Regional language, primarily Tamil came to be emphasized along with Sanskrit. Some of the brahmanical religious leaders like the Kandadais and Periya Jiyar at Tirupati had non-brahmanas as their disciples. Referred to as *ekakis, ekangis* and *sattada Shrivaisnavas,* these non-brahmmanical groups figured prominently as the recipient of several shares in temple offerings. The *Koil Olugu,* a chronicle of the Ranganathaswami temple at Shrirangam in the Tamil region states that Ramanuja first recognized their importance and included them in various activities in the temples.[18] However, it appears that these non-brahmana groups were not given any priestly functions. Their activities were to be mainly confined to:

> "Decorating with followers the *tirumandapas* during festivals and the Alagiyamanavalan *tirumandapa* daily; making garlands and offering them for the starting of processon; raining (see) flowers (on special occasions); proceeding in two rows holding ceasors, two folded cloths, eight gold torches and twenty silver torches and waving two pieces of cloth; forming

a rear batch, with hands folded behind the row by the waists reciting the last two lines of each stanza; bearing the Ramanuja sword and acting as the bodyguard of the *Jiyars* and the Shrivaishnavas".[19]

Hence, these groups played a marginal role in the actual ritual activities. One can conclude that despite efforts to include non-brahmanas in the ritual activities, Shrivaishnavism remained highly brahmmanical in its outlook. Even the elite amongst the non-brahmanas (i.e. the political leaders and other powerful agrarian and mercantile groups) could participate in rituals only symbolically. In fact, the marker of social respectability was an upward movement in the *varna* hierarchy and became the basis for competing over the control of the temple resources. For example, in the fifteenth century A.D., the members of the *cetti* community claimed a *Traivarnika* status for their mercantile community. That is, they claimed that they were thrice born as opposed to the twice born *brahmanas* and therefore, were entitled to a higher social status, especially in the temples.[20]

Often the identities of the temple non-brahmanas were linked to their respective religious leaders and hence were a monolithic one. Their power and the privileges stemmed from their being disciples of these influential Shrivaishnava leaders. With the waning influence of their respective preceptors, these groups also lost their importance. From the sixteenth century, (i.e. during Saluvas Narasimha's time) the *Sattadas* were attached to Kandadai Ramanuja Ayyangar, a powerful *acharyapurusha* whose influence extended to the temple centres at Shrirangam, Tirumala-Tirupati and Kanchipuram and controlled the feeding houses or *Ramanujakutam* at Venkateshwara temple at Tirupati. They enjoyed numerous privileges and made donations in the name of their preceptor. Nevertheless, in the later period, when the influence of Kandadai was diminished the *Sattadas* do not appear to have enjoyed the same status. It should be noted that despite holding positions of prominence in the respective institutions of their leaders, the non-brahmana could never assume leadership or be the head of a *matha*. The successor to Kandadai Ramanuja as the head of the *Ramanujakutam* was a *brahmana,* Kandadai Ramanuja Madhvayyangar. Thus; the Shrivaishnava attitude towards the non-brahmana devotees was characterized by an element of duality. On the one hand, endowments were encouraged irrespective of caste and there developed a close nexus between the religious and political leaders. On the other, they retained a brahmmanical organization within the temple structure and the community. The

former attitude was a result of religious exigency than of religious/ theological liberalism. For the *mathas* and temples could not survive without the patronage of political rulers.

By the end of the thirteenth century A.D., Shrivaishnavism emerged as an organized religious community. From this time onwards, the dominance of various religious leaders in the different temple centres also became prominent. Therefore, the temple emerged as an arena, where patronage, power and religiosity converged and enhanced the importance of the religious leaders as well as the centre itself. In fact, the complexity and competition for control over resources within a single temple centre or over a group of temples in a region or beyond was a characteristic feature among the sectarian leaders during this period. As a centre of community activity and community interaction, temples emerged as important institutions, association with which had significant ramifications. Therefore, the nature of association with a temple centre, had an influence on the identity formation of a Shrivaishnava. The Narayanasvami at Melkote and Narasimhasvami temple at Ahobilam drew local patronage and therefore, fostered the regional identity. The Varadarajasvami temple at Kanchipuram, the Ranganathasvami temple at Shrirangam and the Venkatesvarasvami temple at Tirupati became the focus of the community across the local and supra local boundaries, thereby fostering macro level identities.

Amongst the institutional structures, the *mathas* have been the more crucial factor in fostering the sectarian identity of the community. As a powerful institution within the larger community structure of the temple, the *mathas* were either a competitive unit vis-á-vis the temple authorities or participated along with them in various transactions. Very often, they came into conflict with other groups in the temple like the *acharyapurusas* over the control of resources. The social base of a *matha* was determined by it being attached to a temple in some form or the other. Some *mathas* were associated with a single temple and hence were localized and became the controllers of the administration of that temple. The Periya Jiyar *matha* and the Cinna Jiyar *matha* at Tirupati belong to this category. Other *mathas* made a particular temple their base, drew supporters from all over South India and then became involved in numerous ways in the temples' transactions of other places. The Van Sathagopa Jiyar *matha* at Narashimhaswami temple at Ahobilam in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh belonged to this category. Therefore, as the core of all the sectarian activities, the *mathas*

emerged as a prominent institution of the Shrivaishnava community particularly from the fourteenth century onwards. Even today, despite being classified as Vatakalai and Tenkalai, *mathas* have remained distinct and have retained their own sets of traditions and lineages.

Today, there are approximately twelve *mathas* in Shrivaishnavism, which belong to either the Vatakalai or Tenkalai sect. The Vatakalai *mathas* are Ahobila Jiyar *matha* at Ahobila,in Andhra Pradesh, Brahmatantra Parakala *matha* in Karnataka and Andavan *ashrama* at Srirangam in Tamil Nadu. The Tenkalai *mathas* are, the Periya and Cinna jiyar *matha* at Tirupati and Tirumala in Andhra Pradesha; Shri Yadugiri Yatiraja Jiyar *matha* at Melkote in Karnataka; Sriranganarayana Jiyar *matha* at Srirangam, Yatiraja *matha* at Sriperumbudur; Emperumanar Jiyar *matha* at Tirukkovalur, Udaiyavar Koil Jiyar *matha* at Alvar Tirunagari, Vanamamalai Jiyar *matha* at Nanguneri and Shri Perarulala Yatiraja Ramanuja Jiyar *matha* at Tirukkurungudi – all in Tamil Nadu.

Amongst such the multiple identities and a complex religious consciousness, the *acharya* emerged as the focal point onto which all the affiliations converged. The concept of a *guru* was epitomized in the *acharya* who was the spiritual guide as well as the initiator into the community. Hence, of all the levels of identities, the one at the level of the *acharya* became important as it linked the disparate groups into the mainstream Shrivaishnava community, through the *acharyic* institutional organization. The *acharyas* then became the disseminator of Shrivaishnavism by rearticulating the tradition according to the changing context and need of the community. These religious leaders projected an independent identity that became the basis for establishing power and authority and a large following. In this context, the composition of a genealogy to create an antiquated lineage became an important textual exercise for the Shrivaishnavas in the post-Ramanuja period particularly when the religious leaders tried to establish a strong institutional organization with a large following. Hence, within the community, multiplicity created a hierarchy of identities, with the acharyic one at top, which was followed by the identities of the *brahmanas* and the non-brahmana elites, who ranged from political, landed and mercantile elites to marginalized communities.

However, these *acharyas* were also instrumental in propagating sectarianism and sectarian affiliations, which promoted multiple identities. One of the ways in which the plural identities were constructed was by developing multiple traditions, which primarily

concentrated upon evolving a cohesive *acharyic* lineage. This well constructed lineage provided a focus around which various sub-communities developed. It also enabled the sectarian leaders to project an independent and strong identity, which became the basis for establishing power and authority and a large following. The composition of the genealogies to create an antiquated lineage embellished with myths and legends was an important textual exercise for the Shrivaishnavas in the post-Ramanuja period particularly when the *acharyapurusas* and *matha* leaders frequently tried to establish a strong institutional organization with a large following.

There were some sectarian leaders, who claimed their descent from the seventy-four *simhasanapatis* (the direct disciples of Ramanuja, like the Kandadais) or from Ramanuja himself. Some *acharyic* groups claimed lineage from the preceptors of Ramanuja, to obtain a more exclusive and antiquated status (like Tatacharyas and Uttamanambis). The importance of the lineage was further highlighted when it became the legitimizing source for competing claims over the temple resources during tensions and conflicts, particularly during the Vatakalai-Tenkalai schism. For example, the Bhattars constructed a lineage from Kurattalvan, the first disciple of Ramanuja to claim control over resources at the Ranganathasvami temple at Shrirangam However, the Bhattars never aimed to cultivate followers. The *mathas* attributed their origin to either Vedantadesika or Manavalamamunigal (who then were linked to Ramanuja), thus, exhibiting the Sanskritic and Tamil affiliations of the *mathas*. However, there were some later *mathas* (like the Yatiraja *matha* at Melkote), which attributed their foundations to Ramanuja directly.

The construction of the genealogies ensured the authority of the leaders and clarified the position of the successor. This established a continuous line of teachers and a hierarchical organization on a permanent basis, giving the community a legitimate status. The *acharyapurushas* as well as the *mathas* had their respective retinue of servants, system of recruitment and organization comparable to any political system. For instance, Kandadai Ramanuja Ayyangar had a group of disciples called the *Sattada Shrivaishnavas* who managed the institution of *Ramanujakutam*, which was headed by him. The influence of the *jiyars* and *acharyas* was so pervasive that they were even deified and worshipped.

The sectarian hagiographies and the other *guruparamparas* while evolving their respective apostolic lines of succession developed an

important institution that became the basis of community organization. This was the concept of *guru*. The head of the acharyic lineage, his successors and the heads of the *mathas* were all designated as *gurus*. By the virtue of being a *guru*, the *acharyas* emerged as the foci of the sectarian/multiple identities. *Guru* and *acharya* were often interchangeably used (a practice that continues till day).

The importance of the *gurus/acharyas* lay in their role as disseminators of the canon and the *guru-sisya parampara*, i.e. the preceptor-disciple relationship was the transmitter of tradition. The *guru* was indispensable to the devotees who sought his help for attaining salvation. The Shrivaishnava tradition provides details on the role of the *acharya/ guru*. The *acharya* initiated the disciple into the community through the initiation rites of *panchasamskara*. He was instrumental in the dissemination of three main texts (i.e. *granthas*) viz, the *Shribhasya*, the commentary on the *Vedantasutras* composed by Ramanuja, the *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* and the secret *mantras* like the *Dvayam* and *Tirumantaram*.[21] The discourses of the *acharya* that explained the theological meaning of the texts became a part of the exegesis.

The two roles of the *guru*, the initiatory and expository got institutionalized into *acharyaparampara* and *granthaparampara* respectively. Hence, the importance of the *guru-shishya parampara* not only ensured continuity but also legitimized the validity of the teacher as the preceptor of the tradition with the added authority to interpret. Lineage or *parampara* bestowed ideological and textual legitimacy to the sectarian leaders (both to the *acharyapurushas* and the *mathadhipatis*). In the practical context, there were four spheres of competitive control, which contributed towards their legitimacy and dominance. The first was the theological sphere, where the leaders had to prove the validity of their ideas through the debates within not only the community but also vis-à-vis other religious traditions. Hagiographical texts refer to many debates, which enhanced the position of the leader/*guru*. The sectarian *guruparamparas* provide several examples of the intellectual superiority of the *guru*.

Secondly, the socio-economic sphere of control was equally important. The predominant feature of the Vijayanagar economy was the appropriation of maximum surplus, which created tensions between the existing and the newly emerging social classes. This can be seen particularly at centers like Kanchi, Shrirangam, Tirupati and Melkote. Shrivaishnava sectarian leaders took advantage of this

social tension to increase their body of followers and thus enhanced their position. They with their particular group of followers converged at the temple, which provided the normative and super-ordinate institutional base. Hence, religious ideology and social developments complemented each other, leading to the rise of the sectarian affiliations.

