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Women's Position in Sacral Literature: A Study of the Kuncitanghristavam

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ABSTRACT

Women"s rights, whether in strictly legal terms, or rather more broadly, in terms of perceptions in society and culture, have been a matter of considerable interest. In this paper, I propose to focus on the latter aspect, with reference to one specific text, the Kuncitanghristavam. A Sanskrit text of the 14th century, it is a poem written in the temple town of Chidambaram, by one of the temple priests, Umapati, and while it is primarily a poem that is concerned with the Ananda Tandavam, the Dance of Bliss believed to have been performed in Chidambaram by Siva, it is also a text that goes into some detail about the Goddess. I will therefore attempt to study the ideological framework within which women are placed, with reference to this text.

"Two aspects of the complex of religions called Hinduism are crucial for much of its history. On the one hand the enthusiasm for idealism; on the other the perception of the physical reality of the supernatural, that it is embedded in concrete things."[1] The idealism obviously had a social and moral significance, given that the "embedding in concrete things" meant not just the physical structure of the temple, but also the ideological structure within which the ideal was located. It is this aspect, of the juxtaposition of the ideal with the real, which I will try to examine in this paper.

What was the position of women in medieval times? Was there a connection between the sacral images and the real social position " i.e. did the image reflect the reality, and then become re-imposed on society? Within this framework, did women have clearly defined rights? These are some of the questions that I am trying to raise in this paper. The text that I have chosen here is one that is not very well known outside the circle of religious history. Named the Kuncitanghristavam, it is a poem in Sanskrit, composed probably in the fourteenth century by one of the priests of the Siva temple at Chidambaram, Um?pati Siv?c?rya. It might seem an odd choice in a paper on women"s rights, for as the text is a poem in praise of the Dance of Siva, as Nataraja in the Chidambaram temple, it obviously has as its focal point the god. But at the same time, Siva is seen as in some sense incomplete without ?akti, the female element; and so, albeit as Goddess, the female is part of the text. I must reiterate here that the text has a particular location, the Chidambaram temple, and so, references to the female and goddess are both, in broader conceptual terms and in terms of images and spaces, specific to that temple.

This paper is divided into two parts. In the first part, I will concentrate on the descriptions provided in the text itself. In the second part, I will attempt to examine the issue of rights and position with reference to these descriptions. Let me start with a broad description of the Chidambaram temple and its ideology. The temple is, for ?aiva ideology, the centre of the cosmic world, for it was there that Siva performed his divine dance " the ?nandat?ndava, the dance of bliss. The devout would

have it that this will also be the place where, in time, Siva will perform the rudrat?ndava, the dance of anger, by which the world will be destroyed, so that creation can begin all over again. The main image is naturally that of Siva as Nataraja, the divine dancer. At the same time, enshrined within the temple is also the belief of God as formless, and so, next to the shrine with the image of Siva as Nataraja is another shrine, which has no image whatsoever, and has no light " a lamp is used when the devotees come to the shrine, and in its light, one can see, fairly faintly, engravings of leaves (the vilva leaf, used in rituals of Siva). But the focus of attention is of course the divine dancer, and dance, whether of creation or destruction (and probably more the former) is a public act, to be performed before an audience; and so, Siva"s audience in Chidambaram consists of first, the goddess, Vishnu,'ss serpent in the form of Patanjali, and an ascetic who is otherwise unknown, one Vyaghrapada. Vishnu himself is represented in one of the sculptures in the temple as playing the drum to which Siva dances.

The goddess in Chidambaram is ?ivakamasundari " "?iva"s lovely beloved" " and in the temple, is part of the main shrine. However, this is not her only space, for there is a separate shrine devoted to her near what is called the ?ivaganga tank. There is also a temple devoted to the goddess as Kali (the Tillai Kali) at the northern edge of the town. Both these temples were probably built in the 13th century, which means that they were already in place before the text was composed. Kali figures in the main temple as well, for there is a small shrine to her in the Nrtta Sabha of the temple. The world view of the text is of Chidambaram as the centre of the cosmic world, of course, as well as that of the ?aiva Siddhanta tradition. As said above, Chidambaram occupies a very important place in the cosmic view, as the place where creation took place. I do not propose, here, to go into the entire debate of whether the Siddhanta tradition was specific to the Tamil Nadu region or had a pan-Indian spread as well.[2] What I will concentrate on is the image of the goddess " and she has a role, often starkly dissimilar, in both, the Chidambaram world view and the Siddhanta tradition.

The goddess is, first of all, ?akti " pure energy, manifest everywhere in the world, but particularly through Siva. Stories about the ?iva-?akti links and about the way/s in which the two came together are innumerable. By the 14th century, the complementarity of ?iva-?akti " of the male / female being the two parts of one whole " were firmly established. In iconography, this found expression through the form of Ardhanarisvara, the earliest version of which probably dates back to Gupta times. As Ardhanarisvara, while there is the understanding that the male and female are complementary and united, the two are still represented as distinctly male and female. This image has found expression in early Bhakti poetry in Tamil, in which this is the image of "perfect love, unity, equality, completeness."[3] However, there is also a belief that Siva in himself is both Sakti and Siva, male and female, and so, as the female element was within him, it was probably enough to depict Siva alone. As male, he is Nataraja, Gangadhara, Pasupati, and particularly in the south, Bhiksatana, the handsome ascetic / beggar, who haunted the cemeteries, but who drove women mad with lust. But he was also Umapati " the husband of Uma, Parvati, and there are times when this appears to be the most important. Siva in this poem is also called m?y?tita, "the one beyond Maya", and so beyond all illusion. He is thus the ultimate "truth", no matter what his form. As he

had within himself the female element of ?akti, this also had to manifest itself. It is here that the Siddhanta tradition comes into play, for according to this tradition, ?akti is manifest in the three aspects of Icch?, JÃ±ana and Kriya. Icch? ?akti was desire " the desire of Siva to show compassion to those who worshipped him. JÃ±ana was knowledge " knowledge of Siva. And Kriya was action " that taken in pursuit of knowledge, so that Siva could show his compassion. Another explanation of these has also been provided, in which Icch? remains the power of desire, but is that which motivates Siva to create the world, to ease suffering and save the multiple individual selves. JÃ±ana permits Siva to know what he has created, and Kriya is activity itself, which is manifested by various actions. In this explanation, Sakti has a distinct and separate identity, which is manifested through Siva, but only if she so desires. She is "Para-Sakti", who "is of the form of Grace", who stands as "the Lord"s Icch?, JÃ±ana and Kriya".[4] She is also therefore the "visible form of Saccidananda",[5] and in Chidambaram, is the one who can witness the entire dance. Implicit in this is the understanding that she can see it because she is the motive force behind the dance, as well as "Siva undivided from His Self".[6]

In these descriptions, the image of the goddess is that of a mother, omniscient and omnipotent, and who is always present even if not visible. They are also more abstract, and so, in the temple, any of the images can be seen as representative of these ideas. However, it is ?ivakamasundari, in the main shrine, who is seen as the most important representation, which is why she stands so close to the main image. But there are other images, and other stories, which are not quite as comforting as that of the goddess as mother. One of these images is that of Kali. As said above, a separate shrine to Kali exists on the northern edge of the town, and perhaps significantly, the Cidambara Mahatmya defines her as "protectress" of the third enclosure of the temple, facing northwards, away from the main shrine. The Kuncitanghristavam has one stanza which says that Siva first danced with Kali and defeated her, and then expelled her " presumably to the forest. The poem goes on to say that she "hung down her four faces in shame", and moved by compassion, Siva made her the "protector of His holy place". [7] Yet another stanza goes back to an earlier story about Kali, that she had been created to kill a demon, but having killed him, her anger was then unleashed upon the world.Â Siva therefore went out to the forest to meet her, and there showed her the anandatandava, the Dance of Bliss, and then calmed her down, by making her the symbol of his protection.[8] However, it should be remembered that Kali also represented Siva"s destructive force, for she was born out of his anger and desire to destroy.

In contrast to the images and stories about Kali are those about the goddess as ?ivakamasundari. She is first of all his wife and therefore her role is that of housewife and helpmate within the bounds of marriage. As one half of the divine couple, she is the object of his sexual desire and vice-versa. One stanza seems to imply that Siva approaches Parvati as a customer to a prostitute " an image that recurs in the 17th century, in the Telugu poems of Ksetrayya. There are also a great many stanzas which go fairly explicitly into the sexual activities of the couple on their honeymoon. On the other hand, there are probably an equal number of stanzas which go into the jealousy of Parvati because Siva "frolics in secret" with her closest companions "JÃ±ana and Iccha". Many of these are evocative of the Radha-Krishna stories in which Radha is jealous of the attention that Krishna

both gets and devotes to other women. The idea of the "good" wife and mother is also part of these stanzas, for the goddess is jealous of her rights as wife, takes pride in the achievements of her sons " there are many stanzas about Ganesha"s exploits " and as good wife takes it as her right to chastise her husband when she feels he needs it. None of this detracts in any way from the representations outlined above, of the goddess as Sakti. On the contrary, it is because she is Sakti, and a part of Siva, that she has the right to both be with him, and to question him. She has her own place, both within the ritual and the ideological structure, for quite apart from the shrines that are dedicated to her, she is also supposed to be Srividya, worshipped by all, especially in Chidambaram, for this temple has, in addition to the shrine with the image of Nataraja, a shrine which has no image at all, and is supposed to represent pure consciousness. It is here that Siva and ?akti find their true form, as unified, formless consciousness.

