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Tribute to Edward Said

"Contemporary criticism is an institution for publicly affirming the values of our, that is European, dominant elite culture, and for privately setting loose the unrestrained interpretation of a universe defined in advance as the endless misreading of a misinterpretation."

Edward Said.

As the editor of the journal I think that something must be said to pay homage to Professor Edward Said whose demise has shed a pall of gloom over the cultural arena of the world. Said was a Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University and the author of over a dozen books, including, *Orientalism*, *Peace and its Discontents: Essays on Palestine in the Middle East Peace Process*, *Culture and Imperialism* and *The World, The Text and The Critic*. His writings have been translated into 26 languages. As a prolific writer he could address all issues of culture, colonialism, imperialism, language and literature. He remained a staunch advocate of Palestinian cause with inspiring theoretical and practical suggestions. Said was an intellectual whose courage and conviction along with clarity of thought paved the way for multifarious interpretations for the sake of the oppressed sections of the world. He never diluted his position in intellectual or political matters to appease the views of mainstream media and intellectual circles.

Thanks to the new perspective of Said, there is wider implication of the new sensibility arising from his view on orientalism. As a result of his arguments in *Orientalism* he is widely credited with pioneering postcolonial studies. His writings inspired the intellectuals who wanted to express their commitment to the cause of the oppressed in the world.

His argument that for centuries Western scholarship has misrepresented the East and has made the Orient its "other" deserves much attention. Besides he shows how far the knowledge of the West served the cause of imperialism. He was much influenced by Foucault's doctrine of power and knowledge. He unmasks the nexus between knowledge and power in history and the extent of colonisation by means of the so -called Eastern or Oriental scholarship. What we can say beyond doubt is that he will be remembered for two reasons, as one of the founding fathers of postcolonial studies and as the leading spokesperson for the Palestinian cause in the West.

In the passing away of Said, not only the academic world but also those who remain for the cause of justice to the weaker sections of the world has lost an eminent thinker and revolutionary.

Dr. P.K. Pokker

“Queenie Did It All, or Did She?” Raymond Williams and the Popular Culture Debate

P.P. Raveendran

One of the earliest references to “popular” in Raymond Williams appears in the form of a quotation from Wordsworth inserted into his discussion of the Romantic poets in *Culture and Society* (1958). Reviewing the changes that occurred to the ideas of art and the artist and of the artist’s place in British society in and around the industrial revolution, Williams locates five key areas of significant cultural transformation in that work. One of these pertains to “the different habitual attitude towards the ‘public’” that was getting established during this period (Williams 1993: 32). Wordsworth is mentioned here, among other major Romantic poets, as an artist who is acutely sensitive to the altered role of the public in the new industrial age. Williams notes that Wordsworth has made a distinction between the public “ever governed by factitious influence,” and the people with “their embodied spirit of knowledge.” Wordsworth is committed to the people, but the public, with whom he associates the term “popular,” fares very poorly in the poet’s rating. Here is the bard of the nineteenth century, as quoted by Williams:

Away then with the senseless iteration of the word *popular* applied to new works in poetry, as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts but that all men should run after its productions, as if urged by an appetite or constrained by a spell.

(Williams 1993: 34)

This certainly is not the first time that the idea of a popular literature as opposed to an elite tradition of writing appears in the history of culture. The debate over popular culture has a history that goes back to the ancient

times. The central arguments in the debate have been traced to the writings of Montaigne and Pascal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on the question of diversion that coincided with the arrival of a market economy (Lowenthal 1968: chapter 2) and to the writings of Herder and others in the context of the emergence of various national cultures in Europe in the eighteenth century (Burke 1978: 8). The debate continues into the nineteenth century through the writings of Matthew Arnold, whose *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), by invoking the spectre of the philistine, can be seen as anticipating much of what the mass culture theorists later were to articulate on the question. Arnold's ire is directed not only against the restless lower and middle classes of his society who were clamouring for a fair deal for themselves in a more democratically structured arrangement, but against the concept of mass democracy itself, which he sees embodied in the culture and ethos of the new nation, America. The reference to America is quite in order here, as a fear of trivialization of culture in the form of increasing Americanization has been a matter of major concern for the mass culture theorists of the twentieth century. For scholars like Gertrude Stein the twentieth century is the American century for the simple reason that America, the new world has lived the longest in this century (Tallack 1991: 1). Today we might find ourselves agreeing with Stein's description of the century, but not perhaps for the reason that she has given. The twentieth century certainly is the American century, for political, economic and cultural reasons. But the mass culture theorists' fear of America arose from a fear of democracy itself, and of all that it implied in the cultural sphere. The British critic Edmund Gosse, in an essay written on the eve of the twentieth century, in 1899, articulates this fear with remarkable cogency, thus:

One danger, which I have long foreseen from the spread of the democratic sentiment, is that of the tradition of literary taste, the canons of literature, being reversed with success by a popular vote. Up to the present time, in all parts of the world, the masses of uneducated or semi-educated persons, who form the vast majority of readers, though they cannot, and do not appreciate the classics of their race, have been content to acknowledge their supremacy. Of late these have seemed to me to be certain signs, especially in America, of a revolt of the mob against our literary masters If literature is to be judged

by a plebiscite, and if the plebs recognize its power, it will certainly by degrees cease to support reputations which give it no pleasure and which it cannot comprehend. The revolution against taste once begun, will land us in irreparable chaos.

(Qtd. in Q.D. Leavis 1932: 190; Strinati 1995: 22)

I have chosen to quote at such length from Gosse for two reasons: first, because his words sum up the elite position on the popular culture debate in such lucid terms; and second, because much of the debate on popular culture in the twentieth century has revolved around questions implied in the Gosse quotation, namely, questions pertaining to taste, literary value, canon formation, reader response and composition of the reading public. An elaboration of these questions in precise, theoretical terms belongs to the late twentieth-century research associated with the unfolding paradigm of cultural studies, which we'll take up briefly for review at the end of this essay. But the early part of the century witnessed an intensification of the debate on popular culture provoked by a series of developments that included the advent of radio and cinema, the rise of literacy, the growth of mass media and the spread of a consumer culture. Culture, while it got democratized, was also liable to be centrally controlled, and this extended the prospect of opinions and consent being manufactured by the hegemonic order. This gave rise to a complex of questions which could not be resolved as easily as Arnold and Gosse had anticipated. The complexity is indicated by the fact that Theodor Adorno and Ortega y. Gasset would arrive at similar conclusions regarding the nature of popular culture starting from mutually antagonistic political and philosophical premises.

The mass culture theory associated with F.R. Leavis and his *Scrutiny* group is a variant of the elite position outlined in the Gosse quotation. It has its roots going deep into the Arnoldian thesis as well. Both Arnold and Leavis thought of popular culture as mass culture, a culture that celebrates the trivial and the immediate at the expense of what is authentically, universally and eternally valuable. The Leavisite notion of "experience" is related to this idea of serious literature as a matter of abiding value. The value of literature, Leavis would say, is directly proportional to its ability to embody experience truly, wholly and authentically. In developing this argument Leavis apparently has drawn freely on Eliot's concept of the 'unified sensibility'. As is well known, Eliot's unified sensibility represented

an experience that was true and whole. Both Eliot and Leavis disparaged Milton and the Romantics, who were found wanting in comparison with the poets belonging to "the line of wit," such as Andrew Marvell. Marvell's poetry, according to Leavis, "displayed a finer wisdom of a ripe civilization" (Leavis 1936: 31). This finer wisdom, one soon discovers, is associated in his system with an exclusive minority who would act as the preservers and guardians of authentic culture. In *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* (1930) he rejects the charge of elitism levelled against the mass culture theorists and claims that what they lament really is the loss of the organic community that predated the advent of industrialization and urbanization in modern European societies. Later mass culture theorists like D. Mac Donald who talk about the "atomization" of the community are only extending the arguments of Arnold, Eliot, Leavis and others to the situation obtaining in a technologically advanced world.

It is into this debate that Williams intervenes, especially with the works starting from *Culture and Society*. True, he does not position himself centrally in the popular culture debate, as Leavis does in *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture*. The "Introduction" to *Keywords* (1976), which is significant for the personal account it provides of the genesis of the kind of research embodied in works starting from *Culture and Society*, makes no mention of the debate, though there is an entry on the word "popular" in the main text, which takes the reader through the meandering senses of the term across the history of the language (Williams 1981: 98-99). But the initial impetus for the project, summarised in the *Introduction* as the recognition that the people of successive generations "do not speak the same language" (ibid: 9), can be seen as transmitting a kind of symbolic significance to the arguments set forth in the books coming after *Culture and Society*. Thus though no specific work of Williams could be cited as exclusively addressing itself to the question of popular culture, in as much as his works are scrutinizing the alternative languages practised in segments of the society, they can indeed be read as providing comments on the debate. In *Culture and Society* itself there is a chapter on "The Industrial Novels" which takes up for discussion certain uncanonized novels of the nineteenth century that express the structure of feeling of the new industrial society. This is followed up later with such essays as "The Growth of the Reading Public" in the *Long Revolution* (1961), "Methods in TV Production"

in *Communications* (1969), "Forms of English Fiction in 1848" and "Region and Class in the Novel" in *Writing in Society* (1983) and a full-length study of television entitled *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (1975), all of which have as their focus of analysis an object falling in the epistemological space of popular culture.

While it might be possible to reconstruct Williams's approach to popular culture by piecing together the arguments of the works mentioned above, I would propose that a more coherent and theoretically convincing case on this could be made out of Williams's central thesis on culture itself. "Culture" is one of the five key words that adumbrates, along with "art," "class," "industry" and "democracy," the epochal change that the nineteenth century has brought forward in Williams's theoretical system. And the word itself undergoes a kind of progressive radicalization in the system as it moves from *Culture and Society* to the later works. Williams himself is on record as having described his attitude to culture in the early works as "first stage radicalism" (Eagleton 1989: 4). But even here one might notice a willingness to place culture in a context of relations and to look upon it as socially and historically conditioned. What he attempts to describe in *Culture and Society* actually is the change in the worldview of a people that manifests itself as a change in word-meaning. "Culture" encompasses within itself a whole ambience of attitudinal shift. Williams says:

I had originally intended to keep very closely to *culture* itself, but the more closely I examined it, the more widely my terms of reference had to be set. For what I see in the history of this word, in its structure of meanings, is a wide and general movement in thought and feeling.... In summary, I wish to show the emergence of culture as an abstraction and an absolute: an emergence which in a very complex way merges two general responses— first, the recognition of the practical separation of certain moral and intellectual activities from the driven impetus of a new kind of society; second, the emphasis of these activities as a court of human appeal, to be set over the processes of practical social judgment and yet to offer itself as a mitigating and rallying alternative.

(Williams 1993: xvii-xviii)

Williams is aware that this idea of culture, though an outcome of the new social and political developments, is also a response to the problems of social class. Looking upon culture, that is, elite culture, in this way and phrasing it in this way is a seminal recognition for the participants of the popular culture debate. What Williams has discovered for them is a new way of conceptualizing culture, a new discourse on culture, which was a radical departure from the conceptualisation of Leavis and the "Scrutineers." Leavis himself was totally unaware of the altered problematic in which Williams's research was set. "Queenie did it all in the thirties" was, it is said, an elderly Leavis's response when his attention was drawn to his former pupil's radical work (Eagleton 1989: 2). Queenie, of course, is Q.D. Leavis, wife of Frank Raymond, whose *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1932) is generally regarded as a brilliant piece of research on the question of fiction and its reception, undertaken in the early decades of the twentieth century. But this should not deter us from recognizing the fact that Williams, a one-time Leavisite, had moved far, far away from the *Scrutiny* paradigm by the time he completed *Culture and Society*. That is why he now defines culture not in terms of an ahistorical and sectarian notion of "authentic experience," but as "a whole way of life" that covers the range of societal experiences lived segmentally. "Where *culture* meant a state or habit of the mind, or the body of intellectual or moral activities, it meant now, also, a whole way of life," Williams says (1993: xviii).

A further radicalization of the concept is to be noticed in Williams's later works, especially in *Marxism and Literature* (1977), where a full-fledged theory of "cultural materialism" is advanced to account for the 'material' dimension of culture. By the material dimension is meant the practices and institutions of culture including printing, performance and distribution. This constitutes the artistic mode of production, which for Williams is as significant a part of the Marxist production mode as is the economic component. In a reworking of the orthodox Marxist base—superstructure model, Williams integrates his altered concept of the materialist production of art with the broad-based notion of culture as a whole way of life that includes practices, expectations, ways of seeing and communications. This, in theory, is Williams's cultural materialism, though in practice it represents the convergence of several traditional and newly constructed disciplines including history, sociology, cultural studies, gender studies, structuralist Marxism and post-

structuralism.

One interesting fall-out of this convergence is the theoretical possibility of a new concept of popular culture, not in the least incongruous with the basic postulates of Williams. One cannot theorise the differences between diverse uses of a word ontologically, Williams suggests. One has to resort to history to do that. In the same way one might suggest that one cannot distinguish ontologically between high art and low art. One again has to resort to history to do the same. This is because cultural forms, whether elite or popular, are to be understood as what Williams calls "cultural technologies of the self" that operate by constituting subjects who identify themselves in terms of specific communities, classes and gender groupings (Williams 1974: 18). Viewing films, watching television and reading novels are all ways of organizing subjects and subjectivity. Fiction, whether it is popular or elite, encourages and perpetuates certain self-images relating to one's identity as the member of a class, caste, community, region, nation or gender grouping. And with this the popular culture debate can be regarded as having reached a stage of development where it is, for those who detest theory at least, at its unpopular worst.

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Edward W. Said: A Paradigm of Intellectual Formation

Prasad. P

"I am not going to die, because so many people want me dead"¹

Edward W. Said

The most eloquent Professor Edward W. Said died the other day, after a decade-long battle against chronic lymphocytic leukaemia, a disease that never stopped him from writing, travelling and speaking till his last breath. A rather foreseeable, but unfortunate piece of news had apparently left some in delicate despondency and others in furtive comfort! For, Said had always been a fascinating conundrum.

Who was in fact Edward W. Said? A 'professor of terror' for some, a fearless champion of human rights for many, or a paradox of identity for a few! No matter what, he was the most powerful and expressive intellectual of our times, who not only formulated but also corroborated his theory on intellectuals with his eventful life. Edward Said's overwhelming obsession with 'the role of intellectuals' underlies virtually all his cultural analysis and criticism. His paradigmatic contribution to the advancement of intellectual work is perhaps a pointer to those people who overlook and abuse the responsibilities of intellectuals.

II

Intellectuals are often criticized for being detached from the everyday concerns of their fellow human beings. Though they are capable of playing significant, and in some cases, decisive roles in the modern world, most of the intellectual interventions are done from a position of relative autonomy. And this image of an intellectual as an independent person exerted a powerful influence throughout the twentieth century. Julien Benda was one of the principal advocates of this position. He even idealized and sublimated the detached status of the intellectual and upheld the importance of universal principles such as justice and truth.

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A remarkable and stern exhortation to abandon this so-called position of intellectual independence is found in Antonio Gramsci, when he says that individualism "is merely brutish apoliticism, [and] sectarianism is apoliticism."² For Gramsci, the notion of autonomy was empty of content. He associated it with idealist philosophy, as "the expression of that social utopia."³

Therefore the significant question is, whether the detached independence of the intellectual has either ever been attained in practice, or would be desirable. And, what should be the ideal position of intellectuals? Should they *detach* themselves from society, or *attach* themselves to any particular class? There is also the issue of confronting the intellectuals' claim to speak, in the name of an abstract and 'timeless truth' which has been somewhat problematised in the context of postmodern challenges to the legacy of the Enlightenment.

Here the attempt is to look at some of the key aspects of Edward Said's observations on the role of intellectuals, in the light of the aforementioned queries. This, in one sense, is to pay a great tribute to the relentless intellectual energy with which he fought injustice and discrimination. His classic, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* is central to this. Said's other works and articles that shed light on the role of intellectuals are also examined, so as to posit him in the contemporary socio-cultural context.

III

Edward Said has carved out a very large and diverse audience through his repetitive exhortations to intellectuals. With considerable resonance from his own life, Said has spelt out his notions on the nature, role and responsibilities of intellectuals. Intellectuals, according to him, should disassociate themselves from orthodox party lines or fixed dogma. He urges them to break all the barriers created by their background, language and nationality and exhorts them to come out of the confinements of institutions and worldly powers. The principal intellectual duty is the search for relative independence from such pressures and hence Said's characterizations of the intellectual as "exile and marginal, as amateur, and as the author of a language that tries to speak the truth to power."⁴ It is obvious that Julian Benda's (1867-1956) struggle for eternal standards of truth and justice

influenced Said. At the same time, Said is also attracted towards Antonio Gramsci's idea of "organic intellectuals." He acclaims him as a social analyst, "whose purpose was to build not just a social movement, but an entire cultural formation associated with the movement."⁵

Benda conceived intellectuals as a small group of "morally endowed philosopher kings who constitute the conscience of mankind"⁶, whereas Gramsci saw them as integrated to working class, whose role was to create counter hegemony to subvert the ruling class dominance. Though Said was well aware of the quixotic philosophy of Benda, he wished to combine his ideas with those of Gramsci –probably the most reactionary with the most radical. His rather polyphonic approach becomes very clear here. This curious amalgamation definitely had invited sharp criticism from some quarters. "Said's habit of equating Benda with Gramsci" observes Aijas Ahmad, "[is] one way of domesticating the revolutionary content of Gramsci's thought"⁷. However, there is a sense in which one could say that Said is possibly assimilating the revolutionary edge of Gramsci's thought and incorporating it with Benda's philosophy of universal principles.

IV

Said's *Representations of the Intellectual* is perhaps an exegesis of his own life and position as a writer and as an intellectual: "There is no such thing as a private intellectual" according to Said, "since the moment you set down words and publish them you have entered the public world"⁸. He further adds:

Intellectuals are individuals with a vocation for the art of representing, whether that is talking, writing, teaching [or], appearing on television. And that vocation is important to the extent that it is publically recognizable and involves commitment and risk, boldness and vulnerability; [...].⁹

Said's spirited defense of universal principles, which he borrows from Julian Benda, helps him to take up a position against Lyotard and his followers. Political and social reality does exist, Said argues, despite Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis or Lyotard's notion of the "disappearance of the grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment." And hence, the intellectual should not abjure his moral obligation to the victims of this reality. He is no longer ready to problematise universal principles like justice and truth. He

even goes to the extent of challenging these postmodern intellectuals, and accuses them of “admitting their own lazy incapacities perhaps their own indifference, rather than [reaching] to a correct assessment of what remains for the intellectual a truly vast array of opportunities despite postmodernism.”¹⁰

V

Each intellectual is born into a national language and hence obliged to speak that language. But the mere use of national language, observes Said, would entrap them in dominant discourse. He is conscious of the hidden dangers embedded in language. He advises the intellectual to break free from the confines of nationality and extract from the language an idiom capable of articulating the universal principles. The intellectual’s inevitable political commitment is to unmask the hidden ideology disseminated by the modern communication system and to tell the truth using this language. This becomes particularly significant in the context of emotionally surcharged situations like war, when propaganda often obscures truth. He discovers that the responsibility of the intellectual, in such times, “is generally to uncover and elucidate the contest to challenge and defeat both an imposed silence and the normalized quiet of unseen power, wherever and whenever possible.”¹¹ A concern with this social truth requires a concern with linguistic truth and a critical attitude to the conventional clichés we hear from the licensed media experts and politicians who would “seduce the consciousness into passive acceptance of unexamined ideas and sentiments”.¹²

Unfortunately, there has been a shift, observes Said, from patriotic consensus and acquiescence, to skepticism and contest. A kind of pseudo nationalism masquerading itself as patriotism and moral concern has taken over the critical consciousness. This in effect leads to unquestioning “loyalty to one’s ‘nation’ before everything. At that point there is only the treason of the intellectuals, and complete moral bankruptcy.”¹³ Said realizes that the liberation of the intellectual from these stultifying confines of nationalism is an inevitable necessity in these times. He appreciates great intellectuals like Rabindranath Tagore and Jose Marti in this context for “never abating their criticism *because* of nationalism, even though they remained nationalists themselves”¹⁴

VI

The status of being an exile is elevated to a fascinating and romantic dimension by Said. He discards the popular notion that the state of being exiled is to be totally cut off from a place of origin. The exile exists in a median state, where one neither completely abandons the old, nor fully accepts the new. It is a state beset with half-involvements and half-detachments. The exilic intellectual is always unwilling to make adjustments and so he rather prefers to "remain outside the mainstream, unaccommodated, unco-opted, resistant"¹⁵ This helps Said to conclude that the exile is not only an actual condition but also a metaphorical condition. Apart from the predicament of being dislocated geographically from the place of origin, intellectuals in exile also run the risk of metaphorically alienating themselves. Said observes interestingly:

An intellectual life is fundamentally about knowledge and freedom [...]. An intellectual is like a shipwrecked person who learns how to live in a certain sense *with* the land, not *on* it, not like Robinson Crusoe whose goal is to colonize his little island, but more like Marco Polo, whose sense of the marvellous never failed him, and who is always a traveller, a provisional guest, not a freeloader, a conqueror or raider.¹⁶

This exilic standpoint enables the intellectual to see things with a double perspective. Hence an idea or experience is always counterposed to another, and looked at with an unpredictable critical insight. Said's own experience of the Middle East coupled with his critical double perspective helps him to juxtapose and equate Islamic, Christian and Jewish fundamentalism and treat them as equally prevalent and reprehensible. It is with this same perspective that Said defends the demonisation of Islam by the West. Though we normally associate the condition of exile with melancholia, isolation and marginalization, for Said, there are several—quite paradoxical—advantages to exile. The exile is always skeptical, since he must survive in destabilizing circumstances, and added to this; exile liberates the intellectual from conventional preoccupations. In that condition, the intellectual becomes a conscientious critic of the society, a champion of unorthodoxies and principles. To accept such an exilic position one does not need to be an actual immigrant or expatriate, but it requires of one to adopt the perspective of an outsider, to move away from the centralizing authorities towards the margins.