Thirdly, the temple was also a sphere of competitive control. It was the source of ritual legitimation of the authority of new warrior class (Appadurai, 1981: 99-105). The establishment of ritual control over a temple through gifts (for rituals and festivals) became an important agency for the enhancement of power and domination of this class. The powerful sectarian leaders were often the intermediaries through whom the warrior class made gifts and in return obtained 'honours' and 'authority' (ibid.: 88-89). The *matha* leaders and *acharyapurusas* who were the recipients of these privileges from the ruling class also gained greater control over temple organization and administration. This was the 'redistributive process' at the center of which Vishnu was the 'paradigmatic sovereign (ibid.: 103-106).' The sectarian control of this redistributive process was the essence of the entire power structure in the temple. Therefore, on the one hand, there developed a two-way relationship between the sectarian leaders and the Vijayanagar rulers and on the other, temples emerged as the power base for the sectarian leaders. Arjun Appadorai points out that an asymmetrical relationship existed between the rulers and the sectarian leaders. While the rulers conferred 'honour' as well as resources to the latter, the latter only rendered honour and did not confer any material resources. However, the religious leaders were the vital link between the local population and the new class of rulers, thereby enabling the establishment of authority over the newly conquered areas. Hence, the 'sectarian control of the redistributive capacities of the temples' promoted the efficacy of the faith and enhanced the position of the religious leaders, making them virtually indispensable in the politico-religious system. This not only satisfied the religious desires of the donors, but also imparted a universalistic character to an otherwise brahmanical system. The inscriptions on the walls of the temples indicate that donors wished not only to record their donation and hence be remembered by posterity but also to be recognized as a figure of authority ('little kings') (Carman, 1981: 41-43).

Fourthly, another arena for competition over authority and influence was the administrative affairs of the temple. In almost

every festival and ritual, the religious leaders figured prominently as administrators as well as the recipients of the *prasadam*. Thus, as the *acharyapurushas* and the heads of *mathas*, the sectarian leaders established religious, political and economic control over the society and legitimized themselves as central figures of the community. The example of the various Shrivaishnava families as well as the *matha* organizations projected these developments. In fact, the assertion of the identities became so strong, that from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century A.D., the *acharyas* as well as the *mathas* were affiliated to the Bhasyic school of thought (i.e. Sanskrit) and the Prabandhic school of thought (i.e. Tamil) that ultimately crystallized into the dual divisions of the Vatakalai and Tenkalai respectively.

This identity was further reinforced in the textual traditions as well as the pilgrimage centers and pilgrimage network of the Shrivaishnavas. In both cases, a collective community consciousness was represented. The different genres of texts presented a "tradition". This Shrivaishnava tradition represented a past, a particular kind of religious ideology, canonical or scriptural basis and an institutional organization. The process of the construction of tradition began from the twelfth century AD. Keeping the contemporary needs in mind, the tradition as reflected in the texts codified pre-existing ideas along with the interpretations and commentaries of the codifier, thus stabilizing the identity of the Shrivaishnava. The dynamism of this textual tradition lay in its dual character, viz. the Sanskritic and Tamil. This duality was notionally presented in conciliation with each other and this crystallized into the philosophy of *ubhaya vedanta*, i.e. the dual *Vedas*. Such a philosophy for the first time, accorded a sacred status equivalent to that of the *Vedas* to the Tamil hymns of the Alvars compiled as *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*. This was reflected in the language of the texts, *Manipravala* that was a mixture of Tamil and Sanskrit words.

The delineation of the community in the Shrivaishnava textual tradition although acknowledged the multiple affiliations, such a multiplicity was contained and accommodated within the structure of a cohesive and distinct identity around Vishnu as the supreme universal god with Shri (Lakshmi) as his divine consort. The texts further introduced the cohesiveness in the charismatic portrayal of Ramanuja, whom the Shrivaishnavas regarded as their most important *acharya*. Ramanuja was attributed with the organization of the community and his philosophy of *Vishistadvaita* provided a

religious ideology to the Shrivaishnavas. Ramanuja is supposed to have introduced temple reforms to include the non-brahmana participation in the ritual and temple activities. Therefore, the idea of a uniform identity meant belonging to a single Shrivaishnava community with Ramanuja as its head. Uniformity became an important theme in all the sectarian hagiographies that provided the respective sects with a lineage. The origin of the lineage in most of cases was traced to Ramanuja. In this manner, each sect with its lineage claimed to represent the uniform Shrivaishnava community. Such a projection became important for establishing claims in the competitive spheres of resource control in the temples. It represented an integrative framework, whereby devotees could be from any section of the society.

It was in the pilgrimage process that the uniform identity of the community was projected. This pilgrimage process formed a network between the pilgrimage sites. In this manner, it laid down the spatial boundaries for the community to identity with. The origin of the pilgrimage network can be traced to the Alvar phase when a sacred geography was projected in the hymns. However, this sacred geography was itinerant in nature and did not evolve into a formal pilgrimage network until the thirteenth century when a community consciousness emerged. The sacred geography was extended beyond the southern boundaries to incorporate the northern Vaisnava sites, fixing the number of the pilgrimage centers to one hundred and eight. The extension of the community boundaries beyond the southern frontiers reflected an attempt to identify with the pan-Indian Vaisnava tradition. Therefore, through the pilgrimage network of one hundred and eight centers, the community consciousness went beyond the southern boundaries and acquired a pan-Indian identity. However, the number, one hundred and eight was merely notional. Certain centers emerged for the first time in the post-thirteenth century AD, which acquired a pilgrimage status. For instance, the Narayanasvami temple at Melkote became a pilgrimage center, more important than the some of sites in one hundred and eight were. The pilgrimage network while projecting temple geography also evolved a hierarchy. Some centres were of regional importance and hence enforced a regional identity. Then some centres promoted a supra-local identity, and drew pilgrims from all over south India. Lastly, some pilgrimage sites became the center of the Shrivaishnava activities and assumed a pan-Indian status. For example, Srirangam was the major Shrivaishnava center and epigraphs refer to *brahmanas* of 'Kasmiradesa' in the fourteenth

century AD. Similarly, in the seventeenth century, Tirupati had emerged as the center of Hathiram Jiyar *matha*, which was of north Indian origin.

Thus, the Shrivaishnava community identity is understood through the analysis of the textual tradition, institutional organization, viz., the *mathas*, and temples and finally the pilgrimage network. It is also stated that the community emerged as a coherent structure when the normative tradition as represented in the texts evolved a religious philosophy that became the ideological basis of the institutions and the pilgrimage process in the post twelfth century AD. However, none of these categories through which the community identity has been understood were stabilized until the end of the sixteenth century AD. They were constantly evolving and modified upon and, contributed to the fluidity in the community consciousness and its sectarian affiliations. The socio-political context against which the identity construction took place and crystallized thereafter also contributed to the fluidity within the Shrivaishnava community.

Thus, when the modern scholars wrote on the history of the Shrivaishnavism, they drew heavily from the normative paradigm of the textual tradition that projected the notion of a single homogeneous community, but also tacitly acknowledged the multiple identities by accommodating them.

III

It has often been maintained by scholars working on the history of religion in South India that the Shrivaishnavas were able to successfully achieve a syntheses of the northern Sanskritic and the Southern Tamil traditions, almost a fusion of the two, especially under Ramanuja. However, this duality could be discerned even in the hymns of the Alvars that reflected an awareness of these two distinct linguistic traditions. However, this did not prove to be a theological barrier to the Alvars, as they did not attempt to evolve a philosophy for a community construction. Ramanuja's Vishishtadavaita attempted for the first time to reconcile this duality. The systematization of theology and organization of the community being the major concern, Ramanuja's commentary on the *Brahmasutra* i.e. the *Sribhasya* emphasized "qualified monism" bringing together for the first time the concepts of *karma, jnana* and *bhakti*.[22] By the end of the twelfth century, the emergence of a well-developed Shrivaishnava community solved the major concerns

of the organization. The theological questions assumed more importance and numerous interpretations evolved. In this context, the philosophy of *ubhayavedanta* that is dual Vedas, Tamil and Sanskrit and the development of a language that reflected this dualism in the use of both the Tamil and Sanskrit words emerged as another attempt at reconciliation.Therefore, the philosophy of Vedantadesika and Manavalamamunigal reflected the concerns of the theological issues centering on the *ubhaya-vedantic* framework and evolved certain concepts for the community: the nature of god and soul, the nature of *bhakti* and the life pattern of *prapanna*, the status of Shri and other minor issues. These conceptual issues as discussed by these *acaryas* emerged as the exegetical framework for the Vadakalai and Tenkalai sects in the post-seventeenth century period. However, it should be remembered that neither Vedanta Desika nor Manavala Mamuni had ever consciously attempted to evolve a distinct community, probably due to their different religious attitudes; they were identified with the Sanskritic school of thought and Tamil school of thought respectively. Nor did the other theological and commentatorial works that took inspiration from them reflected a distinct Vatakalai or a Tenkalai status. Therefore, the duality was only notionally evident in Shrivaishnava exegesis.

It were the hagiographic texts including the *guruparamaparas* which evolved their *acharyic* lineage on the basis of the Sanskrit and Tamil traditions in order to project a strong community identity whose articulation became important in the post-Ramanuja period when competition for control over resources intensified. However, it should be noted that the projection of theological precepts was not the concern of these hagiographical writings. At the time of their composition, the notional duality as well as the association of certain religious leaders with this duality was clearly developed. Hence, it became easier for these texts to use their names, especially that of Vedanta Desika and Manavala Mamuni to fabricate or construct an *acharyic* lineage that would give legitimacy to the respective communities.

The various sectarian affiliations between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries had evolved their individual *acharyic* lineages, thereby reflecting an independent assertion of the respective identities.[31] In these apostolic lines of succession, two points were fixed. One, was that of Ramanuja. Two, that of Vedanta Desika and Manavala Mamunigal. Thus, the ideological context of a well consolidated Vatakalai and Tenkalai lineage in the post-seventeenth century was already laid before this period.

The 'schism' as understood in the colonial period by the historians involved a series of disputes between the Vatakalai*s* and Tenkalai*s* over the temple administration. This feature was also characteristic of the pre-colonial period. Although direct evidence is not available, it can be inferred from the epigraphical as well as textual sources that tensions between various sects and religious leaders existed. Besides, the presence of several prominent leaders in a temple center would hardly encourage peaceful co-existence. However, over a period, the alignments across Sanskritic and Tamil ones were gradually crystallizing into strong sub-sects. The coming of the British and their interactions with the religious institutions led to the reworking of the entire power relations. In the early years of the colonial rule, the British government decided the temple disputes. Perhaps, then the need arose to establish distinct sectarian identities cutting across the regional frontiers based on common interests. Therefore, the Sanskritic affiliations came to be identified as the Vatakalai and the Tamil ones as the Tenkalai.

Today, the Vatakalai-Tenkalai notion of Shrivaishnavism has altered the entire identity pattern of the community. The daily practices of both the sub-sects have too much specificity that has the rational for the assertion of Vatakalai-Tenkalai identity. For instance, the external sect marks (like the *namam*) and other rituals of the respective sects reiterate the differences that strengthen the sectarian affiliations for the Shrivaishnava psyche. However, a problem arises when direct connections are made with the historical situations. For instance, it is assumed that these sub-sects had existed right from the post-Ramanuja period. Second, the assumption that Tenkalai*s* attached secondary importance to caste and Vatakalai stressed on caste injunctions is not correct. The entire history of Shrivaisnavism right from Ramanuja's time indicates the domination of the brahmanical hierarchy, where *varnashramadharma* was always upheld and readjustments and realignments were made within this framework. Third, Kanchipuram as the center of Sanskritic school (hence Vatakalai) and Shrirangam as the center of Tamil school (hence Tenkalai) is historically over emphasized. Both Kanchi and Shrirangam emerged as major centers of Shrivaishnavism in the post-Ramanuja period. However, the textual references themselves do not clearly account for such associations. Both Vedanta Desika and Manavala Mamuni are shown to be influential in both the centers in the biographical narratives of the hagiographies. Therefore, it becomes narrow to attribute the Prabandhic /Tamil

and Vedic/Sanskrit affiliations to Shrirangam and Kanchi. Rather the characterization of Kanci as the northern center and Shrirangam as the Southern center seems more appropriate.