These, then, are the multiple images that come up through the poem. Most are still well known to devotees, and probably also to the less devout. However, I propose to move beyond the images that are strictly religious, to the broader question of their place in society. Â The first question that rises is that of stereotypes. What are the stereotypes that exist, or are reinforced, through the text? It is possible to identify stereotypes for both goddesses and women in society, and naturally, they are obvious. So, for the goddess, we have the stereotypical forms " Kali (or Bhadrakali) as frightening but protective, Parvati as mother (Amman), or ?ivakamasundari, as wife. Less well known, but stereotypes nonetheless, are the images of the goddess as ?akti, in the forms of Iccha, JÃ±ana and Kriya. Linked to this is the second question, that of rights. What are the rights that the goddesses have? These are of course part of the stereotypes outlined above, and so, Kali"s right is to be fierce, to be quick to anger, and to manifest that anger in the world at large. ?ivakamasundari (or Parvati) are at one and the same time both the ganika and the kulastri of normative texts, for she is the wife, who looks after the home " in Chidambaram, after the images are taken out of the temple in procession, ?ivakamasundari"s image is taken back inside first, so that she can make the house ready for the lord " and taking some of the qualities of Kali, resentful of that which seems to impinge on her rights as housewife. At the same time, she is also, like the ganika, sexually aggressive, but only with her husband. Then, she is the mother, compassionate, caring, and taking great pride in the achievements of her children. What kind of reflections do these images have in society? They do provide the stereotypes for women in general " as mother, wife, or, like Kali, fiercely protective of what she considers as hers. Thus, women are those who are supposed to resist intruders into their territory, which would probably include the house, and definitely the family. Then, as housewife, she is supposed to look after the house and home, and welcome the husband " this would naturally include the sexual aspect as well. There are other aspects that can also be included. For example, are all women ‚€˜naturally" protective " i.e., is protectiveness a female attribute, in the same way that compassion is supposed to be? Who is protected and how? Does the "power" (?akti) to protect come from the reality of motherhood? In other words, is it motherhood that gives women the ability to protect? And so, if they are not mothers, does that then mean that a crucial aspect of their ‚€˜nature" is missing, making them whimsical, demanding of attention and jealous of others who get attention (like the goddess, who is jealous of the attention

that Siva gives to other women)? Even more, is jealousy or whimsicality part of the basic "nature" of women?

It would also perhaps be instructive to study the poem and its multiple images in historical perspective. A text of the 14th century, it actually fits into the existing parameters, and does not challenge them in any way " not surprisingly, considering that the author was a temple priest. The images already existed, and unlike with the Bhakti saints, these images were not being challenged. On the contrary, given the centrality of the temple in the ideological and ritual structure of the Tamil region, it may perhaps be argued that the text was in a sense a reaffirmation of aspects of the normative and ideological structure that had been challenged through various religious movements. Vira?aivism, which had started off with a considerable degree of blurring of gender roles, had already been in existence for over a century when this poem was written. There is, of course, no doubt that religious structures were also those through which accommodations could be made " perhaps one of the best examples is of Kali herself. A forest dweller, she is, in a sense, "tamed" by Siva. She is first defeated by him, then banished by him, and then, when she is shamed in front of an audience, she is also "rescued" by him, and given a specific role to perform. In social terms, this would amount to a re-assertion of the essential incompleteness of women without the male figure to lend them (or to include them in) the mantle of male authority and possession. So, while they are protective, the territory that they defend is defined by the male; and they may be compassionate mothers, but these roles are also available to them because of the male presence. At the same time, they are also guided by lust (Siva as ascetic drives women to thoughts of adultery, while Vishnu as Mohini tempts men to depart from the straight and narrow), and so, they need the bounds of marriage, to make sure that their lustful impulses are kept "legal" and permitted, to the extent possible. I have elsewhere argued that crucial to Bhakti and its ideology is the idea of worship, but this worship is also community based.[9] The language of worship is both personal and social, but the philosophy or the emotion of the personal is often not transmitted to the audience, and therefore, as said above, the social and familial norms are highlighted. The goddess as wife is also the epitome of the virtuous woman, in whom tradition and society rests and is upheld, and perhaps then ?akti becomes even more representative of the power of woman within the bounds of family " and subordinate to the male power.,/p>

A final question that needs to be asked is, can one see any kind of a rights-based language through this text, or is it possible to identify only a multiplicity of images and stereotypical positions? In other words, does the text lead us to an understanding of women"s position, women"s images, or women"s rights? Rights, images, position, are all part of the sacral sphere, but it appears that only image, without substance, is transferred to "real" women in society. Ideological constructs, in such texts, are affirmed, not challenged. If the foundation of society is seen to be the patriarchal family, in which, so to say, everything has a place, and everything is kept firmly in that place, then religion as a mental sphere has to assert the importance of that construct over all others. Therefore, the four pillars of society, to slightly modify the concept of "pillarisation", consist of society, polity, religion, and ideology through religious formulations.

References

1. [1] David Smith, The Dance of Siva: Religion, art and poetry in South India, Cambridge University Press, Indian edition, 1998, p. 80.
2. [2] Saiva Siddhanta has three fundamental categories, consisting of pati, Siva, pasu, the self, and pasa, the bonds. There are 3 bonds, Maya, Siva and ?akti. Maya is matter and so the material cause of the universe; Siva is the efficient cause and ?akti is the instrumental cause. The Siddhanta tradition goes on into defining various stages of achieving consciousness, and emphasizes the importance of knowledge in reaching the ultimate state,/li>.
3. [3] See Indira V. Peterson, Poems to Siva: The Hymns of the Tamil Saints, Motilal Banaarsidas, 1991, p. 101.,/li>
4. [4] David Smith, op. cit., p. 138.,/li>
5. [5] Ibid.
6. [6] Ibid., p. 157.
7. [7] Ibid., pp. 144-45. This is very different from the traditional stories about the dance, which is that Siva and Parvati had a competition, and were evenly matched until Siva lifted his leg above his head, in a posture that no woman could imitate
8. [8] Another version of this story says that Siva became a baby, who was suckled by Kali, and who then drank up the anger along with the milk. Having absorbed her anger, he became Ksetrapala, the protector of the holy places. Ibid., p. 146.
9. [9] K.K. Shah ed., History and Gender: Some Explorations, Rawat Publishers, Jaipur, 2005, pp.107-118.

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Nineteenth Century Colonial Ideology and The Codification of Criminal Law in India: Intrusion with Caution

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I

The attempt at codification of the criminal law in India in the nineteenth century was the single-most important measure that captured the attention of the colonial government in the legal sphere, both at home and abroad, since it was the first codification of criminal law within the British Empire. The promulgation of a uniform criminal code would invariably lead to overlapping and clash with the traditional set of laws of the Hindus and the Muhammedans, especially vis-Ã -vis marriage and inheritance, which were till then guided by the respective personal laws of the communities. Although strictly speaking these fell under the civil category of laws, which as per the avowal of the colonial administration would be governed by customs and traditions without any outside interference, in reality these distinctions got blurred as the government identified "deviations"within these civil law issues to penalise them as crimes. Placed in the time-frame of the nineteenth century, the paper discusses the influences behind the thought process of the main ideologues of the Penal Code, and the extent it gelled with the broader framework of the nineteenth century ideology that informed much of the administration of British India. The subsequent journey of the Penal Code from the submission of the draft code in 1837 to its final enactment in 1860 shows the negotiations it had to make in order to garner acceptability. The article examines how the colonial government managed to walk the tightrope between codifying the diverse set of laws in a country guided by customs and traditions at every step and not arousing large-scale social antagonism.

Modern historiography has dealt in detail with the whys and the wherefores of the promulgation of the penal code,"the philosophy behind the introduction of a codified body of law. David Skuy argues that defects in the English criminal system ,emotivated the codification of Indian law., 1 Eric Stokes points out that English criminal law was treated as a blot on English jurisprudence by the English jurists and that the English themselves did not consider their criminal law to be modern.2 This lacuna together with the chaotic state of affairs in India that hampered the effective dispensation of justice and administration, invigorated the government to shoulder the responsibility of uniform codification. Jon E. Wilson sees the demand for codification more as the by-product of ,œpractical processes of British administration, rather than the influence of a particular tradition of European thought, notably utilitarianism.3 The company officials, as Wilson contends, could sense a "distance"from the indigenous system of jurisprudence,"chaotic, fraudulent and corrupt and it is this that flagged off the codification process. However, to gloss over the theoretical influence of the Utilitarians behind the thought that went into the making of the Code would be offering a partial analysis of a complex process. This paper, while acknowledging the combined influences of practicality and legal loophole behind the codification of scattered body of laws and a structured judicial system in British India, delves into the framing

and the passage of the code to argue that the journey that began with passing of the Charter Act in 1833 and ended with the enactment of the Indian Penal Code in 1860, envelopes both theoretical and practical considerations and that the strand that entwined both these threads was the element of caution. As has been pointed out, a monolithic criminal code would invariably be at variance with some of the traditional customs and rituals of the natives. The definition of what constituted a crime would obviously result in differences of opinions and hence the need of the hour was to soft-peddle the idea of uniform codification. Interference in the sensitive domains of the indigenous society was married with watchfulness and vigilance which remained the catch-phrase of the protagonists of this period as is evident from the methodology adopted by the makers and the enactors of the Penal Code. The high ideals of a civilising mission that dominated colonial ideology in the nineteenth century, was somewhat tempered by the realistic appraisal of exercising caution that would in the end cement the foundation of the empire in India and achieve the ultimate goal of securing the Indian market for commercial purposes.

