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Ijtihad is the annual academic journal of the Department of History, Lady Shri Ram College for Women. Keeping its religious connotations aside, Ijtihad (Arabic: اجتهاد) is a term that means "independent reasoning" or "the utmost effort an individual can put forth in an activity." The journal seeks to reflect this spirit of an unhindered, ceaseless quest for the many contemplations of "historical truth".

Started in 2014, the compilation invites under–graduate student research papers covering any historical topic, for peer review and publication; with an aim to nurture historical imagination on campus.

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From The Editors' Desk

History comes as a breath of fresh air in this world wrapped up in the present and the pollution of misinterpretations. To be able to pull a 'history' out of triviality is a herculean task whether sources are abundant or sparse. It is no simple feat to put understanding into words, and to express emotions and ideas of a space-time far removed from one's own.

Ijtihad, the academic journal of the Department of History, Lady Shri Ram College, is an attempt to string together enthusiastic young researchers while encouraging them to contribute to the ethos of the academia in department. The journal provides a compelling opportunity to the student body to get their self-authored work published.

In this, the third edition of the annual journal, the articles cover an array of research areas, from the influence of Japanese in the creation of *Swadeshi* art in Bengal to the depiction of gender in the *Natyashastra*. Fascinating papers on themes like Tattoos and Pop Art can be found interspersed with pages which also carry intriguing writings on deconstructing Nationalism.

This year was monumental for the Department of History, with the unprecedented success of the annual academic festival '*Maazi-o-Mustaqbil*'. The editorial board of the journal had the opportunity to interview two imminent scholars, Dr. Gopinath Ravindaran, ex- member secretary of ICHR and Dr. Dilip Simeon, a labour historian and public intellectual.

This edition wouldn't have been possible without the tremendous support of our distinguished faculty along with the constant encouragement of the department union. We must thank our subeditors who worked tirelessly to ensure the timely publication of the journal. Our contributing authors had to put up with the demands and questions of the editorial board and we appreciate their effort in putting together their best.

The focus of the editorial board has been to publish a journal which is gripping and thought-provoking at the same time. We earnestly hope that you enjoy flipping through the pages, reading and re-reading some of the brilliant pieces contributed by our student body which have been meticulously handpicked by the editorial team of Ijtihad'16.

Aishwarya Upadhyay
Sahitya Poonacha

Contents

History in School: An Analysis of the ideas projected by History text books for the young reader

Sakshi Ghosh

The idea of what constitutes or does not constitute History is not only an academic but a popular concern. The paper attempts to understand the picture projected by History textbooks (published by NCERT in 2006 for classes 6th, 7th and 8th) about the institution of caste and its limitations. The paper argues for inclusion of a socially and politically sensitive topic like caste in History textbooks. This would make the student aware of the political importance of historical enquiry and critique the popular notion of History being a collection of facts to be committed to memory.

History finds its' way into the discussions, debates and even casual conversation between people more often than they realize. It is indeed one of the most used and abused terms. However looking into what constitutes and shapes popular perception about history is an engaging exercise not only for the variety of responses it may evoke but also the depth of each response.

A lay person's understanding of what constitutes (and does not constitute) History is an extremely contextual and contentious subject of study. Unlike mechanics or natural world, a child has to depend on adults around him to make sense of the past[1]. From the collective memory passed on to a child during early years of upbringing in form of stories, myths, lived experiences, celebration of personality centred events of political importance, to exposure to television, songs and now even social media platforms lend to the child's understanding of the 'past'. Other than these, there are other more direct factors which shape a person's understanding of History namely formal schooling and text books.

This paper attempts to look at the popular picture of History that the school texts published by NCERT create for a young reader. Due to personal constraints, I limit my study to an analysis of how three History Textbooks – Our Past-I, Our Past-II and Our Past-III, conceptualised and written for students of classes 6th, 7th and 8th respectively deal with the issue of Caste in Indian History.

This paper, in no way, tries to ignore other factors that supplement the understanding of History, perhaps more than the text itself, but simply launches an enquiry into understanding the curriculum keeping in mind the fact that it is the child who is at the receiving end. Text books are politically significant and education is often means of creating a sense of National identity (as understood by the people in power): this can be seen in the establishment and creation of NCERT. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is an autonomous organisation set up in 1961 by the Government of

[1] Kumar, Krishna, *Prejudice and Pride*, Penguin Books India, 2001, p 21.

India to assist and advise the Central and State Governments on policies and programmes for qualitative improvement in school education (Annual Report, NCERT, 2013-14 2015, 1).

The NCERT text books have undergone revision and change under different political regimes trying to come to terms with the idea of secularism and its' opposite i.e. communalism which has a bearing on how the past has been represented.[1]

The History textbooks that were brought forth in 2006 represent a sea change in the manner in which school texts grapple with the sense of "our" collective past. The process involved eminent Historians from premier Universities introducing ways and means to shift focus from learning of facts and information to enquiry and imagination. The Preface and Introduction to Our Past-I and the various boxes strewn around the texts under labels like- let's discuss, let's imagine etc. stand testimony to this fact and so does the note by Neeladhri Bhattacharya at the beginning of the text book (Our Pasts-I 2013)

These texts answer many of the issues raised by Krishna Kumar in his work *Prejudice and Pride*[2] nonetheless it remains a sanitized version of Indian History where issues like communal and other forms of violence are absent and instances of caste and gender discrimination remain mellow.

Caste as an institution cannot be absent in any discussion on Indian History. As I hope to show, however, it is not given enough space in the three books which chronologically deal with pre-historical, ancient, medieval and modern period and thematically shift the focus from rulers and politics to various players from different social, economic and geographical backgrounds in order to create a more holistic sense of Indian History.

The History text for class 6th mentions the various words used to describe people as mentioned in the *Rigveda* (Our Pasts-I 2013, 46-47), moving to a discussion on Varna and its association with Birth and occupation (Our Pasts-I 2013, 55-56). There is also a section that deals with people inhabiting the villages in south and north India and their different roles indicative of their status and economic position (Our Pasts-I 2013, 88-89). A direct reference to Fa Xian's comments on the treatment of untouchables also finds mention (Our Pasts-I 2013, 119).

In the textbook for class 7th, the issue of social mobility and proliferation of jatis is given space under the heading of "New Social and Political Groups" referring to the rise of Rajputs, Sikhs, Jats, Kayasthas and increasing number of jatis in relation to economic developments of the time (Our Pasts-II 2013, 6-8).

The book for class 8th refers to the institution of caste in greater detail in one of its most informative chapters entitled "Women, Caste and Reform". This chapter is broadly divided into two main segments on the issue of reform in the treatment of women and the second part deals with "caste and social reform" (Our Pasts-III 2013, 114-119). This section talks about the various political developments and reform movements by Periyar, Jyotirao Phule and Ghasidas, the anti-caste views expressed by Rammohun Roy, the Prathana Sabha and

[1] Kumar, Krishna, *Prejudice and Pride*, Penguin Books India, 2001, pp 50-65.
[2] Ibid.

the Paramhans Mandali. The last chapter "India after Independence" dedicates space to discussion on how untouchability was dealt with in the Constitution of Independent India making necessary provisions for the poor and the backward (Our Pasts-III 2013, 162-163).

The issue of caste as portrayed in the three NCERT books under consideration has significant limitations. First of all, these texts follow a distinct cause-reaction format. Varna, as illustrated in class 6th textbook, is said to be the creation of the "priest" and it defines duties and occupation based on birth'. This portrayal is likely to create an abstract picture of a 'rigid system'. Caste related violence is limited to practice of untouchability.

The maximum number and instances of reference to caste as an institution is found in the class 6th text. The book meant for class 7th introduces the reader to the concept of "jati" and increase in number of jatis due to socio economic differences. However, it does not explain how a varna and jati are different. These terms are used interchangeably in everyday life and to distinguish between the two is necessary, as it is the very concept of the jati and the idea of proliferation of jatis that helps in creating and maintaining a façade of rigidity of the four varna system.

Lack of explanation on what addition of jati or sub-caste does to the entire caste structure adds to the abstractness of the concept. These books are catering to a very diverse socio-economic group of young readers and the issue of caste as addressed by these texts will create a sense of disconnect for the urban students who are seldom aware of the intricacies of the system. While for a student in rural areas or residing in fringes of metropolitan cities or hailing from the economically and socially disadvantaged sections of society it may create a sense of disconnect for its very abstractness. In the students' mind, this might create incongruence between their lived and academic experience.

The overarching framework of cause and reaction creates its own complications. The text meant for class 8th has a section called 'Caste and Social Reforms' in the chapter on "Women, Caste and Reform". These reforms are presented as personality centric and the organizational character of the reform movements are highlighted. The last chapter shows how the Constitution dealt with the idea of untouchability. The style and theoretical frame of all the three texts as a whole treat caste as an institution created by priests: an institution that was dealt with by a few organized movements and eventually by the state.

Making of the *varna* system is shown to have a tangible cause leading to specific reactions in the form of people questioning the various facets of the system. This framework very importantly misses out on local participation in this 'system' and the various ways in which people subvert these restrictions, as also the extent of influence it had on ordinary lives from food to customs to organisation and location of living spaces.

No one can deny the inherently oppressive character of caste, but highlighting its dynamism would put the reader in a better position to appreciate the many ways in which this resilient institution continues to affect our present.

Secondly, the flexibility of the institution and maintenance of a façade of rigidity can be a very challenging idea to comprehend. How one should present it to a young audience, requires detailed investigation. It would appear that there is space for greater sensitivity in

exposing the child to the intricacies and subtleties of the caste system and dedicating more space to the historical evolution of caste, *varna* and *jati*.

These aspects govern various cultural, political and religious aspects of our present. A more thorough understanding of the complexity of an often simplified idea like caste can place the young reader in a better position to understand the complexities of the political world which are thrown at him/her in form of words like vote-bank politics, reservations, religious reforms, Dalits, untouchability, etc. This would further develop in the young mind, a sense of difficulty in understanding the world around them and making them come to terms with the fact that not all questions might necessarily have a categorical answer.

Also engaging the student in an enquiry about caste would further help them develop an understanding of issues like gender and violence. The idea is to expose them to a not so perfectly sanitized and chaotic society of the past where caste as an institution influenced society and was in turn influenced by it.

Thirdly, introducing caste in Political science text books and not giving it adequate space in History texts, creates the superficial idea of remoteness and the very popular perception of History being a mere chronological narration of past events. Broadening the space and depth of analysis of a more contemporary issue like caste may help in changing this view.

Sound historical understanding of a politically and socially important issue would help the young reader bring History to practice in their daily conversation and discussions, helping them develop a 'historical imagination'.

Fourth and perhaps the most important idea behind allowing the young reader to wallow in not so clear water is to provide them agency. History writing and reading is a politically significant and empowering tool. The child is seldom mentioned in history and the popular idea is that making and writing history is the work of adults, to include the child in a more active manner and not treating History in text book (at least) as a one way discourse would help in giving a child a space to express their difficulties, which in my opinion is more important than a perfectly written answer.

While stating these propositions, I am aware of the rather idealistic stand I seem to be taking. History as a discipline itself stands in paradox to the idea of understanding it through textbooks. Our past shapes our understanding of our present. It is for this very reason that writing History for the future citizens of a young nation is an exercise which requires great vigilance on part of the writers and on part of the targeted audience of this writing.

Further, I am also aware that in a country where the ability to write ones name and basic numeracy is what is defined as literacy and the fact that education receives alarmingly low state attention, History to be recognized as an important aspect of education is far cry, though this does not mean that it goes unnoticed in political and academic circles.

The New NCERT History textbooks published in 2006 mark a watershed in the effort of bringing about positive changes in the popular perception of History however I believe that

it, along with other books of social sciences, needs to be revised perhaps more frequently than it is, to keep pace with the rapidly changing composition of young audience.

The composition of young readers today has changed and is changing at a rapid pace, it is adept with technology and more politically aware than their earlier counterparts, biologically they are attaining maturity faster, it is necessary to shape and revise the NCERT social science and in particular History textbooks to keep them involved otherwise the stated purpose of making the reader aware of the working of the social world would become ineffective if not redundant.

Conclusion

Giving more space to issues like caste would help the young reader come to terms with the fact that the past is neither linear nor always reduceable to a cause and effect sequence. It would help them empathise with marginalized groups and relate to issues of violence and discrimination along lines of caste and gender. Also it would help them make sense of the complexities of political, social and religious realities of contemporary India making the subject as a whole one of contemporary significance. Further giving them scope for understanding and making sense of a lived historical experience would provide the young minds an agency in the process of making sense of the past, not always relying on the written word alone but interpreting day to day happenings in light of their derived knowledge to support or counter it.

While making such propositions, I admit that I am aware of the abstractness of the idea and the paradox of hoping to make sense of History through textbooks. Clearly, the idea opens up more questions than answer (if at all). It raises questions on how the student is to be engaged. Matters of pedagogy and methodology, and the extremely industrious task of writing about the most dynamic social institutions of the world in a manner which is lucid and comprehensible to a young audience but yet not general or simplistic is a challenge before academicians. I have tried to argue that there is scope for further thinking on the issue.

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Nayika: Her Evolution in Three Texts: A Gendered Perspective

Shreya Dua

"Women's hearts are hard, so enough flattery! Leave me alone!
He was told this whenever Hari tried to placate her."
(From Dhvanyaloka of Anandavardhana)

The word Nayika has come down to us to mean Heroine. Ludicrous, maudlin and wanton, she is the paragon of beauty. Our perceptions imbue her with such fledgling characteristics, yet there is a constant sense of allurement attached to her. Not always is she ingenious or negative, sometimes she is venerable and intelligent. But then she ceases to be alluring; she ceases to be heroine. Thus, either intrigue or sacrifice, the two extremes must constitute her personality. It is only then that the word exhibits grandiose, a feature it has evoked for almost two thousand years. The future seems as persistent. Therefore I choose to examine her nature through a legacy left behind by ancient Indian authors. The sources for our study include some of the most famous and impeccable works – Mahabharata's Shakuntala, Kalidasa's Abhijnana-Shakuntalum and Jayadeva's Gitagovinda as narratives. We use the Natyashastra, and Kamasutra by Vatsyayana as authorities on the definition of a Nayika.

Our basic definition, characteristics and nature of the *Nayika* are obtained from the *Natyashastra*.[1] There are supposed to be four classes of heroines – a goddess, a queen, a woman of high family and a courtesan.

The eight kinds of *Nayika*s as explained by Manmohan Ghosh are – *Vasaksajja* (one dressed up for union), *Virahotkanthita* (one distressed by separation), *Suadhina-bhartrka* (one having her husband subjected in her control), *Kalahantarita* (one separated by a quarrel), *Khandita* (one enraged with her lover), *Vipralabdha* (one deceived by her lover), *Prositabhartika* (one with a sojourning husband) and lastly *Abhisarika* (one who moves to her lover). The *Natyashastra* states four causes of jealousy– Depression (*vaimanasya*), Mixed Feelings (*vyalika*), Disgust (*vipriya*) and Anger (*manyu*).

In the Mahabharata,[2] Janamejaya requests and Vaishampayana begins the tale of the Puru dynasty. Dushyanta is attracted to the hermitage and its beauty Shakuntala undergoes the Gandharva marriage with him and he leaves, not recognizing her when she goes to him with their progeny Sarvadamana until a divine voice orders him to accept the two. In *Abhijnana-Shakuntalum* (Shakuntala and the Ring of Recollection) by Kalidasa,[3] the story is far more complex. Dushyanta marries Shakuntala and leaves after which a sage curses her. Only the ring given to her by Dushyanta can resume his recollection, and this totem gets lost on the way. She is therefore rejected and waits for the progeny to be born to redeem

[1] The *Natyashastra* can be dated between the 200 BCE to 200 CE

[2] The *Mahabharata* runs across a long time frame – from the Later Vedic period till around 3 century C.E. This span represents the transition from chiefdom to a state society. It is affiliated closely with the rise of the sixteen Mahajanapadas.

[3] Kalidasa was a court writer during the reign of Chandragupta II in the so-called Gupta period. He left his imprint on Sanskrit literature in an unassailable manner and is supposed to have lived between the late 4th and early 5th century C.E.

her. The *Menaka* and several people and situations play a poignant role in bringing them together. The play is divided into five acts.

Influencing the arts even today, the twelfth century poet Jayadeva's work is one of the first celebrations of Krishna's and Radha's intimacy[1]. Miller makes the reason behind the excessive usage of the word Madhava clear[2]. No different is the meaning of the word Radha[3] from that of Laxmi or Sri. The text is translated into twelve cantons that juggle between the vicissitudes of amalgam, separation and the ultimate union between Krishna and Radha.

All the three narrative texts begin by extolling the position of the *Nayaka.* In both Kalidasa's work as well as Vyasa's the *Nayika* makes a belated entry. The first line of Vyasa introduces Dushyanta as the *"mighty hero"* and he is referred to as the *"thunderbolt wielder himself."* Kalidasa opens the curtain with the chase for the antelope as the king orders the charioteer to slacken the reins. Jayadeva's triumph in writing begins by representing the *Dashavataras* of the God of Triumph coupled with other victories – he is the suppressor of Kalia, the vanquisher of Madhu, Mura and Naraka. Therefore, we notice a tendency to commence by displaying the valour of the hero so that the *Nayika*'s beauty can be juxtaposed against it i.e. the *Nayika* is introduced in relation to the *Nayaka.* The first description of Shakuntala in the Mahabharata is with reference to her *"flawless body", and "Her lips are fresh red buds, Her arms are tendrils"* marks her entry in Kalidasa's text. This can be seen as a means of finding a worthy girl for the hero rather than the other way round. However Jayadeva after praising Krishna instantly begins the tale with the *Nayaka* and *Nayika*'s union. Krishna is most importantly the satisfier of Radha.