The modern works on Shrivaishnavism have presented the notion of uniformity, multiplicity and duality as discrete, non-interactive categories. However, as has been attempted to show the various levels of the Shrivaishnava identities were mutually interactive and influencing each other and constantly underwent a transformation. The identities were fluctuating and depended on the context against which they were articulating. Similarly, the duality of the Vatakali and Tenkalai sects that ossified into sub-castes were not exclusive categories. Several overlapping areas between them made the Shrivaisnava identity more complex. Nevertheless, the sense of belonging to one single community was always adhered to and the claim of being the direct descendant of Ramanuja was a major exercise on the part of all the sectarian affiliations of the Shrivaishnava community. There were moments when the sectarian affiliations were muted and the single identity was reasserted.

NOTES

1. Ālkondaville Gōvindāchārya. 1906. *The Life of Rāmānujāchārya. The Exponent of Viṣiṣṭādvāita Philosophy.* Madras: S. Murthy & Co; idem, 1982. *The Holy Lives of The Azhvars or The Dravida Saints.* Bombay: Anantacharya Indological Research Institute (Reprint); C.R. Srinivasa Aiyengar. 1908. *The Life and Teachings of Shri Ramanujacharya.* Madras: R.Venkateshwar & Co'; T Rajagopalachariar. 1909. *The Vaishnavite Reformers of India: Critical Sketches of Their Lives and Writings.* Madras: G.A. Natesan and Company; T.A Gopinatha Rao. 1923. Sir Subrahmanya Ayyar Lectures *on the History of Sri Vaisnavas.* Madras: University of Madras, Government Press; K. Devanathachariar. 1914-15. "Shri Vaishnavism and Its Caste Marks", *The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society,* 5, pp.125-140; V. Rangachari. 1953-58. "Historical Evolution of Shri Vaishnavism in South India", in *The Cultural Heritage of India,* ed. H.Bhattacharya Vol. 4. Calcutta: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, pp.163-185; K.V Raman. 1975. *Shri Varadarajasvami Temple-Kanci: A Study of Its History, Art and Architecture.* New Delhi: Abhinav Publications.

2. Ālkondaville Gōvindāchārya. 1910. "The *Ashtadasa Bhedas,* or the Eighteen Points of Doctrinal Differences between the Tengalai (Southerners) and the Vadagalais (Northerners) of the Vishistadvaita Vaishnava School of South India", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland:* 1103-112; idem, 1912. "Tengalai and Vadagalai", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland,* pp.714-717; V. Rangachari. 1914-15. "The Successors of Ramanuja and the Growth of Sectarianism among the Shri-

Vaishnavas", *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, pp.102-136; idem, 1914-15. "The Life and Times of Shri Vedanta Desika", *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, pp. 277-312. 1917; idem, "The History of Shri Vaishnavism. From the Death of Shri Vedanta Desika to the Present Day", Q*uarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* 7, 2 (January), pp. 106-118 and 7, 2 (April), pp.197-209.

3. Some of the widely regarded hagiographies or *guruparamparas* are: Garuda Vahana Pandita. *Divyasuricaritam..* (trans. from Hindi by Pandita Madhavacharya).T.A. Sampathakumaracharya and K.K.A. Venkatachari (eds.). 1978. Bombay: Ananthacharya Research Institute; *The Yatirajavaibhavam of Andhrapurna (Life of Ramanuja)* in *The Indian Antiquary, A Journal of Oriental Research* (1909[1985]), Vol.XXXVII, Sir Richard Carnac Temple (ed.), 1872-1933, Delhi: Swati Publication; Pinbalzhgiya Perumal Jiyar. *Arayirappati Guruparamparaprabhavam.* Tiru Krishnaswami Ayyangar (ed.), (1968); *Muayirappadi Guruparamparaprabhavam* (Vadakalai) of Tritiya Brahmatantra Svatantra Parkala Svami, 1968, Lifco: Madras.

4. For instance, see, Ālkondaville Gōvindāchārya. 1906, op.cit; idem, 1982, op.cit; C.R. Srinivasa Aiyengar. 1908, op.cit; T Rajagopalachariar. 1909, op.cit; V. Rangachari. 1953-58, op.cit.

5. For details, see, Robert C. Lester. 1994. 'The Śattada Śrīvaiṣṇvas', *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* 114 (1), pp. 39-53; Burton Stein. 2004. 'Social Mobility and Medieval South Indian Hindu Sects', in David Lorenzen (ed.), *Religious Movements in South Asia,* Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp.81-101 [Originally published in James Silverberg (ed.), 1968. *Social Mobility and the Caste System in India: An Interdisciplinary Symposium,* pp. 78-94. Paris: Mouton]

6. Garuda Vahana Pandita. *Divyasuricaritam..* (trans. from Hindi by Pandita Madhavacharya).T.A. Sampathakumaracharya and K.K.A. Venkatachari (eds.). 1978. Bombay: Ananthacharya Research Institute, Chapter 18, *shloka 2*; *The Yatirajavaibhavam of Andhrapurna (Life of Ramanuja)* in *The Indian Antiquary, A Journal of Oriental Research* (1909[1985]), Vol.XXXVII, Sir Richard Carnac Temple (ed.), 1872-1933, Delhi: Swati Publication, *shloka* 58; Pinbazhagiya Perumal Jiyar. *Arayirappati Guruparamparaprabhavam.* Tiru Krishnaswami Ayyangar (ed.), (1968), pp.192-8; *Muayirappati Guruparamparaprabhavam* (Vadakalai) of Tritiya Brahmatantra Svatantra Parkala Svami, 1968, pp.95-6

7. For details, see, Arjun Appadurai. 1981. *Worship and Conflict under Colonial Rule.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 105-228.

8. *Kalai* also means language.

9. In both the centres, both the Vedas as well as the *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* are sung on various occasions with great devotion.

10. Since Kanchipuram was a multi-temple centre- different religious traditions developed. It has been stated that Kanchi emerged as the major centre for various inter-religious theological debates. Consequently, the Shrivaishnavas had to rely on the Vedic-Upanisadic tradition to establish

their legitimacy. See Patricia Mumme. 1987. *The Theology of Manavalamamuni: Toward an Understanding of the Tenkalai-Vatakalai Dispute in the Post-Ramanuja Shri Vaisnavism.* Madras: New Era Publications; idem., 1988.*The Shri Vaisnava Theological Dispute: Manavalamamuni and Vedantadesika.* Madras: New Era Publications.

11. One of the well-known historians is V. Rangachari. See footnotes 2 and 3 for complete reference of V. Rangachari' works

12. V. Rangachari, 1914-15, op. cit., p. 103.

13. *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy.* 1919. Nos. 433, 447 and 495. New Delhi: Archeological Survey of India.

14. Ibid., Nos.347, 354, 363, 379, 381, 382, 383, 421, 462, 475, 479, 499, 531, 586, 587, 588, 649, 650, 651, 651, 655, and 663.

15. V Varadachari. 1983. *Two Great Acharyas. Vedanta Desika and Manavala Mamuni.* Triplicane, Madras: Prof. M. Rangacharya Memorial Trust.

16. The *Koil Olugu,* p. 142

17. The *Koil Olugu,* p.46

18. South Indian Inscriptions, Volume XXIV No.385, 426 and 432.

19. This information was gathered during the field trip to various Shrivaishnava centres, where I had discussions with several Shrivaishnava *acharyas* and lay devotees.

20. Arjun Appadorai, 1981,pp 85-86 Appadorai; Arjun, and Carol A. Breckenridge. 1976. "The South Indian Temple: Authority, Honour and Redistribution." *Contribution to Indian Sociology* 10,2:187-212.

21. For instance, *Vadakalai Muayirappati* does not mention the eight disciples of Nathamuni. However, the *Guruparamparasaram* that forms the first chapter of the *Rahasyatrayasaram* mentions the eight disciples. Another texts *Panniayirapati* gives a detailed lineage of Nammalvar and attributes a *kshatriya* status to him. Other texts of the same affiliation do not give such details.

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SETTLING THE UNRULY TRACTS: REPRESENTATION OF COUNTER SPATIAL TACTICS, IDEAS ON ENVIRONMENT AND JUSTICE AMONG SANTALS IN 18TH CENTURY FOLKTALES

Sayantoni Datta

Looking at the in-between zones of daily living amidst conflict, this paper locates what may have pointed to the everyday life of the Santals and their environmental space[1] and place-making practices[2], through available descriptions in folktales documented between 1890 and 1929. Here, an attempt is made to shift the narrative around Santals in the 18th and 19th centuries, beyond the idea of rebellion and oppression, to the Santal imaginations on space and place-making. Thus, while acknowledging previous environmental research on the colonial impact on tribal societies and the transformation of their landscapes (Guha, Sivaramkrishnan, *et al.*), where earlier researches have established and acknowledged the important relationship that tribals had with the forests, this paper instead attempts to look at possibilities available in folktales to gauge the 'inner life of the Santals' and their own assessment of power groups during this time period.

While new researches have broken away from the earlier emphasis on insurgencies by tribal communities to exploring dimensions such as gender relations, the role of the local elite in ousting tribals from their resources, and the influence of migration on tribal societies, the focus on 'place-making' and the 'environmental imagination' of Santals available in their folktales in the 18th century tries to point towards new ways of viewing tribal research in tune with contemporary concerns. Since the areas of habitation of the Santals and other tribes in Central India continue to be conflict-ridden today, the paper hopes to take a retrospective look into the past and everyday lives in conflict among the tribals in the 18th century, which may continue to hold relevance in the way we are dealing with the tribal communities and the environment today.

In the analysis of the historical trends in tribal studies, B. B. Chaudhuri reinforces what S.C. Roy argued for: the need to look at 'the inner life of the community', and how they perceived the power groups from oral narratives and songs of the tribals, which still remains a neglected area of research (Dasgupta and Basu, 2012: 48). Given that this period in history is crucial for the society, where the Santals were being settled from shifting to sedentary cultivation, where the 'disciplining of the space'[3] was entirely controlled by the British, assessing 'notions of space' and 'spatial practices' among the Santals helps to emphasise how the 'house' and the 'universe', the 'forest' and 'the landscape' provide the Santals a space for dreaming and imagining (Gaston, 1994). In recognizing this imagination, one hopes to look at the emerging 'political praxis of the Santals' and their subversive and counter spatial tactics which find expression in these folktales as well as the environmental wisdoms embedded in the same. This critical look into Santal place-making gives the Santals a 'nuanced placement in a specific geographical landscape (and time) which has historical significance in socio-cultural practices, due to spatial configurations and concomitant ideologies about the built form'(Amoo-Adare, 2013). While disciplining of these spaces today continues to be along lines determining productive activities on that space and increased state military activity, exploring the time period between a change in productive activities and rebellion and military control of the space in the past, provide an insight into the minds of the oppressed who were trying to seek out 'liberatory spaces' amidst this disciplining. Here, I focus specifically on environmental attitudes which are related to spatial practices around nature (or 'natural resources'), which was a core point of tension between the rulers and the ruled even in the 18th century.

A PICTURE OF THE TIMES

The period between 1770-1860 saw a large agrarian change or the 'settling of the unruly tracts' (Sen, 1984). Several moments of environmental loss were recorded among the Santal communities residing in this area along the eastern part of the Damodar Basin[4]. The Bengal Famine in 1770, which led to much of these lands falling into wastelands called 'jungle' later, was cleared for agriculture with major incentives from the British (Ghosh and others, 2007). This forms the initial marker of transition over the landscape while the Santal Revolt of 1855 marks the end of this period.

Having emptied the coffers after defeating Siraj ud Daula in 1765, the British had to think of new ways to increase revenue. In 1770, the famine in Bengal had created further distress and shortage. In the lesser fertile tracts or dry laterite zones of Birbhum, where there was depopulation, these farmlands fell to becoming wastelands. The British realized that this region was lying in the hands of Zamindars who had paid little or no revenue since the time of the Maratha troubles when Ali Vardi Khan was Nawab (Sen 1984). It was important for them to settle these areas and extend tillage into the wastelands to improve revenues. Some scholars speculate that earlier agricultural activity had ceased on these wastelands but the British tended to call these areas 'forest lands' (Ghosh and others, 2007). The nomadic Santals begin to play the environment-altering role of clearing forests and reclaiming these wastelands by bringing more and more land under cultivation. (Sen, Areeparampil *et al.*). [5] This is a crucial moment in the environmental history of this region, as inaccessible land is now easily accessed by the British and thereby also transformed. The British used several oppressive laws on existing systems, which ultimately resulted in the Santal Revolt of 1855.