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, the East India Company had spread its tentacles across the length and breadth of India. Placed on a surer footing, the British now looked upon India as a viable commercial market since the colony possessed the three-pronged advantages of territorial importance, commercial value and maritime utility. As Stokes shows that from then onwards, British policy in India was conditioned ,œ,¦in the direction set by the development of the British economy,¦, 4 British power in India came to be regarded as an 'œinstrument for ensuring the necessary conditions of law and order by which the potentially vast Indian market could be conquered by British industry., 5 This necessitated the task of justifying their rule for which they found an ideology based on India,'s "difference"from Britain. The British identified themselves as a civilised and modern people and decisively set the non-European world as the "other."To describe oneself as "enlightened"implied that someone else had to be shown as "savage."As the British endeavoured to define themselves as "British"and thus as "not Indian,', they had to make of India whatever they chose not to make of themselves. This process had as its outcome, an array of polarities that shaped much of the ideology of the Raj during the first half of the nineteenth century. To amplify the inferiority of the Indians the British took recourse to language, race, history and gender. India fared poorly in all aspects and the British strongly believed that they carried the white-man,'s burden to civilize a barbaric people. Robert Montgomery Martin boastfully claimed, ,œThere can be no doubt, that if the happiness of the great mass of the people be considered as paramount, the acquisition of the Indian provinces by Britain must be looked on as a most fortunate circumstances, for peace, the indispensable prelude to civilization,¦, 6 To the Evangelicals, the hand of God was nowhere more visible than in the miraculous subjugation of India by a handful of English. Utilitarianism, the ultimate goal of which was to turn every individual into a free autonomous agent capable of making choices, sought to liberate individuals from the shackles of slavery and custom. The colonial masters had this strong conviction that it was they who would usher in India,'s modernisation by introducing modern institutions and ideas and rescue India from being immersed in tradition and morass. One of the main utilitarian think-tanks of the period, John Stuart Mill, emphasised that a government,'s main task required promulgation of a '˜parental despotism"which trained its subjects in western knowledge and self-government. The British

officials in the first half of the nineteenth century thus worked on the assumption that by ushering in new ideas they would act as the harbingers of change and create an India with modern political public who would be capable of self-government. The main proponent of the Indian Penal Code, Thomas Babington Macaulay, encapsulates the feeling, ‚œWe have to frame a good government for a country into which, by universal acknowledgement, we cannot introduce those institutions which all the habits, which all the reasonings of European philosophers, which all the history of our own part of the world would lead us to consider as the one great security for good government., 7 Thus the ideological calling of the period projected the need of an urgent revamping of the prevalent set-up by rooting out social evils, introduction of western education, uplift the pitiable condition of women.

II

Legal remodeling was an important component of this broader picture of the civilising mission. Till the early years of the nineteenth century, conservation of the existing set-up or "status-quoist orientalism,"being the mainstay of colonial administration, the rulers tried to walk the tightrope by balancing the prevalent laws and customs with their ulterior agenda of securing the vast Indian market for commercial purposes. Nathaniel Halhed Brassey summed up this sentiment, ‚œThe importance of the commerce of India, and advantages of a territorial establishment in Bengal, have at length awakened the attention of the British legislature to every circumstance that may conciliate the affections of the natives,¦nothing can do favourably conduce to these two points as a well-timed toleration in matters of religion and an adoption of such original institutes of the country, as do not immediately clash with the laws or interests of the conquerors., 8 This sentiment was portrayed by Harry Verelst, the Governor of Bengal (1767-1769), who realised early on, the futility of transplanting the English legal system in Indian soil because of the vast gulf between the two countries. Hence, even if a "full-grown oak"be planted on the "banks of the Ganges,"Verelst apprehended, there would be a very slim chance of its striking roots. Thus, in the given situation, it would be impracticable, he warned, to impose the civil and criminal code of Great Britain on Bengal. Governor Warren Hastings echoed this when he decided that India should be governed by her own traditions of common law. During the early days of the colonial rule, the British were enthusiastic "patrons of the sastras"and treated the original legal texts as most authentic.9 Hastings, Jones and their colleagues, being trained in European classical tradition, developed a "civilizational eye"and thus came to appreciate legal pluralism as component of a ‚œlarge coherent cultural wholes defined by great languages and their classical texts., 10 The end result was a plethora of translations of vernacular legal texts, outlining the principles and precepts of personal laws, into English. The ultimate purpose was to ensure that Indians were governed by ‚œthose laws, which the parties themselves had ever considered as the rules of their conduct and engagements in civil life., 11 However this attempt to plug in indigenous legal system into the socket of British interest, at the ground level, proved cumbersome. What it resulted in was a mishmash of Hindu law, Muhammedan law and English law. In each of the three Presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, the Governor-General or Governor and the Council exercised legislative powers under authority from the Acts of Parliament. These enactments were called

Regulations which were ,œfrequently ill-drawn,¦frequently conflicting,¦, 12 As Macaulay observed, ,œOur Regulations in civil matters do not define rights; they merely establish remedies. If a point of Hindu law arises, the judge calls on the pandit for opinion. If a point of Mahometan law arises, the judge applies to the Cauzee., 13

The penal law of Bengal and the Madras Presidency followed the Muhammedan law in name only, since the original law was distorted to such an extent so as to deprive it of all the religious veneration of the Muhammedans, but at the same time retained enough of its original peculiarities to perplex and encumber the administration of justice. Although the object of the administration was to meddle in the existing state of affairs as little as possible, some of the provisions of the Muhammedan penal law were anathema to the colonial mind. Law of retaliation for murder, stoning for sexual immorality, mutilation for theft, were found to be contrary to the British sense of justice. Hence arose the need to rectify such glaring inadequacies which led to a patched quilt of laws subscribing neither to the English law nor to the Muhammedan Law. Noted Utilitarian advocator James Mill derided the penal law, prevalent in India as ,œ...defective to a degree that never was surpassed..., 14 The operation of several sets of laws, varying from Presidency to Presidency and from city to city, often mutually exclusive, put a spanner in the administrative process and often reduced justice to a mockery. Together with the ideology of civilizing mission gaining ground, legal reforms could no longer be ignored. The law of a nation, felt J.D. Mayne, was a reflection of the authoritative expression of its social condition. In the context of India, Mayne opined that the social condition was so radically unsound that the existing law needed to be altered since it was ,œan actual hindrance to their (the indigenous people) improvement, and its maintenance is impolitic., 15 With the superiority of the British sword proved beyond doubt with their conquest of India, he justified legal reform on the ground that, ,œto confine the subject population to their own laws, is simply to deny them the benefits of a better code., 16

James Mill, who was a potent influence at this stage, too, insisted that ,œthe most effectual step which can be taken by any government to diminish the vices of the people is to take away from the laws every imperfection., 17 Imperfection in the legal system was identified by Mill as the fulcrum of all evils plaguing India. The prevailing social degeneration was portrayed by the chaotic legal scenario which Mill very condescendingly dismissed as a ,œdisorderly compilation of loose, vague, stupid or unintelligible quotations and maxims: selected arbitrarily from books of law, books of devotion, and books of poetry; attended with a commentary which only adds to the absurdity and darkness; a farrago by which nothing is defined, nothing established., 18 Once the Indian legal system enshrined the principles of clearness, certainty, promptitude, and cheapness, with penalties graduated according to the nature of the offense, it would, he concluded, confer "unspeakable benefits"upon the Indian people; indeed a system of law was ,œthe only great political blessing, they were then capable of receiving.19 The qualities desirable in a system of law, according to Mill, are "completeness"and "exactness."The present legal system thus found no favor with Mill. The variegated sets of law applicable to different classes ran contrary to the idea of good governance, ,œThe evils also necessarily growing out of the existence of a set of people in a country who claim a right to obey their own laws, and to be amenable to their own tribunals,

which may be literally to be inaccessible to nearly the whole of the population, cannot but present themselves to every mind as enormous, and repugnant to every idea of good government., 20 By the third decade of the nineteenth century uniformity in the legal and judicial system was urgently needed in the interest of just administration and voices professing such reforms could be heard loud and clear. The moot question at this juncture was civilizing mission, which theoretically was the lynchpin of the doctrinal tenet of the period, the overriding concern trampling upon the sentiments and emotions of the indigenous people, or were some concessions made? In this context one is reminded of Macaulay,'s famous line in which he very condescendingly remarked about education being imparted the traditional way, ,œI believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanscrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England,¦We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother-tongue. We must teach them some foreign language., 21 Was this disdain reflected in the legal sphere also? Were Bentinck and Macaulay, the two principal players at this stage, looked down upon everything "native"from a pedestal and dismissed the customary laws and native sentiments attached to these?

While the need for a legal re-modeling was being voiced, the modality to be followed to achieve the end was charted out by the great Utilitarian thinker, Jeremy Bentham and herein one can trace the unmistakable influence of the Utilitarian principles. He identified a comprehensive body of law as the basic prerequisite for the greatest happiness of the greatest number, ,œIn every Political State, the greatest happiness of the greatest number requires, that it be provided with an all-comprehensive body of law., 22 He prescribed that law must be 'œefficient and swift, clear and easily intelligible, simple and readily available., 23 Bentham coined the term codification,”a sweeping legislative reform based on his critique of the common law. He staunchly believed that if every infringement of right be met with peremptory punishment, crimes and litigation would cease and human behaviour would be channelised along a more constructive path. The basic prerequisite for the realization of this ideal was that laws should be scientifically designed and embodied in a written form in codes. This "pannomium"as Bentham termed this set of codes, would comprise the whole gamut of laws which should be laid down in simple, lucid language that could be understood directly by every man of ordinary intelligence with minimal of judicial discretion, ,œ...the matter of these law-books must be made up into sentences of moderate length, such as men use in common conversation...with no more words than necessary, not like the present statutes in which I have seen a single sentence take up thirteen such pages as would fill a reasonable volume., 24 Such a code, grounded in the principles of utility would enhance the rule of law as also hold out the promise of universal jurisprudence.

