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SUMANYU SATPATHY



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RASHTRAPATI NIVAS, SHIMLA

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HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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EDITORIAL

This issue comprising miscellaneous articles and reviews is able nonetheless to address a few common concerns and questions, complex as they are, across disciplines and genres. Together, they present a kaleidoscopic view of the real or imagined political entity called India, its rich and complex cultural past and present. A few articles which deal with caste, language and communal identities have been included in this number. There is a distinct preoccupation with minoritarian discourses such as the ones over caste and language issues; but within these there are certain thematic overlaps too. True to the character of the journal, an attempt has been made to ensure that none of the articles is limited to the specialised discipline of the authors. That is, it is hard to point to articles which can be labelled strictly literary, sociological or purely philosophical in their orientation. Their main thematic or methodological provenance may or can be identified as characteristically within the limits of a given discipline, but then as the arguments proceed more often than not they trespass these boundaries.

The first article, drawing on multiple interlocutions with Sobho Gianchandani conducted in Urdu, has been cleverly interwoven and rendered into English by Asim Siddiqui. Entitled, the “Progressive Writers’ Movement in Sindhi Language and Literature,” the piece not only puts in interface the two languages, Urdu and Sindhi, it also tells the complex story of a major Sindhi playwright and short story writer and a member of the Communist Party of Pakistan that was banned in 1956. Continuing with the subject of language, and using a polemical tone, Lalit Kumar’s essay, “A Language without a State: Early Histories of Maithili Literature” dissects Jayakanta Mishra’s well-known *History* in an interface with Grierson’s *Chrestomathy*. It argues that the first history of Maithili literature was the culmination of the process of exploration of literary specimens initiated by Grierson, with the stated objective of establishing the identity of Maithili as an independent modern Indian language. Lalit Kumar contends that any proper examination of Maithili literary history is inseparable from the study of language. Devender Kumar in the third essay of the issue showcases, but does not limit himself to, yet another

neglected language, Haryanvi as manifested in its folk form. He takes up a particular genre of Haryanvi folk song, the titular “Jakari,” and uses it as the primary archive to study a woman’s “inner world.” He maintains that folk narratives of women “destabilize and deconstruct the dominant ideology of a society while using the popular modes and motifs of the folk tradition.”

Among the articles which address the issue of caste as it was used in political praxis, we find Alok Prasad attempting to correct the popular misconception regarding Nehru’s vision of caste, in his essay “Jawaharlal Nehru’s View On Caste-Based Social Exclusion,” He argues that the perception of many scholars and writers is stereotypical as well as ahistorical. Prasad tries to suggest that Nehru was neither blind towards caste-based social exclusion, nor did he “underplay its dysfunctional impact on India’s modernization project.”

Three essays included here focus on many complex consequences of the vivisection of the subcontinent both in the east and west. Koushiki Dasgupta in the article, “Muslim Businessmen and the Partition of Bengal,” shows that the Memon businessmen were mobilized and how the notion of a “home” has been codified by other criteria. It also shows, whether or not one agrees, that both east and west wings of Pakistan had their own structural problems.... but it was Calcutta which suffered the most. Not only it lost its pre-eminence as the major commercial and manufacturing centre in the eastern part of India, it went into decline rapidly. Neither Calcutta nor Dhaka could ever become a commercially promising city thereafter as history witnessed the death of what once had been a magnificent economy.” In his article, “Stigma to Freedom: Reflection of Caste and Identity in Poems of Vaibhav Chhaya,” Chandrasheel Tambe reflects on the problematic of political identity among the Scheduled Caste youths in Mumbai. He analyses a few selected poems by Vaibhav Chhaya to show the way they strive towards freedom de-casting Dalit identity, as identity issues of the “scheduled caste” youths are now to be situated in the context of globalization. He argues that Vaibhav’s poems “exhibit consciousness to rise against all forms of exploitation in present civilization.” Further, he says that “this inclusive identity is positive in the sense that it is not perturbed by the stigma and hence instead of emphasizing escape, it envisages movement towards freedom.”

Moving to another facet of marginalisation, Vinny Jain deals with early British responses to the condition of women in India, which were built around a selective reading of Indian epics and religious

texts. Through the examples of the selective British readings of Draupadi, she shows how nationalists got agitated, and how Bankim through his essay on Draupadi debunks these “misconceptions.”

Migration generates its own kind of marginality which is the subject of another article in this issue: “Filling the Gap: Distance between Heart and Feet,” in which Sapna Pandit analyses Rohinton Mistry’s iconic novel, *Such a Long Journey* and “re-reads “the Immigrant Experience.” Though the article confines itself to the domain of literary studies, the author also looks at the socio-psychological dimension of the experience of the immigrants. In her own words, her article “deals with the problematic of negotiating an identity.”

Kashmir has been caught, both literally and figuratively, in the crossfire between the two sides of the partitioned North-West sector of the subcontinent. Thus, towards the end of this issue of the journal, two articles focus on the conflict zone through literary texts set in the Kashmir context. These are Simran Chaddha’s “Cleansing the Valley: Salman Rushdie’s *Shalimar the Clown* and Mirza Wahid’s *The Collaborator*” and Manisha Gangahar’s “Manufacturing The Self and the Collective: Memory Politics In Life Narratives From A Conflict Zone.” Though they take up literary texts as their archive, they are by no means “literary” studies. In her piece Chaddha tries to explore one “dimension of ethnic assertion and the claim it stakes over land and territory, namely, the ethnic cleansing enacted in the valley of Kashmir against the Pandit community at a time when global geo-politics focussed on the intervention of communism in the region of Afghanistan.” Continuing with the theme of identity and displacement, Manisha Gangahar shows in her article how when much of the social and political life has turned into questions of recognition, the concept of identity poses a quandary.” She also asks, “[W]hen identity is comprehended as something that comes from the outside rather than something discovered as having existed within, narratives play a central role in providing a sense of identity.” Her paper, through a reading of life narratives from the conflict zone of Kashmir, shows “how memory is not merely a shadow or something out of control, but it is rather an alluring sanctuary.”

Finally, in his paper, “Global, National and Local Frames on Ecology and Sustainability,” which is somewhat of an outlier, Amarendra Kumar Dash “interrogates the rhetoric of denial and disengagement” in the discourse of environment? Following the method of critical discourse analysis, the brief study “expands our understanding of ecology and sustainability in a number of ways.”

The issue ends with reviews of two major publishing events:

Venkat Mani's *Recoding World Literature: Print Culture, Libraries, and Germany's Pact with Books* which aims to present a genealogy of 'world literature' and Mohammad Asaduddin's *Premchand in World Languages: Translation, Reception and Cinematic Representations*.

SUMANYU SATPATHY

THE PROGRESSIVE WRITERS' MOVEMENT IN SINDHI LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Sobho Gianchandani

[Translated from Urdu by Mohammad Asim Siddiqui*]

Sobho Gianchandani (1920-2014), a student of Rabindranath Tagore at Shantiniketan during World War II whom the great poet called 'the man from Mohenjo Daro', was a major Sindhi playwright and short story writer. Member of the Communist Party of Pakistan, which was banned in 1956, he was the first non-Muslim and non-Urdu recipient of Pakistan's highest literary award 'Kamal-e- Fann' (2004). Arrested about 20 times for his fight against injustice and inequality, Gianchandani's has been a very prominent voice for Sindhi language. This is the English translation of a conversation of Sobho Gianchandani with Muslim Shameem, Rahat Sayeed and Mazhar Jameel. For the sake of readability the observations of Gianchandani have been given the form of a unified, running text by the translator.

The Progressive Writers' Movement in Sindhi language started at the same time as in other Indian languages and its impact has also been the same. Except for some local specifics, Indian languages have emerged from similar cultural and political climate. Indian people have had common problems and limited means. For this reason literatures in different Indian languages share some characteristics. Interestingly, even before the advent of the Progressive movement, different Indian languages displayed progressive tendencies and ideas, whether they were in the form of adoption of modern education or Sufism or a sense of rebellion against the British rule.

Among the pioneers of modern Sindhi literature, the most prominent name is that of Mirza Qaleech Baig. Along with him there is Doctor Gaur Bukhshani. There must have been many others like him. The Sindhi progressive movement is comparable to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's effort to bring Muslims closer to modern education.

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However, whereas Sir Syed's movement essentially targeted Muslims after they suffered heavy losses in the Revolt of 1857, the Sindhi movement has been essentially secular. It tried to lift the Sindhi people irrespective of their religion. It was not dominated by the Muslims. Infact, there were very few Muslims in this movement. More Hindus than Muslims were associated with this movement. Still it cannot be called a movement of Hindu nationalism. Interestingly the board which was set up to decide the script for Sindhi language was dominated by Hindus and its chairman was also a Hindu. The board decided on Arabic rather than Hindi or Gurmukhi script, a decision which can be considered the most powerful evidence to establish the secular character of Sindhi literary movement.

It is remarkable that there have not been reactionary tendencies in Sindhi literature. It has not been open to concepts of narrow nationalism. The best example of Sindhi literature's open spirit is Mirza Qaleech Baig. He is a prolific writer who has written more than sixty books which include novels, translations and adaptations from other literatures. His contribution to bring Western ideas to Sindhi literature is without a parallel. His adaptations have a unique quality. Thus, in his work titled *Zeenat* he successfully transported the world of English industrial society to his local Sindhi environment, introducing Muslim characters and providing a local colour to his narrative. A scholar of Persian and Arabic, he introduced fiction into Sindhi language. Essentially secular in outlook, he also produced remarkable work on language and linguistics including a book on Shah Abdul Latif's poetry.

After the arrival of the British, Sindhi literature acquired a definite shape. Works from the Western world and also from many Indian languages were translated. Fiction was a prominent beneficiary in this process. Grammar of Sindhi language was compiled. Modern type also came into existence in this period. After 1930, the impact of Indian social and political movement on Sindhi literature was more evident. The creative process in Sindhi literature received a boost.

Sufism is the most distinctive and dominant characteristic of Sindhi literature. Beginning with the first Sindhi poet Qazi Qazin to Shah Inayat, Shah Latif, Sachal Sarmast, Sami, Bekas and Bedil, all Sindhi poets were Sufis. Still instead of an escape from life or renunciation of life or making a fetish of shrine worship, there is a total involvement with life in the Sindhi poetry. Thus Shah Latif, undoubtedly the greatest Sindhi poet, is a Sufi but he is fully involved in the activities of life. On the one hand, he shows his involvement in the construction of Bhat Shah and on the other, he jumps headlong into love. Fairs interest him, as do the sermons. There is so much

of the ordinary lived life and so many shades of it in his work that one only wonders at his power of observation. He possesses so many dialects of the ordinary existence and so many songs, mannerisms and perceptions of the ordinary life which cannot be his if he were merely confined to the shrine.

From the very beginning a mixed culture developed on the shores of Sindh. Hindu and Muslim customs and traditions have had a mutual existence for such a long time in Sindh that the development of a composite culture in Sindh is not an accident. It was an inevitability. In fact, Sindhi culture is a synonym for this composite culture. Hindus of Sindh were influenced by the monotheistic philosophy of Islam. They also developed a detachment from idol worship. An attitude of tolerance and a realistic view of life were other influences accepted by them. Similarly many habits and patterns of local life gradually entered the lives of the Muslims. As a result of this in the northwest in general and Sindh in particular many Sufi and Bhakti institutions came into existence. Sufi elements are present in not only Sindhi poetry but in life in Sindh in general. What constitutes the Sufi character of Sindhi poetry? It consists of the spread of higher human values, love and brotherhood among human beings, search for truth wherever it may come from, love of the beauty of life, hatred against forces of oppression, and an exhortation to avoid those forces which turn the beauty of life into ugliness. These teachings are present in every religion but bad people exploit them for their own benefit and make these values ineffective. Sufi poets of Sindh have employed these Sufi beliefs in their poetry beautifully and effectively. They have used the traditional stories and tales of Sindh in their literary works in such a manner that they have come to life again. In their work there is a very true representation of Sindhi life. These Sufi poets have presented traditional Sindhi tales and stories in such a manner that they have become the chronicles of Sindhi life. The richness of Sindhi folklore is such that as many as forty-five volumes of these traditional stories and tales have been published. They contain all shades of folk life. There can be found in these stories tales, dialects, riddles, epigrams and all other pieces of interesting conversation which people may indulge at moments of leisure. One reason for the richness of Sindhi folklore is that in Sindh the traditions of different lands have come together. In Sindh can be found the influence of, among others, Punjabi, Bilochi, Qibali, Marwadi, and Gujarati traditions. This mixed culture has entered the Sufi poetry in a significant manner. As a result of these influences and because of the insistence on human values, the outlook of Sindhi literature

has essentially remained secular. It does not mean that the poets and writers had turned their back on their faith. It simply means that they promoted the universal and essentially humanist aspects of their religion which do not hurt the sensibilities of others.

The canvas of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's poetry is so wide that all aspects of life can be found in it. The experiences and sentiments of common people and their happiness and sorrow are beautifully represented in his poetry. His vocabulary is so large that it is a matter of surprise that he wrote in a language which had not produced any great poetry before him. He had the twin job of representing life and expanding and refining the language inherited by him.

In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that he is not only one of the greatest poets in Sindhi language but in other languages also he would have few parallels. A true and great artist is part of the world heritage irrespective of the language he uses as his medium. He or she surely has something distinctive about him/her. From this angle the most distinctive quality in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai is his power of observation and expression. He is a poet who has seen the world. He has not stuck to any one place for too long. He is familiar with each aspect of Sindh. When he talks of the Thar Desert he appears to be an inhabitant of Thar. The topography, the weather, the climate, the flora and fauna, the language, the dialect and the patterns of life that define the people of Thar Desert can be found in him. Similarly, when we see the description of 'Bahar Natran' in 'Sursa Mandri', which is purely an Indian custom, we see him thinking like a Hindu woman. According to this custom, women make a coffin of banana leaves and light it to flames. They then drop it in the river with a prayer that their loved ones who have left their village come back home safely. Shah Abdul Latif reminds us of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* in his description of Modav brothers' struggle against the sea. In the same manner when he represents the feelings of Marvi, in his *Age of Marvi*, the listener is full of emotions and his feelings for his native place reach their purest form. It is the magic of his expression that his tales are sung in even small fares in different places. In any case, in Sindh, there has been a close relationship between poetry and music and instead of bookish poetry there has flourished a kind of poetry which is accompanied by music. In fact, with this has developed a complete cultural climate. The large vocabulary of Shah consists of very expressive metaphors and similes which capture the essence of his subject. Despite expressing himself in a local lingo he succeeds in imparting universality to his work. It is because of this that a worldly person or even an atheist can get

delight from his work. Unfortunately, no proper scientific study of his work has been done so far. Dr Gaur Bukhshani has presented him as a mere Sufi philosopher and has interpreted Shah's couplets, compiled in *Shah Jo Risalo*, in a philosophical, spiritual and metaphorical context. In fact, the social context of his work which influenced Shah's poetry is not explored by Gaur Bukhshani. H.T. Sorally was the first critic who tried to understand Shah's poetry in a historical and social context. He tried to touch on the influences on Shah's poetry. He has also quoted the testimony of Italian traveller Manucci who travelled through Sindh in order to understand Shah's poetry. He has also used many documents of the East India Company which illuminate some aspects of Shah's work.

Local colour has always defined Sindhi poetry. Despite Arabs coming to Sindh and despite Persian being the official language in Sindh for a long time, Sindhi poetry remained rooted in tradition and locality.

The fusion of different cultures has always happened in Sindh and no culture has ever existed in its final pure stage in Sindh. Both Persian and Arabic influences did not last long. Arabs came to Sindh in a small number and they hardly brought any cultural capital which could have exerted a definite influence on Sindhi culture. Cultural influences travel through home and family. Arab men mostly came here without their families and they married and settled down in Sindh. They were influenced by Sindhi culture much more than they influenced it. The influence of Persian also remained confined to the court. In fact, courts and feudal lords in Sindh did not have the kind of grandeur that defined their counterparts in Lucknow, Delhi, Agra and Awadh. Sindh did not even have cities like Lucknow, Delhi and Agra. In fact, even during the relatively prosperous period of Khudmirs, Mir would sit on the floor with his courtiers. The gap between the feudal lords and their subjects in Sindh was not as wide as in other feudal lands. They were more like big Zamindars. It was rather a tribal system which fell short of being a fully feudal system. It did not have great influence on life.

Respect for others' faith is another remarkable element in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif, or for that matter, in Sindhi poetry as such. Sachal Sarmast, a poet very different from Shah Latif, whose poetry has more of the religious element, is essentially secular in his outlook. Apart from this another remarkable tendency in Sindhi poetry is its international concern. When Shah says "Oh God make all lands of the world fertile before sending water-filled clouds on my sky", he immediately reveals his love of all humanity.

Since the beginning of history, the valley of Sindh has been home to various world cultures. It has not made distinctions between eastern, western, northern and southern cultures. These cultures also included cultures such as Greek, feudal Arab and old Indian cultures. The remains of Mohenjo-Daro point to the fact that even five thousand years ago, there were trade relations between the people of Sindh and the Egyptian people. It is because of this cultural fusion that tolerance and coexistence have been the basic elements of Sindhi character. As recently as about five decades ago it was not unusual to see devout and religious Hindus folding their hands before a mosque and then ringing the temple bell and worshipping their idols. The threads of different cultures were woven in Sindhi culture. Sindh's Sufi poets played a very important role in creating this composite culture. Today a greater number of Hindus who migrated from Sindh to India celebrate the birth and death anniversaries of Shah Latif and Sachal Sarmast than they do in Sindh. It is because these two are their national poets too. Compared to them, Sami has not had the same kind of influence, for the reason that in terms of thought and style he is not quite in the same league as Shah and Sarmast.

Interestingly enough there has also been an influence of religion on the poetry of both Shah and Sarmast and both have taken up religious questions with a lot of devotion. However, in their expression of religious sentiment they neither hurt the religious sensibilities of others nor showed any religious bias. This is secularism of the highest degree which has respect for others' religious beliefs. Compare them with Hashim Thattvi, a very distinguished scholar who has very competently translated Quran in Sindhi language but has written against Sufi thought and has also written in favour of Muslim nationalism. Despite this Hashim Thattvi has not been able to exercise any influence on Sindhi thought because his ideas do not harmonize well with the basic Sindhi character. In Sindh, religious preachers and thinkers have not had the kind of influence exercised by the Sufis. A few religious teachers and scholars who gained prominence are the people who were not Sindhi natives. They were rather people who came from outside Sindh and settled down here. Even today one can see the influence of Sufi thought on the native Sindhi scholars, thinkers, intellectuals, and social workers. In other words Sufism is an integral part of Sindhi character.

As mentioned elsewhere in this text, the beginning of modern Sindhi literature took place with the writing of novels and short stories. With the coming of the British the influence of English

language and literature can be seen on Sindhi. The English people ruled Bengal for close to two hundred years. After the battle of Plassey in 1757, they exercised full control over Bengal. Gradually they took control of other parts of India as well. At last they came to Sindh in 1843. Thus they ruled over Sindh for about one hundred years. It is evident from this historical fact that they ruled over Bengal for a longer period and hence the English influence on Bengal and Bengali language is more definite as compared to its influence on other languages. Interestingly other languages acquired European influence not only directly through English language but also through Bengali. The first Bengali novelist was Bankim Chandra. The characters in his novels are often mendicants but they are quietly part of a movement against the British. In his novel *Anandmath* the 'Vande Mataram' song, which is now the song of Hindu nationalism, was introduced for the first time. This movement was similar to conservative Wahabi movement among Muslims which also raised its voice against the British. The literature which came into existence in Bengali and other Indian languages as a result of these movements was essentially nationalist in spirit. The Bengali literature of this period lacks the technical and stylistic complexity which we find in the later Bengali writings of writers like Tagore and Sarat Chandra. In poetry, Qazi Nazrul Islam distinguished himself as a revolutionary poet. Premchand and Sudarshan were other major writers of this period who talked of nationalism. Meanwhile, the Progressive Writers' Movement provided an ideological current to this revolutionary ferment which was especially manifested in the short stories of Krishan Chander, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Upendranath Ashq, Ismat Chughtai, Saadat Hasan Manto, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas and Balwant Singh. These writers were quite popular in Sindh. Their work displays a consciousness of social and economic issues. It can be said that the literature produced outside Sindh showed a revolutionary fervor. It was creating a political and social awakening. There was also a consciousness against exploitation of all sorts. This consciousness was given a shape by the Progressive Writers' Movement. From the time of Mirza Qaleech Baig Sindhi literature awakened to a new consciousness. People in Sindh seemed very enthusiastic to welcome the new ideas. In the beginning a great many works were translated from English into Sindhi. The contribution of Mirza Qaleech Beg in this respect has already been mentioned. Compared to the literature in other languages Bengali literature was more progressive and a greater number of English classics were already available in Bengali. Almost a similar situation prevailed in Hindi literature and

it also was familiar with the richness of European literature. Urdu has also seen a period of translation. Most Hindu writers of Sindh knew Hindi and Hindi bore the influence of Bengali. As a result Sindhi writers were exposed to the Western influence through their reading of Hindi, Bengali and Urdu literature. They benefitted a great deal from this exposure. In other words, Sindhi literature has acquired modern ideas not only through Sindhi translations of English texts but also through Bengali, Hindi and Urdu literature. Writers like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Premchand and Sudarshan were familiar names in Sindh. A journal titled *Sundar Sahitya* (Beautiful Literature) was launched in 1920 and it remained in circulation for more than twenty years. It played an important role in promoting modern literature. Thus, even before the beginning of the twentieth century the stage was set for modern Sindhi literature. During this period the literature of different languages, English and Indian, was available in Sindhi through translations and adaptations. The first long story and novel was written between 1920 and 1925. Qaleech Baig's novel *Zeenat* was also published during this period. In this cultural awakening a very important name was that of Shewak Bhojraj who started a movement for the development of children's life. He belonged to Motani family of Larkana and wrote three books. His first book titled *Ashirvad* (1933) was a story about young people who are full of new ideas. They participate in the national movement and go to jail. In jail they are transformed into revolutionaries and raise their voice against exploitation. This is essentially a story about the problems, passions and aspirations of the youth of the revolutionary times. His second book was titled *Dada Shyam* (1934) which was a story about the love of a school teacher for his student and was written against the backdrop of the nationalist movement. His third book, set against the tribal background of Shikarpur, includes stories about the Balochi region. All writers of this period were realist. They came from rural backgrounds and village is very much present in their stories in all its honesty and sincerity. Their stories are remarkably free from any air of affectation. All these works present a reflection of Sindh of the times. They present a portrayal of both the freedom movement as well as a reaction against social evils and conservatism.

In talking about the background of modern Sindhi literature it is important to discuss the efforts of some English and European scholars. Ernest Trumpp, a German philologist and missionary to Sindh Province, got *Shah Jo Risalo* published in modern type from Germany. He had also compiled the first Sindhi grammar. He also

promoted the use of modern type. In fact, all over India wherever the English people had influence, the English rulers, missionaries and priests adopted the regional Indian languages for their needs. They refined these languages and tried to fix some rules for them. Generally they tried to promote these languages. It happened in the case of Sindhi too and with the efforts of the Englishmen, local scholars and intellectuals, Sindhi established itself along with other established languages.

Progressive Writers' Association was formed in 1936. Though no branch of PWA was formally established in Sindh, Sindhi literature was taking the form of an organization. In the beginning some efforts were made at the individual level. In Shikarpur in 1940 Gobind Punjabi and Barkat Ali Azad jointly started a series of volumes entitled *Nai Duniya (New World)*. Its first volume was titled *Sard Aahe (Cold Sighs)* which included many stories by Gobind which were written in a new style and which addressed new problems. In the second collection Barkat Ali Azad published a translation of Peter Kropotkin's *Message to the Youth* which became highly popular not only at that time but was also published in many new editions in later years. Recently Muhammad Ibrahim Joyo has published another edition of this work. This work is an appeal to the youth to connect with the ordinary people in whichever field they want to excel, be it medicine, law, philosophy or engineering. At this time the publication of many literary magazines also promoted the cause of Sindhi literature. A magazine titled *Asha Saita Mandal* presented the translation of many important Hindi, Urdu and Bengali novels which are considered modern classics. A similar kind of magazine was published by the Sikhs of Hyderabad which presented the translation of classic works of Western writers. Later Jagat Advani started a magazine titled *Zindagi (Life)* which also published the translations and adaptations of the selected modern masterpieces of world literature. One magazine titled *Sindhu* which started from Jacobabad continued the trend of translations. From these details one can conclude that in the third and the fourth decade of the twentieth century Sindh was experiencing a literary wave. There was a competition among literary magazines and the individuals about who could present a better translation of literary works. It does not mean that no original works were produced during this period. Original novels and stories were produced though their number was limited. There was certainly a rawness about the original works in Sindhi. Readers were becoming familiar with the best in world literature through translations and adaptations. As a result their literary taste and sensibility was reaching a new plane.

Progressive literary movement formally started with the founding of 'Sindhi Adab Sangat' (Sindhi Literature Union) in 1945-46. But even before it was founded, progressive-minded young people were busy making their individual efforts. When Gobind Punjabi came to Karachi from Shikarpur, a group of progressive young men was already active in Karachi which took interest in literature too. This group included comrade Jamaluddin Bukhari, Gobind Mali, Ram Nijvani and me (Sobho Gianchandani). Apart from this, the students and teachers of D.J. College, which included professor Gurbakshani, Shaikh Ayaz Narayan, Shaikh Razaq and Sundari Uttam Chandani, constituted the progressive element. We held a socialist ideology and we wanted Sindhi literature to follow this path. There were many others with us, not socialist though, who held liberal views and who were interested in the development of Sindhi literature. At this time there was the dominant trend of translation in Sindhi literature and few original works were being produced. When I came out of prison in 1944, we launched a movement for original works in Sindhi and persuaded writers to produce ones in Sindhi. We started a magazine *Nai Duniya* which encouraged original works in Sindhi. In addition to this we also brought out a few collections of original stories. One of our collections of stories was titled *Sahrai Phool* (Flowers of Desert). We motivated Sindhi writers to produce original works on the line of Western literary masterpieces. We travelled in different parts of Sindh to prepare a favorable ground for 'Sindhi Literature Union'. Before Sindhi Literature Union, another half-formed organization, namely Sindhi Adabi Circle, was started under the leadership of professor Gurbakshani which later took the shape of Sindhi Literature Union.

Among others who were part of the progressive movement in Sindhi the names of Ehsan Badri, Kirat Babani, Sundri Uttamchandani and Roshan Mughal are worthy of mention. The prominent centres of the movement were Karachi and Hyderabad. After Gobind Punjabi left Shikarpur, it ceased to be an important centre of progressive movement. Later Shikarpur gained some prominence when Shaikh Ayaz settled there again and he started a paper titled *Aage Qadam* (*Forward Steps*). Three issues of this paper came out.

Another person who made his mark later was Hyder Bakhsh Jatoi. In his views on poetry he had progressive ideas. He wrote a long poem in the manner of Iqbal's 'Shikwa' and 'Jawab-e-Shikwa'. This poem so enraged Rashdi Brothers that they launched a movement against Jatoi. So much so that even a fatwa of blasphemy was passed against Jatoi. However, Jatoi was not part of the group that started progressive movement in Sindh.

The contribution of Mohammad Ibrahim Joyo in publishing

Sindhi literature in modern form and in expanding it intellectually and stylistically is very noteworthy. Ibrahim Joyo is largely responsible for giving Sindhi literature its present shape. His work started with the publication of the magazine titled *Mahrat*. With this magazine he encouraged the young talent and showed them a new way. A very widely read person, he is familiar with entire world literature. Because of the encouragement given by him to new writers, a new generation of Sindhi writers has come up.

Jamal Abru belongs to the post-Partition phase of writing. In fact, Sindhi Literature Union did most of its work after the Partition. After the Partition when many writers left Sindh and people belonging to a different culture and speaking different languages came to Sindh, there was a reaction against it. The change in political climate in Pakistan, in Sindh in particular, after 1950 filled Sindhis and other minorities with a sense of deprivation. This sense of deprivation reached its climax after the Pakistan government adopted one-unit programme. During the ten-year period of one-unit programme, all minority cultures, except that of the Punjabis, increasingly felt a sense of deprivation. A very strong kind of nationalism developed in regions other than Punjab. This nationalist consciousness and sensibility found an acute reflection in literature. During this entire period Sindhi Literature Union played a historic role in promoting and publishing the national literature of Sindh. It will not be wrong to say that Sindhi Literature Union symbolized Sindhi society's desire to organize Sindhi literature in a progressive framework. There was a time in Sindhi politics when opportunism and cheap intrigues were the order of the day. At that time Sindhi Literature Union was the only institution which continued a fight for the Sindhi language, literature, culture and the rights of common people. It was due to the valiant efforts of the young Sindhi writers, poets and intellectuals that even politicians had to pay heed to their words. They had to follow the path showed by these Young Turks.

This period also saw the beginning of a new era of poetry represented by Shaikh Ayaz, Tanwir Abbasi, Shamsherul Hyderi and Niyaz Humanyoun. Shaikh Niyaz had always been a representative poet of Sindh. However, it was after the creation of Pakistan, and particularly after the Sindhi nationalist reaction to Pakistan's one-unit policy, that he distinguished himself as the most effective, powerful and loudest nationalist poetic voice in Sindh. A very erudite person, Shaikh Ayaz was fully familiar with the heritage of Sindhi classical poetry as well as the classics of world literature. He possessed historical consciousness and aesthetic taste in equal measure. His

creative capacity was such that he tried his hands at every literary genre. Today any discussion of modern Sindhi poetry or short story cannot be completed without mentioning his contribution. His poems addressed to Gaut Bhattai entered the blood veins of Sindhi readers. In his work he evolved an idiom, not found anywhere else in Sindhi literature, which was a perfect blend of the classical and the modern. This entire period gets its identity from Shaikh Ayaz.

Because of his style and soft tone, Tanwir Abbasi also represents Sindhi character. Niyaz Humanyoun, on the other hand, is full of a revolutionary spirit. Apart from these two there is the important name of Abdul Karim Gadai, who had been writing poetry for a long time but would gain prominence during this period. Among the modern short story writers Jamal Abru, Ayaz Qadri, Shaikh Razzaq, Hameed Sindhi, Rasheed Bhatti, and Naseem Kharl are worthy of mention. In the last three decades, Sindhi literature has scaled new heights. A lot has been written in different genres of Sindhi literature which include, apart from Sindhi poetry and short story, criticism, research works, witty and humorous writings, personal essay, autobiography and travelogue. In other words all varieties of writing have seen growth.

The progressive situation in Sindh has been quite different from its counterpart in Urdu. In Urdu, the beginning of modern literature saw both progressive as well as reactionary elements. Later the progressive elements carved out a separate ideological position for themselves. In Sindh, the entire modern literature started with progressive ideas. From the very beginning, we had to struggle to produce original works in Sindhi. Translations and adaptations reigned supreme before we came on the scene. When we started our style of writing, as mentioned earlier, it had a technical and stylistic rawness about it which would be refined by later generation of writers.

The Partition affected the course of Sindhi literature. Before the Partition, most Sindhi writers in Sindh were Hindus. After the Partition, many Sindhi writers left for India and a vacuum was created. Only Ayaz, Ibrahim Joyo, Abdul Razzaq and Usman Diplai remained important names in Sindhi literature. Diplai was basically a Wahabi Muslim and he wrote against grave worship, Pir worship and Murshid worship. He also wrote against the oppression of Zamindars. At the same time he wrote books against the Congress, endorsing the viewpoint of the Muslim League much in the manner of Naseem Hijazi. Thus, in the beginning there were contradictory strands in his writing as he was a follower of Muslim League but was also a

progressive. After Pakistan was created and he saw the conditions in Sindh closely—political conspiracies and exploitative strategies—he also experienced the frustration which was experienced by all progressive writers. When Gobind Mali and I, to share an interesting incident, toured Sindh in 1945 in connection with progressive writers' movement, we also met Diplai. Diplai told us frankly that his and ours paths are different from each other. However, when we came out of the prison in 1952, Diplai was among those who welcomed us which obviously was a sign of the intellectual change in him. After that he became a part of the progressive movement and made friends with Ibrahim Joyo whose company he shunned in the past. A man good at publishing, he brought out a couple of literary magazines to promote the cause of progressive literature.

The writers who migrated from Sindh continued their literary activities even from the camps in which they were forced to live. In fact, there was an intensity in their efforts. They brought out *Nai Duniya (The New World)* from Bombay. These writers included Kirat Babani, Gobind Mali, Gobind Punjabi and Anand Golani. Gradually Ajmer and Hyderabad also became the centres of Sindhi literature and magazines and books would be published from these two places. The migrant writers from Sindh had to compete with Hindi and other languages and they needed to preserve their Sindhi identity. For this language and literature were the best means. When their writings were received in Sindh they were hugely influential because of their quality. Their popularity in Sindhi grew enormously and literature linked the two lands culturally and emotionally, a relationship which is still very strong. In the initial years after the Partition, the growth of literature in Sindh was slow but in the fifth and the sixth decade of the twentieth century, the development of Sindhi literature reached a crescendo. In particular there is no match in India for Shaikh Ayaz's poetry. Interestingly Shaikh Ayaz considers Narayan Shyam a better poet and talks of him very fondly. In my opinion Shaikh Ayaz is a far better poet. However, in fiction and other prose genres a lot of work has been done in India. It is remarkable that because of the efforts of Sindhi writers Sindhi is included among the national languages in multilingual India.

In the end I would like to underscore that in a matter of fifty years or so, Sindhi writers have expanded the canvas of Sindhi literature in India. However, the other aspect of this reality is very disappointing. In Pakistan's political history, the injustices done to Sindh have adversely affected the course of Sindhi language and literature. At the official level not much has been done for Sindhi language.

Unless a language is wedded to an economic cause, it cannot prosper. A Sindhi-knowing young man cannot procure employment. A language also prospers if it is made the medium of instruction. Sindhi has not got its due from this angle too.