VII

The increasing tendency of intellectuals to be tied to institutions baffles Said. His deep anxiety over the proliferation of professionalisation leads him to formulate his idea of amateurism. According to him, the attitude of professionalism is the specific threat faced by the intellectual of these times. It is an attitude that makes you consider your work as a nine-to-five job, something you do for a living. At the same time, Said realizes that all intellectuals, affiliated to institutions are not necessarily on the side of power. He appreciates Noam Chomsky, the great dissident intellectual in the United States, for not having succumbed to the pressures of professionalism. For Said, amateurism is an inevitable trait for the intellectual who aspires for a better society and the attitude of amateurism is necessary to retain relative independence from all power structures. The intellectual spirit as amateur can definitely transform the merely professional routine into something much more radical. Said indefatigably exerts this amateur spirit to unearth the forgotten and to chart alternate courses of action in periods of absolute dilemmas. He always takes cognizance of the necessity of resuscitating remembrances of things past:

The role of intellectual is that of testifying: he/she testifies against the misuses of history or against the injustices that befall the oppressed. I should add that he/she must be a rebel against power and against prevailing ideas. The intellectual must raise doubts about the illusions of the status quo all that is tyrannical in society, especially for the sake of the deprived and the oppressed.¹⁷

"Speaking truth to power", says Said, "is no Panglossian idealism: it is carefully weighing the alternatives, picking the right one, and then intelligently representing it where it can do the most good and cause the right change."¹⁸ Said is perhaps reminded of his own advocacy of the Palestinian cause, in spite of the ill treatment and vilification that he had to suffer from many quarters. Though the intellectual's voice is desolate, it can associate itself freely with the reality of a movement, the aspirations of people, and with the common pursuit of a shared goal. Said joined in the Palestinian National Council as an act of solidarity. However, 'criticism before solidarity' was always his motto. On the one hand, Said felt that, it was symbolically important to expose himself as a Palestinian and on the other,

he always warned against the dangers of affiliation to a particular party. He was used to being peripheral, think on the margins and speak and act outside the circle of power. Nevertheless, he has been unable to live an uncommitted or suspended life and has never hesitated to declare his affiliation even with an extremely unpopular cause. Added to this, he had persevered to preserve the right to be critical, even when criticism conflicted with solidarity or what others expected in the name of national loyalty.

VIII

One could probably observe that, it was the Arab-Israel war of 1967, which changed Said's life considerably. The vigorous re-emergence of Palestinian nationalism after the Arab defeat, made it increasingly impossible for him to live his life particularly in the US, where the quest for Palestinian justice was then almost considered as anti-Semitic and Nazi-like. He felt that "the life of an Arab Palestinian in the West, particularly in America is disheartening."¹⁹

When the Jewish Defense League called him a Nazi in 1985, his office at the University was set fire to, and he and his family received innumerable death threats. And what is more, his idea of co-existence between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs was intolerable to the extreme left-wing nationalists. They considered him too liberal on the question of Palestine. But he has been outstandingly courageous and consistent in his belief that no military option exists for either side, and only a process of peaceful reconciliation and justice would work. He was also highly critical of the use of clichéd slogans like "armed struggle" and of the revolutionary adventurism that caused innocent deaths and did nothing to advance the Palestinian cause politically.

A complicated situation arose in 1993 when, after seeming to be the approved voice of the Palestinian struggle, he wrote with increasing sharpness of his disagreements with Arafat and his bunch of supporters. He was immediately branded "anti-peace," when he opposed the Oslo Accord as tantamount to surrender and a process that would lead to more clashes, and subsequent events proved him to have been exactly right. And more recently, he lashed out at the ineffectual leadership of Arafat: "What kind of a leader is this, [...] Arafat is finished. Why don't we admit that he can neither lead, nor plan, nor take a single step that makes any

difference except to him and his Oslo cronies who have benefited materially from their people's misery?"²⁰ This kind of forthright honesty and integrity even while disparaging, probably allows him to stand outside the umbrella that shielded or accommodated his contemporaries.

IX

Said's approach is always influenced by a deep belief in the worldliness of intellectual activity. Intellectuals themselves, like the texts they produce, are constantly inflected with the complexity of their own being in the world. In this sense, it is the worldliness, which remains as a source of the intellectual energy with which Edward Said engages with culture and politics. He posited this theory of worldliness, at a time when the discourse of poststructuralism was almost fashionable in the Western intellectual scene. Though he also was an exponent of some of these theories, he soon realised that any kind of political activity was impossible within these theories. So he soon became an ardent critic of its rejection of the world and of the worldliness of the people. For him, the text is something that is affiliated to the socio-cultural and political realities of the world. He considers his own identity in this world as a text, which is materially located in this world. This worldliness is reflected in the form of his representations of the Palestinian cause and of the role of the intellectual.

Said is probably best known throughout the world for his groundbreaking work *Orientalism* in which he demonstrated how the West exercises its hegemony over the East; mainly by constructing the East as its inferior 'other'. The inclination of intellectuals to yield to the interests of hegemony is also an explicit theme in *Orientalism*. His other works like *The Question of Palestine*²¹ and *Covering Islam*²² mainly focus on exposing the Western representations of Palestine and Islam in the contemporary world. In *Culture and Imperialism*²³ Said examines the diverse operations of imperialism, and the power of culture that maintains these operations. The historical experience of resistance against empire is also eloquently mapped out in this book. It is to be realised that, Said's analysis of the representations of the Orient, Palestine or Islam cannot be understood properly without a perception of his view of the worldliness of the text, and the function of criticism and of the intellectuals. The reality that Said tries to articulate through all these books is not different either from the textuality or from the text's worldliness. *The World, The Text, The Critic*,²⁴

perhaps provides a lens through which these works can be read more profitably. Thus through his profound and prolific writings, Said has been acting out his political and cultural theories albeit with many contradictions and paradoxes.

X

His identity as a Palestinian intellectual, that too in an elite academic position in the US, is probably the first paradox. "This identity is itself a text that is continually elaborated and rewritten by Said, intersecting with and articulated by all other texts he writes".²⁵ His preference for the Western canon and Western classical music along with his aversion to Arab classical music has also prompted at least some critics to call him a cultural elitist. His notions on the amateur and exilic intellectual are also deeply paradoxical. It seems that Said is striving hard to meet the requirements of his own conceptualizations of intellectuals, at times. His adoption of Gramsci's concept of the organic intellectual in fact helps him to discard all dogmatic positions in intellectual work. But at the same time, his engagement with so many idealists and specialist intellectuals makes his arguments somewhat eclectic.

Said's major drawback is perhaps his fastidious insistence on individual independence, and his claim that the intellectual's independence is incompatible with membership in any political party or commitment to any political system of thought. Organizational involvement, however, need not entail putting blinkers on the brain. Unity in collective action does not preclude freedom of thought, and both are necessary for political effectiveness. As Gramsci would say, an intellectual can never be detached from the society; and the existence of the intellectual independent of class is only a myth. But unlike in the age of Gramsci, the avenues open before the intellectuals to be actively involved in politics have dwindled. Particularly, after the waning of the radical struggles of the seventies, an apolitical temper has come to grip the academies in the West. It is this context that lends poignancy to the dilemmas of Said.

Despite the many paradoxes and contradictions, Edward Said remains the quintessential intellectual both in the minds of intellectuals and of the marginalized people all over the world – now more conspicuous by his absence and more eloquent by his silence!

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Gujarati Dalit Writing: Towards a New Aesthetic

K. M. Sherrif

The deconstruction of the paradigms derived from both classical Sanskrit literary tradition and from the medieval synthetic Indo-Persian tradition has been one of the chief characteristics of Gujarati Dalit Writing ever since it emerged as a subversive force in Gujarati literature at the beginning of the Eighties of the Twentieth century. Dalit writers, poets as well as fictionists, turned the conventional themes, motifs and modes of Gujarati literature inside out to expose the well-entrenched regressive ideological positions. Apart from bolstering their assault on the all-pervasive elitism in literature and their concerted attempts to resocialise Gujarati literature, this deconstruction provided them with the vital ammunition in their cultural offensive against communal fascism.

Closely related to the deconstruction of conventional literary paradigms is the rejection by many Gujarati Dalit writers of the use of 'standard Gujarati' in their works. Both the poets and the fictionists among them have used the Dalit dialects of Gujarati extensively, especially those of North Gujarat where the Gujarati Dalit Movement originated. Some like Neerav Patel have questioned the very rationale of using the standard version of the language as a literary medium. The choice of the Dalit dialects have not, however, resulted in the production of exotic museum pieces, as it sometimes happens, especially when anthropologically motivated non-Dalits write about Dalits. Instead, it has clearly demonstrated that any other choice would have been a travesty of faithful representation. In fiction the use of the Dalit dialects have facilitated the successful appropriation of conventional narrative techniques.

This paper attempts to offer a glimpse into the aesthetics of Gujarati Dalit writing as it emerged from the deconstruction of conventional literary paradigms and the conscious choice of Dalit dialects for both narration and

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poetical composition. Some of the quotations asked are from published English translations, while the others are impromptus translations from the original Gujarati.

Narsimha Metha (1414-80), the foremost poet in the Bhakthi Movement in Gujarati literature was the typical Brahmin devotional poet of medieval tradition. In his abject poverty, his unflinching devotion and his cascading verse, Narsimha Metha is comparable to the medieval Malayalam devotional poet Poonthanam. Most of his poems and hymns were written in popular idiom. His *Prabhaatiyaans* (Hymns sung at dawn) were, till recently, part of the daily ritual of most Savarna household in Gujarat. One of the popular legends about Narsimha Metha describes how Krishna appeared with a sari for his daughter's wedding in answer to a prayer, which Metha had composed in the form of a *hundi* (a written undertaking to repay a loan).

Neerav Patel's poem *Maro Shamalyo* (My dark skinned lord) turns this legend about Narsimha Metha on its head. Neerav's protagonist is a scavenger who, like Narsimha Metha, is too poor to buy a sari for his daughter for her wedding. Being smarter than the medieval poet, however, he addresses his prayers to both Krishna and Chamundi the goddess of revenge and pestilence. He also believed that the gods only helped those who helped themselves. His daughter too got a sari for her wedding— when he picked up a particularly expensive one at the gates of the crematorium. The sari had been removed from the dead body of a young Savarna woman from an affluent family (as was the custom) before cremation. The scavenger convinced himself that it was a gift from the gods:

My dark skinned Lord
Got my *hundi* right;
And Chamundi knew
My offering was for real
So the zamindar's young wife popped off.

The stiff rendering given above, it must be admitted, does not do justice to the scavenger's monologue in the original, which is in thick dialect and laced with expletives.

Raju Solanki's poem *Maff Karjo Dost Raghla* (Forgive me my Honourable

Friend) is a vitriolic attack on Orientalism which would have delighted Edward Said. The scavenger, a pail of human excreta balanced on his head, tells his Savarna friend:

Not for me the wild, ecstatic dance
With the *Shakunthal* balanced on my head.

The allusion is to the ecstatic reaction of the Nineteenth Century German poet and philosopher Goethe on reading a second-hand German translation (from William Jones's English translation) by Freidrich Von Schlegel of Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Shakunthalam*. Dalits have realised that they have no stake in India's hoary past. Any attempt to access it would be met with terrifying retribution:

The molten lead they poured into my young ears
Still burns me.
The Dalits have no illusions about where they belong either:
The garbage heaps on the outskirts
Of your 'golden age' is the limit. .

Yashwant Vaghela stumbles upon a new etymology for 'Bharat' (India). He traces the word to the phrase *Bharrat* (bearer or burdens). Vaghela's etymology derives its sustenance from the fact that the 'Brown Man's Burden' imposed by world capital is ultimately passed on to the marginalized sections of society, including the Dalits. Vaghela's poem *Hoon Bharrat Choon* (I am the Bearer of the Burden)³ is Indian history in a nutshell, from Mohan-Jo-Daro to the sewage manholes of Mumbai, narrated from the subaltern's point of view.

Bipin Gohel, the oldest living Gujarati Dalit poet has lived most of his life in Hyderabad and Mumbai. The 'mushairas' of the metropolis disgusts him. He tells a fellow poet going to a mushaira:

Your poetry owes nothing
To the cacophony of any mushaira
Nor to the sickening swagger of these pygmies
Inebriated by their obscene opulence.

Leave your words to fend for themselves.⁴

Mangal Rathod's poem *Jalsaghar*⁵ addresses Biswahit Roy, the protagonist of Satyajit Ray's film *Jalsaghar*:

Caught in the web of your vanity
How can you ever pull yourself together
To look destiny in the face
As it smiles sardonically at you
From the midst of its accusers?

But the sardonic smile of destiny may as well have been directed at the mawkish sentimentality that runs through many of Ray's films, or at the fudgy nostalgia that debilitate poets and writers in Indian literature, even those with avowedly progressive *leanings*:

The tears of your beloved kin
Shall flow once more from the burning candles.
Drawing yourself up with the majesty of a khan saheb
The notes of what *malhar* shall you despatch like arrows
To shatter the chandeliers of your *jalsaghar*.

Legends on your life and death
Shall sprout again on this maudlin childish planet.
Begum Akthar's plaintive voice
Shall again move to tears
Men who lost their virgin woods forever.

Neerav Patel's decision to let the protagonist in *Maro Shamalyo* speak in a Dalit dialect must have been a well-considered one. For in his poem *Gujarati*⁶ Neerav asks the crucial question: Whose Gujarati? Dalits of Gujarat have never identified themselves with either *Garvi Gujarat* (proud Gujarat) or *Garvi Gujarati* (proud Gujarati). Apart from Neerav, Shanker Painter is the other major poet who has made effective use of Dalit dialects in his poems. The two collections he had published, *Boongiyo Vaage* (The Bugles Resound)⁷ and *Daathedana Devtha* (The Goddess Who Wields the Sickle)⁸ contain, apart from his own poems, several songs of peasants and artisans

he collected from the village of his native Mehsana district in North Gujarat.

Among fictionists, Mohan Parmar is the most accomplished in the use of Dalit dialects. In his story *Aandhoo* (Sandstorm)⁹ the theme of which resembles that of Berthold Brecht's play *The Rule and the Exception*. Mohan Parmar adopts the brilliant strategy of making a landowner trapped in a sandstorm narrate the story in the First Person in a Dalit dialect. Like the employer misunderstanding the altruistic intentions of his worker in Brecht's play, the landowner takes what are human gestures from Shanamo, the Dalit cart driver as ploys to hide his murderous intentions. But unlike the factory owner in Brecht's play who shoots the worker to death in what he believed was self-defence, the landowner in Mohan Parmar's story is too helpless to do anything but submit himself to his fate, which, it turned out, was nothing worse than being rescued by Shanamo from being crushed by a tree uprooted by the storm. The landowner's helplessness in the storm and his use of Dalit dialect represent a mock-inversion of social hierarchies. The combination of the use of Dalit dialect and the stream of consciousness technique in *Aandhoo* has had its parallels in the fiction of younger Dalit writers like Dasarath Parmar.

Despite the creditable achievements of Gujarati Dalit writing in the last two decades, the silence of some of the pioneers since the mid-Nineties and the tendency of many young Dalit writers to disassociate themselves from the Dalit Movement in recent years are ominous signs. The sustained assault on the Dalit movement by the forces of Hindutva are palpable. And hopes of a resurgence of the Movement in the state, at the moment, appear extremely bleak.

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Imaging the Postmodern

K. Gopinathan

Do you think what you breathe is air?

The Matrix

Truth is produced, induced, and extended according to the regime in power. On the other, truth lies in between all regimes of truth... what is put forth as truth is often nothing more than a meaning (Trinh T. Minh-Ha)

The term postmodernism is used to designate a phenomenon with a unique set of characteristics, which started impacting in a big way on the western societies, on the ways in which they organized themselves and on their cultural practices. Those who would like to be exact argue that it began with the blowing up of a building, designed in the Le Corbusierian School, in St. Louis, Missouri, at 3.32 pm on July 15, 1972. However, there is a near total agreement in viewing postmodernism as a phenomenon than an idea and it can broadly be traced to the post 1968 world, where local conditions/identities are focused over and above a holistic universal. There is not much dispute about the fact that it made its initial forays in the field of architecture. Very soon it found for itself a powerful ally in the medium of motion picture, may be because both primarily belong to the field of the visual. An organisation of the structures and moving images, around the basic notion of functionality and a unity of time and space were till then the guiding principles in these two realms of human practice. A rationalist utopia, a dream of a planned and rectangular world, which will replace the chaotic and the amorphous was the goal of the bourgeois world and of its critical insiders, although they differ, at times even radically, in their programmes and methods of analysis. Both of them shared a faith in the emancipatory ideals of enlightenment and the ultimate victory of reason. To a large extent, films in the modern period were used to address

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the rational consciousness of the spectators and even the gods were questioned from the perspective of this rationalist utopia (see films like *Parasakthi* (Tamil) and *Nirmalyam* (Malayalam)).

The postmodern began with the end of faith in the rationalist utopia. Unlike the heroes of yester years, our present day film heroes rely more and more on brute muscle power than rationalist discourse to tackle hostile situations and opponents in the films. This is the case, not only with the Stallone- Schwarznegger- James Bond films from Hollywood, but also with our own megahit films of Rajanikanth, Nagarjuna, Mohanlal etc. Films before and immediately after the Second World War, both popular and art house texts, were generally targeting the ethical self of the opponent in the film and of the spectator, and were trying to change them through rational/emotional appeals. The famous long speech by Chaplin at the climax of his film *The Great Dictator* and the emotional outburst of the secular, humanist postmaster in the Malayalam classic *Neelakkuyil*, are clear examples of the orientation of the modernist texts. These two films, like many others, are classic statements about modernity's faith in the rational utopia and in the desirability of a harmonious world, both organized around a rational/secular subjectivity. An average text of modernity participates in the inner/outer, soul/body dualism, which privileges the former in the pairs. This functioned as the organizing principle of western modernity and its representational systems.

The postmodern conditions of the contemporary world have thoroughly transformed the centrally organised production strategies of the realist texts. A kind of loose federalism among the different segments and departments of production, has become the order of the day and this has considerably altered the actual organisation of textual and industrial aspects of cinema. A Fordist style of formatting of cinema as an industrial product, which is highly centralised, is replaced by an assemblage of relatively autonomous units. Capital has become 'dis-embodied' and fluid and production is spread all over the globe erasing national boundaries. Studio centred and territorialized filmmaking is under tremendous pressure to reach out to the global village. A homogeneous nationalist spectator is no more the ideal addressee of the postmodern films. Corresponding to the interpellation of themes, interests and styles, sources of finance have also become fluid, flowing in from all directions. Sources of finance, which are

not always transparent, have their own ways of interfering in the actual constitution of a cinematic text. Films produced within this changed scenario and production logic, look more like assembled products leaving little scope for any kind of essentialisation. The spectacular dance numbers, brutal fight sequences and high voltage emotional segments of an average film today are very loosely strung together, as absolutely autonomous units in a federal arrangement, than in a well designed geographic system of images. The important point to be noticed here is that this disintegration or fragmentation of the postmodern is not limited to the production process, but extends itself to the constitution of visual images and to the structuring of them into a narrative. Fragmentation affects all levels of the film production process.

The ontology of television as a medium is 'break' or 'fracture', which makes it a paradigmatically postmodern medium. Fragmenting experience or rupturing its spatio-temporal unity, is the essential nature of that medium. Hence television presents a world which is discontinuous, decentred and fragmented and this 'worldview' is diametrically opposite to the one represented by a classical text. Television programmes like MTV offer, in Fredric Jameson's words, 'schizophrenically fragmented images' and carving out a harmonious world out of them is an impossible task. Films, belonging to the dominant stream, show a tendency to ape this butchery of images. Television shows in bits and pieces, and the remote control, a typical postmodern device, takes us through serials, sentimental soaps, talk shows, musicals and reportage from the battle front, periodically intercepted by commercials. This eclecticism of imagery is the very being of television as a medium. By breaking the flow and narrative progression, Television inflicts a break in the subjectivity of the spectator, who drifts along the endless flow of images.

The intrinsic desirability of the word modern and 'being modern' becoming a value in itself, are being effectively questioned and exposed from various angles during the last two decades. The 'valuation' inherent in the periodisation of human history as ancient/medieval/modern (which itself is a modern European phenomenon), has created a consensus, in privileging the latter against the other two stages. But, by now, critical studies have convincingly established the process of homogenization and exclusion ingrained into the concept of modernity, which squeeze out

innumerable subaltern identities. An Indian modernity and the other regional modernities like that of Kerala, are no exceptions to this universal process of elimination within the modern. The unanimous and apparently progressive designation of subject as a secular modern, made identity markers like caste, gender and class invisible in the Indian context. "Today", as Tejaswini Niranjana and many others observe, "when the nation is increasingly under interrogation, we need to examine the significance for cultural politics of rethinking modernity, modernism, and the modern."¹ In the Nehruvian phase of nation making, it was modern to transcend the vertical-horizontal divisions, which pitted one group of Indians against the other or the simmering fault lines beneath the social surface, which were hampering the baby-nation from reaching out to the brave new world. The word modern was understood and employed for all practical purposes to name a global process such as industrialisation, colonial expansion, creation of democracy, emergence of nation states, growth of mass communication, rise of mass social movements and the combined effect of all these upon individuals and social groups. No doubt, as a medium born out of this process and as the first art form to organize itself as an industrial commercial enterprise, cinema faithfully recorded these epochal changes. As a result, the essential function of cinema is considered to be to mirror the social reality, to effect a realistic re-presentation of the signified. This genetic bond between the signifier and the signified is severed in the postmodern and it is aptly configured as 'the age of the signifier in isolation'. Images are not reflecting a world outside the cinematic text, but they, by themselves, constitute an autonomous realm of signifying practices. Jean Luc Godard was, in a way, predicting this emerging scenario when he redefined 'art as not the reflection of reality but the reality of the reflection'. While neo-realist films like Deseca's *Bicycle Thieves* and Guru Dutt's *Pyaasa* were 'true' reflections of the post war European reality and of the alienation of the artist/individual from the society respectively, the Hollywood films in the 1990's, like *Titanic* and *The Jurassic Park* were celebrating the liberation of the image from the referent. Jean Baudrillard, in his famous essay, gives us a dramatic account of this in order to establish the gravity of the emerging situation under the dictatorship of the liberated visual image. A militant re-assertion of neo- orthodoxy in the Regan-Thatcher era, the withdrawal of the welfare state and the dominance of the electronic mass media are some of the significant events of the backlash, which keep shaking the foundations of the modern world.

They announced the end of a rationalist utopia and the meaninglessness of metanarratives/metaphysics, and the literal fragmentation of the soviet bloc and the fading of a socialist utopia helped to build an aura of authenticity around these claims. And as the youngest of the arts and as almost a Siamese twin of the modern world, cinema has had the rare fortune (or misfortune?) to record both the emergence and the apparent collapse of the modern.