As Shakuntala's story continues, the *Nayika* welcomes Dushyanta alone to the hermitage justifying her father's absence in the *Mahabharata* version. But in Kalidasa's play there are multiplicities of characters huddled around her. Her voice precedes her entry, as she is in conversation with her sakhi's Anusuya and Priyamvada. In both Dushyanta experiences love at first sight. The imagery of nature is replete in all three texts. Wood after wood was crossed by the king in *Abhijnana Shakuntalum*, the serenity as well as the gurgling waters of the Malini River were all too alluring for him. Vyasa's version possesses least descriptivism. As the chariot nears the grove, the beauty of the hermitage is described. *"Clouds then thicken the sky, Tamala trees darken the forest."* Thus begins the tale of the most passionate lover- Hari with Sri. In *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* there is not only a tendency to personify nature but to draw analogies thereby associating the *Nayika*'s form with it. She personifies *"Forestlight"* a jasmine creeper who choose as her source of vitality the mango tree. Kalidasa seeks pairs in nature in order to address the beauty of marriage. The creeper creates the desire for a companion in Shakuntala. The same tendency occurs in the *Gitagovinda*, but here even the *Nayaka* is a part of the comparison with the non-human.

In order to approach the *Nayika* in *Abhijnana Shakuntalum*, a reason is sought. The king seeks to find a way into the hermitage so as to court Shakuntala. The door opens by itself; the sages demand protection from demons in the absence of Kanava. The professing of love is a discrete activity. A lotus leaf provides material for a letter. The *Nayika*'s nails etch the words that she orates. Jayadeva's work is not accustomed to this belief- Krishna and Radha

[1] Jayadeva was one of the first poets to depict the physicality of love between Radha and Krishna rather than merely looking at it as a distant metaphor of the union between the atman and *parmatman*.

[2] The slayer of Madhu has been used several times by Jayadeva, yet its reference caters to a parallel meaning. Springtime and honey both symbolize passion; thus Madhava, representing these two facets irrevocably becomes the erotic lover. Aptly said it is that, "Krishna is both the object of love's attack and the embodiment of love's creative sensuality."

[3] Radha is success and wealth of which Krishna is the lord.

are constantly admitting their profound attraction to the sakhi. Radha's "depression' is conveyed to her sakhi. The sakhi takes back Krishna's words to Radha explaining that his predicament is no different from the *Nayika*'s. There exists mutuality. In *Mahabharata's* Shakuntala this is not evident. We are unaware if Shakuntala is in love. For her the lawfulness of the marriage overpowers the factor of love. Wishing to take Kanava's blessings she gives in only when Dushyanta proclaims the Gandharva form of marriage to be lawful. In this manner she is seen to possess intelligence and rationality. However, Kalidasa's *Nayika* is only known for her pulchritude. She is puerile and incapable of thinking greatly. Vyasa's *Nayika* is more than just intelligent; she is savage - laying down a fervent condition that her son shall be the heir. The bargain is more on her side. Such an act would be blasphemy for Kalidasa's heroine.

The *Nayika* in all the texts is bestowed with a divine element. Shakuntala is factually a nymph progeny in the stories whereas Radha has several times been referred to as Sri. But in the Gita Govinda Krishna is undoubtedly divine. The same is not true of Dushyanta. Shakuntala in *Adi Parvan* makes it very clear that she is of a higher order. This raises the inevitable question of caste. The *Nayika* belongs to the higher caste on the paternal side; she is now eligible for Dushyanta. The *Gitagovinda* has no mention of the term caste.

Separation is pivotal to all three texts. In the *Mahabharata* it has little significance. When it was time for Shakuntala to take her son to his father, the separation came to a climax. Kalidasa created the situation three times. Just as the lovers approach each other, Gautami inquires upon Shakuntala's health and parting is destined. Having undergone the Gandharva marriage with Shakuntala, Dushyanta leaves. The third separation is Dushyanta's rejection of Shakuntala. The *Gitagovinda* is the story of the gap of separation between two unions. In these two texts the disposition of the *Nayika* suffering from love-sickness is nearing death. Wilted in love- *"Her cheeks are deeply sunken, Her waist is thin, Her shoulders bent, And the colour has left the skin."* She is, in fact, shown to be extremely frail and weak. Dushyanta's predicament is nowhere near Shakuntala's. Nature torments him, thus overpowering his strength- *"Arrows of flowers and cool moon rays, Are both deadly for men like me."* Krishna's is close yet not close enough. He is craving for Radha as *"cool moon rays scorch him."* But in Radha's case *"Death may take her"* was no understatement.

Only the *Abijnana Shakuntalum* shows Shakuntala's departure from the hermitage as an emotionally loaded sorrowful affair. Father cannot part with his jewel and friends cannot part with their confidant. The hermitage will be hollow without its source of vitality; forest light to the buck to the wild goose will all miss their life giver. In the time span between Vyasa and Kalidasa, rules relating to the conduct of women were circulated. All of this was woven within the endeavour to control the sexuality of women by creating barriers on their mobility. Rules of conduct such as Kanava's instructions-*"Obey your elders, be a friend to other wives!"* came to be in force. In Jayadeva's work the forest is the backdrop of the poem - the dark Tamala grove is an impeccable place for ardent lovers. This creates a sense of abandonment and freedom. Also Jayadeva's wife Padmavati was a *devadasi* or *Mahari*, who supposedly danced to his works at Jagannath Puri. There were probably less restrictions on her and on the women around Jayadeva, giving the *Nayika* the freedom to carve her own path. A lesser yet similar freedom is available to Vyasa's Shakuntala. She goes to Dushyanta's court unaccompanied and after releasing arrows of poisoned words with intensity and velocity, turns back. She targets the flawed character of Dushyanta. However, Kalidasa's *Nayika* goes with an entourage and is submissively silent throughout the discussion. Her begging is fruitless; both sides abandon her. She is rebuked for her character. The stained *Nayika* has nowhere to go as Sarngarava says to the king-*"Since you married her, abandon her or take her, Absolute is the power a husband has over his wife."* If a *Nayika*

in a utopian play could be referred to as her husband's slave, the reality of society would portray graver situations.

This rationale of calling husband- God represents the desire to instil divinity in a human figure. But the *Mahabharata* attempts to humanize divine figures. Dushyanta's rejection is seen as a fallacy on his part - As the *Nayika* departs from the court, a voice demands Dushyanta to accept and cradle his son, the son who saves him from Yama. In *Gitagovinda* Krishna's puritan ways make him flawed, in the poem itself he seeks remorse - The winner of hearts couldn't control his *"wonton ways"*, now it is he who is heartbroken, yearning for the *Nayika*.

Divinity attached to the *Nayika* is not penultimate. Shakuntala is seen as a sagacious character who not only speaks up but also fights. This is similar to the manner in which Radha rebukes Krishna for spending time with the "other woman" observing various signs on Krishna- *"Dark from kissing her kohl-black eyes."* By the time Kalidasa creates Shakuntala, a woman who speaks up for herself would be unthinkable. The epic's Shakuntala is flawed in another way. She uses her son rather than love as a weapon because she derives power from motherhood. But the play's *Nayika* shall always be a wife before a mother.

At the end of *Abhijnana Shakuntalum* the *Nayik*a forgives the *Nayaka* for not recognizing her. Blaming him is far-fetched because of the presence of several third factors onto which the blame could be transferred. Curse, luck and karma provide justification. But in the *Mahabharata* it is the *Nayaka* who forgives the *Nayika* for her pugnacious words. So does Krishna ask for Radha's forgiveness, thereby persuading her.

The happy ending of Vyasa's tale can be for the most part wholly accredited to Shakuntala's own efforts. Variegated factors such as friends, priests, and destiny help Kalidasa's '*Nayik*a'. Emphasis is laid on penance rather than the effort to arrive to the ending. The *Gitagovinda* also highlights penance, but efforts exist and are mutual.

Finally, sexual desire in Shakuntala's tale is clearly motivated by the need for a progeny, the only claim that made her allegeable for respect. But in the *Gitagovinda* the aspect of '*sringar*' is very strong. This often crosses the bounds of gender and divinity. In a state of delusion for Krishna, Kamadeva is mirrored in Kama (love i.e. Radha). The *Nayika* assumes Madana's embodiment as Hari describes *"Her arched brow is his bow, Her darting glances are arrows, Her earlobe is the bow string."* In the final canton the *Nayaka* verse-by-verse requests Radhika for pleasure *"offer your lips nectar to revive a dying slave."* So strong is the urge for intercourse.

With respect to the *Natyashastra*, Shakuntala is a woman of high family, who becomes a queen and is born with a certain element of divinity. However interestingly Radha belongs to none of the four classes of heroines as elucidated in the *Natyashastra*. Though she is referred to as Sri, deification only occurs because of her association with Krishna.

Jayadeva has used almost all the types of *Nayika*s and complied the profiles diligently in the *Natyashastra*. Careless Krishna, Tender Krishna as well as Indolent Krishna would refer to Virahotkanthita, Cunning Krishna depicts Radha as Vipralabdha, Abashed Krishna is invariably a Khandita *Nayika*, Languishing Krishna seems to be Kalahantarita in the form of Radha, Blissful Krishna is arrived because Radha is Abhisarika, and lastly Ecstatic Krishna is when Radha is Saudhina-bhartrka. In both Shakuntala tales she represents *Virahotkanthita Nayika*, *Vipralabdha Nayika* and *Khandita Nayika* (when Shakuntala in *Adi parvan* reprimands the *Nayaka*). The *Gitagovinda* depicts these more or less in conformity with the four causes

of jealousy. Depression and Anger in Abashed Krishna, and Mixed Feelings in Blissful Krishna. Shakuntala's story evokes Disgust. The others are missing in both versions.

Thus we conclude that the *Nayika* was indeed an irresistible figure. Her evolution would be as follows. During the compilation of the *Mahabharata* she represented the woman who struggled yet was powerful enough to exercise her voice. Kalidasa enriched her with far more beauty but kept her tied in the shackles of patriarchy. However Jayadeva gave her a distinctive and emancipated form. This form was closer to her character in the Mahabharata rather than *Abhijnana Shakuntalum.* We notice how Jayadeva complied fully to the *Natyashastra* while Vyasa was least influenced. This is probably because the *Mahabharata* precedes the *Natyashastra.* But that is not reason enough as almost all the texts were in circulation centuries before they were committed to writing. Overlapping is thus a common phenomenon; the same can be said for the concept of the *Nayika.* She absorbs various elements from the past and present social contexts and profoundly influences the current as well as the future of whichever period she is born in.

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Japanese Influence in the Creation of S*wadeshi* Art in Early 20th Century Bengal

Tara Vidisha Ghose

High art in the 1900s in Calcutta became intertwined in larger debates on the western influence on Indian art and on ways of asserting a more distinct 'India-ness'. As a result of these, Calcutta in this period witnessed what scholars see to be as the first nationalist art movement in India, led by Abanindranath Tagore. In the creation of this new swadeshi school of art, there were attempts to shake off the naturalist principles that were brought in through colonial art education and to build up on a so-called 'authentic Indian aesthetics and values'. Following several experiments of reviving Mughal art traditions, Abanindranath Tagore found the assertion of a unique art style of his own through incorporation of Japanese artistic techniques and ideas. Set against the backdrop of strong debates regarding what exactly constituted swadeshi art, often laying emphasis on perceptions of what comprised the essence of India, the critical acclamation of Abanindranath's new style of painting appears to be an interesting phenomenon, especially given that it built up on influences that were not strictly Indian at all. In the light of the aforementioned, this essay attempts to locate the important role played by Japanese art styles in the creation of swadeshi art, against the context of the debates regarding what exactly constituted swadeshi art, along with the close relationship between Abanindranath and Okakura, and his students.

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1. Artistic Exchanges between Abanindranath Tagore, Kakuzo Okakura, Yokoyama Taikan and Hishida Shunso

Abanindranath first came to be influenced by Japanese art through his contacts with Kakuzo Okakura, an internationally noted scholar and art expert, when the latter first travelled to India in 1902. After Okakura returned to Japan in 1903, he sent his foremost students, Yokoyama Taikan and Hishida Shunso to the Tagore household at Jorasanko. The presence of these two artists had a profound influence on Abanindranath's work, and vice versa. Abanindranath came to be strongly influenced by Taikan's wash technique and the gentle use of the brush adopted these techniques to his own watercolours. The liberal use of water to moisten the page provided an expressive haziness to the paintings, lending them a melancholic mood, which appealed to Abanindranath strongly[1]. Further, Abanindranath felt that colours had the ability to capture deeper emotions, in opposition to lines, which were seen to be stifling due to their role in demarcating boundaries and defining shapes. The manifestation of his views on the power of colour and influence of the techniques of the Japanese artists is strongly visible in his subsequent works, such as 'The Yaksa's Lament', 'Sita in Captivity', 'Diwali' and 'Bharat Mata'.

[1] Strongly influenced by Western ideas of Romanticism, Abanindranath wanted to freely express emotions or *bhava*in his paintings. In fact, one of the main reasons that he wanted to move away from painting Mughal miniature style paintings was because Mughal artists did not prioritize this element of *bhava*.

Though the techniques that Abanindranath Tagore learned from Okakura, Taikan and Shunso were strongly reflected in his art, the subjects painted were often tied to what was seen to be Indian iconography and themes, such as Hindu gods and goddesses and historical scenes. These subjects came to have influenced the work of Shunso and Taikan, who painted scenes from the Ram-Leela and goddesses like Saraswati and Kali. Though the paintings used Hindu iconography, they were painted using the blurred colour washes that these Japanese artists were known for.

These exchanges between AbanindranathTagore,Taikan and Shunso tied these artists together to a point when the distinctions between Indian and Japanese art blurred to create a new 'Oriental' style, centered on the use of the wash. The wash lent a sense of romanticism, melancholy and mystery born of a blurriness of colourand form. The most noted painting of this style was Abanindranath's 'Banga Mata', which became 'Bharat Mata' and came to be seen as the personification of the idea of the Indian nation.

2. Ideological Background

2.1 The Japanese Context

This phenomenon of artistic exchanges between Abanindranath Tagore, Yokoyama Taikan and Hishida Shunso are especially significant against the specific backgrounds of Japan and India in this period. These provide an explanation as to why Japanese influences persisted in the paintings of Abanindranath Tagore and his disciples and played an important role in the creation of *swadeshi* art.

Unlike India, Japan in the turn of the 20th century was not a colony. However, the opening up of the country in the Meiji period saw the entry of western influence in the artistic and cultural spheres, leading to conscious efforts to move away from traditional Japanese aesthetics to those driven by western principles of art. In this way, the condition of Japanese art bore similarities with that of India, which too was heavily influenced by western art values. While on one hand, art in Meiji Japan strongly attempted to emulate Western artistic techniques and aesthetics, on the other hand, there were strong attempts at expressing a distinct Japanese identity. Thus, the Meiji era ushered in the formation of two new schools of painting: The *Yoga* and *Nihoga* schools.

The *Yoga* or 'European' oil painting school was the dominant school of art in Meiji Japan and received strong support from the government. It used western techniques of depiction of form through the use of shading, which was a feature that was absent in traditional Japanese painting. The diminishing of traditional Japanese culture under the strong influence of westernization and increasing modernization lead to feelings of anxiety among some sections of artists, leading to the emergence of the *Nihoga* painting school or the 'Japanese' painting school. This was a neo-traditional school of art, established to counter the rising influence of the Yoga school.

Okakura was an important figure tied to the *Nihoga* School and the Nippon Bijutsuin[1] and was recognized as one of the foremost authorities on Oriental art and archaeology. In his book, *'The Ideals of the East'*, he expressed ideas of a pan-Asian civilization that tied together the ideals of an integrated Asia towering above the materialism of the West. This idea was a welcomed source of nationalist pride in India, especially since the India of the Vedas was

[1] Okakura was one of the 40 artists who broke away from the Imperial Art School to form the Nippon Bijutsuin, which became the focal point of the efforts to re-nationalise traditional Japanese art.

upheld as the 'motherland of Asiatic religion and thought'. Further, Okakura laid emphasis on the ideals expressed by Buddhist art and revered India to be the origins of these ideas.

Along with building a picture of an integrated Asia, Okakura defined an independent position for Japan and celebrated her as the only Asian country to have effectively upheld her traditions and resisted Western domination, thus placing her in the special position of 'the new Asiatic power'. Through contacts with the Tagore family, Okakura was able to gain support for these ideas, pushing forward a shared Pan-Asian identity and raising Japan as a source of inspiration. Thus, the interaction of Okakura and his students with Abanindranath Tagore and their subsequent influence on *swadeshi* art in early 20th century Bengal had ideological implications, apart from being a technical and aesthetic shift. This becomes especially evident when one notes that Okakura's views entered Bengal when discussions on what constituted 'Indian' art were already in place and were shaping the idea of *swadeshi* art.

2.2 The Indian Context: The Conceptualization of *Swadeshi* Art

Okakura's visit to India occurred at a time when Orientalist views had begun to lead the way for a new interpretation of Indian art and aesthetics. Two key views on Orientalism in India were put forth by E.B. Havell and A.K. Coomaraswamy, who moved away from the bias that dominated the European understanding of Indian art, as reflected in the colonial policy of art education. Havell was critical of the lack of emphasis given to Indian art in the art education curriculum in Bengal and challenged the importance given to European art ideas. This orientalist view came from a place of British paternalism which was seeking to prevent the obliteration of the 'exotic orient' under the influence of European ideas.

In the turn of the 20th century, Havell's ideas regarding Indian art strongly opposed what he called 'British Philistinism' and the ways in which it had proven to be detrimental to the development of 'authentic' Indian art. Underlying his argument was the clear equation of Indian art with Hindu art, which was seen to have carried within it deeper spiritual meaning which could not be appreciated by the West because of the latter's inability to move beyond physical decorative qualities. The elusive spirituality of 'Indian' art was thus seen to be its strongest quality, representing the deeper essence of nationalism and the larger struggle of the Orient against the Occident.