A LANGUAGE WITHOUT A STATE: EARLY HISTORIES OF MAITHILI LITERATURE

Lalit Kumar

When we consider the more familiar case of India's new national language, Hindi, in relation to its so-called dialects such as Awadhi, Brajbhasha, and Maithili, we are confronted with the curious image of a thirty-year-old mother combing the hair of her sixty-year-old daughters.

—SITANSHU YASHASCHANDRA

The first comprehensive history of Maithili literature was written by Jayakanta Mishra (1922-2009), a professor of English at Allahabad University, in two volumes in 1949 and 1950, respectively. Much before the publication of this history, George Abraham Grierson (1851-1941), an ICS officer posted in Bihar, had first attempted to compile all the available specimens of Maithili literature in a book titled *Maithili Chrestomathy* (1882).¹ This essay analyses Jayakanta Mishra's *History* in dialogue with Grierson's *Chrestomathy*, as I argue that the first history of Maithili literature was the culmination of the process of exploration of literary specimens initiated by Grierson, with the stated objective of establishing the identity of Maithili as an independent modern Indian language. This journey from *Chrestomathy* to *History*, or from Grierson to Mishra, helps us understand not only the changes Maithili underwent in more than sixty years but also comprehend the centrality of the language-dialect debate in the history of Maithili literature. A rich literary corpus of Maithili created a strong ground for its partial success, not in the form of Mithila getting the status of a separate state, but in the official recognition by the Sahitya Akademi in 1965 and by the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in 2003. A proper examination of Maithili literary history is bound to remain inseparable from the study of language, for the first history of Maithili literature was avowedly written with the objective of validating the distinctive identity of Maithili. An attempt to examine the question as to what took the Akademi more than fifteen and

the Indian Constitution more than fifty years after Independence to accord literary and official-linguistic recognition respectively to a language, which had more than a six hundred-year long tradition of 'written' literature, takes us back to some of the debates originating in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

A Tripartite Contestation: Hindi, Bengali and Maithili

In an article titled "Kavirāj Govindadās Jha" published in "Mithilank" (1936), the special issue of the Maithili periodical *Mithila Mihir*; Narendranath Das reflects on the cultural appropriation of the seventeenth century Maithili poet Govindadās by Bengali literary historians:

As Bengalis under some illusion turned Vidyapati into a Bengali poet by inventing his Bengali parents, finding his imaginary birth place in Bengal, and even calling his patron, the Oinwar dynasty ruler Shiv Singh, a Bengali zamindar, so all the stories related to the life of Govindadās were fabricated in Bengali literature. (Das 1936, p. 38. Translation mine)

The author here extends his gratitude to Nagendranath Gupta for debunking the myth that Vidyapati was the only eminent poet in Maithili literature, for Gupta discovered Govindadās while compiling Vidyapati's *padavali* in Mithila (p.39). The issue of cultural appropriation of the major poets of Maithili literature by the Bengali and Hindi literary historians was raised by Amarnath Jha in the foreword to Jayakanta Mishra's *History of Maithili Literature* (1949). Jha argued that out of the three major literary icons of Maithili—Vidyapati, Govindadas, and Jyotirisvara—the first two were appropriated by the supporters of either Bengali or Hindi. He maintained further that on the one hand, the foremost literary figure of Maithili, Vidyapati "had been claimed for many years to be a Bengali poet and is now being claimed with even less justification to be a poet of Hindi", and on the other, Govindadās was also "thought at one time to be Bengali poet, though the kind attentions of Hindi scholars have not yet been turned to him" (Mishra 1949, p. ii).

The controversy arising from the cultural appropriation of various Maithili literary icons by Bengali and Hindi historians stems from the fact that Maithili was often called a dialect of either Bengali or Hindi. In an article published in the "Mithilank", the editor argued that outside Mithila, Maithili was often called a "dialect of Eastern Hindi", and Mithila a "colony of Bengal" whereas some also called Maithili merely "Bengal kā joothan" [leftover of Bengal] (Mithilank 1936, p. 166).²

Whether the local languages of Bihar—Maithili, Bhojpuri and Magahi—are dialects or independent languages has been one of the central and recurring questions to understand the Maithili linguistic and literary culture. This debate has equally preoccupied European philologists, administrators and the local intelligentsia of Bihar in both pre-Independence and post-Independence periods, ever since language became an object of study for the orientalists in South Asia. The earliest attempts to produce a complete history of Maithili literature did not remain unaffected by this dispute. In 1947, a Council for Hindi was constituted at Allahabad University, which proposed to bring out a comprehensive history of Hindi literature in three volumes. The council decided to include Awadhi, Marwari, Bundeli, Bhojpuri and Maithili literature in its third volume. When Mahamahopadhyaya Umesh Mishra (1895-1967), a professor of Sanskrit at Allahabad University and a renowned Maithili intellectual, was asked to contribute an article on Maithili literature for the volume, he refused outrightly and resisted any attempt made by the Hindi intellectuals to absorb and assimilate the history of Maithili literature into Hindi literary history. Citing the status of Maithili as an independent literary language, he argued that its history could have been included in a volume dedicated to modern Indian languages, but not in a book on the history of Hindi literature (Brass 1975, p. 70). Speaking on behalf of the Maithili language he wrote on 9 October 1947 in the Maithili periodical *Mithila Mihir* that the proposed history of Hindi literature shows the unwillingness of the Hindi-speaking people to acknowledge Maithili as a separate language. He further appealed to the readers of *Mithila Mihir* to ensure that Maithili is not to be associated with Hindi under any circumstances. He also requested other Maithili scholars not to ever contribute anything on Maithili literature to Hindi books (cited in Brass, p. 70). Thus, he saw the incorporation of Maithili literary history into history of Hindi literature as an act of absorption and assimilation of the Maithili language and resisted the Hindi coup in the contestation between Hindi and Maithili. The dispute over the writing of Maithili literary history was almost resolved two years later, when Umesh Mishra's son, Jayakanta Mishra, carried forward his father's legacy by producing a comprehensive history of Maithili literature in 1949.

Umesh Mishra had expressed his desire to include the literary history of Maithili under a volume on modern Indian Languages, but the biggest impediment to Maithili getting official recognition as a distinct language was its erroneous identification in the colonial

imagination either as a dialect of Bengali or Hindi or its construction as a *ganwāri boli* [language of peasants]. In a letter written in September 1934, Bholā Lal Das, one of the pioneers of Maithili journalism and founder of Maithili Sahitya Parishad, Laheriasarai, appealed to George Abraham Grierson, who was living in England after his retirement from the Indian Civil Services, to help him revive “the dying Maithili culture” (letter cited in Jha 2013, p. 196).

Das lamented that due to “serious misconception regarding this language and literature” (p. 196), prevalent mainly among the colonial officials and the intelligentsia, some officials continued to reject it as a dialect, notwithstanding Grierson’s assertion made in his various works, including his *Linguistic Survey* (1903), *Grammar* (1881) and “A Plea for the People’s Tongue” (1880), that Maithili is not a dialect but a language. Questions of misconception, omission, exclusion, marginalization, *dialectization*, and above all misidentification are central to the examination of the history of the Maithili language and literature. The classification of Maithili as a dialect of either Bengali or Hindi continued in post-Independence period as well, not only in various Census reports³ but also in an institution like Sahitya Akademi till 1965, when Maithili was eventually accorded the status of a distinct modern Indian language. Jayakanta Mishra in his passionate speech entitled “The Case of Maithili” delivered before the Akademi in 1963 contended that the difficulty in officially recognizing Maithili as an independent modern Indian language stemmed from the “imaginary theories of classifying Indian languages in the late 19th century” and the confusion “prevailed among a few English educated people.” For Mishra, this anomaly was still apparent in the way the Sahitya Akademi regarded Maithili Classics “as belonging simultaneously to both Hindi and Bengali” (Mishra 1963, p. 4.).

Jayakanta Mishra in his book *A History of Maithili Literature* (1949) and George Abraham Grierson in *Maithili Chrestomathy* (1882), respond to the language-dialect debate with two different but interrelated sets of concerns, and attempt to establish the identity of Maithili as a language, a lifelong preoccupation of Mishra. The question why the first history of Maithili literature was published in 1949 with the proclaimed objective of asserting the identity of Maithili as a language in its own right can be answered in the context of the renewal of the demand for separate provinces on linguistic grounds in various parts of India immediately after Independence. Although the Congress had supported the linguistic provinces in free India as early as 1917, Nehru was a little reluctant to enforce

linguistic redistribution, given the depressing atmosphere of violence unleashed by the partition (Guha 2007, p. 180). However, Gandhi always supported the subject of linguistic states in principle. Speaking on the issue of the formation of states on linguistic grounds, Mahatma Gandhi said in a prayer meeting held on 25 January 1948 that “there should be as many provinces in the country as there are major languages”, referring to what the Congress party had decided some twenty years ago (Cited in Guha 2007, p. 182). The demand for the formation of a separate state of Mithila was first formally made in a resolution passed at a meeting of the Maithil Mahasabha in 1940 and reiterated by the Darbhanga Maharaja in various meetings of the Maithil Mahasabha (Brass p 53). Paul Brass, in his fascinating work *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (1975), has analysed the reasons for the failure of the Maithili movement in getting a separate state on linguistic grounds. During the 1940s, demand for a separate state for the Maithili speaking tracts of Mithila was repeatedly raised and therefore Maithili’s claim for the status of a modern Indian language, with a rich literary heritage reinforced by the first history of Maithili literature, was a significant exercise in the history of the Maithili language.

Grierson’s *Chrestomathy*

The first anthology of ‘all’ the existing materials available in Maithili literature was brought out by George Abraham Grierson in 1882 in his *Maithili Chrestomathy and Vocabulary*. His original plan was to publish this *Chrestomathy*, along with, what he had originally titled as *An Introduction to the Maithili Language of North Bihar Containing a Grammar, Chrestomathy, and Vocabulary* in 1880 but owing to the delay in printing, *Grammar* was published first in 1881, followed by *Chrestomathy and Vocabulary* together in 1882.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, Greeks had the usefulness of knowledge in mind when they created *chrestomathy* from their adjective *chrēstos*, which means “useful,” and the verb *manthanein*, which means “to learn”. Grierson must have had the usefulness of knowledge in mind, for he had primarily written his *Grammar* and *Chrestomathy* for the British officials. However, what I suggest here is that Grierson’s work was written partly with a desire to make colonial officials aware of Maithili and partly due to his love for Vidyapati’s verses, which have been included in his *Chrestomathy*.

Expressing his love for Maithili, Grierson wrote in 1934, in response to a letter from Bhola Lal Das, that “he has admired [Maithili] ever

since, some sixty years ago he first came across the beautiful poems of Vidyapati” (Jha 2013, p 205). He had shown a similar kind of admiration for Maithili in another letter written earlier in 1933 from Camberley, England to the Maharaja of Darbhanga Kameshwar Singh praising “Vidyapati’s literary powers” and informing the Maharaja of his translation of Vidyapati’s *Purusha Pariksha* into English (p. 182).

Grierson begins his bilingual *Chrestomathy* (in Maithili along with his English translation) with the claim that: “This reading book contains all the Maithili literature I have been able to collect” (Grierson 1882, p. 1). He had selected seven examples of the Maithili language and literature prevalent among various castes and religious sects of Mithila. These specimens, which appear in this very order in the anthology, include a letter written by a Durmil Jha to a *musammāt* (widow); song of King Salhes, which was popular among the so called ‘lower castes’ of the region; Marsiā, sung by the Muslims of the region during Muharram for commemorating the death of the brothers Hassan and Husain; Nāg songs, sung by the lower class women of the region, who during the rainy season beg from door to door singing in honour of Snake god; songs of 1873-74 famine, popularly known as Kavitā akālī, composed by one Fatūrī Lāl, in a language that was a mixture of Maithili and Braj; poems of the fourteenth century poet Vidyāpati, the names of whose ancestors and descendants have been listed in order to validate his historicity; and Vaishnava poems of a contemporary poet Harshnath.

Grierson’s anthology, thus, in its all-inclusive model not only captures the continuity between the medieval fourteenth century Maithili poet Vidyapati and his own contemporary Harshnath, [both composed erotic love poetry in the Vaishnav tradition] but also the heterogeneity of Maithili. This eclectic tradition of Maithili is apparent in the book in folk songs and tales, which were popular among the ‘lower’ caste, Muslims, ‘lower class’ women and in contemporary tales of famine. The famine tales praised the concerted rescue efforts of the British Raj and the Darbhanga Raj during the Bihar famine of 1873-74.

Mishra’s *History*

The pursuit of literary specimens of Maithili was carried forward by Jayakanta Mishra in the first full-fledged history of Maithili literature, which was originally written for his D.Phil at Allahabad University under the supervision of Amarnath Jha. Before I go on to interpret this literary history in dialogue with Grierson’s work, I have

very briefly analysed the content of this history, including the major genres, poets, playwrights and novelists. Mishra in his book divides the entire Maithili literary history into three parts: Early Maithili Literature (1300-1600), Middle Maithili Literature (1600-1860) and New Maithili Literature (1860 to the present day). Early Maithili literature was represented primarily by Vidyapati's poetry, lyrics called Nacāri and Mahesavāni sung in praise of Lord Shiva. Other prolific poets included Vidyapati's contemporaries and successors like Chandrakala, Amrtakara, Bikhari Mishra, and Lakshminatha (between c. 1400-1527), who mainly composed love poems for the pleasure of the court in imitation of Vidyapati (Mishra 1949, p 199). The middle period was known for *Kirtaniya* plays, which were composed of songs alone, and were popularized by playwrights like Ramadasa Jha, Devananda, and Umapati Upadhyaya during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in Mithila and Nepal. If Vidyapati and his predecessor Jyotirisvara have been celebrated as the major poet and prose author respectively by Mishra in early Maithili literature, in the modern period Chanda Jha (1831-1907) and Harimohan Jha (1908-84) occupy the same position as poet and novelist respectively. Mishra names an entire age after Chanda Jha, who was the court poet of the Maharaja Lakshmeshwar Singh of Darbhanga and famous for composing *Mithilabhasha Ramayana* (1898) and translating Vidyapati's *Purusha-Pariksha* (1889) from Sanskrit into Maithili. Although novels like Rasabiharilaladasa's *Sumati* (1918), Janardan Jha's *Shashikala* (1915) and Punyananda Jha's *Mithila-Darpan* (1914), were written before the advent of Harimohan Jha on the literary scene, he is the most widely read novelist of Mithila today, as Mishra argues. His *Kanyadan* (1930-33) and *Dviragamana* (1943), were widely appreciated for presenting the conflict between tradition and modernity, the old and the new in a humorous fashion (Mishra 1950, p. 37).

To resume the act of reading Grierson and Mishra together, it would be worthwhile to mention here that the supporters of Maithili pay homage to Grierson by often drawing on his extensive research done on Maithili in order to defend it against those who reject its claim as an independent language, whereas its opponents maintain a strategic silence on Grierson's work. Mishra, too, pays tribute to Grierson by quoting from his *Grammar* and carrying forward some of the questions raised by him. He begins the preface with a sentence from Grierson's Maithili *Grammar* which reiterates the inclusive model of the Maithili language and emphasizes that Maithili is the mother tongue of "all the Hindus and Muhammadans, who inhabit

the great plain which is bounded on the North and South by the Himalayas and the Ganges, and on the East and West by the Kosi and the Gandak respectively” (Mishra 1949, Preface p. xiii).

The above-mentioned statement that Mishra cites from Grierson not only focusses on the territorial unity of the Mithila region but also defines Maithili as an inclusive language. One of the accusations that has been levelled against Maithili and its supporters is that it is the language of upper castes, in particular that of Brahmins and Kayasthas. The opening sentence puts an end to all possibilities of any form of exclusion based upon caste and religion in the first history of Maithili literature by reiterating Grierson’s statement that Maithili is the mother tongue of “all the Hindus and Muhammadans.”

On the opening page of the preface to his book, Mishra cites another extract from Grierson in order to discuss his objective behind writing this history. The second quote, which has been extensively appropriated and cited by the Maithili enthusiasts, helps him establish the identity of Maithili as an independent language. Citing from Grierson, he maintains “Maithili is a language and not a dialect” and argues further that “it differs from both Hindi and Bengali, both in vocabulary and in grammar, and is as much a distinct language from either of them as Marathi or Uriya” (Mishra 1949, p. xiii). In fact, not only does Mishra revisit this question but also argues that in order to prove Grierson’s assertion that “Maithili is a language, and not a dialect”, he decided to produce this literary history. In other words, the desire to prove the authenticity and independence of Maithili as a language, was the driving force behind the production of the first history of Maithili literature. Mishra expresses his desire to prove Grierson’s claim and carry forward his legacy in these terms: “My primary aim in writing a History of Maithili Literature in the following pages has been to investigate and to establish the truth of the great philologist and scholar” (Mishra 1949, p. xiv).

Mishra’s history of Maithili literature responds to two significant debates, which are at the heart of the Maithili linguistic and literary culture: one is the association of Maithili with the so-called upper castes of the region; and the other is the language dialect controversy. In fact, any secondary work done on Maithili cannot avoid responding to these two central questions. My intention behind analysing Mishra’s preface is to examine the ways in which he responds to these two questions. On the opening page of his preface, he not only attempts to answer them but also tries to find evidence to substantiate Grierson’s claim about the inclusive model of Maithili on the one hand, and its independent existence, on the other.

Expressing his dissatisfaction with existing scholarship on the Maithili language and literature and its representation, he observes that this language has been “much neglected, vilified, and misrepresented during the last two generations”. (Mishra, p xiii). If Mishra finds fault with the last two generations for misrepresenting Maithili, Suniti Kumar Chatterji, who wrote the introduction to this book, leaves the onus of nourishing Maithili on the next two generations by contending that “the next two generations will decide the fate of Maithili for ever” (Mishra 1949, Introduction p. v).

The act of writing a literary history then becomes a step towards defending Maithili against those who challenged its independent existence on the grounds of absence of a rich literary corpus. The discovery and compilation of a rich literary heritage were important exercises, as both the local scholars and the Orientalists had acknowledged that unlike Bhojpuri and Magahi, Maithili had a written literature.⁴ Any analysis of Maithili literary history, thus, is inseparable from the study of the language, for history of literature here is being written with the objective of validating the authenticity and distinctive identity of the language. Thus Mishra “investigate[s] and establish[es]” Grierson’s claim by compiling and analysing a corpus of Maithili literature that he procured from his visit to various libraries of India, Nepal and the personal collection of local intellectuals. He also drew heavily on the regional histories produced earlier, such as Shyam Narayan Sinha’s *History of Tirhut* (1922) and Parameshvara Jha’s *Mithilatattvavimarsha* (1949). The active pursuit of a rich literary heritage of Maithili becomes an important exercise for both Grierson and Mishra in order to prove the distinctiveness of Maithili, as Grierson in order to distinguish a language from a dialect does not take into account the test of the mutual unintelligibility but includes the two other factors of “nationality and literature”. Grierson argues elsewhere that despite having a common grammatical form and vocabulary, Assamese is not called a dialect of Bengali because of its rich literary heritage and separate nationality. (Grierson *LSI*, 1903 Introduction, p. 24.)

In drawing the comparison between Grierson’s anthology and Mishra’s *History of Maithili Literature*, my primary objective is to see how the first history of Maithili literature not only accomplishes Grierson’s incomplete task and builds upon the sources available in this anthology but also excludes many of them. The first five specimens of Maithili collected by Grierson, which were popular among the ‘lower caste’ and lower class women, hardly find space (except the Marcia songs) in Mishra’s literary history. Although

he briefly mentions Maithili folk literature, in particular, the long romantic tales in verse called *Gita-kathas* (popular ballads), he seldom mentions the popular tales collected by Grierson.

The two poets common in both Grierson's anthology and Mishra's literary history are Vidyapati and Harshnath. Although Jayakanta Mishra dwells on Vidyapati at length, he calls *Varna-Ratnakar* (c.1324) "first entirely undisputed work which stands at the head of Maithili Literature" (Mishra 1950, p 119). *Varna-Ratnakar* was discovered by Pandit Haraprasad Shastri in the last decade of the nineteenth century and has ever since played a crucial role in the canon formation of Maithili literature. This fourteenth century prose work written in the genre of *varnan* or description, is divided into seven chapters, each of which provides detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects, including Nāyaka, Nāyika, pimp, prostitute, palace, seasons, Bhata (bard) and several others. There is no denying that there exists a big gap of almost more than sixty-five years between the publication of Grierson's anthology and Mishra's history, and during this gap Maithili underwent immense transformation with the advent of Maithili print, rise of modern Maithili prose, discovery and the subsequent publication of old Maithili manuscripts, and above all the institutionalization of Maithili literary studies in several universities of India, including those of Calcutta, Patna and Banaras. The inclusion of Maithili as a main subject in several universities of India gave a new impetus to the publication of books in Maithili for pedagogic purposes. Therefore unlike Grierson who was faced with a dearth of literary samples while compiling his anthology, Mishra could engage in inclusion, exclusion and expansion accessing a wide range of literary pieces.

The dearth of literary materials may have forced Grierson to include not only songs and poems, both oral and written, but also a letter written by a widow in Maithili. One of the important departures that we see in Mishra, as a consequence of the expansion of the Maithili literary canon, is the split between the written and the folk, which did not exist in Grierson's *Chrestomathy*. Grierson in organizing a wide range of genres of Maithili literature did not create any split between the high literature and the low literature, between the love poetry of Vidyapati and the popular songs of 'lower' class and caste. The love poetry of Vidyapati and Harshnath, in fact, appear at the end of *Chrestomathy* notwithstanding the fact that Grierson collects them first and praises these polished verses for neatness of expression. His effusive praise for these verses is not predicated on the perceived hierarchies between genres but reflects his attempt to

distinguish the real Vidyapati of Mithila from the pseudo-Vidyapatis of Bengal, who lacked the refinement of the former⁵.

Expansion of Canon

Immediately after the publication of his literary history, Mishra came up with another work called *An Introduction to the Folk Literature of Mithila* (1950), which along with the earlier published history made the history of Maithili literature a complete work, as the latter addressed the problem of exclusion of some genres. What distinguishes this work on folk literature from the previous *History* is that those specimens of folk which Grierson had included in his anthology and which were excluded by Mishra from his literary history in 1949, resurface in this 1950 text. If Mishra had acknowledged the contribution of Grierson's *Grammar* in enabling him to produce his literary history, here he accepts the contribution of *Chrestomathy*. Acknowledging Grierson's contribution to the folk-lore of Mithila, Mishra writes: "Sir George Grierson is known to have been the first scholar who tried to collect Maithila [sic] folklore in such works as *Bihar Peasant Life*, *Maithili Chrestomathy*, *Bihari Grammars* and *Dina Bhadraka Git* and *Nebaraka Git*" (Mishra 1950, p.2). Although Grierson had included not only folk literature of Maithili but also the written works of Vidyapati and a contemporary poet Harshnath, Mishra refers mainly to folk literature because Grierson in the absence of printed books available in Maithili perceived it primarily as a *boli* [spoken language]. Grierson has captured this major problem that he encountered in the introduction to his *Grammar and Chrestomathy*: "Maithili is a *boli* in the literal sense of the word. Beyond a history of Krishna and the songs of Vidyapati Thakur I know of no literary work which it possesses. It is emphatically a spoken language" He had also expected that his current work will attempt to "fix a standard" for the language and "foster a literature" (Grierson 1882, p. 2). Mishra not only acknowledges Grierson in his work on folk literature and includes the oral compositions that Grierson had compiled but expands the list further and includes the religious tales called *Vratkathas*, which were widely popular and considered sacred among women.

In Mishra, unlike Grierson, we can clearly see the split between the folk and the written, despite his awareness of the difficulties in drawing a line between these two branches of literature. Referring to the difficulties involved in drawing the line between the high and the folk literature in the context of Maithili, Mishra writes:

It is very difficult to point out the differences between the Literature proper and the folk literature of a Vernacular. For the very fact that something is composed in a vernacular is often taken to mean that it is not composed in the literary medium of the learned. From this point of view all vernacular literatures are folk literatures, literature of the common folk. (Mishra 1950, p. 1)

Mishra's intriguing claim about all vernacular literatures being folk literatures would have been an appropriate one had he said this about the condition of the Maithili language and literature of Grierson's times. By the 1950s, the status of Maithili had undergone titanic transformation with the expansion of its canon. It seems to me therefore, that the above mentioned analysis would be an anachronistic reading of Maithili.

If one forgets the author here for a second and looks at the methodology employed by both Grierson and Mishra, one will be tempted to say that the former is the author of these sentences, not the latter. It is ironic that Mishra, who had earlier created separate categories for folk literature and literature proper without mentioning any such theoretical division, discusses the difficulties involved in separating them. For him, as argued earlier, it could become possible to make this division due to the abundance of written and oral materials in the public domain in the 1940s, which was not the case during Grierson's times. If Grierson laments the unavailability of Maithili literature in the public domain and expresses his desire to transform the status of Maithili, Mishra had no such problem of paucity of materials for either his history of literature or his work on folk lores.

Reflecting upon the abundance and variety of folk literature in Mithila, Mishra contends that although he has tried in the present work to demonstrate the "variety and literary richness of Maithili folk-poetry", it has not been possible for him "to do full justice" to the "enormous material at our disposal in such a brief space" (Mishra 1950, p.3). To locate this dichotomy between the folk and the written is not to suggest that he rejects the importance of folk literature; rather his work on folk can be read in dialogue with his literary history as these two works put together complete his project. Reading them together also helps one address the historical and administrative inaccuracies in calling Maithili either a peasant dialect or a dialect of Hindi, as folk is brought back to the centre of literary attention after the publication of this work. Reading Mishra's History and his work on folk literature in dialogue with Grierson's *Chrestomathy* helps us understand the kind of transformation that the Maithili language

and literature underwent in a span of almost sixty to seventy years. From Grierson's complaint that "beyond a history of Krishna and the songs of Vidyapati Thakur I know of no literary work" to Mishra's claim of having an "enormous material at our disposal", Maithili traversed a long journey with the advent of colonial modernity and the rise of a modern Maithili literary culture. Although Grierson and Mishra were being driven by two different sets of concerns while producing their works, Mishra not only completed the task that Grierson had started by exploring the rich corpus of Maithili literature but also responded to the most important question of the dialect versus language, which Grierson was one of the earliest colonial officials to answer with a sympathetic viewpoint for the languages and literatures of Bihar.

Notwithstanding Mishra's attempts to explore the rich literary tradition of Maithili in his *History of Maithili literature* and a lifelong desire to substantiate Grierson's claim that Maithili is a language, it took Maithili more than fifty years after Independence to get constitutional recognition. Mishra's literary history was preceded by his contemporary Ramakanta Jha's *Maithili Sahityaka Itihasa*, which was never printed, and its manuscript remained with its author at the time of publication of Mishra's history in 1949 (quoted in Mishra p.68). The first comprehensive history of Maithili literature, then, was the outcome of a three-stage transition: first, the literary consciousness of the Maithili community was expressed within the early regional histories; second, the availability of Grierson's *Chrestomathy*, and third, the eventual 1949 history of Maithili literature.

Mishra's literary history has been followed by other histories like those of Shrikrishnakant Mishra's *Maithili Sahityak Itihasa* (1955), Radhakrishna Chaudhary's *A Survey of Maithili Literature* (1974), Durganath Jha 'Shreesh's *Maithili Sahityak Itihasa* (1983), Devkanta Jha's *History of Modern Maithili Literature* (2004) and a few others; but Grierson's *Chrestomathy* and Mishra's *History of Maithili Literature* represent two significant historical junctures in the biography of Maithili and are widely cited and appreciated for their attempts at producing the rich literary heritage of Maithili.

Although Grierson had attempted to establish its identity as a distinctive language, the claim of Maithili as an independent language was almost muffled in the colonial period by the Hindi juggernaut and the ongoing Hindi-Urdu conflict. Maithili's misidentification either as a dialect of Bengali or Hindi played a major role in undermining its status as a separate language for long. In the colonial period Oriya was also claimed by the Bengali scholars as a

dialect of Bengali but unlike Maithili, it did not lose its script with the advent of the printing press and could establish its claim as a distinct language. In post-Independence period this controversy resurfaced but the problem of the anachronistic reading of linguistic history, in calling a six hundred-year old language a dialect of a relatively new umbrella-language Hindi, was almost settled after the distinctiveness of Maithili was acknowledged by the Sahitya Akademi and the Indian Constitution.

Notes

1. In the early 'regional' histories of Mithila written since the 1880s we come across cursory mentions of the literary tradition of Maithili. For instance, Bihari Lal Fitrat's *Aina-i-Tirhut* (1882) written in Urdu, Ras Biharilal Das's *Mithila Darpan* (1915) in Hindi, Shyamnarayan Singh's *History of Tirhut* (1922) in English, and Parameshwar Jha's *Mithilatattvavimarsha* (written between 1910-1918 and published in 1949) in Maithili briefly catalogue and describe Maithili authors.
2. The article ironically titled "Gonujha ki Nasdani" [Gonujha's Snuffbox] was published in the form of letter to the editor under the fictional name of a legendary figure of Mithila called Gonu Jha. However, given the length and serious content of the article, one can assume that it was written by the editor, as the essay in its satirical reflections bemoaned the difficulties in finding readers for Maithili periodicals both in and outside Mithila, where Maithili was looked down upon as the leftover of Bengali.
3. The confusion over the issue of language and dialect continued to plague the Indian officials even after Independence as late as the *Census of India 1961*. In this census, under the section "Languages of Bihar", while there are separate entries on Bengali and Oriya and the number of speakers in each language, the entry on Maithili says: "Please see Hindi". The other two languages Bhojpur and Magahi have been dropped all together. See, *Census of India 1961, Vol 1, Para II C. 'Language Tables'*, p viii.
4. See, Grierson, *Grammar*, Introduction, p xiii. Grierson for the sake of convenience classifies Maithili as a dialect of non-existent and imaginary standard language Bihari, which should not be confused with Hindi. He maintains that "Maithili is the only one of the Bihari dialects which has a literary history". The other two Bihari dialects, according to Grierson, are Bhojpur and Magahi.
5. Grierson suggests that for Bengalis, Vidyapati's verses, were hard to grasp. His verses therefore were twisted or either expanded or shortened and rendered into a "bastard language," which was neither Bengali nor Maithili initially and gradually it became closer to Bengali. Once this hybrid language was developed a host of imitators came up, who composed songs in the name of Vidyapati, but the compositions of these Vidyapatis lacked the "polish and felicity of expression" of the original. See Grierson, *Chrestomathy*, p 34.

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JAKARI: LIFE-SONGS OF HARYANVI WOMEN

Devender Kumar

Folk narratives, especially those of women, destabilize and deconstruct the dominant ideology of a society while using the popular modes and motifs of the folk tradition. Woman is both the object and the subject of desire. Sometimes she is constructed in very traditional terms as alluring, seductive, mysterious, irrational, and also unknowable with unfathomable depths. The feminists usually oppose the propagation of such an image of womanhood and call it a male view about a woman to justify her exclusion from the realm of power, politics and decision-making. As the 'eternal puzzle', a woman is portrayed as incapable of questioning and fighting actual oppression. She, thus, ultimately becomes an object to be desired, explored and possessed. The same woman becomes an active agent to the best of her abilities when she has her own desires especially the sexual ones to express. There are many songs and anecdotes in Haryanvi folklore about this kind of a woman. She is depicted as attracted towards some exotic character mostly an outcaste and expressing her desires and longings openly. To fulfil those desires, she can invent any guile to dupe the custodians of patriarchy. In such matters, the relationship between/among women themselves turns out to be that of female trust, understanding and friendship. The portrayal of a woman expressing her desire openly and unabashedly is revolutionary in a culture that strongly emphasizes female sexual passivity. Keeping these facts belonging to the 'private domain' of women in mind, this paper analyses the obvious universal stereotypes of woman projected in Haryanvi women's folk songs. Jakari, a significant genre of Haryanvi women's folk songs, is used as the primary text to study a woman's 'inner world' in her own words.

Haryanvi peasant women's folksongs can be divided broadly into the following categories: 1. Ritualistic songs; 2. Seasonal songs; 3. Bhajans; and 4. Jakari. Ritualistic songs comprise mainly birth songs, marriage songs and elegies. Seasonal songs consist of songs sung exclusively during a particular season. For instance, *Samman songs* are sung during the month of Shraavan, the season of rain and clouds;

Fagan songs are sung in the month of Falgun, the season of mirth and merriment; *Katyak songs* are sung in the month of Kartik, the time to propitiate gods and deities, and so on. *Bhajans* are mainly sung by old women during a religious gathering or at the time of some elder person's death. *Jakari* songs are unique in the sense that they can be sung on any occasion except that of death. *Jakari* songs are of utmost significance as I find them representing an important segment of a young Haryanvi peasant woman's life: the segment beginning with her coming of age (attaining puberty) to her becoming the mother especially of a son (attaining motherhood). This is actually the most crucial phase in the life of a woman during which she undergoes most of the drastic upheavals of her life: She undergoes hormonal changes affecting her mental make up permanently; she is married off to an unknown man; she is migrated to her conjugal home from her natal home for life; there in her natal home she is faced with the task of establishing her identity as a trustworthy member of the family; she has to bear male child to ensure the progeny of her conjugal clan. In this regard, *Jakarīs* are the most authentic available accounts of a woman's displacement and re-establishment. She is forced due to patrilineal norms to migrate from her place of birth and is gazed by patriarchy how ingenuously and skilfully that also on her own she establishes herself again. These *Jakari* songs are of utmost significance also because of the fact that these have not yet been documented or commented upon by any folklorist in Haryana or anywhere so far; these songs have rather been dismissed as sundry and miscellaneous items in virtually all the existing documents of Haryanvi folklore.