In the modern period, especially in its early phase, the film hero was well-mannered, gentle and respectful towards women and he was an embodiment of all possible virtues. Villains were exactly opposite to the heroes as far as the characterization was concerned. A typical villain looked ugly and cruel, ever ready to violate the modesty of 'good women', violent in behaviour and evil in designs. It was an exact transplantation of the biblical concepts of God and Satan into the cinematic space. By and large, the reel life represented the ethical normative based on the metaphysical divide of good and evil. But the films of the 1990's popularised a different genre of heroes who were, in a sense, 'beyond good and evil' and often the characteristics typical of a classical villain dominated them. Villain is no more a 'secret' to be revealed at the climax of the film, but an 'eternal presence' in the narrative and, at times, he/she even unrecognizably merges with the hero. The hero of one of the megahit Malayalam movies of this period *Azhakiya Ravanaan* (Beautiful Ravanaan) played by the superstar Mammooty was one who belonged to this class of heroes. The hero Kuttysankaran, an underclass by birth, later becomes a multimillionaire, an underworld don, a film producer, a crafty villain who traps the lover of the heroine, a village simpleton, a Romeo madly in love with his teenage flame—all rolled into one. Lacking a centred homogeneous identity as in the case of, modern hero, he is seen casually slipping from one of these identities into another. As the very name of the film signifies the hero Kuttysankaran, who is a bundle of all these mutually conflicting identities, is the demon Ravanaan (archetypal villain of the Indian cultural psyche) but handsome and desirable. Another interesting thing is that all the mutually exclusive identities of this hero are literally 'played-out', that too with a comic flavour, and none is essentialised or privileged as the core of his character. According to the need of the particular situation in the narrative, one of them is foregrounded and the others are backgrounded. A villain, as the 'other' of

the hero, is absent in the film, as the hero himself is discharging the narrative duties of the traditional villain. Villainy is knit into the construction of the hero. Thus, *Azhakiya Ravanam* exhibits the tendencies of a typical postmodern hero with a fluid identity and conventional goody-goody heroes are fast beating a retreat from our celluloid. This is a fact which is underlined by many other heroes portrayed by our popular celluloid stars in the contemporary times. Jagan, the hero played by Mohanlal, another superstar of Malayalam film industry, is a generic brother to the hero of *Azhakiya Ravanam*. Jagan, a Brahmin boy forced by hostile circumstances, runs away from the native village, rebels against his upper caste identity by removing the sacred thread, transforms himself into a secular revolutionary intellectual of Jawaharlal Nehru University, then becomes an underworld goonda and a protector of corporate interests, a wretched womanizer, a drunkard and a drug addict. But later he adorns himself with upper caste markers, retrieves his caste identity and becomes a feudal lord in his native village. Diminution of the stable/centred identity of the hero and the emergence of spectacularised heroes like Kuttysankaran and Jagan with fluid identities, give us a foretaste of the postmodern hero. With enormous amount of firepower and muscle power at their disposal, these larger-than-life heroes as in the case of *Azhakiya Ravanam* or Jagan are, unlike the heroes of the modernity, not engaging the system in its totality but engaging local problems like settling an old dispute with a village karanavar or taking part in family feud or in the renovation of a village temple. Representing or conceptualizing the universal is no more the concern of art and theory in the postmodern. As the conceptual universals are evaporated, the submerged identities and localities become visible. The sudden retreat of old certainties and homogeneities, creates a vacuum, into which intensely passionate and local identities are rushed in. All types of imaginary identities will sound appealing in a world, where people are frantically in search of something to hold on to; and the films in the contemporary world record these seismic changes, under the loss of a symmetric universe of hope.

Mixing of genres, styles and perspectives, overlapping of the roles, confusion of identities, non-linearity and playfulness of the text are some of the very important features of the postmodern text. The occasional comedy sequences, reserved for the erstwhile comedians like Adoor Bhasi and Bhahadur, appear as interludes to unwind the spectators. The comic

scenes of earlier films had no intention of intervening in the business of the hero, who was busy fighting to change a corrupt world. The element of playfulness and comedy have ceased to be just interludes but they have become the general flavour and mode of presentation, of a large number of contemporary Malayalam films, starring Mohanlal, Jayaram, Dileep, Mukesh etc. Mohanlal set this trend of genre/role mixing where the distinction between the hero and the comedian is not operational. Their films cannot be subsumed under any particular genre, they are heady mixtures of popular genres like comedy, thriller, family drama, romance, tragedy etc. Parodying individuals and situations of everyday life is an important factor in the success of their films. Parody is a powerful aesthetic instrument for effective social criticism but the balance between parody and mimicry is so delicate, that often in their films, it slips into a 'neutral mimicry without parody's ulterior motives'. This 'stylistic promiscuity' has pulled down the walls separating art and popular cinema. As the philosophy of the postmodern is associated with pluralism, it is also identified with an eclecticism of styles and a breakdown of artificial boundaries and taboos inscribed within the cultural practices of modernism. In a relatively short span of time, the styles and strategies of high modernism, which used to shock and provoke, were co-opted into the popular. Malayalam films of the late 1980's and the 90's register this mending of the fences between art cinema and commercial cinema, a division developed in the 1970's. As Shelley Walia says, "It was a move to pull art back into the arena of daily life and close the border between art and society", and also "abandonment of the divine pretensions of authorship"². Along with that the text also lost its pretensions of being a complex structure and the idea that meaning is lying somewhere in its depths. When the surface/depth dialectics of modernity lost its currency, everything from the depth erupted to the overground of the text, giving an unusual intensity to the surface.

Films in the postmodern, unlike the films in the modern are not motivated by a commitment to change the world around, but an element of play dominates the narrative. The 'missionary zeal' to create a new subjectivity and the rational world order is missing in these films. The hardships, sorrows and injustices within the system are spectacularised or played-out, but they are not challenged from an alternative political perspective. As rightly pointed out by Val Hill and Peter Every, the "discourse

of enlightenment can be accused of hiding its history of slavery and oppression-part of the very conditions that made it possible. Postmodernism raises those conditions to the level of the signifier, making them part of the pleasure of the text....."³ The central pre-occupation of the postmodern text is pleasure as is obvious in the 'joyful dance of pastiche and parody'. Irresistible is the disarming openness (or brashness?) of the postmodern text, in admitting everything and in making everything visible. Everything that is considered as profane like physical, surface, pleasure, humour, gossip etc, are reinstated at the very center of the postmodern cinema.

The standard response elicited by most films in our times are great fun or *adipoli* (a new Malayalam word popularised by this new genre of cinema), a trend inaugurated by a typical Hindi film like *Rangeela* or Malayalam films *Niram*, *Meesamadhavan* etc. Even a casual comparison of these new breed of films with the Hollywood classics or the Bollywood classics by Gurudutt, Shantaram, Raj Kapoor et al, or with Malayalam classics like *Jeevithanouka* and the new wave films of the 1970's, will show the shift not only in their formal aesthetic structuring but also in their narrative ambience. The Gurudutt film, *Pyaasa*, is an open indictment of an evil world and in the famous climax sequence the hero, a romantic outsider, literally incites the spectators to burn the corrupt world. Similarly the heroes in *Jeevithanouka*, a classic text of the 1950's and *Swayamvaram*, an art house production which heralded the new wave in Malayalam cinema, tenaciously hold on to their essential identities as honest, secular humanists or as aspiring writers who are morally and intellectually uncompromising in a hostile world. Unable to accept any of the "optional identities", which might ensure success in life, as in the case of heroes like Kuttysankaran or Jagan, they, as in the case of the hero in *Jeevithanouka*, wait for a hard-earned victory, earned by sheer virtue of his character or as in the case of the hero of *Swayamvaram* accept a tragic defeat. This is because they are constrained by a God/Satan paradigm and as heroes they are unable to keep the company of Satan or to transform themselves into the satanic mould. But the heroes in the postmodern refuse to fail and are not willing to suffer pain and losses; and not ready for a long and arduous wait for the ultimate victory of the good over evil. They want instant results for which they will go to any extent; they are smart, ready to take the world in their stride and invariably unscrupulous, cunning and scheming. They live on the

surface and celebrate the surface glories; they prefer the ecstasy of the moment and don't wait till eternity to descend on them. Neither are they disturbed by an unequal and oppressive world order nor dream about a just and humane world. The hero's masculinised and spectacularised body (Sylvester Stallone/ Schwarznegger) is the theatre where justice is enacted and punishment rendered. These trigger-happy heroes, who like the old-fashioned heroes, don't address the ethical-rational self of the villain but 'directly address' his body. Even though they belong to a formally democratic country, the terminator heroes are careful enough to ward off the 'danger' of long and winding processes of democracy and legal system delaying the execution of the punishment. It is a feudal punishment delivered through AK-47, Stealth bombers and cluster bombs. The heroes played by Chaplin or Raj Kapoor and the heroes in the Hitchcock films are not as embodied or physically exaggerated as the tribe of terminator heroes; and often they have frail body frames and minds of their own. Most often they 'become' heroes by their inner power, resilience and unflinching faith in the grand narratives of humanism and compassion towards the victimized. They are not heroes by fire power.

An intense visibility of the human body is one of the very important markers of postmodern cinema. Take for example, classical modern texts like *Wild Strawberries*, *Silence* by Ingmar Bergman, *Sacrifice* and *Nostalgia* by Tarkovsky, *Charulatha* and *Ghare-Bhaire* by Satyajit Ray. The mesmerizing beauty and haunting pain, experienced through these and many other modern texts including the popular commercials, are generated through 'ill-lit' compositions, subtle balancing of light and shadow, slow, rhythmic and contemplative shots. An intense and flat lighting pattern throughout the film is the dominant lighting pattern in films like *Run Lola Run* and invariably in television productions, especially serials. Depth is consciously avoided in them both in their lighting and in their focusing and composing of the shots. Flatness/depthlessness at the levels of image production is one significant feature that differentiates postmodern from the modern. A celebration of the surface has its manifestations in all aspects of contemporary culture and the product packaging in consumer industry is its most compelling example. Consumer industry is not just limited to selling products but also keen to sell 'life styles'. Images of the products are sold much ahead of the actual transaction through endless network of electronic

and conventional media. We are, in the postmodern age, flooded with the visual images and without any exaggeration, it can be said that a new type of pastorality has descended on us, where we, human beings, graze the galaxy of visual images.

Human body is the single most visible object in postmodern culture and a chief source of pleasure in texts like pop albums, music videos, advertisements, popular cinema and variety of television programmes. The center of power/ pleasure shifts from the inner to the outer, to the made-to-order muscle men from the high-tech gymnasiums (Stallone/ Schwarznegger/ Salmam Khan etc.) or to the designer babes who flaunt their bodies (Aiswarya Rai, Karishma Kapoor, Nicole Kidman, Bipasha Basu etc). An uninhibited celebration of the human body has done away with the Cartesian split between *res extensa* and *res cogitans* and the philosophical habit of privileging the mental over the physical. Postmodernism has 'invented' human body and cleansed it off the sin stuck to it for the last few millennia. Body, especially of the female, is the new colony, with its vast potential and it is opened to the multibillion image industry in the postmodern. Voyeurism is no more an aberration but a central constituting element of the text within it. Television has played a major role in familiarizing the fragmented female body even to the 'family audience' of our decent middle class households. Through its vast repertoire of the eroticised images postmodern preaches to us a new gospel; this time, centred on the body instead of the soul. And the feminine is located on the surface of a loud and outspoken body, made intensely desirable. Earlier this was a function assigned to the vamp, played by one of the extras and pushed to the outskirts of the narrative and in no way allowed to disturb the story-line. The fundamental difference is in the organisation of the shots. In the classical narrative cinema the desirability/voyeurism around the vamp, or at times around the heroine herself, is organized from the point-of-view of the villain or the bad guy and that itself is a moral comment on it. Such distinctions have become irrelevant in the postmodern cinema, where the heroine is indistinguishable from the vamp and eroticised pleasure of the text is organized within a universal perspective.

The distance that our cinema has travelled from Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali*, Raj Kapoor's *Boot Polish* and Ramu Kariat's *Neelakkuyil* to Karan Johar's *Khabhi Kushi Kabhi Gum* and Kamal's *Swapnakoodu* is the product of

the non-fordist production climate currently dominating our film industry. The most appropriate and faithful reflections of these changes is in the television images, especially in the musicals and mega serials. A director is more like an assembler of songs, dances, fights, thrills and special effects produced by various sub-contractors, than an author in the classical sense. It is not the essential being of a unified narrative, as in the case of a classical text that a spectator is experiencing, but he/she is subjected to the total impact of an assembled product. This, in turn, results in a kind of dependence on special effects (Hollywood productions like *Alien*, *Mummy* etc.) digital imaging and all sorts of technological wizardry.

'This is not the true image but it is just an image', this was the insightful comment by Godard on the radically altered nature of the new cinematic image. He was also the first significant filmmaker who made substantial contributions to the creation of a new generation of images. The deliberate use of flat images and the rejection of deep compositions in his films were intended to portray the depthless/ soulless world of the capitalist modernity. It is not the 'being' of the shot or spiritual intensity of an image that is vital, but the intensity of the surface itself is aimed at in a typical postmodern film like *Run Lola Run*, which makes the generic division of cinema into the popular and the art house redundant. Such hierarchical arrangement of various artistic practices into high and low has lost its sanction; and postmodern art in general as in the case of architecture, seeks to reconnect with the masses, borrowing at random, styles from anywhere and everywhere. Excessive gaudiness, ornamentation, and noisy music have made their way into the postmodern texts. No single artistic style or convention is privileged over others and all the available strategies of expression/narrative styles cohabit in them.

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Accelerating the Organisation and Expansion of World-Centrism by Utilising the Combined Powers of Dialogue and the World Wide Web

Andrew Terrence Brown

The events of the twentieth century have almost shattered humanity's hope for a path of evolution towards peace. From the information that has been accumulating on the past and present human condition, it seems likely that humanity will continue to perpetually spiral downward through the power struggles of global conflict, possibly ending in global catastrophe. Human existence is not projecting the highest realizations of man, the true will of mankind, which is the will of the common human people. To this phenomenon, this dichotomy, humankind cannot remain passive. Understanding this contradiction in human existence compels us to react. In this essay, I will argue that the world-centric worldview, or the global worldview, is the most basic component for the survival of the human species, and that organising the expansion of world-centrism by utilizing the combined powers of dialogue and the World Wide Web is a powerful and essential catalyst.

Dialogue is the most basic and most powerful tool for organizing the collective fight against world problems, and the World Wide Web is the most powerful tool for world-wide dialogue. Therefore, the combined powers of both should be fully utilised. In order to broaden the organisation and expansion of world-centrism, we must devote all available energy to accelerating and expanding the sharing of information and ideas between every person and every organisation directly involved in combating world problems. We must connect, in every possible pattern, the discourse between all of the people and organizations involved in the healing of world problems, and a powerful way to accomplish this would be to centralise the accumulation of information and ideas which they are able to provide.

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I propose that this accumulation of information and ideas provided by these people and organizations be formed into a central database as well as a central network of communication and information sharing, and that this database be available to the entire world. Utilising the combined powers of dialogue and the World Wide Web is an essential step to organizing the fight against the broadest threats to human survival: the suppression and control of information and world views, and our threats to human rights and our natural environment. Although access to the World-Wide Web is primarily limited to the developed world, at the present time the people of the developed world hold most of the power for positive and negative global social change.

First, I will address the essential need for a global view in our world, and then relate metaphysically the importance of this worldview to human survival. Next, I will discuss the role of a central informational database of information sharing regarding world problems, and the role that the suppression of world-centrism plays in obstructing its impact on the world. Finally, I will discuss what has happened in human history and what I believe can happen in the future.

The Concept of World-Centrism: Healing the Organism that is Humanity

“A Way of Thinking that is Rooted in a Truly Global Outlook is the Most Pressing Issue of Our Time.” Daisaku Ikeda, Recipient of the United Nations Peace Award, from his book *For the Sake of Peace*

The basic concepts contained in world-centrism, or the global worldview, are the most essential components of the survival of the human species. World-centrism is a worldview that has no ego-centric ties, whether they are socio-centric, ethno-centric, or otherwise. In essence, it is a worldview that finds itself to be loyal to all of humanity, and understands this stance to be essential to human survival. This view can see through the transparency of the artificial boundaries that have been created; it recognizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of all human life. The central idea of world-centrism is that the existence of humanity depends on our ability to form balance in our co-existence with each other and our natural environment.

World-centrism grows from a larger form of self-identity. Its worldview recognizes that our lives are interdependent, and that in this sense we function as one organism; the survival of the whole depends on a balanced integration of the parts. In order to begin piecing together our scattered puzzle, we must begin to reverse the role of ego-centrism in our existence. We must break the chains of our fractured, dualistic worldview, which has isolated us from the web of patterns that connect us to each other. This process could be accelerated through connecting dialogue between every person and organization involved in combating world problems. The global view must be formed into a central network, an open space of information sharing, and it must be available to the entire world. This concept will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Rejection of ego-centric perspectives is absolutely essential to our survival. The basis for proving that a world-centric or global view is essential to human survival can be seen in the structural patterns of matter and life. The macro and micro levels of reality share relational exchange: the same patterns that can be found at the micro levels of reality can be found at the macro levels. Structural formality exists in the stages of structural formation found in physics and biology, and basic regularities can be found.

At a level of physical perception, internal and external balances, or symbiotic relationships, hold together matter and life. As the forces within matter join together, the formation of structure unfolds in increasing complexity, and the foundation of this increasing complexity is symbiotic balances of forces. These stages of growth are not haphazard: structural formality exists. This structure of symbiosis can be found directly in the relationships of the components in the development of matter and life. From quarks to subatomic particles to atoms to compounds to cells to organisms to the Gaia system, symbiotic balances of force are formed and subsequently built upon. (This is not saying that quarks are the basic building blocks of reality, matter at the quantum level is elusive). Each whole is a conceptualized whole of constituent parts as well as a constituent part of a larger conceptualized whole. As this development unfolds, life and meaning emerges.

This formation is a process of transcendence; each stage forms greater levels of integration, or increasing levels of integrative capacity; the basis is

to go beyond what has come before, to create greater unions. This process consists of: a steady decline of ego-centrism; the creation of order out of prevailing chaos; an intelligent design. Matter, life, and mind escape chaos through self organization, or self transcendence. Life's perception of existence increases as the evolution of consciousness continues; existence gradually perceives itself more profoundly.

Matter and life must follow this structural formality in order to survive. Agency and communion, or balance within and with the external environment, must be retained in order for development to continue. Without this equilibrium, these balances of force will deconstruct: life will inevitably disintegrate. We have failed to perceive ourselves as included in the web of life.

Ecological disintegration and threats to human rights, including the risk of global destruction, are the most basic threats to our survival. They threaten to deconstruct our existence, our transcendent development; they represent a steady rise of ego-centrism, an escalation of chaos, a serious imbalance between human life and our natural environment. Rejection of ego-centric perspectives is essential to re-integration with the process of evolutionary development.

If we can begin to direct the accelerating expansion in organisation of world-centrism, we can counteract the human ego in process. For anything to expand outward, it must be collected and condensed to a focal point, a central area and network of connection. Organising and expanding this view of the world is the basic building block of the transcendent evolution of humankind.

**The World-Centric Collective:
Accelerating the Growth of the Global Perspective by
Organising the Sharing of Information and Ideas
Concerning World Problems: A Practical Application of this
Conference**

"Only within the space provided by dialogue, whether conducted with our neighbours, with history, with nature or the cosmos, can human wholeness be sustained." Daisaku Ikeda, also from *For the Sake of Peace*

Dialogue is the sole weapon of the enlightened mind, and the World Wide Web is the most powerful tool for world-wide dialogue. Therefore,

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both should be fully utilized. We must give the common people a way to organise a force for themselves.

Humanity must begin to construct the expansion of the world-centric self-identity; based on the interdependence of our lives, we must organize the understanding of the functioning organism that we collectively are. We must create an expanding world-centric entity, a central neural bridge between the clash of civilizations. Creating order out of prevailing chaos requires self-organization.

A central informational database could be constructed, utilising the World Wide Web. It could include links to every organization and every individual in the world involved in the healing of any of these world problems. All of the information and ideas they can provide concerning world problems could be structured and organized. This database could become the progressive think tank of the new millennium, the largest open space of positive dialogue and information sharing in the world. The exchange of ideas and information could be phenomenal because this massive database would be available to the entire world.

This philosophy conference is putting people and ideas together regarding all of these world problems. This format is a practical application of this philosophy: it bridges together all of the people and organisations directly involved in these issues and has the power to make all of the information and ideas that they can provide available to the entire world. The power of this availability could have a role in attuning the world to global reality; it could unmask the size of the global view. We must not rely on external reform but on the expansion of internal reform.

The concept of world-centrism is a unifying ground for endless people and endless organisations all over the world. World-centrism includes anyone or any organisation that is involved in healing a world problem that threatens human survival. This includes any issues surrounding human rights, the environment, etc. Human rights issues include: exploitation of peoples, whether economic or environmental; peace, including conflict resolution and ending arms proliferation; the effects of socio-centric and ethno-centric ideologies, including imperialism, whether economic or cultural, and genocide, whether racial or cultural; basic life necessities, including combating starvation, mal-nutrition, poverty, and disease; issues surrounding religion,

including freedom, acceptance, and peaceful co-existence; the threat of bland monoculture; responsible science and technology, etc. Ecological issues include: sustainable development; pollution of any kind, mainly ozone depletion; endangered species, etc.

A centralised, broadly expanding world-centric collective could be constructed. The lines of communication between all of these people and organisations could be crossed in infinite patterns, to begin a mass communication, a mass sharing of information, a combinatorial explosion. Unlike the United Nations, where decision making is centralised and subsequently acted upon, this simple information sharing would be an upward grassroots movement.

The central objective would be to disseminate the information and ideas accumulated by this collective of people and organizations. Local forums for discussion could form, and these forums could help local communities solve local problems. Thus, by not imposing patterns, natural patterns would manifest.

If the ideals of world-centrism were to broadly expand, every person on this planet would be more prosperous, our lives safer than ever before, and our own as well as our descendant's long term happiness a hundred times more likely to be sustained. The people, ideas, and information would have to be linked together to endless length, but since we are in the "communication" age, we have all of the necessary means of communication. The ideas would have to be spelled out by endless people, the information accumulated by endless people, but being in the "information" age, we have all of the necessary resources to accomplish this. The accumulation, comparison, and discourse of people regarding the ideas and information of world problems could be of infinite use to the world. How this force can gain momentum to influence global politics is not yet known, but the very possibility that it could influence global politics is a justification for contemplating its formation.

Important issues surrounding this format of free access of information would need to be addressed before the network was connected, such as the right to stay out of globalization, rights of privacy, and hidden agendas among those providing information.

The human and cultural right to stay out of globalization would have to be upheld. Protecting peoples and cultures of the world from globalization could be done by organising the information that people provide regarding how to stop the encroaching aspects of globalization, such as encroaching international businesses, etc. This right could also be upheld by respecting the right of local cultures to stay out of the information.