Benthamite philosophy exercised a great influence on Lord William Bentinck,”the first governor-general who dared to step into the sensitive domain of the Indian society, where his predecessors had feared to tread. Although Bentinck and Bentham never came face to face, the former was a close associate of James Mill, a core member of the Benthamite inner group and this fostered Bentinck,'s indoctrination into Benthamite philosophy back in England. Bentinck,'s reading of

Mill,'s History of India deeply affected and influenced his understanding of the country. As Governor-General, he is often regarded as the pilot mainly responsible for trimming the sails of the British Indian state to the winds of change, and this change is coterminous with co-opting the element of caution while crossing the threshold of the personal domains of the natives, considered sacred and inviolable. When he took up the cudgels of the governance of India, Bentinck was determined to root out "customs repugnant to the best feelings that Providence has planted in the human breast."The formula that he employed to put the greatest good for greatest number ideal into practice was forethought, planning and caution. His previous stint as the Governor of Madras which witnessed the bitter Vellore Mutiny (1806) hammered into his head the dangerous consequences of ploughing into issues pertaining to religion and customs of the natives with brashness. Thus while Bentham at the theoretical plane exhorted caution, ground reality too seconded the same. Caution to tread into the sensitive territories of the Indians increasingly got enmeshed into the doctrinal tenet of the rulers, which finally found a cogent expression during Bentinck,'s tenure in the Charter Act of 1833. It, for the first time, gave voice to the official expression of civilising mission being conjoined with restraint as exhibited by the line that due regard should be accorded to the ,œ...Rights, Feelings and peculiar Usages of the People..., 25 In the legal sphere, the best manifestation of this is found in the framing and the promulgation of the Indian Penal Code.

III

The Charter Act of 1833 added a fourth member, known as Law Member, to the already existing three member Governor-General,'s Council and a Law Commission was appointed to frame laws for the whole of British India,",œ...such Laws as may be applicable in common to all Classes of the Inhabitants of the said Territories..., 26 The scope of the Commission was to look into the jurisdiction, powers and rules of the existing courts of justice and police establishments in the Indian territories and into the nature and operation of the prevailing laws whether civil or criminal prevailing in India. The Commission commenced its work in August 1835. The first Commission consisted of Thomas Babington Macaulay (the first Law Member of the Governor General,'s Council) as the President and J. M. Macleod of the Madras Civil Service, G.W. Anderson of Bombay Civil Service and F. Millett as its members. After arriving in India in June 1834, and the customary meeting with the Governor-General Lord Bentinck who was recuperating in the Nilgiris, Macaulay took his post in Calcutta towards the end of 1834 and immediately plunged into public business. In his speech during the passage of the Charter Act, Macaulay had categorically stated, ,œUnless,¦we mean to leave the natives exposed to the tyranny and insolence of every profligate adventurer who may visit the east, we must place the Europeans under the same power which legislates for the Hindoo,¦, 27 While he believed that the Indians would immensely benefit from such interactions with the Europeans, legal equality was urgently called for to eliminate the possibility of exploitation. It is this ideal that he sought to embody through his work in India. Macaulay defended the principles of equality in no uncertain terms: ,œI am not desirous to exempt the English from any evil under which his Hindu neighbour suffers. I am sorry that there should be such evils, but whilst they exist, I wish that they should be felt, not only by the mute, the

effeminate, the helpless, but by the noisy, the bold and the powerful.' 28 Thus Macaulay was echoing Mill,'s views.

The pioneering work of this Commission was the framing of the Indian Penal Code. In fact the very philosophy behind the creation of the Law Commission was to structuralise the codification process, ,œThe preparation of such a Code must be set about immediately, and it is principally with a view to that object and for the purpose of collecting and arranging the necessary materials, and of advising the Govt. as to the disposal of them, that the Law Commission are to be appointed., 29 Macaulay himself was convinced that ,œ...no country ever stood so much in need of a Code of laws as India..., 30 In doing so, Macaulay was speaking almost in a similar voice to that of Bentham and James Mill. Macaulay was, however, not a firm endorser of Mill and the Utilitarian philosophy of politics, government and electoral reform as propounded by the latter, apparent from Macaulay,'s caustic comments in the articles written for the Edinburgh Review in 1829, ,œ...these people (referring to the Utilitarians), whom some regard as the light of the world...are in general ordinary men, with narrow understanding and little information...many of them are persons...having read little or nothing..., 31 However, he always looked up to Bentham with reverence, praising him as a great original thinker and a "sincere and ardent friend of the human race."Bentham,'s sequence of his pannomium was the codification of penal, civil and the constitutional laws. Toeing the same line, Macaulay, too, started with the codification of penal law and intended to follow it up with the Code of Criminal Procedure in 1837 and then lay his hand in the framing of the Code of Civil Procedure in early 1838. Defending the priority given to the Penal Code, Macaulay wrote in his Minute of 4 June 1835 that it would take several months before the materials collected in relation to the Civil Law of India could be laid before the Commission. Hence, in the meantime he thought that the Commission ,œcould not be better employed than in framing a Criminal Code for the whole Indian Empire., 32 Macaulay believed that there was no department of law like the Criminal Law which had captured the fascination and attention of the philosophers and incited and provoked the best faculties among "reflecting and reading men."To him, ,œThere is perhaps no Province of Legislation which has been so thoroughly explored in all Directions., 33 Hence Macaulay took it up as a challenge to frame a complete criminal code for the whole of India, the promulgation of which would eventually prevent European settlers from oppressing the natives. In a letter written to his friend Ellis, in August 1835, Macaulay, confided his excitement in being actively engaged in framing a complete procedure of criminal code for India and was optimistic that the penal law and the criminal procedure would be put together in "one moderately sized volume."As the Governor-General later eulogised that this was indeed ,œthe first decided Step in a Course of Legislation by which it is intended that a Change so beneficial. From the present Motley and uncertain Practice of the Law, shall be produced in the whole Character and Effects of our Government., 34

In framing the Penal Code, Macaulay followed the Benthamite principle of a code of law not being a digest of the existing practice or a compilation from foreign law systems. Speaking of the futility of transplanting any alien legal structure, Thomas Munro had stated, ,œIt was as impossible to adapt our institutions to India, as to transfuse into a corpse the animation of the living being., 35

While setting out to frame the Code, Macaulay too adhered to the said principle since at the very outset he clarified that ,œ,¦the system of penal law which we propose is not a digest of any existing system; and that no existing system has furnished us even with a ground work., 36 In his essay, On the Influence of Time and Place in Matters of Legislation, Bentham, detailed the modalities of framing laws in the context of Bengal. While warning against the pitfalls of transplanting the laws of England in toto, he laid down the principles to be adopted for effecting ,œvariations necessary to be made in these laws, in order to accommodate them to the circumstances of Bengal,¦, 37 Bentham believed that any prevalent set of laws should not be disbanded as retrogressive and pernicious since that set of laws might be suited to the peculiarities of the country to be regulated. Thus there cannot be any universal standard code, suited for all occasions. Drawing a comparison between Bengal and England, Bentham points out, ,œ,¦it might happen that in Bengal a plan could not in any part of it be adopted with any advantage, or that, if it could, yet in several points a variety of additions, defalcations, alterations, would require to be made., 38 English laws, being operational in a superior environment, thus could not be deemed to be tailor-made for Bengal, which suffered from an inferior quality of administration. Once such inferiority disappeared, Bengal would be receptive of superior English laws. The British rule would facilitate this elevation to a higher plane, but till then legislations should be grounded in realistic appraisal of the situation.

By dissecting various sets of offences and concluding that punishments should be graded according to the degree of pain inflicted and pleasure denied, Bentham enunciated that such degree varied from place to place, ,œA night,'s confinement in the prison called the Black-hole, in the hot climate of Calcutta, proved fatal to nearly all the persons who were confined in it. In a winter,'s night in Siberia, the same number of persons might perhaps have undergone a confinement of the same length in a similar space, without any remarkable inconvenience., 39 Thus while legislating one has to take into account exigencies like local circumstances, which in turn can be classified into two,"physical and moral. Within the first category, fall external determinants like climate and the texture of the earth, while the latter group includes circumstances of government, religion and manners. Circumstances which demand attention, which form the backbone of making laws expedient in one country and faulty in another include prejudice, state and condition extrinsic and intrinsic with regard to the minds of men. The latter is important to gauge the success rate of the proposed law, i.e. whether the law would be accepted by those for whom they were meant. An able legislator should do his homework before framing laws and be well-informed of the local situation, the climate, the physical constitution, the manners, the legal customs and the religion of the governed. Once possessed with these data, the administrators could safely embark on a journey of legal reform. Bentham strictly enjoins that no native law should be changed, no usage presently adhered to, be summarily abolished without any special reason. Just because a prevalent law was repugnant to the manners and sentiments of the rulers was no valid reason for its termination. But at the same time caution does not entail tacit support to those "obnoxious"practices. Bentham provides the solution to this tricky situation, ,œThese prejudices have generally some salvo for good government and good morals. It is the province of the legislator to find out this salvo, if there be one, and make use of it; and, in the mean time, if it be worth while, to try what instruction and other gentle means will do, towards getting the better of the prejudice., 40