The Orientalist definition of Indian art favoured Abanindranath's new school of art in opposition to Indian academic art and highlighted its role in constructing the nation. The art of the latter was rejected and Raja Ravi Verma was replaced with Abanindranath Tagore as the poster boy of Indian art. A distinction was drawn between the works of these two artists on the grounds that painting historical and mythological subjects was not enough. The treatment of the paintings had to be in consonance with the higher ideals and spiritual values they represented.

In this context, the Academic realism of artists was condemned as low imitations of European standards, reflecting scenes and emotions in a way that ignored the deeper values of India. In contrast to Verma, Abanindranath was upheld for his creativity and imagination and the depth of emotion he incorporated in his art. These qualities were emphasized through his use of Japanese techniques, which filled them with a deeper emotional and spiritual meaning, ostensibly consonant to the ideals of Hinduism as understood by Havell and Sister Nivedita. Hence, the use of Japanese techniques brought out the 'authentic Indian' voice in his paintings, allowing them to conform to the idealistic concept of *swadeshi* art.

3. Conclusion: Linking Ideologies

In tying together the Japanese context with that of Bengal, a direct link is drawn in the writings of Sister Nivedita.[1] After reading Okakura's *'Ideals of the East'*, Sister Nivedita underlined India's role as the source of religion and thought in Asia, attributing Japan's strength to the strengthening of Indian values in Japanese culture. She held that the process of the dissemination of Buddhism from India to China and Japan was repeating itself in Hinduism through Swami Vivekananda's powerful speech in the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1893. Her view reflects an attempt to incorporate the values underlying Japanese 'awakening' into the gamut of Hinduism. Though the attempt to attribute Japanese strength to India was not one that was widely held, these are several other factors that could reconcile the Japanese and Bengali contexts, thereby making it an aesthetically and ideologically meaningful combination.

The incorporation of Japanese techniques in *swadeshi* art needs to be seen in the specific context of Abanindranath Tagore. Nephew of Rabindranath Tagore, Abanindranath grew up in the 'intellectually open-minded' environment of the illustrious Tagore household situated in Jorasanko. From childhood, he was aware of debates on nationalism due to the Tagore association with the Hindu Mela along with the influence of Rabindranath Tagore who was in the forefront of the *swadeshi* movement in Bengal. This predisposition played an important role in building Abanindranath's partnership with Havell, which proved to be vital in the growth of the new nationalist art movement. Havell played a major role in exposing Abanindranath to the artistic past of India, including Mughal paintings, which, under the grip of European aesthetics had come to be heavily undermined in India. Through the study of Mughal art, Tagore came to regard it with newfound admiration and soon incorporated it in his own art style. However, though the revival of Mughal painting was a step towards discovering a *swadeshi* voice, it did not prove to be enough. This was partly because the expression of emotions was never a part of Mughal art- a condition that went against what Abanindranath was searching for in attempting to express his artistic voice. The beauty of Mughal painting thus became valued solely as a tool to celebrate the richness of India's artistic past.

In his endeavour to develop a more *swadeshi* voice, Abanindranath found a solution to his problem in the art of Japan. This was due to his close interaction with Taikan, Shunso and Okakura, which helped in the development of his wash technique that brought in deeper expressive qualities in his paintings. This effect lent an ostensibly spiritual dimension to the religious and historical themes that Abanindranath Tagore painted, raising the value of the emotions and deeper ideas that lay within his artwork.

In the context of the views of Sister Nivedita, Coomaraswamy and Havell, the effects created by Abanindranath Tagore were interpreted to have brought out Hindu ideals and spiritual values that were seen to be the essence of authentic Indian art. His paintings retained the link with tradition in the themes they painted but put these forward in an original and imaginative way. Further, tying it together with the views of Okakura and the creation of the 'Oriental' style through his interactions with Taikan and Shunso, Abanindranath's style became a part of a larger pan-Asian aesthetic and ideal that

[1] Sister Nivedita was another key figure who determined the conception of *Swadeshi* art in Bengal in this period. An Irish disciple of Swami Vivekananda, her ideas on art and nationalism drew heavily from the Swami's teachings and preached the harnessing of Hindu spirituality to build nationalism. Her views played a key role in emphasizing the role of Hindu spirituality in shaping *Swadeshi* art.

reconciled the struggle of the orient against the occident. Thus, the aesthetic that the incorporation of Japanese techniques lent to Abanindranath's art were strongly linked to the larger ideological contexts of art in Japan and Bengal, lending it greater power and acceptance as a new art movement, regarded by some scholars as the first *Swadeshi* art movement of India.

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Tattoos: Visual Language

Nikita Sharma

The following paper is a survey of the tradition of tattoos in North and North-Eastern India. They formed a part of the various modes of communication among people belonging to a culture as also with the spiritual and the other world. I collected part of the information used here through personal interviews. I have kept in mind the limitation of this mode of data collection. However, even with the limited data, the paper attempts to discuss the various implied and direct meanings of these bodily symbols.

Tattoo is believed to be an art of marking skin with indelible designs by making punctures in it and inserting pigment. In tribal societies, tattoos are not just an "art" form but a part of their existence, identity and culture. From olden times this practice of tattooing has been prevalent in almost all cultures in the world at some point of time and the meanings that they convey are subject to the socio-cultural, economic and sometimes political conditions. In some cultures, tattoos were used to mark the social rank of the person or important milestones of their life whereas, in others, it might be a mark of bravery, beauty or spirituality of the person. Alternatively, it could also be seen as a mark of one's tribal/kinship affiliations or signify one's status in a relationship, e.g. a seal of slavery. In certain cultures, they are also believed to have therapeutic and medicinal functions. Still, people bearing traditional tattoos might often be seen as 'primitive'. The purpose of this essay is to question this belief and to bring to notice the complexities of traditional *tattoos* in northern and north-eastern India.

In 18th century, Captain James Cook went on a voyage to explore the Polynesian triangle and he was impressed by the art form and coined the word Tattoo to denote it.[1]

The earliest evidence for tattoos can be dated back to 3300 BC on an 'iceman' named *Otzi* as it was found in Alpine Oetz valley. Fifty-eight markings were found on his body, mainly on the acupuncture points. This suggests a medicinal purpose of tattooing. Other pieces of evidence can be found from ancient Egypt, wherein certain patterns on statues of goddesses are clearly visible. Steve Gilbert believed that these might have had carnal functions. Similar patterns could be seen in ancient Japanese clay figurines. However, those particular dots and lines were believed to have spiritual associations.[2]

Tattoos have been regarded as a part of multi-literacies that predate written mode of communication. They are a visual mode of representation that carry with them deep emotions and beliefs. Deciphering these encoded meanings requires some amount of

[1] Tattoo is a distorted form of the Tahitian word *tatau*.

[2] John A. Rush, "scarification and tattooing:a cultural history of pain." In *spiritual tattoo: a cultural history of tattooing, piercing, scarification, branding and implants*, by John A Rush. (frog books, 2005).

knowledge or of the culture within which they are embedded.[1] Many times, however, they convey messages that can be read without knowing the language or culture or the actual meaning. According to Bell and Valentine,[2] a body decorated with tattoos is a political statement because it causes actions and counter-actions from the state as forces within and outside the individual struggle for power and control. This doesn't mean that tattoos remain confined to individual or state. In some cultures, it tends to define the social standing and economic background, ethnicity, group membership, gender and ritual conditions of the people. Christopher B. Steiner's article, 'Body Personal and Body Politic'[3], is useful in bringing out the link between the practices of tattooing in Polynesia and its political structure. According to Sahlins,[4] political leadership in Polynesia is characterized by centralized chiefdoms that rule over vast areas. The leader is at the pinnacle and social structure is typified by fixed hierarchies and little social mobility. Since the art of tattooing is associated with permanency thus, is best suited to the political system characterized by fixed hierarchy. That is why, in Polynesian islands, tattoos held a very prominent place. In Marquesas Islands particular form of tattoos indicated rank and tribal affiliations. Also, it was an expensive deal thus only better off people would get it where a special house for the occasion was built. In Hawaii, tattoos differentiated between men and slaves. Designs of small bands and stripes were restricted to people of high status and tattoos from knees to waist in solid black were for people of lower status. This art reached its highest and most sophisticated form in Maori where it is called *'moko'*. Chiefs had more elaborate and intricate designs which were their prerogative. Slaves were branded with tattoo marking on their back which was called '*papa*'.

The practice of tattooing is called '*gudna/ godna'* in India. There are very few written records or texts relating to the subject and the ethnographic data is not very extensive. The only records that can be found were the census reports of colonial period. In today's time, the practice has largely been condemned by the urban people for being 'primitive'. This is one reason that this tradition is never recorded properly and has gone extinct in many parts. 'Indigenous people are aware that tattoos identify them as tribal and hence they are seen with contempt'[5]. With regard to tattoos in India, Lars Krutak's research remains the main vantage point.

In 20th century south India, the *kolam*[6] patterns resembled the labyrinth found on rock art in Goa (2500BC). These kolam patterns were chosen because they were believed to have a protective function. The belief was that these intricate designs were like puzzle for Yama and his demons. They could not harm the tattooed person because they won't be able to

[1] Jennifer Deepti, "Tattoos, the power of ink." In *Multiliteracies: Beyond text and the written word*, by Amanda Goodwin , Miriam lipsky, Sheree Sharpe Eugene F. Provenzo, (IAP, 2011), 41.
[2] Cited in Eugene, *Multiliteracies: Beyond text and the Written Word,* 43.
[3] This article focuses on various forms of body adornments like tattooing, body painting, scarification etc and concludes that in different cultures, these forms are correlated with the types of political leadership.
[4] Cited in Steiner, *Body Personal and Body Politic,* 432.
[5] Lars Krutak, "India: land of Eternal Ink", http://vanishingtattoo.com/india_tattoo_history.htm (accessed on October 15, 2015).
[6] Kolams were like 'rangoli' drawn at the threshold of the house. They are associated with fertility, protection and apotropaic functions.

solve the puzzle and rendered powerless. Most of the people believed that tattoos had a relation and bearing upon one's after-life.

Tattoos were also used to cure certain diseases. Some tribes in Jharkhand believe that tattoos keep their organs healthy and others believe that bearing mark on forehead promotes safe delivery in child-birth. Symbols such as scorpion, cobra, bee, spider, etc. are regarded as 'protective charms'. Symbol of Spider is believed to have power to cure leprosy. Whereas signs of luck were swastika, lotus, fish, triangle, etc. In India, caste also came to play a role in determining the tattoo that one could get or rather; tattoo indicated the caste and sometimes profession of the bearer. The spindle caste women would have the symbols that have a resemblance with a spindle. The milkmaids (who were generally five in number) are represented together as five straight lines. People bearing this tattoo would belong to *goval* or *ahir* caste. Same way, Rajput women were generally identified by the tattoo of a warrior on horseback. Symbols of camel, needle, and sieve clearly denoted the bearer as a caravan member/ trader, cobbler and farmer respectively.

In Hindu tradition, as recorded in 1910, there were legends associated with the custom.[1] Tradition attributes the practice of tattooing to the times of Sita as the fear of abduction of women let them to mark tattoos which would help them recognize the women. According to another tradition, Vishnu is believed to have tattooed the figure of his weapons, sun, moon and tulsi plant on the hands of Lakshmi to protect her from enemies during wars. Other traditions are associated with Krishna. In a personal interview with Santosh (on 15th October '15), I got a few lines of a 'bhajan' which portrays Krishna as a tattoo artist mostly for women though. A few lines of it are-

….sheesh par kirwade mere shri girdhari re,

Maathe pe likh de mere madan murari re,

..naasika pe likh de nandlal,

..haathan pe likh de haldhar ji ko bhaiya re..[2]

Among the Baiga tribes of Madhya Pradesh, both men and women got tattoos. However, the practice among men died. It was an expensive thing to get too many tattoos. Having extensive tattoos became marker of one's economic status. Here, tattoos were also considered a form of sexual expression and desire. A Baiga once said, "When she is well tattooed, our sinful eyes declare her beautiful..." Baiga tattoos were thus linked to beautification purposes as well. Girls got tattooed at different ages like once when they are seven or eight years, and then after they have puberty, marriage, etc. They also believed in magical and medicinal powers of tattoos to purify blood and cure arthritis.

Some tribes like *Baiga*, *Bhumias*, *Khonds*, et al believe that tattoos have magical powers to protect them from real and spiritual dangers. Here tattoos work in the same way as

[1] Krutak, *India: Land of Eternal Ink.* 2.

[2] This *bhajan* basically shows that Radha got her whole body tattooed with different names of Krishna which shows prevalence of this practice among the people in large numbers, who might belong to lower or upper sections of the society.

talismans. Narendra Kumar, aged 50 years from Rajasthan has a tattoo of a '*trishul*' and '*om*' on his wrist. He believes that this shows his religious inclination and this way he feels quiet close to God, as if deriving power and strength from Him. Another belief in India is that tattoo marks are the only possessions that the person can take in their afterlife, everything else is left here. So tattoos become a part of their soul. A Bhumia woman says, "If we die and don't have any markings then we will not have anything of beauty to show in afterlife. We are tattooed to show '*Bhagwan*' something that will please him." The Chang women of Nagaland have particular tattoo for forehead and they could only tattoo their faces and no other part of the body. The particular design on the forehead was the common symbol that would allow their ancestors to recognize the woman after she has died and this tattoo would work as a currency in her afterlife.

Tattoos were also identified with bravery, manhood, warrior spirit and honor. Among the Naga tribes the practice of head hunting remained an important identity marker and as a method of asserting greater power over the other tribes. After the coming of Christianity, the practice of tattooing has died out and in 1953 the government banned the practice of head hunting which was closely linked to tattooing tradition. The ceremonies and patterns for men were very different. Those who brought the enemy heads and actually participated in the battle would get what the Khiamniungan tribe calls the '*tiger chest*' tattoo. Other tribes believe that having this tattoo was an honorable matter as only those who had taken the life of enemy could get the chest tattoo and that too only the queen of the tribe could make it. For the Wancho Nagas, men who took head of enemy could get the prestigious face tattoos.

Tattoos in some regions have close relation to secular matters or to devotional aspects of a tribe, group or an individual. The men of the Mer tribe of Gujarat were not extensively tattooed but had particular motifs made on the back of their hand, wrist or right shoulder. These motifs could include Rama, Krishna, feet of Lakshmi, Hanuman, Om, Camel, Scorpio, Bee or could include symbols of Coconut, Champa leaves etc. The popularity of Hindu gods like Rama, Krishna and symbol of Om in Hindi point to the gradual Hinduisation of these tribes.[1] However, for the girls of Mer tribe, getting tattoos was a compulsion just as it was for women of most other tribes. A Mer girl would get tattoo at important points of her life like attaining puberty, marriage etc. it was especially important to get tattoo before marriage. If the girl didn't have a tattoo, the in-laws would say that the girl has been sent to them 'like a man'. The favourite design of Mer girls was '*hansali*'. Mer men believed that women with tattoos were faithful.

In north, north-western India, it was compulsory for women to get tattoos. The dot or a mole was put to protect the bearer from evil eye, and if combined with the crescent moon, it signified a loving pair. The five dots represented Pandavas (domestic harmony). The nine planets or '*nav grahas*' were believed to influence the destiny of the person. Eight dotted pattern represented lotus, symbol for Lakshmi, goddess of wealth. Tattoos for women were related to beautification and sexuality; ideas of afterlife which was prevalent in almost all regions; strength and good health; to mark the puberty, marriage, luck; spiritual well-being

[1] Krutak, *India: Land of Eternal ink,* 4.

etc. The motif of fish and triangle were the signs of fertility. From Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh, Baby (40 years old), Ranno (50 years old), Sita (45 years old), Rukmini (58 years old), and Chunni (40 years old) talked about the compulsion that they face from the in-laws to get tattoos (personal communication, 13th July'15). In these areas, the in-laws will not even accept water from them if they don't have tattoo. In Rajasthan, most of the women used to have the name of their husbands and villages tattooed on their hands along with sun, moon, flower, etc. This was a sign of a dedicated wife. The Chang women had a legend associated with the forehead tattoo. These people believed that long ago, their village was flooded due to breach of a taboo and it was inflicted upon them as a punishment. In order to save the village, a maiden sacrificed her life and the deity responsible for the flood promised that the water would recede if the women of the tribe got that mark on their foreheads. It was also believed to have frightened tigers.

Tattoo artists were predominantly women. In most of the North and North-western parts of India, these tattoo makers belonged to wandering tribes like Vagharis and Nats. They were generally nomadic people. However in some cases, they might belong to the lower sections of the society who were settled in the periphery of the village. There is a stark contrast in the background of tattoo artists in these parts and those of north-eastern parts of India. Among the Naga tribes like Chang or Wanchos, only the queen of the tribe could make the tattoo on the headhunter warrior. A day for tattooing was decided through divination rituals and then feasts followed. As remuneration, the queen would receive various items at different stages of the operation. Men were not allowed to witness the ceremony or process of tattoo making in any of the tribes, if they did, then it was believed that the girl would be punished in after-life. The tattoo artists of Ao Nagas were old women and the knowledge of tattoo making was hereditary in female line and if the girl didn't learn the art then it was believed that her life would be full of problems.

The whole process of tattooing was very time-consuming and painful. It could last long for three to four days. These were made through a rudimentary machine. The design was stencilled on the body part and then pattern was hammered upon softly on the skin. In many areas, the woman artist would sing folk songs or nursery rhymes to disregard the pain. However, now the whole custom has changed with the coming of electronic machines and due to change in belief systems. Sheyili, who belongs to Sumi tribe of Atoizu region, in a personal communication on 29th June'15 provided first-hand information about the extinction of their traditional practice of tattooing. With the coming of Christianity, this tradition is looked down upon and these people were treated as 'different' from the other people and she is the first Christian convert of her region and hence, doesn't bear a tattoo herself. Medical science has highlighted the side-effects of tattoos which also worked towards the negative attitude toward the art form. These tattoo designs are either replaced by the modern patterns or have disappeared completely. Nowadays, these tattoo artists are majorly men and they can be found in almost all weekly and monthly fairs. Along with the technique, the whole composition of tattoo makers is changing.