The important unforeseen issues and objections that would arise would be many in number, but since they are unforeseen, they cannot be confronted at this point. However, we should at least be contemplating the possibility of its creation.

Suppression of World-Centrism: What Stands in the Way

Creating order out of chaos requires us to reverse the process of ego-centric power struggles on the global scale through self organization, and this cannot be done without lifting our worldwide governmental sanction on information and worldviews.

The suppression of world-centrism is the biggest obstacle to balanced integrative co-existence, or transcendent human evolution. World economic powers backed by bureaucratic and totalitarian ideology have never had the power and influence they have today over the world and the world's collective worldview; our global society is based on a dominator hierarchy of world-centric suppression, most importantly of information, ideas, and worldviews. Although self-governance is absolutely essential and must be spread as widely as possible, dominating nations, with their collective influence on humanity's prevailing worldviews, are destroying our higher form of self-identity, a vital piece of humanity. Pathological dominance is abuse of upward or downward powers of causation, the most serious cause of suicidal imbalance.

In evolution, any part of a system that refuses to consider the other parts as necessary to the survival of the whole (the necessity of internal and external balance), brings destruction upon itself in the web of life. Dominating imbalance becomes a cancerous cell in the body, in this case the collective functioning human body. In order for peace and prosperity in the world to arise, the worldviews held by world leaders must make a quantum leap, and begin to reverse the cyclic nature of bureaucratic and

totalitarian ideology. Our nations function as a relatively new organism; any new organism requires time to mature and stabilize. Only when an organism has experienced a virus can it build an antibody to that virus.

If human existence perpetually continues down the path of division, ruled by ego-centrism, our eventual self-destruction is inevitable. In order for matter and life to transcend, to unfold in increasing complexity, or to even carry on existence, at each stage internal and external balance must be formed. Our very survival depends on our ability to form balance with each other and with our natural environment, and this massive suppression of information and worldviews is the most basic obstacle. The drive of every symbiotic relationship is to retain wholeness and partness, or internal and external balance. If we fail at either of these endeavours, we will simply cease to be. Our existence depends on this natural law.

We have a central governmental choice, between bureaucracy and humanism. The widespread suppression of world-centrism is the most basic threat to humanity, and to humanism. The world-centric worldview must begin to expand and manifest itself on our evolutionary path in leadership. Without this necessary step, our development will cease to continue.

This oppression to the evolution of our collective intellect is our greatest challenge to the realizations of man becoming actualized in the operation of our world. This central governmental choice is between oppression and manifestation. The sum of the ruling class is very small: a very small minority is directing the course of human existence. The first step to overturning this dichotomy, this power of totalitarian suppression, is to make the citizens of the world aware of this phenomenon, this contradiction to our existence, in its totality. This could be aided by unmasking the size of the global view, and making this view available to the entire world.

The Impact of Optimism and Idealism - We Were Created for Something Much Greater than This: What Has Happened and What Could Happen

We understand that internal affairs no longer consist of isolated individual nations, that all affairs on this earth are "internal affairs".

Today is an ironic age. We possess the ability to completely destroy

ourselves and the earth at precisely the same time that we can generally agree on an understanding of what is needed in our world. We have been given the choice between life and death. Survival has always been the number one drive of humanity. The choices that the world makes in this decade could determine the future of the human race.

As the evolution of life continues, more and more meaning seems to emerge and manifest. For this reason I do not believe that we are eternally doomed to fail at peaceful co-existence with each other and our environment.

There is evidence that suggests we have been set up in the right place at the right time to change. Our current world is at risk of total ego-centric domination, and if we temporarily survive in this escalation of chaos, our world will be filled only with hate, violence, suffering, destruction, and disintegration. At this rate, the organism that is humanity has not obtained causation; it does not have the power to choose life. However, evolution is pointing us in the right direction. There is a larger group of people on this planet with a global worldview and a world-centric self identity than there has ever been, and this is growing every day, one person at a time. We must understand that there is considerable, if not monumental, hope for a new path. People encounter innumerable influences that restrict the global worldview, but there are thousands of people and organizations who have the mission to spread world-centrism by combating one world problem or another.

By unifying these people and organisations with the information and ideas that they possess through utilizing the World Wide Web, we could begin to broadly organise agency and causation in our destiny. Every day people are finding new ways to fight against the widening gap between the North and South, the clash between East and West, environmental destruction, poverty, starvation, war, the seemingly unending cycle of cultural and racial genocide and cultural and racial imperialism, among many other world problems. If we do not unify the information and ideas provided by these people, I do not believe that we will ever escape this downward spiral. Chaos will escalate, and our next catastrophe may be our last. We must begin to "think globally, act locally, and commit individually."¹

Poverty, hunger, and starvation put chains around entire groups of

people. I believe that the first step to creating a free world must come through eliminating hunger. According to a United Nations report, five percent of the world's annual defense budget would be sufficient to provide enough food, water, healthcare, and education to the entire world in the same period of time. Not only is this fact appalling, but at the United Nations Millennium Summit, world leaders agreed that relieving the plight of those poorest nations is a global responsibility. What are we waiting for? Eliminating starvation is well within our grasp. This should be the first priority to lobby support for. Why wait? Every second an avoidable infant death occurs.

Every person in the world shares possible nuclear, biological, and chemical oblivion in common. Nations must really rethink what defense actually is, and what safety means for their people in the long run. We are all locked in a room, gasoline all over the floor, fumes filling the air, and we are all stockpiling matches for what reason? Everyone's life is in danger. To make things worse, the nuclear arms race is currently escalating, with many new nuclear players. This is the most daunting dilemma we have ever had. This danger of mutually assured destruction could turn into the most imminent grounds for cooperation. I believe the availability of the collective global view on the World Wide Web could play a vital role in organizing support to eventually manifest this cooperation.

The world of extreme consumer culture has absolutely no idea of the repercussions of its lifestyle. Only information can save us. Ecologists tell us today that if drastic measures are not taken, life as we know it will not last another century. Sustainable development is the most important issue of our ecological future. In the United States, forty percent of the rivers, lakes, and streams, as well as large amounts of the coastline, are unsafe to fish or even swim in. The U.S. produces at least a quarter of the ozone depleting emissions, the most powerful threat to the entire world ecosystem. The White House even edits out emissions content from the Environmental Protection Agency's reports. The centralised availability of world-centric information could block any nation's abilities to cover up the reality of the impacts that their citizens lives have on others. I believe this nation has the potential to wake up and take responsibility for its actions, if the citizens could become self aware.

The United States is doing little to help world-centrism manifest, whether through the economy or the armed forces, or both in a military-industrial complex. At the same time that we are the most powerful force in the entire world, our leaders go so far as to deny the importance of the United Nations, the only collective force we currently have to organize the fight for human rights and ecological re-integration. If the citizens of the United States could become self aware of the threats they pose and their potential to be a force for good in the world, and what "good" really means for the common people of the world, I believe that the United States could fundamentally change. I believe that we possess the resources to become a major force for human rights and environmental re-integration.

The threat that the United States poses to the world is unprecedented, however I believe that its weaknesses can be overcome. The problems that the U.S. poses to the world also pose the same dangers to the U.S. To some degree, the leaders of the U.S. stick to their patterns of behaviour as a result of being threatened, and they feel threatened because of their patterns of behaviour. I believe that over time, our thought patterns and patterns of behaviour could shift.

To eventually accomplish this, it would take nothing short of a massive grassroots movement of information dissemination within the U.S. Though this seems impossible, I believe that there is evidence of its possibility.

"Until There is Peace Among Religions, There Can Be No Peace in the World." Professor Hans Kung

A central question would be to ask how this accumulation and connection of discourse could play a role in healing our central religious struggle. This world-centric collective could play a vital role in organizing world-wide inter-religious dialogue, to accelerate the connection of people regarding this most important peace process. The amount of people involved who view peaceful co-existence as a number one objective, the silent majority, could be uncovered.

Relatively small groups of people, on both sides, are keeping the cycle of violence intact. A main objective of this collective web site would be to provide the means to give the common people a voice, an ever organizing force. The first step to amplifying the voice of the common

people could be to attempt to link these people together, to infinitely cross their lines of communication regarding the information and ideas they contain. The dichotomy of this situation reflects many violent conflicts in the world; they are held together by the minority, the will of the common people is unable to manifest.

If the process of this central religious conflict could begin a cycle of reversal, this could change our outlook as human beings on what it means to be human and our abilities to manifest peace. If the communication of information and ideas between these people was organised, there may be no way of stopping its infiltration, even directly into this central religious conflict. If this conflict, the central conflict of humanity, is ever resolved, we can imagine what impression could be made on the people of the world. A revived hope for the ability of man to co-exist peacefully could be born. Information is power, and the power of the linkage by persons of ideas and information could gain enough force to overthrow physical power. The outcome could begin to reverse our ingrained idea of a permanent human condition.

Reason, without faith in the power of reason to overcome, is useless. Unprecedented change is never impossible, it is written in the laws of nature. Change is the only constant—transcendence is built into matter and life. Our collective human outlook on our own abilities, as well as the human condition, must change. We must realise that there is no permanent human condition, that we are an evolving interdependent system, an evolving collective consciousness. If rationality exists in the human realm, logic and love are innate to human existence. Only at this junction can we see our evolutionary path clearly. The foundation of cognitive evolution began with logic and with love. Love is the seed of logic, logic the seed of love, and both are the seeds of world-centrism, the seed of survival.

In the words of Ken Wilber..."Evolution has the broad and general tendency to move in the direction of: increasing complexity, increasing differentiation/integration, increasing organization/structurisation, increasing relative autonomy, increasing telos... as the cosmos comes to know itself more fully, new worlds emerge".²

Notes and References

- 1.) This slogan was provided by Princess Elizabeth of Yugoslavia during the Earth Conference One held in Oxford, 1988.
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Reflection on Political Crisis in the Contemporaneous: Paul Ricoeur and Hanna Arendt Trend

Marcelo Felix Tura

Summary

The purpose of this article is to present a reflection on political crisis promoted by accelerate development of technology in the contemporaneous age. Besides, there should be a contribution to this debate, recovering the capacity of reflection and political action in an attempt to design a new project to social organisation. Moreover, it is our purpose to shed some light on political crisis at present time.

Based on Paul Ricoeur and on Hanna Arendt trends, we conclude political action promotes changes in the social organization and it also improves new meanings for individual and collective existence of men.

Key words: technological capitalism, political crisis, meaningless of individual and social lives, constitution of identity, changes in the society.

Introduction

Contemporary historical conditions of technological capitalism have been causing changes in social, political, economic and cultural organisations. Then, these changes have promoted Social Sciences' models and theories crises.

Men's action in the world has made transformations along the social order established in other historical times. Individual and collective action are political in such a way to defend interests and satisfaction of needs. This is so, because they always aim power.

Men need to explain and also to comprehend the world in an attempt to answer and to satisfy their happiness and their future. However, these

become more frequently difficult, because technology advance makes society more complex.

It is not possible to consider society as permanent, just as nature. Society means movement, composed by permanence and change. Action promotes disorder, and this, disagreements and crises which send or not society to decadence, to the end of actual civilization project and to social paradigms' breakage.

During a crisis, the philosophers, motivated by problems that plague political and economic orders, advertise the end of ideology, utopia and human rationality.

Technology acceleration promotes place reduction, time's acceleration, individual's exacerbation and establishes a media society that keeps on creating illusions and false conscience on individuals. Moreover, this media society also keeps on imposing political fictions which are supported only by some social groups.

Groups who ascend to the top of the society and control media have influenced political utopia models. On the other hand, current political utopia models have so narrow fields that do not allow adaptations and adjustments when a new historical era comes in.

Fiction is a phenomenon made upon fantasy, and utopia is a theoretical model or description of an ideal made upon observation of reality. We realize there is a contradiction between these two concepts, because utopia refers to an ideal model while fiction is a fantasy creation.

Political fiction should be considered on two perspectives: settled by governments, institutions and new technologies as conceptions and strategies that improve social collective motivation to political action and as theories and models created by individuals which determine historical and temporal dimension that improve changes in the society.

On the crisis of the current political utopia models, we point Paul Ricoeur's and Hanna Arendt's political thoughts to establish a referential of analysis and reflection that allows us to criticize political fiction models imposed by technology.

1. Paul Ricoeur: Ethical, Political and Economic Intersection

According to Ricoeur, Politics has its own rationality and it is not a simple variable of Economics. Also, avoiding a moral view of Politics, he proposes Politics and Ethics should be considered across an intersection of three circles: Economics, Politics and Ethics.

For this author, the comparison between Economics and Ethics defines Politics, so Politics should be set face to face to Ethic. Also, political problems and difficulties have particular links to Ethics that do not depend on Economics.

Before being confronted to Ethics, Politics should be defined with respect to economic and social points of view. According to Ricoeur, it is supported by the idea that economic and social spheres are settled in the men's organised faith against nature through methodical organization of work. Moreover, this establishes connections to production, circulation and consumption of stocks. Thus, definition of economic order comes up to more than one abstract social mechanism in a concrete historical community.

Ricoeur distinguishes society and community concepts: society is a term related to the economic mechanism while community is a term related to the uses and changes of habits.

The economic and social mechanisms have improved a rational organisation of work. So, rational work has been educating men. Then, economic man was being considered rational man.

According to Ricoeur, it is necessary to overcome Marxism tradition inheritance that considers Politics as a simple variable of Economics. For him, Marxism fashion produced a lacuna while not distinguishing Politics from Economics.

In a Marxism fashion, political alienation is caused by economic alienation: in this trend, the source of alienation is the *plus valorem* obtained from capital exploring men's work. Then, the aim of any political regime is to overcome exploration of men's work through appropriation of this economic surplus.

According to Ricoeur, Marxism commits a dramatic oversight when it

only considers popular movements able to make society free of economic exploration. Along this fashion, absence of an autonomous reflection on politics ends up on a political totalitarianism, as an excuse for suppression of alienation's sources.

Ricoeur points men's dissatisfaction on society defined by Economics: greatly dispute and competition; most people does not have access to produce wealth, confrontation of groups in the society without Estate's arbitration; meaningless in the fight against nature and in the effective calculation apology which organises work methodically.

There is a paradox that plagues advanced societies driven by technology: on the one hand, societies increase technological competition to continue developing; on the other hand, technology dissolves societies, ethical and political essences. Industrialization logic and rationality paradox establishes an economic and political puzzle.

Modern men in attempt to overcome contradictions generated by this paradox start privatizing his private life. In order to recover meanings for life, Ricoeur proposes Economics and Politics would be considered in a different way; Politics would have a reasonable rationality and an ethical perspective. Economic order only satisfies work's organisation but men need to seek meanings to their lives in the universal concrete.

Politics should be defined by the function of Estate in the historical communities. Ricoeur defines Estate as a union of historical communities able to make decisions. Historical communities have a sense beyond formal, because habits and symbols, accepted in prescript form, preserve their narrative and symbolic identity.

Several institutions are articulated and organized in the Estate and they make human action reasonable. There is rationality in the collective practice that makes human action's wisdom.

Existence of rational Politics and an Estate as a universal structure was based on Hegel. However, Ricoeur gives to it another meaning: a democratic Estate that guarantees freedom, equality and non-violence, where conflicts should be expressed and negotiated, and citizens should have their rights insured.

According to Ricoeur's point of view, Politics should transform individuals in citizens and Estates in a particular and free organisation that satisfies individual's and collective's needs.

There are two political reflection fashions according to Ricoeur: one based on Estate's rationality which limits human's passions, related to Aristotle, Rousseau and Hegel's trends; other that highlights violence and falsehood of power, related in Plato, Maquiavel and Marx's trends. These two trends represent the political paradox in the societies.

Political paradox exposes conflicts in the society, which have originated the conflict of interpretations and residual violence. Such problems have been enlarged in the technological society.

In order to overcome the paradox, Ricoeur proposes political liberalism: a democratic project made by a historical community where ordinarily worth commonwealth overcomes hierarchical command of authority in the social organisation.

The Estate's function is to organise a free discussion through proposition of procedures that allow conflicts to be negotiated. For Ricoeur, Estate cannot eliminate conflicts, therefore it regulates discussion and guarantees necessary conditions of free public opinion through Politics.

Politics and Ethics' intersection, according to Ricoeur, is composed by convergent consensus around founder traditions where a community takes motivation to live.

In Ricoeur's opinion, politics is divided into two parts: moral conviction defined by the excellence of the preferable; moral responsibility defined by the historical context and the moderate use of violence.

Ricoeur proposes a moral discussion where political contestants' convictions should be submitted to a universal exigency. In this discussion, the point of view of the other and ethical convictions, based on *jus* of traditions has to be considered.

In Ricoeur's point of view, the concept of responsibility is enlarged by the sense of solidarity and friendship. So, it is transformed in responsibility to the other. Then, political action should be improved by prudence and it has to promote commonwealth.

According to Ricoeur, freedom is the solution for the worse of Politics as soon as virtue and justice are the solution for the worse of Estate. For him, ethical, economic and political intersection improves individuals to a good life in common to the others and in *jus* societies.

2. Hanna Arendt: A New Age

Hannah Arendt presents an alternative proposal to recover Politics. For her, Politics, in a democratic manner, allows pluralism and diversity, also drawing together ideal conditions to form individuals' identities.

According to Arendt, individual's identity is made socially, while in Ricoeur there is a multiplicity of conditions that determines the constitution of identities: individual should choose some of them and others are determined by social environment.

At the present time Politics has been converting into an administrative activity and, consequently, has losing meanings. Arendt, worried about impoverishment of political activity, develops her reflections upon two dimensions: Jewish-Christian inheritance and the recovery of the political thought.

For Arendt, past and future constitute political field and it has two perspectives: retrospective analysis of history and respect commonwealth by individuals. Politics has been made in a continuous way: now we are suffering the consequences of what was decided in the past and political decisions of the present will affect the future.

For Arendt, in order to recover political meanings it is necessary to consider individuals do not exist separately and also they communicate. For her, action and thought are political acts which citizens exercise freedom and citizenship.

According to Arendt, politics is not an absolute need for society, it is not a man's attribute and neither it is a part of human nature. For her, Politics is more elevated way of plural company, where several groups, with different ideas and in certain place, have their destinies send to commonwealth and to humanity's formation.

The fundamental principle for political thought, according to Arendt, is diversity, because men have different opinions. Then, according to this

principle, politics is made by heterogeneity, not by homogeneity, which means equality has to be reached out from differences.

In Politics, action has a highlight, because it unchains processes that generate power. For Arendt, power has to be exercised without use of violence, force and coercion and authority has to be based on collective acceptance.

Arendt clarifies social mechanisms of control used to make life cruel. For her, totalitarian government uses terrorism to defeat opponents avoiding any opposition to established order and, when it does not have more enemies to combat, it spreads terror on common citizens.

Totalitarian governments spread ideologies against human nature, which establish terror in the society. For Arendt, concentration and extermination fields placed in World War II represent the most radical experience of terrorism.

According to Arendt, whenever totalitarianism takes place, it creates political institutions that destroy social and political traditions. Totalitarian governments transform social classes in mass, change political actions to mass actions and increase police action.

Constant crises in the societies allow totalitarian governments to adopt methods of intimidation and violence against population, which transform individuals in mass.

For Arendt, according to historical experience, all forms of government: traditional or liberal, national or socialist, republic or monarchy, authoritarian or democratic are fragile and they do not last for a long time.

Arendt, based on historical experience, interprets totalitarianism as a modern form of tyranny because the power is concentrated only in one man's hands. Nowadays, a dictator needs orientation of law that commands nature and History, so his power can be exercised on legitimacy and without outrage.

Total terror belongs to the essence of totalitarian regime, and its function is to accelerate natural and historical forces of action. According to Arendt, as in a monarchy, the principle is the honour and in a republic the principle is the virtue, as the terror becomes an orienting and a criterion principle for

action in a totalitarian government. The fact terror is made in constantly actions, each government's totalitarian act is changed in an execution of a death sentence that nature and History had already pronounced.

According to Arendt, totalitarian governments use ideologies as armature, installing the logic of tyranny, inhibiting individuals to elaborate thoughts against submission. In totalitarian governments terror is a nature and historical action, and ideal individual is not able to think, to feel and to act, even to differentiate reality to fiction and true to false.

Absolute terror becomes true through isolation of individuals, complicating political contacts and actions against established power. Political isolation becomes in loneliness, transforming individuals in isolated and solitary beings. Politics isolation happens when action aiming at commonwealth is not possible.

According to Arendt, loneliness makes individual experience not to belong to world, instead individual living in company of others. Loneliness makes individual to lose self-confidence and confidence on the others, complicating any kind of social association. As a consequence, individual loses, at the same time, capacity for thinking, feeling, and belonging to a real world.

In Arendt's point of view, loneliness has been used as social control of employees until Industrial Revolution, and it has been promoting collapse of political institutions and social traditions. Loneliness, while element preparatory of victims to concentration field, has been extended as a daily experience to individuals in the society and it has been destroying any social organisation.

In Arendt's understanding, experiences of concentration field create a new form of social control to established governments that has promoting physical and ideological violence, and social isolation.

Historical experiences of totalitarian and technology acceleration improved disorder in the social organisation. As a consequence, Politics, symbols, values and life loose meaning.

In Arendt point of view, human freedom of thought is able to promote changes in the social organisation, establishing a new age that promotes

commonwealth. To her, human freedom of thought is able to create a new man and a new society.

In Ricoeur and Arendt, it is always possible to establish a new age, from a new beginning, because man is always able to rebel against any established order.

Conclusion

The aim of our work was to recover the meaning of Politics. Contemporary historical conditions of technological capitalism promote place's reduction, time's acceleration and individual's exacerbation that endanger man's understanding and political field; also it produces a general crisis of perspectives to human and do not facilitate historical transformation.

Our aim to point Ricoeur and Arendt's political thoughts was to assure historical possibilities of individual as political actors. Necessity to be free makes men able to react to any established order.

Men should be able to solve proposed matters by contemporaneous and they should have a choice to believe or not on continuation of civilization project, for this, they have to continue believing in their capacity of managing conflicts.

We pointed Ricoeur's and Arendt's political thoughts because they stress men's possibility of changing the actual historical context through politics. For them, crises, deviations, illusions, mistakes stimulate men to search meanings to social and individual life.

Men, feeling lack of meanings to life, wish transformation and make keeping in them a horizon to political utopia. Searching new meanings to life, men recreate themselves, and society.