Jakari folksongs have developed mainly midst groups of women going to fields for agricultural work, to village wells and ponds to fetch water, disposing of household chores like grinding, cooking, tending cattle and children, spinning, sewing, dyeing, etc. as most of these routine tasks are disposed of by young women. *Jakarīs* become a musical expression of their dealings with these tasks at hand. In between they weave in these songs their own view about these activities and their cultural extension into familial relationships. On the third level, they use these *Jakarīs* to spell out their web of desires and longings that remain veiled behind the veneer of *sharam* (bashfulness) and *izzat* (honour) imposed on a woman's being as something natural. If one wants to draw the boundaries of this most crucial phase in a woman's within the musical expressions, the following two folk songs can be used as the initiation and culmination of that phase respectively:

1. “*Oh O chah muklave ke Oh O chah muklave ke
Mei dussar leke jaoon ri chah muklave ke*”
[See my enthusiasm for Muklava (departure for conjugal home)
I depart with a load of gifts see my enthusiasm for Muklava]
2. “*Bagad bichale peepli Nandlal
Lalaji O janka to adbadpaan
Pyarilagekulbahu Nandlal*”
[There is a *peepal* tree in my lane
Whose leaves are too dense;
Nowadays the daughter-in-law looks lovely, ONandlal.]

While the first song is a testimony to a young woman’s desire and expectations of love as she goes to her marital home, the second folk song (a birth song) recounts the glad acceptance of that woman by her conjugal kin only after she has born a male child to them. In between these two crucial points, so much there happens in the life of a woman before which everything that occurs before or after appears negligible. The domain of *Jakari* lies within these two points and herein they turn out to be musical expression of a young woman’s heart and mind.

When the young woman reaches her conjugal home, her first substantial contact is obviously forged with her husband. Her husband also responds to her in a positive way. He starts caring for her. He even does not hesitate in helping her in heavy chores for instance in grinding, which is the theme of the following *jakari*:

“*Bakhatoothkechakijhoyi e chakidhoreaave se
Merisarkiaankhughadgi e yokechalahorya se
Kesove se jayeroyegharkachalanbigadrya se
Bahusoveyochorapeesemotachalahorya se*”

[I started grinding early in the morning; he came close to the grinding stone;

Just then my mother-in-law woke up and got stunned to see that scene.
(She woke up her own husband saying:)

How can you sleep O mourner of your kids, customs of this house are in danger:

The daughter-in-law is sleeping while our son is grinding.]

The intimacy between young couple becomes a matter of jealousy for the mother-in-law. This results into a life-long bickering between mother and her daughter-in-law.

As soon as the intoxicating phase of marriage is over and the man and woman have to engage themselves into arduous daily routine, the woman starts facing the hardships of her conjugal life especially

at the hands of her mother-in-law. The mother-in-law, who is already vexed, now starts teasing her newly married daughter-in-law in many different ways. For instance, she gives her only barley bread to eat when she senses that the latter likes wheat bread:

*“Saasbajreki roti ri’
He ri do dendi de deek, saasgihuanki de deri.
Bahu e gihuankikhave e
He terababalsahukarkebharkegaadilyave e?
Saasmharegihuankethekeri
He ritereekborimhjuarussemhbhodi e bhodiri”*

[O mother-in-law, don't give me barley bread
if you wish give me only one, but give the wheat bread.
O daughter-in-law, you eat wheat-bread,
As if your father is a rich man who sent cartful of wheat for you?
O mother-in-law, my father is a wheat trader
While you have paltry sorghum in a sack, full of chaff.]

Dismayed at her mother-in-law's persistent taunting, she starts pining for her natal home. One day her brother comes to meet her and she complains before him about her plight. The brother talks to the mother-in-law in favour of his sister and seeks her permission to take his sister with him for a few days. The woman feels elated at her prospect of going to her natal home. But this sense of elation turns out to be short lived when the brother tells her in isolation the real thing:

*“Keh de keh de re biramera man ki re baatbhola man ki re baat
Ma e meri ne kekahya je
Ma e kahya se re bai ne le gharaay beta le gharaay
Baapkahyadheemerigharbhali je.”*

[O brother, tell what I want to hear
Tell what my mother has said.
The mother says bring my daughter home
The father says daughters are good at their own home.]

It is not only that the mother-in-law alone is on a mission to torture the newly married woman; her other members of the conjugal kin, especially her elder brother-in-law and sister-in-law, leave no chance to torment her. And the condition of that woman becomes more miserable if her husband is not at home. In the following *jakari* a woman narrates such an experience:

*“Likkad de ne tannamaryamaryaJethHazari ne O merijyan
Matna O Jethanne mare jaangayibeemari ne*

*KhoddkhoomhgerunjewribulwalyunPatwari ne O merijyan
Likhparwanapiyedhoregeryayaadkreteribyahi O
Jaldi se piyagharpeaakabjakaryaterebhai ne O merijyan.”*

[Coming and going my majestic elder brother-in-law taunted me O my life

Don't taunt me O Jeth I know what ails you.

I'll call the village land accountant and put measuring rod in each furrow

I wrote a letter to my husband telling him his wife misses him badly

You come home very soon as your brother's possessed everything.]

Receiving the letter, her husband comes on a vacation and asks her what happened. When she tells about the wrong-doings of her brother-in-law and even about his sexual advances, he dismisses her complaint in a typically patriarchal manner:

*“Gori re kehogyathamnegeryataarpetaar?
Relwai sari merabhoorakachiyagaat
Machine chlaaundevar ne pakadliyaath
Gori re kehogyameir ma kajayachhota beer”*

[O wife, what happened that you sent letter after letter?

I wore blue sari on my fair delicate body

I was operating machine when your brother caught my hand.

O wife, so what? He's my brother born of same mother!]

The woman feels further hopeless in such a situation wherein she is shown her proper place by her own husband—the place quite inferior to rest of the clan members. The climax of miseries sets in her life when she fails to deliver a son to her husband—the ultimate test of the worth of a woman in a Haryanvi family. The husband becomes so insensible that he takes no time in deciding to marry another woman:

*“Na terechhora re gorinaterechhori
Dillisehrmh re gorisuthrisichhori
Suthrisichhori re gorilyanijaroori
Uskehojya re gorichhora re chhori.”*

[O wife, you neither have a son nor a daughter

In the city of Delhi there's a pretty girl

It's inevitable to bring the pretty girl home

She'll bear a son and a daughter]

Later on, in the same *jakari*, the unfortunate woman laments the losses of her life:

*“HeiIshbarterileela re nyari
Eklaalkeoparchutgi re nagari”*

[O God, your playful nature is unique
Not having a son I was banished from the community.]

These have been the main factors responsible for miserable plight of women in the Haryanvi society. Combined together these factors pit so much burden on the psyche of a woman that suicide seems to be a viable option for her to get rid of her death-in-life condition. In one *jakari* the woman narrates what happens after her committing suicide:

*“Kadhendevarjethbhanmeritastas rove saas he
Kyun rove merisaasbawlinirnabasikadhdeyi
Kadhendevarjethbhanmeritastas rove bhartar he
Kyun rove bhartarbaulebyahlyayiyethanedarki!”*

(Brothers-in-law draw my body out of well and my mother-in-law cries loudly
Why cry now O my crazy Mother-in-law? You pushed me out hungry n thirsty.
Brothers-in-law draw my body while my husband weeps inconsolably
Why weep now o husband? Go and marry a police inspector’s daughter now.)

The forgoing analysis shows how *jakari* as a folksong genre represent the life and its upheavals for a young Haryanvi woman. Most of *Jakari* songs are replete with sense of helplessness and hopelessness as ingredients of a woman’s life. Themes such as unnatural death in the form of suicide or even murder, banishment, alienation, etc. recur profusely. And it is but natural if we keep in mind the tests and trials that a woman has to undergo in the Haryanvi society. However, it is one aspect of the issue. In other words, all *Jakari* are not like that. There are other themes like woman’s retaliation to individual insults, her subversion of dominant ideology, and her resistance to patriarchal norms through humour, slyness, lies, etc. in one *Jakari* she mocks at the gluttony of her elder brother-in-law in order to subvert his authority in a subtle manner:

*“Eisawapenhsarke tare gulgale e dhaiserpoyi roti
Eitoknibharkerandhikheerki e laagadthimharejhoti
Eijeth mere kanyonda de diyakarkekardichhati
Eisawapenhsarkekhyagulgale e dhaiserkhagya roti
Eitoknibharikhagyakheerki e iisajethadaki
Eibalakbacchebhookhe so ge me thinirnabasi”*

[O I fried five and a quarter *seergugale* and rolled two and a half *seerroti*
O I boiled full vessel of *kheer* as our buffalo was new to milk
Summoning my all courage I invited the elder brother-in-law

He ate five and a quarter *seergulgale* and two and a half *seerroti*
 The gluttonous brother-in-law even gulped the full vessel of kheer
 My children went to bed empty stomach
 And I too remained hungry n thirsty since morning.]

In the following *Jakari*, she puts aside the patriarchal norms of sexuality and celebrates her sexual encounter in a hilarious tone. In this *Jakari*, a Jat girl invites a Brahman guy for feasting at her home. The guy takes her into the inner chamber and shuts the door. Just then a neighbour woman comes to her house. The girl asks her to come in the inner chamber. As soon as she reaches there, the guy pulls her also inside and shuts the door. See the climax:

“*Gaam ne paatgyaberateenuankakothimhdera*”

[The village came to know the threesome is in the inner chamber.]

The richness of *Jakari* folk songs as a genre is discernible in the variety of these songs as far as themes are concerned. Another significant theme dealt within *Jakari* is that of a woman’s self-criticism. In such *Jakarīs* she looks at her own dealings in a self-reflexive way and presents an unusual kind of self-analysis. It is in these kinds of *Jakarīs* that a woman’s heart finds its best expression: Her desires which remain choked in heart during daily life find fluent musical expression in these *Jakarīs*. In this context she no longer remains an object of desire but becomes a desiring subject subverting the age-old norms in such a subtle manner that powers-that-be fail simply to understand the reality of situation. She adopts so may subversive tricks to save herself from those tasks she does not want to do, from those precarious situations arising out of her desires in which she fears to be held guilty of violation. It is in these songs that female bonding surfaces at its best. In the following *Jakari*, a young girl manages to be sent to her conjugal home even before the scheduled time with the help of her mother and both mother and daughter succeed in hiding this fact:

“*Heiri ma manne de naghaalurejeelagdanamera*
Heiterisathanboojhenbaattairihamnepatya nab era
Heiuskisaasusakatbeemarjamai le gya se e mera”

[O mother, send me to my conjugal home; my heart no longer lies here.
 O your friends ask me how it happened? They couldn’t know.
 O her mother-in-law is critically ill; hence my son-in-law’s taken her]

The young woman has no doubt about coming to her conjugal home before time out of curiosity. Nonetheless very soon she realizes that life here is also not a bed of roses.

Here also she has to deal with the same household chore, rather with an increased intensity, as she is not a daughter here but a daughter-in-law. In the following *Jakari* she is asked by her husband to bring his midday meal on fields. But she does not want to go to the fields. Instead of denying her husband, she picks up a quarrel with her mother-in-law so intensely that her father-in-law has to intervene. He chides his own wife for quarrelling but the woman takes the pretence of being victimized by him and does not go to the fields. In the evening, her husband comes back from fields and before he could say anything she starts weeping. The considerate husband takes up the issue with his father:

*“O BabalisikejiwanichhegitannemeriNirmalanpeeti
Hei re beta teri Nirmalanjhoothimanneapniboodhlipeeti”*

[O Father, how much you're intoxicated with youth
That you beat up my Nirmala?
O Son, your Nirmala is a liar;
I beat up my own old woman.]

Likewise, if the husband is away to some other place and woman is living alone, she can become wayward very easily. Even such a woman is adept at befooling her man by showing her *tiriyacharitra*. In the following *Jakari*, a woman whose husband is in the army becomes wayward. When her husband comes back and he comes to know about it, he becomes furious. He takes a baton in his hand and goes to the village well where his wife is fetching water. He threatens to kill her:

*“Neidteritaarunga re tannelhyajsaramnaaayi
Aankhbhargipaniki O terekisnesyakhalayi?
Rule gerehathanke e paapi ne kaljekelayi
Gail le chalunga re merighanidhukhpayimurgayi”*

[I'll cut your throat; you've become so shameless.
Tears welled up in my eyes and asked who poisoned your ears?
He threw away his baton, embraced me and said:
I'll take you along, you've suffered much.]

As her experience of married life increases, she becomes more confident about herself and expresses his desires explicitly. One day she does not hesitate even in proposing an unknown man at the well. The man agrees to take her along with him for his younger brother and challenges her to show how smartly she will set his household. She takes the challenge boldly and declares:

“*Merakedekheiga O me to hilyahilayanaara*
Roti O teripodyungi O chadhwadyunchoonudhara
Paniketerebhardyungi O toknikebajadyunbara
Aurkechaiye se O bhaiyan ten paaddyunnyara”

[What will you test me O I’m already a seasoned ox.
 I’ll role chapatti for you but make you debtor of flour.
 I’ll fetch water for you but disfigure the brass vessel.
 What else do you want? I’ll alienate you from your kin.]

To sum up we can say that *Jakari* folk songs are full of varied reflections of the ‘inner world’ of a Haryanvi woman. If one has to understand her life, one must understand *Jakari* and analyse it one of the most important yet most neglected texts. Nowadays there is a growing consciousness of women’s cultural and historical significance in the development of any society. Scholars have mostly been concerned either with the written literary texts or mechanical data collected by various agencies from time to time to assess the women’s issues. Sadly enough, there has been little folkloristic work at least in India directly addressing issues related to women whereas folk narratives are supposed to be the most fundamental and authentic expressions of such issues. It is in the folk narratives of her own that woman projects most comfortably a female vision of the world wherein she internalizes, resists and subverts the hegemonic discourses of her society.

The question how society affects folklore is one side of the coin; the other side is the question how folklore influences the perceptions of a society. As folklore changes over a period of time, it reflects the social situation, presumably the result of material changes that affect a society. This analysis is bound to throw some light on the phenomenon how the social order and social institutions articulate in the formation of the subject (individual), or how the link between social and psychic reality is to be spelt out. Taking cues from this study of people’s verbal art, the concerned authorities will benefit while formulating emancipatory policies for the masses especially women.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S VIEW ON CASTE-BASED SOCIAL EXCLUSION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Alok Prasad

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), the first Prime Minister of India, was a pragmatic modernizer whose intellectual and social gaze covered almost all aspect of Indian society. Born in a non-conformist Kashmiri Brahmin family and having a direct experience of the liberal West during his education in London, he was deeply impressed with the process of egalitarian nation-building in Soviet Russia in 1920s. But the most perennial influence on his life was Mahatma Gandhi who made the task of social reconstruction, including elimination of caste-based social exclusion, a vital part of the National Liberation Movement. Nehru's core belief in democratic socialism, thus, inevitably engaged with the question of caste-based social exclusion. As such this paper seeks to examine the views of Nehru on historicity, relevance (or irrelevance), and dysfunctions of caste system and caste-based social exclusion. It also examines his view on the various inclusive policies required to be adopted for removal of caste-based exclusion especially in the context of the Dalits. The paper seeks to argue that, unlike a *priori*, stereotypical and, ahistorical perception given by many scholars and writers, Nehru was neither blind to caste-based social exclusion or nor underplayed its dysfunctional impact on India's modernization project.

The Study of caste system and caste-based social exclusion have been the cynosure of the academic enquiry in the field of Social Sciences since the time of political Independence of India. Yet, there is no single analytical, far less comprehensive work on the views of Jawaharlal Nehru on the caste system or caste-based social exclusion in India. Perhaps, the greatest weakness is that of the 'Nehruvian scholars' and biographers of Nehru who have chosen to put his emphasis of removal of caste system or caste-based social exclusion in the larger project of 'modernization' into and oblivion. But, even as Nehru was the first Prime Minister and one of the most charismatic leader of his age, the obvious and inevitable question of

his views on caste system or caste-based social exclusion, in absence of any significant study, has engendered certain *a priori* perceptions and academic truisms. The most significant of these is the claim that Nehru's radical modernizing agenda, including removal of caste system or caste-based social exclusion, was often stymied by the conservative bloc of his age comprising the land-owning castes, the upper-caste bureaucracy, and the regional Congress satraps. Less convincing but certainly very diffused perception is that Nehru, being a Brahmin and an "outsider" or even worse a beneficiary of the privileges of caste system or caste-based social exclusion, probably lacked a political will to deal dismantling of caste inequalities in any real sense. And, still another perception is that Nehru, if at all, began to think about the caste system or caste-based social exclusion only when he became the Prime Minister of India and hence could not avoid dealing with problem face to face. This paper, therefore, seeks to make an inquiry into Nehru's ideas and thereby, hopes to test these *a priori* assumptions and perceptions.

Nehru was a Kashmiri Brahmin by birth but when he was born, there were already winds of change and rebellion against the caste system among the Kashmiri Brahmins of Allahabad where he was born and spent his early childhood. His own father Motilal Nehru had visited England in 1899 in direct contravention of Hindu norms of the time which meant loss of one's caste and religion and social ostracism if they crossed the seas. He refused to do the *prayaschita* (penance) rituals before his community when he came back from Europe and, instead, led a protest against outdated beliefs of the Hinduism with some like-minded persons through an organization called *Satya Sabha*¹. In his maiden public speech in 1907, Motilal called caste system and *purdah* system (the custom of veil) as the two greatest blots on the Hindu Society². Thus, Jawaharlal Nehru's foundational experience was characterized by non-conformism and rebellion against the orthodoxy and this was only further reinforced by the direct exposure to Theosophism and Western Liberalism in subsequent years. Perhaps, the other most significant formative influence in his adulthood apart from and before Gandhi was his visit to Soviet Russia in 1926 and, therefore, his first response to the issue of caste system or caste-based social exclusion was wrapped in the garb of traditional socialist analysis of economic determinism.

For Nehru, the socialist ideas, as expressed most tangibly in the form of social restructuring in Soviet Russia in the 1920s, were not merely of theoretical interest but rather should be seen as an answer to the problem of social disorganization due to the emergence of

modern industrialization. The first half of the twentieth century was a testing time not only for the Indian society but also Western societies. Globally, the modern capitalism was under deep crisis as evident from the World Wars and the breakdown of the traditional social order in many countries of Europe. In India, due to the distorted nature of colonial industrial capitalism and the colonial rule, the problem of social disorganization was even more acute. Quite naturally, the Congress nationalism under Gandhi could not remain oblivious to the social inequality and disorganization if it were to become a genuine mass movement; the struggle for political freedom could not be separated from the questions of social and economic reconstruction of India. And, thus, in Nehruvian discourse of caste system or caste-based social exclusion should be seen within the his larger concern to search for a stable, secure and dynamic basis of social organization for India. These concerns were only reinforced in 1940s and 1950s when there emerged the problems of Partition, economic scarcity, food shortages, etc.

For Nehru, the question of caste system or caste-based social exclusion till 1930s was still a side issue which did not excite his public concerns. Yet, he remained tenacious in his discussions with Gandhi about a direct assault at caste system as opposed to the latter's concern about removal of untouchability only. He repeatedly asked Gandhi about the removal of the caste system and eventually he could appreciate his position by focusing on the removal of untouchability. He was actually undermining the whole caste system as untouchability was the common denominator, the weakest link in the chain, the weakest point of the enemies' front³. Equally important, Nehru learned from Gandhi the non-confrontationist and indirect approaches for removal of caste system or caste-based social exclusion. By 1946, when his *Discovery of India* was published, Nehru had already developed his ideas on caste system or caste-based social exclusion in a comprehensive, mature form and, subsequently, the changes to them were more in tenor than in substance.

Any discussion about Nehru's views on caste system or caste-based social exclusion must first begin by his view on the origins of the caste system because unlike any other theory his theory emphasizes on the need of social inclusion as the fundamental motivation for emergence of the caste system. According to him, the Aryan invaders, after having conquered the non-Aryan indigenous population in North-West India, could have killed or enslaved the latter, but instead opted for a peaceful and inclusive solution—the caste system. They devised the caste system in a manner that they could ensure their purity and

superiority from the non-Aryan population and yet integrate them into their society. Thus, caste system in its original and pure form was an attempt, in the context of a multi-racial society, to build an inclusive social organization albeit marked by inequality between the two major races—the Aryan and the non-Aryans⁴. Here, he makes a special mention that though the initial difference was between the Aryan and non-Aryan but in the course of time Aryan attempt to claim superiority and the very non-egalitarian principle inherent in it infested them too and in the course of time the four-fold order of the society emerged.

According to Nehru, the caste system, with its four-fold division, in its ideal form is a very flexible and adaptive system. It was a system of division of labour in its most perfect sense, a multi-ethnic state where each caste was expected to specialize in its occupation and together all the castes engendered a harmonious society. In this system, there was normatively an injunction on the castes to avoid any conflict with the other. But what gave a stability and solidarity to it were evolution of a common and shared culture, traditions, customs, pilgrimage centres, etc. Also, as there was no concept of private property, the produce from the land was shared between the state, farmers, and various castes more or less equitably. Moreover, as the society was not materialistic and the guiding spirit behind the production was self-sufficiency, the system could normally remain stable and bereft of strains.

In the caste system, the Brahmin was at the top and usually strived to set it apart from the others by endogamy and by maintaining a relative distance from the mundane. Indeed, Nehru views the Brahmins as a class of persons held very high in esteem in a society erudition and learning were held in high esteem; so great was this esteem that Brahmins have continued to be respected even much later when there was a degradation of the system and deterioration in the contribution and commitment of many Brahmins to their normative occupations. According to Nehru the chief manner of integration and inclusion of the non-Hindus in the caste order was through open access to the second and the third rungs in the caste hierarchy. Thus, many social groups, after acquiring the military and political power would gain entry into the caste system as a Kshatriya; similarly many aboriginal tribes enter into the system as the Shudras. Finally, there were the Untouchables at the bottom of the hierarchy as they were enjoined to do menial jobs in the society.

According to Nehru, the caste system became increasingly rigid and degenerate in course of time and, in the classic Marxian sense,

he argues that the germs of degeneration of caste system were inherent in the contradictions in its very structure. What were these contradictions?

First, the concept of purity and pollution in the course of time led to the growth of exclusiveness, touch-me-not-ism, and not eating and drinking with people of the other castes⁵. This led to the development of narrow attitudes and exclusion; each class was excluded from the other caste. Thus, there developed thousands of mutually exclusive castes and not an inclusive social system.

Secondly, caste system, with the principle of subordination of the individual to the group, was inherently an inefficient system based on rejection of meritocracy. According to Nehru, it encouraged 'average type at the cost of the abnormal, bad, or gifted . . . individualism has less role in it'⁶.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the caste system systematically excluded the lower castes and untouchables educationally, culturally, economically and socially and thus a vast majority of its members were not allowed to develop their full potential. The caste system embodied aristocratic ideals and degraded a mass of human beings and gave them no opportunities to get out of that condition. This degradation brought deterioration all along the line including in its scope even the upper castes.⁷

Lastly, even as the society and social values became more and more narrow and rigid, the caste system led to India's exclusion from the developments of the world outside.⁸

Within the context of caste-based exclusion, Nehru placed special emphasis on the exclusion of the untouchables. Nehru added many significant guiding principles on the issue of untouchability. First, like Ambedkar, he did not remain focused on the problem of untouchability alone and saw untouchability as only an extreme form of casteism. Like a good doctor he endeavoured to cure the root cause of the Dalit problem besides alleviating the symptoms. In a message drafted on 24 September 1955 and sent to the organizing secretary of a seminar on "Casteism and Removal of Untouchability" held in the Delhi School of Social Work in September 1955, he pointed out:

"The Complete removal of untouchability has been one of the principal planks of our programme in India for the last thirty five years and more. . . . Untouchability is only an extreme form of casteism. From removal of untouchability, it naturally follows that we should put an end to various aspects of casteism, which have weakened and divided our society for a long time. From any democratic or socialist point of view, it is an

anachronism and objectionable. From human point of view, it is also wholly undesirable.”⁹

Secondly, in order to ensure that the Dalits are compensated for the injustice done to them so that they can be a part of national mainstream in due course of time, he supported the policy of reservation (or positive discrimination) in the legislature, educational institutions, and government employment, etc. for the Dalits. It must be noted that Nehru was in principle against reservation based on caste and religion but he was ready to make an exception for the Dalits. During the Constituent Assembly debates on the reservation policy to be followed in the independent India, he made his views explicit in the following words:

“...Frankly...I would like to put end to such reservations as still remain. But again, speaking frankly, I realize that in the present state of affairs in India that would be not a desirable thing to do, that is to say, in regard to the Scheduled Castes. I try to look at it from the religious minority, but rather in the sense of helping backward groups in the country.”¹⁰

Thirdly, he took care that in the process of empowerment of the Dalits, we should take care that we do not dehumanize them for achieving some short-term gains for them. Addressing to the Backward Classes Commission on 18 March 1953, he said:

“If we were to go any people in this huge country with the feeling that they are inferior or downtrodden and that we are going to uplift them, I think we would have messed up the job right at the beginning, instead of doing any good, because the method is all wrong.... I prefer cooperation and working together as equals. We are all equals. We must be prepared to live with them as equals and to teach and to learn from them, as two brothers would teach each other. This is how we must reach out to them so that they may recognize us as their brethren and that we do not consider ourselves superior to them but treat them as equals. Only by cooperating in big tasks, can we reach out to them.”

Due to the commitment efforts of the state under Nehru to empower the Dalits, there was a steady increase of Dalit representation in the government services and the quota for them in the one of the most prestigious civil services—the Indian Administrative Service—was already filled by 1964 to its maximum. He regarded a Dalit—K.R. Narayanan—as ‘the brightest person in the Indian Foreign Service.’¹¹

To conclude, a perusal of Nehru’s view on caste-based social exclusion reveals that many of his ideas overlap with those of his far more radical contemporary Ambedkar though his attempt at finding the solutions to problem was in tune with Gandhi. Nehru sought to

build India on the basis of political, social and economic revolution and the central concern of the social revolution was annihilation of the caste system. Indeed, the central concern of Nehru's democratic socialism was equality of opportunity and the removal of the caste system. Without these principles it has no meaning.

Notes

1. B.R. Nanada, *The Nehrus: Motilal and Jawaharlal*, London, 1962, pp. 38-40.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
3. Tibor Mende, *Interview With Jawaharlal Nehru*, Paris, 1956, p. 33.
4. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, (henceforth *DI*) Calcutta, 1946, p. 62.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 216-217.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 188.
9. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru Second Series Vol.30* (henceforth *SWJN* (Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, New Delhi), p. 228.
10. Speech in the Constituent Assembly, 26 May 1949. *Constituent Assembly on India Debates*, Vol. VIII, p. 331.
11. *SWJN*, Vol. 30, p. 303.

MUSLIM BUSINESSMEN AND THE PARTITION OF BENGAL: A POLITICS OF AGREEMENT?

Koushiki Dasgupta

There is a general assumption that most of the high profile businessmen of colonial India either came from the Hindus or from the Parsis leaving their Muslim counterparts far behind. It is not that the presence of the Muslim businessmen was not recorded, not that they remained absent from the mainstream political changes, still in several occasions they tend to look obscurant. The emergence of a self supporting economic enterprise in post-1947 Pakistan makes it sure that in colonial India, the Hindus or the Parsis did not have a domination over the economic affairs rather the Muslims in a sizable number occupied an important place.

In India the Muslim backwardness and the so-called propositions of a Hindu domination over Muslims took a special meaning only at a time of political disturbances or communal outburst. The data received from the 1921 census brought some interesting facts. A considerable section of the Muslims stayed in the important urban pockets and contributed sufficiently to the economic life. In two Muslim majority districts like Bengal and Punjab, the Muslims basically remained rural and agriculturalist, while in the provinces where Muslims were a minority, the existence of an urbanized commercial cum business class was visible. In Bengal, the percentage of urbanized Muslim population was low than Punjab where a large Muslim middle class existed. In Bengal, most of the urban Muslims were engaged in trading activities, in Punjab the number of trading Muslims were small. However, in Bombay, urbanized Muslims were mostly engaged in business and commerce.¹ In 1915, a government report from Bengal recorded the occupations of the Hindus and Muslims in the following manner.²

Table 1 shows that Hindus were predominant in industry and commerce while the Muslims outnumbered the Hindus in the agricultural sector. In Bengal, the trade and industries were mostly controlled by the Europeans and a small group of non-Bengali

Table 1

<i>Occupations</i>	<i>Hindus</i>	<i>Muslims</i>
Agriculture	13,557,038	20,856,662
Industry	2371,008	1040685
Trade and Transport	2337983	867352
Public Administration and others	912549	231312

Indians. The Marwaris controlled most of the trading networks apart from a small number of Bengali Hindus and Bengali speaking Muslims. They were the migrant communities who had their own trading organizations and social networks in Bengal, especially in Calcutta. Muslims specialized in the trade in leather and skin, oil products, luxury articles and in textile. They remained more or less weak in all other branches of commerce, even in banking and finance. The period between 1920-1940 witnessed increase in Indian participation in industries, however, the Hindus and the Muslims used different set of institutions to inspire involvement in the same industries.

Looking at the composition of the Muslim big business in regional terms, one may see how north and north western Indian Muslims (converts and non converts both) dominated the scenario whereas Bengal, one of the Muslim majority provinces in the then India, took a back seat. Interestingly, in Bengal, the Bengali speaking Muslims did never become an important entrepreneurial and mercantile class; it was the non-Bengali migrant Muslims like the Hindu Marwaris, who successfully mobilized the business opportunities (the Muslims of Calcutta numbered app. 205,000 out of a population of nearly 90,000 in 1918³). The Kutch Memons (migrated from Kathiawar) took their position in hide and indigo trade, the Pathan merchants were seen into the leather industry, the Parsi and Iranais were in general export import trades of the coastal region. The Dawoodi Bhoras, Khojas and the Ismailis were also settled in Calcutta as big business groups⁴ including a community of Arabs and a considerable number of Moghals. The Muslim merchants of Calcutta specially the Bohras, Memons and Rankis more or less monopolized the hide and skin trade. They also made their mark in gums, spices, indigo, tobacco and rice trade, however, one third of the city's Muslim population were in the industrial sector, one sixth in transport, one seventh in trade, one eleventh in domestic service and one in twenty in the public services.⁵

D.H. Ahmed, being a regular columnist of different magazines

and the first Muslim graduate of the Calcutta University served as the Inspector General of Registration under the Government of Bengal and unlike the other Muslim writers wrote in a rational modernist way to describe the condition of the Muslims in Bengal. Searching for the reasons behind Muslim underdevelopment in late nineteenth century, he expressed, "... if we compare classes governed by particular customs with classes forming the general body of Muhammadans, we find that Memons and Khojas, for instance are advancing in wealth and position while the general community is declining...It is clear therefore that the Arab or Muhammadan law of succession is unfavorable to the accumulation of capital and the preservation of property."⁶ In comparing the Bengali Hindu's position in trading and business with their upcountry brothers, the writer mentioned, "Both Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims (the bulk of who follow the Hanafi law of inheritance of the Sunni sect) have therefore been remarkably lacking in the accumulation of capital. Moreover among the Bengali Hindus, we find, various castes, who had taken to traditional trades, professions and crafts. This is why we find among them a 'savior group' and a moneylender class. Similar situation did not prevail among the Muslims... no important sub-caste arose among them who might have separated themselves from the 'general Muslims' like the Memons and the Khojas and thus have given lead in trades and professions... The Bengali Muslim upper class remained essentially unprogressive."⁷ As far as the Muslim commercial community is concerned, it seems that they did not have any signification control over the political life of Bengal or Calcutta. The Muslim commercial men hailing basically from non-Bengali background did not enjoy a hold over the bulk of the Muslim population in Bengal and none of them get an entry into the provincial legislature.

The politics of twentieth century Bengal would never be a complete one unless talking about its businessmen, particularly of the shadowy relationship between the non-Bengali Muslim business class and the mainstream Muslim politics. It is shadowy in the sense that there was no Tata, Purushottomdas or Birla in Muslim politics in Bengal but the politics itself was grounded on such a base where a single escape from reality could have been precarious for the future. The factor which helped the non-Muslim business ventures most was the rise of economic nationalism from early twentieth century. It became one of the most important features of the Muslim businessmen that they did not face all such problems like the Congress did, not the Muslim League had any separate agenda for the businessmen and the

working class in early years. In early 1930s, M.A. Jinnah was on the way of becoming the one and only representative of Indian Muslims and was trying to come in terms with the Congress at the all India level. He was to get support in favour of his plans for the Muslim minorities in Punjab and Bengal and to hold his position as the sole voice of Muslim minority interests. In the decade of 1920s, the basic problem of Muslim politics was confusion and fragmentation. H.S. Suhrawardy, Sir Abdur Rahim, A.K. Gaznavi, Akram Khan, Fazlul Huq and others were divided among themselves. However, after 1929 the rise of Nikhil Banga Praja Samity the whole situation in Bengal Muslim politics took a major turn.