As we have seen, tattoos are a part of complex ways through which humans try to communicate and forge a relationship with the environment and the ancestral and spiritual worlds. An aspect which held my attention was the gendering of tattoos among the tribes

and the compulsion over women to bear them. Their sexuality, beauty, obligations, etc. are marked by these tattoos. We get a sense of variety of rich tattoo traditions in India that date back to thousands of years which communicate through social and bodily rituals, the relationship of humans with society and their belief in the other world.

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The Representation of the Q*utub* in Popular Culture and Modern Historiography

Niyati Gangwar

"Ignorance is the first requisite of the historian, ignorance which simplifies and clarifies, which selects and omits."-Lytton Strachey

Ignorance, whether intentional or unintentional, conscious or unconscious has led to the tainting of historical narratives which in turn has indelibly affected our perceptions about the past and our engagement with it. Through this essay we seek to explore how this ignorance when applied to tangible symbols of immense historical importance manifests itself in creation of a memory that is skewed and does not serve to do justice to the events that it seeks to commemorate. It is in this context that we will study how the representation of the 'Qutub' as a monumental complex, has been tarnished by a problematic historical narrative which is in imminent need of questioning and critiquing.

Abounding in general knowledge books as the tallest tower in India, now facing tough competition from high rise buildings steeped in urbanization but still holding face, the *Qutub* Minar continues to evoke a response of awestruck wonder from tourists, students and historians alike. Built in the last decade of the twelfth century, this grandiose minaret is appreciated for its breath-taking demeanour, elaborate balconies and intricately carved structure. However an equally imposing structure situated next to the *Qutub* Minar and an essential part of the *Qutub* Complex, the striking 'Masjid I-Jami' mosque does not enjoy the similar undivided appreciation and glory as the minar. Through the course of this essay, we seek to enquire into the selective representation of the minar as an architectural marvel in popular culture with the consequent exclusion of the 'Masjid I-Jami' mosque. We shall delve deeper into the historiographical debate surrounding the 'Masjid I-Jami' referred to as 'Quwwat ul Islam' the representative of the enforcement of Islamic authority over the so called 'infidel' population, the controversy regarding its structure which was built with remains of materials plundered from Hindu and Jain temples and the implications of such a narrative on popular mind-sets and judgements.

We will also be exploring the role played by the guide-book provided by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), titled 'Qutb Minar and Adjoining Monuments' available at the site of the monument itself in reinforcing a problematic narrative. The text has been constructed by amalgamating works of scholars on medieval architecture, Islam and Indian history. It provides quite a confrontational perspective between the 'Hindu' and 'Islamic' communities and assumes their character as essentially monolithic as evident from the introduction provided here:

When the turbulent forces of Islam swept into the Indo-Gangetic plains at the end of the 12th century, it was an encounter of two opposing cultures. Islam was a younger religion, more pragmatic than the ancient and well-settled Hindu religious order of India.

As in philosophy, so in architecture, the two faiths were diametrically opposed. Both drew their architectural precepts from laid-down norms-scriptural in the case of Islam and bound by convention in the case of Hinduism. Beyond that, they were completely different.

The earliest mosques in the subcontinent were austere, making allowances only for scriptural inscriptions and geometric patterns, while the temple celebrated creation, its walls vibrant with images of divine, human, animal and plant life. In form and feature, the lucidity and economy of Islamic architectural expression was posited against the richness and exuberance of Hindu art.

The first point of contact between the two forces was one of friction. Fired by religious zeal, the soldiers of Islam set about destroying and despoiling the symbols and structures of the other.

This destruction, historians agree, is the reason for the absence of Hindu monuments in the upper-Gangetic plain, especially around Islamic centres such as Delhi and Ajmer.

The text reinforces the belief that the stark differences between the two religions manifested into two distinct architectural styles which had exceptionally perceptible differences. It also establishes at the disposal of the reader the view that Islam had a tradition of engaging in plunder and destroying other religious symbols, in the context of which it interprets the 'Masjid I-Jami' consisting of columns plundered from twenty seven Hindu and Jain temples.

The construction of the 'Masjid I-Jami' was begun in 1191-92 CE by Qutubuddin Aibak, commander of the army of Mohammad Ghori and founder of the Delhi Sultanate. Column shafts, bases and capitals of different sizes with *Shaivite*, *Vaishnavite* and Jains motifs with each other (ranging from sculpted figures, lotus flowers, bells and chains to '*kalasa*' vessels sprouting flower creepers, a brahmanical motif of abundance and overflowing prosperity) were placed upon each other to attain a uniform height of the roof with not great concern for symmetry, also reiterated by the guide.

Since the presence of plundered material from 'Hindu' temples within a 'Muslim' mosque is unmistakeable, the Masjid confirms images of Islamic iconoclasm and fanaticism; it resurrects memories of communal distinctions and strife which almost every Indian regards as a part of his country's social history. [1]

We shall now delve into the historiographical debate which has crystallized the understanding that has made its way into the ASI guide. The first scholar to make a detailed study of the epigraphs and architectural form of the *Qutub* complex was Sayyid Ahmad Khan. He was one of the most prominent cultural figures of the Muslim community in 19th century India. He is best remembered as an activist for Indian Muslim education and for founding the first secular Muslim educational institute on the Subcontinent – the

[1] Sunil Kumar, 'Qutb and Modern Memory', in *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India*, Suvir Kaul, Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 141.

Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh (now Aligarh University). Before all these achievements, however, he began his career as a young Muslim academic in 1846 when he transferred his position of Munsif (judicial officer) for the East India Company from Fatehpur Sikri to Delhi, following the death of his elder brother.[1] His work 'Asar-ul Sanadid: Imarat I Dihli ki Mustanad Tarikh' (Great Monuments: An authentic history of the buildings of Delhi) was considered the most comprehensive treatise on Delhi architecture. His conclusions were included in the reports of the ASI written in the 1860s and the guides prepared at the turn of the century for English tourists to Delhi also relied on his findings. Thus, the repository of information provided by him formed the basis on which an early consensual opinion on the nature of the *Qutub* complex was developed by scholars like J.A. Page and Alexander Cunningham.

The major subject of interests in the works of Khan, Page and Cunningham was the redeployment of Hindu and Jain temple material within the masjid structure which were defaced, inverted or plastered over through which Qutubuddin Aibak sought to make a statement of conquest and hegemony over an infidel population in north India and thus conduct a ritual cleansing of profane territory.[2]

They were preoccupied with the plinth of the temple upon which the mosque was built and the number of Hindu temple pillars which were utilized. Their discussion of the *Qutub* Minar was again largely restricted to its stylistic origins whether it had indigenous or Ghurid influences.

They essentially viewed the reuse of plundered temple material not merely to proclaim Qutubuddin Aibak's victory over Delhi but more importantly as Islam's victory over idolaters, as the victorious culmination of a preceding series of plunder raids led by 'Muslims' into Sindh, Punjab and Hindustan. This analysis was drawn from the assumption that the mosque was known as 'Quwwat ul Islam' in the past. Sunil Kumar points out there is no historical evidence in the form of any extant inscription in the mosque or referred to by this name in any Sultanate chronicle. We shall discuss in detail the divergent spectrum of views on the Masjid I-Jami being referred to as 'Quwwat ul Islam', as representative of the might of Islam later.

In the 1960s an attempt towards a more secular narrative was attempted by Meister, Mujeeb and Husain which though repudiated the earlier anachronistic view was equally problematic. To question the view of destruction and conquest, the Hindu adaptation of the 'saracenic arch' or the corbelled dome were highlighted as examples of inter-community cooperation and amity. [3]

In the 1990s, Anthony Welch and Probert Hildenbrand not adhering to the anachronistic communal or secular assumptions attempted at presenting the native's view which proved to be even more problematic. According to Anthony Welch, the Muslim patrons of the Hindu craftsmen forced them to conform to the Islamic architectural styles as reflected in

[1] Fatima Quraishi, '*Asar-ul-Sanadid: a nineteenth-century history of Delhi'*, Journal of Art Historiography, 2012, vol.6, p.1.
[2] Ibid, p. 145.
[3] Ibid, p. 146.

the attempt to replicate the familiar form back home, consequently twisting and tarnishing the indigenous forms of architecture. In his view, since the *Qutub* Minar performed the symbolic function of marking the Daral-Islam (the land of Islam) newly conquered from the infidels and was the most visible to believers and believers outside the city walls, it carried Quranic statements of conquest. [1]He argued that the monument was an overwhelming 'celebration of Islamic conquest' and thus the form and structure of the monument and the inscriptions it carried was meant to distinguish the Muslim conquerors from their 'Hindu' subjects and thus serve as a reassuring symbol of Islam's superiority to the Muslims in a foreign land.

Sunil Kumar questions the predominant narrative by pointing out that the extent of destruction caused by 'Muslim' conquest needs to be re-contextualized. Near the so-called site of destruction existed a reservoir built by a 'Hindu' queen, called the 'Hauz-i-Rani' prior to the capture of Delhi which had remained unfazed by plunder.

It is also important to question whether the *Qutub* Minar was only associated with the Delhi Sultans. Research has been carried out to prove that it also came to be associated with the Sufi saint, Qutb – al'din Bakhtiyar Kaki whose shrine was located near the Masjid I-Jami, which offers an alternative explanation to it being referred to as 'Quwwat ul Islam'. Qutb – al'din Bakhtiyar Kaki was the '*pir*' of Baba Farid, Nizam al din Awliya's spiritual master and the renown of the student had certainly accrued to his teachers as well.

The shrine emerged as an important pilgrimage site in the late 14th and early 15th centuries. Though Qutb –al'din Bakhtiyar Kaki did not enjoy the popularity as enjoyed by Nizam al-din Auliya, he became immensely popular amongst the later Mughal emperors for his mystical prowess. In the 18th century many people in Delhi regarded him as the 'senior most in the hierarchy of saints', especially chosen by God to maintain order in the world. According to popular cosmology prevalent in Delhi in the late 18th and early 19th century, Bakhtiyar Kaki was regarded as the *Qutub*, the axis around whom the world revolved. [2]

This interpretation came to acquire an iconic representation when the minar of the neighbouring 13th century Masjid I-Jami was described as 'Qutb sahib ki lath'. Thus the minaret was believed to represent the staff of Qutb – al'din Bakhtiyar Kaki which pierced the sky and like the pir himself, connected heaven with earth, providing stability and shelter to mortals on earth. In this reworked interpretation, it was the saint who was the Quwwat ul Islam, 'the sanctuary of Islam' and not the congregational mosque. Thus it was in acknowledgment of the pir's charisma that the minaret of the mosque was called the *Qutub* Minar.

In spite of such developments in research, the view of the monument as an assertion of Islamic hegemony has remained unquestioned. This view has been borne out of the tendency to view the medieval period as the Muslim period even though historians no longer call it so. The Delhi Sultans and Mughal emperors are accorded pre-eminence at the cost of other actors who had the capacity of playing an important role. This static and

[1] Ibid, p.147.
[2] Ibid, p. 170.

undifferentiated narrative is disturbed only occasionally by Bhaktis and Sufis who are dismissed as 'non-conformist' since they did not fall in the ambit of the two dominant religions. [1]

As established through the course of this project, there is a need to question the predominant narrative which has been indelibly imprinted onto our minds through what we perceive as evidence in the form of the ASI guide and the historiographical arguments on which it is premised and thus re-write a narrative which does not recognize the two religious communities as monolithic and cohesive in their entirety since there were dissensions and conflicts within the communities themselves. Moreover ascribing significance to a monument as the symbol of an assertion of a particular religious identity becomes problematic because the structure and organization which form the premises of the so-called Hindu and Islamic identities are essentially modern constructs. Therefore, it will be anachronistic to conform to this assumption.

Moreover, we must acknowledge that the representation of the *Qutub* Minar and the so-called *Quwwat ul Islam* mosque in popular culture has evoked a fragmented history of the medieval times which has determined to a certain extent the process of defining our identities in the contemporary scenario. Thus, it is pertinent that we juxtapose the two narratives, out of which the predominant one evokes a memory of communal strife based on 'facts' which are now being questioned by the other narrative which seeks to rise above religious dichotomy and accommodates scope for more intensive historical research.

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[1] Ibid, p.173.

The History of Institutions and the Institutions of History: *Tête-à-Tête with Mr. Gopinath Ravindran*

(Guest Interview, Maazi – O – Mustaqbil 2016)

Aishwarya Upadhyay, Sahitya Poonacha and Aditi Kumar

Q. This question is related to your field of study. You have studied Malabar and south Indian history. Is there a larger effort to integrate the histories of these regions? Say the ancient and the early medieval period of Indian history. As when we study early medieval history, we find that there is a paucity of perspectives from down south or the Deccan and even from the north-eastern regions.

Ans. *[Regional histories from] North-east yes, because the textual evidence sources are limited still. But the south especially, is very significant. One, I don't believe in the idea of a south India. There is nothing known as a South India or a North India because these two categories are deeply fractured and there are a large number of variations within it. So I don't think there is any sense in calling it South Indian history. Having said that, I think regional history had its home in southern India. Regional histories had academic acceptance in southern India unlike in north India or northern India, where it comes much later. We've thought of this thing because if we look at the south, if you are aware of historical writing on southern India, there is a lot on the valleys, on the drylands, on the wetlands going back to the Sangam literature. These have been investigated by geographers, economic historians, and social historians. Whereas in the north, you don't find [something like] it. There is no vibrant history of Bundelkhand for instance, that is a region. Yes you have some on the hills now, [for example] Chetan Singh's writing. Now the Himalayan history is coming up. But it's still coming up. So maybe I am speculating here, I think it's the fact that southern India didn't have a very centralized, powerful state like the Mughal state. And you had regional powers. The dynasty might have changed but the powers of different regions continued for a long time. So I think that is the difference in the north and the south in terms of regional history. That yes, sitting in the north, not much of southern India is taught. That is correct. There is a bias. But I think the bias is not the kind of the north- south bias so much; [but] it is of centralized state versus regional states. I think that is the bias.*

Q. Sir, you talked about the 'Dumbing down of History'. 'Dumbing down of History' has a history of its own, it's not something that has just developed recently. NCERT books, after 2006, the statistics aren't revaluated. The dumbing down begins at the level of primary education. Therefore, how can institutions like the ICHR influence the different institutions to bring about that type of thinking of children? The textbooks have been dependent on the central government. How do you think it can be tackled in a manner that objective and not state-sponsored history is taught to students?

Ans. *By 'dumbing down', I didn't mean being lazy. Not updating statistics is laziness. But methodologically they might be good books, or may not be good books. Dumbing down of history is when you try to mistake the popular Amar Chitra Katha to be history, it is when*

you say that when there is a popular belief, the sources are in variance with it but you accept the popular. You don't have the intellectual capability or tools to sift History from myth. I am not saying that myths are not important, but a myth should be read as a myth it is important to study history but the myth can't be taken as a factually describing source. So this is what a great historian does, you read the Ramayana and make use of it but you won't believe that whatever was written in the Ramayana actually happened. That is the dumbing down I was talking about.

As to the second part of the question, that is the popularization of History, the task of institutions like the ICHR was the popularization of Science or History. That popularization, if I were to teach the B.A. class or M.A. class, it will be pitched at different levels in terms of details and complexity of the argument being put forward. So a school textbook will differ on its assessment from your readings. That's not 'dumbing down' but a simplified History. A good historian will write a history that can be simplified at times but not simplistic. I will not write A caused this and this caused this, but try to bring in as many complexities as possible keeping in mind the ability of the recipient to absorb it. The question regarding the central government is a pertinent question because most schools are not with the central government. It is less than 10% of you students who read CBSE books. CBSE books might not be the best books. But if you go to states, that's where the most harm takes place. Bipan Chandra's books might not have been the most exciting of History books to read [what changed it was Romila Thapar and R.S. Sharma's books]. Of the new books, Political Science was really good, Sociology was good, but History I wasn't very happy with. It was all over the place, reading some of the books. Although the idea was good, getting the child to think. But state-sponsored books, don't think that everything outside the state is benign, they can be as bad as the State books or as good. Most of your students go to non-CBSE boards, they have nothing to do with CBSE; they might go to other boards. That is a false binary, where CBSE is the state. The non-state, might have biases of region and religion, give undue importance to states and they are not aware of what's happening in other regions. There'll be national history and your own state history taught. There'll be other biases depending on the people in power in the State. You can have the same problems faced by CBSE textbooks, in State syllabus and privately-produced textbooks also. I was part of an ICSE school, and we had the most horrible textbooks, our teacher prescribed V.D. Mahajan to us, in high school I thought he was a great historian! But a state-sponsored textbook need not be worse than a privately-produced textbook.

Q. Religion and politics usually use history as a tool. And this happens repeatedly, which is detrimental for many academic institutions. This un-credited use of history, sometimes borders on fabrications. How do you think can this be curbed today? Given the developments that have taken place recently, as a student of history, it would affect us to hear these biased or largely one-sided perspectives of history coming about.