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Logic and the Problem of Knowledge in African Philosophy

Njoh Alexandre

Introduction

This thesis is a study of the logic of African epistemic methodology. It is a logical investigation into the African proverbs and divination statements. Logic could be applied here in two ways; deductive and inductive. Deductive logic should study in a formal way the various statements and propositions in African with the aim of exposing their validity or invalidity while induction critically examines the scientificity or truth of the propositions and statements. It is an enquiry into the possibility of an indubitable knowledge through an African epistemology using some proverbs, *Ifa* and *Zande* divinatory statements study cases.

In approaching this subject matter I shall acknowledge that in every field of study there are unique subjects — specific abstract basic principles of reasoning that are good in that particular field only. This may be applicable to African method of knowing. But I wish to be guided by the belief that abstract general principles of logic hold good in all fields and all subjects in determining the validity or invalidity of arguments, and that logical truths of statements provides some rules or principles to justify only some steps of reasoning that are good and, answer questions as to whether an argument is valid or a set of statements is logically consistent. Accordingly, we shall try to achieve the objective of this thesis through these methodological sub-headings:

Introduction

Logic, Epistemology and African Proverbs

Logic, Epistemology and Causality

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Determinacy and Indeterminacy of African Epistemology.

If every culture should have some logical thoughts, no matter how primitive or inchoate then there should be in existence what can be called African logic, though its substantive nature may be problematic. But the logic of the African must be located within the vortex of African philosophy which is a discipline of critical analysis of social and political thoughts and myths and symbols of African religious world views. Like in western philosophy, the core disciplines in African philosophy should be metaphysics, logic, epistemology and ethics. Against the background of Robin Horton's recommendation that logic, Epistemology, Metaphysics or Ethics be investigated piece meal in African culture, there arises the need for a logical investigation into African Epistemology.

I should also recommend the logic in the natural language of the African on the one hand and on the other hand, the need for its formalization in terms of sentence connectives and variables, subject-predicate calculus and deductive methods. The logic in natural language flourished in African culture in the closed context which, ipso-facto, requires to be translated into standard categorical and inductive statements. These are, otherwise, coherent and critical judgement which I believe are informal logic of the Africans. Such coherent and critical judgements which abound in traditional Africa may be inductive, analogical and deductive reasoning, most of which may be critically speaking, validly limited to 'African Universe'. The problem of the logic, therefore, is the problem of its closed culture and, which demands its universal or scientific acceptance through formal logic inevitable.

Logic, Epistemology and African Proverbs

Although proverbs and wise-saying are more often than not couched in myths and religious world views, they express some facts about the metaphysical and physical structure of reality. Some summarize adequate conceptions of the basic structure of the world and adequate set of standards for human conduct and social organizations. Some proverbs and wise sayings were arrived at through deductive and inductive inferences or from universal concomitance of phenomena, except that they may be couched in natural and mythical language.

Granted that these proverbs are logic in the natural language in their own right, they may lack the credential of modern logic and science. Bertrand

Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein pointed out that a logically correct symbolism must be in a logically perfect language so as to capture reality. In his own words, Russell says:

“... in a logically correct symbolism, there will always be a certain fundamental identity of structure between a fact and the symbol corresponds very closely with the complexity of the facts symbolized by it”¹.

This identity of structure is postulated to hold not between any existing language and basic metaphysical structure of the world, but only between a logically perfect language and metaphysical structure. Russell and Ludwig would, ipso-facto, dismiss African proverbs from the realm of science and logic since they were concerned with, and formulated, from a mythical, natural and logically imperfect language. For them the language of these proverbs and metaphors should, of necessity, be translated into a logically perfect English language with connectives, compound and atomic sentences. Leibniz, Russell and Carnap also see the ordinary or natural language as inadequate for philosophical purposes because of its vagueness, inexplicitness, ambiguity, context — dependence and misleadingness. They therefore propose the construction of an artificial or logically perfect language from the natural language in which these defects are removed.

Definitely, if we were to produce and refine African traditional logic from African proverbs and wise sayings, we would be confronted with the problems of either firstly, pursue a perfectly written African language and secondly translate them into a logically perfect African language or alternatively carry out a straight forward transmutation of these proverbs into logically perfect English language from where one may distill out formal truths and logic. Walter J. Ong writes about the need for language in science and explanations in the following words:

“abstractly, sequential, classificatory, explanatory examination of phenomena or of stated truths is impossible without writing and reading”².

Hence, there is no gain-saying the fact that writing makes the management of knowledge more rewarding than orality does. He contends that to move from orality (in African culture) to writing is to a purely individual act of self-assertion and from illogicality to a rational state of

consciousness, and from a state of mental chaos to a domesticated thought process of science.

Borrowing Robin Horton's ideas on 'Philosophy and Logic', 'Open and Closed Predicaments', African proverbs and wise sayings would definitely not pass for logic or philosophy. For Horton, rational as African thought may be, there is a sense in which this includes among its accomplishments neither logic or philosophy. He says, logic means "thinking directed to answering the question, what are the general rules by which we can distinguish good arguments from bad ones".³ And philosophy means "thinking directed to answering the question: On what grounds can we ever claim to know anything about the world".⁴ According to Horton, Logic and Philosophy in these restricted senses are poorly developed in traditional African. Despite its elaborate and often penetrating cosmological, sociological and psychological speculations, traditional thought has tended to get on with the work of explanation, without pausing for reflection upon the nature or rules of this work. He says, that because the traditional thinker is unable to imagine possible alternatives to his established theories and classifications, he can never start to formulate generalized norms of reasoning and knowing. Only where there are alternatives can there be choice, and only where there is choice can there be norms governing it. He therefore concluded that these second order intellectual activities are virtually absent from traditional cultures, while logic and philosophy are characteristically present in all scientifically oriented cultures.

We may accept the contention that logic and philosophy are poorly developed in Africa only in the light of classical and contemporary philosophy which is in tune with modern science and logic. The burden on us is therefore to make African philosophy more critical and scientific and make, if possible, its proverbs, wise-sayings and/or divinatory statements amenable to scientific and inductive explanations.

Against the above background we shall be faced with the following problems concerning logic and Epistemology in African thoughts

- a) abandoning natural logic in a natural language for a logically perfect language,
- b) opening the closed predicament of African culture especially as it concerns its epistemology,

- c) discarding orality for a perfectly written African language translatable to a logically perfect English language,
- d) discarding myths for facts,
- e) translating African proverbs and wise-sayings into existential and categorical statements amenable to modern logic.

Now we are going to start experimenting with translating some proverbs and wise-sayings into inductive and categorical statements for the purpose of making them amenable to logical and scientific investigations. This is because most of African proverbs and wise-saying are rhetorical and seem to have no epistemic content. Most of them can tell us about African world views and moral ideas without epistemological content. Here are some proverbs and wise-sayings among the Igbo and Yoruba tribes which I have attempted to convert into categorical propositions.

1. The child being carried on the back does not know that the trek is difficult.

Categorical propositions:

Children who are being carried on the back are those who do not know that the trek is difficult.

2. The snail is one animal who carries his house with him wherever he goes.

Categorical proposition:

All snail carry their houses wherever they go.

3. If a child claims to be wise, tell him that his wisdom came from his father.

Categorical proposition:

All children who claim to be wise got their wisdom from their father.

4. A man feasting in his home thinks that others outside it are starving.

Categorical proposition:

All men who are feasting in their homes think that others outside their homes are starving.

A random sample of proverbs and wise-sayings, on logical investigation, shows that some are amenable to the inference of *Modus Ponens* and sometimes *Modus Tollens*.

1. If life were like a seedling, the enemy would uproot it.
Life is like a seedling (p).

The enemy will uproot it (q)

$p \text{ e } q$

p

\therefore / q M. P.

2. One who claims that he does not enjoy sweet things should cook his pot of soup without salt.

One does not enjoy sweet things ($\neg p$)

One cooks his pot of soup without salt ($\neg q$).

$\neg p \text{ e } \neg q$

$\neg p$

$\therefore \neg q$ M. P.

OR

If one who claims that he enjoys sweet things then he cooks his pot of soup with salt.

One claims that he enjoys sweet things (p).

Therefore one cooks his pot of soup with salt (q)

$p \text{ e } q$

p M. P

$\therefore q$

3. If a fool does not stick out his foot to be cut off, surely not a wise man.

A fool does not stick out his foot to be cut off ($\neg p$).

Therefore surely not a wise man ($\neg q$)

$\neg p \text{ e } \neg q$

$\neg p$ M. P

$\therefore \neg q$

4. Laughter does not necessarily *signify* pleasure

Laughter (l)

May not be pleasure ($\neg p$)

$I \text{ e } -p$

$I \text{ M. P}$

$\therefore -p$

5. It is not (necessarily) the staring eye that sees well.

It is a staring eye (p)

Therefore it does not see well ($-q$)

$p \text{ e } -q$

$p \text{ M. P.}$

$\therefore -q$

What I have done is to formalize simple statements into categorical propositions and conditionals or implications. They are deductive and inferential as to warrant a logical investigation, though some are inductive and could be candidate for a scientific investigation. The main reservation against them is that most arguments of these forms beg the question because their conclusions are already contained in their premises. Their epistemological content is therefore questionable.

Logic, Epistemology and Causality

We shall now turn to inferences which can be extracted from African thought for epistemic and scientific considerations. In examining the array of inferences that are involved in African Epistemology, we could observe that Cassian R. Agera's *Psychogenic* and *Logogenic* principles, *Modus Ponens* and others could be amenable in African causal principles either consciously or unconsciously. He distinguished between *psychogenic* syllogism i.e. inference for oneself and *logogenic* syllogism i.e. inference for another. The example of *psychogenic* logic he cited is:

"Whatever is smoky is fiery

The Yonder hill is smoking.

Therefore the Yonder hill is fiery".⁶

This conforms to Aristotelian or traditional logic of

$M - P$

$S - M$

$\therefore S - P$

where the middle term (smoke) is equally distributed in the major and minor premises and so the validity of the conclusion is said to be guaranteed. Here the major term fiery is concluded to be present in the minor term, 'Yonder hill', on the basis of the universal concomittance and contingent co-production of events. This is an alternative model of causal theory. The psychogenic logic is framed in the content of inferential process that directly presents the truth to oneself and is geared to the discovery of truth.

The logogenic syllogism is the inference for another. He cited as example:

The Yonder hill is fiery.

It is smoky.

∴ Whatever is smoky is fiery.⁷

The first premises, here, is the thesis that stands in need of demonstration. The second premise gives reason for the thesis. It is the minor ratio. The third premise is the statement we would justify according to the status of the major ratio. Therefore the thesis may now be considered as indicated in virtue of the minor and the major ratio. According to Agera, it means that it is their sequential order that constitute the difference between the logogenic and the psychogenic syllogisms. In logogenic principle the concluded thesis is presented and the reason is demonstrated in order to view the thesis as established. While in the psychogenic principle, the truth is concluded directly on the basis of the same reasons. Therefore the psychogenic syllogism is the 'inference how'.

In African epistemology, the logic of most Thoughts take the form of

M – P		p
S – M	or	q
∴ S – P		∴ p . q

Evans-Pritchard's study of *Zande* Oracle tend to show that there are logical connections among the oracle's statements. According to him, its mystical notions are eminently "coherent and interrelated by a network of logical ties, and are so ordered that they never too crudely contradict sensory experience but, instead experience seems to justify them..."⁸ Zande oracle divination recognizes contradictions and it is on this basis that statements are validated or invalidated. The oracle, Zande

“administers poison to a fowl, then put a statement to the oracle, if the fowl dies, the statement is taken to be true or untrue and if the fowl survives the statement is also taken to be true or untrue depending on how it was originally put”.⁹

By poison oracle, Evans-Pritchard means the liquid preparation from the bark of a certain tree, which will be administered to the fowl, and the process itself is oracular. In other words, the result of administering the liquid preparation to the fowl will be accepted as final. The *Zande* carry out more than one test for corroborative purposes.

Even though the various tests in *Zande* oracle may not conform to the subject-predicate type of traditional or sentential logic, yet some principles of inferences can be deduced. One of the statements in the oracle which says: “If X has committed adultery poison oracle kills the fowl”¹⁰ (where X is a proper name). C. S. Momoh, says that this is not a conditional sentence made up from an indicative protasis and an indicative apodasis because while the protasis is indicative, the apodasis is imperative. The corresponding conditional is,

if X has committed adultery, the poison oracle will kill the fowl¹¹

which according to Momoh is the kind of conditional the diviner will use in explaining the divination. He then adduced a formalized arguments of some of the tests in the oracle as follows:

a) if X has committed adultery, then the poison oracle will kill the fowl. X has committed adultery. Therefore, the poison oracle kills the follow,¹²

b) if X has not committed adultery, then the poison oracle will not kill the fowl.

X has not committed adultery. Therefore, the poison oracle does not kill the fowl.¹³

i)	p	⊃	q
	p		M. P
∴	q		

$$\begin{array}{ll}
 \text{ii)} & -p \text{ e } -q \\
 & -p \qquad \qquad \text{M. P} \\
 \therefore & -q
 \end{array}$$

C. S. Momoh's attempts in logical investigation which is supposedly to develop the logic of *Zande* or African science falls short of logic necessary for a logical investigation about the scientificity of either *Zande* or Ifa science. Why? He seems to have concentrated in the logical technique of developing conditional statement out of the statements of *Zande* oracle whereas much as that would help in understanding how logical the statements are, the method begs a lot of questions and deep neck into the problem of circularity. Developing Modus Ponens or Modus Tollens out of the Ifa or *Zande* oracles, therefore, will not surface for either scientific investigation which I believe a logical investigation would head to.

Instead, the natures of the inferences involved in *Zande* or Ifa predictions would be the precise candidate for a logical or scientific investigations. Hence I adopt the model of Psychogenic and logogenic logics i.e. the 'inference that' and the 'inference how' respectively. Therefore, a logical investigation of how the *Zande* statements may be a source of scientific knowledge could be alternatively sought in the above principles by doing a logical and scientific investigation the important evidence when should be fundamentally pertinent is the statement: 'if X has committed adultery, the poison oracle will kill the fowl'. The import of this statement does lie in its simplicity and on the ground that it can be perceived or felt by all the parties involved. Hence it is important to know what is the logical justification (not in the Modus Ponens and Tollens, however, as these begs questions, reaffirms the premises and ends up not affirming new knowledge). Therefore I think we should do the logical investigation with the Psychogenic and logogenic principles which are syllogistic principles.

Adultery causes poison oracle to kill fowl.

X commits adultery

\therefore X causes poison oracle to kill fowl

Note: The causative principle in operation here is justifiable in the system of the metaphysical presupposition of *Zande* science.

Syllogistically, it means

A	K		M	P
X	A	or	S	M
<hr/>				
∴ X	K		∴ S	P

(where A = adultery, K = poison oracle kills fowl, X = proper name)

This is a valid and standard syllogism which accords with what Agera described as Psychogenic principle of 'inference that' because it is geared to the discovery of truth, which the Modus Ponens analysis will not be able to do. Here the middle term (A) is equally distributed in the major and minor premises hence the validity of the conclusion. The major term K is concluded to be present in the minor term X on the basis of the universal concomittance and contingent co-production of events which is an alternative model of causal theory.

On the other hand, the logogenic model will be as follows:

Poison oracle kills fowl

Adultery is committed

∴ Poison oracle kills fowl because adultery is committed.

Here the first premise is the thesis that stands in need of demonstration. The second premises gives reason for the thesis. And the third proposition (or the conclusion) is the statement that needs to be justified according to the status of the major premise. Therefore the thesis (first premises) may be considered as indicative in virtue of the second premise and the conclusion. It could also be seen that the logic behind this, apart from being logogenic, is a simple conjunction: P and q, therefore, P and q or

p
q
∴ p q

This obeys the principle of induction and the uniformity or concomittance of nature.

Also, in African epistemology, the causal principles of contiguity and similarity could be amenable to Modus Ponens, logogenic and psychogenic

logics. The principle of contiguity means that things which have once been in contact can influence each other even when they have been separated while the homeopathic principle means that by initiating the desired effect of something you can produce it. For example, the contiguity principle says that a sorcerer may harm his victim by joining his victim cloth to a poisonous substance. The conditional statement implied here would be:

If X cloth contacts a poisonous substance, then X will be harmed.

The psychogenic and logogenic logics will be as follows:

X contact with poisonous substance is harmful,

X cloth contacts poisonous substance,

X is harmed.

Note: The causative principle on operation here is justifiable in the system of the metaphysical presupposition of *Zande* science.

Hence syllogistically it will be

P	H
X	P

∴ X	H

(where P = poisonous substance, X = somebody's cloth, H = harmed). This conforms to the rule of valid syllogism and psychogenic principle. The statement 'if x cloth contacts a poisonous substance then X will be harmed' could also be logically translated according to the logogenic principle:

Poisonous substance is harmful

X is harmed

whatever contacts poisonous substance will be harmed.

As for the principle of similarity, the practical example is that when dark green leaves are burnt the green smoke will go into the sky and cause rainfall. The underlying belief is that the dark green cloud that proceeds rainfall is similar to the dark green smoke caused by burning green leaves.

The conditional statement is,

If green leaf is burnt, then there will be rain.

Again the underlying principles or psychogenic and logogenic logic will be as follows:

If green leaf is burnt then there will be rain

It is the village that the green leaf is burnt

Therefore, it is the village that it is raining

Hence syllogistically pschogenically it will be

G R

V G

V R

(where G = green leaf is burnt, R = it is raining and V = village. or
logogenically it is raining in the village

Green leaf is burnt

Therefore it rains because green leaf is burnt.

The epistemological dimension of these causal principles, therefore, is that they are underlined by the principle of, "inference that" meaning that there is a truth discovered and 'inference how' meaning inference for another. On the other hand the principle of conjunction and logogenic principle affirm or demonstrate the truths of some epistemic logics for example, the epistemic logics of the principles of contiguity and similarity.

In the *Yoruba Ifa corpus* of traditions, there is a divinatory system¹⁴ whose logic is based on the verses and axioms of *Odu Ifa*. In the divination, the casting of an instrument called *Opelle* or *Ikin* (a string with pairs of special seeds joined together) is used to determine which *Odu Ifa* or *Ifa* axiom or *Ifa* verse is revealed. There are two hundred and fifty six *Odu Ifa*, sixteen major *Odu* and two hundred and forty combinations. There is also a determinant used in casting *Ifa*. It is called *Ibo*. It is used in asking 'yes' or 'no' questions. If for instance, a group of friends come to visit us and then ask us to go out with them, if one is not sure of their intentions, one may just use the 'Ibo' to ask *Ifa* whether to follow them out or not. The instruments are cowries, broken plates, orange seed, bone, stone and so on. Cowries are used to ask for well being, wealth and affirmation. Broken plates are used for negative responses, Stone is used to ask if the well-being foreseen by *Ifa* is long-life. Seeds are used to ask if the well-being

predicted by Ifa is that of a new baby. A bone is used to ask if the bad thing Ifa saw is as fatal as death. All the determinants except bone is a 'yes' determinant. These determinants presuppose synthetic apriori propositions while the axioms or the verses presuppose apriori propositions.

Before casting the oracle, they will place the cowries (yes) determinant on the right hand side of the *Opele* and the broken plate (no) determinant on the left. The *Odu-Ifa* or *Odu-axiom* or *Odu-verse* revealed will determine whether to pick the determinant on the right hand side or the one on the left hand side.¹⁵ Being synthetic apriori propositions the determinants are truths which can be demonstrated by the logogenic principle or the principle of conjunction.

The *Odu-Ifa* determinant (yes) is cowry (p)

It is well-being (q)

Therefore cowry signifies well being (p q)

p

q Conjunction

p . q

Although this is a conjunction, it is inductively scientific and could as well be amendable to Psychogenic principle.

On the other hand, the determinant (yes or no) revealed can be demonstrated deductively as Modus Ponens.

a) If the determinant revealed is Yes (p)

then it is favourable (q)

It is yes (p)

Therefore, it is favourable (q)

p \Rightarrow q

p M. P

\therefore q

This deductive Modus Ponens is significant only because it shows that it is a valid argument though without much a scientific import. Though they may be amenable to psychogenic and logogenic inferences there a lot of scientific questions to raise with regard to *Zande* and *Ifa* deductive

systems. It is easily observed that there are a lot of postulates and propositions are given or taken for granted. There is no scientific reasons available for their employments as concepts in the divinatory system. If you take *Ifa* divination, for instance, you might want to know the scientific justification for the employment of the *Opele* instrument (with special seeds) in the formulation of the various *Odus* — why and how the instrument is cast? Why and how the position of the seeds determine the various *Odus* and so on? At any rate, the casting of the instrument presupposed various propositions; some more fundamental than others. What informed the conclusions or propositions from the casting of the *Opele* instrument or do they occur by chance? If it is by chance, then it will not suffice because chance is not a nuance or idiom of science.

On the other hand, the conclusions and propositions may be based on some kinds of beliefs. They may be incorrigible or indubitable. Such incorrigible and indubitable beliefs may be treated as foundational beliefs. A foundational belief has a privileged epistemic status over the non-foundational ones. It is taken to be given or self-justified or, at least, for a particular moment of time, it requires no justification. But the 'Epistemic Ascent Argument' transcends every possible epistemic justification by demanding the justification of whatever principle of justification one can adopt; it asks for a justification of how one justifies a non-foundational belief by means of the principle that a non-foundational belief is justified if it is based on a foundational belief. The Epistemic ascent argument according to D. Shatz is:

"If (a) S is justified in believing p on the basis of q, then (b) S has to be justified in believing (a); and if (b), then (c) S has to be justified in believing (b), and if (c) then (d) S has to be justified in believing (c) and so on"¹⁶.

The problem here is that the argument shows the possibility of an infinite regression. If one does not show but assume that the foundational beliefs are justifiably true, all your justified non-foundational beliefs will hang on a frail assumption.

On the contrary, this criticism will not hold water if by the pragmatic theory of truth the alleged assumption works well and consequently it is appreciated by the holder of the belief. Yet a counter thesis to this is that

Gettier's problem has shown that one can have justified true belief on the basis of false beliefs. Therefore, a non-foundational belief may be justified but derived from the foundational beliefs which happen to be false. The point at issue is that since the antecedent of an *Ifa* or *Zande* conditional may be embedded in myth or mysticism, it may be true or false and if it is false then the foundational belief is false.

There is no gain-saying the fact that African epistemology which may be embedded in mysticism has a lot of logical and scientific implications. The problems became very obvious when we ask for the basis of the following assertions:

- If X has committed adultery, then the poison oracle will kill
- If X cloth contacts a poisonous substance X will be harmed
- If the determinant revealed is 'Yes' then it is favourable.