Forests prior to this period are represented as always having been an ambivalent category, an area where wars were fought, lying in the periphery of empires and kingdoms, comprising the social and political other, the alien and evil. Forests were also places of 'exile' or a space for 'meditation', frequented by outcastes, mavericks and the holy men in society. But the situation began to change with the entry of the East India Company. The Company began to quickly map these areas, and unlike earlier times where the ambivalence of forest tracts remained, for the Company, a better solution was to clear them. Clearing forests was a part of the civilizing mission. A few years later, however, the British realized the importance of retaining forests with the rush in demand for *Sal (shorearobusta)* trees for sleepers for the railways. Yet again began a new oppressive regime of bringing privately-held forests under state ownership, and overriding laws on commonly-held forestlands, leading to a host of conservation conflicts.

THE SANTAL REVOLT IN 1855

The Santal Rebellion of 1855 was the final marker of the disturbances and discontent that the East India Company's rule caused to the peace and tranquility of the Jungle Mahals, comprising a part of

the middle valley tract of the Damodar. In 1855, thus, we find considerable alarm among the British and evident in the following letter addressed to the Secretary of Bengal by the Commissioner of Chhotanagpuris a description of this revolt of 'an outbreak of the Santal population' with an appearance of 'a very general and serious rising' (Old Singbhum Records, 1958).

The movement meant a lot of direct loss to the Santals themselves. Sidhu, Kanhu and other leaders of the movement who were arrested, were sentenced to death and hanged in 1856. The others were not only dispossessed but falling to penury chose to become daily-wage labourers or went back to settled cultivation. Members from the Santali community became a stable pool of labour for British enterprises through most of the 19th century after this (Areeparampil, 2002).

The Santals had a very complete form of a village community known as the Mandali system. In this system, the Majhi or village headman would handle all the business of the community, which included negotiation of rent as well. Unlike the *Paharias*[6] who refused to settle, the Santals took to settling in these undulating plains, which had to be leveled for cultivation (particularly what the British constituted as Jungle Mahals). The landlords would initially fix verbal tenures with the Santals who kept their commitments on the same. Furthermore, for the initial years of clearing, they were not charged any rent.

The Permanent Settlement Act of 1793, instituted by the British as a more strategic system of gathering revenue, at once empowered local landlords to collect revenue on behalf of the British along with ignoring the numerous rights that were available to different kinds of cultivators and tenurial rights held prior to this, which were both written and verbal. Now, landholdings were allotted to Zamindars under a fixed tenure with a fixed rate of revenue. The Santals, who earlier were of great use to clear jungle and forestland and hence not charged any rent, were slowly charged taxes against the plough and as they settled, they were later taxed against the total crop produced. These assessments while flouting earlier agreements were exorbitant, since it only matched the land productivity levels of the fertile plains of Bengal rather than the dry laterite zones of the Jungle Mahals (Ghosh, Areeparampil, Sen *et al.*). Extortion by landlords meant high debts, crop produce was slowly bonded to *Mahajans* (moneylenders) and exorbitant rents meant quick land alienation among the Santals who fled towards Damin-i-koh (Dumka), the only *khas* lands that were left directly

under the Company. Here is where the Santals received some protection as the Company was quick to realize that the Santals were lesser aware of government systems and courts and the written word, in comparison to their counterparts from Bengal, Bihar or Uttar Pradesh, who were the Zamindars and revenue collectors in the area.

As soon as the lands became cultivable lands, the Santals would flee to newer wastelands while the cultivable lands would pass on to permanent settlers. Thus, it is no wonder that as the Santals began to retreat from Bengal and the Jungle Mahals, their numbers grew in Damin-i-Koh, the only place where their rights were protected. With time,lesser and lesser wastelands were available, providing all the appropriate conditions for a revolt.

The repeated problem faced by the Santals and other tribals in Jharkhand was that while they offered and arranged governance regimes which were community-based collectives of organizing resources, the colonial government found this inconvenient, especially in terms of determining and ensuring that revenues increased (Ghosh and others, 2007).

British law and policy created the dominant spatial practice in these parts. The British administration first transformed the space, and then experienced losses in the space. It instituted formal definitions of this loss as 'deforestation' and developed new ideas on 'forests', 'wild tracts', 'productivity', and 'settled agriculture'. It was the apocalyptic events which the British woke up to–namely famine, shrinking cultivation, the wrath of marauders and finally deforestation (Damodaran, 2002). Revenue extractions during the colonial period played a crucial role in 'ecological degradation' and 'deforestation'.

BODDING'S FOLKTALES

Reverand Paul Olaf Bodding (1865-1938) was a Norwegian missionary, linguist and ethnographer who worked with the Santals for 44 years. He arrived in India in 1890, a young Norwegian priest who came to help Skrefsrud and Borresen in their missionary work and resided in Mahulpahari in Dumka(Damin-i-koh). His main work was around Santali literature and much of his interests lay around the mythologies, legends, folktales, songs, witchcraft, medicines and daily life of the Santals. Among the several works credited to him are a collection of folktales. After Bodding died, his wife Mrs Christine Bodding handed these manuscripts over to the Oslo

University Library in Norway, which were put into press by another folklorist, Steven Konow.

A man by the name of Sagram Murmu from Godda sub-division of Santal Parganas helped Bodding with his work on Santali language. Sagram Murmu had great knowledge of his people and Bodding encouraged him to write his stories down as well as collect stories from distant villages against a nominal remuneration. Soren's research of the original manuscripts corroborates Konow's claim that most of these folktales were in fact written down by Murmu himself and not Bodding. Konow, of course, went one step further to state that it may thus be considered an authentic source or cultural wealth of the tribals (Soren, 1999), though this may be debatable. There has been a continued debate in tribal studies on the role of missionaries during this time. Traditional researches show that the missionaries worked in tandem with the colonial state with the sole aim of bringing in a civilizing mission among the 'natives'. However, recent researches show that the role of missionaries continues to be debatable while Tripti Chaudhuri stresses on their evangelical rather than imperial roles, whereby their main goal was to educate the Santals and improve the life situations, hence emphasizing that their records were not always encapsulated with interests of the state (Dasgupta and Basu, 2012: 102-120). Alpa Shah (2014) highlights the missionaries as a force which acted against the State (e. g. , the Jesuits) and thereby actually eased the entry of the state into the area in the long run. Bodding belonged to the European missions, but considerable criticism has been made by tribal scholars on Bodding's misrepresentation of Santali religion (Archer, Cecil Henry Bompas, and Soren), though all acknowledge the contribution his body of work has made to the cultural resources located in that time. Thus,in this interpretation,one has had to keep in mind the biases in the text and the reformist agendas of the missionaries.

It is evident from the explanations in the Preface by Steven Konow that the documentation of stories on behalf of Santals was being conducted with the fear that almost all of this community was getting 'Aryanised' and little history of ancient India will be left. Santals were from the ancient Kolarian race and hence documentation of their folktales would help throw light 'on the mentality preserved in their ancient speech', mentions Konow. One gets a hint of the reason for this fear where Tripti Chaudhuri highlights that after the Sidhu Kanhu movement, in 1874, many Santals joined the Kherwar movement initiated by Bhagirathi Manjhi

of Godda, which had a lot of Hindu influence which appealed to the Santals and threatened the Christian Missionaries (Dasgupta and Basu, 2012: 110)

Konow concludes these Aryan influences in the stories because of the inflection of some Aryan words related to domestication of animals, trade, craftsmanship, money and time but also mentions the likeness that the tales have with Pancatantra and that it is difficult to gauge whether the Aryans adapted their stories from the stories of the Kolarians, the root community of the Santals, or whether Murmu had documented stories which had adapted themselves to Aryan influences over time. Furthermore, in the first story in Volume 1, the writer, Sargram Murmu, tells us about how the Santals are learning to read and write after the *Sahebs (The Missionaries)* have come in and taught them. He considers these folktales to be the unwritten laws of the Santals which help carry down the traditions and customs of the Santals.

ABOUT THE NARRATORS AND STRUCTURE OF THE FOLKTALES

Others who helped Murmu with writing the manuscript included Durga Tudu, Mohon Hembrom, Bhuju Murmu, Kanhu Marndi, Somae Murmu, Kandna Soren, Hari Besra, S Hasdak, Sugri Haram, Dhunu Murmu and Sona (Soren, 1999). Soren highlights the presence of women who also submitted these stories, though in the 1929 printed version of Bodding's folktales by Gian Publishing House referred to in this paper, many of the names are not mentioned. In these volumes, just a few find mention. Sagram Murmu from Godda, Kanhu Marndi from Chondorpura, a better-educated Santal who died in Mesopotamia during the period of war, Bijhu Murmu and Phagu, among others. There is a possibility that some of the tales were told by women as some characteristics and motifs clearly represent this (Ramanujan, 1997). The confusion over motifs suggests that having adapted itself from the original tellers, characteristics and motifs of both women and male-authored tales are found. Most of these stories have a free-flowing structure and the stories are left open-ended with a scope for multiple interpretations based on the life experiences of the listener. In most cases, Murmu has documented different versions of the similar tale, where the basic plot and storyline remains the same, but the characters take on new colours and voices in each tale. These multiple versions provide an imaginative reading of how the Santals were trying to argue with the numerous dilemmas of survival at that time.

I do not select all the stories in the three volumes for this paper. Instead, I highlight some relevant plots and incidents that give insights into the spatial imagination of the Santals, where definite renegotiations are taking place when the physical space is changing around them and provide a focused discussion on the tales around the cultural heroes of the Santals, which may point to some key ideas of justice and environmental attitudes.

THE SANTAL COUNTRY/SPACE IN THE FOLKTALES

To use Descola's term 'nature of beings', these folktales are documentary evidences of how Santals viewed nature and their landscapes within their folk traditions at that time. The tales give a rich diversity of observation among the Santals, and their construction of the natural space around them. For the Santals, the inner and the outer world, the house and the world they inhabited were equally important. The typical Santal country comprises the presence of flat rocks, many Arjuna (Terminalia Arjuna, Kahua) and palm (Borassus Flabelliformus) trees and 'tanks' or water bodies.

It is interesting that Santals gave so much recognition to these small creatures, termites. [7] 'Termite hills were to be found everywhere,' writes Bodding. (Bodding, 1990a: 172) The Santal folktales show the keen observations that the Santals had made of the intricate nature of the termite nests, as the characters (chickens) get lost in the narrow passages of the termite hill and save themselves from the hungry Jackal. This Bachelard would interpret as the labyrinthine journeys down a *cellar,* while here the Santali subconscious comprises a journey into the intricate underground passages of a termite hill where chickens find *refuge,* experiencing adventure and protection from the enemy who could not access these parts. It is in fact the subterranean and irrational forces pointed out by Bachelard, probably 'fear', that finds various *underground manoeuvers* in the underground tunnels where takes place the resolution of the plot in a story where a friend turns foe.

There are also some indications on the customs related to the use of space. Water bodies and tanks were segregated for drinking and eating and for cleaning or washing. These norms are considered important, since failure to adhere to the norm is mocked at by the Jackal, when a small King fails to establish this practice in his kingdom (Bodding, 1990a: 2). Tanks are usually surrounded by palm trees since the leaves of palm trees don't fall and rot, thus ensuring that the water remains clean. Bamboo trees are planted a little away

from the water since the leaves could fall and pollute the water, observes Bodding in his footnotes (Bodding, 1990a). Since folktales were also a method of educating the young, it could be that in their documentation, the Santalis recording these stories for the missionaries included messages and agendas for the society as well.

The natural landscape bears symbols of familial connections and ancestry and this is evident when one culls out the role of trees and grasslands in different plots. In the story 'How the Sabai Grass Came into Existence' *(Backom Cet Leka Janamen*) *(*Bodding, 1990b: 296*)*, the slain sister of seven brothers takes the form of a bamboo shoot which is cut and converted into a flute and the sister comes alive through the music in the flute and calls her brothers for a meal. While serving the meal, as she relates the story of their act of slaying her, the ground opens up to swallow them, which includes the youngest brother who tried to rescue her but failed. The sister tries to save her youngest brother from being swallowed into the ground by holding on to his hair. While he too faces the same fate as his brothers, his hair remains above the ground and becomes *sabai grass*[8] (Backom, Pollinia Eripoda) and covers the landscape. [9] While for the environmental researcher the importance given to *sabai* is important, Bachelard points to the *natural surroundings* bringing to the fore the idea of *elsewhere* which have detailed memories of the past and while the past here holds harsh memories of loss of ancestors and family and lessons for the Santals, the *sabai grass* provides a*vast* space, of immensity and dreams.