Ans. *I think it is politics that uses history. And religion per se should not, because religion is not history. History as opposed to belief; that is, historical enquiry as in distinction from belief [should be considered in our perspective]. If I were to ask you if you believed in God, what would be your answer? (A member from the editorial board says yes, another says no) but, historically you cannot prove that [religion being history]. So, that is belief; that is faith- as opposed to history. So there is a distinction between history and faith and as long as that is maintained and recognized; I'm not a believer but for a believer like her (referring to the editorial board member who said that she was a believer); would be comfortable in a private faith and in pursuing an objective/ scientific/ professional historical enquiry, there won't be*

any conflict. But politics has used history and I think it should use history. What is politics? Politics is an attempt to either justify the kind of government and governance that you have at present or an attempt to change it. Let's say- if I'm in favour of whatever is happening today or the state as we have it, then I should be able to marshal history to support my support for the state. And if I want the state to change again, I will again go back to history. So history is an indispensable resource. The problem comes when history is wrongly interpreted. We are not saying that history should not be used. But historical research or history conclusions should be arrived at only by following commonly accepted methods of research. That is the only point.

Q. Doesn't Institutional History at times become a History of institutions?

Ans. *Yes, unfortunately. That's what I was trying to say. They become hagiographies sometimes. They become narratives of a particular institution. So, institutional history has become like regional history and it has played a very useful role; for instance you have depression in the world, how does it affect India? And within India how does it affect agriculture, how does it affect Bengal? Why does it not affect another place? Why does the 1857 revolt not spread the same way all over the country? So these specifics have to be taken into account and some kind of inter-textual analysis needs to take place so you should have an inter-institutional analysis, and look at the spaces between institutions also. So the institution should not always be seen vis-a-vis another institution but also through the non-institutional. It is not that with the institution everything is hunky dory and you can't do without the institution that is not true. If you have a bad institution it might not be helpful. But the very attitude to institutions becomes the culprit of the state. It's like looking at prices, prices themselves won't tell you anything but price increase at this time can tell other things. Therefore, the institutional decline while you have at the same time the growth of another competing institution will have a lot to tell you about the state at the time, about the institutions and the needs of the people at the time or popular demands of all including those of the dominating groups.*

Q. What do you think it would mean to history if we didn't have institutions like the ICHR?

Ans. *I don't think very great will be happening to people like us sitting in Delhi (in terms of its effects on academic research). But these institutions become much more important for a student or a researcher in a small town away from Delhi. Here you are in a good college in the centre of the city. You know people here; you know where to apply for a grant. Your teachers will help you; the college itself would have some connections. Whereas most people outside the metropolitan academic space do not have these privileges or advantages. So for them, they need money [and] university funding is going down everywhere. These are fund-giving institutions. These are scholarship-giving institutions. These are institutions that help people move out of their immediate colleges and universities. So to make Indian history more cosmopolitan, you need these institutions. For example I have never taken a grant from ICHR, but that doesn't mean that the ICHR isn't important, or, UGC for instance. That's another very important institution and through the UGC you control, [although] you should not be controlling the content of education but even that is happening. ICHR is a small institution but UGC is a huge institution; and its power going up can also be detrimental to other, competing institutions. So the university can be in a state of tension with the UGC, or a college might be in a state of tension with the university. As long as it is healthy tension and something [is] coming out of this conversation between institutions, it bodes well for*

academics. But if it becomes a turf war or if one trying to displace the other, assuming that they all have a purpose, then I think it's bad for research.

Q. When you talked about the protocol of History, a methodology that all institutions of History should agree to, do you think that all institutions will agree to the protocol? If this is a scientific methodology, don't all institutions already employ it?

Ans. *These are very general, basic things which all of us do. If I were to ask you, the causes of the revolt of 1857. What will you do? You might have a hypothesis, you might say first, that it was not caused by the greased cartridges but by the disruption and dislocation before 1857, that is your assertion or hypothesis. Then you will go find material to support the assertion. If you find material and if you are an honest historian you will say "My assertion is correct". But if you're dishonest you will ignore it, or you will manufacture evidence. Therefore, 'Diplomatics' becomes important [a church discipline engaged in checking the veracity of documents. It used to be a cause of some of the old universities]. They find whether these are forged documents dating back to the time. Anybody dealing with the past should do this. You consider fake till proved genuine. Very often you have examples like the British fortnightly report, that speaks of the Gundas coming and burning the police station but who is the Gunda? Therefore, you have to be able to read your source. The 'rebels' came and attacked the report says. Today they would mean the nationalists for you or the freedom-fighters, but for the colonial state they would see it differently as militants or terrorists. Look at the authenticity of the source and be strictly guided by your source and then go on to accept, reject, or modify your hypothesis. That is simple scientific method. If we use this we can still have differences of opinion but it would be a healthy difference of opinion, because the facts on the basis of which you're putting forward your view might be different from mine but there's nothing wrong in the use of these facts. No, all institutions don't use it. How can you say that there was plastic surgery or aeroplanes flying around in India in the ancient times? Now that is coming into a textbook, a state-sponsored textbook.*

Dinanath Batra is also a higher-education advisor in Haryana, so, that very clearly doesn't correspond to any source material. Now, you don't have to be a great historian to know that but you can't find sources to corroborate this assertion. That is the kind of popular history that is problematic. Or take Cynthia Talbot's essay, "Authenticity of Prithviraj Raso", it says that this historian comes along and says that it [Prithviraj Raso] is not authentic because it is written much later and is fabricated. The other historian says it is not. If we are engaging in this debate it's fine. Let a hundred schools of historical thought bloom, there is nothing wrong with that. But, it is only when I try to misrepresent and deviate from the protocol is when the problem begins.

National to Moral: A *Conversation on History with Dilip Simeon*

(Guest Interview, Maazi – O – Mustaqbil 2016)

Irandati Pal and Jhilam Roy

Q. Can we talk of a national history in a country like India which consists of motley of people with diverse ethnic, cultural, linguistic identities? Can we also assume that citizens of India do not really feel bonded to the nation and that there is no national identity as such and what we have are just attachments to particular regions and communities which are presumed to be splinters of a larger national identity?

Ans. *To answer the first part of the question I would say that, yes, we can talk of a national history of India, provided that you have a very inclusive view of national history. There is no harm in talking about national history as long as it is done with a certain amount of modesty, openness, and, with the knowledge that national history is not that of one particular group, but the evolution of many people into some consciousness. But it should be posed with modesty. It should not be defined by one group or one kind of ideology. Is it the nation which defines the people or is it the other way round? There is a Difference between liberal and imperial version of history. Each one has got a stake in providing his view to his nation's history. This is an inclusive and democratic view. People from various backgrounds think and come up with their respective views on national history. But, there is also an imperial version where the nation decides that only one dominant national history prevails and then forces it down upon people's imagination.*

[Answer to the second half of the question] See there are two different issues here. The question you are raising is that of the formation and dissolution of interest groups. There are only a few interest groups involved, it's not the entire people who are defined as this or that nation or nationality and to which people actually belong. Some people are defining and there are other people who are coming around to the definition. But these are separate issues, as to how identities are dissolved and formed. It's a question of interest, power and language. But, that's one issue. The other issue is that the concept of the nation itself is a product of modern institutions of nation-state. So nationalism became an important ideology during the French Revolution and when the French Revolution needed to define itself in antipathy to its enemies. So nationalism became a system of governance or nation became an ideology that accompanied the birth of the nation-state. So the history of nation-state is very important and it needs to be understood as a de facto, default concept, regardless of whether it fits or not. You use it because United Nations is called United Nations. The nation-state is the building block of the international committee of nations; and, whether the word is apposite or not, we still use it. We presume that nation-state is the home of a nation. This itself is a problem. It's a home of a nation, which, if it is presumed that the home of a nation is a homogeneous entity then, you are making some people belong and some people superfluous. So therefore the concept of India is a nation-state, whether it is a nation or not can be discussed. People view it in one way or another depending on their preferences but it

is a nation-state and it has a national Constitution which was worked out by some democratic process. Within it there are many groups and sub-groups that are arguing. The doctrine of nations and nationalism is a part of the Left-wing discourse which arose in the Russian Revolution but it isn't necessarily fitting into it. We should not use vocabulary that does not necessarily fit. We shouldn't use it and we should question it.

Q. There is a dearth of accessibility to archives and sources in our country. As a consequence of that, a student ends up getting only the historiography or an interpretation of events by some or the other scholar and not the actual reportage on the incident. Do you think that this gives a distorted version of history to the student?

Ans. *Yes it does. It isn't just the students who suffer from inaccessibility to records, even, researchers are not allowed. Some archives are available, some aren't. No kind of consistent archival policy is followed in India. In Anglo-American academies, archives are released out after some 30-40 years but we don't have that. Some papers are over 70 years old and this is not released at all. There are some documents in the C.I.D. office in Lucknow which are relevant to the Indian national movement but half of them were all lost in floods many years back. The remaining half is still very important for understanding the Indian national movement .it's important material but they won't release it.*

We don't have any respect for history. We are still treating it ideologically. It took so long to release the archives and documents on Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. In 2012, the Congress-led government was asked to release documents on Netaji and they refused by implying that it would lead to a threat to national security. What do you mean by national security? There are some papers related to Netaji in England. These papers clearly show that the right-hand man of Netaji, Bhagat Talwar was a C.I.D. agent, an informer to the British. Of course, a war was going on during this time and the British obviously utilised the information relayed to them by such secret informers. But why hide that now? After the collapse of the Soviet Union, important papers on Hitler were released and one scholar did a wonderful job of collecting this information and providing a new perspective to understanding Hitler and his policies. This was a great service to the public since it shed light on many things which were unknown previously. Yes, what we study is historiography and there are good as well as bad historiography. But, we need historiography to provide a structural framework for studying any event/incident because it isn't just possible to understand things just by using archival material and documents.

Q. Quoting Mr. Rajkamal Jha's statement, "If you don't understand a language, please get an interpreter", we would like you to share with us your viewpoint on the complete disregard shown to historians or for that matter, historical facts by the government and the general public in the context of historical interpretation, especially in the case of highly politicised, debatable and dramatic debacles such as the demolition of Babri Masjid.

Ans. *Well, this question relates to the place of history and historical thinking in politics. That's why my lecture today was on ideology. You choose and reject what you want as per your convenience. The Leftists have also done this. For many years, Lenin's view on Stalin was completely obliterated from public records..... So, various government and power structures use history as per their convenience, as per the ideological requirements of the day, but we cannot do our history keeping that in mind. We have to do our historical work as honestly as we can. Of course, what view the society makes of it depends on our skill and the*

level of receptivity on the part of the people. People pay no attention to what the historians have to say.

Q. How far does morality play its due role in everyday politics and social life? Can an incident or event or even the actions of people be put into the watertight confines of good and evil?

Ans. *Well, this is a world shattering question. You know when you talk of entire groups of people, of different classes of people and you attach moral categories to them, I think that is wrong that you kind of discharge the capacity of moral judgement by using general categories, for instance by saying that A is good, B is bad, because good and bad can be found in every human being and it doesn't have to be flattened like this. There are certain narratives which do away with or flatten our moral senses by including entire groups of people or even nations as good and bad. It can't be done. So it is a challenge to our moral sensibilities, and then of course, there is the age old question of distinction between good and bad and between good and evil. Now, I think that we can't do away with the concept of evil and sin and so on. And that is one thing that has got a place in theology, but it has got a place in theology because there is obviously something out there. We cannot just dismiss it because it is there in theology. Theology is something that has to be itself explained. So we might even argue that theology is the first definition of philosophy because there are certain metaphysical questions [in it], such as what is good and bad and what is just and unjust, or statements by saints and prophets such as Jesus, according to whom, it is better to suffer oneself than to inflict pain and sufferings on others. So people have been grappling with this question of good and bad and good and evil for a very long time and so it is obviously an aspect of the human predicament. We are just like that, we do that, and people have noticed it all over the world. There are some features of human existence which are common to all of us regardless of time, space, culture, so I feel that, to come back to the question of ideology today, ideology is used as sustenance.*

The natural human inclinations to make such categories and distinctions between good and bad and so on and so forth, is used by people as sustenance for political purposes so I believe that ideology should be for philosophical purposes and not for fulfilling some functions of yours. You want to justify some kind of hooliganism and you resort to this category of good and bad, and what you are doing is to provide the worst kind of fuel and that's why I said you may use history to convert evil into virtue. These questions are really big and cannot be answered off- hand but, you need to keep your moral sensibilities alive and we can do that only if we continue to talk. That's why truth and nonviolence are so important because if I have a conversation with you, even if I disagree violently with you, I should not be doing violence. Then only will I arrive at truth but if I don't allow dissent to exist or if I launch into a violent attack then that makes no sense of having a speech.

Q. How would you want students to read and perceive history?

Ans. *I want them to view history as a very wonderful and exciting story of the human race but also one which is full of pain and turmoil and something that will give them an opportunity to present time. History is always a means of locating ourselves in the present. When you look back in history and you see the tremendous amount of energy and human variety and human culture and thought it's staggering and exciting. You can be excited by history, you don't have to be depressed by it but you should always approach it with an open mind and not an ideological prison, because once you put yourself into a prison then you are in a compartment and then you automatically shut off the other voices that could actually*

enrich you. So you are simply impoverishing yourself, depriving yourself voluntarily. I want to make it very concrete, I was within the Marxist- communist tradition and, we didn't read people like Hannah Arendt or Albert Camus or Leo Strauss because they weren't Marxists but everybody does not fit into these categories and they may still have something to say. Our approach to Gandhi is like this. We feel so suspicious that Gandhi is a [advocate of] Sanathan- Dharma, so there are a whole lot of people who identify themselves with atheism and so on, and I feel that it isn't necessary. In any case atheism itself is an awfully debatable issue but whatever it is you should not dismiss somebody because he was religious. So, even the question of communalism can be linked to religiosity, there are some people who are completely religious but secular and then there are irreligious people who are communal. There is no direct link. I recommend students to read Gandhi's works, primarily Volume. 90 of Gandhi's collected works, which is available in the Gandhi Heritage portal in the Internet, in Gujarati and Hindi, and read the last few weeks of his life, and you will find something in it that is completely relevant even in present times. So that is something very concrete that I'm telling you. It's so relevant and vibrant and you should read it.

Natyashastra: A Treatise on Society?

Sahitya Poonacha and Mayurpankhi Choudhury

The Natyashastra, a treatise on dance and drama is an inclusive yet exclusive text. While it allows a wide range of people to read the text, it does not believe in or propagate an inclusive society. It gives us a vivid insight into life in the society of 200 BCE to 200 CE, a deeply reflective text that is a work of Brahmanical dominance, an example of a text used by the Brahmanas to propagate their ideal of what a society should be like.

"He who always hears the reading of this Sastra which is auspicious, sportful, originating from Brahman's mouth, very holy, pure, good, destructive of sins, and who puts this into practice or witnesses the performance will attain the same goal which masters of the Vedic path and the masters of the Vedic lore, the performance of sacrifices or the givers of gifts attain"- says Bharata as he concludes his narration.

This paper seeks to analyse the treatise as reflection of the society it was written for and the ideas of the people it was written by.

The *Natyashastra* is said to be written between 200 BCE and 200 CE by renowned scholars, attributed to Bharata Muni as a treatise on drama and dance. The perceived writer Bharat Muni covers the entire Indian subcontinent in all directions almost in an effort to create an all-pervasive and inclusive text. Maybe the author[1] was working for the propagation of Dharma and Brahmanical ideas and found this one way to unify all the people to create their stronghold. The *Natyashastra* had a wide reach.[2] It is considered the fifth Veda to primarily give it Brahmanical sanction. We must remember, the text was composed around a time when the Varna order had come into full swing, but it would do good to know that the texts of the Brahmanas applied in theory but questionably in practice.

The portrayal of caste in the *Natyashastra*, proves exactly how segregated the society was during the time period. When asked why the text was written by his disciples Bharata muni, replies that people had become unrighteous[3]. All the gods and celestial beings who accepted Indra as their head approached Brahman asking for a text accessible to the Sudras as well.[4] This inclusive characteristic of the *Natyashastra* doesn't reflect the inclusive character of society at the time. The purpose of the *Natyashastra* or the effect it had on society was to be such that it would shape a good member of society.[5]

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[1] The *Natyashatra* may have been a work of a body of authors as the text spans a vast number of years

[2] Places mentioned include; Anta, Andhra, Odra, Kalinga, Kosala, Tosala, Tripura, Magadha, Madraka, Sindhu, Ganga and Himalaya, etc.

[3] "*…. people became addicted to sensual pleasures, were under the sway of desire and greed, became infatuated with jealousy and anger, and thus found their happiness mixed with sorrow….*"

[4] "*….We want an object of diversion, which must be audible as well as visible. As the vedas aren't to be listened to by those born as Sudras, be pleased to create another veda which will belong to all the colour-groups"* Manmohan Ghosh, " Origin of Drama", *The Natyashastra: A Treatise on Dramatology and Histrionics*, 1950, pp. 2-3

[5] "*…..Teaches duty to those bent on doing their duty, love to those who are eager for its fulfilment, chastises those who are ill-bred, promotes self-restraint in the disciplined, gives courage to cowards…..*" M. Ghosh, op.cit., pp. 2-3

The *Natyashastra* states that it is written for everybody, and its wide reach attests to its pervasive quality. Bharata though, is sceptical of the text being accessible. Abhinava Gupta[1] observantly points to the usage of the word 'loka' most probably referring to the people of a 'desa' and concludes that the text may have been written for the people living in the *Janapadas.*[2] The audience of the plays Bharata Muni elaborately describes as comprising all sections of society, but still prefers if the audience of the plays were made up of any people except Sudras for their lack of knowledge of dramatic art.

Every ritual and every activity including the construction of the playhouse was to be ratified by the Brahmanas, these processes were a ritual in itself[3].He uses the word 'undesirable' to describe the following people: heretics, Sramanas[4]and those who had physical defects. He uses the word 'men' for Sramanas and physically handicapped people, so we can't tell whether the women belonging to these groups didn't attend the proceedings. Moreover, plays were usually divided into '*ankas*' in order to pertain to the time constraints of rulers.