That Macaulay stuck to this principle is amply exemplified by his treatment of the twin issues of adultery and polygamy. Adultery, which was recognized as an offence by the existing laws for the administration of criminal justice in the Company,'s Courts in all the Presidencies as also by both Hindu and the Muhammedan personal laws, was not made an offence by this Code. Hindu law treated adultery as a criminal offence. Muhammedan law treats adultery as a capital punishment. It is one of three crimes which call for expiation by the blood of the offender, in the form of stoning the criminal to death. Deriving its basic premise from Roman law, adultery, as per English law, was treated as a civil injury. Roman law enjoined that the father of an adulteress should return the dower which the husband had paid for the purchase of his wife, while the adulterer should redeem himself from other penalties by paying the price of benefit of which he had possessed himself. But at the same time, just as personal laws punished adultery with physical disfigurement and/or death, English law, too, tacitly approved of such a measure under the name of justifiable homicide. In spite of its acceptance as a punishable crime, adultery could not find its space in the draft version of the Penal Code that was submitted for inspection in 1837. The reasons for omitting it were stated in the Note appended at the end of the Code. At the outset the Law Commission, did set out to provide a punishment for adultery, and in order to enable them to come to a right conclusion on this subject, collected facts and opinions from all the three Presidencies, ,œThe opinions differ widely. But as to the facts there is remarkable agreement., 41 After sifting through these, the omission was justified by the framers on three grounds: that the existing laws for the punishment of adultery were altogether inefficacious for the purpose of preventing injured husbands of the higher classes from taking the law into their own hands; secondly, that scarcely any native of the higher classes ever took recourse to the courts of law in a case of adultery for the redress against either his wife, or her paramour; thirdly, that the husbands who took recourse to the courts of law were generally poor men whose wives had run away, that these husbands seldom had any affectionate feelings towards their wives, but thought themselves injured by the elopement since they considered their wives as useful members of their small households, that they generally complained not of the stain on their honour, but of the loss of a menial whom they could not easily replace, and that their principal object was that the woman may be sent back. Where the complainant did not ask for the return of his wife, he generally demanded to be reimbursed for the expenses of his marriage. Those whose family names were stigmatised by the infidelity of their wives did not apply to the tribunals at all while those whose feelings were less delicate were satisfied by a payment of money. The Commissioners thus concluded, ,œUnder such circumstances we think it best to treat adultery merely as a civil injury. These things being established it seems to us that no advantage is to be expected for providing a punishment for adultery. The population seems to be divided into two classes,"those whom neither the existing punishment nor any punishment which we should feel ourselves justified in proposing will satisfy, and those who consider the injury produced by adultery as one for which a pecuniary compensation will sufficiently atone., 41

The Law Commission faced lot of flak on account of omitting such a provision, and was criticised for giving fillip to immorality. In defence, the Commission countered, 'œThis was not altogether a strong argument favouring adultery to be made a punishable offence., 42 A Penal Code, they

argued, was by no means to be considered a body of ethics and that the legislature ought to punish acts merely because those acts were stamped immoral, or that because an act was not prohibited at all did not tantamount to the legislature considering that act as innocent. The Commissioners apprehended that nothing short of death would be considered as punishment for such a wrong. Macaulay,'s own brush with the native sentiment on adultery convinced him of this. His first-hand experience with adulterous relations amongst the natives and the manner in which all hell broke loose in the aftermath, came within just a few months of his arrival in India, when during his stay in Nilgiris, his servant was accused of being involved in an adulterous relationship with the wife of Governor-General Lord William Bentinck,'s cook. He got a bitter taste of how the natives took the law in their own hands when it came to such moral issues. Immediate trial of the accused was demanded by the husband and his supporters and since Macaulay was scheduled to leave the very next day and could ill-afford to delay the departure because of his servant,'s "waywardness,', he made arrangements for hearing on that very day. The Court assembled and the arguments continued throughout the night in "violent contention."The servant was pronounced not guilty. A relieved Macaulay was about to start for his journey, when mayhem broke out, ,œThe gang had pulled him (the servant) out of his palanquin, tore off his turban, stripped him almost naked, and were about to pull him to pieces., 43 Although he could save his servant from the clutches of the violent mob, it was a lesson that he carried with him when he set out to frame the Penal Code. An adulterer/adulteress was either killed by the family members or considered symbolically dead by the family. Manada Debi recalls that when she became pregnant and fled with a married man, who happened to be a distant cousin, her father refused to report the matter to the police fearing social stigma and declared that he considered his daughter, who was his only child, to be dead and he was no longer interested in having her back even if she was repentant.44 The Law Commissioners were, however, dead against corporal punishment, because they believed that the blow would eventually fall on those with higher sensitivities and not because it was inhumane, ,œ,¦we are convinced that it ought to be sparingly inflicted, and we propose to employ it only in cases where either murder or the highest offence against State has been committed., 45 In such a state the framers thought it prudent that compensation for such an offence would be far better suited than inflicting a punishment which would be regarded as "absurdly and immorally lenient."Here again, one can trace the unmistakable influence of Benthamite philosophy, ,œA prejudice so strong, altogether unjust and ferocious would require great forbearance...it would be better to yield to it altogether for a time than expose his laws to hatred., 46

The other significant exclusion was polygamy/bigamy. Under English criminal law bigamy was a punishable offence. When it came to India, the framers acknowledged that in a country which recognised polygamy ,œthe difficulty of framing such a law,¦is great. To make all classes subject to one law would, evidently, be impossible. If the law be made dependent on the race, birth-place, or religion of the offender endless perplexity would arise., 47 To resolve this perplexity without antagonising the vast mass of people, what was needed was a thorough revision of the laws of marriage and divorce. Within the official circle, polygamy was seen as a social and religious institution prevalent throughout the whole country and ,œit is not only a few scattered individuals who advocate and practise polygamy, but the largest proportion of all classes, Hindoos and

Mahomedans, who are in a position to maintain plurality of wives,¦, 48 The District Magistrate of Noakhali, L.S.S. O"Malley opined that ,œplurality of wives is as suited to the people [of the East] as a strict rule of monogamy is in the West,¦I would therefore, strongly disapprove of any extension of the Christian law against bigamy as retrograde and unsuited to the people., 49 Thus the Commissioners decided to play safe by making bigamy, when practised with deceit and fraud, a punishable offence for the Christians of India only, leaving the vast multitude outside its pale.

The cautious approach, as exhorted by the Charter Act, guided the codifiers to treat these two "deviations"with an eagle eye and arrive at this decision. Though personal laws prosecuted adulterers and the enlightened section of the Indian society abhorred the practice of polygamy, Macaulay thought it safe to maintain the status quo, in deference to the prevailing mood.

IV

Feeling extremely homesick and anxious to return to England, Macaulay submitted his resignation in April 1837 and was succeeded by Andrew Amos. Although the Governor-General, Lord Auckland in his minute on 20 May 1837, had promised that ,œby all Means in my Power I would speed the Progress of Measures by which the Administration of Justice in India may best be improved,, in reality there was a lot of foot-dragging on the next course of action as regards the fate of the Penal Code.50 Taking a cue from the introductory note of the Law Commissioners on the draft code, in which they admitted that in the absence of a comprehensive set of laws, alluding to the codification of penal, civil and the constitutional laws, the existing penal code would be beset with inconsistencies and defects, so long as the substantive civil law and the law of procedure remained "dark and confused,"the Court of Directors directed the Governor-General to subject the code to examinations before the same was adopted as the law of the land. A note was despatched to the Legislative Council in February 1838, whereby it was stipulated that the draft should be allowed to ,œcirculate some months here (India) and that previously to its being in any degree adopted by the Legislative Council, the Matters to which Attention shall have been particularly directed should be considered by the Government, and sent, with an Expression of its Opinion, for further Discussion by the Law Commission., 51 Eventually in 1839, under the directive of Lord Auckland, the Legislative Council despatched this draft code to different local Governments and to all the high legal functionaries in the country for their opinions on its provisions, ,œfor obtaining the opinions,¦not only as to whether Provision is made in the Code for the different Offences which are prevalent in India, but also as to the Necessity of the proposed Enactments, and the Adaptation of the proposed Penalties with reference to all the Circumstances of the Country, and to the Habits and Feelings of the large and various Population which will be affected by them., 53 Cautiousness was never more clearly spelt out than this.

This reference produced many returns, some of which expressed their strongest objections to many parts of the Code as also the veracity of promulgating such a Code in the first place. But unfortunately, ,œ,¦the voluminous comments received,¦were allowed to sleep in the Legislative Council for five years before they were referred to the Law Commission for examination and

report., 54 In 1845, Amos,'s successor C.H. Cameron (the Fourth Member of the Council between 1843 and 1848), during a sitting of the Law Commission dated 15 June, noted that ,œ...some steps may be taken towards a revision of the Code and for its adoption with such amendments as may be necessary., 55 However, the Government of Lord Hardinge evinced interest in law reform and the Law Commission was called upon to reflect on the suggestions received and submit reports. Bushby, Secretary to the Governor-General in Council, informed the Commission, ,œThe Governor-General in Council is desirous that some steps should be taken towards a revision of the Code, with a view to its adoption, with such amendments as may be found necessary, or to its final disposal otherwise., 56 Cameron reviewed the criticisms and submitted two reports,"one dated 23 July 1846 and the second on 24 June 1847,"suggesting revisions ranging from concerns about the viability of using illustrations to objections about the translations of English legal concepts into Indian vernaculars. However, both the reports strongly recommended enactment of the Code. The Government of India went through these two reports and afterwards sent the same to the Court of Directors with its observations and from then onwards the draft code shuttled between Britain and India. But due to differences of opinion at home and in India, the Code did not receive any authoritative sanction. Macaulay perhaps had this premonition when, in January 1838, he referred to the Code as ,œa sort of work which must wait long for justice, as I well knew when I laboured at it., 57 . The debate centred on the promulgation of the proposed Code,"was it to be implemented at one go or in parts,"as also the translation of the Code in Indian languages to make it intelligible to the masses for which it was meant for. The fear, which gnawed at the administrators, was social antagonism at the promulgation of a universal penal code, supplanting the Muhammedan code of law. Although there was no open acknowledgement, their apprehension became apparent when C.H. Cameron assured the Select Committee that there would be no open objection from the Muhammedan population, since, ,œWe have never said that we repealed any such law (Muhammedan law),¦, 58 He however, did fear some sort of a backlash from "different portions of the population"because ,œ,¦there are no doubt cases in which their religious feelings have been affected., 59 Thus he advised for a piecemeal implementation of the Code on an experimental basis to test its viability, ,œIf it is thought desirable not at once to change the Law throughout the whole of India, Bombay offers itself, to take the Lead in this great Improvement., 60 The logic offered was that Bombay, where already the Elphinstone Code was in operation, would be more receptive to a new set of laws. Sir Herbert Maddock countered him, ,œI entertain serious Doubts of the Expediency of such a Course of partial Legislation with respect to a Code of Law intended for universal Application., 61