The formation of the Nikhil Banga Praja Samity marked a new era of organized politics when the Bengali Muslim leaders for the first time came under a non-communal economic banner. The leaders now took the issues of the province more seriously regardless of the attitude of the all India leadership or the BPML, which continued its existence as a separated body and mostly alienated from mainstream Muslim politics in Bengal. For the Nikhil Banga Praja Samity, it was not possible at that moment to materials unity among different shades of opinions. If a section of the Muslims failed to realize the actual necessity of a non-communal organization of the Muslims, the others did not welcome a non communal peasant oriented party whole heartedly. Such a party exposed the question of enmity or difference within the community that the interests of zaminders were different from the peasants. Very naturally the merchants and the businessmen did not have an involbment with this new politics even though a number of BPML leaders had their own business interests. Founded in 1936, the United Muslim Party (UMP) for the first time came as an amalgamation of three interests—landed, commercial and legal. While H.S Suhrawardy became its Secretary, Nawab Khwaja Habibullah became its president. Other office-bearers included nawab Musharraf Hossain, M.A H Ispahani, and Khwaja Nooruddin.⁸ Thriugh M.A H Ispahani, one of the leading merchants in Calcutta, the new United Muslim Party built up connections with big Muslim merchants of Calcutta. This new alliance emerged as a challenge to the Krisak Praja Party in Bengal because the Praja Party was established to focus on Bengali interests and it was an organization of the Bengali Muslim leaders on non communal lines representing both east and western part of Bengal. While the Krisak Praja Party condemned the United Muslim Party as a 'Minterial Party' for the purpose of capturing votes, Sir Nazimmuddin, one of the leading members of the United Muslim Party described that the

Praja Party was not 'a purely Muslim organization'. The division of the Muslim political world was clearly visible not in terms of politics only, but socio cultural divisions also demarcated the line of actions between these two blocks of Muslim interests. The establishment of the Muslim Chamber of Commerce in 1932 might have been seen as the first example of the ventures taken by the Muslim merchants and businessmen in Calcutta. However, in June 1932, the government showed its positive intentions for separate representation of Muslim commercial interest in future legislative assembly body and in August 1932, the Muslim Chamber of Commerce was established in Calcutta.⁹ The Muslim Chamber of Commerce was basically financed by the rich Cutch Memon Adamjee family and the decedents of the Ispahani family. Several Muslim legislative council members from mufussil Ashraf families and some prominent politicians from Fazlul Haq's group joined in first committee of the chamber. The establishment of the Muslim Chamber of Commerce made one thing clear. Now onwards the wealthy and influential Muslim mercantile community openly came out for political causes. Boosted with a spirit of confidence and endeavour the rich Muslim merchants and industrial families now realized the truth that if middle and professional classes could ask for political advantages, the mercantile classes should logically take up the communal cause for long standing advantages. However, most of the leading members of the chamber were non Bengali Muslims, came in search of fortune in Calcutta at certain times. Young Bengali Muslims had a kind of bitterness for the Muslim Chamber of Commerce since it was a 'non-Bengali concern'. Their main objection was that the Bengali Muslims had nothing to do this organization because "a Bengali Muslim had to deal with spot cash in doing business with them, books were kept in different upper Indian languages and the factories owned by the chamber were staffed by non Bengali Muslims".¹⁰

This Bengali-non-Bengali issue had certain significance for the Muslim political equilibrium in Bengal. Just after the election of 1937, the non three non Bengali leaders emerged as the main lieutenants of Jinnah in Bengal. The KPP and the Bengal Provincial Muslim League did not have a lukewarm attitude for the central League and Jinnah used a few non Bengali leaders as his trust worthy spokesmen who could nullify the inhibition and misconceptions about Jinnah and his objectives in Bengal. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, Hasan Ispahani and Khwaja Nooruddin took the responsibility of establishing the new Muslim League party in Bengal. The Bengali-non-Bengali divide became too much evident in Muslim politics after

the election of 1937 when Fazlul Huq, leader of the KPP formed the ill-fated coalition ministry with the Muslim League. There were clear indications on which course Bengal politics would proceed in near future because the entry of All India Muslim League in Bengal not only put the Bengal League into oblivion but the committee appointed by Jinnah to set up a bowlful League organization in Bengal provided non-Bengali Muslim leaders the much awaited opportunity. This committee was formed with twenty members, including six members from the non-Bengali business community of Calcutta and four to the Dhaka Nawab family.¹¹

The Muslim Chamber of Commerce in the 1930s didn't raise real hope among the Muslim businessmen and its activities remained obscure. But M.A. Jinnah attracted a few men of wealth and business. They were financial strength of the League and on Quid-i-Azam's request they initiated numbers of activities for the advancement of the Muslims as a 'nation' separate from the Hindus. Yusuf Haroon, one of the young lieutenants of Jinnah, described the relation between Adamjee and Jinnah as of mutual respect and friendship. Sir Adamjee was appointed as Jinnah's personal nominee in the League's Parliamentary Board of 1936 along with Mirza Ahmed Ispahani, Faizullah Ganji and Abdul Aziz Ansari. Why men like Adamjee came closer to the League? Was there any communal sentiment working behind these relationships? Definitely communal feelings were present but it was not the sole cause. The Muslim businessmen, especially Adamjee, found the election manifesto of the League's Parliamentary Board in Bengal more appealing than the KPP's socialist stance. The KPP was opposed to any shift aimed at expropriation of private property, while the League's manifesto was business friendly. It proposed an increase in the prices of jute, solution of unemployment, financial assistance for development of industries, adoption of a well defined labor policy including payment of fair wages, provision for insurance, better housing and other facilities. Infact League's manifesto seemed to be more progressive in terms of winning over all sections of the society.

The line of Muslim political solidarity did not follow similar course of action all over India and it was a high task before Jinnah to assimilate the Muslim business world into the line of Islamic brotherhood. In those areas where Muslim businessmen were very much active, the issues of communal politics were not rampant to the business world. In the province like Bengal where Muslim businessmen had never got a strong foothold, the politics of communalism had brought several implications to the business world. The Muslim businessmen didn't

have a decisive role in Bengal politics also. Therefore, it would not be a mistake to point out that Jinnah contrived to produce some of his best diplomacies here for the success of the Pakistan proposal. One such step was to create a support base which would be acquiescent to the will of Jinnah in all respect. Just like western India Jinnah searched for a kind of support base among the wealthy Muslims mostly from the commercial and business background in Bengal. But the question was whether this section of the Muslim commercial men were convinced of the proposal of a divided India instead of a strong centre specially when the proposed Pakistan zones were the most industrially backward areas and were lagging behind the other provinces. Prof Ayesha Jalal believed threat the Pakistan demand was nothing but a 'bargaining counter' to achieve concessions from the British and the Congress but the Pakistan proposal itself was a package of hopes and aspirations put up for sale at the cost of individual free will of the Muslims. Muslims irrespective of their internal class divisions and socio economic positions were asked to support the cause of Pakistan. Separation of the Muslim majority areas could have been the solution to various political and economic problems but its results were not the same for all. What was true for the Punjabi businessmen, it was not same for the Bengalis. Division of Bengal would be as fatal as the separation of Bengal. Greater portion of Hindu capital was invested in Bengal and the separation of Muslim majority areas meant to be a loss for the Hindu big business. Their main anxiety was on Calcutta. If Bengal needs to get separated from India, Calcutta must remain with India or with the Hindu majority areas of Bengal in case Bengal gets divided. But what about the Muslim businessmen? Neither the Congress nor the Muslim League was really worried for the Muslim businessmen of Bengal. If they stay in Hindustan, it would be great difficulty for them to sustain business positively with the Hindus and if they take the decision of going into Pakistan or the Muslim majority areas, their business would suffer a lot. In both of the cases the Muslim businessmen were left with the same fate while it meant to be a lot for them whether Calcutta would go to Pakistan or not.

However, in Bengal the situation was different. There was no such big Muslim firm in the proposed area of East Pakistan. Big business houses from western India had their substantial units in East Pakistan but the epicentre of business was in Calcutta. Not all the big Muslim capitalists were the supporters of the Pakistan movement or the Muslim League and up-to the last moment they left their options open. It was only after the Lahore Resolution

started getting momentum Jinnah mobilized a few Muslim businessmen in support of Pakistan but in case of Bengal confusions and hesitations continued to grow faster. The leading Muslim Leaders from Bengal had viewed the Pakistan scheme in terms of two independent sovereign states in two Muslim majority areas of India while Jinnah envisaged Lahore Resolution (1940) in terms of one Pakistan state. Abul Mansur Ahmed, a leading member of the East Pakistan Renaissance society declared, "Religion and culture are not the same thing. Religion transgresses the geographical boundary but *tamaddum* (meaning culture) cannot go beyond the geographical boundary. . . . Here only lies the difference between *Purba* (Eastern) Pakistan and Pakistan. For this reason the people of *Purba* Pakistan are a different nation from the people of the other provinces of India and from the 'religious brothers' of India."¹² No doubt a section of the Bengal Muslim League leaders were thinking in terms of their separate Bengali and Muslim identity and it was H.S Suhrawardy, the then Premier of Bengal who clamoured for 'an independent, undivided and sovereign Bengal in a divided India as a separate dominion',¹³ for the purpose of 'economic integrity, mutual reliance and the necessity of creating a strong workable state'. He believed, ". . .if Bengal is to be great, it can only be so if it stands on its own legs and all combine to make it great. It must be master of its own resources and riches and its own destiny. It must ceased to be exploited by others and shall not continue to suffer any longer for the benefit of the rest of India. So in the end the tassels will rage round Calcutta and its environments, built up largely by the resources of foreigners, inhabited largely by the people from other provinces who have no roots in the soil and who have come here to earn their livelihood, designated in another context as exploitation. Alas. If this is the main objective, as my figures would demonstrate, then no claim for the partition of Bengal can remain static, and a cause for enmity and future stiff would have been brought into being of which we can see no end."¹⁴

Suhwardy's arguments were supported by a group of Muslim league leaders, including the Secretary of the Bengal League, Abul Hashim. He believed that cent per cent alien capital, both Indian and Anglo American exploiting Bengal, is invested in Bengal and the proposed scheme of a free and united Bengal might have been a cause of fear for them.¹⁵ Both Suhrawardy and Abul Hashim were critical of the non-Bengali exploitation of resources in Bengal but the question was whether this non-Bengali capital was meant for both the Hindus and the Muslims? But the crux of the situation existed in the moves taken

by the Muslim Chamber of Commerce in support of Suhrawardy united Bengal plan. It was Ispahani who first took the initiative of motivating Jinnah in favour of this united independent Bengal plan and provided financial support for the plan. It was a calculated on his part because it gave him an opportunity to liquidate the anti non-Bengali feeling among the followers of united Bengal plan. Ispahani was quick enough to realise the outcomes if Calcutta would go with India. From this city he started his business and it was the heart of all great business endeavours. Therefore, when did he find the united Bengal plan as the most suitable option to the partition of Bengal plan, he readily extended his support to Suhrawardy-Hashim's group. Perhaps he had an intention to control the jute industry in west Bengal, mostly owned by the Indian Chamber of commerce or the British business houses. But an in-depth study on Ispahani's political endeavours would show how this man fluctuated from his positions on the issues related to the fate of Bengal. Even though in the draft copy of the Lahore Resolution (1940) the words, 'sovereign independent *states*' (italics mine) was mentioned, Jinnah in May 1947 commented, "in no case should it (Calcutta city) be allowed to go with the western Bengal, otherwise it will follow as a corollary that Western Bengal would go into Hindustan and His Majesty's Government will be making the present of one great port to Hindustan, in any event,...Calcutta should be made a free port".¹⁶

In the last phase of the Pakistan movement, the role played by the Muslim businessmen in Bengal was obscure. In most of the occasions Ispahani and Awaji took side of the anti Suhrawardy faction in the Muslim politics of Bengal and Ispahani didn't support Suhrawardy's involvement with Bengal Congress leader Sarat Chandra during the united Bengal movement. Apart from Ispahani, other businessmen were not known faces in the political front. It was also true in case of the all India Muslim League also. Perhaps Jinnah wanted to make it clear that the future Pakistan state would not be state of the capitalists and the ideal of Pakistan should be Islamic not capitalist. Whatever the reality was, it was true that Jinnah did have many Muslim industrialists and businessmen within his hold. The enterprises that later came forward in the economic development of Pakistan were consisted of a few big business houses only.

However, the only alternative to Partition, that is a federal state with a weak centre and powerful provinces did not receive support from the non-Muslim big businesses because they had already envisioned one united India with a strong central authority with restricted amount of power to provinces. Partition emerged as the

best solution to all these problems on the condition that non-Muslim areas of Punjab and Bengal would be within the Indian union. Such a solution was equally acceptable to both the non-Muslim and Muslim business interests, socially the Muslim businessmen from Sind and Punjab found it as a means of liberation from the hold of non-Muslim businesses in Bombay. As noted earlier, such an arrangement was not made in keeping the Muslim businessmen in mind at all. Since most of the Muslim businessmen from Bengal were of non-Bengali in origin, it was taken to be obvious that they would migrate to Pakistan in near future. Definitely they did the same but it was really a point to be noted that the Muslim big businesses in Bengal at least in 1940s completely overlooked the common Bengali sentiment growing among a section the Muslim leaders in Bengal.

No doubt most of the Muslim businessmen took partition as an agreement of mutual consensus, for the rest it was a challenge itself. The big businesses houses were benefitted from the pro business environment in both the wings of the new Pakistan state and they filled in the vacuum left by the non-Muslim businessmen who fled Pakistan. But for the small business holders it was not an easy task. They did not have that sort of assets or property in India like the big business houses, necessary for a good survival in a new country. They need to start afresh like that of the non-Muslim businessmen who fled Pakistan. They faced stiff competition from their established fellow businessmen in India while the Muslim businessmen who stayed in India lacked their organization and voice in absence of their lively colleagues who had already migrated to Pakistan. The entire episode indicates how the Memon businessmen were mobilized and how the notion of a 'home' has been codified by other criterions. Both east and west wings of Pakistan had their own structural problems in the way of economic development but it was Calcutta which suffered the most. Not only it lost its pre-eminence as the major commercial and manufacturing centre in the eastern part of India, it went into decline rapidly. Neither Calcutta nor Dhaka could ever become a commercially promising city thereafter and history witnessed the death of what once had been a magnificent economy.

Notes

1. Report of the Committee to consider questions connected with Muhammadan education, Calcutta, 1915, pp. 1-2, Appendix on p. 1, Bengal General Proceedings, January-December 1913, General Department, Miscellaneous, Calcutta 4th July, 1913, Resolution No 3435.
2. See *Investors India Year Book*, Calcutta, Siddons and Gough, Issue 1920

3. Census, Vol. VI, Part I, 1921, pp. 4-34
4. Four Muslim castes were governed by Hindu inheritance laws. The Khojas, Bhoras, Memons and Girasias. While there are literatures on the material and social condition of the Khojas and the Bohras, there is not much history of the Memon caste. Out of the families for which data is available, Currimbhoy, Habib, Lallji, Tyabji, Valika, Ispahani and Shustari were Shias. The Tyabkis, Valikas were Ismaili Bhoras, the Khojas figured prominently with the Currimbhoys, Habibs and the Lalljis. The Memons were Sunnis, of which the Adam, Adamji, Arag, Dada and Haroons were from Kutch and Kathiawar region while the Ispahani had Iranian origin. See, Sergey Levin, "The Upper Bourgeoisie From the Muslim Commercial Community of Memons of Pakistan 1947-1971" in *Asian Survey*, 14(3), 1974, pp. 231-43; Ashgar Ali Engineer, *The Bohras*, New Delhi, 1980; H. Papanek *op.cit.*; Carissa Hickling, *Disinheriting Daughters: Applying Hindu Laws of Inheritance to the Khoja Muslim Community in Western India 1847-1937*, Masters's Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1998 ; S.T. Lokhandwalla, "Islamic Law and Ismaili Communities (Khojas and Bohras)", in *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 4(2), 1967, pp. 155-176.
5. Census, Vol. V, Part I, 1921, pp. 107, 414, 213, Vol. VI, Part I, pp. 36, 104-107.
6. *The Moslem Chronicle*, April 18, 1896, p. 176.
7. *Ibid.*
8. See *Star of India*, 15 July, 25 May, 1935, p. 5. Among the sixteen founder members, more than eight were from landed interests. M.A H Ispahani, and Abdur Rahman Siddiqui belonged to the non-Bengali Muslim community of Calcutta. For details see, *Star of India*, 25 May 1936, pp. 1-5.
9. Government of India, Reforms Department, 221-32-R of 1932: Bengal Government, Appointments Department, May 1934, File No IR-38, Progs 31-50.
10. *Star of India*, 24 February 1933, p.10, see the letter form S Babur Ali.
11. From the non-Bengali business community, Hasan Ispahani, Abdur Rahman Siddiqui, Abdul Aziz Ansari, Mohsin Khan and Molla Jan Mohammad were included. From Dhaka Nawab family, Nawab K. Habibullah, Sir Nazimuddin, Khwaja Shahabuddin and Khawa Nooruddin were appointed.
12. Quoted in Shila Sen, *Muslim Politics in Bengal, 1937-1947*, New Delhi, 1976, p. 179.
13. *The Statesman*, Calcutta, 28 April, 1947, p. 2.
14. Statement by Suhrawardy, in *The Statesman*, Monday, 28 April 1947, p. 1.
15. *The Star of India*, 30 April 1947.
16. *Note form Jinnah*, 17 May, 1947, L/P&J/10/79, *IOLR*, pp. 167-70.

GLOBAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL FRAMES ON ECOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY: INTERROGATING THE RHETORIC OF DENIAL AND DISENGAGEMENT

Amarendra Kumar Dash

Some of the most visible developments in the current political economy are shrouded in rhetoric. Across the border, a failed nation tries to bleed India by thousand cuts, but then denies that there are no terrorist camps in Pakistan. The US attacks Iraq for sheer control of a geography rich in resources but attributes the attack to control of chemical weapons, terrorism, and restoring ethnic and regional balance. In India, political leaders and bureaucrats have robbed the national economy by thousands of failed and non-existent projects; but then, escape the wrath of public by resorting to the rhetoric of growth or the formulaic denial of involvements.

The rhetoric of denial is at worst when it comes to admitting that the development propagated by globalization and world economy is unsustainable and climate change is an inevitable consequence of this process. Trans-generic equity of economy and ecology was the point of concern in the Rio de Janeiro Summit, 1992. Alarming carbon dioxide emissions, global warming, and climate change, and attendant greenhouse effects were the focus of Kyoto Protocol 1997. However, consensus on environmental action plans still eludes us and is marred by divisions of developed and developing nations.

In the US, industrial lobby and paid media have been busy in promoting a parallel discourse that global warming is a natural process and anthropo-centric pollution do not have much to do with it. Researchers working on corporate environmental responsibility in India have frequently complained that industries are not co-operating on providing environment related data. All these issues together mandate a revision of the existing environmental communication and education strategies.

In this context, the two important research questions are raised:

- 1) In which ways do the economic, political and cultural powers significantly affect the ability to participate in and influence the nature of public ‘mediated’ communication about environment?
- 2) What is the role played by media and communication processes in the contestation and denial of climate change issues?
- 3) What is the role of rhetoric in the denial of issues related to ecology and sustainability across the globe by the political elites and economic powers?

Theoretical Background

This study is based on Daniel Goleman’s (2009) concept of *Ecological Intelligence*. Goleman is a critic of the practice of assigning too much of importance to human intelligence, which he considers as one of the defects of current civilization. Goleman emphasizes on the principles of *Emotional Intelligence* and *Ecological Intelligence*. According to Goleman, ecological intelligence lies in our ability to understand the inter-connected threads of nature and to use the eco-system in a holistic way and thereby, to live of life of fuller satisfaction.

At a theoretical level, this study is founded upon Dryzek’s (2005) typology of eight environmental discourses which employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for analysing environmental discourses. Dryzek’s (2005) builds upon the study of Hajer (1995) that demonstrate how politics impact environmental policies and expose the use of language to shape opinions process.

Dryzek’s (2005) typology categorizes eight environmental discourses that represent the range of approaches to environmental policy and politics from the 1970s to the present. According to Dryzek, industrialism is “characterized in terms of the overarching commitment to growth in the quantity of goods and services produces and to the material wellbeing that growth brings” (2005, p. 13), Dryzek groups two overarching classifications of environmental discourses: 1) reformist versus radical and 2) prosaic versus imaginative. The reformist or radical classification is defined by the modes of discursive departure from industrialism. A reformist discourse is a departure from industrialism by altering a part of its function, and not the whole. An aggressive, altogether departure from industrialism is defined as radical.

Dryzek’s analysis of environmental discourses in the US brings out eight environmental discourses. They are:

1. administrative rationalism
2. democratic pragmatism
3. economic rationalism
4. survivalism
5. sustainable development
6. ecological modernization
7. green consciousness
8. green rationalism

Table 1 aligns these eight types of discourses into a visual typography. The vertical sides of the table displays the prosaic and imaginative forms of environmental discourse whereas the horizontal sides display the reformist and radicals agendas of environmental discourses.

Table 1: Dryzek's Environmental Discourse Classification

	Reformist	Radical
Prosaic	<p><i>Problem Solving</i></p> <p>Administrative rationalism Democratic pragmatism Economic rationalism</p>	<p><i>Survivalism</i></p>
Imaginative	<p><i>Sustainability</i></p> <p>Sustainable development Ecological modernization</p>	<p><i>Green Radicalism</i></p> <p>Green romanticism Green rationalism</p>

Dryzek's typology displays the environmental politics in the US from 1970s onwards. The prosaic and imaginative classifications summarize modes of departures from industrialism. Prosaic accepts the social, economic and political structures set by industrialism. In this category, environmental problems are defined within the established structures. On the other hand, the imaginative category seeks to redefine the existing framework of industrialism and aligning the social, economic and political structures as a whole.

Taking clues from Goleman's conceptualizations of human intelligence and the inter-dependent modes of survival, this study posits that human beings should be able to recognize the ecological consequence of growth, development and expansions. Mankind should be intelligent enough to understand the ecological messages embedded in the development narratives and should use adequate interrogation skills to deconstruct the hidden structures of denial and disengagement embedded thereby.

Concepts and Operationalization of Key Constructs

- *Rhetoric*

Rhetoric refers to the art of persuasive expression through addition, deletion, amplification, suppression, camouflaging of information. This operates through offering a system of narrative which influences and often overrides the logic of understanding and expression. For example, a married couple is talking about wine and alcohol.

Husband: Honey, where is my bottle of *liquid delight*?

Wife: My goodness! You have again fallen to that *old shit*!

In the above discourse about wine, the italicized words substitute alcohol, first as a glorified product and second, as a dirty practice. This is the power of language to provide rhetorical parallel to human logic and understanding.

Rhetoric is also a practice of artful deviation. Rhetorical language or modalities deviate from the normal, information-oriented language or communicative modes in print and television media. Rhetoric, depending upon the users intentions, excites human emotion and imagination to different heights and completes the act of persuasion.

In the context of this paper, rhetoric refers to the art of speaking too much or too less about ecology and sustainability through deliberate misinformation or dis-information. For example, assigning the term 'clean energy' to atomic energy hides the long term ecological issues associated with such ventures and puts the economic elites who are the major beneficiaries of such projects into a privileged position of interpreters.

Environmental rhetoric operates through a deep structure of selective speaking or verbal camouflaging. We should not forget that during the materialisation of the Indo-US nuclear bill under the Monmohan Singh government, India and the US were described as 'partners in progress'.

- *Frames*

Frames are logical or rhetorical constructions in language or other modes of expression through which ideology takes shape or gain powerful positions. Using frames, good things may be deceived as bad or the evil can be positioned as the saviour. One of the spectacular examples can be the framing of the Iraq War by CNN and BBC where the Anglo-American positions were given legitimation through the

distortion of facts and other deliberations. Similarly, the World Wars and the Cold War Era also witnessed nationalistic rhetorical frames creating fear and horror in the minds of national citizens and demanding greater allegiance to the political state and their ruling elites.

The recent use/abuse of rhetorical frames can be traced to the media portrayal of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi from a communal bigot and an autocrat and subsequently revising the old frame by an emerging frame that showcased the same person as the symbol of progress and good governance and an economic icon.

In this study, I shall focus on a several frames with regard to ecology and sustainability which are crucial to India's position in the global politics and economy. Together, these frames represent the ideological positions, constraints, and transitions of India, the nation state, in addressing the issues of industrialization, energy planning, transport, and urban planning. These frames will be located in the larger syntax of ecology and sustainability worldwide, especially the ones espoused by global super powers and various international summits, conventions, and resolutions.

Table 2. Rhetorical frames of denial and disengagement

Frames	Examples
Denial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change and global warming is part of the natural evolution and an evitable stage in the grand cycles of nature. • Pollution, climate change and global warming are the lived reality, and therefore, cannot be given higher importance than industrialisation, economic deviltment, and employment generation.
Disengagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing countries do not have the resources such as green technology, capital, citizen knowledge and skills, and the overall political and economic environment to remain engaged in ecological actin plans. • Global standards of environmental management would hinder the growth local industries of the poor nations. • The so-called global powers and developed economies had committed higher degree of pollutions during the formative stages of their industrialization. • While mapping pollution, nation will be the unit of measurement and per capita pollution will not be considered.

Conceptualization of Global and Local

This study attempts to analyse India's commitment to addressing the issues of ecology and sustainability in an integrated perspective which includes: 1) the global frameworks led by the US and the UNO; 2) the national policies and specific projects by the government of India; and 3) the perceptions of local citizens in various parts of India.

Table 3: Identifying the global, the national, and the local

Players	Conceptualization
Global	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unipolar world post-Cold war and post-Gulf War headed by the US and followed by the UK, Italy, France, Germany, Australia and others. • The Rio de Janeiro Summit, the Kyoto Protocol, UN Resolutions, etc. which are often used as the bench mark while talking about sustainable development.
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The national policies of India on ecology and sustainability • Specific cases of development related crises related to dams, atomic energy projects, mining, deforestation, urbanisation, transport and new industries.
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response of environmentally-educated public to various national policies • Response of the common man affected by specific projects

Method of Study

Primary and secondary literature on select issues related to ecology and sustainability are collected. They will be analysed following the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework of van Dijk(1998a). According to van Dijk, power gaps are manifested not only in the domain of world politics, economy, and military, but also in the formation of language and other modes of expression at different levels of life. Likewise power gaps are also salient in the construction of environmental discourses and the very recognition of these powerful or powerless positions are crucial to environmental education.

This study follows a critical rhetorical framework where rhetorical frames are developed by Durant (1987) and McQuarie and Mick (1992). While CDA will be used to unravel the power-asymmetry at the deep structure of environmental dialogues, policies and action plans, rhetorical analysis will strengthen this process by

deconstructing the rhemes and tropes contributing to rhetorical extension, rhetorical replacement, rhetorical comparison, rhetorical contradiction, rhetorical substitution and many other rhetorical functions.

Implications of the Study

In the recent years there was mounting pressure on the developing nations to conform to the so-called global standards of ecology and environment. Headed by China and India, the developing countries could successfully resist the consensus and the implementation of stringent environmental laws at international level with a possible imposition on the developing nations. However, of late, China has decided to switch over to green technology and cleaner modes of production. Given the speed with which the Chinese oligarchy works in implementing its visions, China will soon join the elite, global league of 'eco-friendly' nations. This may lead to some sort of global isolation for India and the nation may have to rush for drastic and unprecedented changes which may hinder growth and cause citizen unrest. Therefore, the environmental education of the national citizens will play an important role in fostering ecological citizenship and supporting sustainable development. This study is committed to promoting citizen understanding of ecological issues at global, national, and local levels.

Possible Outcomes of the Study

The study expands our understanding of ecology and sustainability in a number of ways.

- It unravels how power, greed, and vested interests are embedded in ecological discourses.
- It offers insights into differing worldviews and how to relate each to sustainable development.
- The study will serve best as a part of the broader *instrument mix* (e.g. combined with legal, technological, financial and other instruments) used to develop, implement, and manage various ecological strategies and action plans.

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STIGMA TO FREEDOM: REFLECTION OF CASTE AND IDENTITY IN POEMS OF VAIBHAV CHHAYA

Chandrasheel Tambe

Background

In the first half of the twentieth century large number of Marathi speaking population belonging to Scheduled Castes¹ from the neighbouring areas migrated towards Mumbai (Pradhan, 1938). Some of them found employment in organized public sector establishments like Municipality, Port, Railways, B.E.S.T. Co. Ltd.; private sectors like factories, workshops, Mills and companies as unskilled or semi-skilled manual labourers. Many were engaged in an unorganized sector, mainly in less rewarding occupations like hamals, loaders, etc. The search for livelihood with dignity and self-esteem were key motivating factors behind migration of this destitute section of Indian society who attempted to escape from the caste yokes at their villages of origin. Inspired by the movement of Babasaheb Ambedkar many amongst them educated their children with the hope of social and financial mobility. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, their next generations are either graduate or are in the process of becoming one. Journey of this class of the Indian population from traditional village-bound caste-based hierarchically ordered society to the modern urban cosmopolitan liberal space of Mumbai is not just the story of struggle for material gains. It is an account of transformation of social self, embodied in inner self, from birth ascribed stigma of untouchability to the self-constructed identity of freedom and humanity. Indeed, it is the chronicle of their efforts to de-caste their identity.

The present paper is an attempt to look into the identity issues of young generation among the scheduled castes. For the purpose, selected poems from the anthology titled '*Delete Kelele Saare Aakash*' (*All of the Deleted Sky*²) by Vaibhav Chhaya are selected to serve as a gateway into the socio-psychological temperament of the scheduled caste youths situated in the beginning of the twenty first century.

The period is characterized by tremendous fluctuations in the political and economic life of the Indian society. Amidst the progress of globalization, the forces of communalism, casteism, linguism are gaining the center of the politics and society. The context in these early decades of the twenty-first century has fashioned ground for the interplay of multiple social identities. Youths like Vaibhav are dealing with the issues of such multiple identities by retaining their ideological linkages with the movement of Babasaheb Ambedkar and thereby positioning themselves in the constantly fluctuating socio-political environment. Vaibhav's poems are seen here as a social document. The paper consciously ignores the aesthetics of his poetry and looks into the reflections on society, politics and economy of globalization and eventually reaching out to the identity position that his poems signify.

About the Poet

Vaibhav Chhaya is 1988 born Marathi poet-columnist. He was encouraged to put together his first anthology of poems on caste, exploitation and society, *Delete Kelela Saara Aakash (All of the Deleted Sky)*, by Namdeo Dhasal³ himself (Pawar, 2015). His anthology published in 2014 at the age of 26 is popular. He is a media professional and is active on social media of Facebook where he regularly posts his prose and poems. In his blog *Samyak Samiksha* he writes on language, culture and politics. He understood social media as an instrument of change in today's globalized world (Bhatkhande & Chandrasekharan, 2015). He acknowledges roots of his deviance in his childhood memories of abuse. He lived in a ghetto in Vitthalwadi, suburb of Thane. His father was employed in Indian Railway as Class IV employee. He was alcoholic who used to beat Vaibhav's mother, who bore him nine children. Only Vaibhav survived of them. Sufferings of his mother are deep in his subconscious mind. His father left the family when Vaibhav was two year old. His whereabouts are not known since then. Vaibhav gives all credit to his mother for his education and career, who took job as a booking clerk with the railways. Vaibhav dropped his last name in 2010 and adopted his mother's first name Chhaya.

Problematic of Caste Identity

Caste is ubiquitous in India. As early as in 1916, Ambedkar warned of global consequences of the caste problem in India. In his words, "as long as caste in India does exist ... if Hindus would migrate

to other regions on earth, Indian caste would become a world problem” (Ambedkar, 1982). So, the spread of caste has been across time and space. More than hundred years of scholarship and heaps of ideological reasoning from Right, Left and Center did not wipe out this system from the society. It continued to regulate social, economic and political behaviour of the people. Construction of social identities and continuation of practices of identification are integral to the process of perpetuation of caste as a system of social organization. Identity appears to be the link between individual and social structure. In another way status of individual in the social structure can be understood by the social identity the individual carry in given society.

Caste is a system of differential rewards to individuals with cultural sanctions depending upon their birth in particular groups which are hierarchically ordered and culturally distinct (Berreman G. , 1979). The hierarchy determines differential evaluation, rewards and association. It is not merely the division of labour but is essentially the division of labourers (Ambedkar, 1970). There are thousands of such birth ascribed castes in India and the hierarchical arrangement among them is highly contested. Still there is a consensus that those who were treated as untouchables are attributed with lowest status and rest all are ascribed the higher status in social hierarchy. Borrowing from Goffman (1963), caste is an oppressive system which imposes stigmatized identity to the members of untouchable community/castes. It deeply discredits them and ascribes intrinsic unworthiness relative to other touchable castes in the society. It is the identity of oppressed which implies ‘deprivation, denigration, subjugation and exploitation’. Berreman (1979) argues that despite of all the religious, economic, social or political rationalization of this oppressive system by the upper castes, lower castes in India never confirmed to their ideology and maintained the culture of resistance and resentment against inherited deprivation and subjection. Therefore, there are consistent attempts by the lower castes to escape the implications of their inborn stigma and put in their efforts for mobility and emancipation. This accounts for the universality of mobility and emancipation efforts in such groups. It is in the light of this theoretical framework of interactionism the paper is addressing the issues of identity in Vaibhav’s anthology of poems.

Poems

Vaibhav’s poems are part and parcel of the emancipatory anti-caste movement in India commonly known as the dalit movement. From

nineteenth century critique of Brahmanism of Jotiba Phule to Dalit Panther movement of 1980s, Vaibhav inherits legacy of nearly 150 years of resistance. This movement of resistance was not disassociated from the social, economic and political development in the country. Colonial rule, liberal education, industrialization, urbanization were the major components of the context in which dalit movement took shape since nineteenth century. In Mumbai this context is more visible owing to distinct place the city occupies in the economy. Today in the twenty-first century too, the context is playing crucial role in shaping the dynamics of the movement of Dalits. Globalization, post-industrialization of economy, growth of fundamentalism, aggressive nationalism and terrorism are among the major elements of this context. One thing that remained constant amidst changes in last 150 years is Caste with its robustness and resilience. It continued to be the least common denominator of society in India. Therefore, this young poet Vaibhav pens his experiences in his poems and admits in the prologue of his collection,

“My poem is my political act. My introduction is my every action that transcends my caste and class character and takes me closer to humanity⁴⁹”

(Chhaya, 2014, p. 7).