Four pillars are raised on the site, one for each caste in various directions. During the ceremony, gold is thrown at the foot of the Brahmin pillar, silver at the foot of the Kshatriya pillar, copper at the foot of the Vaisya pillar and iron at the foot of the Sudra pillar. For the puja and the construction to go well, Bharata insists that it is necessary that the Brahmins be pleased with a variety of items like jewels, cows and clothes showing patronization. Bharata remembers to warn the people about the consequences of not following the rules of consecration, which is that they will be reborn as an animal of the lower order. Whether this refers to the lower castes, thereby calling the lower castes 'animals' or if it refers to a 'lowly' animal isn't clear.

There were four original sentiments, the Erotic, Furious, Heroic and Odious, out of which the eight types arise which Bharata talks about. One of them is the **Comic** sentiment[5]. He distinguishes the laughter according to caste where the Aryans were said to have possessed a 'slight smile or a smile'. Middlings[6] and women were said to possess a laughter of ridicule while vulgar or excessive laughter was associated with the inferiors or lower castes. **Disgust**[7], **Apprehension**[8] and **Sorrow**[9] only pertained to women and inferiors. **Energy** was attributed to superior castes[10]. Behaviours of specific castes while being **Intoxicated** (State of drunkenness) is also categorized[11]. The various castes experience different levels of intoxication too[12].

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[1] Abhinava Gupta- Commentator on the *Natyshastra*.

[2] *Janapadas*- refers to urban centres of the times.

[3] Even before the play starts in the chapter 'Preliminaries of the play' the blessing and the approval of the kings and the Brahmanas is sought. The pujas are conducted by the Brahmanas, the playhouse is constructed only when the Brahmanas are satisfied and the Brahmanas are also shown to be powerful beings to be addressed as the 'Noble one'.

[4] Sramanas- non-Vedic people part of an upstart parallel to the Vedic tradition

[5] Comic sentiment describes various types of laughter

[6] Middlings signify the Vaisya community

[7] Disgust is caused by seeing unpleasant things, attached to women and inferiors

[8] Apprehension is generated by acts of robbery, theft and offending superiors; the kings and Brahmans, attached to women and inferiors

[9] Bharata says "*Sorrow relates to women, persons of the inferior type….*", "*Persons of the superior and the middling types are distinguished by their patience and those of the inferior type by their weeping*" M. Ghosh, op.cit., pp. 110-147

[10] Superiors- the Kings, Princes and Brahmanas

[11] Superiors would sleep, the Middlings would laugh and sing and inferiors would cry or use hot words

[12] Superiors are associated with light intoxication, medium intoxication is characteristic of the Middlings and excessive intoxication is associated with the inferior people.

That Bharata thought that amongst humans there would be a difference in the way each human expressed his emotions on stage or in reality according to caste or gender is largely created by the teaching and the strict order that he saw in his society. In reality if someone wasn't consumed in their tradition and would admit to themselves, the superior, middling, inferior and women would all laugh the same way over similar topics and express their emotions as humans not as a Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya, Sudra or a woman.

Positions and postures were an important aspect of drama and Bharata explains how Kings and Brahmanas would stand and how the Middlings and Sudras would stand too[1]. What this tells us, isn't of what the actors were doing on stage but it gives us a reflection of what was actually happening in society. It isn't necessary that that's how kings and Brahmas held themselves in society but Bharata made it so to patronize them and praise them. Separately he describes the gaits of ministers, ascetics, merchants, blind men. Those of the lower castes would have eyes moving to different objects and should always have his head or hands bent. One should also keep in mind that many of these postures may be exaggerated due to the requirements of such performances, solely to create a better effect on stage, but it seems less so.

The particular chapter in the *Natyashastra* regarding costumes and make-up[2] is very reflective of the society at its time Manomohan Ghosh believed so too. In the sense, that it aims to project the people as they looked in their daily existence, which tells us a great deal of what went into making that person appear as he did in society. There is a great deal of emphasis on the different regions and the stratification of society. Artists were to wear certain colours and also be painted a certain colour to make identification of characters easier on stage. Each caste from different regions wore specific colours[3]Manomohan Ghosh says[4] that sometimes those with the same complexion would be represented by the same colours but this hardly explains certain categorizations[5]. It is true that most of these get ups would have been exaggerations to emphasise certain points amidst these descriptions though we also find the mention of foreigners and the dressing manners of Buddhists. This might prove that even though they subscribed to the Brahmanical approval the authors or author of the text is aware of parallel traditions contemporary to their time.

The distribution of roles as a chapter that tells us that only certain people could be selected to play certain roles. While discussing how situations and people are supposed to be represented he also talks of how characters are to be represented. There are certain types of characters[6] that are typically represented in a play; a superior male who would possess certain qualities of control, wisdom, skill, etc.[7]. Similarly a superior female would be represented[8]. A middling male would be seen subordinate to his superior[1]. A female

[1] Those playing superior and Middling characters, had to ensure that their chests were raised (Vaishnava Sthana), shoulders at rest (Sama and Caturasa), the neck as graceful as that of a peacock, and it goes on further.
[2] M.Ghosh,op.cit., p. 424
[3] "*...Brahmins and Kshatriyas should be always made red and Vaisyas and Sudras dark or deep blue in complexion*" ibid., p. 426
[4] Ibid, footnote 1, p. 425
[5] "*Those who practice vile acts, possessed of evil spirits, diseased or engaged in penance and do not perform sacrifices and are inferior in birth should be made brown"* Ibid., p. 424
[6] M. Ghosh, op.cit., pp. 527-552
[7] Superior male- controlled in his sense, wise, skilled in arts and crafts, honest, expert in enjoyment, consoles the poor, versed in the Sastras, grave, liberal, patient and munificent.
[8] Superior female- tender nature, not fickle or cruel, speaks smilingly, obedient to her superiors, bashful, good mannered, has physical charm, high birth and natural qualities, grave and patient

wouldn't have all the superior female's qualities, she'd possess them but with many flaws. An inferior male was supposed to be harsh, unintelligent, violent and murderous[2]. A female of inferiority would be similar to her male counterpart. 'Inferior' castes only had the option of playing an inferior character while superior castes had options[3].

Nayaka (the hero) and *Nayika* (the heroine) are the protagonists in *Natyashastra. Nayikas* have been classified into 384 types on the basis of their age, characteristics, behaviour and their position in love affairs; similar to those in *Manusmriti.*[4]

The 25th chapter of the *Natyashastra* describes three kinds of women:-*Uttama, Madhyama* and the *Adhama* women. The *Uttama* women are shown to have high tolerance level, are adroit in the strategies of Kamatantra and are highly desired by men for their fertility. They are the women of the superior nature. The *Madhyama* women or middle women are shown to be jealous and malevolent characters who are proud and short tempered but can be pacified quickly. The *Adhamma* women are degenerate women who get angry without a cause and are inherently ill natured. The *Uttama* women most probably belonged to the Brahmin family, the *Madhyama* were the high caste women of the society and the lower caste women were the *Adhamma.* One can thus note the patriarchal notions seeping in through the Brahmanical compositions. It remains a high probability that women who didn't conform to the social norms or questioned them were deemed as *Adhamma.*

In the 24th chapter of *Natyashastra*, 8 kinds of women are categorized. One of these kind of women is *Khandita* which means broken. She is described as a woman whose husband is engaged with the "other women". But why does Bharata Muni call her broken? The answer can be sought in another classification. *Swadhinbhartrika* is an independent woman, whose husband lives with her because of sexual attraction and never looks at other women. Hence, a woman is only complete with her man. *Virhotkanthita, Kalahantarika, Vipralabdhaare* all aspiring for a *Nayaka*, in their life. The classification of women is not done according to their productive roles. They have been given a secondary position according to their relations with their male counterpart. Domestication of women is set in the mental scope of the audience. A women is basically living under the patronage of a man be it her husband or her lover.

The 25th chapter grants men full freedom to synchronize women's sexual sphere through the use of power (both, physical and economic) and violence. It follows the lines of *Kamatantra* and *Manusmriti*[5], providing *Saam, Pradan, Bheda* and *Danda* as a legal and valid medium to exploit women according to men's desire. Control over women's sexuality emerges as an important aspect. The author seems to be aware of women's contribution to

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[1] Middling male-an expert in dealing with people, well-versed in books on arts and crafts and sastras, wise, possesses sweetness

[2] Using harsh words, ill-mannered, of small intelligence, irascible, violent, able to kill his friend, able to kill anyone cruelly, treacherous, haughty in his words, ungrateful, indolent, an expert in insulting honoured persons, covetous for women, fond of quarrel, doer of evil deeds and a stealer of others' property

[3] Only a slave would play a slave, but a middling would never play a slave.

[4] It is the earliest metrical work on Brahmanical Dharma in Hinduism; records the words of Brahma. It states a divine code of conduct for all women. For instance while talking about the love affairs of women it quotes "Swabhavevnarinam ….." It is the nature of women to seduce men in this world; "Uchayangh..." Wise men should marry only women who are free from bodily defects, with beautiful names, grace/gait like an elephant, moderate hair on the head and body, soft limbs and small teeth.

[5] It is recommended in the chapter V-164, VVI-371 of *Manusmriti* that, in case a women, proud of the greatness of her excellence or her relatives, violates her duty towards her husband, the King shall arrange to have her thrown before dogs at a public place.

patriarchy. Any occasion for protest is quelled and women are made to act as agents of patriarchy.

The whole notion of "femininity" and "masculinity" also surfaces in the *Natyashastra*. While expressing different emotions; there is clear distinction of male and female expressions of joy, love, hatred and so on. For instance, fear by a *Nayika* is to be expressed by moving of eyeballs, throbbing and shaking limbs, glancing sideways out of fear, looking for someone to rescue them, weeping loudly and putting their arms round the man. But a man in a similar situation cannot seek refuge in a woman. A *Nayaka* is supposed to express fear by expressing consternation, slowly letting go of the women or by looking distraught or worried. Similarly, anger in women is expressed by tearful eyes, touching of the chin and the lips, shaking of the head, knitting of the eye-brows, keeping silent, curling of the fingers, leaving of garlands and ornaments and assuming the *Ayata* posture[1]. A *Nayaka*, if angry is allowed to resort to violent means. A woman was expected to be the epitome of grace and tenderness. Even her exhibit of anger is not supposed to be filled with aggression.

A typical heroine, she is to be endowed with a good physical form, youth and strength; she should be tender and charming and must have a lovely voice - conversant with tempo (*laya*) and time (*tala*) and sentiments. In contrast women who have been barred from acting smile on wrong occasions, have violent gaits, are haughty and unruly in their manners and are suffering from diseases. Women's body is supposed useful in the cultural form like theatre. Bharata Muni supposed feminine or patriarchal meters as requirement for being an actress. Thus, by showing the icon of women in the form of an actress, he upheld the ideal patriarchal image and impression of the woman in the cultural mind set of masses.

The *Natyashastra* however cannot be taken up as a historical text for study of women's condition in ancient India due to its inherent shortcomings. It portrays dramatics as a respectful occupation when this may not have been the reality. Except a widow and a *Nayika*, no high caste women were allowed to step out of their houses after sunset. This was because the *Nayika* needed to travel with her theatre group; she has been looked down upon by society at large.

Moreover, the text remains silent about the caste of the *Nayakas* and the *Nayikas*. While it becomes apparent that high caste women were barred from acting there is no mention of the caste of *Nayikas* playing the role of high caste women on stage. The *Purusa Sukta*[2] of the *Rig Samhita* codifies the caste system as divine in nature. This makes it improbable that low caste women in ancient India were given the liberty to act as high caste women onstage. Moreover being part of a theatre group would require constant interaction and social contact with other members of the group as well. The *Natyashastra* is assigned the date of composition somewhere between 200 BCE to 200 CE. Considering the fact that untouchability in India predates this time period, it is possible that lower caste women were barred from the profession completely because they didn't adhere to the persona of a typical *Nayika*. The non-Aryan groups are attributed with many degenerative terms in the Vedas like the flat nosed, dark skinned and people who speak inferior language. Perhaps Bharata Muni while framing the notion of an ideal *Nayika* kept in mind the characteristics of the lower caste women as they didn't fit the mould of "feminine beauty".

[1] Standing in Chaturasra bending the knees slightly and obliquely and keeping a distance of Vitasati between the two feet

[2] The 10th mandala, hymn 90 of the *Rigveda* is dedicated to the Purusha, the "Cosmic Being". The different castes in the varna system emerged from different parts of Purusha. From his mouth, arms, thighs and feet, the four varna systems are born.

Bharata thus manages to describe society to us with great precision and detail. Unintended or intended, still remains a question. But it gives us an idea of the various castes and the status of women, how they were perceived and of the deep-rooted ideology of the caste system that had been drilled into the brains of the people.

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A Derelict Assignee?

Jhilam Roy

A political list reserving a fatal expense for the over – matched. A King's lust against his Queen's plea – bargain to reduce charges of obloquy and death. With the verdict hanging on whimsical malice and royal injustice. Legend assigns Anne Boleyn, the most infamous of the Henrician Consorts, a letter written in imprisonment, thirteen days before a French sword silted her "little neck" on 19th May, 1536. The letter addressed to King Henry VIII, bore the tragic conclusion of her short life and even shorter reign, giving an insight into those convictions concerning her downfall that she carried to the grave. The purpose of this paper is to review the nature and denotation of the text: was it devised to guarantee slaughter or mercy? Was it an outrageous condemnation of legal sanctity or a voiceless bow to the virility of corrupted power? What could have been its applicability – successfully solicitous or woefully derelict? Or was it a four – hundred and eighty year old living testimony to the phase – Death and Life are in the power of the tongue?

Sir,

Your Grace's displeasure and my imprisonment are things so strange unto me that what to write or what to excuse I am altogether ignorant. Whereas you send onto me (willing me to confess a truth and so obtain your favor) by such a one whom you know to be mine ancient professed enemy. I no sooner received this message by him than I rightly conceived your meaning; and if confessing a truth indeed may procure my safety, I shall with all willingness and duty perform your command. But let not your Grace imagine that your poor wife will ever be brought to acknowledge a fault where not so much as a thought ever proceeded. And to speak a truth, never a prince had wife more loyal in all duty and in all affection, than you have ever found in Anne Bulen; with which name and place I could willingly have contended myself, if God and your Grace's pleasure had so been pleased. Neither did I at any time so far forget myself in my exaltation, or received queenship, but that I always looked for such alteration as I now find. For the ground of my preferment being on no surer foundation than your Grace's fancy, the least alteration was fit and sufficient (I knew) to draw the fancy to some other subject.

You have chosen me from a low estate to be your queen and companion, far beyond my desert or desire; if then you found me worthy of such honor, good your Grace, let not any light fancy or bad council of my enemies withdraw your princely favor from me; neither let that stain, that unworthy stain, of a disloyal heart towards your good Grace ever cast so foul a blot on me and on the infant Princess, your daughter.

Try me, good King, but let me have a lawful trial, and let not my sworn enemies sit as my accusers and as my judges; yea, let me receive an open trial, for my truth shall fear no open shame. Then shall you see either my innocence cleared, your suspicions and conscience satisfied, the ignominy and slander of the world stopped, or my guilt openly declared. So that, whatever God and you may determine of, your Grace may be freed from an open censure; and mine offence being so lawfully proved, your Grace

may be at liberty, both before God and man, not only to execute worthy punishment on me as an unfaithful wife, but to follow your affection already settled on that party, for whose sake I am now as I am, whose name I could some good while since have pointed to, your Grace being not ignorant of my suspicion therein.

But if you have already determined of me, and that not only my death but an infamous slander must bring you the joying of your desired happiness, then I desire of God that He pardon your great sin herein, and likewise my enemies, the instruments thereof, and that He will not call you to a strait account for your unprincely and cruel usage of me at His general judgment seat, where both you and myself must shortly appear, and in Whose just judgment I doubt not (whatsoever the world may think of me) mine innocency shall be openly known and sufficiently cleared.

My last and only request shall be that myself only may bear the burden of your Grace's displeasure, and that it may not touch the innocent souls of those poor gentlemen whom, as I understand, are likewise in strait imprisonment for my sake. If ever I have found favor in your sight, if ever the name of Anne Bulen have been pleasing in your ears, then let me obtain this request; and so I will leave to trouble your Grace any further, with mine earnest prayer to the Trinity to have your Grace in His good keeping and to direct you in all your actions.

From the doleful prison in the Tower, the 6th May,
Your most loyal and ever – faithful wife,
Anne Bulen.[1]

High Treason. Incest. Adultery. Witchcraft.

Against these most heinous crimes of mankind, for over four centuries stood this poor solitary attorney whose dereliction cost its client her honour and life.

Allegedly drafted by the hand of the first infamously executed Queen of England on May 6, 1536 at the Beauchamp Tower (Tower of London): this letter known to history as the "[letter] To the King from the Lady in the Tower"[2] – was the decisive testimony of Anne Boleyn, soliciting her and her fellow convicts' innocence and acquittal, in conflated notes of condemnation, excoriation and mendicancy; before that historic trial in English History that would escort a Queen to a traitor's scaffold, for her appointment with the French swordsman. Unfortunately, to the authority it was commemorated, it appeared as *belles-lettres* – one of the many infelicitous genres woven by a perfidious quill, in anticipation of

[1]Note the repeated use of the Anglo – Saxon equivalent of the word 'Boleyn' (origin: Gallicized surname 'de Boulaine') – 'Bulen'. Anne usually styled herself as 'Anne Boleyn' – hence this signature is inconsistent with her style. Also at the time of writing the letter, she was still Queen of England and it would have been customarily expected of her to sign herself as 'Queen Anne', which she did not. See Gareth Russell, *May 6, 1536: The Mystery of the Queen's Letter* (Source: blogspot.com post, Confessions of a Ci-Devant, Thursday, May 6, 2010). The original draft, however, had the use of the equivalent 'Bullen'. This article uses the excerpt in Lord Herbert's publication of the original letter (quoted in Alison Weir, *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn* [London, 2010]) and substitutes the 'Bullen' for 'Bulen' for referential convenience.