Critically speaking, these propositions may be treated as counterfactual conditionals which means that they have or entail false antecedents. If we lack the means for interpreting counterfactual conditionals, we can hardly claim to have any adequate philosophy of science. A solution to the problem of counterfactuals would give us the answer to critical questions about law, confirmation, and the meaning of potentiality in the philosophy of science. The problem of counterfactuals is also a problem of factual conditionals because any counterfactual can be transposed into a conditional with a true antecedent and consequent. The question is to the kind of connection between the two atomic sentences; and the truth of statements — "*whether they have the form of counterfactual or factual conditionals or some other form — depends not upon the truth or falsity of the components but upon whether the intended connection obtains*".¹⁷ Hence, 'If the Odu-Ifa determinant (Yes) is cowry, then it is well-being' can therefore be treated as a counterfactual with epistemological problem.

In logic the relation, 'if ... then ...' is symbolized as $p \rightarrow q$ and the above divinatory propositions conforms to this above logical pattern. At a purely logical realm, a counterfactual conditional of the form 'if p then q' entails its contrapositive 'if $\neg q$, then $\neg p$ '. Hence 'if X cloth contacts a poisonous concoction (p), then X will be harmed (q)' will entail its contrapositive, 'if X is not harmed (q), then X cloth is not in contact with a poisonous substance (p). For *Zande* or *Ifa* logic to be tenable as a science,

if p is true, then q must be true – there must not be a situation where the conditional consequent is false and the conditional antecedents false. As a science p and q must be relevant to each other. But the scientific problem with divination generally is that there may be some other conditions to be fulfilled. Even though as a science, Zande or Ifa must hold materially if when one proposition, p, implies another, q, it is not the case that P is true and q is false.

The epistemic problem with *Zande* and *Ifa* as well as western science, is what quarantees the truth of p (which quarantees the truth or falsehood of q). The truth is embedded in mysticism. More often than not, it is treated as given or a priori. It follows, therefore, that if the propositions of *Zande* and *Ifa* are considered as truth functional compounds and counterfactuals they are true since their antecedents are false. As counterfactual conditionals. p materially implies q leads to the paradox of material implication where a false proposition materially implies any proposition (for if p is false it is not the case that p is true and q false), and any proposition materially implies a true proposition. Therefore, in Ifa divination, 'If X cloth contacts poisonous substance (p)' is false, the consequent proposition 'X will be harmed (q)' will also be false, (all being true propositions) and if the antecedent (p) is true and consequent (q) true, both will be true. On the other hand, if the antecedent (p) is either true or false whatever is the truth value of the consequent (q) will be true since any proposition materially implies a true proposition. The summary of this argument is therefore;

If 'X cloth contacts poisonous substance (p)' is true then 'X will be harmed' (q) will be true but not vice versa.

And if 'X cloth contacts poisonous substance (p)' is false then 'X will be harmed (q)' will be true.

This is the paradoxes of material implication. But in Ifa or *Zande*, there are definitely other conditions to be fulfilled before a statement is deemed true or false. More often, they are not certain and predictable and they may not be communicable or they are in closed predicament as Robin Horton would argue. This denies the supposedly African science the virtue of universality of science.

Here is a counter methodology from the open predicament of scientific culture. A western trained scientist knows that "*syphilis is a chronic infectious disease of humans caused by the Spirochete Treponema Pallidum*"¹⁸ The disease may cause irreversible damage to the cardio-vascular central nervous or musculoskeletal systems. In the treatment of the disease, the drug choice for most forms of it is Penicillin G. Medical scientists say "*Treponema Pallidum is killed by very low concentration of Penicillin G*".¹⁹ Medical science has not received any report of resistance to penicillin by Treponema Pallidum after, more than thirty years of use of Penicillin. Other antibiotics or alternatives which are effective in the treatment of syphilis include tetracyclines, erythromycin, chloramphenicol and cephalosporins. These alternatives are not resistance to persons A or B or C after urine or blood tests. Therefore for a person X,

If you apply penicillin G to syphilis case by Treponema pallidum (p), then syphilis disease will be killed (q).

Penicillin G is applied to syphilis (p)

Syphilis is killed (q)

$p \rightarrow q$

p

M. P

$\therefore q$

Here it is shown that a piece of western science is empirical and based on facts. This is not to say that the problem of counterfactual conditionals is not associated with it. It could be contraposed in the light of defeasible developments.

On the other hand, the problem of African epistemology is that at times both the antecedent and the consequent of a conditional in divination may originate from the universally unknown or mystical realm (and so may be false) and which *ipso-facto* is a counterfactual. OR the antecedent may be false and the consequent true which *ipso-facto* is semi-factual. However, according to Nelson Goodman, all counterfactual conditionals considered "*as truth functional compounds are true since their antecedents are false*"²⁰ and "*the truth value of a counterfactual does not derive simply from the truth value of its components; for since the antecedent and consequent of every counterfactual are both false, all counterfactuals will have the*

same truth value by any truth functional criterion".²¹ That is to say that if the truth value of p and q are each true, then the compound sentence will be false by any truth functional criterion. Goodman sought to discover the necessary and sufficient conditions under which a counterfactual conditionals is true. He therefore argues, that

"a counterfactual is true if and only if the antecedent conjoined with relevant true general principles to the consequent".²²

Therefore, *Ifa* and *Zande* propositions (whether factual or counterfactual) may be confirmed true if any only if the antecedent conjoined with relevant true statements about the attendant circumstances leads by way of a true general principle to the consequent.

The method of confirmation here should conform to the empirical confirmation of categorical hypotheses if it were to be called science in the real sense of the word, 'Science'. Therefore, the greater the number of confirming instances of hypothesis like, 'If X cloth contacts a poisonous substance, X will be harmed? the greater the degree of confirmation or evidential support for the hypothesis. The pattern of confirmation for simple cases is,

1. If (x) (Fx \bullet Gx) is true, then since Fa, it must be true that Ga.
2. Ga
- \therefore 3. With some probability, (x) (Fx \bullet Gx)".²³

This means that the hypothesis (x) (Fx \bullet Gx), together with the antecedent condition Fa, implies Ga. If Ga is the case, then we have a confirming instance of the hypothesis. Therefore, the pattern of the hypothesis in question will follow the pattern of the latter, all things being equal,

1. '(x) (Fx \bullet Gx)' = df 'if x cloth contacts a poisonous substance, x will be harmed'
2. 'Fa' = df 'x cloth contacts poisonous substance'.
3. 'Ga' = df 'x is harmed'

which means that if 'if Fa then Ga' or 'Fa \bullet Ga' is true and Ga is the case, then (x) (Fx \bullet Gx) is confirmed.

OR simply

1. x contacts poisonous substances
2. x is harmed
3. Therefore, 'if x contacts poisonous substance, then x is harmed' is confirmed.

The basic pattern of disconfirmation of an hypothesis follows this pattern

- "1. if (x) (Fx \Rightarrow Gx) and Fa, then Ga
2. \neg Ga
- \therefore 3. \neg (x) (Fx \Rightarrow Gx)".²⁴

What we may conclude here is that the Ifa or *Zande* divinations will be scientific if their deductive hypotheses are confirmed with this formula and that the greater the number of confirming instances, the greater the degree of confirmation or evidential support for the hypothesis in question.

Determinacy and Indeterminacy of African Epistemology

The question of indeterminacy is a critical question in an African system of knowing or what I call African science or epistemology. Naturally, when one claims something, one asserts a justifying evidence for that thing. OR if one claims something in a particular context and claims something to be the meaning one assert a justifying evidence for one claiming so. Ifa and Zande scientific traditions are practised in closed language cultures. Take for instance, all the concepts, axioms and verses in their divinations are in their narrow and closed African languages. The question of determinacy/indeterminacy arises only and only when we look into the nature of meaning with respect to the evidential support we get from the empirical world.

The evidential support is the justifying evidence when meaning is construed to be determinate. On the other hand, indeterminacy of meaning refutes any evidential support being the justifying evidence.²⁵ Like in any scientific culture, the problem of the determinacy/indeterminacy of meaning is a problem within African scientific epistemology itself and in its relation to the universal language of science, i.e. English. There is no gain-saying the fact, that the determinacy of terms in Ifa like *Opele*, *Odu*, *Cowry*, *Bone*, and so on is sine-qua-non for a predictable and systematic divinatory system. This is, of-course, a necessary condition for justifying African epistemology.

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On the other hand, there should be a justifying evidence for translating Ifa and Zande propositions into another language possibly into the language of the new scientific order, that is, English. But before then the determinacy of the terms in the original language must be settled. If the meaning of the term 'Odu' of Ifa tradition, for example, is indeterminate, then the more wrongly it is translated as something else in English with an indeterminate status. The translation of one language into another is meaningless without the meanings of the terms remaining constant in both languages. For African epistemic science to be plausible and universal the meanings of its terms should be unalterably carried over or translated into English which is the universal language of science. This means that we can define the meaning of a word, x , of L_A as ' a ' and of a word, ' y ' of L_E as ' a ' too. The formal argument for the determinacy of meaning through an account of translation will be thus:

- i. If by a set of rules R_1 of the language L_1 , the sentence S_1 means that P .
- ii. And if some sentence S_2 means that P by a set of rules R_2 of the language L_2
- iii. Then S_1 and S_2 are translatable from one to another. ²⁶

Accordingly if $S_1, S_2, S_3 \dots S_n$ can be inter-translatable, then P obtains a status of a universal in the sense that can be instantiated in all those sentences of the respective language. S and P is not confirmed to any one of the languages. This universal P is 'that p '; P determined by the R in general. This formal argument for the determinacy of meaning ensures that knowledge 'that P ' in African epistemology is the universal P which should be determined by a set of rules R in general.

Conclusion

We are inclined to conclude that a possible African theory of know is confronted by imperfect language inadequacy of formalised rules of logic, problems of indubitability, uncertainty and defeasibility as a result of its obviously known mystical orientation. Although most of its apriori foundations could be pragmatically acceptable, their sharp contrast with the methodology of experimental sciences could be a hindrance to its acceptance into the community of scientific culture. The last but not the least of its problem is the determinacy problems of its nuances and idioms

which put a hedge against its universal means of discovering the truth. Yet the truths of an African system of thought could be established on certain logic as I have pontificated, there could have been truths instead the truth of western science or thought. Postmodernism has indeed opened up a flood gate of truths which are justified by their pragmatic utilities.

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Caste and Colonialism: Situating William Logan and Samuel Mateer in the Administrative Ideology and Missionary Discourse of Colonial Kerala

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This paper attempts to problematise the representation of caste in both administrative ideology and missionary discourse of colonial Kerala. It is well recognised that colonialism purposefully preserved many of the institutional forms of the old regimes. The institution of caste got a major transformation in the colonial period and was made a surveillance strategy of the colonial governmentality. The question of caste has been explained in terms of colonial construction in some of the recent debates.¹ But the imagined identity of caste as an 'invention' of colonialism has been interrogated.² What happened to caste in the colonial systems of representation and writing culture is that the brahmanical self perception of caste had been made a frame of reference and incorporated with ethnocentric judgements into the colonial discourse.

There were only occasional travellers published notices on Kerala till the arrival of the Portuguese. Ludovico Di Varthema (1502-1508 AD) mentions the 'pagans' of Calicut and among them, he says, brahmanas are priests and chief personal of faith. He says that the king honoured the brahmanas by giving them his wife in first night to cohabit with as a ritual practice. The '*naeri*' (nair) are obliged to bear sword and shield when they go through the street. If they did not carry arms they would no longer be gentlemen³. The third class is *tiva* (thiyyar) who are artisans and the fourth is called '*mukkuvan*' (fisherman). The *poliar* (pulayar) who collect pepper, wine and nuts. The *poliar* and *hivara* (vettuvan) are the untouchable castes. They cannot approach a *brahman* or a *nair* within fifty paces. They always went by private ways through the marshes crying out with loud voices and the failure of which would cause to the slain of the untouchable by the

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Nair⁴.

Varthema tries to paganise the people and brahmins become a reference society in his account. The social ordering of the people is depicted as brahmanas on the top and untouchable at the bottom. The practice of untouchability and distance pollution mentioned by him can be considered as informed by his brahman informants or scribes.

Duarte Barbosa⁵ reputedly mastered the local language 'so well that he spoke it better than the natives of the country' was able to write a description of Malabar customs⁶. He begins his account with the history of the country as preserved in the local legends, then proceeds to describe the people, their customs and practices, from north to south of the principal towns. Barbosa says that there are eighteen castes in Malabar⁷ and 'each separates from the rest so much so that they do not touch one another under pain of death or forfeiture of their property, so that all have name, caste, custom and idol worship of their own⁸'. Barbosa accurately reported the major cultural features of caste system. He presents his description of the caste system organised as hierarchy with brahmans on the top and untouchables at the bottom. No reference is made by him to the theory of *varna* or moralising about the benefits or evils of the caste system⁹.

Barbosa's account is characterized by the hierarchisation of gentry with hereditary occupation. Serial ordering of the major eighteen castes is depicted in a descending order according to their position, occupation and power. The hierarchy is designed as brahmanas on the top and untouchable at the bottom. The hierarchy he mentioned with reference to brahman alludes to the fact that his perception had been influenced by the local information, the brahman possibly the nairs. The most peculiar feature of his account is that the absence of any reference to the concept of *varna* or any moralising about the benefits or evils of caste system.

John Huyghen Van Linschoten is considered to be the first among the Dutch travellers who visited Kerala. His 'Voyages to the East Indies' gives us some information regarding the caste system then existed in Kerala¹⁰. The people of Malabar is treated as black in complexion and "lecherous and unchast nation in all the Orient¹¹." They are characterised by 'their idolatrie, ceremonies and superstition.' He makes a generalisation that the people of Malabar belong to two groups. A group of 'noble

gentleman, called nayros' (nairs) who are soldier always take arms and the common people called 'Polias' (pulayas) having no weapon.¹² The nairs serve the king at his command and will. He also refers to the untouchability and distance pollution practiced by the nairs towards pulayar¹³. His description on the customs of Malabar is coloured with error and fiction.¹⁴ He says that 'Brahmenes' (brahmanas) are the people of words and ceremonies and they do 'idolatrour services'¹⁵. They "use all men where and when they will". Brahmanas "also have the kings wives at their pleasure"¹⁶. The common people of Malabar, he says, are "pulyas" (pulayas) are labourers and men of occupation. They are much "contemned and despised" and live miserably without having weapon¹⁷. He also refers to the hereditary occupation of caste. "Every man follow the occupation of his elders, and may not change it for anything"¹⁸.

The European predilection and predetermination about the people of Kerala is started with the erroneous and fictitious account of Linschoten. His European commentator himself attested that Linschoten's account on Malabar is coloured with error and imagination. He tries to primitivise the people that they are superstitious, black lecherous people of the unchast 'Orient'. He generalise the "superstitious idolators" of Malabar in to two categories— a group of noble gentlemen as nairs, and common people as pulayar. But the brahmanas who do "idolatrour service" and "use men where and when they will" are excluded from his general categorisation. His common people pulyas (pulayas) are contemned and despised people of labour and men of occupation.

John Nieuhoff was a Dutch Captain whose account "Travels and Voyages" gives us a remarkable information about the land and people, customs and manners of Kerala¹⁹. He says that brahmanas are the noblest of the people of Kerala. They do not take food prepared by non-brahmanas. Their dress codes, sacred thread and ornaments have received his attention. Subdivision among the brahmanas, their service to the local rajas are also mentioned. The low status of both Tamil brahmanas who practice trade and banyas who came from Gujarath to that of malayali brahmanas are also treated by him.²⁰

Nairs are used as bodyguards by the Muslim merchants. Their proximity to brahmanas gave them recognition and the rites and customs of the

brahmanas are imitated by the nairs²¹. Nieuhoff mentions the untouchability and distance pollution practised by the high castes towards the lower castes, especially to pulayas. The existence of matrilineal system of inheritance and practice of polyandry are attested by him. He mentions the occupational codes and dress codes of the low caste people. Nairs do not practise trade or handicraft and they practise strict endogamy²². *Pulayar* and *parayar* are considered to be the lowest caste and degraded slaves²³. *Thiyar* are engaged with handicraft and also practise toddy-tapping and agriculture²⁴. There existed sub-castes among this group. *Paravar* converted to Christianity with the help of Portuguese due to the inhuman practice meted out to them by the Muslims²⁵. *Malayar*, a tribal group were also converted to Christianity²⁶. *Malayar*, their habitation and customs are mentioned. They are represented as simple, faithful and clever folk²⁷.

King is at the apex of social status, below him is *kaimal*, then comes the brahmanas. Nairs are considered to be the caste below the brahmanas and lower castes like *mukkuvar*, *paravar*, *pulayar* are at the bottom²⁸. Brahmanas, nairs and *mukkuvar* follow the same faith and worship idols in the temple²⁹. He does not refer to the existence of *varna* schema and attributes the occupational base to the caste system.

Administrative reports of Dutch officials like Canter Visscher (1717-1723), Stein Van Gollennesse (1743) Adriaan Moens give us valuable information about the social life of Kerala³⁰. Canter Visscher's 'Letters from Malabar' gives us the information about the socio-political and cultural life of Kerala. Visscher gives us the information about the 'manners and customs of the people, their laws, rites and ceremonies, description of their kingdom, as well as their origin and their modes of government'³¹.

Stein Van Gollennesse's report mentions the *parava* fishing community, the Christian converts. According to this report there existed not less than 12000 native Christian fishermen or mukkuvas in Malabar Coast in 1663 AD. The native servants and subjects of the Dutch consist of 'topasses', 'lascorins' and 'muquas'. The topasses are the Portuguese freed slaves and possibly the illegitimate children among them. The lascorins are natives of Malabar converted from all castes to the Popish faith by the Roman priests³². The report says that after having the Christian faith a converted man becomes the subject of the Company and consequently a free man whom no one would dare to molest³³. The nairs of Cochin illtreated the mukkuvas,

plundered their houses, wanted to drive away and forced them to live in the Dutch town³⁴.

Moens held the view that migrants are divided into Northern and Southern groups. Those who come from north are divided into four classes: Pandits (Tamil or Telugu brahmanas), Canarians (Konkins), Benyas (Baniya) and Silversmiths. Pandits belong to high caste but few in number. They do not practise trade and handicraft. They serve the other three classes as priests, especially to the silver smiths. Canarian (Konkins, Saraswatha brahmanas) are also a clan by themselves from the north³⁵. Konkins earn their living chiefly by trade since most of them are traders. Some of them practise agriculture assisted by the '*corrobins*' (kudumbi, konkin sudra) the lowest of the class or caste of the konkins³⁶.

The benyans (vaniya, bania, bunya) are also caste or clan. They practise trade in all kinds of things³⁷. Some of them are wholesale merchants. There are two big baniya merchants and one of them is named as 'antachetti' who is the contractor for the import and export duties of the Dutch Company. The silversmiths constitute separate caste and are otherwise called as 'sonar'. They came from 'sanstripredesam' (South Canara). They wear sacred thread and pretend to be a high caste³⁸.

The dyers or cloth painters are also employed as clerks or 'canacapels' (kanakkapillai) with the Jews, Canarians, Baniyan merchants and Europeans. Shoemakers came from Tuticorin is also mentioned in Moen's report.

The prime motive behind the introduction of land policy by the British was to extract a large share of the agricultural produce to land revenue, and to achieve this, they were also interested to create and recognise a few customary superior right holders on land.³⁹ To ensure more revenue and to commercialise the agriculture the British had to introduce Western modes of revenue and tenurial system. By the commercialisation of agriculture they meant the conversion of land and the people tied up with land as commodity. This process is also meant for the detachment of labourers from the land and its congenial cultural world. It was in this context that the British began to propagate their administrative ideology and justifying it. They also projected the view that the existing traditional administrative practices and customary relations were to be changed. The policies of commercialisation of agriculture and retainment of customary

authority and their privileges were legitimised as the liberation of the people from the clutches of traditional practices and exploitation.

The early travel narratives and reportage of the British on Kerala attested the social composition of people based on dependence relations. Francis Buchanan in his survey reported the major features of the traditional agrarian relations and the social composition of people⁴⁰. From his narrative one can infer that the land was the production base and labour and capital were tied up with the land. He points out the deplorable condition of the producing castes. The agrestic slavery reported by him was corresponded to the agrarian relations. The *janmam*, *kanam* and *pattam* modes of slave transaction⁴¹ as reported in the narrative of Buchanan is originally related with the *janmam-kanam mariyadai* ties of agrarian relations. But he equates the practice of untouchability with the European concept of slavery. It is a fact that the dichotomical relationship between the customary authority and the *kanan* tenants was corresponded to *janmam-kanam* modes of agrarian relations in the case of ownership and control of land. This was an outcome of expansion of cultivation which brought the untouchable bonded labourers under servile condition. It was this process that structured the producing groups at the bottom of caste hierarchy. Contrary to the above fact, Buchanan treated the practice of untouchability and the servility of the producing castes with the European category, "Slavery". Buchanan's contemporary, Colebrooke, also equated the practice of untouchability with Atlantic modes of slavery.⁴²

Surveys and reportage of the colonial state were aimed at the acquisition of better and more systematic information about people as well as the means of appropriating revenue. The investigative and survey modalities of the colonial state⁴³ had been materialised by census and ethnographic science.⁴⁴

The survey and reportage of the British Officials, in the early decades of the 19th century, especially of Ward and Coner depict the physical as well as the cultural landscape of Kerala⁴⁵. One of the important features of their reportage is the treatment of each caste in their life world. Mappilas and tribal people are treated as *jatis* than community or religious group⁴⁶. Crucial to the colonial discourse of caste is the relationship between caste and colonial state. From 1881 census onwards the colonial state began to make caste-wise enumeration of the entire population. It was this census

operation which gave castes specific names, labels and ranks. Caste was defined in all the aspects and later tribe was defined in relation to caste. The notion of ranking of caste was introduced.

The social configuration of people connected with agrarian relations and customary obligations were changed by the introduction of British tenurial system. The introduction of market economy under British hegemony that affected the age old local institutions and practices. In order to change the traditional land utilisation pattern in a way to enable the tenant to acquire more capital for the improvement of land and to enable the British to extract maximum land tax regularly, the tenant had to have the proprietary rights at his disposal. It was in this context that the colonial administrators began to redefine the rights held by the customary authority on land. Occupational groups detached from the ethos of village communities as a result of British concept of private property and tenurial system, had to be redefined and reconstituted. These categories and their superseded material and moral base under the influence of new tenurial system and market economy could be placed in an ideological domain. But the conferment of proprietary right to tenants made the British to incorporate the brahmanical ideological perception of the formation of caste society in Kerala in to colonial discourse. This is manifested in Logan's narrative on *Keralolpathy*.