The translation aspect proved to be uppermost in the colonial mind. Soon after the submission of the draft Code, decisions were taken to translate the code into the principal vernacular languages of the Presidencies and circulation amongst the eminent members of the respective communities. The project was however shelved, only to be revived at a later date in 1847, when the Home Department instructed that ,œsome Portion of the Code may be carefully translated into One or more of the Native languages,¦, 62 Consequent to the issuing of such instructions, Cameron selected two chapters,"Chapter III,"Of General Exceptions for the sake of difficulty and Chapter XVIII,"Of Offences affecting the Human Body,"for the sake of importance,"for the said purpose

(Report from the Select Committee 1852-1853, 185). The main purpose of the translation work as underlined in the official transaction was to ,œmake (the Code) intelligible to the People, high and low., 63 The translation work, undertaken by another member of the Commission, Elliott proceeded smoothly and as Cameron testified, ,œ...there was no difficulty that was not perfectly superable by care and attention..., 64 Subsequently, in the same year an attempt was undertaken by G.F. Edmonston, a civil servant of the North-Western Provinces, to translate the entire code in Urdu. Government of India smugly communicated to the Court of Directors in April 1848 that ,œthere can be little Doubt that, with the general Knowledge now prevalent of native Usages, Sentiments, and Institutions, many Functionaries will be found possessed of this Degree of Knowledge, and that more than Half of them will, with a little Assistance from Natives, be fully competent to transpose the Language of this admirable Code into Forms accommodated to the popular Intellect of the Country., 65 In 1848, the Court of Directors instructed the Government to pass the penal code into law, with whatever modifications and alterations, it would deem advisable. It was left to the government to decide whether the Penal Code was to be introduced "gradually and experimentally"or at one sweep. Unfortunately, no concrete action was taken immediately. Maddock, in his testimony before the Privy Council, explained that the delay was due to the various contradictory opinions expressed regarding the code as also lack of goodwill on part of the government to enact the code into law. In fact he accused the government of not taking the issue of passing the code "ever seriously."He regretted that nothing much was done when he left India in 1849.66

Interest was revived during Dalhousie,'s administration. He was keen to abolish the privilege enjoyed by the British subjects with regard to exemption from the jurisdiction of the criminal courts in the provinces, being amenable only to the criminal courts at the Presidency which were governed by English Law, ,œI am most clearly of the opinion that the Time has come when the Exemption in question ought to be abolished, and that British Subjects should now be brought within the Jurisdiction of Criminal Courts in the Mofussil, as they have long since been brought under the Jurisdiction of the Civil Courts there., 67 However, in doing so, he was not willing to expose the British subjects to the farce that was prevalent in the name of criminal law. The special treatment meted out to the British subjects could be withdrawn only when they could be brought under a criminal law at par with the English criminal law. This justified his eagerness to pass the draft code into law. In his Minute dated 19 April 1850, Dalhousie pressed for the promulgation of the penal code at the earliest which required a thorough discussion on the content without delay. However, the legislative department warned against any brashness but advised that it would be judicious to ,œenter on a wider Field of Legislation, in connexion with and furtherance of the Objects which these Drafts were intended to accomplish., 68 Even then, the push given by Dalhousie set the ball rolling. Prodded by the ,œstrong Stimulus administered by the Governor-General,'s declared Opinion with respect to the Necessity of passing a precise Penal Code, in substitution for the Mahomedan and Regulation Law..., the Law Commission, once again took up the Code for necessary revision.69 The Code was recast in 1851, under the auspices of John Bethune, who succeeded Cameron as the Law Commissioner, in April 1848. Bethune dissented on several aspects of the draft Code, especially the manner and the substance of expression and

expressed his doubt as to whether the Code could at all be passed into law in its present form. His main objection was to the rigorous use of illustrations, which he felt robbed the Code of its lucidity and gave in to confusion. Bethune also objected to the flowery language of the draft Code, more precisely, what he felt was the systematic abandonment of commonly used legal expressions and the use of "awkward and uncouth terms."Such language, he felt, was deliberately applied in order to lend novelty to the code itself, since at the very introductory note the framers had stated that they were not guided by any existing system. Backed by the Governor-General, Bethune, on his part, remodeled the Code to the extent that he did not tamper with the classification of offences as enshrined in the 1837 Code, but took the liberty to alter the order of enactments, wherever he felt such alteration was needed. Paying special attention to language, Bethune proposed to use commonly-used English terms. As regards the style of the Code, Bethune planned to put references opposite each of the clauses. In case of omission of such references, he would append an explanatory note. The Bethune Code, according to Dalhousie, was "substantially different"from that which was constructed by Macaulay and was sanctioned fit for enactment by the Court of Directors.70

This was sent by Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, to London for a choice to be made between Bethune code and Macaulay code. The home government remained silent on the issue for nearly two years. After the demise of Bethune, Sir Barnes Peacock was appointed the Fourth Ordinary member of the Council in 1852. In his Minute dated 7 July, Dalhousie requested the Court of Directors to send some ‚œdefinite Instructions for the Guidance of the Governor General in Council in legislating fully and at an early Period for the Establishment of some One Code of Criminal Law in the Territories of the East India Company..., 71 Responding to that demand, the Court of Directors gave the go-ahead, ‚œ...we authorize you, if you shall see fit, to proceed to pass a Law for giving Effect to the Code, as it may be finally arranged by you..., 72 Meanwhile by the Charter Act of 1853, a Commission was appointed to sit in London, for considering and reporting on the recommendation of the Indian Law Commission. On 3 June 1854, the Code was referred to a Select Committee of the Legislative Council for consideration and revision. On the 7th of the following month, the Committee in reference to a despatch from the Court of Directors made a special report in which they recorded their opinion that the Code, as originally prepared, should form the basis of a system of penal law for the whole of the British territories in India. Thus Macaulay triumphed over Bethune. The Code, as revised by the Committee, was introduced into the Council on the 20 December 1856. It was in due course again referred to a Select Committee for further revision after considering the observations and suggestions which might come up after the publication of the Code. After undergoing several alterations, the Code was at length passed into law on the 6October 1860. Finally, it was decided by Act VI of 1861, that the Code would take effect from 1 January 1862.

V

Thus the penal code journeyed for twenty three years across continents, till it saw the light of the day. Unfortunately, Macaulay did not live to see his labour come to fruition, having passed away

in 1859. The passing of the penal code fulfilled the long-cherished dream of James Mill as also his mentor Jeremy Bentham who deemed the fault lines along the legal system as anathema to the progress and modernisation of the country. Given the fact that both Bentinck and Macaulay were keen followers of the principles and teachings of these two vis-Ã -vis legal reforms, one cannot afford to gloss over the deep-seated influences that their works exerted. Keeping with the spirit of the period as encrusted in the Charter Act, of sensibility and respect to Indian sentiment that would ensure acceptability, the long gestation period hints at the element of caution that pervaded the passage at every step. In fact the Commission was instructed to annex to the Code, some specific penalties for Europeans for outraging the religious feelings of the Indians. That they had paid heed to these directives is evident when in their introductory note to the draft penal code, the Law Commissioners, too, noted, ,œWe are perfectly aware of the value of that sanction which long prescription and national feeling give to institutions. We are perfectly aware that law-givers ought not to disregard even the unreasonable prejudices of those for whom they legislate., 73 Macaulay placed great importance on sentiments and public opinions. They were trying to prove that as just administrators they had given due cognizance to the specific exigencies and made room for accommodating the same. Here, too, Bentham,'s vision comes into picture. While enunciating the qualifications of an enlightened law-giver, Bentham stated that legislators need to be ,œinformed of the local situation, the climate, the manners, the legal customs, the religions, of those with whom they have to deal., 75 Macaulay is indeed a living proof of this.

Right from Macaulay to Bethune, to the code-makers watchfulness was the prime concern and the negotiations made during the course of the enactment reflect this time and again. From collating information on customs and practices, to simplifying the language in a discernible manner, to translating sections in Indian languages, to repeatedly circulating the code far and wide for feedback, the government was leaving no stone unturned to put forth its cautious face. One of the prime motives of Dalhousie in trying to accelerate the passage of the Code was to bring Englishmen and Indians at par so far as immunity in criminal jurisdiction was concerned. The penal code was seen as the springboard to this end. Contrary to the methodology applied in passing the Widow Remarriage Act, where Dalhousie showed brashness in disregarding social opposition towards the Act and went ahead even when the number of opponents outweighed the supporters, in case of the Penal Code, he showed more prudency and far sightedness as is evident from his approach. Principle and reality became entwined in common spools of prudence and accommodative spirit to ensure that even at a time when the embers of the mighty Revolt of 1857 were yet to die, no concerted opposition emanated from the indigenous society, mainly because of the precaution exhorted by the codifiers. Thus polygamy was not prosecuted, while the age of consent, although raised to ten, still remained within the shastric prescription. The penal code is a true reflector of the spirit of the colonial period. It is perhaps because of this determined adherence to cautiousness and willingness to make room for compromises that the Indian Penal Code has survived the test of time and still serves as the bedrock of the criminal justice system of present-day India. There have been modifications and amendments o the code over the years, no doubt, to cater to the changing scenario, but if one looks at certain segments, one can only marvel at the far-sightedness of the framers. For example, the Chapter titled ,œÃ“f Offences Relating to

Marriage,, which identifies deviations relating to marital practices still retains the same sets of offences and punishments with the only addition of section 498A in 1983 and it is this same set of laws that are widely taken recourse to by thousands of hapless women, being at the receiving end of various forms of marital violence.