[2] The title heading the letter was in Thomas Cromwell's handwriting. The original letter was supposedly found with Sir William Kingston's letters, lying among Lord Cromwell's other papers in 1540. The original draft (Cotton MS. Otho CX 228), though damaged in a 1731 fire, is currently housed in the Cotton MSS of the British Library. See Alison Weir, *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn* (London, 2010).

justice against foul certitudes and hence its very purpose – the final plea against a fatal deal of deception– was indulgently bypassed. However, so disputed was its content that since its maiden publication in 1649[1], it has become the nuclei of an ever raging controversy, dampening even the intensity of the embroilment associated with first class polemic cases such as the *Donatio Constanti*, the Shroud of Turin, Shakespeare's Lost Play, etc.

Anne Boleyn. The second and probably the best known of the six tragic wives of the notorious Henry VIII, she is subject to veneration and censure by historical scholarship as the "only cause of banishing the Beast of Rome with all its beggarly baggage"[2] from England and the aggressive patroness of a revolution as far reaching as the English Reformation. An outstanding intellect eloquent in several tongues as well as "a brutal and effective politician"[3], Anne was the first English Queen to step outside the threshold of royal domesticity and serve as the King's fellow aviator in steering the Tudor state toward the reformed good of Anglican modernization, away from the decaying and deterrent clogs of conservative Roman Catholicism. Nevertheless, the seat of her affection in her husband and her subjects rested on her ability to produce a male heir – the sole mission wherein she dismally failed. Moreover, for all her progressive doings, her supplanting of Katherine of Aragon as the Queen Consort and her truculent treatment of the Princess Mary earned her the wrath of the prominent factions of the nobility, for whom her term of 'Reformation' had always been synonymous to sinful heresy. After a woeful obstetric career involving a daughter, a deformed stillborn and two miscarriages, she was sent to the Tower of London (with her five alleged lovers[4]) to be discarded and killed on the flimsiest of evidences. Four centuries later her crimes, even if negligently scrutinized, would betray their origins in "accusations rather than convictions"[5]. Indeed, modern historians including Eric Ives, David Starkey, and Alison Weir and alike believe that Anne Boleyn's downfall was the tale of a *coup d'état* designed to thaw her ominous manipulations of the King's conscience, by the exploitation of His Majesty's darkest dread: a vain dynastic ambition!

But was the nobility solely to suffer the blame in this affair? What part did the lusting King of England play in the overthrow of the barren 'whore' of a wife; he became so exhausted of after her deplorable birth record? Did he instruct his Lord Secretary Cromwell to fabricate evidence to get rid of Anne so that he could marry the fresh fertility of Jane Seymour? Or did Cromwell construct a case against the Boleyn faction to persuade the King of the treachery of his wicked advisors? Or was Anne, in reality, guilty as charged?[6] Her last letter

[1]Lord Herbert, The Life and Raigne of King Henry VIII (1649). See Alison Weir,*The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn* (London, 2010). Other sources include G. Smeeton, *The Life and Death of Anne Bullen, Queen Consort of England*(Britain, 1820); and J.S. Brewer, J. Gairdner, R.H. Brodie, ed., *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII (1862 – 1932)*(Britain, 1862*)*. See Claire Ridgeway, http://www.TheBoleynFiles.com

[2]John Almer.

[3]David Starkey, *Six Wives: The Queens of Henry VIII* (London, 2003).

[4]Viscount Rochford (George Boleyn, Anne's brother), Sir Henry Norris (Groom of the Stool), Sir Francis Weston and Sir William Brereton (two gentlemen of the Privy Chamber), and Mark Smeaton (a Flemish musician and a Groom of the Privy Chamber). All were executed on May 17, 1536. Others imprisoned on suspicion of adultery with the Queen were the poet, Sir Thomas Wyatt (Privy councillor and diplomat) and Sir Richard Page (vice- chamberlain to the Duke of Richmond, Henry VIII's bastard son); but they escaped persecution and were acquitted.

[5]Philip Melanchthon, unquoted.

[6]Alison Weir, *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn* (London, 2010).

puts her in an ambiguous light, i.e., of a person who had perhaps known the answer to all these mysteries, either by hindsight or court gossip, but did not confess timely enough to reveal her knowledge. Given that scholars[1] have disputed over the authenticity of the letter – "the handwriting[2] and style alike indicated beyond reasonable doubt that this letter was not really written or composed by Anne Boleyn"[3] – many have questioned the authorship and the purpose of this *opus* in Anne's trial and execution of 1536. The verdict on the nature of its service thus stands dubious: was it meant to magnify the popularly abhorred insolent spirit of a Queen[4] and in the process drive an outraged Henry to ruthlessly butcher her or was it scribbled by a distraught and hapless woman, desperately petitioning for her very existence? Is this letter really the derelict assignee it is thought to be or is it, in fact the silent triumphant page of its alleged petitioner's death sentence?

Provided that the letter was suspiciously found amongst Cromwell's possession, either it was his handicraft to seal Anne's fate or that it was intercepted before it reached the Sovereign to plead for a reprieve. After Anne's execution, the King and his court, with barbarous alacrity, turned their back on the past; making Anne Boleyn the taboo that never should have existed. Her portraits were taken down or burned and the mention of her very name was banned: in such hostile circumstances Cromwell's preservation of her last letter would obviously stand out. The Lord Secretary was the Queen's "ancient professed enemy"[5] – why would he think that it was desirable to keep a letter from Anne protesting her innocence?[6] Or why would he give the letter of an accused traitor such a poetically romantic title? Either the writing was of great significance to the Tudor State or sentiments might have been at work: he had climbed to power with the aid of Anne and now had to destroy her in order to retain that power. It was the least justice he could do to the memory of the person who gave him his silk-stocking! The disappointing conclusion that the letter never made it to Henry's hand leaves the modern reader in much speculation about what might have happened, had Henry VIII, in person, made the effort to revisit his cooled 'Grand Passion' in the Tower and hear her reticent alarm. Probably the climax would have as apocalyptic as the one that followed after Richard Burton sojourned *a la* Genevieve Bujold in Anne of the Thousand Days. All, from Anne's arrest to execution was conducted with such celerity by Cromwell that Henry's sympathizers contend that the Kind didn't have the amenity to change his mind and grant pardon to the woman he once valued, sufficiently to change the face of England.

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[1].i.e., Herbert, Agnes Strickland, J. Gairdner, Friedmann, Sergeant, etc.

[2]Savage, ed., *Love Letters of Henry VIII.* It is just possible that on 6 May, four days after her arrest, she was too agitated to write it herself and dictated it to someone else (quoted in Alison Weir, *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn*[London, 2010]). Hence, the discrepancy between the handwriting in this letter and the one in her authenticated letters.

[3]J. Gairdner, ed., *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII (1862 – 1932).* In his view, it is written decades later in an Elizabethan hand (quoted in Alison Weir, *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn* [London, 2010]). The injunction might be correct – the letter, its content so inconsistent with Anne's handwriting and style, could be an emotional forgery scripted in an Elizabethan classroom.

[4]J. Gairdner, ed., *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII (1862 – 1932).* He opines that the letter 'bears all the marks of Anne's character of her spirit, her impudence and her recklessness' (quoted in Alison Weir, *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn* [London, 2010]).

[5]See excerpt.

[6]Alison Weir, *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn* (London, 2010).

The letter effectively summarizes how Anne herself saw her downfall: a political coup staged by a passel of power – gourmand counsellors at the instigation of a lecherous husband to satisfy each other's purpose: the latter's to marry her handmaid and the former's to neutralize a politically interfering Queen and her cause of Reformation. Investigation, spying, bribery and invention did the rest[1]. Her estimation was correct.

For some time, a notion existed that Henry VIII had Anne and her associates executed in fear that Catholic Europe would turn against him with arms for pursuing heresy under their influence. Undeniably, the Boleyn faction had been the most prominent servants of the English Reformation – an essence that endeared them to the English King whilst enraging those temperamentally inclined to Roman Catholicism, presumably the Tudor Court and the whole of Europe. The wave of arrest of the members of Anne's innermost circle[2] and the blocking of their access to the King drew the teeth of the reformist heretics; in fact, the executions of May 1536 made sure that the Boleyn faction was never allowed to recover its balance and by the end of the month, it was effectively dismantled to pave the way for the rising stars of the Henrician court, the Seymours. Knowing that the eradication of her faction would halt her much cherished process of Reformation Anne reasonably asked Henry to spare the leaders particularly four of her 'lovers' who were "in strait imprisonment for [her] sake"[3] – a request he didn't comply with. Yet, miserably for the cuckolded King and her Catholic enemies, their slanderous heretic Queen had the last laugh. The clients she had promoted would remain to hold and consolidate a bridgehead for the Protestant religion in England[4]. In a cruel twist of irony, Anne Boleyn would leave behind her heritage in her daughter Elizabeth I, whose ascendancy in 1558 would not only reinforce the Boleyn blood but also its reformist tendencies to the Tudor throne: the potency of this rejuvenated Boleyn legacy, stronger than the initial surge, would chisel perpetually the condemned Faith of a condemned Queen in the heart of country that so condemned them.

However, Anne's injured, pious and reproving tone[5] made sure that Henry showed her little mercy. "Every word is a sting, envenomed by a sense of intolerable wrong."[6] In asserting she was in the Tower on account of her enemies and Jane Seymour and that her queenship had no 'surer foundation' than Henry's 'fancy'[7] – she was accusing him of fickleness. Her suggestion that he had already determined her death so he could marry Seymour was tantamount to insulting Royal Justice and an implication that Anne would be sent to the scaffold without a proper trial. Historians doubt this tone of psychological inconstancy – at such an extreme juncture, she was to reign in her sharp tongue in the interests of ameliorating his displeasure[8]; instead she aggravated him. Why?

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[1]E.W. Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* (United Kingdom, 2005).
[2]All those arrested with the exception of Anne's Ladies in Waiting, Duke of Wiltshire (Thomas Boleyn, her father), Lady Rochford (George Boleyn's wife), Duke of Norfolk (Thomas Howard, her uncle), Matthew Parker and Archbishop Cranmer of Canterbury.
[3]See excerpt.
[4] E.W. Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* (United Kingdom, 2005).
[5] Alison Weir, *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn* (London, 2010).
[6] Agnes Strickland.
[7] Gareth Russell, *May 6, 1536: The Mystery of the Queen's Letter* (Source: blogspot.com post, Confessions of a Ci- Devant, Thursday, May 6, 2010).
[8] Alison Weir, *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn* (London, 2010).

Semper Eadem, 'always the same' was after all, Anne's motto[1]. From the very beginning, she was a powerful but unpopular outspoken Queen, defiant in her beliefs and audacious in her enterprises. She had never been the waxen wife of conventional expectation, to be moulded or impressed at her husband's will[2]. Accustomed to unhesitant speech, even to public upbraiding of the King, she displayed the same ardour in her final days. Battered by the demoralization and fragmentation of a prisoner under constant and unsympathetic scrutiny, as well as driven by her sense of injury, Anne might have let her thoughts flow, unchained, into the erudite petition. In her compos mentis or haste, she might have overlooked the fact that her pleas would fall into the deaf ears of a different Henry, much altered by the seductive promises of the Cromwell faction and his own capacity of self – pity. Nonetheless, her sharp wit had somehow gathered the new inimical constitution of his disposition towards her– for which she remitted the usual lavish title or any term of endearment that might be expected of a Queen while addressing her King Consort; and began her letter with the appellation of "Sir", that was reserved for the commons to designate the King.

Yet, at the end of the letter, she took to humility and dropped her cynical note out of – Convention? Religion? Circumstances? The metaphor is clearly visible – a condemned traitor being stopped midway by the clergy or the sheriff, while delivering his farewell scaffold speech because it had content defamatory to the State. The text is the evidence of the 'blot of accusation' that had defiled her mind, prior to her trial. It couldn't have been guilt for she omitted, till her dying breath, to say she deserved death for the crimes alleged against her. Nor, was it a vulnerable resignation to her doomed fate. Keeping in mind that Anne was the source of her family's prospects as well as the shield that protected the infant princess from the opposition that shrouded her since birth, she could be seen making a frantic attempt to wheel her associates away from the jeopardized future that was being contracted by her condemnation. Her death was impending and being the accountable woman she had been all her life, this draft was a silent supplication that the King's personal displeasure against her would not manifest itself in the treatment of those intimately yoked to her in person and patronage. Indeed, convention and religion demanded of men facing eminent divine judgment to forgive and repent – railing against injustice was unacceptable[3]. Here, Anne followed both rubrics, albeit against her better judgment, as it would be Elizabeth who would suffer from the luxury of defying the King and his supposed Justice[4].

This was not the only instance where she would act threatened with the behest prescribed for a traitor. In the letter, Anne professed her faith on the apotheosis of Tudor law while discrediting its executors. Her writing mirrored the personal confliction of a reformist Queen against that obsolete part of the Law of the Land that incessantly upheld the Crown's case to be unassailable. It was a laudable prophesy made ten days prior to her fictitious trial, where her "'accusers' would sit as her 'judges'"[5], delivering a formal approval of a death warrant signed afore by an adulterous husband. A stabbing verity de novo! The convicted Queen, however, would be seen praising the Justice redeemed to her, in her dying speech –

[1] E.W. Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* (United Kingdom, 2005).
[2] *Ibid*.
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] See excerpt.
[5] E.W. Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* (United Kingdom,2005).

"For according to the law and by the law I am judged to die and therefore I would speak nothing against it…"[1]

Evidently, Henry took to his heart his wife's criticism and saw her deathbed wishes as an inflammatory plea bargain – for which while the other 'troublesome queens' of Europe like Eleanor of Aquitaine, Matilda of Flanders and Joan of Navarre were decreed to divorce, unceasing imprisonment or deportment to a nunnery for the crimes Anne was accused of; she was sent to the block. Regardless of the extensive pains taken to promise her a fair public trial, her death, as she had surmised, was a foregone conclusion. Decapitation had always been the intention:

In mourning wise since daily I increase,
Thus should I cloak the cause of all my grief;
So pensive mind with tongue to hold his peace
My reason sayeth there can be no relief:
Wherefore give ear, I humbly you require,
The affect to know that thus doth make me moan.
The cause is great of all my doleful cheer
For those that were, and now be dead and gone.[2]

No wonder Henry VIII dissolved her Greenwich household, sent for an experienced swordsman from Calais days before she was to step in the Crown Court, and promised his beloved Jane the crown even before 'the sword was reddened with the blood of her mistress'[3]!

Hence, notwithstanding the applicability of the letter – successfully solicitous or woefully derelict – Anne would be the valorous anodyne martyr of Anglican Tradition, the 'righteous victim of Fortune or of unscrupulous, malicious schemers'[4]. A woman of great promise who risked everything for her royal ambition, only to 'lose her head' over the King…

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[1] In *Reformation in England*, J.H. Marle d'Aubigny writes admiringly of the letter – "We see Anne thoroughly in this letter, one of the most touching that was ever written. Injured in her honour, she speaks without fear as one on the threshold of eternity. If there were no other proofs of her innocence, this document alone would suffice to gain her cause in the eyes of an impartial and intelligent posterity." See Gareth Russell, *May 6, 1536: The Mystery of the Queen's Letter* (Source: blogspot.com post, Confessions of a Ci-Devant, Thursday, May 6, 2010).
[2] Sir Thomas Wyatt, *Poems*, CXLIX {an elegy from May 1536} (quoted in E.W. Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* [United Kingdom, 2005]).
[3] Agnes Strickland.
[4] John Stow (quoted in Alison Weir, *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn* [London, 2010]).

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Pop Art and the Culture of Commodities

Tara Vidisha Ghose

Emerging in the 1950s and peaking in the 1960s, the Pop Art Movement in USA was set against the background the boom of commercialization, the growth of capitalism and the transforming nature of mass media. Against this context, Pop Art came to encompass a variety of forms borrowing heavily from popular culture and the media, including magazines, comic books, television, advertisements, mass-produced products, film and music. Through this, many subjects that had up till that point never been dealt with in high art came to occupy a central space. Further, it embraced commercialization in a way no movement before it ever had. Though notions of the transcendental and spiritual nature of art persisted, capitalism as propagated by America in the '50s and '60s had created a situation in which art could freely be valued in terms of wealth and could work as an instrument for its expansion. Now, the deeper value of art existed hand in hand with its commercial worth and at times, the latter even came to be the prime element in this equation.[1]

The scope of this essay will be to critically analyse Pop art's love affair with consumer culture and commodities. The influence of mass production, advertising and the media in the works of artists like Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol and James Rosenquist and the commentary that these artists made on this culture of consumption will be analysed. The essay will primarily focus on Pop Art in the United States of America since Western Pop Art reached its peak here.

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1. The Birth of Pop Art

1.1 Britain

The birth of Pop art took place in the 1950s in United Kingdom. It was triggered by the activities of the Independent Group, a collective of artists, designers, architects and musicians who held discussions and organized cultural events in the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London. In 1954, they began discussions on the relation of popular culture and modernity. They established that unlike in the period of the war where experience was first hand, post-war society was strongly tied to indirect experiences via television and mass communication. Thus, the Independent Group felt that it had become important to integrate popular culture into the realm of fine art.