In fact, so important is the trope of the natural surroundings in the daily life of the Santals that this enters their daily rituals and customs. In a sub-plot, which includes rituals and customs involving the river Damodar, the story on the Jackal and the Prince (*Toyo Ar Raj Hopon Rean*) (Bodding, 1990a: 58) is about the pauperised prince boy. Bodding explains in a footnote 'that for Santals, among the numerous death rituals or ceremonies performed, the last ceremony is called *bandhan,* performed after some of the bones of the cremated body are thrown into the Damuda river'. This connection is better explained in the tale on *Kara and Guja* (Bodding, 1990c :162), where the story unfolds on the sub-sept of the Hasdak sept of the Santals, or *Cil Bandhis.* In the story, two kites have been plaguing the community; it is Kara and Guja who manage to kill them. The two kites fall into the *Gangi Jamin* spring or fountainhead of the river Damodar, symbolizing the ancestral history of the *Cil Bandhis.*

These stories are also used to orient children to the forest and the animals and plants, besides the *ancestral* symbolism that forests

hold in literature. We are oriented to the kind of activities women undertook in the forest and the range and the nature of animals as well. In 'The Story of a Princess' (*Raj Kumari Reak Katha)* (Bodding, 1990b: 162), when the sister is plagued by her seven sisters-in-law, she finds friends in the forest. So, when her sisters-in-law trick her by giving her a potfull of holes while sending her to fetch water, the frogs offer to lie flat over them, so the pot does not leak, or when she is asked to bring leaves from the forest without tying them, the tree snake (*Dipsadomorphustrigonatus*–non-poisonous) stretches itself and wraps itself around the leaves,hence tying the bundle and unbundling it when the sisters-in-law come to see how she has managed the feat. In the same way, the rat-snake (*Zamenismucosus*– non-poisonous) fastens itself around the firewood which she must carry back for her sisters-in-law.

In the story (*Toyo Ar Tarup Rean*) (Bodding, 1990a: 8), a ravenous leopard who has been attacking the Santal village is saved by a group of traders travelling along the road in the forest, and after this generous act of the traders, decides to turn around and eat them instead. The 'mahua tree' and the 'waterpool' sit in judgment giving environmental lessons when the traders call upon the *mahua* tree and the waterpool to save them from the leopard. The tree and waterpool believe that the leopard should surely eat the traders given the ingratitude of 'human kind' to them and nature. Trees are that *poetic space* where the inner and outer worlds blend. In many of the stories, trees bring respite and a twist in the protagonists' otherwise difficult life. Trees are important marking points which change events or turn around fate. For instance, the Banyan Tree (*Ficusbengalensis)* is a camping ground in between a long journey and also brings a twist to the story when the Mongoose Boy (*Cemen Kora*) who (Bodding, 1990b: 144-175) loses his house and belongings because his brothers burn it down, and strikes a fortune under the 'dream space' of the tree.

The tree acts as a space for solace, forgiveness and redemption as well. Thus, in the story 'Seven Brothers and One Sister' (Bodding, 1990a), where the sister is constantly plagued by her seven sisters-in-law, the narration goes like this,

> "*Hurt by all this, the girl went away to a sandal-wood tree [Santalum album] and sat down at the foot of this tree. Having thought over all, she mounted the tree to hang herself, but she was not hanged, she was transformed into a fruit and stayed there. A long time passed.*

Then one day her brothers were coming back from their trading tour, and camped at the foot of this tree; while there, people tell, a tear-drop fell down on them. "

While trees come in as a symbol of 'immensity', the blending of the inner and outer worlds, it is important to note that many of the plots around the trees have a sense of tragedy associated with them. Bachelard associates *grandeur* and immensity with trees. On more occasions than one in Santal folktales, trees are found to *weep.*

Some of the spatial demarcations highlighted in these stories are the carved niches in the walls and near the fireplace for fowls within the dwelling, the walls offer protection and a place of refuge. The *bhitar* (inner world) is where the *Bongas* (spirits) and ancestors reside. The house-field at the end of the dwellingis where Santals grow corn and vegetables in the cold weather. There are demarcations of the forest from places of habitation. The forest is a place of proximity that suits all domestic purposes of fetching water, firewood and leaves and fruit-gathering and planting. The limits to this constructed imagination of space is that space beyond where strange adventures take place. These are: the road frequented by traders, the ambivalent market place to make a fortune or get robbed, the place beyond the river Ganga where lives 'the other', the source of the Damodar in which lie the ancestors and to which the last funeral rites are offered, and the deep forest where sometimes the cattle are taken in to graze. The Santals also visit distant lands or the lands of the other in these tales, but here it is usually for the purpose of exchange, to exchange cloth, cattle, and charcoal. This gives the drastically different conception of territory and space in the minds of the Santals as well as conceptions of time.

The Santali folktales trace gradual changes in the landscape, 'one that was ever changing with past forests giving way to settlement, shifting agricultural practices and altering boundaries between villages and forests'. In the tale 'Jhades Jugi' (The Ascetic Jhades) (Bodding, 1990b: 46)[10], a description of changes in the forest landscape is linked with the notion of time.

After the bride of the youngest brother of seven brothers is kidnapped by the Jugi,

"As time passed, who knows how long a time, people tell, they took care of the child whom she had borne and gone away from, until he grew up. And people also cleared the primeval forest and settled all over and filled the place."

NEGOTIATING LIFESTYLE CHANGES AMONG THE SANTALS

Some of the stories lock in the numerous conflicting decisions and new norms that needed to be established in the community as the political and economic and environmental events were turning around them. This is reflected in some of the stories, particularly around the shifts in agricultural practices from shifting to sedentary agriculture, dilemmas on conservation, or the flux that the community was facing due to migration, or how the Santals chose coping mechanisms around the atrocities of *Zamindars* (landlords) and moneylenders, or the simple changes in technology, some that the Santals willingly took on for their own betterment at that time.

In Volume 1 of Bodding's folktales, a separate section is devoted to stories on women. While Bodding notes that the Santali women are not projected in equal light as the men, it is interesting that plots and stories around women also depict several conflicts faced by the society in the outside world, and most of these conflicts are a negotiation on lifestyle.

The importance that the Santals gave to the combined form of living agrarian and forest-based livelihoods is highlighted several times in different tales. In the 'Kara and Guja' story, the situation is described clearly, where rent-free land earlier provided to Santals was being converted into rent. Here Santals have continued some of their older practices of support from the jungle to supplement their food. There is a mention of jungle tubers such as *Zehneria Umbelleta* used for consumption.

In one of the stories of animals borne by women titled the 'Hanuman Boy' (*Haru Kora Rean)* (Bodding, 1990b: 110-143), the plot revolves around the shifts in agrarian practice. The Hanuman boy, born of a widow, is used to highlight this difference. [11] The story unfolds with several incidents of how the Hanuman boy outwits his seven human brothers in spite of his limited resources. The competitive conflict between them starts when the Hanuman boy and his brothers decide to clear the forest to begin cultivation. Each of the brothers chooses a patch of the forest to clear, but here the Hanuman boy strikes his axe at a tree and comes back home. The Hanuman boy does not light fire in his part of the clearing while his brothers have cleared their patch and begun to use ploughs and bullocks too. The Hanuman boy asks his mother for ploughs, bullocks and seeds, only to hear that she has none of these assets. His mother gives him pumpkin seeds *(kodukutki)* instead. Thus, while his brothers sow highland paddy[12], the Hanuman boy plants pumpkin seeds

(*Cucurbetia lagane ria*) which grow as climbing creepers around the tree stumps in the forest. At this point, the conversation between the Hanuman boy and his brothers flows like this:

> '"Look here you, when are you going to plough? You do nothing to clear the ground. "

> "O brothers," he (Hanuman Boy) replies, "I have sown without clearing the ground. "

> "What have you sown, you fellow?" they asked.

> "Look here brothers," he on his part asked them, "what have you sown?"

> "We," they replied, "wehave sown highland-paddy. "

> "I also," he said, "have sown highland-paddy; or rather I have not sown, I have planted. "

The brothers soon realises that the Hanuman boy has planted pumpkins instead of rice, and at this point he tries to convince them that he can barter these pumpkins for rice. During the harvesting season, a ritual is followed of offering the first rice harvest to the *bongas* on a sacred spot or *khond* after which a feast is prepared. The Hanuman boy must also follow this ritual even though he has planted no rice. To his mother's surprise, when they cut open the biggest pumpkin picked from the forest, out falls a whole lot of rice, symbolically seeds here. The story points to the fact that there is some prosperity in planting as well.

In the story on the 'Jackal and the Leopard' (*Toyo Ar Arup Rean*), we are introduced to the typical dilemmas related to conservation. While stories of hunting as a sport are replete in several accounts by the British and local elite during this time, in this story a clear rationale of survival is given for killing the leopard that has been eating the villagers' cows and bullocks. The leopard is given a voice in the story, and chooses to escape to another forest when he hears the din of the Santal drums in the villages. However, here he meets a group of traders along the road which bifurcates the forest, who try to save him from the people in the village. We are thus introduced to competing interests vis a vis the leopard, the people in the village and the traders on the road. In the story, when the Leopard is saved by the traders, he threatens to kill the traders, who ask a 'mahua tree' and 'a waterpool' to sit in judgment. Both give their verdict against the traders given the 'ingratitude' of human kind. It is at

this point that the Jackal is introduced in the story. He ignores previous judgments and instead outwits the leopard. The leopard is induced to enter a sack and then beaten up with stones to death.

There could be numerous interpretations to this story. The story could be of competing interests. What the Jackal does is take us back to the original intention of the village people, who were being harassed by the leopard in the forest and who decide to work in the larger interest of saving the forest and the traders rather than just serving the vested interest of the traders of saving themselves, or the self-interest of the leopard. On the other hand, the leopard being given a voice could well be 'nature's being' that has lost a sense of home and place, and must meet its end given the numerous forces against him, the lack of food, the traders, the villagers and the Jackal, who can outwit anyone.

In the stories on women, 'The Silly Women' (*Dundhi Maejiu Rean*) and The Story of 'Some Women' (*Maejiuko Reak Katha*) indirectly establish that women are not to engage in the sacrificial rituals associated with paying homage to the ancestors (*Kutam Dungra*). The plots in the stories revolve around a time when all the men leave the village, leaving the women behind to perform these rituals, an exclusive domain of men. In the first story, the narrator mentions that the story is located in a time 'when the Santals were all foolish', and a *Zamindar* forcibly takes the men away. The women pray to the Bongas that their men return safely. In the second story, the story is located at a time when the village was an endogamous village and hence when the men all went off to trade (which Bodding captures in his notes as moving far into the Assam districts to trade in cloth, cattle and charcoal), women are left behind to perform the sacrifice. In both the stories, it is established that this knowledge rests with men indicating that the men are needed in village rituals as well. In smaller plots, in 'The Moneylender and his Debtor' (*Mohajonar Khatok*) (Bodding, 1990a: 263) a Santal outwits the moneylender and settles his case. A considerable portion in the story is devoted to the interaction between the moneylender and the Santal's wife, who does not understand the language of the moneylender and this comes forth in a dramatic scene when the moneylender finding the Santali man unavailable in the house, must accept the postponement of the payment of dues, but instead eyes the beans grown in the house-field by the Santali woman. The moneylender begins to argue. Not understanding the alien language, the argument flares into a physical act of the woman chasing him out of the house with a pestle. A clear message is given

to Santali women on how to cope with the threats of changing and powerful forces around them.

THE SANTAL CULTURAL HERO AND ATTITUDE TO JUSTICE

The Jackal[13] is an important cultural image in most of these tales. Though the Jackal is a trickster, he is established as greater than the King. The Jackal may also represent an ambivalent character who could well be the missionary for the Santals narrating these stories, or the pure cultural hero of the Santals.

In most of the stories,the Jackal enters a plot when all other systems of justice seem to be failing in the narrative. Since folktales are being handed down to the next generation, one can assume that the Jackal is trying to tell the next generation not to make the same mistakes as the previous generation and keep their wits about them. Thus, this section explores in the voice of the Jackalthe larger messages that are being given on justice, and the voice of wisdom in these trickster narratives.