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Feeling National: Swadeshi Circus, Performance, and Building of National Self

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Abstract

Bengali world of ideas was agog with new notions in the nineteenth and early twentieth century as the people of Bengal tried to imagine them [self] free from the colonial paradigm. The project became the crux of Bengali politics that revealed itself in a more vigorous form during the swadeshi and boycott agitation of 1905-1911. These changes unfolded in the well-organized public sphere, which became the ambit of all political activities and processes. Logic of public sphere required medium of communication by which to inform the public and take into consideration their opinion. In this changed circumstances public opinion became an important factor that had to be wooed for legitimizing notions, and actions of politics. Professor Bose,s Great Bengal circus appeared during this phase of Bengal politics serving dual purpose: providing a space to demonstrate the new notions of self-identity, and using the same space to bring together the people into publichood. In its grand spectacularity, the Great Bengal circus, created an illusion, an image of ,self,, that in the space of performance, a space of many possibilities, created a sensation among the public, and in that moment of feeling the sensation carried them away from the image of ,self,imposed by the Raj towards an indigenous image of ,self,. In this article, the various techniques and its interpretations during audience reception has been analysed to locate one ground among many where a notion of self was being built during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.... A Bengali woman attired in a dress and her hair flowing loosely on her back sat fearlessly on a tiger that bared its teeth viciously. But apparently unperturbed by the tiger, the woman caressed it slowly. Both the tiger and the woman were mounted on an elephant1.

Marvellous as it may sound, it is not a page out of some adventure thriller; it is an outline of the image of Miss Mrinmoyi advertised by the Great Bengal Circus in the English daily Amrita Bazaar Patrika. The advertisement read: 'œMiss Mrinmoyi ,The Most Daring,in her unparalleled exhibit of managing the biggest Royal Bengal Tiger on the back of the finest elephant!!!' The words of the advertisement though hyperbolic did not act performed by Mrinmoyi was imaginative, entertaining, but above all spectacular. In the backdrop of the intellectual project of reinventing the Bengali ,self,the act afforded the Bengalis an opportunity to believe that physically they were not feeble and even their fairer sex could be 'œas brave as Europeans and Americans' 2. There can be no doubt that the circus party of Professor Bose performed before the Bengali audience a self-image of virility. The scenes of fire, disappearing acts, the presence of wild beasts, the rather dark skin pigmentation of the performers (stressing their indigenous social origin), and incredible feats of the performers were a novelty that presented before the audience the muscle and physical prowess of the Bengali nation. Such portrayal as Amrita Bazaar Patrika rightly pointed out 'œraised the Bengali nation in the estimation of the public...' 3 The daily was right in noting the nationalist tendency of the image that the performance of the circus could create. But the estimation of the

newspaper did not stop short at that. It further hypothesised that the performance could 'œdo good' to every heart with a 'œspark of national life' 4 thereby assuming that the audience who came to witness the performance naturally accepted the image and, further still, such acceptance made them de facto a part of the national community. The assumption gave little or no credit to the role played by the audience or the recipient in shaping and engendering a national image. But in a performative arena, which by every means is a part and parcel of the public sphere, communications are never just means of portraying it is also an instrument for influencing and for persuasion. Therefore, the performance communication of the Bose,s circus did not simply generate the image of national potency it actually tried to persuade the mass audience to believe the image as real. In this article, I will elaborate upon the process and experience of disseminating the image of a virile nation by the audience of the Bose,s circus that resulted in the submergence of the portrayed image and the felt image into a national community.

Circus of Professor Bose earned fame as an indigenous amusement. Performance of various spectacular and unthinkable daredevilry enacted by the performers not just earned them fame; it appealed to the imagination of the people. Within a very short span of time, the circus succeeded in acquiring for itself the accolade of a national circus5. The circus owed this newly gained fame to the performers who performed there, and particularly to the techniques of performance. The audiences witnessing the performance were quick to note these factors, and in many cases respond to it. The logic of recognition, of the performance, needs to be looked for in the space lying between performance and response. In that span of moment, something happened in the interaction between the performer, the space, and the spectators. Primarily a space of entertainment, during the interaction the performers performed, and the spectators responded excitedly. Thus, in the moment of illustrating/playacting and during reception the circus performance touched upon some emotion of the people that earned them the accolade of being national. In this article, I intend to look closely at the two factors that could have generated such emotions: the nature of the performance performed by indigenous performers and the response/reaction of the people who came to view the performance.

Circus performances that flourished in India, particularly in Bengal, during the late and early twentieth century have failed to draw the attention of the historians. Concentrating primarily on world of intellectuals and their many social and cultural experiments historians and anthropologists have not paid much attention to the wonderfully carnivalesque world of Bengali circus. In few historical works6, there occurs a remote reference to the circus organised by Nabagopal Mitra of Hindu Mela fame. But the performance was, as many contemporaries later recalled, not very refined and enjoyable. Apart from pointing out the standard nationalist idea that the circus awakened a nascent nation from its slumber, the early historical treatment of Bengali circus has been quite half-hearted. But the writings of twentieth century particularly the autobiographies and newspaper reports show that the Bengali circus attained great refinement and heightened popularity in the hands of Professor Priyanath Bose. In this essay, it will be my solemn attempt to locate circus performance of Professor Bose in the context of the emergent nationalist ideas

produced by the educated elite intellectuals, presence of a developed public sphere conducting politics of the age, and various media deployed to disseminate and discuss the ideas.

Contextualizing the performance

In early twentieth century, Bengal politics was conducted within the ambit of a public sphere. As the foremost requirement for the formation of a public sphere was sharing of information a wide network of communication developed in Bengal. Ideas now had a passage to reach out to the masses due the developed network of communication that the public sphere provided. As various media were deployed as a ,technique of mass contact,7 ideas travelled and flowed without restraint to the people. Swadeshi age witnessed the proliferation of the most diverse kind of communication media that ranged from fictions and non-fictions, drama books, songbooks, pamphlets, to more performative kind of communication like theatrical performances, jatra, songs, etc. passing on and sharing of information. Widespread sharing of information brought together a diverse group of people hitherto separated by geographical, social, linguistic, and ethnic boundaries. It inaugurated a moment when a bond could be imagined by the diverse group of unconnected people bringing them together in a community of common feelings and emotions. It was in this porous world of communication and networking that idea met people, thereby introducing a perceptible change in Bengali imagination.

Turn of the century ushered in a tumultuous change in the mental world of Bengal. From 1903, the proposal to partition Bengal began to take shape in the official circles of the colonial government. The proposal finally materialized into a plan under the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon, in October1905. The decision to partition Bengal met with strong resistance from the intellectual circle of Bengal. In fact, the period witnessed an attempt on the part of the leaders, represented by cosmopolitan, Hindu, educated male Bengali middle-class intelligentsia, to annul the plan of the colonial government to partition Bengal8 by developing a national identity imbued with a sense of economic and political self-sufficiency9. When the world of ideas agog with notions of nationhood collided with the material world of the colonial government sparks were bound to flow. In early twentieth century, the spark came in the form of anti-partition agitation. The agitation later assumed a wider and broader framework, christening itself as the swadeshi and the boycott agitation. A shift in the agenda definitely occurred due to the transition; the purpose of resistance was no longer annulment of the partition, but the achievement of political, economic, and cultural swadeshi through the boycott or rejection of the non-swadeshi or the foreigner. The shift though apparent did not prove to be a very smooth one. Different trends and tendencies appeared in the way people comprehended and applied the notion of nationhood. A climate of competition overtook Bengali intellectual world as the various format of the notion of nationhood vied with each other to gain prominence. In the arena of public sphere ideas contested with each other to win popular support, hence acquire political legitimacy. These ideas offer the ideal perspective for understanding and gauging the nature, and extent of the developments mental world of the Bengalis. Public opinion, that assumed the role of an arbiter of the political life of an idea, became the favoured muse of the intellectuals. The act of informing the public was replaced by an act of

persuading the public. Media communication flourished as a means of influencing and persuading public opinion in favour of one idea or the other. In this climate of demonstration and persuasion, communicative media like the Great Bengal Circus gained heightened importance as a space of protest, contestation, resistance, and resolution.

Locating the ground of demonstration: making of an image

Performance of Professor Bose,s circus or the Great Bengal Circus offered variety to its spectators. It functioned as a swadeshi enterprise and at the same time acted as a source of entertainment. One would think this called for a complex balancing act; on the contrary, the diversity of the performance complemented each other and contributed much towards the popularity enjoyed by the circus.

Native performers conducted and performed most of the acts in the circus. Indigeneity of the presentations was one of the crowning features of the performance. People flocked to the circus to witness the dangerous feats performed by indigenous men and women. Both the acts and the image it illustrated were pregnant with covert potency. Onstage it demonstrated a series of powerful images, which in context of the ongoing swadeshi and boycott agitation went a long way in displaying, advertising swadeshi ideas before the spectators/consumers, and persuading them to accept the value of the ideas. Thus, the performances has to be read and analyzed not merely as a ground for demonstration but also as a public arena where the spectators had an arbitrating voice, hence were central objects of media persuasion.

In perspective of the context of performance, the acts of the indigenous performers stood out in stark contrast to other swadeshi or indigenous enterprises of the period. As ideas of economic swadeshism began to gain ground during the latter half of the swadeshi movement, new swadeshi enterprises began mushrooming in Bengal. The attempts at organizing swadeshi businesses resulted in the development of such well-known enterprises like the Calcutta Pottery Works of Satyasundar Deb, Calcutta Chemicals of R. N. Sen, and Bengal Waterproof Company of S. M. Bose. But most of them enjoyed a temporary success10. Few swadeshi enterprises gained as much popularity as did the swadeshi enterprise of Professor Bose. Amrita Bazaar Patrika surmised the situation as, 'œan indigenous enterprise fully the peer of foreign shows' 11. Another native daily, The Bengalee, commended the performance of the circus with such panegyrics as 'œa well-trained and skilful band' , which according to them 'œcan hold their own against those of the first class companies of Europe' 12. The praise bestowed by the Great Bengal Circus made its presence felt in the colonial economy as well as in popular imagination as a successful indigenous entrepreneurial venture.