William Logan, administrator-historian⁴⁷ and Malabar Collector during 1870-1880, was appointed as special commissioner to enquire in to the tenant right in connection with the peasant revolt, explained the tenure as a matter of special attention. In analysing tenure, Logan did not accept the views of early administrators. By putting forward his arguments and findings Logan rejects the theory of brahman monopoly of land emphasised in *Keralolpathy*. He relies on the interpretations relating to the Syrian Copper Plate grants and other documents and stated that *janman* originally a political office which enjoyed a definite office as a customary share of the produce⁴⁸. He also makes a detailed analyse of the evolution of the *kanam* tenure and find that it is formerly the supervision or protection rights⁴⁹. *Kanakkar* enjoyed in olden days as stable a right in his *kanam* holding as *janmi* had in his⁵⁰.

For Logan the very term *jati* is 'not a Dravidian idea',⁵¹ and foreign to

Kerala prior to the advent of the Aryan immigrants to Kerala. Brahmanas played a 'civilizing' role in the society they entered. He says, "there can hardly be doubt that the high degree of civilization to which the country has advanced at a comparatively early period was due to Aryan immigrants from north, and these immigrants brought with them Aryan ideas of method and order in civil government which became the law of the land"⁵².

Keralolpathy narrative becomes a contentious text for Logan. Here emerges a new discourse of colonial encounter with the native practices. The explanatory potential is sought in the ideal universe, the ideological schema of the brahmanical perception of social world. Following the oriental-colonial position, Logan rejects *Keralolpathy* partially so as to delegitimise the customary authority and at the same time he incorporates it substantially to safeguard the colonial interest attributing the origin of caste to the Aryan brahman migration. The Aryan brahman migration to Kerala becomes a frame of reference and the transformation of Kerala society in to a 'high degree of civilization' is attributed to the "Aryan ideas and methods and order in civil government". His narrative goes on, "among other things which they imported was jati which is a foreign word and not a Dravidian idea and a custom connected with birth". In order to incorporate the reconstituted categories in to the modalities of colonial governmentality, the social perception of indigenous elite, ie., the brahmanical perception of the social universe was made a political signifier in the colonial governmentality and writing culture.

The census of 1881 was considered to be a frame reference to treat caste as an administrative category. Though Logan considers hereditary occupation and the question of caste together, the criterion by which he formulates his ranking of castes is pollution i.e., atmospheric pollution (*theendal*) and pollution by actual contact (*thodeel*). This clearly shows the fact that in order to ensure the economic interest of colonialism Logan refutes the *Keralolpathy* tradition which legitimises the political and economic privileges of the customary authority. On the contrary, brahmanical perception of social universe, the ideological schema of brahmanical self perception of jati is substantially incorporated in to the colonial discourse.

Logan describes the slavery that existed in Malabar and the efforts taken by the early administrators to abolish it. But in fact the *janmam*

kanam and *pattam* modes of agrestic slavery that existed corresponded to the *janmam kanam* agrarian relations, had to be changed by the very inception of colonial tenurial system. The agrestic bonded labourers who were detached from the traditional agrarians relations had to be reconstituted. Here, the colonial governmentality and administrative ideology interpreted this transition as a process of mediation, an agency in the “emancipatory discourse”. It was justified as the slaves were being liberated from the clutches of feudal and traditional corrupt administrative practices and customs. The category of slave got a political meaning. It had been interpreted on the basis of European mode of slavery with ethnocentric judgements. Consequently, the actual tillers, the *adiyar* and untouchable castes, were marginalised and considered to be the slave castes to be liberated by the colonial emancipatory endeavours. The colonial policy was to incorporate the producing castes in to the domain of British controlled capitalist economy as cheap labour force. It was in this context that the British began to take steps to abolish slavery.⁵³

Logan described the social composition of the gentry within the Aryan Dravidian framework and made the ranking and meaning making of caste on the basis of pollution. This process of categorisation had been materialised through gazetteers and the ethnographic science. This is ably manifested in Innes’ “Malabar”⁵⁴ and in the monumental works of Edgar Thurston. Following the paradigm of colonial ethnography, Thurston, who was the superintendant of the Madras Government Museum, conducted surveys on the castes and tribes of South India. His endeavour was intended for briefly the task of recording the manners, customs and physical characters of more than 300 castes and tribes⁵⁵. It was through these modalities of colonial governmentality that caste was converted as an administrative category.

Imagine a religion of enforced homogeneity and polytheism and paganise its believers were the strategies undertaken by the European missionaries. Invention of a supposed religion and its constituent elements, the brahmanas on the top and the untouchables at the bottom, and primitivisation of which called for the civilising endeavour. This could be happened, it is argued, by the mediation of Christian morality, the gospel. This was the logic behind the entire missionary discourse on the question of caste, slavery, untouchability and religion.

Missionary discourse has a pre-history. It originally started from Portuguese. The early European accounts of Lingschoten and Varthema were mediated by the ideological perception of social realities of the indigenous elites, the brahmanas and brahmanic upper caste scribes. The erroneous and fictitious accounts of Lingschoten and Varthema had primitivised the indigenous gentry with bias of European predispositions. It was these narratives which characterized the people as superstitious, black and lecherous. The "superstitious idolaters" became a referent in analysing the indigenous life worlds in subsequent European narratives,⁵⁶ many of which did paganise and primitivise the indigenous people and their cultural specificities. This is well pictured in the account of French missionary Abbe. J. Dubois who discovered and distorted the various customs and practices in his problematic narrative⁵⁷. The destination of his "researches" is to present "a faithful picture of the wickedness and incongruities of polytheism and its very ugliness". It was this "re-presentation" of diversities of the indigenous life worlds that could distortedly juxtaposed with the "beauties and perfection of Christianity".

There had been close relationship between the practice of untouchability and expansion of cultivation and formation of agrarian society. Pollution was a strategy mediated by the brahmanic - sanskritic ideology not only to sustain the producing class at the bottom of social hierarchy but also to distance them from the fruits of their labour. It was connected with power relations as a cultural practice to be subjugated the producing class. It should be borne in mind that the 'poleyar' (pulayar), the common people and men of occupation who were represented as contemned and despised in the narrative of Linschoten. They became a category of slave among the Dravidian race in the narrative of Caldwell. And this slaves and slavery, it is argued, has a history, not in the process of agrarian social formation but its rise took historically from the conquest of the aboriginal inhabitants by the invaders and settlers from north, in the narrative of Samuel Mateer, a prominent London missionary.

The missionary discourses on the specificities of life world in Kerala has systematically been started with the establishment of London Missionary Society (LMS-1795) and the Church Mission Society (CMS-1799). Rev. Dr. Claudius Buchanan, Chaplain of the English East India Company had been deputed to enquire into the state of Christians in Malabar and his

visit to Malabar gave an important shift in the missionary endeavour of Kerala. The establishment of British overlordship in Thiruvitamkur and in Kochi and the appointment of British Resident in these princely states in 1800 also gave impetus to the missionary encounter with Kerala society. Among many a Christian missionary narratives Samuel Mateer's narrative is considered here for analysing the missionary discourse on caste in Kerala. Mateer was a L.M.S. missionary who spent nine years in Thiruvitamkur and wrote extensively on land, people, their customs and manners⁵⁸. The paradigm on which Mateer built his narrative is the 'Aryan Theory' and argues for the existence of Dravidian and Aryan brahman categories.⁵⁹ The target of his writings was "missionaries and students and the friends of mission at home". The entire writings of Mateer is directed towards "for the support and spread of the gospel". There existed close co-operation between the colonial state and missionary activities which extended, he says, "under the control of the British Resident and paramount Government of India". The constructed religion, 'Hinduism', becomes a frame of reference and castes are placed exclusively within this monolithic and enforced category of religion. He argues that "amongst the Hindus, caste is placed upon distinctively religious ground". Invention of a monolithic religion of "pagan people" demands a reform agenda. For Mateer this religion, Hinduism, is "a religion of idolators, ignorant, pleasure seeking people". The very elements of this religion are castes, the origin of which is doubtless connected with the early history of India and the conquest of aboriginal inhabitants by the brahmanical race⁶⁰. For him caste is "inseparably connected with the doctrine and traditions of Hinduism"⁶¹. He puts slavery within the frame work of Hinduism and its origin is traced back to the conquest of a superior race (Aryans) and the subjugation of an inferior one (Dravidian). He argues that slavery in Malabar doubtless took its rise historically from the conquest of the aboriginal inhabitants by the invaders and settlers from north⁶². It is here both administrative ideology of colonial state and the missionary discourse share the same paradigm about the origin of caste: the theory of racial conquest and the subjugation of aboriginal inhabitants. William Logan follows the Keralolpathy tradition of the brahmanical perception of the social composition and the theory of the introduction of caste by Aryan brahmins into the Dravidian society. More or less in the same fashion Mateer argues for the theory of conquest and racial explanation for the origin of caste. For Mateer the moral character of the subjugated primitive

inhabitants was to be 'improved' "to proclaim liberty to the captives of sin". In this context he puts forward his own schema, four principal castes in his narratives as typical or illustrious system— brahmanas , sudras, shanars and pulayas. The former one becomes the caste of a superior race, the Aryan brahman and the latter, the subjugated Dravidian race of inferior quality. Among themselves the shanars and pulayas are the slave castes to be liberated by the gospel. Thus, the missionary "emancipatory " discourses are directed to the liberation of slaves of "Hinduism" and to "cutting down the poison tree of idolatry and superstition, clearing cruelties and vices". This was all justified for "turning up the fruitful soil, and sowing in it the seed of life eternal"⁶³. The liberation of slave castes, the chanars and pulayas was justified by the argument that the "freed slaves under Christian institution and discipline are more acceptable to sensible and well disposed employers and landowners"⁶⁴. The "emancipation" of slave caste has a political meaning and economic justification since the liberation of slaves from their bondage would supply the necessary cheap labour force for the plantation industry. It is partly because of this intention that Mateer's mission was to introduce the Christian faith "in to new castes, and tribes and villages to lay the foundation of a church in India".

The brahmanical self perception of social worlds and material practices of cultural diversities was invertedly represented in their ideal universe as an ideological schema. The brahmin informants and brahmanic upper caste scribes informed the early European travellers the social ordering of people only after placing themselves in a privileged position. This brahmanical self perception that was followed by early European travellers and subsequently by colonial administrators and missionaries.

Caste and religion became distorted and mediated categories in both administrative ideology of the colonial state and missionary discourse. The origin of caste was traced to the racial theory of conquest. The 'Aryan theory' became an explanatory mode for the origin of caste, untouchability and slavery. It ultimately paved the way for the representation of brahmans and brahmanic upper castes as 'savarnas' belong to a superior race and the lower castes, the 'avarnas', an inferior Dravidian race. The colonial position of caste is that the brahmanical self perception regarding caste hierarchy is inverted to constitute the 'other' in the form of a stagnant, inflexible hierarchy based on racial differences which enabled to ossify occupational

differentiation. It was this caste which became a prism through which the colonial rulers began to see the indigenous people and their life worlds. Caste was seen as representing a world view of Indian social and cultural life in a stagnant and degenerated form.

Notes and References

- 1 Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2002.
- 2 Sumit Sarkar says that while identities like caste are certainly not fixed, given or unchanging, neither can their construction be reduced to colonial discourse alone. Sumit Sarkar, *Beyond Nationalist Frames: Relocating Postmodernism, Hindutva, History*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2002, p.41. The question of caste has been silenced in the modern Indian historiography. Sumit Sarkar repents that he could not pay any attention to the question of caste when he worked on Swadeshi movement, Sumit Sarkar, Op. cit., p.85, f.n.11.
- 3 Kaul, H.K., Traveller's India, Delhi; 1998, p. 423, The Itinerary of Ludovico Di Varthema of Bologna from 1502 to 1508, edited and translated by John Winster and Jones with Richard Carnar Temple, AES, Delhi, 1997, pp.I-lix, pp.55-79, 92-99.
- 4 Kaul, H.K., Op. cit., pp. 423-4
- 5 Barbosa was a Portuguese official, from about 1500 to 1516 or 1517, a secretary of the Portuguese factory at Kannur
- 6 Mansel Longworth Dames (ed). The Book of Duarte Barbosa vol II, Delhi, 1989, introduction p. XXIV
- 7 The English word 'caste' is derived from Portuguese 'casta' a word meaning family, stock, kind strain clan, tribe or race. The English word caste has the same Latin root 'castus' which originally meant 'pure'. The early Portuguese writers confronted by a social situation for which they had no precedent in their own experience or even a descriptive word. They began to apply this Latin term to the various subdivisions which they observed in Indian society.
- 8 Ibid, p. 85
- 9 Eighteen castes reported by Barbosa are: (1) brahman (brahmanas) (2) nayres (nair) (3) Vyaperi (vyaparinair) (4) couicaven (kuravan) (5) mainattu (mannan) B. caleten (chaliyan) (7) tuias (thiyan) (8) manens (mannan) (9) canaquas (kanian) (10) ageres (asari) (11) mogeres (mogers) (12) monquers (mukkuvan) (13) betunes (vettuvan) (14) paneens (panan) (15) revoleens (eravallen) (16). Pareans (parayn) (17) chatis (chetti) (18) guzarater (gujarati)
- 10 Arther Coke Burnell (ed), The Voyage of John Huyghen van Linschoten to the East Indies Vol I [From the old English translation of 1598], reprint, Delhi, 1988.
- 11 Ibid., p. 278

- 12 Ibid., p. 279
- 13 Ibid., p. 281
- 14 Ibid., f.n. 2, p. 280, f.n. 1, 2, p. 282 and f.n. 12, p. 283.
- 15 Ibid., p.283.
- 16 Ibid., p. 284
- 17 Ibid., p. 284
- 18 Ibid., p.284.
- 19 Sivasanakaran Nair K., Nieuhoff kandakeralam (mal), Trivandrum, 1996.
- 20 Ibid., pp.46-8.
- 21 Ibid, p. 49
- 22 Ibid., pp. 49-53.
- 23 Ibid., p. 53
- 24 Ibid., p. 53.
- 25 Ibid., p.54
- 26 Ibid., p. 66
- 27 Ibid., p.66.
- 28 Ibid., p. 61
- 29 Ibid., p. 64
- 30 Canter Visscher's 'Letters from Malabar' is edited by K.P. Padmanabhamenon with his notes see K.P. Padmanabhamenon, History of Kerala, 4 volumes, AES, New Delhi, 1983.
See also Galleti A, The Dutch in Malabar, Madras, 1911.
- 31 Padmanabhamenon K.P. History of Kerala vol I p. xx
Also see, Galletti A, op cit. p. 89
- 32 Ibid., p.90
- 33 Ibid., p.90
- 34 Ibid., p. 91
- 35 Ibid., p.20.
- 36 Ibid., p. 200
- 37 Ibid., p. 201
- 38 Ibid., p. 202.
- 39 Varghese, T.C., Agrarian Changes and Economic Consequences: Land Tenures in Kerala, 1850-1960, Culcutta, 1970, pp.21-22.
- 40 Francis Buchanan, A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar, Vol.II (1807),Reprint,Delhi,1988.
- 41 Ibid, pp. 366-75.
- 42 Colebrooke traces the origin of caste to the brahmanical texts like *Jatimala*, *Rudrayamalatantra* and *Dharmapurana*. He also corroborates jatis, as revealed in these texts, with Indian situation, the Atlantic mode

- of Plantation Slavery. See Indrani Chatterjee, *Gender, Slavery and Law in Colonial India*, OUP, Delhi, 1995, pp.6-7.
- 43 Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, OUP, Delhi, 1997, pp.7-8.
- 44 There had been a few important accounts of caste on the basis of race science during this phase, i.e., H.H. Risley and his protégé, Edgar Thurston, who were disciples of the French race theorist Paul Topinard. Their theories of caste were determined by race essences and thereby played a critical role in the intellectual history of India and empire of large (See Susan Bayley, *New Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV-3, Cambridge, 1999, pp.126-7).
- 45 Ward and Coner : *A Descriptive Memoir of Malabar* (1906). Reprinted TVM. 1995.
- 46 Ibid., pp.31, 63,104, 189, 243.
- 47 The representation of caste in the writings of colonial historians has not been problematized. James Mill, the ideologue of utilitarianism, emphasised the brahmanic view of origin of caste and stated that the wises of caste subordination led to more destructive point among the Hindus than among any other people. (See Sharma, R.S., 'Historians of Ancient Indian Social Order' in *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, Philip, C.H., (ed.), London, 1961, p.61) Mill with his utilitarian predilection and imperial ambition projected his much infamous periodised narrative of Indian history in which he gave much emphasis to the brahmanic view of origin of caste and exalted position to brahmanas. (See James Mill, *History of British India* (1810), Vol. I, Reprinted, Delhi, 1990, pp.45-56). For Rapson, yet another colonial historian, the institution of caste is formed as a result of the spread of brahmanism and difference between the conquering Aryans and subjugated Dasyus is colour. (See Repson, M.A., *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, IIIrd Indian Reprint, Delhi, 1994, p.48). William Wilson Hunter follows the same view as far as the caste system is concerned. (See William Wilson Hunter, *A Brief History of Indian People*, Oxford, 23rd edn., p.38). Valantine Chirole argues that caste system is primarily developed by the Aryan brahmanas in order to preserve the prestige and purity of the conquering race (See Valantine Chirole, *The Orient and Oxidant*, Chicago, 1924, pp.20-21).
- 48 Kurup. K.K.N. , *Willaim Logan: A Study in the Agrarian Relations of Malabar*, Calicut 1981, pp. 22-6.
- 49 Ibid, pp. 29-30.
- 50 Ibid.p 30.
- 51 Logan William, *Malabar*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1981, p.136.
- 52 Ibid p. 136.
- 53 Adoor K.K.Ramachandran Nair, *Slavery in Kerala*, Delhi, 1996, pp 47-58.
- 54 Kusuman, K.K., *Slavery in Travancore*, Kerala Historical Society, Thiruvananthapuram, 1973, pp.-73.

- Innes C.A., *Malabar Gazetteer* (1908). Kerala Gazetteers Department, Reprinted TVM. 1997.
- 55 Thurston, Edgar, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* 7. Vols.
- 56 Charles Grant's writings represent the first full expression of evangelical encounter with Indian culture. For Grant caste system is an 'oppressive and insulting tyranny' which subjects the lower castes to 'perpetual abasement (See Javeed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imagining*, Oxford, 1992, pp.81-83). He argues that the only hope for the improvement of Hindus lies in the evangelical endeavour with the government support.
- 57 Abbe. J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners Customs and Ceremonies*, Reprinted Delhi 1983.
- 58 Samuel Mateer, , *The Land of Charity: A Descriptive Account of Travancore and Its People*(1870) Reprint, Delhi, 1991, 'Native Life in Travancore' (1883). Reprint, Delhi, 1991.
- 59 Ellis and Robert Caldwell formulated the Dravidian family of language and articulated the racial and historical base of the Aryan-Dravidian divide (Thomas R. Trautman, *Aryans and British India*, Delhi, 1997, p.115).
- 60 Samuel Mateer, *The Land of Charity...*, p. 27.
- 61 Samuel Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore*, p. 28
- 62 Ibid., p.297.
- 63 Ibid., p.425.
- 64 Ibid p 414.



Lokayatadarsana — The Indian Materialism

Dharmaraj Adat

The researchers who are repeatedly assuring that the ancient Indian Philosophy is exclusively operating upon spirituality, are still not absent. The model expression of this fiction is to be found in the writings of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

“Philosophy in India”, he says, “is essentially spiritual. It is the intense spirituality of India, and not any great political structure or social organisation that it has developed, that has enabled it to resist the ravages of time and the accidents of history.... The spiritual motive dominates life in India.”¹ “The dominant character of the Indian mind”, he repeats, “which has coloured all its culture and moulded all its thought is the spiritual tendency. Spiritual experience is the foundation of India’s rich cultural history.”²

In the modern context, even the new generation is not trying to violate the strictures imposed upon the subject by Dr. Radhakrishnan. Owing to the belittling of the orthodox people, and the lack of intellectual seriousness in the well wishers, the contributions of the world famous scholars like Debi Prasad Chattopadhyaya have not yet reached the real target. Objectivity and the realization of the inevitability of the contemporary world, multiplies the value of the contributions of Debi Prasad Chattopadhyaya. Hence anybody who likes to save India and Indianess from the cultural distortions of Hindu fundamentalists, who always sharpen their weapons by misinterpreting the heritage of India, should necessarily go through the works of Debi Prasad Chattopadhyaya.

Apart from Debi Prasad, there are philosophers and historians like Rahul Samkrithyayan, K. Damodaran, E.M.S.Namboodirippad, D.D.Kosambi, R.S.Sharma, Irfan Habeeb and Romila Thapar. Each of them made from their own realm, efforts to mould and innovate the generation according to the demands of the day.

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Attempts to study the Indian Philosophical thought scientifically dividing into idealistic and materialistic, has been subjected to a deeper analysis only recently. What has been accepted here, is, a categorising like *vaidika darsana* (or *Asthika darsana*) and *avaidikadarsana* (or *Nasthika darsana*). Those systems, which accept the authority of the Vedas, are grouped as *Vaidika* and those, which reject the authority of the Vedas, are grouped as *Avoidika*. *Vaidika* schools acknowledged Vedas and other Vedic texts as non-masculine and non-tyrannical. Contrary to it, is *Avoidika*. The six *Vaidika darsanas* are *Nyaya* of Goutama, *Vaisesika* of Kanada, *Samkhya* of Kapila, *Yoga* of Patanjali, *Mimamsa* of Jaimini and *Vedanta* of Badarayana. Many of them are again splitting into many other branches. For example *Vedanta darsana* is divided into *Dvaita*, *Advaita* and *Visishta-advaita*. The notion that *Vedanta* meant *Advaita vedanta* is wrong. Similarly *Avoidika darsanas* are also divided into three, namely *Baudha*, *Jaina* and *Charvaka* (*Lokayuta*). Each of them are again getting into many categories as before.

These nine schools of *vaidika* and *avoidika* philosophies if divided into atheistic and theistic, most of the proponents of the Indian philosophic thoughts will appear themselves as atheistic. They rationally argued that the existence of God cannot be determined within the circles of rationality. In the long tradition of Indian Philosophy except a few, never felt the necessity of God for the analysis of their philosophy. There is something to be noted here particularly. Almost all the philosophic springs of ancient India based on atheism got developed by placing strongly on the realm of materialism. Not only the philosophy of *Lokayata*, which is exclusively renowned as based on materialism, but it includes, *Samkhya*, *Nyaya*, *Vaisesika*, *Mimamsa*, *Jaina* and *Baudha*. If seven of the nine Indian philosophic thoughts totally denied God and acknowledged materialism, on certain absolute realms, *Advaita Vedanta* also neglected God. Can we call then all these philosophies as strictly materialistic since they singlemindedly neglected God ? Not at all. Are they idealistic then? Dr.Radhakrishnan and others repeatedly emphasised like that. At the same time they face the reality that an idealism without God could not be met with. Many latter Indian philosophers tried themselves to solve this contradiction by dragging God into their systems. But it worsened the situation much more. Even after doing much they could not deny the intrusion of materialism into their philosophic systems. "Our consciousness and thinking, however

suprasensuous they may fear", Frederic Engels rightly pointed out the fact, "are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter."³

Though the truth is like this Dr. Radhakrishnan and the like scholars without any hesitation noted that the Indian philosophy is totally spiritualistic and the Indians traditionally performed discussions on God.