The Jackal in Judgment

In the story 'Jackal Judgment' (*Toyo Bicar*) (Bodding, 1990a: 39), the she-jackal plays a crucial role where the overall morality of the society seems to have failed. Here a young boy is cheated by an influential man, who manages to bring in a group of arbitrators whom he pays beforehand to be on his side. The jackal manages to convince the arbitrators that passing 'unrighteous judgments which impact the seventh generation' would result in a mockery of the arbitrators themselves. Here indirectly, the jackal is suggesting that there is a need for honest arbitration in order to keep the moral fabric of society intact for future generations. The following table locates the possible messages from the Jackal in Judgment in some of selected folktales.

Analysis of the voice and action of the
Jackal in Judgment (Bodding 1990,a.)

Santali Name of the Folktale Name of the Folktale	Core concern in the Folktale	Resolution offered by the Jackal	Environmental Plots/Wisdom/ other concerns offered through the story
Toyo Ar Harem Budhi Rean The Jackal and Husband and Wife	Explores a husband and wife relationship, and the entry of the *bhut(ghost)* who claims that the woman is his wife	The Jackal stops the fight and instead asks to investigate the case. Cleverly throws a challenge and makes the *bhut* enter a kupi (earthenware pot) and thus banishes him. He also instructs the woman to leave the earthen pot behind	The story talks of a lot of changes in the Santal community such as the entry of bottles instead of earthenware and bamboo receptacles, reading and writing brought in by the 'Sahebs', and the customary importance of folktales and riddles in passing down tradition and customs in the community. The wisdom offeredis the need to judge the case instead of quarrelling and an introduction to the importance of folktales put together by ancestors for the community

Toyo Ar Tarup Rean

The Jackal and the Leopard

A ravenous leopard is eating up the cows and bullocks of the Santals. What do the villages do with the leopard? Should they save the leopard or cut the forest down? They decide to save the forest and kill the leopard instead

The Jackal enters at a moment of ingratitude when the leopard threatens to eat the traders who have saved him from the villagers as he crosses a road in the middle of the forest. He outwits the judgment of the *mahua* tree and *waterpool,* who believe the leopard is rightdue to the ingratitude of humankind to nature and manages to trap the leopard and save the traders and villagers

The story looks at several layers of interests; the Santals who needed to save their cattle and believe that it is indeed better to save the forest than one leopard, pointing to larger interests, the traders who work in vested interest as they save the leopard without thinking of the Santals. The self-interest and the ingratitude of the leopard that is rescued whothen wants to eat the traders. This justifies the action of the Jackal, who outwits the leopard and finally stones him to death. The Jackal saves the traders and also works in interest of the Santals. Smaller messages are given by the *mahua* tree and *waterpool* to the traders who cut and axe even the roots of the tree, while basking under its shadow, and drink water from the waterpool though they constantly pollute it.

Toyo Reak Khisa The Astuteness of the Jackal	A father-son quarrel which is not submitted to the Panch in fear of fine. How do we support our children? How do we use our wit to support ourselves?	The Panch members talk of a jackal story where a she-jackal outwits a leopard. Here, the Panch is held synonymous to a leopard which may devour the younger jackals as the he and she jackals quarrel. Both the jackals enter their cave, the she jackal offers a solution to the leopard and exits his trap and manages to enter the cave inaccessible to the leopard.	The father and son decide to settle their quarrel without the Panch members. A basketful of wit is needed to do this. Women like the she jackal are considered to have wisdom and are an example to the Santals to avoid punishments and fines from the Panch (Council), by sorting out their own matters.
Toyo Bicar The Jackal's Judgment	A father tells his son to seek protection under a big man after his death.	The Jackal is established as a cultural hero in the story where the Jackal is greater than the King. The Jackal offers a magical gift of a cow to the poor boy. The cow gives him many goods and rewards for his well-being. The cow is stolen unfairly by elders in the village and the Jackal enters when an unfair judgment is about to take place over the ownership of the cow.	The Jackal reminds the arbitrators that unrighteous judgments should not be passed on the younger generations

Toyo Horokora Rean The Jackal and the Santal	The Jackal again is established as a cultural hero. How did you know that I am the big one?	The story points out that though the Jackal is a big one, it is not necessary that he has material wealth, but wit and wisdom	The plot is similar to the previous story. Several other strategies are made available in this story for the boy to protect his cow. The cow is an important asset for Santals at this point in time, a part of the changing lifestyles which was being accepted by the community
Toyo Ar Raja Hopon Rean	A father tells his son to seek protection under a big man after his death.	The Jackal and the Prince Jackal again gifts the boy a prized cow	The cow is an important asset for Santals at this point in time, a part of the changing lifestyles which was being accepted by the community

The Jackal as a Trickster

Where the Jackal is a trickster, the Jackal is constantly cheating the Santalis, and hard lessons need to be learnt along the way, so the Jackal does not get the better of them. In the story, 'The Jackal's Craftiness' (*Toyo Reak Porphundi*) (Bodding, 1990a: 92), we find the plot unfurl between the Jackal and the Leopards, where the Jackal is actually a moneylender who comes to the leopards asking for grain. The elder leopards find that their young ones are left starving even though they bring enough food home at the end of the day. They realize the Jackal's antics. A tragedy unfurls as the Jackal kills the father when the parents try to take revenge and the young ones and the mother must now accompany the Jackal. Throughout the story, we are exposed to the craftiness of the Jackal, how he uses the leopards to hunt, how he manages to eat the bigger share, how he manages to trick the crocodile while crossing the river and destroys him.

In a large collection of stories on the Jackal, one finds the mention of the age-old ritual of friendship among Santali women of exchanging two leaves and branches of the Karam tree (*Adina Cordifolia*) and thereby declaring their friendship in the community for life. In the stories, the Jackal makes friends with Hen and her chicks, paddy birds (*Ardeolagrayii, Kok*) or a hare, showing that these friendships happen between the strong and the weak as well. The Jackal manages to gobble his weak friends in the stories and if one were to explore at what point the weak are killed, in most cases it is in a moment of over-intoxication[14], for most of these incidents are around sharing rice beer together. In most of the plots, the story unfurls around the idea of 'greed'. The Jackal displays sheer greed where he must devour all that is in front of him, paddy bird, goat, sheep, cow, bullock and finally meets his own destruction in the end. In other cases the society gets together and punishes him.

CONCLUSION

We may broadly conclude that though Bodding's documentations of folktales from the 18th century may have included within them reformist or evangelical missionary agendas, they provide a wealth of information in understanding the inner life of the Santals during the 18th century. The stories highlight the actual situation and the aspiration of the Santals. They also provide us with interesting insights into the environmental attitudes and spatial constructions by the Santals. In terms of the dramatic changes around the Santals,

the Santals stake their claim to space by establishing identities through rituals, and customs and ancestral linkages that they have, or the simple poetic space of the different trees in the landscape, the dream space where Santals change their fortune overnight. Through the exploration of 'spatial concepts'and 'environmental imaginations' in the folktales, one thus finds a broad idea of the kind of symbols or manifestations available in a select set of stories of these ideas on space. The folktales subtly suggest some of the counter spatial tactics chosen by Santals. These include the importance the community continues to give to the forest to supplement their food, which comprised a range of 'nature's beings', distinguishable into friend and foe or the space of reserves such as the 'house field', an important reserve of food which is outside the scope of access to the moneylender, or the warm fireplace at home, the protective spaces for Santals. In the critical negotiation over the imaginations of space is the crucial link of identity, and given the time in history when the folktales are documented, the dismantling of the physical and local spaces around the Santals meant a constant need for negotiation of the self and identity (Amoo-Adare, 2013: 126) which finds expression in these folktales.

NOTES

1. Lefebvre specifies that in order to theorise about the production of space, we need to examine space in terms of spatial practices, representational spaces and representations of space. (Lefebvre, 1991). The 'way space is identified draws critical boundaries between identities, self and other. ' (Gregory and Pred, 2007)

2. Sense of place is what roots a person to a specific geographical location or place. A person's attachment to a place may be based on people, culture, history, emotion, land, time, and so on. Sense of place or place-attachment is an 'environmental attitude' that contributes to the formation, maintenance or preservation of identity. (Low and Altman, 1992, Amoo-Adare, 2013).

3. The disciplining of space imposes abstract space on everyday life, and in doing so predisposes the users of those spaces towards certain social or spatial practices. (Amoo-Adare, 2013).

4. The term 'Jungle Mahals' was used during Akbar's rule and formed part of Circa Gopalpara. Later, the area was transferred to Chakla Midnapur in 1722. In 1805, the East India Company constituted the Jungle Mahals whereby it added some parganas and mahals from Midnapur which included Chatna, Barabhum, Manbhum, Supur, Ambikanagar, Simlapal and Bhalaidih, the district of Burdwan which surrendered Senpahari,

Shergarh, and Bishnupur and Pachet, Bagmundy, Bogan, Kaodan, Taraf Bahapur, Katlas, Habila, Jhalda, Jayapur, Mukundy, Nwagarh, KismatChaontly, Torang, Tung, Nagar, Kiasi and Patkum which formed parts of the then district of Birbhum. Out of this Manbhum, Bhalaidih, Pachet are part of the Damodar valley (Sen, 1984).

5. R.C. Mukherjea's accounts on who the Santals were and their stories of migration written in 1960 give some instances and evidences of the compulsions on the Santal's side to migrate and convert from a nomadic life to that of a settled one. From the genesis story of the Santals, it is obvious that the Santals too were facing shortage of land and were having inter-tribal feuds which thus encouraged them to keep moving in search of new lands and settling in new areas from 'Campa gar' (R. C. Mukherjea, The Santals, A Mukherjee & Co. Pvt. Ltd. , 1962)

6. *Paharias* are tribals living mostly in the hilly forested tracts of the Santal Parganas

7. Termites play a crucial role in dry environments, particularly in the area of nutrient recycling and the creation of soil. Termites also trap moisture and help it travel, crucial to the decomposition process of plant and animal material in dry environments.

8. *Sabai* continues to be used for the use of different products such as ropes and baskets by Santals.

9. Note by Bodding: 'Backom is used for making twine and also making paper, naturally not by Santals'. The plant is found wild and cultivated.

10. The ascetic is another character that appears in the Santal stories, and the relationship the Santals had with ascetics would come from the northern parts of the country, north of the Ganges to live in these forests, were both to be revered and feared. In the stories about *Jugis*, most often these ascetics are shown to have magical powers that may impact the everyday family life of the Santals.

11. It is important to note here that like the use of illegitimate children in literature in 18th century cultural narratives in Britain, here 'animals borne by women' are used to bring a critical topic into public eye. We don't know if similar cultural concerns were prevalent in the Santal community as among Europeans, though S. C. Roy denies the existence of the illegitimate child among tribal communities. However, in cases where the father dies before the birth of child, we find in these tales similar predicaments of the child as that of orphans and illegitimate children. It could well be an adaptation of the trope from Victorian traditions by Bodding or the missionary influence in these tales. Nevertheless, it is important to notice how the plot is arranged around the child and how the voice of the child is used to highlight practices otherwise 'criminalised' in the colonial context.

12. Bodding notes that this type of paddy is rarely seen among the Santals except for those migrating to Assam.

13. Konow tries to make distinctions between Aryan and Santal tales, especially

through the depiction of Jackals in these tales. In Santal tales, Jackals are shown to be treacherous and malevolent while in stories with Aryan influence they are represented with great wit and intelligence and a minister and adviser to the King in the organized animal kingdom, he concludes.

14. The essence is association with greed and excess rather than the consumption of alcohol here. Many other tales in the volumes talk of the practice of brewing beer as part of the ritual activities of paying respect to the ancestors of the Santals, for instance.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Contrary to Thoughtlessness: Rethinking Practical Wisdom, Monica Mueller, PhD, Lexington Books, New York, pp. 118, 2013.