True to the argument of Berreman (1979), the Dalits steered historic anti-caste movement in Maharashtra. And it won't be an exaggeration to claim that it is the most successful social movement in India which pressed the agenda of social change on the mainstream and maintained the pressure for more than 150 years. In such a long span of one and half century the Dalits contested the stigmatized identity ascribed by the Brahminical Social Order. Today Dalit youths are at the crossroad of identities. Attempts to escape from social stigma is forcing them either to align and coalesce with other available identities or construct them a tag of their own which will not only free them from unwanted memories of past but also maintain their hopes of future alive. This direction links them to the goals of modernity which identifies every person as a human being and celebrates humanity devoid of any religious or primordial identity. This dilemma is visible in Vaibhav's poem, *Identity Crisis*. Poet asks to himself,

Who am I?
 Being 'educated' or mere stamp as 'educated'?
 Ideology or dominion?
 I am lost in the quest

(Ibid, p. 24)

Here the self in the poem is enquiring about his identity and getting lost in the quest for the answer. Education is questioned as an identity marker. One can take this in two senses. Firstly, being educated is personal identity not so salient where strong identity markers like caste and religion easily overcome it (Vryan, 2007). Secondly, the poet says that if education is not empowering the individual to identify himself then it is only façade. True freedom is to unmask him and carry real core in the world which is consistently attempting to impose their ideologies over you (James & Jongeward, 1978). A true educated one is the one who is liberated.

In the next stanza, Vaibhav exposes markers of social identity and how different ideologues are trying to capitalize those markers and trying to attach to him political identities. He writes:

Name proclaims my caste
 Body offers exhibition of my crushed ancestors
 My words are highlighting my ideology
 On my rear
 On my white shirt
 Everyone attached labels
 You are our Communist
 You are our Marxist
 Ambedkarite, Socialist, Atheist
 Extremist, Naxalite
 My identity
 A complex thing
 Or it must be
 A mask imposed by somebody
 Real but severely injured
 Or fake like plastic plant

(Ibid., p. 24)

Speech, dress and adornment, manners, lifestyle and physiognomy are the indicators by which people are identified as members of social categories (Berreman G. D., 1972). Vaibhav is conscious about his social identity markers. Name, body and words are few that are named in the poem. As he maintained they all indicate his lowly and broken social status. Although he resents this labelling him as 'broken one/depressed', what annoys him more are the efforts to tag him as Communist, Marxist, Ambedkarite, Socialist, Atheist, Extremist and Naxalite. A social identity determines what should be expected from the identified persons and where he should be fitted within various interactional network level, and sociocultural structures (Vryan, 2007). All these are in a way the ideologies of resistance and for

them depressed identity of the Dalit which reflects from the identity markers is an opportunity to incorporate him in their network. These ideologies acquired meaning as rebellious, revolutionary and hence attempted to construct solidarity network of all the oppressed. Although the poet does not reject them altogether but he maintains his own stand with conscious decision. He is aware of the complexity of this identity recognition, and at the same time he is aware of his exploited past and not denying it altogether. He retains the capacity to reason, to question and to decide independently without any enticement of his right to search his identity. He proclaims this in following lines:

In this journey to search the identity
 My wisdom has retained
 My right to freedom

(Ibid., p. 25)

Vaibhav's quest for the answer to his identity is rooted not only in the past which is history and is full of narrations of subjugation, degradation but also in his day-to-day experiences. In his poem, *Tevha Pasun* (Since Then) he narrates his experience of morning walk and his interactions with various persons to whom Vaibhav denote through symbolism of names and greetings. First he met Maharashtrian Brahmin women, he greeted *Namasker*, and she smiled. Then he said *Salaam Walekum* to Usman Chacha, a Muslim, he reciprocated; he greeted *Ram Ram* to a Police Officer, Maratha by Caste; *Jay Maharashtra* to political workers of a political party in Mumbai, Shiv Sena, which claim to protect interests of Marathi language speaking people of Maharashtra; *Good Morning* to the Christian, James who is corporate employee; *Red Salute* to Comrades gathered in the Union Office. Finally he greeted a transgender Shabnam:

While returning from walk I saw Shabnam
*120, Kachha Pakka Ilaichi*⁵,
 Stuffed in the mouth,
 He came spitted
 We hugged each other
 I clapped for him
 He too thundered *Jay Bhim* at me
 I can't understand
 Since then Allah, Jesus, Ram, Marx
 All of their devotees turned their back to me
 Why are they angry with me?

Here, Vaibhav brings two things for the readers. First, two most stigmatized identities, a Dalit and a Transgender, are brought together to display the exclusionary behaviour of the so-called cosmopolitan society in Mumbai, and secondly, which is most crucial for Vaibhav, is the identity as Ambedkarite, which is asserted by his greeting of *Jay Bhim*, and is not received by others with same meaning which Vaibhav constructs for it. Here for others Vaibhav's Dalit identity is transmitted to his newly acquired selfhood. Being Ambedkarite for others is similar to being Dalit and hence equally stigmatized. Vaibhav draws commonality between being transgender and being Dalit and figures out the exclusion and discrimination as common factors between them. He also exposes hypocrisy of modern cosmopolitan social life of people in Mumbai. Despite of these experiences of discrimination he is not perturbed by the fact of sheer existence of atrocious social structure which degrades the existence of fellow humans.

Vaibhav writes on the vast canvas of contemporary civilization and reflects upon large number of issues through which he connects with everyone who is victim of one or the other form of exploitation. He elaborately sketched the details in the poem, "*Manasane Jagave Manus Mhanun*" (Human Should Live as Human) (Ibid, 44). In this long poem Vaibhav prescribes humanism as remedy for all sorts of exploitation. He emphatically argues against war and advocates destruction of nuclear weapons and disarmament. He challenges patriarchy rooted in prevalent institution of marriage and feudalism by asking for return of land of indebted farmers and freedom from the yoke of money lenders. He expects impoverishment of capitalists, asks for destruction of drug and liquor mafia. He wishes to restart all the Mills of Mumbai. He wants to spread education among the deprived masses. He desires to punish the doctors involved in sex selective abortions, dowry seekers, corrupt bureaucrats, those who discriminate on the basis of caste and rapists. He extends his support to those who are resisting. At the same time he wants to punish those who are stealing sand for civil constructions and wants to stop atrocious behaviour of police with social activists. He demands for the audit of NGOs, for job security and permanent employment for contractual workers. He demands Corporate Houses to be held accountable of unbridled destruction of environment, corruption in Spectrum/oil/gas allocation. He seeks clarification from Media about news behind news, shares in advertisements, editorial policy and politics of opinion polls. He expects slum dwellers should be free from the inhuman living conditions. He expects to demolish

ghettoes, to give access to the deprived ones in the sky scrapers. He wants to break cultural censorship over food and expects humans should learn how to crush riots and destroy brokers lobby. Humans should challenge fiefdoms of religious bodies and distribute all the wealth equally among all. They should teach not to pray before stones. He expects humans should construct the semantics of revolt, to design ornaments of love, to develop new enterprises. They should build hospitals with affordable treatment and medicines, new dams, irrigation canals, roads, new universities and will develop the software of new society where they will teach new lessons of humanity. Finally, he says that to live like human, they should revolt against everyone who are destroying the values of non-violence.

Vaibhav delineates list of issues which are of greater concerns for humanity today. And therefore do not want to restrict him to single identity. There is complex matrix that develops by identification with every form of exploitation like Dalit, women, labour, environmentalist and so on. For Vaibhav exploitation is universal and thus need to expand borders of his identity to encompass humanity as a whole. This web of identities pose serious dilemma for him. At this point his own exploitation became one part of the universal presence of exploitation. He rejects his identity as a Dalit as he wrote in the poem *Shabdani Sangitlay Amhala* (Words Have Told This to Us).

Amidst the carnival of *Buddham Sharanam Gachhami*
 Amidst the lyrics of *Bhimraom Sarami*
 We are reborn
 We have thrown the shackles of serfdom long before.
 Identity of this revolt cannot be Dalit
Dalitatva cannot be an honor for me
 My war cry is Ambedkarite revolution
 It does not emboss impression of *Dalitatva*
 But engages with open dialogue in the ground of inequality
 It proclaims true duty of accountability to humanity
 And prepares for construction of new world

(Ibid., p. 56)

Vaibhav has a firm stand on his rejection of the term Dalit. He likes to recognize himself as Ambedkarite than Dalit. He is rejoicing conversion to Buddhism, and singing songs of Babasaheb Ambedkar and celebrating his rebirth as a free human being. For him this newly found identity cannot be Dalit, he no more accepts depressed state as a state to be proud of. His identity is Ambedkarite by means of which he now openly challenges inequality and proclaims his accountability towards humanity and prepares for construction of

new world. In the telephonic talk with the author he cleared his views:

Lot of self-victimization happened by the use of the word *Dalit*. In order to progress we should not indulge in self-victimization. The term is derived from '*Dal*' means depressed or oppressed. When we challenge the depressed status and oppressive structure we in a way reject '*Dalitatva*' also. Moreover it is stative word, and we should leave the state of being depressed.

(Chhaya, Telephonic Conversation, 2015)

With rejection of the term Dalit he enters into the debate which was rigorously held in the literary circles of anti-caste movement. Dalit Panther movement of 1970s popularized the term. It caused greater political awareness among the scheduled castes and created new identity for the downtrodden (Sirsikar, 1995). It was concerned with identity formation and its assertion to redeem the self-confidence and self-worth of the marginalised sections (Punalekar, 2001). The term was not acceptable for many writers and at least six different terms were used by them in Maharashtra, mainly Dalit Literature by Keshav Meshram, Dr. Sharankumar Limbale, Daya Pawar; Ambedkarite Literature by Dr. Yashvant Manohar, Dr. Yogendra Meshram; Non-Brahmin Literature, by Sharad Patil; Buddhist Literature by Vijay Sonawane, Bhausaheb Adsul; Literature of Phule-Ambedkar Motivation, by Raja Dhale, Prof. Gautamiputra Kamble; and Bahujan Sahitya, by Baburao Bagul, Anand Yadav (Ratnakar, 1997).

From Dalit Panthers of 1970s to the present, things have changed considerably and Vaibhav is conscious about those changes. Globalization has brought paradigmatic shift in the politics, economy, society and culture in India. Innovations in Information Technology swiped earlier assumptions about human behaviour. State entered into laissez faire mode. Many agendas of social transformation undertaken during post-independence period remained inconclusive. Rise of service sector and increasing privatization drastically reduced bargaining capacity of labour unions. Primordial identities of caste, religion and language have resurfaced.

Failure of Dalit politics in Maharashtra weakened morals of the activists. Dalit leaders are either coopted by other political parties or formed separate political parties and failed the efforts of unity of Dalit Politics in Maharashtra. Atrocities on Dalits continued unabatedly. It is in this context Vaibhav, as a poet, is carving the path of liberation. His poem *Samajun Ghe*, (Try to Understand) addresses to the activists of the Ambedkarite movement. He is realistic in his

understanding of problems of earlier generation of activists. He appeals them to shed off the old stereotype of activist. Enough of the *Shabnam* bag on shoulder, shirt torn in armpit, dusty pant, high power spectacles, grown beard and wrinkles on face. He advises to change the method of struggle or else, he cautioned that their loss will be ultimately be the loss of movement. Therefore he suggests them to:

Feed yourself first
 Take off tattered vest
 Check your bones and ribs
 Make them strong
 People may call you capitalist
 They will insult you as traitor
 But you keep on walking

(Ibid., p. 98)

All this he advises with the intention of strengthening the movement. His observation of the movement at grassroots level is minute. He knows that if activists are not financially independent then they may fall into trap of cooptation by the dominant sections resulting into their loss of autonomy and freedom to think. This results into slow death of the movement. Hundreds of police cases, false FIRs, subsequent arrests, neglect of family life all this results into weakening the morale of activists. Therefore, he counsels:

Try to understand
 Economy of the movement
 Compose new definitions of economics of movement
 And revolt
 Against that rope
 Which you have weaved
 To tie against your neck once you get demoralized.

(Ibid., p. 99)

Vaibhav speaks in the times when 150 years of movement resulted into gains for the dalits in terms of space and sense of empowerment. He wishes to capitalize those gains for the sake of the movement itself. Since he has seen the movement from close quarters and is also part of it he is aware of plight of those hundreds of Dalit social workers whose selfless service to the community ultimately destroyed their personal growth and neglect of family. As the goal of the movement of Dalits is the upliftment of the lot of exploited sections of the society, it is imperative that activists should financially secure themselves.

In his title poem, “Delete Kelele Saare Aakash” (“All of the Deleted Sky”), Vaibhav proposed the strategy of the movement in the age of globalization. The sky in Vaibhav’s poem signifies the history, the memory, the past, the life world of the dalit. It comprised of the lost ground in the battle towards the end of caste notified existence. Days of Dalit mobilization when Ambedkar stirred the conscience of the upper caste brought the issue of exploitation on the national platform. Vaibhav offers subtle observation of the old instruments of the movements that were used by Ambedkar very effectively as a strategy to fight for the cause of dalits. Three fronts of struggle deserve mention here, academic scholarship, diplomacy and political mobilization of masses. More than twenty-two volumes of his writings and speeches published by the Publication Division of Government of Maharashtra comprised of essential writings of Ambedkar on diverse topics ranging from sociological, political, economic, cultural, religious are evidence of the strategic employability of knowledge, its production and spread for the advancement of the cause of the movement. On the diplomatic front his relationship with Gandhi, Congress and other political leaders of the country at one side and with British Government and other anti-caste movement leaders on the other exhibit his highly skilled maneuvers in very hostile social and politically context of early twentieth century. Despite of limited resources his strategy of mass mobilization tested the time during numerous agitations he carried out not only on the issue of untouchability but also for the labour class in Bombay Province as a founder of Independent Labour Party.

Babasaheb Ambedkar and his life is the major component of the identity of dalit movement. Dalit Panther movement too employed the strategies of writing, mobilization effectively in 1970s. It brought the wave of Dalit literature and produced generation of aggressive activists who were inspired by the Black Panther movement of America. Ambedkar’s were the days of pre-Independence colonial phase of industrialization in India and Dalit Panther born in the post-colonial welfare state era. In the twenty-first century, Vaibhav is decoding the situation in the globalized India where global market is more powerful than ever and instruments of knowledge, mobilization and context of diplomacy has changed completely. Therefore, in the poem “Delete Kelele Saare Aakash”, he urges to modify the instruments and adopt new strategies of resistance.

We have to design our own softwares
 And computers to run those softwares
 And antivirus to protect them

We only have to design for ourselves
 Strength of wrist
 Now let's reach to fingers
 Fire from the eyes should enter into Brain
 See, now demand is more for software than
 Hardware
 Let's change the language of movement
 And centers of knowledge
 Overthrow the monopoly over intellect
 Like oxygen in the air
 Free knowledge as well
 Then only will be free the human from within the human

(Ibid., pp. 58-59)

Software symbolizes strategy, planning, attitude, ideology; computer implies the activists who are motivated by the desire to serve the community; and antivirus is the ultra-software meant to protect the former two; it is the identity which is the need of the hour. Power in the wrist symbolizes agitational tactics of movement, the dangers of which are already highlighted by Vaibhav in early poem *Samajun Ghe*; therefore he expects that now dalits should write on Facebook wall, they should write blog. He is aware that print media and electronic media of television and radio are already monopolized by upper castes; hence it is sensible to use social media of Facebook, Blog, WhatsApp and Twitter. He appeals to the young generation of Ambedkarites to use Information Technology as their new instrument of struggle.

Discussion

In order to deal with the problematic of identity as positioned in Vaibhav's poems, I shall summarize my understanding in three themes; firstly, caste is integral to social interaction in the cosmopolitan city of Mumbai. It is lived and experienced by the people in overt and covert forms. Secondly, the present generation of the dalits desires to assert themselves in positive way as 'being something' rather than 'not being something'. This position indicates ideological orientation of their acquired identity which is inseparable from the thoughts and life of Babasaheb Ambedkar. Thirdly, there is a visible continuity in the way dalit panthers defined the term 'Dalit' in 1970 and the position that Vaibhav's poems are adopting vis-à-vis universal presence of exploitation in this twenty-first century. The poem indicates aligning of the political self with

other exploited sections and 'being human' is the inclusive identity that it resorts to fulfill the purpose.

If coping up with the stigmatized identity associated with untouchability is the problem in caste ridden rural society then negotiating with multiple identities is the inevitability of urban context. As compared to the rural society, the urban environment offers the individual certain amount of freedom to pursue its own capacities. Deciding which identity should be prioritized over other identities—although in limited sense—is possible in urban environment. The free space offers potential to de-caste the identity that the generation of Vaibhav is looking forward. But the process of de-casting is not as easy as it appears to be at first glance. The problem is inherent in the clash between personal identity and social identity. By personal identity one may think of 'one's characterization of oneself in the light of the beliefs the one may own', and social identity connotes 'one's identification by others based on the stereotypes associated with the one's ascribed social status'. Here identity acquires political domain as contested ground, within the mind of the individual—between nurtured self and ambitious or ideal self that one aspire to build on its own. Similarly, it also engages in the politics of identification where social identity as ascribed by the social structures engages into confrontational mode with the self-constructed identity crafted by the individual himself⁶.

In such a complex situation newly defined identity may get trapped into in-group and out-group differentiation (Tajfel, 1978). Almost every social identity thrives on such differentiation where association with those who share similar positioning and antagonistic or confrontational relationship with those who differ in such identification does exist. Any attempt to free one's self from the burden of past—that is to relieve oneself from the stereotypes of stigmatized identity—is pregnant with the possibility to alienate in-group members. On the other hand if out-group members continued their discriminatory behaviour with such individual then there is a possibility of the crises of identity for the individual. Accumulated negative experiences (a dystonic outcomes⁷) (McKinney, 2001) of others behaviour affects identity formation among the persons. An attempt to de-caste can therefore be such a complex phenomenon. This does not mean that de-casting is impossible at all. Here we enter into the domain of ideology. Ideologies carry potential to influence both in-group as well as out-groups, means it can develop its followers in both the sides. If more people believing into particular ideology coalesced together, in such a situation it is quite possible that de-

casting will get legitimacy and the situation may avert the identity crisis for such individuals, for whom ideological comradeship may work as buffer to avoid the crisis of clash of self-defined and socially ascribed identity.

Now we can get back to three themes derived from Vaibhav's poems and look at the dynamics behind the de-casting process of the identity, and conclude hereafter. As the caste, overtly or covertly, is the part and parcel of daily experiences of the dalits in one of the most cosmopolitan urban space in the country, the continuity into their shared existence is the matter of fact. Therefore, the effort to negate those experiences, carving our own niche, is also integral to their struggle to survival in the city. In order to do that present generation of the dalits expects to move away from 'escaping stigma of untouchability' to 'de-caste their existence' and to move towards greater freedom as human. Ambedkar's imagery, his ideas and philosophy is the reference point for these youths who are acquainted with them through their socialization. In the age of globalization their individualistic position should not be interpreted as capitalist in classical form. They see into it the new possibility to close their rank with other victims of exploitation. This may contain the possibility of obliterating the in-group and out-group differentiation based on caste, based ascribed status and frees them to acquire the identity which is more accommodative and universal in nature.

Notes

1. The term Scheduled Castes is constitutional term used for the section of population against whom practice of untouchability was prevalent in India.
2. Translation of the title is borrowed from report published in DNA (Pawar, 2015)
3. Namdeo Dhasal was Marathi poet, writer and Dalit activist from Maharashtra, India. He was the founder member of Dalit Panthers, prominent organization of young Dalit authors and activists in 1972. His notable works are *Andhale Shatak*, *Golpitha*, *Tujhi Iyatta Kanchi?* And *Priya Darshini*. He was awarded with Padma Shri by Government of India in 1999 and with Lifetime Achievement Award by the Sahitya Akademi in 2004.
4. All the poems quoted in the paper are liberally translated by the author of the paper.
5. A mixture of Tobacco, Arecanut, Cardamom and slaked lime which is chewed for its stimulant and psychoactive effects.
6. Psychosocial identity depends on a complementarity of an inner (ego) synthesis in the individual and of role integration in his group (Erikson, 1968).
7. According to Erikson, each stage of psychosocial development culminates in a balance of both syntonic and dystonic outcomes. A syntonic outcome is a positive experience through which the individual strives to attain and

consequently maintain the experience in the overall ego structure. A dystonic outcome is a negative experience whereby the individual strives to avoid and consequently rectify the experience of in the overall ego structure (McKinney, 2001, p. 723).

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COLONIAL PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN IN INDIA AND THE NATIONALIST RESPONSE: DECONSTRUCTING BANKIM'S DRAUPADI

Vinny Jain

In 1813, a contentious and highly publicized debate took place in Britain over the renewal of the East India Company's Charter. It centered on the question of whether India ought to be opened up to missionaries and free traders, but during the debate, company directors also inquired into the operation of the Governor-General Cornwallis's administrative system and sought to examine his racial ban on Indian's being employed as judges and revenue officials and broached the question of what should be the role of Indian's in their own government. During the debate questions were raised about the morality of colonial rule, Britons paternalistic attitudes toward their Indian subjects and the maintenance of British Colonial prestige.

Even a cursory examination of the papers of that debate will reveal that there was no great shift in general British attitudes away from the common belief that Indians' were morally depraved. Any reference to Britons near obsession from the 1880s onwards regarding Indian Widow Burning (Sati) or the ritual strangling of travellers, supposedly committed by Thugs (Thuggi) will readily attest to the fact that if anything, these attitudes hardened during this period and into the British Raj.¹

British colonial officials, and many colonial track authors, during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, generally regarded Indians' as "misguided children in morals", as Bengal legal official Sir Archibald Galloway put it in 1932.²

Like eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Britons who regarded the parents pedagogical role viz-a-viz their children as very important, many nineteenth century British colonial officials argued that Britons needed to guide Indians on how to become 'moral men' and eventually capable of governing themselves, with others doubting whether Indians were morally redeemable. James Fritz James Stephen, a well known Raj era conservative, would point

out for example, in 1870, that Indians were incapable of any moral improvement and simply needed to be ruled.³

That there was widespread discontent amongst the Indians with the failure of Cornwallis to provide adequate governance, was apparent. This was on account of his firing of Indian judges and revenue officials and the enacting of the permanent settlement, which robbed peasants of their customary rights on the land and grafted Western notions of landownership onto Bengal. The courts were now flooded with massive case backlogs for which the Indians were again blamed. Lord Minto, writing in 1811, argued that British judges had to constantly face the prevalence of crimes of perjury and forgery. James Mill, in his *History of British India*, (1817), framed the issue in starkly religious-cultural terms. Indian duplicity, he argued, could be traced to Hinduism, treating perjury as “a very trifling and venial offence”, which was in marked contrast to Britons high regard to the truth attributable to Protestantism’s emphasis on individual moral responsibility. This unwillingness to tell the truth by the Indian, became for the colonial administrators a key marker of their cultural and racial backwardness.⁴

The tide of opinion amongst the British administrators shifted, eventually, albeit slowly, toward a recognition of the failure of Cornwallis’s policies and several officers pointed out the danger of continuing to deny Indians a major share in colonial government, for endangering British colonial rules’ broader popularity with its subjects. Imperial Roman policies of the inclusion of local elite and conciliation were invoked, and, various moral arguments in favour of devolving further colonial responsibilities onto Indian subordinates were advanced.

This led to the reforms of 1831, piloted by Lord William Bentinck, whose own opinion had evolved and changed on the issue. A quarter century earlier, while serving as the Governor of Madras, Bentinck had opposed entrusting further responsibilities of governance to Indians. By the time he assumed the reigns of the Bengal government in 1828, he regarded it as a monstrous absurdity to continue committing the entire Bengal government to ‘less than four hundred strangers’ and questioned the morality of Cornwallis’s racial ban.⁶

The 1831 reforms were far less than what Bentinck had hoped for, for example, he had recommended that the salary cap for Indian uncovenanted servants be raised tenfold from Rs 100 (twelve pounds, ten dimes)to Rs 1,000 a month(one hundred and twenty five Pounds). This was bargained down to Rs four hundred (fifty Pounds),prompting Bentinck in 1832 to write a letter to the

President of the Board of Control, Charles Grant, that the new top salary that an Indian official could receive was still no more than what “your wretched and incapable British functionary” received as his initial salary upon arrival in India. Not quite seeing it this way, his colleagues, by deliberately choosing this lower salary cap, sought rather to balance greater Indian employment access with the maintenance of British racial privilege and practice.⁷

The early 1830s marked the height of colonial administrators’ enthusiasm for Indianization, the British conceded at least in theory, considerable Indian participation at most levels of colonial administration. No Indian, however, would gain entry into the covenanted service, the colonial bureaucracy’s upper most rung, for another three decades, despite a legal mandate after 1833, for Company Directors to appoint qualified Indians’ (which they simply ignored, claiming that no Indian was qualified).

During the 1840s and 1850s, opponents of Bentinck partial Indianization policy came to the fore, the worry was that Indian bureaucrats came generally from the ‘wrong’ social classes. Because most Indian officials were not landed elites but rather increasingly urbanized, western educated middle class Bengalis, some worried that they would likely subvert whatever powers they were granted to their own private benefit and there was the old persistent stereotype of universal Indian moral depravity, that could be trotted out whenever needed.⁸

That the Company had mercantile interests at heart ought not to be forgotten, as also the fact that this is an era prior to the Indian National Movement, that led eventually to independence in 1947. Indeed this is antecedent to the first war of Indian Independence in 1857.

By 1853, the Company had lost all its monopolistic trading rights and in 1858, was nationalized by the British. The British Raj ICS were often wont to claim that only they were seriously committed to India and the welfare of the Indians’ they ruled over, unlike their predecessors who worked for the East India Company, prior to its nationalization in 1858.⁹

For the next ninety years to Independence in 1947, the officials of the Raj were chosen via a written exam, held annually in England, based on the Oxford, Cambridge subjects. That this resulted in a selection of those best suited to govern India was doubtful, as the system did tend to favour those who could learn by rote and master theory, as opposed to those who were best fitted for Indian conditions. Theoretically, however, they were now open to everybody,

even Indians. In 1864, an Indian, Satendranath Tagore, did qualify and by the 1880s twelve additional Indians (out of a total of twelve hundred) successfully joined the ICS. As Mrilalini Sinha has shown, the British tried various expedients during the late nineteenth century that further Indians, and especially Bengalis such as Tagore, failed to qualify. They progressively lowered the upper age limit, held the exams annually, only in England till 1921 and, continually revised the exams, so that the Indians and undesirable Britons from lower social classes, could not successfully cram for them. Finally, introducing at the end of the nineteenth century, the horse riding test, to weed out those who were not proper English gentlemen!¹⁰

The company policy of partial Indianization, it was contended, was essentially a sham. Was not the Company acting hypocritically, Mir Salamat Ali demanded, when it decried dishonesty and corruption amongst its Indian Employees while still continuing to pay them salaries that were plainly inadequate to live on?¹¹

With the passage of time, and with the mounting pressure of the Indian national movement, increasing Indianization of India's administration occurred, albeit slowly. Attitudes, however, were even slower to change.

Therefore, liberal philosopher and high ranking London-based Company official John Stuart Mill, doubted whether Indians were moral enough to become covenanted servants. Unlike his father who had attacked Bentinck's partial Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy in 1831 as being the most dangerous "Hinduphilism", Mill supported admitting Indians to "all situations to which they were fit".¹² He acknowledged that the Company was breaking the law by refusing to appoint them as covenanted servants, however, he argued that this policy though illegal was a practical expulsion that needed to be maintained until Indian morality improved. This was an extraordinary statement coming from an individual otherwise greatly concerned about justice, liberty and equality. The literature available from the times, the minutes of official meetings, reports and published opinions are strung with such words of endearment and reveal an ideological concern to keep out "weak kneed, effeminate, effete Bengalis".¹³ It was essential that the superiority of the English be maintained in the Public space and it was this that eventually felicitated the political struggle for liberty from a colonizing power that did not see its subjects as essentially equal.

That was a struggle that was located in the public space, but what of the home, the private space? The image and the metaphor of the 'threshold' brings us to the public/private dichotomy that has had

a long and chequered career in feminist literature. That binary is perhaps redundant in today's world and the "personal is intensely political",¹⁴ however for, the purposes of historical research, these notions are still of utility and can be employed to demarcate the spheres of public and private interactions within the home and outside of it. Following Meera Kosambi, it is possible to view the two spheres as not dichotomous but simply different spheres with a porous boundary. The public sphere is naturally divisible into political, socio-cultural and, economic domains. Of these the political sphere is the domain of political power, inhabited by Indian as well as British men and dominated by the latter. The socio-cultural sphere subsumes social customs and institutions involving the family (including marriage) as well as health care, education, literature and related matters. This domain is inhabited by Indian men and women and dominated by the former.¹⁵

This division was implicit also in the colonial State's perception of the political sphere as its legitimate area of domination, while the social and religious matters remained within the exclusive purview of various Indian religious and caste communities. The demarcation was further reinforced by Queen Victoria's proclamation in 1857, to guarantee non interference by the state in the socio-cultural arena. The political and socio-cultural spheres, needless to say were both defined by a gender bias and a caste bias, their predominant Indian occupants were men of the upper castes, much as they are now.

Apart from the characterization of the political condition of India preceding the British conquest as a state of anarchy, lawlessness and arbitrary despotism, a central element in the ideological justification of British colonial rule was the criticism of degenerate and barbaric social customs of the Indian people, sanctioned, or so it was believed by religious tradition. In identifying this tradition as degenerate and barbaric, colonist critiques invariably repeated a long list of atrocities, perpetuated on Indian women, not so much by men or a certain classes of men, but a whole body of structural canons and ritual practices, that they said, by rationalizing such atrocities within a complete framework of religious doctrine, made them appear to perpetrators and suffers alike, as necessary marks of right conduct. Western views on Indian society were particularly critical of the way Hindus treated their women. By assuming a position of sympathy with the unfree and oppressed womanhood of India, the colonial mind was able to transform this figure of the Indian woman into a sigh of the inherently oppressive and unfree nature of the entire cultural tradition of a country.¹⁶

At the same time, indigenous questioning of tradition was also deeply involved with the same issue. The debates on *sati*, widow remarriage, child marriage, polygamy and women's education were central to the nineteenth century programmes of reform. The relevant agendas were partly prompted by the desire to set ones house in order in response to western criticism, but their origins were traceable to a new concern for rational and humane social conduct and introspection, induced thereby, in short, to sensibilities of western derivation.¹⁷

An early nineteenth century British traveler in India had this to say:

“At no period of life, in no condition of society, should a woman do anything at her mere pleasure. Their fathers, their brothers, their husbands, their sons are verily called their protectors, but it is such protection! Day and night must woman be held by their protectors in a state of absolute dependence. A woman it is affirmed is never fit for independence, or to be trusted with liberty..., their deity has allotted to women a love of their bed, of their seat and of their ornaments, impure appetites, wrath, flexibility, desire of mischief and bad conduct. Though her husband be devoid of all good qualities, yet, such is the estimate that they form of her moral discrimination and sensibilities, that they bind the wife to revere him like a god and, to submit to his corporeal chastisements, whenever he chooses to inflict them, by cane or by rope, on the back parts...and, as if she deserved to be excluded from immortality as well as from justice, from hope as well as from enjoyment, it is ruled that a female has no business with the Veda... (a woman) must be foul as falsehood itself and incompetent to bear witness...will it be a matter of wonder that, in the moment of despair, she will embrace the burning pile and its scorching flames, instead of lengthening solitude and degradation, of dark and humiliating suffering and sorrow?”¹⁸

It was *sati*, of course that came to provide the most clinching example of this rhetoric of condemnation—“the first and the most criminal of their customs”, as William Bentinck, the Governor General who legislated its abolition, described it.¹⁹

Indeed the practical implication of the criticism of Indian tradition was necessarily a project of civilizing the Indian people, the entire edifice of colonialist discourse was fundamentally constituted around that project. In broad terms then, the British response to the condition of women in India was as follows:

1. Indian women were uneducated
2. Were dependent for all things on their men

3. Were the repository of all superstition
4. Were promiscuous

The nationalist response separated the domain of culture into two spheres, the material and the spiritual. The West was apparently superior in the material domain, science, technology, rational forms of economic organization, modern methods of Statecraft, their domination of the world was a consequence, and it was imperative that this domination be overcome by the colonized by learning these new techniques of organizing material life and incorporating them within their own cultures. However, if this imitation of the West was extended to other domains as well, then, self identity and national culture itself could be threatened, and, it was therefore equally important that the spiritual essence of national culture be strengthened.

Partha Chatterjee has shown that the material/spiritual distinction was condensed into an analogous but ideologically far more powerful dichotomy: that between the inner and the outer. The material domain, argued the nationalist writers, lies outside us—a mere external that influences us, conditions us and forces us to adjust to it. Ultimately, it is unimportant. The spiritual that lies within is our true self; it is that which is genuinely essential. It followed that as long as India took care to retain the spiritual distinctiveness of its culture, it could make all the compromises and adjustments necessary to adapt itself to the requirements of a modern material world, without losing its true identity. Applying the inner/outer distinction to the matter of concrete day-to-day living separates the social space into '*ghar*' and '*bahar*', the home and the world. The world is the external, the domain of the material, the home represents one's true spiritual self. The world, treacherous, is dominated by the male, the home, with the woman as its representation, must remain sacrosanct from profane material pursuits. And thus one arrives at the identification of social roles by gender to correspond with the separation of social space into *ghar* and *bahar*.²⁰

The world was where the west had subjugated the non European people on account of its material superiority, but the nationalist asserted, it had failed to colonize the internal, the essential identity of the East, which lay in its distinctive and superior spiritual culture. Therefore, while the apparent, inferiority and subjugation of the East had to be overcome in the material world, in the space where battles for national independence had to be fought and won, the inner world, the spiritual essence, the 'home' needed to be protected and no interference was to be tolerated therein by the

colonizer. This then was the ideological framework within which the women's question was resolved by the nationalists. Not a total rejection of the Western project, for its application in the material world was acceptable, (which is why it was possible for them to envisage western education, and participation in the struggle for independence for women) however modernity was to be consistent with the nationalist project and the ideological principle of selection was to be applicable here.