Scholars like S.N. Dasgupta even said that the material philosophy of Charvaka was a foreign good owned from the Sumerians. Let me quote: "Probably the lokayata doctrines had their beginnings in the preceding Sumerian civilisation in the then prevailing customs of adorning the dead and the doctrine of bodily survival after death. This later on became so far changed that it was argued that since the self and the body were identical and since the body was burnt after death there could not be another world after death." ⁴

"We thus know that the lokayata views were very old.... being current among the Sumerian people of Pre-Aryan times".⁵

The organised repetitions of discussions and opinions of such scholars were to impose forcefully the fiction that advaita vedanta was the only Indian Philosophy and all others were simply there to flourish that one.

There are some, who state that Vedanta is the end of knowledge and there is nothing beyond it to know. Brahma is the final essence— the absolute and those who knew it were Indians. This childish outlook, forever, has taken from us the possibilities of getting endless knowledge. The reasons for the withering and dormant nature of Indian scientific thoughts which owned the liveliness of modern development first, were nothing else. However scholars are so smart in making interpretations. The hollow arguments that aeroplanes and even atom bombs were made by the Indians are uttered not by the old generation: but by the new kind. Those who are blindly led by these myth that our ancestors found everything may still amplify much more than that.

But the fables and myths of spirituality are almost well exposed. It is generally and unanimously getting recognised among the scholars that the Indian's world view is deep rooted in materialism. God is only a latter phenomenon in the traditional philosophical schools of India. Those who

are reluctant to accept this truth are filling the old wine in new bottles.

Another aspect should also be revealed here. It is the very reality that the idealist philosophers who analysed the history and the fundamental theories of Indian philosophy intertwined religion and philosophy. They consciously or unconsciously dropped the fact that religion and philosophic thoughts are entirely different. Whatever be the religion, whether Hindu, Jaina or Christian— in the final analysis, it may be operating on the realm of idealism. But its philosophic currents may not be like that. Let us take the example of Budhistic philosophy and the religion of Buddha. There is no other Indian philosophy as Buddhism which so rationally denied the existence of God. But in Buddhist religion even Buddha was evoked as a God. The very opinion that it was at the end of the deterioration of Buddhist philosophy that it was transformed into a religion, could not be neglected. It is a fact that every religion may have certain relationship with some philosophic thoughts. But it is not necessary that all philosophic thoughts should have a frame of a religion. It was the representation of India by inter-fusing religion and philosophy that led many Indian and foreign scholars to get into wrong conclusions of Indian tradition. Their misinterpretation was like this— India had no philosophy, no history. Indians were the profounders of Maya. They were passive and nihilistic. And India had nothing but many myths, mysticism and religious dogmas.

Here at this juncture a re-thinking and analysis of Indian philosophic tradition and the philosophic theories of knowledge become desperately inevitable.

II

A similar word for philosophy is 'darsana' in Indian language. The first use of the term was found in the Vaisesika Sutras of Kanada written earlier to the period of Buddha. In the time of Chanakya the word 'darsana' never achieved a philosophic dimension. In his work *Arthasastra* 'anvikshiki' is the term used in the philosophic sense.⁶ Since the 8th century the word 'darsana' received a wider acclaim in the aforesaid meaning Sree Sankara and Udayana used the same term for philosophy in their works.

The word 'darsana' is derived from the root 'drs' (drsin preksane) which meant 'to see'. So its right meaning is 'the knowledge derived out

of sight'. But the modern scholars consider the word 'darsana' not merely as the knowledge derived through the power of sight. To them sight is an inner urge, or an inner call. This urge is to know the absolute i.e. 'Brahman'—the primary essence of the being. Thus according to the Indian conception the word 'darsana' implies the particular knowledge— knowledge relating to 'moksha' or the final liberation. That is, the science that deals with the 'moksha sastra' is called 'darsana' or the sciences, which are the instruments of knowledge relating to moksha, are called the darsanas. Thus the word 'darsana' means vision and also the instrument of vision. It stands for the direct, immediate and intuitive vision of reality, the actual perception of truth, and also includes the means which lead to this realisation'.⁷

It goes without saying that such meaning is the para phrase of idealists or in particular that of Advaita Vedantins. To them nothing is eternal except the Brahman. Moksha means the liberation from the imprisonment of birth and death i.e. release from worldly existence or transmigration.

If we take the meaning of 'darsana' according to the above version it appears that without following the ways of Moksha no science is becoming a darsana. Then Charvakas who are the instrument of knowledge in general, could not come anywhere near. But at the same time, traditionally the thoughts of Charvaka are acknowledged by the Indians as darsana. Scholars like Kautilya, Haribhandrasuri, Santharakshita and Madhavacharya analysed the thoughts of Charvaka as a real 'darsana'.

The commonly accepted meaning of 'darsana' today is the search for knowledge. It is the irresistible thirst for knowledge. The study of nature where human beings live and the cosmic phenomenon; the study of the place and objective of humanity in nature; the analysis of the origin, development and the extinction of humanity— all these come under the circle of 'darsana'. The etymological meaning of the word 'philosophy' is also the same i.e. 'love of learning'. It also signifies a natural and a necessary urge in human beings to know themselves and the world in which they 'live and move and have their being'.

Lokayatikas discussed nothing else other than this. So when we take this modern meaning to the word 'darsana' Lokayata is also a philosophic science.

Lokayata meant actually the opinions taught by Charvaka or the science of Lokayatikas. Lokayata meant an atheist, a workingman in the world or a Charvaka. That is, Lokayata is the philosophy of the working class. That is why the scholars called it Lokayatam (lokesu ayatam— popular among people).

The founder of this philosophy is not yet identified. Many consider that it was one Brihaspati. From him it went to his disciple Charvaka and from there to his own disciples and then to the public. Therefore, this darsana is also called Brihaspatya. There are many who consider that Brihaspati and Charvaka are the one and the same person. Much more credible version is that Brihaspati concluded the popular manners of the people and thus formed a philosophic school giving them a philosophic interpretation.

III

Almost all the Indian philosophers generally recognise five elements— earth, water, fire, air and ether. But lokayata philosophy recognise only the first four of them. They state that nature and all the creatures are made out of the proportionate blend of these elements.⁸ Since the ether is not explicitly palpable they have not accepted it.

The teachings of lokayata about the nature of beings is founded on the idea that everything in the Universe consists of four elements— earth, fire, water and air. The elements are eternal and immutable. The properties of an object depend on the types of elements it consists of and in what proportion they are combined. The consciousness, intellect and sense organs are also the result of a certain combination of the elements. The four elements of earth, air, fire and water when mixed together in a certain proportion and according to a peculiar manner become transformed into the organism— they argue. And after the death of a living being this combination disintegrates into elements which join up those of the corresponding type existing in inanimate nature.

Almost all Indian philosophies accept the view that soul is having an independent existence outside the body. But the lokayata philosophy believed that 'atman' or soul had not any such independent existence. To them soul is only a characteristic feature of the body and lasts only upto

the death of the body. And hence they strongly held the view that 'atman' dies with the death of the body and one can't find 'atman' in a dead body.

According to the lokayata philosophy it is the body, which sees, hears, thinks and experiences. When they say body, they meant the body, which embodies the life. When somebody say that 'I am fat, old or young' what is specified is the body with the life in it. Such phrases 'my body' are metaphorical in essence. ⁹

The Indian philosophical systems mainly recognise four concepts as the sources of their knowledge. They are pratyaksha, anumana, upamana and sabda. Some others also accepted arthapathy, abhava, sarobhava and aithihya as their sole means of knowledge. But the Charvaka philosophy rejects all others except prathyaksha. It is stated that they never believed things which they could not see.¹⁰

Charvakas who progressed with a new system totally rejected religion and castes which were the foundations of superstitions. Supernatural forces always come under the category of anumana and hence it has no place in this philosophical system. Fate, the theory of Karma, God, other world, Moksa, recompense for virtue or vice concepts are not according to facts and hence they rejected all such things in their philosophy. The phenomenon in nature, its dialectics and even nature itself are caused by the natural transformational urge embodied in the matter.

Lokayatikas totally rejected the beliefs of religion and all distinctions of caste and creed. They found the reality that Brahmana and Chandala had the same red blood in their veins. They also rejected the arguments regarding racial purity. Everybody has the equal right in this earth to live and enjoy.

It is pointed earlier that the Indian Philosophers can be categorised as Vaidikas and Aavidikas. Lokayata philosophers stand in the forefront, which questioned the authority of the vedas. They maintain that the mantra portion of the vedas can by no means be authoritative, because, they do not convey any meaning whatsoever. Some of them are ambiguous; some are absurd; some are contradictory and some repeat what is already known. Hence the Vedas are not only human compositions but even worse. All the obscene rites commended for the queen in the 'Asvamedha' sacrifice

have been invented by knaves. The exercises of religion and the practices of asceticism are merely a means of livelihood for men devoid of intellect and manliness.

Lokayata philosophy was also a strong tirade against the authority of priest-hood. Quoting evidences they insisted that their words should not be taken for granted. The priest class propose the sacrifice of 'Putrakamesthi' to get the children. But they also say that the end of that sacrifice may have either possibilities, i.e. childbirth may or may not happen as the result of the sacrifice. When a child is born they say that it is due to the power of their incantations uttered in performing the rites and when a child is not born they explain the event as being due to the rites being incomplete in some way or other. This is merely an equivocal speculation. The reality is something different. If the male and female are capable of procreation and if the mate in the right time, even without any sacrifice procreation will happen. The killing of animals in the sacrifice is also to be criticised. The priests say that the animal which is sacrificed, will directly be taken to heaven. That is, the animal is getting salvation from the bond of birth and rebirth. If it is true why such performers are not sacrificing their own old fathers? If final redemption is to be attained they might have done something like that. From this very precedence what is more conspicuously clarified is that they were performing all rites just for their own belly sake. The religious ceremonies and all such acts to propitiate God are hence utterly useless.

All 'Smrities' and 'Puranas' are indebted to Vedas. Therefore, since the authority of vedas is questioned, the authority of the depending smriti puranas is also rejected. Moreover it is written by people like Vyasa. He is the one who kneels before the eloquence of Pandavas and one who sexually enjoyed his brother's wife. The story of his birth is also quite known. Such a person's words cannot be taken as authentic. In some puranas animals like fish, tortoise, snake, etc., are represented as instructors. Instructors are supposed to be superior to those who are instructed. Similarly a venerable person is also supposed to be superior to his worshipper. But following the directions of the Smriti-Purana literature, which recommend the worship of cow, snake, fish, tortoise etc. , the followers themselves prove to be inferior even to these animals. Sages like Durvasas, who is famous for his wrathfulness, do not hesitate to give instructions on placidity.

One, who is led by a blind, will fall in a ditch. Similarly those who live according to 'Smriti-Puranas' will always fall in dangers.

Heaven is the prosperity of this life and there is no such place named heaven. The word heaven meant extreme bliss. If anyone is getting into heaven after death, he may be encouraged by the relations here to return; but it never happened. The body, which is becoming a handful of dust has no existence. The ceremonies after death are useless. Similarly the word 'hell' meant, the miseries of this world and no such place called hell anywhere.

Apart from the visible king, there is no other superior power in the world. The universe and the elements of matter are converted into a vivacious nature due to the natural power embodied in it. The world is not the handiwork of a creator. The various phenomena of the world are produced spontaneously from the nature of things and there is no supernatural creator— the God. If there were a God as argued by the believers, why did not he put an end to the problems and miseries of their life and make them happy? Since God is invisible it is not an explicit reality. So, beyond the king there is nobody to control the world.

A great majority of Indian philosophers were pessimists, who preached that the world is full of vices than virtue. They preached that misery is the real mood of life and nowhere one can see peace or happiness. But the lokayatikas never believed that the world is a fertile land of sorrows. Optimism is the essence of their philosophy. They stated that the life is the mixture of different moods. So, happiness is to be extracted out of sorrow, and it is the one advantageous to human life. But we can't see mere happiness in life. But because there is sorrow and because pleasure and blissfulness is mixed with sorrow, should we therefore reject our life? Should we fling away sheaves of paddy, rich with the finest white grains, because they are covered with husk and dust? A man should do that which yield bliss in the end. Even Vyasa said that a lustful woman should be satisfied. The moon God the lord of the twice born, enjoyed very eagerly the wife of his preceptor Brihaspati. Every body knows the story of Indra, the Godhead, and Ahalya, the wife of the sage Gotama. So one need not be sexually poor. 'Happiness is great— it is the exhortation of nature. Even children are fond of happiness. Every man is working hard to get the enjoyment. It is the great happiness that is considered as the absolute end of life.

IV

The foregoing analysis of lokayata philosophy is based on the general presentation of this philosophy by the opponents. So a faithful analysis of this philosophy is quite inevitable to know its real quality and the popularity it gained. The historic responsibility performed by this philosophy should also be made clear. There are not much philosophers who moved ahead through such a track. Many were reluctant to go beyond the version of Madhvacharya the first among the Indian philosophers who compiled the views of the lokayatikas. So the real surface of the ideas of the lokayata philosophy was far away from the understanding of the people. "You will die tomorrow, so enjoy life today by eating and drinking"—many considered lokayata philosophy as the immature thoughts of a barbarous being.

Here needs some explanation. Hitherto not a single text written by the followers of lokayata has come down to us. This philosophy is most fully expounded in the philosophical treatises written by the idealist opponents of lokayata. The most prominent name among them is, as stated before, of Madhavacharya. It was Madhavacharya who first collected the views of lokayata and gave it the frame of a philosophical system. But the idealistic prejudices and political preoccupations of Madhavacharya highly influenced his philosophical enthusiasm. Lokayata, which as its name signified, embodied only the world outlook of the masses was forced to assimilate so many variations and distortions. Madhavacharya did not hesitate to impose the vedantic pattern of arguing on the lokayaktikas.¹¹

Madhavacharya and other idealist philosophers, generation after generation preached that lokayatikas denied everything that is not visible. We know that one can't move forward without accepting the possibilities of anumana (inference). The obsession that one will believe only what one sees, is quite childish. Such an approach is not practical. Since lokayatikas took such a strategy one may consider it and the other as the philosophy of immature thoughts. In reality Madhavacharya and others wished nothing otherwise. It is quite sorry that many modern philosophers were at a fail to see the particular class consciousness Madhavacharya preserved beneath his so called impartial outlook.

Truly lokayatikas were the one who made arguments based on science, from the limited circle of the age. They did not only deny, but

made many creative suggestions. But the idealist philosophers who quoted their views as their purvapaksha tried to make it as the philosophy of negation only to disgrace and make it less popular.

There is no doubt that according to the lokayata philosophy for real knowledge the fundamental concept should be something visible or 'Pratyaksa'. At the same time inference 'Anumana' is not altogether rejected. On the light of the visible one can reach at certain speculations. They strongly argued against the tendency of using 'anumana' for the establishment of God, otherworld and similar superstitions. If 'anumana' is used like this, it is the misuse. Idealists mainly used 'anumana' for the presentation of God, the other world, soul and the theory of salvation etc.

Lokayata philosophy was a tempest blown against the authority of the priesthood in a time of the war of ideas. That is why it influenced the common people. When idealists got into the ruling class and controlled the sphere of politics and socio-cultural scenario, they concentrated on uprooting all philosophies which stood against it. They diluted many ideas useful to them in the mainstream philosophies and others were destroyed. And thus the creative criticism made by the lokayata philosopher were not made known to the people and instead they got only the status of negationalists.

After many researches and investigations S.N. Das Gupta had found evidences to consider that lokayata philosophers also relied upon certain 'anumanas'. The lokayata philosopher who lived in the Seventh Century A.D. called Purandara revealed the matter clearly. Das Gupta summarises Purandara's position as follows:

"Purandara... admits the usefulness of inference in determining the nature of all worldly things where perceptual experience is available but inference cannot be employed for establishing any dogma regarding the transcendental world, or life after death or the laws of Karma which cannot be available to ordinary perceptual experience." ¹²

"Purandarastu aha lokaprasiddham anumanam carvakairapi isyata eva, yattu kaicit laukikam margam atikramya anumanam ucyate tat nisiddhye"¹³
(But Purandara said that even according to the Charvaka inference was valid within the range of the empirically known world: if however, one proposed to extend its application beyond the range of the this— worldly

objects, one's claim would be a forbidden one).

Lokayata Philosophers were not against 'anumana'. But one thing is clear. They gave extreme importance to the perception. The conspicuous circumstances for such an approach was also there. The cunning deceptors, in religious grabs— the priest-hood was trying to generate in the minds of the people illusions concerning the attainment of heaven and the discrimination between the good and the bad; and they are trying to establish their claims on the basis of futile references to such sources of valid knowledge as inference, scriptures etc. The historic responsibility of the lokayata philosophers were to free the people from the hegemony of the priest class and their distorted teachings and they did it well.

Now the picture is much more clear and complicated. The class struggle which existed in India, the 'revolt of the oppressed against the Brahmana-Kshatriya supremacy, the protest of the working class that is heard in lokayata philosophy. The exponents of one were preaching God, heaven and immortality and as a means to attain these, the efficacy of the Vedic sacrifices. The other side represented the stand point of the people and was trying to defend their material advantages. Though it was subdued by the dominant class the lokayata philosophy continued to occupy the minds of the people.

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Book Review

T. Madhava Menon

**Beyond Resistance:
Critical Essays on Canadian First
Nations Writing**
Ed. Dr. M. Dasan

Publication Division
University of Calicut
Pages 320. Price 250/-



The term, "First Nations Peoples of Canada" denotes autochthons of the region; the earlier term "Red Indians", was as pejorative as it was inaccurate. Like indigenous people everywhere they were subjected to inhuman oppression, and exploitation by colonial regimes ever since they were 'discovered' by Western European adventurers, 500 years back.

Five hundred years have... passed since Columbus came..
Now everything is gone, our land is gone, our water is polluted,
all of those kinds of things, and the only thing that we have left
that is still pretty intact is our voice... As long as our voice is
there, then we will survive (Maria Campbell, 1990).

So starts the Editorial Introduction, and perhaps nothing could have put the essence of this more eloquently than this quotation, so aptly chosen. The Editor traces the aggrandizement of the oral literature of the people by the written word in colonial languages. Indigenous cultural practices were banned, and native languages prohibited from being taught in schools. The Editor draws on his years of experience and exposure to marginalized peoples in Canada, USA, Australia and India. Early anthologies excluded the literary creations of the "First Nation Peoples", and literature was believed to have emerged only after the 'civilizing influence' of the colonizers. Prof. Dasan is to be congratulated for having gathered together material from First Nations writers, as well as a set of young scholars from the Universities of India, and succeeded in bringing out this perceptive

volume. The most attractive feature is that the book has been dedicated to "the adivasies of Kerala, who have been striving to go beyond resistance".

In this review, it is not possible to summarize each of the contributions, for reasons of space and time; it has already been done in the Editor's masterly Introduction. The first is by Janice Acoose, herself a member of that tribe, who takes up a legend of her ancestors. She portrays the 'disorientation, grief, fear and internalized rage' that grew among the tribe after World War II. She was the victim of 'incarceration' in Indian Residential School, where children of her tribe were cosigned by the colonial rulers to have their education. The oral literature and stories of her tribe were appropriated by the Western written cultural tradition, and retold to the children of those who were the authors, to make of it an alienating interpretation. She believes that connections must be made between literary sovereignty and political nationhood. Racialism had been institutionalized in colonial regimes (Manju Ramanathan) 'Natives' were only pools of cheap labour. Indigenous leadership was ruthlessly put down and murders and executions. Aggrandizement of tribal was achieved by theft, robbery and massacre. Tribal children, forcibly incarcerated in the schools, were punished for speaking their native languages. Cultural suppression, the ubiquitous thrust of the prestige of the ruling race and its cultural values, were all aimed at the extinction of tribal identity, and its incorporation as aberrant forms whose existence was a credit to the toleration of the dominant culture. This aspect has been emphasized in most of the articles in this book, the various stratagems and courses having been described.

In Canada, tribes reacted with a creativity that baffled the oppressors. Despite physical oppression, political subjugation, economic deprivation, and cultural assassination, they survived because of the power of their myths and the persistence of their oral literature. Resistance was a first step; realization took them beyond it. This renewal of faith now makes them immune from cultural pollution and ultimate extinction. The Editor analyses two dramatic works to show that the wounds (misprinted as sounds, p 394) inflicted on the native family and community can be healed through co-operation, unity and family bonding for which even alcoholic addiction may be a means—the moral strictures imposed so iniquitously and unevenly by the dominant culture, lose significance and sanction.

Chellappan. K draws the obvious comparisons of the “emerging female voices of the First Nation People in Canada and India”. He perceives the women portrayed in three novels he studies as ‘metaphors of double colonization’ but also ‘symbols of a new hope’.

The title *Beyond Resistance*, achieves meaning because it signifies not merely revolt. Nor is it integration with the oppressor, in something called, in India as “Joining the Mainstream of Life”, presumably as flotasm and jetsam. It is a recovery of human identity and recharging of the indigenous springs from which resistance recreates itself. Its message for the tribal people of Kerala, and India, and indeed everywhere, is obvious showing how appropriate the dedication of this book to them has been.

The book is well produced and errors of proof reading rare. It should be a beacon of hope for the English educated tribal youth of Kerala, who are on the brink of being pushed into “Mainstream of Life” in India, so obviously a desperate swim for getting a job as the only remaining survival strategy! If the message of being “Beyond Resistance” sinks into consciousness, then despite the proliferation of residential schools, tribal welfare ‘officers’, forest law, ‘enforcers’, police prosecutions and pressures to further dispossess themselves of lands, the tribal people of Kerala may still succeed in liberating themselves, first intellectually and culturally and ultimately in all spheres of human condition. As a potential aid in that process of liberation, this little book is a great first step, and it is correspondingly welcome. It is reasonably priced considering the present pricing policies— if it had been marketed through a ‘multi national’ press, it would have been at least at double the price.