Amal Kumar Harh

As the subtitle of the book indicates, author Monica Mueller reopens an examination, evaluation and critique of contemporary American theorists writing on Aristotle's ethics. In our own times, it was Anscombe who had inaugurated the notion of practical syllogism in *Intention* and R.M. Hare retrieved it within the context of his prescriptive ethics in *The Language of Morals*, and later in *Freedom and Reason*. Hare, of course, was more inclined towards Kant's command view of moral language. Monica Mueller formulates her own view of Aristotle's ethical idea of deliberation by critiquing contemporary American scholars of Aristotle. In that respect, *Contrary to Thoughtlessness* acquaints the reader with the views and approaches to Aristotle's ethics made and undertaken by American scholars today.

Anscombe has been a pioneer of virtue ethics as against both utilitarianism and Rule-deontology. The idea of rule following was there in Wittgenstein's *Investigations* and later Stephen Toulmin's *Thought and Action* touched the issue of deliberation in deciding the course of moral action and choice of ends. The concept of reason giving in ethics occupied such thinkers as Kurt Baier in *The Moral Point of View*. A point may be made in passing, namely, that virtue ethics has remained a matter of concern with philosophers linked with Catholicism, which Protestantism encouraged deontology and the idea of one supreme and sovereign Moral Law. Kant is a monumental figure in that direction. This religious affiliation of the philosophers concerned remains somewhat obscure in this part of the world. We tend to forget that culture has always been one of the determinants of philosophical thinking. Further, it may be observed that philosophical thinkers in the West appear to be divided between the two camps, either one belongs to Descartes' camp (phenomenology and existentialism included) or to that of David Hume (the analytic school).

There has come up the notion of moral psychology, which

proposes to investigate the linkages between the concepts of moral thought. Mueller's persuasion has a large share of moral psychology. She does not go by bare analysis. Rather, she looks for factors of moral state of affairs, culture, upbringing, experience and perceptions prevalent in society. The point is that moral living, choosing, deciding, judging of moral issues, thinking of ends and means do not happen in a vacuum. There is a backdrop against which the moral drama is enacted.

Mueller's treatise, *Contrary to Thoughtlessness*, examines the elaboration of Aristotle's ethics, its constituents, concepts and notion in course of five chapters. She disposes of the views and adumbrations by a number of theorists, and puts in her own understanding and views to get and set the picture right. We shall follow her through her critical considerations.

Mueller opens her argument by pointing out that rule following is insufficient for full virtue. Humans are capable of acting otherwise, we have alternative perspectives to consider, and there are considerations that may be overriding. On occasions it may be necessary to call up courage and have integrity to challenge the moral status quo. The point is that practical wisdom is quite contrary to thoughtlessness. In looking for the possibility for Aristotelian virtue ethics, what is initially important is to give up the role of intuition. Practical wisdom is not intuition. A practically wise person by definition consistently acts well. A thoughtless person does not. For acting well, the moral agent has to be thoughtful. Moral thoughtfulness is different from theoretical contemplation. Its object is the real world, comprising the web of human relationships.

Mueller makes a distinction between diabolical evil and banal evil. The former evil is intentional and done for evil's sake, and the latter contributes to evil in one's ordinary living without the intent or realization of doing so. Banal evil is typified by thoughtlessness, which is contrary to practical wisdom.

Mueller has gone to quite a length in considering Aristotle's notion of practical syllogism. This is not syllogism simpliciter and the traditional idea of syllogism is of no avail in the moral context. The actions of the practically wise person are always the result of deliberated decisions and never merely the result of appetitive desire. Desire is correct if it accords with right reason. The Aristotelian moral agent never acts for the sake of an end without thinking and evaluating reasons. He has noetic knowledge of the correct ultimate end. Thoughtlessness compounds the potential

for wrongdoing. Virtue as for Aristotle cannot be an affair of mindlessness.

In practical syllogism, endorsement of an end constitutes the major premise, apprehension of the appropriate means to end constitutes the minor premise, and the conclusion is the command which issues in action. As Mueller shows, Aristotle's notion of practical syllogism stands apart from both Platonic analysis and Kantian deontological analysis. As in Plato's terms, the supreme principles of action are pre-established through contemplation of what invariably constitutes the Good, whereas the work of deliberation, as suggested by Aristotle, is strictly to determine the means to the pre-established end. As per Kantian analysis, whichever subjective maxims can be universalized is suitable as ultimate ends. It is worth mentioning that for Aristotle practical wisdom is distinct from scientific knowledge, because first principles in the practical realm are variable. Contingencies of each situation leave no room for an unchanging unqualified vision of the ultimate good. Matters concerned with conduct have no fixity. Mueller has argued against an overly intellectualized account of the formation of a practical syllogism. She contends that calculative deliberation is insufficient.

Deliberation of means to chosen ends is the work of practical wisdom. It remains a fact that human action takes place in a contingent reality which is often unpredictable and entails changing circumstances. Hence, Aristotle urges and encourages the learner of virtue to look at those with whom we credit practical wisdom. Looking to experience with an exemplar reveals the field of knowledge to which practical wisdom pertains, namely the spoken words and deeds of actors, people who live together in a shared common world. Becoming practically wise involves an analysis of the possibilities for human action and indicates the potential for human action at its best. In this context, Mueller takes up the case of *phronesis*, an important concept in Aristotle's ethics. *Phronesis* is to be understood in relation to *sophia*, which is an intellectual virtue. Contemplation of truth is what *sophia* denotes. On the other hand, *phronesis* is deciphering the right rule or ultimate end in a moment of action. Some theorists have identified *phronesis* with calculative deliberation. Mueller disagrees with such an interpretation, and holds that to view *phronesis* in this fashion is quite insufficient. She proposes to consider the overall course of one's development in becoming virtuous. She argues that to restrict *phronesis* to practical syllogism would be too reductive a conception. A calculative view of

practical wisdom does not tell the entire story of the life of a moral agent. Mueller surveys the stages of virtue development, beginning with desiring that which is pleasant and avoiding that which is perceived to be painful. Human being tends towards the pleasing and avoids the painful. This is our desiderative constitution.

Then comes the point about good upbringing, which includes learning to desire that which is noble and to avoid that which is base. Desiring the noble in good upbringing is to be a matter of habit, one comes to perceive that certain ways of acting are noble in certain circumstances. One further learns that acting nobly is pleasant and, therefore, one desires to do noble actions. At this stage, traits of character or moral virtues begin to develop, and correlative convictions of a certain kind are adopted. These convictions are not meant to be the sort of knowledge we have of rules or principles, but rather a kind of knowledge of that which is considered to be noble, which becomes a second nature with the practically wise. A practically wise person is one for whom virtues of character have been habituated in so far as it entails a full reflective understanding of why certain actions are conducive to the ends set by prior convictions and adopted during habituation. Judgment and choice in the fully virtuous person is reasoned from knowledge of the good in general.

The point that Mueller seeks to make is that habituation cannot be mindless, and the thinking involved grows to full virtue, and further that in reality the overall development of becoming virtuous is more fluid than a view of isolated stages. And that is why Aristotle insists on the prerequisite conditions of adequate time and experience.

The next important point is that Mueller takes up for discussion is that of a mean between extremes. How is rationality related to desires? *Phronesis* brings about an agreement of reason and desire that finds expression in good deliberation. Practical truth features this agreement between the intellective faculty and the emotions. The point is subtle. If we do not have the right desires, reason cannot even start its analytical job. The major premise of a practical syllogism is composed of opinion and desire. A virtuous agent might desire to be generous, and this desire enhances his willingness to give. It may be noted that our virtuous agent has already been habituated in a social world that maintains norms which one learns in the process of becomingvirtuous. The minor premise connects a particular situation to the major premise through induction. Now, in order to be sure about the required action to follow, one will have to search

for the middle term, and this is what is called deliberation in Aristotle's ethics.

It is a well-known fact that deliberate rational choice is required for responsible action in the realm of human affairs. For this state of affairs to take place, the moral agent needs to have experiences with a practically wise person in order to recognize what constitutes practical wisdom in the actual world. What is to be noted is that human action takes place in a contingent reality which is often unpredictable and entails changing circumstances. Looking at experience with an exemplar reveals the field of knowledge to which practical wisdom pertains. Becoming practically wise involves an analysis of the possibilities for human action and indicates the potential for human action at its best.

At this juncture Mueller makes three points: (a) It is important to explain that to know the realm of practical affairs is incapable of fixity. (b) Practical wisdom is a species of knowledge, is intellectual excellence. (c) The difference between potentiality and actuality are for the intellectual excellence. These points are relevant and related to the possibility of taking alternative perspectives regarding action. A point about the metaphysics of action should be in order. Now, given the binary of potentiality and actuality by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*, Mueller remarks that a person is actualized in action. Action is distinct in that there is the perpetual possibility of further actualization. Prior to the actualization the agent does not act, and the place of thinking is diminished in *praxis*. This paradox shows how thinking is related to action. The fully virtuous person acts well by her own initiative based on her understanding of the relevant features of the situation based on her desires as an acting agent. The problem then is: how does one know how to act well and what kind of thinking informs that knowledge?

Thinking and acting are two modes of being. Again, there is also the difference between the actor and the spectator. The actor in action discloses herself to the world, that is to others. Speech and action are the modes in which human beings appear to each other as men. When someone acts, the agent is disclosed to others along with the act itself. This disclosure requires the presence of others to witness the act. Further, a person is revealed by speech as well. In other words, without speaking, the distinctly human feature of action would be inconspicuous. As agents, we are capable of discussing our intentions, motivations, emotions, reasons, beliefs, and so forth. Aristotle invokes the distinction between animals and humans who use *logos,* that is speech. Now *logos* is the rational

element, the rational part of man and that differentiates man's practical activity from the animals.

Mueller draws our attention to the aspect of the spectator of acts. The actor and the spectator are interrelated in a shared public world. Aristotle instructs us to be spectators for the sake of witnessing the actor and, thus, form an image of the truth concerning practical wisdom. The practically wise person appears to others who witness and understand the meaning of the acts. The actor cannot exemplify virtue without the spectators who comprehend the meaning of the spectacle as it upholds. The spectators are those who witness the actions of the actors. They, like the actors, are also bound by the human condition of plurality, because their mode of being is dependent upon the presence of others and the in-between constituted by the web of human relationships. The spectator witnesses the appearance of the actors. They have a different perspective because of their role as witness.

Again, as the spectator is not acting, her being is marked by certain withdrawal from the appearing world. Theorists have interpreted the situation in the light of Plato's idea that the life of pure contemplation is the best conceivable life. Mueller disagrees with such an interpretation of Aristotle's position. Practical wisdom is different from philosophical wisdom. For Aristotle, the best life for human beings is a life that consists in both action and contemplation. The specific human reality is that we are at times actors and at other times spectators. This implies two things: first, the spectator may comprehend the meaning of the spectacle of the actor in action, but she abandons the potential implicit in participation in action. Thinking and acting are two modes of being, yet in the world, the two coincide.

In the fourth chapter, Mueller turns her attention to Kant's idea of judgment in the context of the role of thought in moral action. She quotes Kant's *Critique of Judgment* to the effect that understanding in general is the faculty of rules, while judgment is the faculty of subsuming under rules. The faculty of understanding is the faculty of principles of cognition because the understanding, consisting of categories and concepts of thought, orders a manifold of experience. This is how one comes to knowledge of the appearances of experience that are perceived. The faculty of judgment is an independent faculty of the mind which subsumes under rules. The power of judgment takes two forms. When the universal or the rule or principle, the law, is given the power of judgment subsumes the particular under it, and we get a

determinant judgment. But when only the particular is given for which the universal is to be found, the power of judging is merely reflecting. In this case what we get is a reflective judgment. Let us take two judgments, "this is a rose", and "this is beautiful". The former is a determinant judgment, while the latter is an aesthetic judgment of reflection. "Beautiful" is not a concept, there is no rule governing it. Something as beautiful is not judged to be so because the perception of it can be subsumed under a category of thought. Understanding demands of the imagination to offer a representation that can be subsumed, but the imagination can provide no such representation. Instead the imagination represents the object without a concept and offers the representation to reflection. In the relationship between understanding and imagination, Kant suggests that there is free play, a harmonious play of the faculties. As such, the aesthetic judgment refers to a feeling in the subject when judging, and not to anything conceptually indicative of the object being judged. And yet Kant argues that a judgment of the beautiful is universal, because the individual has no private interest in the object, and still judges. How does it happen? Kant's answer is: through *sensus communis* or community sense. Judgments are communicable, and in judging one expects or thinks that others will agree with the assessment.