It is striking that much of the literature on women in the nineteenth century concerns the threatened westernization of Bengali women. This refutation of the colonial perspective, couched in terms of authenticity, was put forward as the authentic Indian response and was intended to serve nationalistic pride. Coming into existence from the late nineteenth century and starting very specifically with the Bankim discourses, it blossomed and developed along a specific socio-cultural agenda. The one singularly important point on which debate was conducted was to retrieve Indian women from both (a) colonial construction, and, (b) colonial deconstruction.

The colonial construct of middle class Indian women, metaphorically referred to as the 'mehsahib' was contested by the nationalist construct of the 'bhadramahila' and in similar fashion, the rural/urban dichotomy was posited as a contestation between colonial subversiveness and Indian authenticity (the post colonial discourse figured out that this anti colonial reaction was installed with a great deal of derivativeness and questioned its authenticity asking for a reading of real voices marginalized thus far, in order to discover genuine authenticity...it is some of those voices this present project seeks to explore).

Homi Bhabha, in this context, used the metonyms of 'hybridity' and 'mimicry'. Mimicry subsumes under a local manifestation of colonial cultural adaptability, whereas hybridity has been imputed with a property of conscious interpretativeness, of cultural truce, presenting a critical approach to progressiveness.²¹

Thus while the Indian 'mehsahib', imitating the new western fashion in dress and mannerism was caricatured and laughed at, there did merge over a period of time, a hybrid identity, the 'bhadramahila', educated in western ways, cultured and 'Kulin', rooted nevertheless in the essentials of Indian-ness, in the quintessential spiritual domain.

I

Bankim's explanation of the subjection of India is not in terms of material or physical strength or the lack thereof amongst the Indian

people, it is couched in cultural terms, a difference of culture that distinguishes the Hindu from the European, the Hindu attitude toward power. In a long essay on Samkhya philosophy, he argues, that the central philosophical foundation of the overwhelming part of the religious beliefs in India, including Buddhism, lies in the philosophy of Samkhya, and the chief characteristic of this philosophy is its emphasis on 'vairagya'.²²

The present state of the Hindus is a product of this excessive otherworldliness. The lack of devotion to work which foreigners point out as a chief characteristic is only a manifestation of this quality. Our second most important characteristic—fatalism—is yet another form of this other worldliness derived from Samkhaya.²³

Europeans are devotees of power. That is the key to their advancement. We are negligent toward power, which is the key to our downfall. Europeans pursue a goal which they must reach in this world: they are victorious on earth. We pursue a goal which lies in the world beyond, which is why we have failed to win on Earth.²⁴

The critique of Indian culture here is in every way a rationalist critique and so is the critique of Samkhaya philosophy. It follows therefore that Bankim supports the acquisition of material skills; the project is to achieve positive knowledge. Thus he accepts entirely the fundamental methodological assumptions, the primary concepts and the general theoretical orientation of the nineteenth century positivist sociology and the utilitarian political economy. He wholly shared the Enlightenment belief in the perfectibility of man and agreed with the positivist view of looking at the history of social institutions as developing from less developed and imperfect forms to more developed and perfect ones. He accepted, for instance, that free trade was a more developed form of economic organization than anything that had existed previously, including protectionism, because it represented a rational scheme of division of labour and was beneficial to all parties involved in economic exchange.²⁵

Thence to the question of 'mimicking' the West. Is all imitation bad? That cannot be, as "one cannot learn except by imitation, just as children learn to speak by imitating the speech of adults, to act, by imitating the actions of adults, so do uncivilized and uneducated people, learn by imitating the ways of the civilized and educated. Thus it is reasonable and rational that Bengalees should imitate the English...but almost as soon as Bankim has made this characteristic thrust of logic, he feels compelled to back track...of course we agree that it may not be entirely desirable for Bengalees to be as imitative as they are now".²⁶

But what of 'home' and what of women?

Bankim's conception of *dharma*, an organic moral authority incorporated into a national religion or culture, and the need for a revival of *dharma* in contemporary India, made him an unsparing opponent of the principle form of elite nationalist politics of his time, viz, social reform through the medium of the legislative institutions of the colonial state. It is not that he disagreed with the reformers' critique of the various Hindu customs and practices; he however, vehemently questioned both the mode of reasoning employed by the reformers' and their means for achieving the reform. He was opposed to their attempts on the one hand to persuade British administrators to legislate on social questions by appealing to enlightened reason and logic and on the other to neutralize conservative opinion by a highly selective interpretation of Hindu scriptures in order to show that the reforms were sanctioned by the Shastra. This he thought as hypocritical. Moreover, somewhat paradoxically in the context of his general sympathy for utilitarian social theory, he had little faith in the efficacy of legislation to bring about a genuine reform of social institutions.²⁷

Reform, in order to succeed, had to flow from a new moral consensus in society, and this new consensus, this new morality was inevitable on account of the new socio-economic conditions that defined the modern age. Thus it was clear, he thought, that polygamy, to the extent that it was ever common in Hindu society, was rapidly on the decline. This decline had come about without State legislation or injunctions by religious leaders. Given the changing social conditions, its ultimate disappearance was inevitable. Consequently, he thought that there was little difference between the efforts of reformers like Vidhyasagar and Don Quixote!²⁸

Moreover, the prime purpose for the existence of the colonial State was the extension of colonial power that was founded on a superiority of force. To match and overthrow that superiority, Indian society would have to go through a similar transformation. And the key to that transformation must lie in a regeneration of national culture embodying in fact an unrivalled combination of material and spiritual values. Indeed, mere reform negates the nationalistic problematic itself, for it assumes that the Oriental (the Indian, the Hindu) is non autonomous, passive, historically non active indeed, for that very reason a historical, and therefore, ever in need to be acted upon by others.

Draupadi²⁹

Draupadi, the heroine of the *Mahabharata*, married simultaneously to the five Pandava brothers, was an image of Indian womanhood used by the colonizers to mock and ridicule. Indian women, symbolized by Draupadi, who had such acceptance, even veneration amongst the masses, were seen as dependent, in need of protection, immoral and unholy.

Bankim's essay, entitled "Draupadi", is his response to and the negation of that colonial caricaturing. His counterargument in defense of Draupadi and her extraordinary life situation, took all his ingenuity. Couched in high *dharmic* terms, it is at once his negation of the colonial projection as well as his building up of a character, that placed in extremely trying and difficult life situations, fulfils her *dharmic* duties to a 'T'. the essay paints an image of Indian womanhood, in dramatic contrast to the colonial telling of the tale. This was in consonance with Bankim's belief that behind every word that was uttered was a belief, in turn embedded in a culture and if one was not conversant with the norms of that culture, then, no matter how good one's command over language may be, perceptions would be skewed. The objective in writing the essay is therefore twofold, a deconstruction of the colonial image as well as the construction of a morally edifying nationalist response.

The first part of the essay opens with Bankim contrasting the character of Draupadi with the traditional image of ideal Indian womanhood. The kind of features traditionally found in heroines are that they are devoted, soft natured, shy and tolerant, these he says were the qualities found in Shakuntala, Damyanti and Revathi, who were the multiple images of Sita, Draupadi alone is the exception from the essentialized ideal of a good Aryan wife, a Bhadramahila. (The rest of the essay is at pains to establish the fact that though this may seem to be the case on the surface, if one were to look at the whole situation as a metaphor and were to analyze it from the Dharmic standpoint, then Draupadi too, in a transcendental sense, is a bhadramahila.)

Therefore, he says, the ideal is the image of Sita, who is included, Draupadi is not the ideal Aryan wife and is therefore, excluded. The only similarity between them, he goes on to say, is that they both were devoted to and worshiped their husbands. Sita was completely devoted to Rama, and Draupadi's devotion to her five husbands could not be faulted, hence they could both be invoked as "Sutees"

Apart from that one similarity, Draupadi, says Bankim, is nothing

like Sita, the differences abound. Sita, though born a princess is essentially the image of a loyal wife. Her identity stems from being Rama's wife. In contrast, Draupadi has a regal persona and bearing, independent of the fact that she has five royal husbands. Contrary to the image of a woman dependent on a man for protection, Draupadi has all the qualities of a female who is tough. For Bankim, if Sita is the ideal wife of Rama, Draupadi is the ideal companion for Bhima. He goes on to say that if Ravana had had the gall to come for Draupadi, then he surely would have been defeated by her 'bahubal' her physical prowess.

The Mahabharatha tells, of Draupadi, springing from the fires of the yajna, fully grown and completely endowed with all the qualities that were essential for the fulfillment of her purpose in life, which was the avenging of her father's humiliation at the hands of Dronacharya. She and her brother, her twin, Dhristdhumna, were both endowed with physical strength and skills at war. Her older sister Shikhandini, (Amba, reborn) was the commander in chief of Drupad's forces. Both these women, far from being weaklings, dependent on men, were fully capable, self sufficient women, capable of beating down the unwanted aggressor.

Bankim uses the Jayadrath episode to highlight the essential strength, physical as well as that of the spirit of Draupadi's character. Jayadrath, married to the only sister of the Kauravas, and thus brother-in-law to Draupadi as well, comes to the forest to visit Draupadi, knowing full well that her husbands are not home, his intent obviously malafide. She first extends the welcome that is due to his station, and when he makes his intentions obvious, she tries to convince him of the essential immorality and unethicalness of the intended deed. When none of her arguments work, she uses her physical strength to literally throw him to the ground. Jayadrath eventually succeeds in overpowering her and forces her unto his *ratha*. She, however, does not despair; her belief in her ability to protect herself and in that of her husbands to be with her is not shaken. She does not wail like an ordinary woman, rather she continues to taunt Jayadrath with gruesome word pictures of his inevitable misery upon the arrival of her mighty husbands. She is in full command of her senses even in a moment of deep crisis when she is alone.

That, in Bankim's opinion is absolutely different from the image of Indian women that the British colonists have favoured.

Another charge levied by the British was that Indian women were denied choice in making decisions that were fundamental to their lives. Draupadi too was married to the five brothers, merely because

their mother made an unfortunate error of asking the brothers to share whatever it was that they had gotten, as was their customary wont, without realizing that it was a woman they had won this time. Bankim's skills are truly tested in finding a Dharmic explanation for Draupadi's unusual marital situation and this is the argument he extends.

European scholars, Bankim says, believe that Indian women are promiscuous based on the sole example of Draupadi's multiple marriage, and that it is tradition in India to have multiple partners which shows how uncivilized and uncouth a race Indians are (contemporary England had accepted the monogamous morality of the Victorian age with all its inbuilt social intricacies, in theory at least, if not in practice).³⁰

Bankim is seriously offended with this allegation. "Nowhere in the *itihas* and the Puranas, is there any testimony of polygamy or polyandry" and by citing the one example of Draupadi, the politically motivated European scholars degrade the Indian female.³¹ That derivation, Bankim contends, is seriously simplistic, it is so simplistic as it were to say that Ferguson, by seeing naked sculptors, concluded that women had no sense of clothing. Bankim contends that there is no historical testimony of polyandry, there is not even an exception before Draupadi. Therefore, even if this unusual marriage of Draupadi were historically true and the Pandavas had existed in fact, then it would be reasonable to conclude that such a marriage would have attracted considerable public censor and would not have been socially acceptable.

Therefore, Bankim contends, the marriage is to be seen as part of the grand schematic, the grand plan, engineered by the poet for the purposes of advancing the story. Draupadi has a very duty bound marital relationship with each of her husbands. She has one male off spring from each of them, not more, not less, no daughters are told of and no one missed out. None of these children survive the war and not one of them succeeds to the throne of Hastinapur. For Bankim, this is obviously an idealized pre-calculated scheme, fiction rather than history. Moreover Bankim contends, Arjuna and Bhima have other wives as well. Yudhithara, Nakula and Sehdeva had not, as the *Mahabharata* is primarily the story of Kunti's sons and the sons of Madri play only a minor part, it is possible that Draupadi, if indeed this story had actually come to pass, may have been married only to Yudhithara and the rest may be only the poets imagination.

The obvious purpose of such a contention is to establish that monogamy, at least for the female is the accepted norm.

At the *swayamvara* organized by her father, Draupadi is appalled at the sight of Karna, a Suta putra a low caste unworthy of her hand in marriage, getting up to test his skills at the archery task that had to be fulfilled in order to win her hand. She knows that he has the skills to do so; however it would defeat the purpose of the grand narrative if he were allowed to win. She voices a clear rejection, couched in caste terms. She will not marry the low born Suta putra. That quells Karna's ambition, and Bankim says her behavior here, even though she is yet only a princess, not the legally wedded wife of a king, a rajrani, is a prologue to how she would behave in the dice episode. She has a clear opinion about what she wants and what she does not and has the ability to voice that opinion, to a room full of the all the worthies of the land. Draupadi's rejection of Karna on account of his birth, on caste grounds has been a blot on her character. Is she blind to merit and ability? Is this an acceptance of tradition, regardless of human concern? Bankim exonerates Draupadi of these charges. This is the politics of masculinity he says, and the writer of the epic, the grand patriarch Ved Vyasa, makes a scapegoat out of her, by putting that rejection in her mouth. An ideal Arya would not refuse the challenge of another, regardless of his caste, Karna's challenge presented a tricky situation, he was worthy and able, yet he had to be prevented from winning in order to further the purposes of the grand narrative. That tricky situation was resolved by the writer by letting the woman take the blame for the ousting.

Her voice is heard, loud and clear again in the dice episode. She uses all the arguments at her command to establish the essential unfairness and injustice of it all. "Did Yudhisthra first lose himself, or did he lose you?" she asks, a woman in dialogue with Dharma himself about the righteousness of his conduct. Her confidence that might appear on the surface as pride (*darpa*) is actually a serious intellectual query. This self-esteem is an attribute of all the major male characters of the Epic, Bhishma, Arjuna, Ashvathama, but not of the females. Draupadi for Bankim, actually breaks the boundaries of the male and female characterizations, if self esteem defines the man, then why not the woman? More of a 'man' than her husbands Draupadi lashes out at them, at Vidhur and Bhishma, for letting what happened the Kurusabha, transpire. She can clearly see that Dharma has been lost that day, despite the presence of these great men in the house.

Bankim then marvels at the ingenuity of the poet. Draupadi is a woman after all and she is, teaching the men lessons in righteous conduct. She has to be brought down from her performance of a

'man', brought down to the level of a female. The poet the grand patriarch of the epic, Ved Vyasa, achieves this by literally disrobing her masculinity to reveal her vulnerable femininity. Disrobed, she is weak and feeble, in need to male protection, in the form of Krishna. Her sense of justice morality and ethics, indeed her firm location in her realized Dharma, is yet not lost. Granted a boon by Dhritrastra, she asks that Yudhishthara be released from slavery, because she says that she doesn't want her son to be called the son of a slave. Granted another boon, she asks that the rest of the Pandavas be freed. Asked to seek another, she proceeds to advise Dhritrastra on the Dharma of a kshatriya. Greed she says, is the greatest of all sins. The Vaishya may be granted one boon, the khatriya two, the king three, and the Brahman as many as he desires. "As my husbands are no longer slaves and I am therefore the wife of a Kshatriya, I should ask for two and no more than two boons."

She has balance and restraint, much in contrast to the treatment meted out to her by the Kauravas.

Bringing his arguments to a close, Bankim provides a philosophical explanation for the poet's imagination, the purpose that the grand narrative is intended to serve.

The man/god Krishna is seen as transcendental, he says, at once a man and a god, 'stithopragya', unaffected by the material circumstances of his life he can therefore, partake of the carnal at will. If that be so, so can Draupadi. She is located in the Epic with five husbands and that is a situation that could lead her into whorism, however she views the five as actually one, in the same manner in which a Bhakta views all the demigods as being the manifestation of the one omnipotent one. Far from being promiscuous, Draupadi for Bankim is the female counterpart of the ideal transcendental man. This, Bankim asserts, makes the Indian tradition more inclusive than the gendered western tradition of only male Christ figures. The fact that she is at once attached and unattached is proven by her having only one male offspring with each of her husbands. This detaches her from the carnal and shows her as having fulfilled her role in the grand scheme of things.

I am no puritan, Bankim declares, and have no difficulty with the pleasure principle, but it would be wrong to think of the feminine as inferior to the masculine. Draupadi obviously is the female counterpart of the male icons who have elevated from the mundane. She despite being placed in a very difficult situation transcends the difficulties presented by the framework and becomes the female epitome of Dharma.

II

That then is Bankim's counterargument. His reading of Draupadi clearly structured to refute the colonial construct and at the same time designed to construct a nationalist response.

Several concerns emerge out of this for me.

First, is what I see as his selective reading of the text of the *Mahabharata* on which his postulates are based.

While it is true that Draupadi's polyandrous marriage is unique and no other such finds mention in Shastric tradition, it is also true that that is but half the story. There are several instances where women in the *Mahabharata* have multiple partners for various reasons. The practice of '*niyoga*' is common, performed for instance by Ved Vyasa on Ambika, and Ambalika, the widowed wives of Satyawati's son vichitraveera, and on Parishshrami their maid who gives birth to Vidhura.

Krishna Dypayana, Ved Vyasa himself is Satyawati's son by the Sage Parashar, with whom she had a Gandharva Vivah, before she was married to Shantanu, the king of Hastinapura. Kunti gives birth to Karna, before she is married to Pandu, and later has three sons with three different men, or Gods if you will, as does Madri who has her twins Nakula and Sehdeva with the Ashwini Kumaras who are themselves twins, while still being married to Pandu.

Also, contained in the *Mahabharata*, is the tale of Madhavi, the daughter of the king Yayati, prostituted by the Sage Galava, on the Kings authorization, to three powerful kings, including those of Ayodhya and Mithila, and the Sage Vishwamitra, for the obtaining of a thousand white horses, with one black ear each, for a year at a time with each man, each of whom fathers a son with her.

In claiming that norm that the Shastric tradition establishes is that of monogamy, especially for the female, or perhaps for the female alone, Bankim ignores all these alternate telling, each narrative proving insights into the location of women in the Indian Shastri/Epic tradition. Women belong to fathers and brothers; much as other forms of property does, with the patriarch having ownership rights over the body and souls of the women of the household. Draupadi too, is in many ways an instrument for her father, who raises her to be the means of his revenge over Drona, which is the purpose Dharma defines for her and this she ultimately fulfills. She seems to have no conscious agency of her own in all this, her fate predefined; dignity accrues to her, in an acceptance of that fate, not in defiance of it.

Bankim goes on to say that since monogamous marriage was the

norm, perhaps she was married to Yudhishthara alone and the rest is merely the poet's imagination as there is no mention of another wife for Yudhishthara while Bhima and Arjuna have other partners. This is an exercise in sanitizing the narrative; the *Mahabharata* mentions that Yudhishthara is married to Devika, the daughter of Govasana of the Shaivya tribe, who bore him a son named Yaudheya, similarly Sehdeva was married to his maternal cousin, Vijaya, the daughter of Dyutimat the king of Madra and had a son named Suhotra with her, Nakula likewise was married to Karenumati, the daughter of the King of Chedi and a had two sons with her.

I do not know, therefore, how Bankim arrives at the conclusion that he does, unless it be a deliberate exercise in weeding out uncomfortable complexities.

Bankim's counter argument is couched in high moral language and presents an ethically morally edifying Dharmic explanation for the situations in Draupadi's life, emphasizing the idealized role she plays as a Sati, an Aryan wife completely devoted to her husband in keeping with the accepted Dharmic norms of Bankim's time. There is therefore no space in his narrative for her special love for Arjun, a love that becomes the cause of her falling from grace, a transgression of righteous conduct and her eventual death during the Mahaparinirvana. All complexity is brushed out of the narrative and a clean Dharmic argument is advanced.

If the remedy, as Bankim believed, for the cultural backwardness that had resulted in the loss of political sovereignty was in cultural national regeneration, then what ought to be the contours of that regeneration? Bankim's burden was to show that "Hinduism is the greatest of all religions"³¹ all that was necessary was to "sweep it clean of the dross that that accumulated over the centuries, to interpret its tenets in the light of contemporary social situations".

Why this new national religion had to be based on a purified Hindu ideal is of course an interesting question. This was not the only religion practiced in India and more than half of Bankim's home province of Bengal was Muslim.³²

In the Indian case, neither language nor racial distinctiveness was a suitable criterion for defining national solidarity. Rather, within the thematic and the problematic, two elements combined to define Hinduism as the likely candidate which could provide Indian nationalism with a viable cultural foundation and nationhood; first, the possibility of a large popular basis and, second, the very identification by the modern Orientalist scholarship of the great spiritual qualities of classical Hinduism.

The main task in establishing this national religion was a 'reformation' of Hinduism. The true Dharma had to be extracted from the impurities of folk religion and then decimated among the people. The project was to retrieve the high classical ideal, made known by the Orientalist, now all but covered by dross. As one looks at this project from the post-colonial, post-modern perspective, its derivativeness is apparent. It negates the authenticity of the folk traditions, the multiple cultural telling, the narrative complexities that were the lived realities of the common people and seeks to implant a derivative discourse, derived from Bankim's location in late nineteenth century Bengal, educated in the Enlightenment tradition, with purposive rationality as its defining discourse.

This reformed Hinduism had an idealized woman, at the centre of the cultural project, a 'Devi' committed to Dharma, wedded to her role as the ideal Aryan wife. It was also a project in 'selection', in that this idealized woman could be educated and informed, could play a part in human and social affairs, could be articulate, so long as she remained devoted to her husband, her home and hearth, submitting in the final analysis to his will in all things.³³

Patriarchy was clearly all pervasive and, despite the fact that Enlightenment taught rationality as well as the moral equality of all human beings, the gender hegemony remained, as it does to this day. Bankim realizes this when he says that Draupadi is often made the scapegoat of gender politics in the narrative that her voice is used to articulate all that which would be not quite right for the male to utter, that she is to play the part of a man, only this far and no further, that her masculinity has to be literally disrobed in order to reveal her essential feminine weakness, she has to be brought down to the level of a female.

However, he does not quite rise to the next level of displacing this male centering in the essay. Draupadi is defended in the context of the image of her drawn by the colonial, but defended from the standpoint of a patriarchal dharma that is outraged with the attack on its own righteousness, a dharma that nevertheless continues to prioritize the male over the female. She remains secondary and essentially subservient to the will of her husbands and in Bankim's reckoning, her acceptance of that fact, renders her a 'Sati' to be emulated and revered.

This, I think, is a dangerous argument, for it removes the Indian woman from the realm of the ordinary and turns her into this ideal, far removed from the real. It then negates and denies the primacy of the felt experiences of body and soul that a real woman experiences,

rendering her joys and her pains inconsequential. It dehumanizes and defleshes her, giving her a transcendental luster that denies her the quest for pleasure, her life is idealized as one of submission and sacrifice. That is an image of the Indian woman that persists today, and has been the cause of much pain and misery.

A few years after Bankim's death in the year 1894, a clear split could be observed among Indian nationalists. It resulted from the tendencies on the one hand to root nationalism in already existing or latent native institutions and ideas and on the other to work for the creation of a nation that resembled European notions in its social and political structure and aims. The dominant nationalist group that was responsible for the creation of the Indian National Congress, supported the creation of conditions that they knew from their knowledge of the west, should exist before a nation, embodying all of India's people could make her identity felt, having at its base an anti traditional, liberal democratic, secular and politically oriented concept of the nation, they aimed for the establishment of mass education, economic advancement, social reform and a unity of the kind that the Western nations enjoyed.

Challenging this moderate Congress leadership in the 1890s and thereafter were nationalists who believed that unity could rapidly be achieved, indeed it existed in a latent form, among Indians who recognized their common heritage as a single religious community. Following Bankim's indications, the extremist political leaders, led by Tilak, began to expound on their national heritage as Hindus and to distinguish that heritage from tradition associated with Muslim or British rule.

One of the most urgent questions that emerged from this debate was: should social reform precede political reform or vice versa? And at the heart of the social reform question was the women's issue.

The consensus as it emerged within the nationalist leadership, gradually and not without opposition, was in favour of postponing social reform till such time as political independence was achieved. Even Renade and Telang among the Reformers failed to support their colleagues in the Social Conference who urged the priority of social over political reform. Telang's famous speech, "must social reform precede political reform in India", remained for many years the frankest exposition of the strategy of expediency to be issued by a prominent nationalist.

"If we compare the Government and the Hindu population to two Forts facing the army of reform, can there be any doubt, that the wisest course for that army is to turn its energies first toward the fort

represented by government where we have numerous and powerful friends amongst the garrison...as for the other fort, the case is as far as possible from being one of *veni vedi vici*. The soldiers of the old garrison are not in the least ready to give up and in some respects we have yet got to forge, and to learn to wield, the weapons by which we have to fight them,” and so he concluded, “let us then all devote the bulk of our energies to political reform.”³⁴

Two further considerations profoundly affected the nationalist view of social reform; one, the personal failings of reformers themselves in living up to their protestations,³⁵and, two, the publicized encouragement that the reform movement received from the British.

The official position on social reform and its relation to political reform received its most cogent and memorable formulations in the eighteen eighties by Sir Auckland Calvin, finance member of the Governor-Generals Council and after, 1897, Lieutenant Governor of the North Western Provinces. He wrote, “Societies that will not make any combined effort to reform their own shortcomings, are not to be much trusted, when they combine to reform public affairs. They lay themselves open to suspicion that in the profession of public zeal, they find an agreeable cloak for the discouragement of private duty.”³⁶

Such statements, finding their way into the media, served to fuel nationalist sentiment and anti British feeling.

The reforms were abandoned, they would be best dealt with by an independent Indian government. The woman’s question has been awaiting the emergence of social consensus ever since. This has been slow to come about and the Indian State has remained rooted in patriarchy. The selective agenda of the nationalist movement has continued to infirm its policy. Alas, the sovereign Indian State seems to operate within an inherited derivative discourse!!

Notes

1. Lata Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998. Martin Van Woerkens, *Strangled Traveler: Colonial Imaginings and the Thugs of India*, Translated by Catherine Tihanyi, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002.
2. Sir Archibald Galloway, *Observations on the Law and Constitution and Present Government of India*, London, Parbury, Allen and Co. 1832, p. 323.
3. James Fitz James Stephen (ed), *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967, pp. 89-91
4. Minto Minute, Extract Bengal Revenue Consultations, March 6, 1811, BL/APAC/10R/F/4/408/10172. James Mill, *History of British India*, New York,

- Chelsea house Publishers, 1968, reprint of 1858 edition, Volume V, p. 433.
5. On the roman empire's broad and deep impact on the 19th century British imperialists, see Pieter Brandon, *Decline and Fall of the British Empire, 1781-1997*, London: Jonathan Cape, 2007; Stephen Patterson, *Cult of Imperial Honour in British India*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 3.
 6. John Roselli, Lord William Bentinck; *The Making of a Liberal Imperialist, 1774-1839*, Berkeley, university of California Press, 1974, pp. 203-4.
 7. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
 8. See for example, Edward Parry Thornton, *History of the British Empire in India*, London: Wm H. Allen and Co, 1841, 6 volumes, Volume V, pp 184-85; Leitch Ritchie, *British World in the East*, London, WH Allen and Co, 1846, 2 volumes, Volume I, p 382; Joseph Sramek, *Gender Morality and Race in Company India, 1765-1858*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
 9. Patterson, *Cult of Imperial Honour in British India*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 83-84.
 10. Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The Manly Englishman and the Effeminate Bengali in the late 19th Century*, Manchester, University of Manchester Press, 1995, pp. 103-4.
 11. Mir Salamat Ali, *Notes and Opinions of a Native on the Present State of India and the feelings of the People*, Ryde, UK, George Rutler, 1848, pp. 56-93.
 12. Eric Stokes, *English Utilitarians in India*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959, p. 64.
 13. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
 14. Gisela Bock, 'Challenging Dichotomies: Perspectives on Women's History' in *Writing Women's History: International Perspectives*, edited by Karen Offen et al, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1991, pp. 1-23 (p. 4).
 15. Meera Kosambi, *Crossing the Thresholds: Feminist Essays in Social History*, Permanent Black, Ranikhet, 2007, p. 7.
 16. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Post Colonial Histories*, Delhi: OUP, 1994, p. 118.
 17. Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Perceptions, Emotions and Sensibilities, Essays on India's Colonial and Post Colonial Experiences*, Delhi: OUP, 1999, p. 13.
 18. J W Massie, *Continental India*, London, Thomas Ward, 1839, cp 2, pp. 153-54.
 19. Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
 20. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
 21. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge, 2002.
 22. Jogesh Chandra Bagal (ed), *Bankim Rachnabali*, (hereafter BR) Volume II, Calcutta, Sahitya Samsad, 1965, pp. 221-34.
 23. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
 24. *Ibid.*
 25. *Ibid.*, p. 312.
- Thus trade between India and Britain he thought had led to an expansion of agricultural activity in India. To the charge of the destruction of indigenous manufacturing he said, "The weaving trade may have collapsed, but why does the weaver not move to another occupation? He may not be able to feed himself by weaving cloth, but there is no reason why he cannot do so by cultivating rice." The real reason weavers were not seizing opportunities opened up by expanded agricultural activities, was cultural, the inertia of backwardness and outmoded social customs.
26. 'Anukaran', BR, p. 201.

27. Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, Delhi: OUP, p. 73. Also, Subrata Dasgupta, *The Bengal Renaissance, Identity and Creativity from Rammohan Roy to Rabindranath Tagore*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2007.
28. 'Vahuvivaha', BR, p. 315.
29. 'Draupadi', BR, pp. 179-185. Translated by Dr Kaustav Chakraborty, Fellow, IIAs, Simla.
30. See, Antionette M Burton, "The White Woman's Burden, British Feminists and the Indian Woman, 1865-1915" in, Nupur Chaudhari and Margaret Strobel, (eds.), *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, Indiana University Press, 1992, pp. 137-157.
31. 'Dharmatva' BR, p. 651.
32. Chatterjee Partha, *Nationalist Thought*, op. cit., p. 75. "this is an interesting question that has embarrassed secular nationalists in the 20th century India, who have sought to give Bankim an important place in the Pantheon of nationalist heroes."
33. Bankim writes in Dharmatva, "a woman is not strong enough to either protect or to feed and provide shelter to her husband, but it is within her to reach and serve and to bring happiness to her husband. That is her Dharma." Quoted from, M. K. Halder, *The Foundation of Nationalism in India: A Study of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee*, Delhi: Ajanta, 1989, p. 57.
34. Kashinath Trimbak Telang, *Selected Writings and Speeches*, Bombay, 1916, 2 Volumes, pp. 288-99.
35. "Renade's second marriage to a young girl in 1873 may have been a dim memory twenty years later but Telang's decision to marry his two young daughters, ages 10 and 8, in 1893, reinforced a popular impression that most reformers were no more courageous than anyone else in their personal lives" Quoted from, Charles H. Heimsath, *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform*, New Jersey: Princeton, 1964, p. 221 and "never did the community of social reformers in Indai experience a shock so profound as when Sen (Keshav Chandra), on the basis of his spiritual revelation, decided to allow his daughter to be married to the young Maharaja of Kutch-Bihar. The girl was 13 and the Maharaja not yet 16, both below the minimum that Sen himself had advocated, and the marriage ceremony was a flourish of the most unmitigated orthodoxy", p. 96.
 "A deviation from reform ideas on marriage probably kept G. K. Gokhale from lending his full support to the social reform movement. He had married a second wife while the first, an incurable invalid, was still alive, and therefore wished to save the social reform cause from any reflection that would be made against it, if he became one of its leaders", p. 222.
36. Dayaram Gidumal, *The Status of Women in India, or a Handbook for Hindu Social Reformers*, Bombay, 1889, pp. 122-23.

CLEANSING THE VALLEY:
SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *SHALIMAR THE CLOWN*
AND MIRZA WAHID'S *THE COLLABORATOR*

Simran Chadha

In the Indian subcontinent, militancy is more often than not an expression of resistance against state polity and/or its implementation. While this prompts questions regarding the strident assertion of development indexes by governments, it also reminds us that literature, from the Victorian novel onwards, has enabled enunciations regarding the flipside of the progress made under capital intensive market economies.¹ Literary texts and their critical analysis provide in this regard the space wherein subjectivities marginalized and silenced by unequal opportunity can find articulation. In our contemporary world, this discontent is manifest in the mass protests and militancy or terrorism which has sadly become a part of our daily existence, either as direct experience or through media or social media reportage.

In the subcontinent today, ethnic conflict is not an unusual occurrence and individual assertions of ethnic identity have acquired more political prominence today than ever before. As evidenced, the repercussions of this are more tragic than ironic.² However, while ethnic conclaves have become the single most damaging threat to the idea of a national identity, it must also be acknowledged that it is from these spaces, constructed on account of marginalization that the nation-state and its policies may be questioned and perhaps transformed.

This paper purports to explore one such dimension of ethnic assertion and the claim it stakes over land and territory, namely, the ethnic cleansing enacted in the valley of Kashmir against the Pundit community at a time when global geo-politics focussed on the intervention of communism in the region of Afghanistan.³ Following decolonization, the people of Jammu & Kashmir were faced with the question of accession to one of the two newly formed nations of India or Pakistan. The matter was contentiously resolved

in favour of the former. While Article 370 of the Indian Constitution guarantees the region autonomy in matters of governance, the area has experienced a state of unrest ever since Indian Independence.⁴ Localized perceptions of social and economic marginalization coalesced into a grassroots militancy which coalesced over the years into acts of civil and political terror leading to a state of paranoia and intolerance as witnessed in the valley today. I purport to explore two completely different facets of this unrest as represented in Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) on the one hand and Mirza Wahid's *The Collaborator* (2011) on the other.

Before I embark on a discussion of the texts, I should clarify that since literature is the primary medium of my analysis, I will be treating the literary texts modes of witnessing. In this regard, I understand and acknowledge that fiction is often decried as an unreliable witness—twice removed from the 'truth'. Typically speaking, the act of witnessing involves recounting from memory an event or action for which contrary perceptions may exist. It is assumed that this re-telling entails objectivity and will adhere to realist parameters. Statements by an eyewitness are then procured under oath and in the presence of judicial bodies of state. Despite this, eyewitness accounts have been known to contradict one another, thereby throwing into reasonable doubt not only the truth-value of the very act of witnessing but refuting the singularity associated with the idea of truth. Contrary to ideas of empiricism and rationality, this polyvalence propagating multiple "truths" is enabling and completely in tandem with post-modernist insights regarding the nature of truth and reality. It is on this account that literary criticism is known to perform what Derrida has theorised in *Of Grammatology* as deconstructive readings and shows the importance of literary insights or truths.