These discussions of the Independent Group lead to the formulation of ideas that formed the backbone of the Pop Art movement. It expressed these ideas through a series of exhibitions, the most notable of which was 'This is Tomorrow' held in Whitechapel Gallery in London in 1956. The exhibition witnessed collaborations between artists, architects and designers, drawing from the numerous things that were new to the visual culture of the 50s, including

[1] Paul Mattick. "The Romance of Art and Money." *International Journal of Political Economy* 25 (2009): 3-8. Accessed 5 April, 2015, https://d396qusza40orc.cloudfront.net/warhol/Week%204%20study%20group%20reading.pdf

celebrities, comic books and jukeboxes. Many art historians and critics mark the start of the Pop art movement from this 1956 exhibition.[1]

One of the most iconic works that was created during this exhibition was Richard Hamilton's "Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?" (1956). Hamilton made this collage for the exhibition's catalogue using images he had cut out of American magazines. He described his piece to be a representation of the different luxury items that are responsible for making modern American homes 'so different, so appealing' to post-war Britain, while simultaneously satirizing them. Items like the tape recorder, vacuum cleaner, the lampshade with the Ford logo and the television set placed in a studio apartment with its idealized, partially nude inhabitants represented the dream life of the modern men and women of the West.[2]

Hamilton's piece, by attempting to show the aspirations of the British being influenced by the capitalist luxuries of America contributes in demonstrating that the impetus of the British Pop Art movement can be strongly linked to its alignment with the American values of capitalism and the growth of media, advertising and popular culture. This understanding becomes reinforced when we take into account that this movement was born during the Cold War when America was in the forefront of the capitalist block and held a strong cultural influence over the western block of which Britain was a part. Thus, the very birth of Pop Art cannot entirely be removed from its link to capitalism and commercialization as propagated by the United States of America.

1.2 Pop Art in America

Following its success in Britain, Pop art took its second birth in America, where it emerged and evolved very differently from its predecessor. American Pop art, unlike its British counterpart, was more critical of consumer culture. According to Nobert Lynton,[3] this was because Britain romanticized mass media and consumerism since wartime rationing was still a part of recent memory. Further, as mentioned before, it represented the ideal of American culture. To the Americans, on the other hand, mass production was less novel and were strongly representative of America's craze over consumption tied to the rise of capitalism.[4]

2. The influence of Media, Advertising and Mass Production

Another artist who was well known for incorporating popular imagery in his art was Andy Warhol. Warhol's brand of Pop is characterized by appropriation of the effects of capitalism and commercialization in America heavily influenced the themes that Pop Art dealt with, the techniques the artists used and the manner in which works were exhibited. In this context, it is impossible to overlook the role played by the media and advertising in laying the foundations of the visual world from which Pop Art drew its subjects and a degree of its

[1] Hodge, *50 art ideas*, pp. 168-171.
[2] Graham Smith, "Richard Hamilton's "Just what is it that Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?" *Notes in the History of Art* 9 (1990): 30-34. Accessed 5 April, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/23202669?sid=21105888813211&uid=2475382047&uid=60&uid=70&uid=3738256&uid=2&uid=2475382057&uid=2134&uid=3
[3] Lynton, *The Story of Modern Art*, 289-299.
[4] Apart from being more critical of its primary subject, another distinction between American and British Pop art was that American artists were far more commercially successful than their British counterparts. The art movement also continued to flourish in America into the 70s, while in Britain, artists proceeded to follow their individual pursuits.

aesthetics. For instance, the work of Roy Lichtenstein shows the heavy influence comic books had on his art. He borrowed his technique and style directly from them, creating large close-ups of dramatically composed comic book panels in bright colours depicting glamorous women and sharp men. He even included comic-style text and speech bubbles in his art and painted imitations of Benday dots to replicate the spotted appearance of cheaply printed comic-strips, images from the media,[1]adding vibrant colours to them and repeating them over and over again. His style is reminiscent of how the media and advertising use repetition to build desires or desensitize us. Grudin locates Warhol's work and its reception against the background of crisis related to brand strategy. This basically referred to the loss of markets by national brands to smaller private brands, which lead to the launching of a new ad campaign strategy by Macfadden Publishing,[2] which heavily influenced Warhol's work.[3]

The effect of advertising, capitalism and the growth of the supermarket had a strong impact not only on the subjects that artists dealt with but also in the manner in which art was produced and sold. Claes Oldenburg's plaster sculptures of food were sold in his gallery called The Store, which literally borrowed the format of a general store. James Rosenquist painted large billboard-style paintings, borrowing images directly from advertisements. Warholstrove to work like a machine by adopting the silk screen printing technique[4] to produce multiple copies of the same image, reminiscent of the homogeneity that is brought in through manufacturing, a theme represented powerfully in his iconic Campbell Soup Can silkscreen.[5]

3. The Idea of the Celebrity

Within the sea of commodities and media images that Pop art represented, the theme of celebrity came to acquire an important space. Booming mass media had given rise to the perception of the celebrity that became an arena for public commodification. Their personal lives belonged in the public sphere and, as is seen in the case of Marilyn Monroe, even their death could become a part of their image. An examination of the way Monroe's death influenced artists of the Pop Art movement can give us a glimpse into their interpretation of the media's treatment of celebrities as icons and the integration of their personal lives into this image.

Marilyn Monroe as a subject was a hot favourite among Pop Artists and her suicide was the source of inspiration for several works since his physical death played a key role in solidifying her image as a cultural icon. Monroe's suicide and its relation to the co-option of

[1] The images Warhol appropriated were images available to the public, ranging from those of consumer products and celebrities to those of car crashes, criminals and electric chairs.
[2] The campaign urged brands to direct their advertising at a target. The target, in the case of national brands, was identified to be the masses rather than the middle or upper classes. This was because the masses could derive status from their association with these brands. Along with this, it was believed that they were insufficiently educated and did not know that the basic products of the nationalized brand were not different from those of private brands.
[3] Anthony E. Grudin, "A Sign of Good Taste: Andy Warhol and the Rise of Brand Image Advertising" *Oxford Art Journal* (2010) 33 (2): 211-232. Accessed 5 April, 2015, https://d396qusza40orc.cloudfront.net/warhol/Week%204%20Grudin%20reading.pdf
[4] Silk screen printing is a technique of print- making involving the transferring of an image onto a screen and blocking out the areas which do not require colour. The screen is then used to make numerous copies of the same image. Sections of the image that require different colours are transferred on different silkscreens.
[5] The Campbell Soup Can silkscreen was not only produced like a commodity of mass consumption through the silk screen printing technique, but was also displayed as if in the grocery aisle of a supermarket.

her life as a public commodity inspired James Rosenquist to paint Marilyn, a broken-up and inverted portrait of the late actress superimposed with parts of her name and the font of the Coca-Cola logo.[1]My Marilyn (1965), a silkscreen made by Richard Hamilton was made using photographs of an image from a 1962 issue of Town magazine printed shortly after the Monroe's death. The image showed pictures of the star's photo-shoots that had been given to the actress for approval. Monroe had marked the alterations she wanted with crosses. The act of the star destroying her own photographs with aggressive crosses made the images especially stark against the backdrop of the actress's suicide.[2]

Andy Warhol created 24 different silkscreens of Marilyn Monroe depicting different aspects of her image. In all of these, he used a cropped publicity photograph of the star from her 1950s movie, 'Niagara'.[3] The decision that Warhol made to use a publicity photograph, rather than a personal photograph, seems to imply that the artist was talking about Monroe's public image as a manufactured commodity, as a celebrity or as a saint. The commentary that these artists were attempting to make by depicting celebrities in their art emphasized how the media had co-opted the lives of famous people and had converted every aspect of their being into commodities. Thus, Pop Art brought into focus how the effects of commercialism and capitalist world had come to convert human beings into objects of consumption.

4. Conclusion

Nobert Lynton encapsulates the essence of the Pop Art movement by stating that Pop was not merely a style of the depiction of specific subjects, but was primarily an encouragement to examine and be critical of the different ways in which the items of daily life are kept attractive to the men and women of the Western world.[4] This, as this essay has attempted to demonstrate, was strongly linked to the growth of capitalism in America and the impact it had on commodity production, popular culture, media and advertising. These phenomena had worked as tools to shape desires for consumption amongst the public. This commodification through the media and advertising extended beyond the realm of factory produced commodities to encompass celebrities as well as themes of disasters such as death and calamities, which had come to become substances of consumption through sensationalizing by the media. By depicting these subjects in their art in different ways, including in the techniques they used and the manner in which art was displayed, Pop artists often provided a critical commentary on how capitalism and the mass production of commodities, images and messages had created a culture of consumption that extended beyond material objects and had become an integral part of American life.

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Deconstructing Nationalism: Discourses in the 20th Century

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We live in an era of modern nation states, and nationalism is one of the defining features of 21st century politics. India is being governed by an ultra-nationalist government, which conveniently panders to majoritarian interests, at the expense of tearing apart the richly diverse societal fabric of the nation. It would be antithetical to the interests of the academia, if nationalism is given a short shrift as one of the parochial forces, as a sophisticated and unorthodox study in the theory would help us deconstruct a plethora of conflicts. My paper draws on the observations of Benedict Anderson, who broke new grounds in his seminal work 'Imagined Communities', Ernest Gellner, and Partha Chatterjee's critique of the dominant ideas of nationalism, though the lens of post-colonialism.

"What passing-bells for these who die as cattle? -Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle

Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells; Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,-

The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;

And bugles calling for them from sad shires."[1]

"No more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers."[2]

Nationalism captured the imagination of the academia in the 20th century, but a definitive theoretical understanding of the concept has remained largely elusive. John Plamenatz categorized nationalism into the 'Western' type, with its genesis in Western Europe, and the 'Eastern' variant, concentrated in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America; they are dependent on the acceptance of a common set of standards which measures the development of a particular 'national' culture. The former did not perceive the standards of progress as being 'alien' to the national culture; while in the latter, there was a distinct sense of alienation, precipitating the tension between the need to conform to the dominant perception of development, and the urge to retain what is singular to that nation. 'The former merely needed to create a state machine to cover, protect, and perpetuate viable

[1] Jon Stallworthy (ed.), *The poems of Wilfred Owen* (W.W Norton and Company, 1986).
[2] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 2006).

existing culture; the latter had to acquire a state and then, with its authority, create and impose what is in effect a new culture'[1]. Chatterjee says that Plamenatz preempts the grounds for the liberal rationalist dilemma in the understanding of nationalism.
The liberal histories of nationalism, as put forth by Hans Kohn, set store by the idea that it can be traced to the Enlightenment Era, which helped humanity realize the ideals of liberty, democracy and progress. This seems facile if we analyse how nationalism has been notoriously employed by modern nation states, which has subverted the essence of humanity. The looming crises like irremediable alterations in the environment, dearth of resources, proliferation of nuclear weapons, the nefarious workings of groups like ISIS and Boko Haram, the denial of human rights to certain sections of our societal pyramid, poverty, unemployment, command that we pool our resources, instead of being mired in parochial politics of nationalism. Nationalism has, however, led to 'mindless chauvinism and xenophobia and serve as justification for organized violence and tyranny.'[2] Hans Kohn attempted to lay at rest this intractable dilemma, by making a distinction between the 'Western' and the 'Non-Western' nationalisms, the former conforming to the liberal-rationalists' idea of inexorable progress.

Nationalism, they say, is distorted in a societal milieu which has 'conditions unpropitious to freedom'[3], and there is nothing necessarily illiberal about nationalism as a concept, but certain 'sociological' conditions result in a 'deviant' form of nationalism. The 'Non-Western' nationalisms should be studied as a process of development, as they strive to adhere to the accepted norms and conventions of progress. The liberal rationalist conveniently takes recourse to the sweeping concept of 'modernization', as he argues that the postcolonial societies strive for that ideal, and the sociological approach helps resolve the contradiction inherent in the liberal understanding of the concept.

The liberal school of thought is critiqued by those who believe that nationalism is a Western construct, and has been superimposed on postcolonial societies which had been left bereft of any 'agency' owing to their colonial legacy. Elie Kedourie writes, from a conservative viewpoint, that nationalism 'is neither something indigenous to these areas nor an irresistible tendency of the human spirit everywhere, but rather an importation from Europe clearly branded with the mark of its origin.'[4]

Nationalism was a reaction to colonial hegemony, but in its conceptualization, it was confined to the straitjacket of Western intellectual traditions.[5] As Chatterjee argues, the conservative and the liberal scholars do not appreciate the implications of the fact that nationalism is not an 'autonomous discourse' in the postcolonial structure.[6] He argues that this perpetuates the subjugation of non-European countries with a colonial legacy, as their

[1] Gellner Ernest, *Theory and Society* (Springer, 1981), p.23.
[2] John Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism", in Eugene Kamenka (ed.), *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea* (Edward Arnold, 1976).
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] Elie Kedourie. *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970).
[5] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Oxford University Press, 1987).
[6] *Ibid*, p.10.

past and present is analysed as a function of the grand process of modernization as perceived apt in the West, and denies them the power of choice in shaping their fate. He interestingly swims against the tide, when he explores how 'thought' itself can be placed 'within a discourse of power', and 'can dominate and subjugate'[1]. The bourgeois-rationalist understanding of knowledge is inextricably linked to power, as it propagates the universal legitimacy of the Eurocentric conception of 'modernity', as envisaged in the Enlightenment Era.

Anderson opines that nationality, nation-ness, and nationalism are cultural artefacts of a singular kind. It is imperative that we appreciate the historical genesis of these concepts, the transformation in their connotations over a period of time, to gauge the paramount emotional legitimacy that nationalism commands. Nationalism, ensuing its inception, was 'modular': it could be transplanted to a great variety of social terrains, and political and ideological constellations.[2] This eventually became a bone of contention between Anderson and Chatterjee.

Chatterjee reflects that 'Imagined Communities' is indubitably critical as it has facilitated our perception of the concept of nationalism[3]. Anderson projects the modern nation state as an imagined political community, which is limited and sovereign. The nation is imagined, as the members of even the smallest nation would not necessarily know, meet, or have heard of most of their fellow members, still in their minds linger the image of their communion. Ernest Gellner in his 'Nations and Nationalism' writes, 'Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness, it invents where they do not exist'. Anderson demurs that Gellner equates invention with 'fabrication', and not necessarily 'creation' or 'imagining'. The nation is inherently limited, as it has finite boundaries, beyond which lie other nation states. Nationalism is the brainchild of the era of Enlightenment, which disturbed the unquestioning acceptance of universal religions and dynastic realms of divine descent, and strove for freedom, the emblem of which was sovereignty. Nation states, irrespective of the inherent inequality, are projected as a horizontal comradeship[4].

Anderson's study of the changing apprehensions of time and space has singularly contributed to our theoretical understanding of nationalism. The medieval concept of 'simultaneity-along-time' gave way for 'homogeneous empty time', enabling us to 'think' the nation. It was marked by 'temporal coincidence', and 'measured by clock and calendar.' This can be analysed from the novel and the newspaper, which are the two important creations of the 18th century, and 'represented' the imagined community, that is the nation. The sway of universal religions and divinely ordained kingdoms was interrogated, and these processes of change were facilitated by the 'economic change', 'discoveries', and the development of 'rapid communications'. 'Print capitalism', at this opportune moment, provided novel ways of perceiving the 'self' in conjunction with the 'other', which paved the way for the genesis of the modern nation state. This was complemented in the colonial period by a plethora of

[1] *Ibid*, p. 10.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 11
[3] Anderson, 2006.
[4] Chatterjee, 1987.

policies which revamped our perception of space, and contributed to the idea that is nationalism. The census propagated 'abstract quantification', the map the rigid demarcation of boundaries, and the museum 'the 'ecumenical', profane genealogizing'.[1]

Partha Chatterjee argues that Anderson conceptualized nation states not as products of the sociological milieu, but as being 'imagined' into existence. Anderson postulates that nationalism, once 'created', was 'modular', and was emulated in the postcolonial 'Third World countries'. Chatterjee critiques this viewpoint of Anderson, as it entailed that the postcolonial world 'would be perpetual consumers of modernity, and our imaginations must remain forever colonized.'[2]

Nationalism, as Gellner hypothesizes, has its mainspring in certain defining traits of the modern industrial state.[3] The legitimacy of the use of violence is concentrated in the modern nation state; the industrial society is economically specialized; it is occupationally mobile; modern societies are imbued with mild to extreme socialism; tribalism or quietism-on-principle are not feasible in this milieu, as the ramifications of central decisions entail the political participation of sub-communities.[4] The socio-political organization has envisaged a gargantuan educational system, which in the transmission of 'central, universal, and prolonged' training, imposes homogeneity.[5] 'The ideal of nationalism is not a consequence of some inherent or universal appeal of the ideal; it is a consequence of the basic organizational principle of modern society.'[6] The culture which is chosen as the medium of this homogeneity 'becomes the object and symbol of loyalty, rhetoric and devotion'.[7]

Gellner and Anderson perceive in the 'Third World' nationalisms, Chatterjee says, an essentially 'modular' character; the former employed the lens of the 'industrial society', while the latter studied the role of 'print capitalism'[8]. Gellner conceptualized nationalism as the imposition of 'high culture on the variegated complex of local folk cultures', and Anderson dissected the "formation of a 'print language' and the shared experience of the journeys undertaken by the colonized intelligentsia".[9]

This paper is a modest effort to pre-empt discussions on the various schools of thought that exist on nationalism. The term 'nationalism' has assumed sufficient notoriety in the contemporary world, however, it defies any rigid definition. As a student of nationalism, I agree with Anderson's definition of a nation as an 'imagined political community', and the subaltern critique of the dominant theories of nationalism. It is interesting to understand Gellner's viewpoint that a 'high' culture subsumes the supposedly 'low' cultures, for the creation of homogeneity; this framework can be employed to understand certain conflicts. Nationalism, like all important concepts, is analysed as a Western construct, which the

[1] Anderson, 2006.
[2] Chatterjee, 1987.
[3] Ernest, 1981.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 2, 4, 7, 8.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 10.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 16.
[7] *Ibid*, p. 19.
[8] Chatterjee, 1987.
[9] *Ibid*, p. 21.

subaltern scholars opine perpetuates epistemic violence. We live in a world wherein it is not necessary to flex military muscles to exercise hegemony in the arena of international relations, but modern nation states are increasingly employing their 'soft power'. Knowledge is an essential facet of this domination, as a Eurocentric understanding of 'modernity' serves to continue the dominion of the West over the postcolonial societies.

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