What about moral judgments? In that case Kant is concerned with the primacy of the categorical imperative as the universal rule from which all action must be deduced. At this point Mueller parts ways with Kant. She argues that there can be no general rules for conduct, since each encounter with experience is distinct in its very particularity. For Kant, when rules are established, rules for cognition as supplied by the understanding, or rules of morality as established by the moral law, one approves of the particular when it is consistent with the universal. But if there is no rule supplied for cognition or for practical reason, judgment requires a standard by which to judge. In judgments of beauty the standard is tested by its capacity for publicity and the delight in the beautiful on the part of the judging subject. This is what he calls community sense, guaranteeing inter-subjectivity. Kant believed the most representational position was the universal standpoint. Mueller implies that one depends on one's community and interactions with others in order to be capable of forming examples which serve as the basis of judgments in moral matters. The judgments of morality are influenced by examples, fictional and real, that we choose to keep company within our thinking. And it may be noted that

communicability is established based on the thinking of the subject. Both communicability and community sense are conditions for reflective judgment. These two aspects of judging are the necessary conditions for the validity of a reflective judgment. Mueller doubts the Kantian requirement of impartiality as viable. She contends that actual impartiality is never possible precisely because a judging subject is always a particular subject. When judging, a subject can and should take the alternative standpoints of others into account and this entails representing the situation to the mind from particular perspectives, not an abstract impartial perspective. Further, communicability of reflective judgment involves the willingness to communicate one's thoughts to others and subjecting them to the test of publicity.

To sum up, Mueller's achievement lies in demonstrating her position in contrary to thoughtlessness in ethics. It is possible for one's thinking to influence one's actions on future occasions. One can judge one's own actions in retrospect by considering whether or not one's actions make sense from the variety of perspectives available in thought. Just as I can judge another to be exemplary by witnessing their compassion or courage, etc., in particular experiences, and internal to this judgment is the expectation of agreement of others regarding this judgment. I, likewise, can judge my own actions in retrospect by testing my actions in retrospect, one seeks agreement with oneself, with the internal interlocutor who is available when one is thinking.

Mueller's invoking of Kant's notion of reflective judgment is important as an insight. The model of reflective judgment works from the points of view of both the actor and the spectator. The judgment is informed by the variety of alternative perspectives available in one's mind. The same spectator would be an actor in the future. The reflective judgment of the actor reverses the order of the practical syllogism by beginning with particulars and judging an endorsable image of exemplarity which will serve as the appropriate end in this situation. A good ethical theory provides conscientious agents guidance as well as a way of assessing whether the action is worthy of praise.

Revolution From Above: India's Future and the Citizen Elite, Gupta, Dipankar, Rupa Publications, India Private Limited, New Delhi, pp. i-xiii, 225, 2013.

Varsha Bhagat-Ganguly

Dipankar Gupta, a senior sociologist, renders his thoughts on democracy, citizenship, fraternity, role of 'elite of calling' or 'citizen elite', and citizenship. After his year-long stay at Bilbao, Basque Spain and witnessing its changeover, revolutionised; he started reflecting on the Indian scenario, as mentioned in the preface. He delves into India's recent past and its various problems, and the need for revolution, especially to ensure universal education, health care, energy resources and to understand the phenomenon of urbanisation for deepening of citizenship. This book is an outcome of his reflections, in which he focuses on India's need to have citizen elites to bring out democracy's potentials or revolutionising India from above as counter argument that such changes historically have not come from below. Several development issues, such as poverty, corruption, labour and informal sectors, economic growth, politicians and politics of given, including divides on caste, class, religion and regional identities, have been extensively studied across ten of the total eleven chapters. The last chapter covers the historical political evolution of Basque region of Spain and their achievements in education, health and research sectors. Each chapter begins with an outline of the chapter, which is a new style of presentation introduced in this book.

The first chapter sets the tone of the book, focusing on the quest for India's Citizen Elite in the context of constraints of democracy, mirroring reality and revolution from above. Through a case of Mandal formula, which increased the scope for reservations, he introduces it as 'politics of given'; that is, accepting the reality of caste. This has resulted in India becoming much more caste-conscious in its political life than ever before. He then refers to seeing reality in the mirror and the need of hammer-wielding craftsmen to shape a democracy wherein citizenship, fraternity and equal opportunities are described as critical constituents. He stresses

the need to transform the architects of fraternity from artists to the political life, as they see the people as citizens and merge 'them' in as 'us'. The elites think in terms of 'aspirations', sound like utopians and go beyond what exists. While advocating hammer, he stresses on education, health care and energy sources as priority areas.

The second chapter describes 'elites of calling' as the vanguards of democracy. He contends that the present scenario distracts us from thinking clearly about our future as citizens and that's where the role of Citizen Elites is important in altering reality. For instance, they would think about handling poverty not through a special programme for the poor but to include them in the ambit of citizenship. Reaffirming as truth that the poor people cannot revolt on their own and if they do so, such expressions of rebellion are short-lived. The 'citizen elite' may be drawn from the established elite but the fact that they are able to see the big picture clearly and contribute to social development for the advantage of all citizens. Members of 'elite of calling' dedicate their lives to people but they are not made by the people, as the politicians are elected by the voters. Earl Grey and the Factory Act in Britain 1833 and Henry Brougham and Education Bill in 1837 and many more 'elite of calling' during the nineteenth century made education and quality public health care the holy cow that no European government dare sacrifice; setting it as the first principle of citizenship. In India, meanwhile, the question of whether it is possible to be a voter and yet not a full citizen takes on a much starker appearance. Though India has a large elite class, they are all busy looking after their own interests and had they been 'citizen elite', they would have acted and thought differently, thinking beyond the 'iron law of dystopia'.

Mahatma Gandhi and Ahimsa as an elite intervention makes the third chapter. It is often argued that Gandhi is no longer relevant in India. In fact, he contributed towards giving India a modern, liberal democratic state. Gandhi forced us to reject untouchability, embrace fraternity, protect minority rights, give equal space to women, and question unchecked industrialisation. He got these ideas from his experience and reading of Emerson, Thoreau, Tolstoy and the Gita, very little from the 'people'. He opposed socialism for two reasons; one of them was that socialism was impossible in its current articulation without resorting to violence. The spirit of democracy and the most prized Articles on Fundamental Rights and Duties have found their place in our Constitution largely because of Gandhi's insistence on non-violence as a political precept. He insisted that 'the weakest should have the same opportunity as the

strongest', and 'Independent India as conceived by me will have all Indians belonging to different religions living in "perfect friendship"', signifying equality and secularismas well as a liberal state–the life and soul of India democracy. Disavowal of separate electorate too goes to the credit of Gandhi.

Unlike previous chapters, the following chapters delve into politics of given, exploring various dimensions of given reality. Utopia to the politics of given is discussed at length, from Nehru to Manmohan Singh, in the fourth chapter. 'Nehru's memory should have been kept alive, yet we have to scratch our heads to remember him'–the statement reveals the lingering relevance of elite intervention while accepting the fact that he steered India through its most difficult period. Though Nehru is given credit as 'elite of calling' who challenged established customs and wisdom, such as starting IITs and IIMs, Bhilai and Bokaro for sourcing steel, and other initiatives for scientific and industrial self-reliance, he did not focus on education and health sectors, nor did he free our legal and law enforcement apparatus from the colonial past, which indicates non-commitment to citizenship. This is why we see a plethora of politicians avidly maximising 'the given'. Nehru instead of equating the public sector with service, his daughter Indira made it synonymous with 'nationalisation'. Political control, at whatever cost, became the guiding motto of the Congress party after Nehru and this characterises all political parties today. The planning commission and Five Year Plan did not yield expected benefits, as our planners are of a different kind; like politicians they do not take positions and remain non-committal. The author has described the failure of Five Year Plans and how poverty has remained alive based on empirical data, and how Manmohan became a politician rather than a 'citizen elite'.

The fifth chapter titled 'A thousand tyrants: One citizen, many masters' would expectedly discuss about bureaucrats, administrators and decision-makers as continuation of his argument of 'change from above' but it is largely focused on consolidation of political class, corruption and how the culture of patronage enlivens 'politics of given'; that is, none of the political parties has evolved policies on agriculture, urbanisation, health delivery system, formalisation of labour force or such measures that strengthen citizenship. The Gorwala report describing 'durbari'-style politics and patron-seeking practices making citizens more vulnerable to these practices is an interesting point that is dealt in detail.

As a logical extension to the previous chapter, the sixth, seventh,

eighth and ninth chapters focus on the issue of formalisation of labour force and its contribution to economic growth, health sector, education sector, and urbanisation, respectively. Each chapter quotes the widely circulated data of various government agencies and reports of national and international agencies on human development to mirror the ground reality, linking it with citizenship intermittently.

The tenth chapter, the shortest among all chapters, discusses the crux of the book; that is, the difference between citizen elites and Mahatmas as well as concepts of civil society and citizenship. The heroes (or Mahatmas) and the 'citizen elite' may resemble each other at first glance but actually they are quite different. The former category is characterised by 'goodwill' and charity whereas for the latter, 'fraternity' is the driving force. Heroes or Mahatmas come in to fill the gaps in anon-delivering democracy but when democracy delivers universally, Mahatmas become a rare feature. The distinction between both categories is blurred because the term 'civil society' is used carelessly and perhaps even promiscuously. The author opines that 'the term civil society refers only to those apparatuses of the state that actually deliver citizenship', and examines two different viewpoints of Partha Chatterjee and Rajni Kothari. He further mentions that the UN and other multilateral agencies identifying civil society with NGOs are obviously unaware of the long, intellectual tradition of this concept. He argues that when a set of rights is won, avenues for legal guarantee of the equality of opportunity as well as legitimate access to socially valuable skills are opened up. The targeted approaches and trickledown theory failed because they are not universal in scope; different social divisions are the basis for various programmes of the government.

In sum, relentless depiction of various issues that ail Indian democracy, which is well known, overshadows many important conceptual terms and processes that the book has dealt with. A little more prodding on the issues mentioned in the following paragraph would make the book a thought-provoking and path-breaking contribution.

The journey of the book, as the author has planned, fulfils expectations of the readers on 'revolution from above', as the title suggests. The term 'revolution' has two distinct aspects: one of social transformation through systemic changes, and the other with protest and people's collective action, based on contentious politics. The author has used words like leader, visionary and utopia rarely. Through the case of Gandhiji, he has indicted potentials of citizen

elites, though that undermines the role of Constituent Assembly members, leaders and freedom fighters and their contribution in ensuring many other rights of Indian citizens. In this regard, one of the obvious questions that arises is of the contribution of Dr Ambedkar and his role as elite of calling. An overview of Nehru to Manmohan Singh highlighting the 'politics of given' like other chapters overweighs the concerns of the book regarding deepening of citizenship and 'what could have been done' to achieve full potentials of democracy.

The tenth chapter is one of the most significant chapters in continuing his arguments as well as to travel on the less explored paths of 'citizenship', different set of 'rights' and developmentalism and its impact on democracy. The inter-linkages between these have been touched upon, yet these could have been dealt with in a much organised manner. Similarly, the role of UN and other multilateral agencies should have been articulated vis-à-vis human rights and right to development, as these discourses have been in place for developmentalism and casually touching upon citizen's rights; the MDG (Millennium Development Goals) stresses on universal rights to education and health care, yet it undermines the citizen's rights as a critical element for citizenship. And if we believe that these agencies can play a critical role as Citizen Elite, articulating their roles would have been helpful.

The debates on citizenship, on ethnicity, rights of linguistic and religious minority bring out the State as a major player in shaping up of citizenship; a chapter initiating a dialogue on the inter-linkages and role of the State, civil society, citizen elites and heroes (or philanthropy and social welfare measures) in bringing about 'revolution from the above' is much expected. Though the failure of theories of trickle down, targeted approach and politics of given are dealt in depth, addressing 'why still these practices are dominant in developmentalism and not giving way to new ones' would have been an invaluable contribution of the book. Similarly, how dystopia prevents a process of making of 'citizen elite' as well as how 'politics of given' enlarges the scope of dystopia would have been enlightening. Otherwise, one of the impressions the book leaves in the reader's mind is that citizen elites are 'born', once in a millennium! The role of democracy or societal processes has negligible avenues to create 'calling of elites'!

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STUDIES IN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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