Another well-known fact about fictive renderings is that despite the adage 'fiction', literary texts have been banned if not burnt across the span of human history and death threats issued with alacrity to authors. This is because narratives filtered as they are through the subjectivity of their tellers perforce implicate the author in the textual controversy and this despite Foucault's scholarly assertion regarding the "death" of the author. In, thus, engaging with the discourses of its time and place, literature resists and challenges power structures and this provides the impetus for silencing textual voices.

The valley of Kashmir literally located on the northern-most frontier of the Indian nation state is the site for contestation for the two above mentioned narratives which may broadly be classified a postcolonial texts fuelled by resistant imaginings.⁵ By postcolonial

here, I mean the aftermath of the epic cross-cultural encounter facilitated by colonization. Ideally, this cultural collision should have led to the formation of hybrid, multi-cultural societies which would meet what Rushdie in *The Moor's Last Sigh* has referred to as “the most profound of our needs”, and which he in *Shalimar the Clown* explicates as: “.... putting an end to frontiers, for the dropping of the boundaries of the self” (Rushdie, 2006, 433) or more practically, as:

Europe, free of the Soviet threat and America, free of the need to remain permanently at battle stations, would build that new world in friendship, a world without walls, a frontier less Newfoundland of infinite possibility (Rushdie, 2005, 20).

It is this version of utopia where ethnic identities are absolved of their political sting that Rushdie exemplifies in *Shalimar the Clown*. He does this through his protagonist Maximus Ophlus, an erstwhile Ambassador to India and also an anti-Nazi resistance fighter who in his dotage is content to live out the remainder of his privileged, even if tainted, life in immigrant friendly California. This hybrid space is home to diverse races, Chinese, Pilipinos, Russians and Indians among others, all manage to find a welcoming home here. Race or ethnicity amounts to no more than physiognomic details. The narrative begins, however, not with California but in the valley of Kashmir where at one time, as the text demonstrates, such hybridity and tolerance flourished.

While Pandit migration from the valley on account of economic reasons has been an ongoing process, in this presentation I will be focussing on the exodus post-1985 following the pan-Islamic radicalization that transpired in the valley around this time.⁶ Communities, other than the majority, were perceived as *kafirs* or infidels and were told to forsake their ancestral homes, convert or suffer annihilation.⁷ This spelt the death-knell for a culture which had flourished in the valley—*Kashmiriyat*, a composite yet discreet mix of Shaivism, Buddhism and Sufism—the three major religious and ideological worldviews which have informed social and political life in the valley. In terms of contemporary political vocabulary, *Kashmiriyat* is closely akin to cosmopolitanism or a secular social consciousness. By locating cosmopolitanism in Kashmir prior to the Independence, Rushdie shows that it is not a modern, first-world phenomenon but existed and flourished in a not-so-ancient Indic civilization. While respecting difference, Kashmiri Pundits and Kashmiri Muslims partook of a set of superstitions, tradition,

folklore, festivals, music, poetry, exotic food, bawdy wedding songs as well as the gossamer pashmina popular in the region and social necessities such as handling *kangaris* of burning hot coal.⁸

As regards cosmopolitanism I take recourse to Bruce Robbins understanding which he explains as:

... a fundamental devotion to the interests of humanity as a whole, cosmopolitanism has often seen to claim universality by virtue of its independence, its detachment from bonds, commitments and affiliations that constrain ordinary nation-bound lives....But many voices now insist that the term should be extended to transnational experiences that are particular rather than universal and that are privileged (Robbins, 1)

Rushdie's description of life as lived in the village of Panchigam in *Shalimar the Clown*, comes close to Robbins idea of cosmopolitanism as "devotion to the interests of humanity" (ibid) but before we proceed it will be worthwhile to keep in mind the debate regarding cosmopolitanisms whereby Arjun Appadurai asserts that "emergent cosmopolitanisms have complex local histories" (Appadurai, 64). Appadurai does this in opposition to the idea put forward by Susan Koshy whereby she locates the idea entirely and exclusively within the experience and transformations that occur within Asian-America communities. Koshy bases her assertion on the transnational migration undertaken by these communities as they move from tradition-bound Asian societies to a modern western world. The comingling of cultures that occurs subsequently is what Koshy defines as quintessentially cosmopolitan. It is this idea of the West as the shrine of cosmopolitanism that Appadurai counters and Rushdie illustrates through *Shalimar*.

A word about Rushdie's politics while undertaking the writing of this text is in order. Rushdie partakes of a Kashmiri-Muslim lineage, as the texts of the *Midnight's Children* and *Joseph Anton* bear witness, as they also do his liberal, westernised, upper-middle class upbringing. *The Satanic Verses* earned him a *fatwa* issued by *mullah* Ayotallah Kohmeni. The *fatwa* levelled charges of blasphemy against the author, and the Iranian state then supported the *mullah's* order, thereby forcing Rushdie to go incognito for more than a decade. During this time Kohmeni refurbished the death threat while the Queen of England conferred knighthood onto the author and Rushdie finally migrated to the United States of America. When he undertook the writing of *Shalimar the Clown*, Rushdie was safely ensconced in the academic world of Emory, USA, but meanwhile the attack on the twin-towers of the World Trade Centre had polarized the world in

indelible ways. While this trajectory locates Rushdie as yet another artist of the floating world—that rarefied space which Pico Iyer has referred to as the space of the “global citizen”, it also proves that ethnicity would henceforth be a force to reckon with. So, if *The Satanic Verses* had earned for the author the wrath of fundamentalist fractions how could he now placate ruffled feathers and yet not endanger the goodwill of the Western world? With *Shalimar the Clown* Rushdie manages to achieve just that.

Iterating the ease with which one may cross national boundaries in today’s world, the narrative states:

Everywhere was now part of everywhere else. Russia, America, London, KashmirOur lives, our stories flowed into one another’s, were no longer our own, individual discreet.

This, however, is not without damning repercussions, as the text proceeds to clarify: “There were collisions and explosions. The world was no longer calm.” (Rushdie, 2005: 37)

The text begins in a tiny hamlet called Panchigam located by the river Muskadoon. In this village society learning is valued and the ideals of tolerance and mutual respect are cherished. Dispute regarding religious beliefs is practically non-existent or is settled through dialogue and sage counsel as the marriage between Shalimar, the “clown prince of the performing troupe”, the *Bhand Pather* and Pundit Kaul’s daughter Bhoomi or Bhoonyi as she prefers to call herself, indicates.⁹ Evil, though not absent, is exemplified as the human vulnerability prompted by emotions of jealousy, rage and revenge but this is nonetheless a far cry from the cold-blooded blood-letting of the ethnic wars which loom ominous in the horizon. Forces of globalization, technological advancement and geo-politics impact this civil community as the discourse of ethnic apartness finds presence through the preaching of the “iron mullah”, who claims to preach “truth” and nothing other than the “truth”, and thus begins the polarisation intended to demarcate the true followers of the faith from the others —the infidels.

As demanded by the subterranean political currents contouring Rushdie’s novel, the characters in the text carry symbolic functions. This is as essential for Rushdie’s politics as it is integral to his narrative strategy. For instance, all the actions that define for the reader the character of Max Ophelus are in tandem with the symbolism associated with a typically western ethos. Max thus symbolises America and when we are informed rather late into the narrative Max is the arms supplier for the *jihadist* movement fast gathering

momentum in this tiny hamlet, it is in keeping with character and symbol. Likewise, the breathtakingly beautiful Boonyi symbolizes the valley of Kashmir. This is bolstered by her role in the text as an artist with the *Bhand Pather*, and the manner in which she gracefully combines through her personality the Pundit and Muslim cultures as coexist in Panchigam. Her marriage to Shalimar likewise symbolizes the composite culture of *Kashmiriyat*. Her encounter with Max is the impact of western authoritarianism on this civilization. Her flight into the degenerate world of glitzy-glaty Delhi with Max, as his mistress, while reflecting on human culpability, desire and want symbolise the setting in of physical and psychological degeneration of this once pristine paradise. The ill-fated relationship between Boonyi and Max, (Kashmir and America), also reads like a parable, warning the fairer sex against aspiring beyond the boundaries of their station in life. This is further illustrated by Boonyi's fate, as her daughter, India, born out of wedlock is snatched from her arms and she is shunted back to Pachigam. For the villagers, she is now *nazaar badoor*—the shunned, slighted scapegoat, left to die in the snowstorm; a warning to other women lest they transgress. Gender boundaries clearly remain intact despite Rushdie's progressive musing regarding the watering down of ethnic borders and boundaries.

The complexity of the symbolism associated with Boonyi accrues from the fact that this was the time when the valley was undergoing tremendous political and social change. As the village pariah, the symbolism associated with Boonyi is reminiscent of the stalemate that existed between the political representatives of the valley and national governance. To this is added another facet. Boonyi remains undefeated and in isolation not only does she recover but attains clairvoyance. She knows that she will die at the hands of Shalimar, her husband and she awaits this moment as it offers a final release from the burden of existence. Boonyi's steadfastness are as indicative of the aspirations of the younger generation of Kashmiris and also of their cry for political freedom or *Azadi*. Bolstering this representational shift is Shalimar's metamorphoses from the naïve and trusting village lad, the celebrated tight-rope performing artist of the *Bhund Pather* and Boonyi childhood sweetheart to a hard-core terrorist.

Seeking vengeance against Max, Shalimar joins the band of *jihadists* under the iron-mullah in order to learn the art of cold-blooded murder. The tension in the narrative now hinges upon Rushdie's representation of *jihad*. Just his acting skills standing him in good stead Shalimar convinces the iron mullah and the band of militants of his shared ardour for their cause:

He stripped off his shirt and shouted out his acquiescence—"I cleanse myself of everything except the struggle! Without the struggle I am nothing!" He screeched his assent "Take me or kill me now!"—and he stripped off his underwear.

It is here that he learns to slaughter his victims: "like a *halal* chicken bleeding to death by a deep neck wound caused by a single slash of the assassins blade" (4), waiting for the day he will avenge the dishonour done him by Max. Prophesying the future of the post 9/11 world, the narrator now warns: "An age of fury was dawning and only the enraged would shape it" (272).

The term *jihad* draws on an epistemology that harks back to the origins of Islam. Interpretations of the term reflect on its transformative value such as vanquishing the evil within—also referred to as the greater *jihad*, wherein this transformative inner war acquires precedence over the material gain. Popular contemporary usage of the term borders more around the vanquishing of infidels.¹⁰ While the jihadists at the training camp have complex personal histories, with tragic loss and like Shalimar many seek vengeance and they too speak the language of peace, truth and love. At the camp they are trained to be ruthless killers. Rushdie's representation of this defining facet of contemporary Islam is in this regard not monolith, rather the pan-Islamic ethos that Shalimar encounters in the training shows the pluralistic and even hybrid character of the faith rather than the narrow parochialism it is popularly associated with.¹¹

However, it is not just the Islamic radicalization that proves to be detrimental to life but the new nationalist brew concocted by the Indian state. Charged with harbouring extremists, the valley bears the full brunt of atrocities of the armed forces. Rushdie's destruction of Panchigam is symbolic of the end of Kashmiriyat or cosmopolitanism. The women are veiled. Life is completely obliterated from the place where love, art and humanism had once blossomed and flourished. Ethnicity has worked its magic.

During this time Kashmir faced one of the worst instances of ethnic cleansing of our times. This finds scant mention in the text as narrative voice states it as: "Kill One, scare ten", and proceeds to catalogue the places where "calamity struck": "Trakroo, Uma Nagri, Kupwara, Sangrampra, Nandimarg", deflecting attention from the terror to the failure of state bureaucracy instead:

There were six hundred thousand Indian troops in Kashmir but the pogrom of the pundits was not prevented, why was that. Three and a half lakhs of human being arrived in Jammu as displaced persons and

for many months the government did not provide shelter or relief or even register their names, why was that. When the government finally built camps it only allowed for six thousand families to remain in the state, dispersing the others around the country where they would be invisible and impotent, why was that. The camps at Purkhoo, Muthi, Mishriwallah, Nagrota were built on the banks and beds of nullahs, dry seasonal waterways, and when the water came the camps were flooded, why was that. The ministers made speeches about ethnic cleansing but the civil servants wrote one another memos saying that the pundits were simply internal migrants whose displacement had been self imposed, why was that....and the pundits of Kashmir were left to rot in their slum camps, to rot while the army and insurgents fought over the bloodied and broken valley....why was that why was that why was that why was that why was that. (296-297)

The only act of terror in Kashmir which the narrative dwells on, is the slaughter of Boonyi at the hands of Shalimar, undertaken more in the spirit of an enactment of vengeance performed towards restoration of honour. The spirit of the killing may be explained by referring to Julia Kristeva's idea of the "abject" which she describes in *The Powers of Horror* as essential for human existence. The abject according to Kristeva, exists:

On the edge of nonexistence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me. There, abject and abjection are my safeguards. The primers of my culture....loathing an item of food, a piece of filth, waste or dung. The spasms and the vomiting that protect me. The repugnance, the retching that thrusts me to the side and turns away from defilement, sewage, and muck (Kristeva, 2).

As a part of the self, such as excrement or menstrual blood, which must be expunged, the murder of Boonyi symbolizes the death-knell of *Kashmiriyat* —a loved and cherished part of the self which must be expunged.

Unlike Rushdie's long-distant gaze, Mirza Wahid's *The Collaborator* presents the insurgency more from an insider's point-of-view. The text describes life in the valley under the pall of death and violence as polarized positions between the state and militants hardened beyond communication. The Pandit question does not arise any longer as the exodus is complete. The narrative is once again set in a village but in this case along the Line of Control and inhabited by a close-knit community of "settled" Gujjars, nomadic tribes who traversed the hills and mountains depending on the season. Now, however, they are constrained on account of the establishment of nations and stringent laws regarding border-crossings. With blurred

ethnic origins, and not quite the true-blood Kashmiris, one would imagine that the Movement—as the *Jihadist Tazneens* chose to call themselves—would have bypassed them for the more succulent crop of freshly victimized city youth of Srinagar, but then, who would know the mountain paths better than the Gujjars and know where the Line of Control may best be traversed—they who staked their claim on the mountains before nations arrived! With words such as *Saarahad Paar* seeping into the vocabulary of the everyday, and whispered clandestinely whenever sons mysteriously disappear from the village, *Kashmiriyat* is a concept by now relegated to the vagaries of literature.

The ramifications of the death and terror that stalk life in the valley cannot be more apparent than in the witnessing of the *haal* of mothers whose sons have disappeared, either for interrogation or to join the movement. Village life is relegated to a state of perpetual mourning as photographs of disappeared now referred to as *shaheed* adorn homesteads. *Jihad* is the discourse of the times and this is announced in no uncertain terms as the sudden appearance of masked youth proudly marching with Kalashnikovs, in brand-new “ActiOn” shoes, of this the one-street town, swiftly and proudly announces the militant aspect of their resistance. As *jihad* spreads its wings, the wherewithal provided, as per the narrative logic, by Pakistan—as the narrator clearly states, army battalions line up to protect the border against infiltration and to stamp out terrorism. The young army Captain posted there, duty-bound, needs more booze to dull his sensibilities if not his vocabulary. Bodies pile up, a putrid smell permeates the saffron valley and a collaborator is needed to clean up the mess and identify for the army the local youth who for the army are terrorists. The lute song of the shepherd Azad has turned into a lament.

As the narrator’s group of *jigri dosto*s are drawn into the enveloping vortex, he begins to live more in self-imposed isolation and the crevices of memory as language no longer affords the joy of shared communication. Communication is practically reduced to no more than a tool to beguile the oppressor and consists primarily of words, such as the “yesssir’s” or the “sirji’s” thrown the way of the army captain. This shattered village community shares more through gestures, performances and the graffiti which appears on the walls and signifies the spirit of the times more than spoken words or shared communication. For instance, the imam’s manner of intonation as he reads the prayer sends out coded messages for his *ummah*. Resistance is, thus, enacted on a daily level and in a manner that may arouse no

suspicion. In this emotive, Sufi land where the poetry of Lal Ded once communicated the ability to transcend the material world and body, words have now lost their ability to convey joy, love or happiness. Yet, strands of a common national imaginary can be traced through the songs of Mohammad Rafi, once a source of entertainment now signifies the lads who have crossed over that they are well. The narrator's friend Hussain uses this method to send greetings to the ones he has left behind, perhaps forever. The narrator dreads the day he may have to frisk Hussain's lifeless, possibly violated body for ammunition and for an identity card, which would proclaim his new, adopted militant identity. The self-loathing that this induces can no longer be encapsulated by Frantz Fanon's description of the post-colonial subject but is more like the epigraph from Aga Shahid Ali's poem: *I see Kashmir from New Delhi at midnight*.

The two texts considered in this paper show the transformative phases of life in the valley ranging from *Kashmiriat* to the brutalizing tactics of mass terror. What is lost in this power struggle is the ethos of humanism, tolerance and respect for differences—the founding principles on which civilizations rest. In this scenario of increasing violence and intolerance then, works of literature are of singular importance, as literary texts perform what Barbara Harlow in *Resistance Literature* stated thus: “Imaginative writing is a way to gain control over the historical and cultural record....and is seen from all sides as no less crucial than the armed struggle” (Harlow, iv).

Notes

1. The trajectory of the novel in England is closely related to the onset of capitalist modes of production. The effect of this, particularly in matters of class and gender, has been vividly expressed by novelists of the Victorian period; for detailed information refer to Margaret Drabble (ed.) “The Oxford Companion to English Literature”, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, among others. Progress within the South Asian paradigm has been accomplished with impunity regarding its effects on the natural environment and sadly, often at the expense of destroying the means of livelihood of indigenous communities. Indigenous resistance to this is clubbed under the adage “terrorism” or “militancy”.
2. For more on ethnicity, refer to Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, New Delhi: Sage, 1991.
3. This is a Shaiuite, Saraswat Brahmin community native to the Kashmir valley having settled there mainly under the Dogra rule.
4. This article is drafted in Part XXI of the Indian constitution and grants autonomous status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir.
5. I refer here to the nostalgia underpinning representations of the homeland by authors of the diaspora.
6. The figures of the exodus vary, ranging from 100,000 out of a total of 140,000

- pundits in the valley to 150,000 to 190,000 out of 200,000. Refer to Sumanta Bose, *The Challenge in Kashmir: Democracy, Self-Determination and a Just Peace*, New Delhi: Sage, 1997; T.N Madan's essay "Kashmir, Kashmiris, Kashmiriyat: An Introductory Essay" in Aparna Rao's *The Valley of Kashmir: The Making and Unmaking of a Composite Culture*, Delhi: Manohar, 2008 and Iffat Malik's *Kashmir: Ethnic Conflict, International Dispute*, Oxford University Press, 2005.
7. The Oregon Legislative Assembly, in 2009, recognized 14 September 2007 as Martyrs Day acknowledging the campaign of ethnic cleansing inflicted on non-Muslim minorities in the valley. Pakistani intelligence agencies, ISI, and infiltration by *mujahideen* from Afghanistan are factors directly responsible for this shift.
 8. Refer to Sudha Koul's memoir *The Tiger Ladies*,
 9. In the subcontinent, the term "bhand" refers to traditional performing folk entertainers and in Kashmiri dialect the term "pather" implies the storyline being performed. Over time this has evolved into modern versions of street theatre with professional dancers and musicians. In the *Bandh Pather* of Kashmir, humour, satire and farce has always been an integral component making the role of the clown one of paramount importance. Refer to Peter J. Claus, Sarah Diamond and Margaret Ann Mills's *South Asian Folklore: An Encyclopedia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka*, Taylor & Francis: 2003. In his study of the Bhand's of Kashmir, theatre exponent M.K. Raina stresses the secular outlook reflected in the liberal incorporation of elements of classical Sanskrit theatre and other theatre forms of India. Their language too is a mixture of Kashmiri, Dogri, Punjabi, Persian and a few English words: "The Bhands ... reflect their firm belief in the faith of a unique fusion of Kashmiri Shaivism and sufi traditions of the valley". Refer to M.K. Raina's article "The Bhand Pather of Kashmir" in www.koausa.org
 10. *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. Ed. John L. Esposito, Oxford University Press: 2014.
 11. This phase of radical Islamization marks a shift in the political scenario of Kashmir. It involved the active intervention of Islamic jihadists from Afghanistan following Soviet intervention there. This was different and apart from the earlier home grown resistance of the JKLF.

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MANUFACTURING THE SELF AND THE COLLECTIVE: MEMORY POLITICS IN LIFE NARRATIVES FROM A CONFLICT ZONE

Manisha Gangahar

In Kashmir, since the Valley became a conflict zone, when much of the social and political life has turned into questions of recognition, the concept of identity poses a quandary. Furthermore, when identity is comprehended as something that comes from the outside rather than something discovered as having existed within, narratives play a central role in providing a sense of identity. Within this domain of narratives but afar the factual details is a space that is deeply personal and it is through these personal accounts that emerges the preeminence of memory and its ability to provide a meaning to one's existence.

The paper, through reading of life narratives from the conflict zone of Kashmir, traces how memory is not merely a shadow or something out of control, but it is rather an alluring sanctuary. Memory becomes a tool for introspection, questioning the self and, at the same time, is also employed as a constituent of the collective during the process of recollection of the past. The paper analyses personal narratives to explore the range of memory's function in identity formation for ordinary people caught in a conflict zone and how, in the process, self-definition becomes liminal politics. Through remembering, not only is the present identity questioned, but also the linearity and continuousness of the self from the past to the present is examined. The memory narratives reconstruct the present in light of the past and vice-versa.

The territory of Kashmir is disputed, but can one say that the identity is not? What defines being a 'Kashmiri'? In this seemingly tug-and-pull of homogenization and fragmentation, as a result of a troubled history, political blunders and alliances, more than discovering a meaning, it is identity politics that a Kashmiri is found caught in. Within the discourse of Kashmir, as the frame of identity shifts to the space of writing, the representation procures a third

dimension that is open-ended, even profound, to allow a definition in strict terms.

The aftermath of 1989-90, with its legacy of censorship, repression, torture, disappearance and exile has left Kashmir in a paradoxical situation. The 'occupation' and 'resistance' calls into question the very existence. Thus, in the realm of culture, the memory about the years of conflict and turmoil is recovered and reconstructed in a way that it not only counters the official word—that normalcy and peace has returned to Kashmir—but also articulates an alternative story. Moreover, as Maurice Halbwachs (1980) asserts, memory—whether individual or collective—shapes identity. Who we are is directly linked to our past, our perception of the past, and our sense of belonging to a particular community. Memory is always a construction in as much as it is a way of understanding the past expressed through narratives and discourses and as such submerged in and instituted by language. Just as an account that goes on to explain who we have been, memory is chiefly brought forward by the need to express or define who we are in the present and, in turn, what we could or would like to possibly become.

Moreover, narratives facilitate constructing a world of symbolic forms wherein reality, in various colours, can be better understood and interpreted. Through stories and recollection of personal accounts of pain, death, war and killing, an attempt is made to revisit and review the past but in the present context. Remembering is not merely a commemoration of an event, or an incident. Rather, the act of commemoration becomes a cultural pattern, aiming towards self-description and self-representation. On the one hand, within the frame of the textual nature of memory, this study looks at memory as a creative force that constructs the past experiences through storytelling and narration and, on the other hand, it particularly looks into the politics of memory, from the everyday articulations of identity that remembering involves to the re-writing of history that recollection implicates, through the reading of selected narratives.

Furthermore, it explores the nuances of individual remembering in a socio-cultural context. It engages with memory within social-political practices in order to show the relation between memory and the composition of subjectivity. Memory, composing of recollection of the past that had taken place both in the private and public sphere, facilitates the establishing of meaning or truth on the one side and, on the other side, deposing the absolute perceptions about the truth. In the words of Herbert Hirsch, 'The connection between memory and identity is dialectical because memory both shapes the

content of what is communicated by the socialization process and is formed by that process. Ultimately, the self does not develop in a vacuum' (Hirsch p.133).

The writings from Kashmir, under the title *Of Occupation and Resistance*, map the trouble terrain of ordinary life in the Valley. The stories traverse the personal landscape of grief, mourning, rejection, humiliation and loss. And it is through these personal accounts that emerges the preeminence of memory and its power to provide a meaning.

However, Paul Ricoeur, a French philosopher, asserts that 'the equating of identity, self, and memory...is the invention of John Locke at the beginning of the eighteenth century' (Whitehead p. 60). Offering a similar view, Francis Ferguson, a literary and a cultural theorist, states that Locke found memory to play an important role for securing 'a sense of individual continuity over time' (Ferguson p. 509).

Memory seems so personal, but, at the same time, it is shaped by collective experience and public representations. The shared memory transforms into a collective remembrance and, thereby, a trope for a political collective. Fahad Shah, the editor, says: "This book...is a compilation of numerous writers' interpretations of their memory of their experiences in the Valley...the people of Kashmir narrate their stories..." (24). The use of writing to preserve the memory of events becomes more prevalent with the notion of the permanence of the written word. To perpetuate the memory of a past, it must not only have the capacity to represent and reconceptualize the self but also be embedded in the collective consciousness.

However, through the reading of these personal narratives, I seek to underscore how personal experiences of pain facilitate a sense of recognition and define self-identity. When these personal accounts are shared and when they transmute into testimonies, anecdotes and memoirs—the memory—they not just remain in the personal space but become a collective memory, integrating the people together into a single entity which is different from that of the supposed oppressor. According to John R. Gillis (1994), the fundamental meaning of any individual or group identity, which is a sense of sameness over time and space, is persistently maintained through the act of remembering; and what is remembered is then defined by the assumed identity. Memory may even constitute the self-conscious because self-identity presumes memory. Personal identity in Kashmir is built out of reference to social objects, institutions, people and events. Memory of an individual can't be disconnected

from the things going around him/her. This becomes even truer in case of ordinary people in a conflict zone. In fact, all personal remembrance is located within a social framework that we call as collective memory. The history and the fate of Kashmiris become part of the collective memory that incorporates and integrates painful and shameful events. As one understands, collective memory in Kashmir becomes an uncompromising and an unconditional imperative of recapping what happened in the past and then the relationship within collective entities being reformulated and meanings derived henceforth. When the past experiences are recalled, they may appear in mind in fragments, tampered chronological order, at times muddled up or juxtaposed by a random pick-and-choose preference of the individual selection. Thus, remembering ceases to be an unadulterated pure exercise of recollections. Furthermore, memory is characterized by a reflection, which is an attempt to redraw the reality of the past, “guided and motivated less by aspects of the past that is being reconstructed than by the present’s needs for meaning and categories of understanding” (Roth p. 77).

In one of the stories, Atta Mohammad Khan has buried more than 235 bodies of unknown people and he recollects: “I can never forget that first day I buried a body...Those days were brutal. I have not slept since then. I still live in the past, with those bodies. Everyone I have ever buried is always in front of my eyes. They haunt me” (Fahad 73). As for the gravedigger, even for the others the past is the remembered present. Memory is invoked from the contents of the present but the past remains a point of reference. As Atta Mohammad Khan expresses: “I cannot forget those mothers who wandered in search of their sons and never found them. My memory is all that I have. Actually, these are not memories, I still live with them” (Fahad 74). The personal memory connects the collective as the personal experiences take shape of monumental symbols, which are then memorialized in personal narratives and nurtured by the power of the collective. Atta Mohammad Khan is an example: “Everyone I buried died because of the same cause, the ongoing struggle in Kashmir. I feel honoured that I was the person who buried them” (Fahad 75). For every story from Kashmir, occupation, oppression and suffering either becomes a point of departure or remains the central thread. The memories are then no longer merely people’s experience but, through the narratives, it is engineering of the memories for subjects to establish culture as durable entity—the narrative structure of reminding and recollecting.

Often, the survivor or the victim remains silent about his

victimization, or at least his voice is not heard in the main discourse. But the experience remains fundamental to the unfolding or enfolded conception of himself: “his silence is an internal one in which the victim attempts to suppress what is recalled (so as not relive the victimization countless times), or finds it repressed by some part of himself which functions as a stranger, hiding self from the self experience according to unfathomable criteria and requirements” (Culbertson 169). At the same time, he is preoccupied by the memory of the violence or violation. And it is through writing, through narrative that the survivor manages to “live with the paradox of silence and the present but unreachable force of memory and a concomitant need to tell what is untellable” (Culbertson 170).

These public acts of recollection, of memorialization, have the capacity to constitute communities, since the act of remembrance is and has to be a collective act. Moreover, collective memory is a forceful and a self-motivating process that occurs whenever the past is re-signified through a testimonial, a ritual, a commemoration, a narrative or a painting. It is a way of making the past come alive all over again and the present can only be understood in light of that past as it is made present in the act of memory. While there are no concrete structures to allegorize, collective memory is connected to a collective imagination; thus a remembering community can be perceived as a bigger subject of which we, as individuals, are a part. Not only is the personal experience a collective, but the collective becomes personal as well. And, collective memory finds its way into the society—days of remembrance, flags, martyrs’ grave, strike calls.

The remembering and recollecting of the past is not only for the purpose of acquiring a sense of cohesiveness as far as self-identity is concerned or merely for creating a collective identity, but it is also an attempt to understand the past and to give it a meaning, even a future. Listing of the names of children and youth killed—martyred—becomes a part of the collective memory, a sort of cemetery in the centre of the Kashmir’s narrative of conflict, and is invoked each time a collective identity needs a manifestation, a reiteration. It becomes essential to remember the past in context of present or to comprehend the present in reference to the past. The symbols of remembrance further shape the contours of political consciousness.

However, even memory becomes problematic as in case of Showkat Nanda, working as a photojournalist in Kashmir. The choice of his profession was founded on his belief that a journalistic photograph had not just a moral value attached but it also carried with it historical

validity (Fahad 29). His write-up, entitled “The Pain of Being Haunted by Memories” is about how his experiences, which included witnessing bomb blasts, crackdowns, gun battles, search operations and killings on a daily basis, “shaped [his] identity and the way he saw the world” (Fahad 29). While his work was appreciated, the ethical dilemma burdened his consciousness. He is supposed to record the facts and not participate in them, he kept reminding himself. But the photographs were a constant reminder of yet another reality—the question of his identity, as he writes: “I too wanted to have an identity where my heart always belonged. That’s why I turned into a stone thrower. I couldn’t leave without making a statement” (Fahad 34). Being involved was important, for he says: “there comes a time in your life when you need freedom from blood soaked memories. I also needed freedom from those memories I’ve framed as self-taken pictures—of dead children, wailing mothers, disgraced fathers and destroyed homes” (Fahad 35).

Also, memory is always centred in an act of recollection that evokes and appropriates the past as a way to signify our present—a reconstruction of a past according to the narrative of the present. Dr Sheikh Showkat Hussain, in his piece, writes: “My mother would always insist that Majeed Beigh, their milkman, be paid immediately at the end of every month, saying that the man has suffered a lot since childhood...Soon after the Indian army landed in Kashmir they perceived every bearded person as a tribesman who had come from the Frontier Province to fight the army of the maharaja. They indiscriminately killed many bearded persons and Beigh’s father was one of them...” (Fahad 122).

In Kashmir, collective memory is based on a framework of common narratives that have been inherited by generations—as what happened in 1947-48, 1989, the Bridge, Pandit exodus, more recent 2008, summer of 2010, 2011 and so on—which are able to actualize the “authentic” reminding of the individual who is a member of his or her generation. “She remembers the dates, the time, and dreams revolution” (Fahad 76), as is true for each and all in the Valley. The substantial medium now is not just oral story telling but personal narrative in print. It is in personal narratives that the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity is conserved. For the memory to preserve the past, it needs to be reconstructed within its contemporary frame of reference and situation.

When cultures and identity are based on the acts of common remembrance and forgetting, reorganization of memory for social

and political ramifications is essential in Kashmir. The pursuit of memory takes place through compilation of testimonials, memory narratives and the creation of monuments at sites of repression. In the creation of monument, whether it be a memorial in a cemetery, a torture centre converted into a peace park, or an army school, there is always an element of selection, something that is privileged and something that is left unseen or not spoken about. But collective memory is always an idealistic construction, a narrative of memory will always be contested, and no society will have a single collective memory, the only thing a society as a whole may share is the silences, the things that everyone has chosen to ignore.

Touching upon the matter of displaced Kashmiri Pandits, novelist Siddhartha Gigoo says in *Looking Back at the Roots*: “Who am I? Where have I come from? What will become of me? The old Pandit generation is fading away. The young are losing the memory of their own ancestry and lineage. Have they been able to memorialise aspects of this shrinking identity and a litany of losses through the arts and literature? No. Haunted by a sense of extinction, I shiver when I come across people who seek to assess and weigh losses and assign degrees to suffering without even knowing what they lost” (Fahad 194).

Memory can be imagined as a space, but a labyrinth that provokes associations, commentaries and interpretations. Silences and practices of oblivion and control over memory have become central issues. Mohammad Jaunaid, who grew up in Kashmir, writes in his piece called “Forgetting”:

“I am not saying memories don’t falter. We forget and we misremember... In essence, one could say, forgetting and telling are similar—if violence dismembers life-worlds, amnesia and memorialisation re-members that torn-apart world—of course, as a different, transmogrified, fleeting home for life to continue to exist” (Fahad 53). But, on the other hand, for Gigoo and the Pandit community, who have been part of Kashmir’s fabric, “[the] future generations who will no longer be ‘displaced’ entities will bear the burden of a borrowed memory or remnants of ancestral memory” (Fahad 194).

Through yet another perspective, the very act of reminding—writing and re-articulation of memory—is a step towards catharsis. One encounters the cogent objection that catharsis is really out of place when one looks at these personal narratives of pain and death. Even if cathartic function is inadequate here, it is important to go on telling the story and seeking some sort of purgative release

however minimal and provisional. In Kashmir, narration of personal experiences become cathartic to the extent that they combine emphatic imagination with a certain acknowledgement of the cause and context of suffering, thereby offering a wider lens to review one's own insufferable pain. Allowing the suppressed voices to speak, it permits a certain "working-through" of memory, a powerful act of mourning, if by no means a miracle cure. Healing is a long process but to be heard is the start of the process.

Nevertheless, memory is in a permanent state of change. Personal memory changes and with it the pictures and views, the tableaux of memory and narratives on which memory is established. So it becomes clear that memory and remembrance are not phenomena of space but of time. Memory is not a stagnant reservoir but a complex contrivance for the creation of texts. Neither is the relationship between remembering and forgetting static. Forgetting is stigmatized as something unacceptable. In the narratives, there is a creative memory with new aesthetic and ethical output that generates remembering as a dynamic process which is far different from traditional concepts of preserving monuments.

The most influential narratives are always latent ones. They become manifest when there is struggle about forgetting and remembrance—a struggle that has never ceased. Latent memories do not disappear, nor lose force, in comparison to compulsory remembering and forgetting. While the turn towards narratology of memory might most quickly be grasped in matters of purely aesthetic interpretation, implication for such a turn resonate toward one of the most vexed and vexing intersections of culture and politics.

Literature imparts an underlying grid to the fragmented responses and pulls the reader/witness in as a participant. Art and memory, together probe into the unconscious and, travelling in time, they evoke a response in the minds and heart of readers across time and distance.

Do these reconstructions of the past offer us any perceptions that can help us work towards solutions? Can they make human life meaningful and valuable, that is give us a voice and help bond us together? The nature of memory is crucial for both the writer and the reader as it probes the conscious as well as the unconscious.

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FILLING THE GAP:
DISTANCE BETWEEN HEART AND FEET
Re-reading the Immigrant Experience in
Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*

Sapna Pandit

You won't find a new country, won't find another shore,
This city will always pursue you. You will walk the same streets,
Grow old in the same neighborhoods, will turn gray in these same houses.
You will always end up in this city. Don't hope for things elsewhere:
There is no ship for you, there is no road.

—C.P. Cavafy

These lines by Cavafy reflect the predicament of immigrants across the globe. The particular experiences of those who chose to migrate to another land without realizing what they were getting into. The idea of finding a better place to establish them seemed very practical and romantic at the same time. And then began the conflict—whether to attach them to the new or to string along the old. Post-colonial studies have primarily dealt with the question of identity and space. It never was a direct revolt against the imperial forces; rather it was a movement that was initiated to question the hegemony of the established school of literary writing. The struggle for the post-colonial writer was not only external, wherein he had to make inroads into a dominant native culture, but it was also internal where he was constantly contesting his space and identity and facing exclusion. The hegemonic position of the writers belonging to the canon, their supremacy in thought, content and acceptance forced the post-colonial minds to address this problematic of a parallel literature and the only expectation was acceptance.

The very fabric of these writings is woven with threads of the protagonists' past life and his dilemma and the contrast that he draws between what was and what is. This conflict further highlights the cultural clashes both within his memory consciousness and outside. The writer contests a space where he is reduced to being

an individual placed on the margins, living in fragments, always hopping between landscapes and mindscapes that are contradictory and hostile. The smuggled baggages of culture and tradition that they carry with them are hard to shake off. Thus begins a role play where they take upon the roles of being the custodians of their culture and tradition, which they preserve to the extent of freezing them in their mindscapes. M.G.Vassanji, one of the most celebrated writers of the diaspora, states: "This reclamation of the past is the first serious act of writing. Having reclaimed it, having given himself a history, he liberates himself to write about the present." (Citation?)

My paper deals with the problematic of negotiating an identity, dealing with the persistent memories of home and the compulsions of coming to terms with the new home. The heart, which is filled with the memories of Zion (the lost homeland) and the feet, which are now grounded in the new land, are constantly at war with each other. The works of these writers depicts what Kamal Kumar Raul calls the clash of culture, identity, class struggle, and the complexities of colonial hangovers, globalization, migration and hybridization. The negotiation of space by these diasporas is both physical and psychological. As Proshansky et al. state:

"Space in terms of location is a manifestation of solid moorings that a floating immigrant craves. Once the location is determined, identity starts emerging- whether that identity is the smuggled one or acquired one, can be contested. It is associated with mental image, consciousness, physical placement and assimilation."

Rohinton Mistry is a writer who occupies a distinct position among the Indian diaspora for sharing not one but many identities. To begin with, he is a Zoroastrian Parsi whose ancestors were exiled by the Islamic conquest of Iran around 800 A.D., situating the Parsis in diaspora in the Indian subcontinent. Later, in the 1970s, he migrated to Canada in search of a better opening. Jennifer Takhar gives a detailed account of the Parsi displacements:

"During India's colonized period, the Parsis were particular favourites of the British rulers. Both parties co-operated well together and this entente has often been dubbed 'the psychological diaspora' of the Parsis. After the partition of India in 1947, some Parsis found themselves (literally) toeing 'the line of discontent' between two warring regions. This situation resulted in many departures to England and the US, marking the western diaspora of the Parsis. Mistry's work too, like other Parsi writers, is guided by this experience of double displacements. The movement, despite being voluntary, had its disadvantages. One, the looking back, the nostalgia and the sense of loss remained and second, the assimilation

was hard to reach in a not so welcoming atmosphere (always looked upon as thieves robbing the opportunities of the native population).”

In his novels, Mistry brings up his associations with India as the predominant motif. His India is the India of the 1970s. Against such a backdrop and the Parsi community as the centre of his narrative, he weaves a story of squalor, suffering and peripheral existence amongst his characters. The characters are the subalterns of the society and the distinct divide among the haves and the have-nots is quite stark in his portrayal.

Such a Long Journey depicts loneliness and frustration that is the outcome of modern outlook. It further gives an account of the psychological journey undertaken by the writer through the physical and emotional journey of Gustad which moves from hope to despair and finally to reconciliation. This reconciliation reached at by the protagonist is symbolic of the reconciliation negotiated by the diasporas in the trying situations that they face in their host lands.

The diasporas, when confronted with unsympathetic situations in the alien lands, persist with patience and wait for their dreams to grow and bear fruit. It is only when they are incessantly pressed to the periphery that the nostalgia for the homeland sets in. Moreover, the hope of returning to their homeland someday remains a distant dream, because the road once chosen and travelled upon does not turn back to start all over again. The movement breaks the connect and their homelands are turned into landscapes painted on the canvas of their reminiscences.

Mistry's critics in general have debated on the absence of Canada, the host country in his novels. Mistry, though living in diaspora, does not conform to the accepted definition of the diaspora. His diaspora is more of a psychological kind. The way he describes India speaks volumes about the experiences that he might have had when he was living in the country, though India has come a long way from the 1970s to the late 1980s, the time span in which his novels are located. What happened back during emergency probably does not hold much ground in the present scenario. However, for Mistry, 1975 is the year and the India of 1970s is the India that he identifies with.

Mistry's other focus is on the fast dwindling Parsi community in India to which he himself belongs. A silent serving community, the Parsis have contributed a great deal in the progress and development of the nation and yet in the 1960s they had to suffer when the knowledge of the regional language was made mandatory in the states. Mistry's narratives are filled with the culture, tradition and lifestyles of the Parsis. In the novels, he seems to be making a definite

effort to chronicle the history of the Parsis, which may acquire the status of a historical document long after the Parsis became non-existent as a community. Another significant writer who concerns herself with the fate of her community is Bapsi Sidhwa, the renowned Parsi writer from Pakistan. Bapsi Sidhwa has addressed her concerns for the Parsis; she also takes up the perspective of the subalterns and explores the ambivalent space of exile just as Mistry does in his fictional works. Mistry too is a writer whose focus sure is the Parsi community, but he simultaneously gives space to other subaltern voices. Avadhesh Kumar Singh believes that Mistry's literature is community specific:

“Their (diasporas’) works exhibit consciousness of their community in such a way that the community emerges as a protagonist from their works though on the surface these works deal with their human protagonists. (66-75)”

Mistry's first novel, *Such a Long Journey* (1991), short listed for the prestigious Booker prize, manages brilliantly to portray Indian culture and family life, setting it against the backdrop of the sub continent's volatile postcolonial politics. The action takes place in 1971 in Bombay at the time when war broke out between India and Pakistan. This political backdrop is the canvas upon which the troubled life of Gustad Noble and family is played out. The novelist delineates the variable fortunes of Gustad Noble, a genial middle-aged man of unpretentious dreams and aspirations while dealing with the communal life of Parsis in post-independent India. The novel also captures the socio-political-cultural turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s.

The narrative of the novel flows like a stream blending and taking into its fold all the characters and situations. Constantly dealing with and braving adversity, Gustad lives his life looking after the needs of not only his family, but also the half-wit Tehmul Lungraa, a fellow inhabitant of Khodadad building. Tehmul can be seen as a reflection of Gustad's miseries on the one hand and, on the other hand, he becomes an emotional anchor for the protagonist.

Another character close to the protagonist is Dinshawji. Both these men worry about the social and political situation of the times: Dinshawji bemoans the loss of his familiar world in the changed street names of Bombay. However, Dinshawji remains gravely concerned:

“There was genuine grief in his soul. Why change the names... He spat out the words disgustedly. ‘What is wrong with Flora Fountain?’” (88) Mistry's protagonist asks, “‘What's in a name?’ ‘No, Gustad’, Dinshawji

was very serious. 'You are wrong. Names are so important... My whole life, I have come to work at Flora Fountain. Moreover, one fine day the name changes. So what happens to the life I have lived? Was I living a wrong life with all wrong names...Tell me what happens to my life. Rubbed out, just like that? Tell me!'" (88)

This quest for keeping one's identity intact runs through the whole fabric of the novel. Gustad's effort to revive the compound wall as a place of reverence instead of being used as a toilet brings to light the character of the pavement artist. The artist takes up Gustad's offer again because of being forced into the situation 'what to do', said the pavement artist. "After the trouble that day, police began harassment. Making me move from here to there, this corner to that corner. So I decided to come and see the place you were talking about." (215)

The restlessness experienced by the artist at the complacent routine is voiced thus—"the agreeable neighbourhood and the solidity of the long, black wall reawakening in him the usual sources of human sorrow; a yearning for permanence, for roots, for something he could call his own, something inimitable. Torn between staying and leaving, he worked on, ill at ease, confused and discontented." (219)

This confusion of the artist is representative of the confusion experienced by the immigrants thinking where they went wrong in choosing their dreamland and the discontentment thereof at not getting a fair deal. The yearning for permanence experienced by the pavement artist is the essence of all diasporic literature and the quest is on, hoping to find solid ground somewhere, someday. The disillusionment encountered on reaching the land of their dreams fills these writers with a bitterness that is hard to lose. Gustad observes, "It's always the same. Always, things look wonderful from afar. When the moment arises, only disappointment." (239)

Mistry, though having drifted away from his homeland remains rooted in the psyche of his mainland. Meenakshi Mukherjee asserts that Mistry's novels reflect his "obsessive concern with roots, nostalgia and finally a mythicization of a lost country."

Mistry's connection with his culture and the Parsi way of life stops him from completely effacing his native roots. His anxieties are regarding the traditions and values amongst the younger Parsis. The confrontation between Gustad and his son Sohrab is an example of this very generation gap where the younger generation is shown as having lost a sense of respect towards older people.

The journey motif in the novel has symbolic implications. The journey undertaken by writers like Mistry ended in a dream

gone sour. It did not pay off expected dividends. The apprehension felt at the futility of such a journey is noticed through the narrative when Gustad undertakes the journey to Delhi in order to meet his old friend Jimmy. The apprehension that he voices almost sounds like an echo of the sentiments of all the diasporas who set out for greener pastures:

“Would this journey be worth it? Was any journey ever worth the trouble?” (259)

Gustad experiences (is met with) disillusionment throughout his life. His dreams are shattered, his aims defeated. His son rebels, Jimmy betrays him, Dinshawji dies leaving him to fight his battle alone, Roshan falls ill constantly testing the strength of his spirit. These events result in making Gustad come out even more strong and triumphant. His is the victory of good over evil. It is his will to survive without succumbing to despair that ultimately redeems him.

Mistry portrays the Parsi sensibility characterizing a sense of loss and resultant nostalgia. Mistry migrated to Canada in the early 1970s, but even twenty years later, when his first novel came out, he emerges more Indian than Canadian. So many years of staying away from the country of his birth has not dimmed the memory of India from the memory consciousness of such writers of the Indian Diaspora.

The significant thing about *Such a Long Journey* is its Indianness. It does not exude or display even a trace of whatever Canadian experience the writer might have gone through during his stay in Canada. The contention remains that why does Mistry allow himself to be a prisoner of his memories? Why does he not write about the country that he had willingly chosen to be his home? The argument that can be provided as against these questions is that the baggage of his lost homeland, which he carries with him, is so heavy that it leaves no space for anything else, not even his experiences in the new land.

Mistry's diasporic sensibility cannot be defined within the accepted definitions of the term. He seems to be trapped in a time wrap, exceptionally loyal to the history, events, culture, tradition and ambience that he left behind. It provides a different perspective of displacement as Vijay Mishra asserts:

“...the idea of India exists in the minds of the diaspora through forms of spatial displacement in which the site is transformed into a word. This form of transference/transformation of space means that India gets internalized and projected on to other geographical space without so much as a hint of dissonance. Where epic textuality requires a fixed point of reference, a past that cannot be duplicated but only extensively rememorated, what we get in the diaspora is a whole series of

displacements that lead to the construction of new spaces as metaphors of India... (67-83)”

In all his novels, be it *A Fine Balance* or *Family Matters*, the milieu doesn't change and neither does the setting. Time and space, apart from a slight deviation in *Family Matters*, remain unchanged. Despite the fact that it has been almost 50 years since Mistry left India, India doesn't seem to leave him. His heart still reverberates with the sounds of the land left behind; his vision is clouded with the colours of his homeland. His feet have found new footing, but his heart still inhabits the spaces left behind. The nostalgia, the void that is left, remains an inseparable part of his being. The socio-political and cultural nostalgia creates a sense of loss and alienation in the new set-up. What is visible is an unending quest for the past and involuntary assimilation into the native culture which is more alien than conforming. The romance with the past and the connect felt with the homeland left behind, is like the umbilical cord that keeps the diasporas alive nourishing them with a life force. The gossamer thread that ties them to their roots is their bridge that they keep crossing; only time stands still during these journeys of the mind. The gap that they so frantically want bridged still remains and the distance between the heart and the feet remains ever so distant.

Note

All references of the novel are from *A Fine Balance*, New York: Vintage Books, 1997.

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REVIEW

Prescribing World Literature

Aruni Mahapatra

Recoding World Literature: Print Culture, Libraries, and Germany's Pact with Books, by Venkat Mani. New York: Fordham UP, 2017, pp. 360.

The story of 'world literature' is a German story. Since the early decades of the nineteenth century, German men have found a range of reasons to argue whether reading literature from outside Germany was good or bad for Germany. Such reading could allow Germans to appreciate "*poesie*", the shared wealth of all nations (Goethe), or it could undermine the growth of a strong, united German Reich (Goebbels). But these reasons were always expressed in terms of *weltliteratur* (world literature). Venkat Mani's *Recoding World Literature* is a history of these utterances, all of which may be answers to this one question— "Why Read World Literature?" Mani's narrative is structured around three moments. In 1827, after reading a Chinese novel, Goethe said to his assistant, Johan Peter Eckermann, that the time of national literatures was about to end, and world literature to begin. In their 1848 book *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels claimed that since the bourgeoisie had made industrialization a global phenomenon, economic growth had transcended national borders and the production and consumption of books was no longer a national but rather a global phenomenon. Finally, Eric Auerbach had claimed, in his 1952 essay "Philologie der Weltliteratur", that world literature in the sense that Goethe had spoken of was not possible in the twentieth century.

Mani approaches each of these instances by describing what he calls "bibliomigrancy—the physical or virtual movement of books" (38). Doing so shifts the focus from the individuals who read the books (and made statements that have since become famous) to a "large body of actors who determine a reader's access to literary

works”, and the spaces where these actors operated: the library (39). Focusing on the library allows Mani to invoke the public life that all pronouncements on world literature implicitly invoke, but which current scholarship on world literature has, to a large extent, failed to theorize. In a long and exhaustive survey, Mani argues that the concerns of contemporary scholarship on ‘world literature’ are somewhat presentist and pedagogical, confined to issues of teaching in academia today. Mani instead asks what attitudes to national literature made it possible for University libraries in 1850s Germany to start a bidding war for a collection of two thousand Oriental manuscripts acquired from a Princely estate in the Northern Indian province of Awadh (120-123)? At different times, different attitudes to languages and literatures other than the national language determined what books were acquired in libraries. A focus on these societal paradigms, what Mani calls different “publics’ pacts with books” (40) sheds light on one intellectual consequence of books actually arriving in the national libraries: the process by which a discourse about the value (or lack) of reading translated books serves as an alibi in a range of cultural debates: nativism, relativism or pluralism. Because ‘world literature’ could be ‘coded’ and pressed into service to justify a wide range of political positions, a process akin to the way librarians use a bibliographic ‘code’ to organize books in stacks, Mani titles his study of the historical evolution of discourses of reading world literature *Recoding World Literature*. A focus on how and why libraries stacked the books that comprised ‘world literature’, Mani claims, will reveal how and why scholars thought and defined what “world literature” was, is and should be.

So what *is* world literature? Mani’s answer is simple: there are as many ways of defining world literature as there are readers. In this, Mani echoes Herman Hesse’s 1929 essay “A Library of World Literature”, where the novelist suggested that like a personal library, what constituted “world literature” was subject to both literary judgement and how much money one could spend on books (152). But Hesse is only one of the many scholars whose opinions Mani discusses, and the others defined world literature in much less open, more Eurocentric ways. That much is not news for scholars; like Postcolonial Studies, World Literature too is guilty of being Anglophonic and Eurocentric. But instead of a theoretical critique of this Eurocentrism, Mani offers historical context, which suggests that world literature could have hardly been anything but Eurocentric.

Mani’s history is bookended by two fictional libraries—Heinrich Faust’s reading room, as imagined by Goethe in the first scene of

his play *Faust*, and the Frankfurt City Library, recreated by Orhan Pamuk as the refuge of Ka, the recently deceased protagonist of his novel *Snow*. Between these two, Mani narrates a story of how real libraries in Germany expanded in size but narrowed in scope. Even before Goethe read the Chinese novel and declared that poeise was a universally shared property, scholars had begun their efforts to bring Oriental books to Germany, and even as Goethe argued that world literature should replace national literatures, others had argued that world literature did not mean a replacement but instead an even deeper entrenchment of national literature. This narrowing reached its lowest in the years before the Second World War, when the Nazi administrator Hellmuth Langenbucher began editing the magazine *Weltliteratur: Novels, stories, and poems of all times and peoples*. In October 1937, Langenbucher dedicated the twenty-fifth issue of the magazine to Goethe's idea of *Weltliteratur*. In the editorial "Weltliteratur?" Langenbucher clarified what the magazine understood by the term, and what it should mean. Langenbucher first separated it from *allerweltsliteratur* (literature of the entire world). *Allerweltsliteratur* was a "literary salad", but *weltliteratur* was not just literature but the characteristic expression of the people of those nations, like Germany, who were rooted in a life-soil (qtd in Mani 161). The Nazi party identified these as Aryans, and a few years later, national libraries revoked borrowing privileges of all German Jews. History, thus, came full circle, and instead of a universally shared poetic genius, *weltliteratur* identified only expressions of people who belonged to a particular race.

Each of Mani's chapters narrates two parallel stories. As Oriental manuscripts migrate from Asia to find new homes in German libraries, German scholars and editors and curators talk about the value of non-German books. This dual approach is one of the most exciting takeaways for this reviewer. Each chapter begins with a carefully chosen scene in which a well-known German writer, say Goethe or Heine, imagined a library. Mani then describes how these concerns were realized and illuminated by the lives and careers of lesser-known individuals who travelled the world collecting books.

We begin, in Chapter 1, with Goethe's Faust sitting in his library and pondering the relevance of his book-lined library, which he calls "ancestral junk" (51). Mani glosses Faust's pact with the devil as Goethe's pact with books from outside Germany. During and before Goethe's time, several poets, scholars, librarians and booksellers had started to acquire and translate Indian, Persian and Chinese literature into German, and Mani's chapter is a story of these efforts.

We learn how the poet August Wilhelm Schlegel, the professor Othmar Frank and others sought to popularize Indian literature among German readers by editing literary journals, appealing to the Royal Asiatic Society, asking German state libraries to acquire Oriental manuscripts, and finally, helping start global projects like the Oriental Translation Fund. Schlegel directed the Prussian government to make and cut Devanagari types to print Sanskrit palm-leaf manuscripts as books (1826), and later published a Latin translation of the *Ramayana* (1829). Professor Frank started a journal to publish Indian literature in German translation, and named it *Vjāsa*. Frank imagined the journal collecting and mediating knowledge imparted by the written documents of ancient India, like Veda Vjāsa the collector and organizer of Vedas in Hindu mythology. Mani calls such efforts “the earliest possible utterances of a comparative frame” for studying “world literature” (70).

The Oriental Translation Fund, with strong ties with British colonial centers in India, had a three-part mission: to acquire manuscripts, commission translators and subsidize the publication of both the original and translated texts in Germany (78-79). In its third annual report, the organization mentioned that two literary works, classified as Romances from the Chinese, were identified for translation. One of these, *Hau-Qui Zhuan*, had been translated into German from an English translation in 1761 as *The Pleasing History*. Earlier scholars have identified this as the novel Goethe had finished reading when, in 1827, he made his famous statement on *wellliteratur*. Two years later, in 1829, the Oriental Translation Fund published a new German translation of the same novel, this time directly from Chinese, with the title *The Fortunate Union: A Romance*.

Mani then describes another influential person who was enabled by the Oriental Translation Fund to compare Oriental and European literature. Thomas Babington Macaulay declared, in the 1835 “Minute on Indian Education”, that “a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia” (qtd. in Mani 56). To his credit, Macaulay admitted that he knew no Arabic or Sanskrit, but had read the translations of “celebrated” Arabic and Sanskrit works, and conversed with men who were experts in Eastern languages and literatures. These experts, presumably, were scholars like Frank and Schlegel, and the translations produced by societies like the Oriental Translation Fund. Both Macaulay and Goethe followed earlier European scholars who justified the study of non-European literature because it compared favorably to the greatest of European literature. Macaulay, who was given the responsibility to

decide the best way for the East India Company to spend the money kept aside for educating Indians, decided that English education was the best possible investment. Mani thus reveals how bibliomigrancy, a migration of books enabled by colonial rule, produced the impulse to compare books from different literary traditions.

Chapter 2 begins with Heinrich Heine's poem *Germany: A Winter's Tale* (1844). The lyric "I", returning home to Germany after years of exile, is stopped at the Franco-German border, where officers search him for dangerous books, suspecting that as a member of "Young Germany", with liberal ideas about women, Jews and the German nation, the poet will try to disrupt the peace. As the Prussian officers rummage through his things, the poet says that his head is a "bird's nest twittering with books to be confiscated" and that the books he is carrying in his head are more dangerous than Satan's library (qtd. in Mani 93). In little more than a decade, a real German would cross the borders and enter Germany with the largest personal collection of oriental manuscripts. He was Aloys Sprenger, and Mani's book is worth reading simply for this fascinating story.

Sprenger partook of "*poesie*" by studying Arabic, Persian and Turkish in Vienna, London and Leiden, where he wrote a dissertation on the history of medicine in the Arab world. In 1847, his knowledge of Arabic made him the principal of Delhi College, and "extra assistant" to the British resident of Lucknow, in which capacity he was entrusted to catalogue the royal library of the Princely state of Awadh. After a few years, following a misunderstanding, he was removed from the royal palace, and returned to Germany with a personal collection of more than two thousand palm-leaf manuscripts, acquired from the same library. This catalogue was published in 1857 as *Bibliotheca Orientalis Sprengeriana*, and contained a markedly harsh preface. In this document, like Macaulay's *Minute*, Sprenger was bitterly critical about "native libraries". These libraries had little by way of sentiments or ideas that Europeans could imitate, because even though the Orientals venerated their texts as sacred, they failed to preserve "bags and bags of old leaves", often leaving them to share space with rats (Mani 119). In a few months, the bags of leaves found (presumably rat-free) shelves in a German library, the Reichsbibliothek in Berlin, who purchased the collection from for fifty thousand Dutch gulden (121).

Mani's stories of real and imagined German and Oriental books which writers and scholars coveted, collected, and placed in libraries make for exhilarating reading. However, they do not necessarily form an overarching thesis, and some readers may find the mass of detail

overwhelming. But Mani's is an overwhelming task: a genealogy of 'world literature' cannot be anything less but must be more than a history of modern Germany, and readers should be grateful for a guide as masterful. This is a tour de force genealogy. By recreating the European history from which 'world literature' emerged, Mani's study will inspire younger scholars to imagine a future for 'world literature' outside and beyond Europe.

REVIEW

Translating the Translator

Gautam Choubey

***Premchand in World Languages: Translation, Reception and Cinematic Representations*, edited by M. Asaduddin, London and New York: Routledge, 2016, pp. 284.**

The burden of being Premchand is a post-colonial condition. To argue that in the world outside India, particularly in the West, Premchand has, together with Kalidas and Rabindranath Tagore, shouldered the weight of being a true exemplar of Indian literature and a prophet of Indian ethos, may not be too audacious an assertion. But prophecy, practiced as an art, appears slippery when compared to a rather simpler act of writing. The latter does not always come with expectations of righteousness, certitude, precision or even futuristic visualisations. Maybe, during his own lifetime, Premchand did not experience much encumbrance in being the *upanyas samrat* or the sovereign of Hindi novel writing. After all, this was how he chose to advertise himself through the pages of his literary monthly *Hans*. And at any rate, this must have been far more bearable, maybe a cause for indulgence too, when compared to the near-remorseless scrutiny which the prophet has been subjected to in the decades following independence. For his alleged “insensitivity” portrayal of Dalits and women, his writings have been reviled and rejected by several Dalit and feminist scholars. Others have questioned his shift from Urdu to Hindi. To them he too is responsible for the contemporary plight of Urdu, the narrative of “Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan” and the cultural chauvinism associated with it.

It may be worthwhile asking as to what has led to this post-colonial condition. Factors such as circumstances surrounding India’s independence, questions of communalism expressed often as Hindu-Urdu conflict and the ascendancy of feminist and Dalit discourses

in social sciences, to name a few, have provided frameworks for Premchand's national and international reappraisal. By focussing primarily on the practice of translation, cinematic adaptation and by tracing the trajectories of inter-cultural literary exchange, the essays collected in the volume under review here, *Premchand in World Languages: Translation, Reception and Cinematic Representations* attempts to take the debate beyond the aforementioned issues and problematizes several easy generalizations. These essays underscore the fact that a progressive substitution of Indology with departments dedicated to South Asian studies and a growing interest in modern Indian languages have added to global interest in Premchand. As Gruzel Strelkova points out in "Premchand in Russian: Translation, Reception and Adaptation", the earliest Ukrainian translation of the author was undertaken by a scholar who was responsible for introducing "studies of contemporary Indian philology in place of classical Indian studies." This is also true of the Spanish and the German translations of Premchand, as Sonya Saurabhi Gupta and Christina Oesterheld appear to suggest in their essays titled "Beyond Orientalism: Premchand in Spanish Translation" and "Premchand in German Language: Texts, Paratexts and Translations" respectively. Premchand's translations in world languages mirror transnational historical and cultural traffic as well as the dynamic character of diplomatic and economic ties between India and other countries of the world. This can be best illustrated by examining the idea of translation in the context of Indo-Soviet ties. During the nationalist movement, many including Gandhi and Premchand drew inspiration from the Russian revolution and the cultural ethos which fermented it. Gandhi's dialogue with Tolstoy and Premchand's translation of his stories as *Tolstoy Ki Kahaniya* bear testimony to India's romance with the Soviet. This got further reinforced with the rise of socialist tendencies in the Congress, ascendancy of the communist party of India and after independence, during the regime of Jawaharlal Nehru. People of the Soviet reciprocated by embracing Raj Kapoor films and the works of Premchand. However, with the dissolution of the USSR and on account of India's emergent closeness to the US and Europe, this position appears to have changed significantly. As Strelkova points out, a 1989 translation of Premchand's *Rangbhoomi* and eleven of his stories, which was edited by E.P Chelyshev, may be regarded as "the last example of Indo-Russian friendship at the state level. After the collapse of USSR, unfortunately, there was practically no interest in modern and contemporary Indian literature." In other parts of the world, by contrast, 1990's economic liberalization in

India generated an interest in contemporary Indian literature and culture: an engagement which could move beyond Indology and orientalism. As Gupta suggests in her essay, majority of the Spanish translations of modern Indian writers appeared in the decades following 1990s.

The volume succeeds in opening up a nuanced enquiry into the various dimensions of translation and its challenges, particularly when studied in the context Premchand and his reception. While bilingualism as a skill is the common enabler in translations of Premchand, translations by Premchand, Premchand's theory of translation etc., his felicity in both Urdu and Hindi leads to a set of difficulties. For someone who launched his literary career as an Urdu author and subsequently went on to translate his own works in Hindi till he could establish himself as the Hindi *uḥpanyas samrat*, the choice of an "Ur-text" is a particularly perplexing one. As Harish Trivedi points out in his essay "Premchand in English: One Translation, Two Originals", "We thus have not one Premchand to translate, but two, or more accurately, one of the two, for nearly all of his works are available in both Urdu and Hindi, in editions which are far from identical." The variations between the two versions, most of which are a result of Premchand's own doings, resist easy generalization and cannot be simplified as a consequence of Hindi-Urdu binary. Further, they also undermine the assumption that this linguistic binary is nothing more than a political smoke screen which tends to obfuscate the reality that fundamentally Hindi and Urdu are identical except that they are written in two different scripts. Thus, as the editor suggests in his introduction, all true translations of Premchand must acknowledge the existence of two originals. In other words, all translators and scholars of Premchand must be perfectly trilingual. Unfortunately, with the increasing disappearance of Urdu from academic and social spaces in India, this has become a particularly daunting task. The way out, as Trivedi proposes, lies in developing a Hindi-Urdu variorum edition with the Urdu variants of unfamiliar key words given in the footnotes with a Hindi gloss.

Madhu Singh's essay *Translation As New Aesthetic: Premchand's translation of Shad-e-Tar and European Modernism* and Avadhesh Kumar Singh's *Premchand On/In Translation* draw attention to Premchand's theory of translation—an important aspect of his oeuvre which is often elided in most studies. Through forums such as Bharatiya Sahitya Sangatha, of which *Hans* became the mouthpiece in October 1935, and the Progressive Writers' Association, to which he delivered the presidential address in 1936, Premchand aspired

for linguistic and literary integration of India. If nationalist concern laced with sharp social commentary was to be the dominant mood of national literature, Hindustani was to be the favoured medium. This was particularly true of the post-1930-Premchand who launched his literary journal *Hans* with an avowed objective of supporting Gandhi's Civil Disobedience Movement. However, sustaining literary traffic by sampling articles every month and getting them translated, with fidelity to the original, would have been an overwhelming task for a periodical with severe financial limitations. To overcome this difficulty, instead of *anuwaad*, the terms that Premchand uses for translation are *marmanuwaad* and *rupantar*. Compared to the word *anuwaad*, which implies translation in a general sense, *marma* stands for essence and *rupa* connotes form. Perhaps it may not be too far-fetched to argue that Premchand's persistent use of the term *marmanuvad* [translation of essence] and *rupantar* [changing form] seems to suggest that the other source languages have little utility beyond the extent to which they contribute to the evolution of national consciousness in regions. Bypassing stylistic issues in translation through *rupantar* and prioritisation of *essence* over language lends itself to the hypotheses that what truly mattered to Premchand were expressions or ideas that could be hypostatized as national, and the availability of these ideas in Hindustani. However, as Singh points out, he managed to sidestep Hindi-Urdu conflict as "he was not a victim of linguistic fanaticism...he fought against it throughout his life, even within Hindi, for there was a concerted effort within his lifetime to Sanskritise Hindi...he advocated the golden mean... and practiced it too in the form of Hindustani." On the question of Premchand's rendering of caste too, the volume brings out readings which are enabled by translations and adaptations and which appear to contradict each other. The concerns with Premchand's portrayal of the so called lower caste characters, which is a cause of resentment among Dalit scholars, often appear glossed over or erased in his translations in world languages. To the Indian state, by contrast, as Nishat Haider argues in her essay "In quest of a comparative poetics: a study of *Sadgati*", Premchand was a chronicler of Dalit concerns. Acting on this belief, and on the assumption that due to budgetary concerns Dalit issues have not been adequately represented in cinema, the government commissioned Satyajit Ray to direct a film of his story *Sadagati*.

The volume, even as it deals with two Hindi cinematic adaptations of Premchand, both by Satyajit Ray, and examines in some details the numerous factors which determined sampling and translations

of Premchand in global languages, circumvents the questions of reading translation of Premchand in India languages, and the politics of selection therein. This lacunae, it may be argued, is common to both Premchand's theory of translation as well as the present volume.

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Sobho Gianchandani (1920-2014), a student of Rabindranath Tagore at Shantiniketan during World War II whom the great poet called 'The Man from Mohenjo Daro', was a major Sindhi playwright and short story writer. Member of the Communist Party of Pakistan, which was banned in 1956, he was the first non-Muslim and non-Urdu recipient of Pakistan's highest literary award 'Kamal-e- fann' (2004). Arrested about 20 times for his fight against injustice and inequality, Gianchandani's has been a very prominent voice for Sindhi language.

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