Enhancing the demand for and the sale of swadeshi or indigenous articles was one of the main goals of the swadeshi movement. The intellectuals for that reason undertook and encouraged promotion of swadeshi enterprises. The Great Bengal Circus functioned effectively as one such swadeshi enterprise. The acts performed by the performers of the circus if not enhancing the

indigenous production capacity indeed affected the market value of a swadeshi article like indigenous entertainment. As a form of amusement or as a saleable commodity the performance of Great Bengal Circus enhanced the value of a swadeshi amusement, quantified as a commodity, in the market. Spectators as consumers were eager to view the performance visibly demonstrating the desirability of the product for them. Such demand in few cases showed that the desirability of the swadeshi production was more than foreign amusements. In a solitary event, the circus of Harmston, a European circus owner, could hardly attract any native audience, most of whom flocked to the swadeshi circus of Professor Bose13. These developments indicate two changes that were taking place in the Bengali mentality owing to the performance: enhancement of popular self-reliance, and the importance attached to the commodity i.e. the circus enterprise in colonial Bengal.

A kind of ,commodity fetishism,became visible in the way spectators treated and perceived the swadeshi amusement enterprise14. Shrouded by the veil of wilful ignorance, that can be termed as a willing suspension of disbelief, the spectators or the consumers in the process of exchanging the product in the market place (or public space) allotted the product a social life of its own. Emerging from a product into a commodity the Great Bengal Circus acquired spectacularity in the eyes of the spectators. It transcended the life and of its makers and assumed a social objectivity. What made them so immensely spectacular, and desirable? The feats that the swadeshi circus presented onstage were no doubt sensational, but not unique. English and European circuses had already made the native spectator terrain familiar with such feats. Still the spectators found enough reason to reject the performance of Harmston Sahib and flock to Professor Bose,s circus. The answer lies in the logic of fetishism as explained by Marx in Capital. He clearly indicated that products in a commodity culture were nothing extraordinary, but items of daily use, which assumed extraordinariness in the 'œfunction of their familiarity' 15. What the Great Bengal Circus produced before the eyes of the spectators, something that they craved and demanded for, was the portrayal of indigeneity. Entering the market of commodity as a swadeshi product, Great Bengal circus by illustrating and replicating swadeshi (economic) endeavours onstage further fetishized the already-fetishized commodity for both visual enjoyment and commercial consumption. In an intellectual climate where the crux of all ideas was the image of Bengali, hence Indian, vitality (in terms of prowess and economic acumen), the physical brevity of the performers and the indigeneity of the origin of performers of the circus became a much yearned for commodity. The people or the performer of the circus, in this case, became the main manufactured products of swadeshi enterprise that propelled the swadeshi endeavour without the circus arena. The product staged and pushed in the performances was the notion of swadeshi. The spectators did not merely view it; they consumed it, drew pleasure from it, and internalized it creating a world of communication, outside the sphere of colonial communication, where they not consumed an indigenous product but actually accorded the commodity a social through which they communicated with each other, and the ,self,. Redefinition of ,self,underway in the intellectual world found it,s exponent in Professor Bose,s circus, which served as one ground among many where ideas were given form, and the form commoditized, giving rise to spectacles, and spectacle-driven voicing of opinion by the people.

I

Commoditisation and the culture of fetishism transformed the notion of swadeshi presented in the performance from a saleable product to a marketable and desirable commodity. The notion found expression in the body, physicality, and extraordinariness of the feats performed by the performers of the circus. The body and the acts were wrapped in spectacularity to make them sensational, hence not just desirable but also comprehensible and acceptable. The audiences were enthralled by the dynamic enmeshing of the notion of swadeshi, the body of the performer and their feats in such an extraordinarily, beyond daily, manner. Moving out of the everyday space in their feats, yet rooted in daily life in appearance (in characteristic facial features and skin pigmentation they were no different from the men and women of the audience), the performer/commodity opened up a space in between extraordinary and ordinary. In the space, the performer/commodity and feat/commodity clad in its extraordinariness could override the mundane.

Circus performers performing extraordinary feats resisted and belied the colonial discourse of effeminacy. For legitimization and consolidation of their power in the Indian colonies, the Raj had established the natives as an effeminate and weak race, incapable of ruling themselves16. Voluminous literature produced on the theme concretised the theory that the Indians were by nature weak, licentious, and child-like who needed to be controlled and ruled for their benefit; this rule was a white man,s burden. The idea found convenient exponents in the literary works of men like Rudyard Kipling17. The Raj, on the contrary, was portrayed as a masculine power possessing the capability to guide and deliver weaker races like the Indians. In 1980, J. Roselli discussed in his path breaking work on the Bengali culture of physical regeneration of nineteenth century the process deployed by the Raj to standardise the image of the Bengalis as 'œsoft bodied little people' , hence stereotyped as the physically weak and effeminate race of India18. In the work, he narrated the genesis of a physical culture in Bengal during the nineteenth century when the Bengalis attempted to free their image and identity from the fetters of colonial discourse. Physical culture was adopted as a means for demonstrating the prowess and bravado of the Bengalis, and to show that they were not an effeminate race. The process gained momentum not only in Bengal but in other parts of India too where a vigorous attempt was underway to counter the stereotyping of the Raj19. Physical culture and exhibition of physical prowess developed into a medium for engendering and disseminating a ,manly,national '˜self,. This formed the perspective in which the Bengali audiences visited the performance of Professor Bose. The sensation generated by the extraordinary acts of the indigenous performers/commodity, therefore, has to be analysed on this ground.

The acts performed onstage by the performers of the circus opened up a space where the spectators could witness spine tingling acts, and could fathom the nature of the act. Enactment of dangerous and unimaginable feats in the most dramatic manner rendered the performance spectacular and fantastic. A huge tent set up for the purpose of performance. A ring separated the space reserved for performance from the audience space and gallery20. The space acted more than a physical division between the space of performance, and the space of viewing. The division went deeper

than that. It actually staged a difference existing between everyday and extraordinary/fantastic. This formed the first step in the dramatisation of the performance.

Music accompanied the acts performed within the separated space. Equestrian acts performed in tune with the rhythm of the musical accompaniment were very popular. Mr. Haridas, the jockey of Professor Bose,s circus, presented this act on an unsaddled horse. However, the main spectacularity of the act was not the riding of a barebacked horse, but the performance of vaults by Mr. Haridas on the back of the horse while riding it. An act of extraordinary precision, it could generate spine-tingling thrill. This earned it the name of 'œHurricane Jockey Act' . The popularity of the act drew more spectators to the circus; hence, the advertisements of the circus specially mentioned the act. The act and the name reserved for it by the viewers became a defining epithet of the performance of Mr. Haridas. Henceforth, all advertisements of the circus performances mentioned the act as the 'œDashing bare '“ back Hurricane jockey act' 21. The rhythmic act mixed physical agility with equestrian skills. In a moments act transportation was devised and projected by which Mr. Haridas transformed into a fantastic being who crossed the threshold of normal, and became extraordinary.

The dramatic effect created by the equestrian act reached crescendo when the acts performed by Miss Mrinmoyi and Miss Sushila were staged. Both the women presented an act with wild animals. Mrinmoyi,s act included two wild animals, an elephant, and a tiger. She would take a round around the ringed centre space on the elephant, sitting on the tiger. This was an extraordinary image invoked by the circus performance. But the dramatisation of Miss Sushila,s act sometimes overwhelmed the extraordinariness of Mrinmoyi,s act. This act dramatised a free hand wrestling between Sushila and a Royal Bengal tiger. The acts, Mrinmoyi,s 'œthrilling antiques' and Sushila,s 'œutmost fearlessness' , held the audience spellbound. Sensational as the acts were it had the power to abrogate boundaries. A woman performing in a public space, before public gaze, enacted moving beyond the social boundaries. It put the lines separating public from private, and material from spiritual in a flux. Naturally, in this limbo, the figure of Sushila and Mrinmoyi became an epitome of prowess. In the words of The Englishman, 'œHindu women are notoriously most timid, but in person of Sushila'¦who goes through her performance, with those animals with nerve and fearlessness (stress mine) is really startling to witness' 22 A two layered transgression was enacted by Sushila and Mrinmoyi: on the one hand, they challenged the colonial notion of timidity of the Indian women; on the other hand, demonstration of 'œnerve' and 'œfearlessness' by two Bengali women contradicted the colonial discourse of effeminacy, proving that not only Bengali men, but Bengali women too were not physically (or morally) effete.

The act of Illusion Box, one of the best-loved performances of the circus, enchanted popular mind. Ganapati Chakrabarty, the popular legerdemain of the circus, performed this act, which involved magic tricks23. The trick involved a vanishing act applied on either himself or some person from the stage. A box would be set up in the space of performance. In this box, he exhibited his legerdemain skill. Either he requested someone to enter the box, or entered it himself, to perform a vanishing act. Dramatisation of such sleight of hand often involved staging of scenes from

Puranic stories, where the act was incorporated. One such popular dramatisation was Krishna Lila24. In a review of the performance by the indigenous English daily Amrita Bazaar Patrika noted that the scene of escape of Basudeva from the prison in Krishna Lila was enacted by using the trick of Illusion Box25. The vanishing act enhanced the sensationalising effect of the dramatisation, making it more desirable and pleasurable. The trapeze act further sensationalised the performance. Gokul and Nari performed unbelievable and daring acts of somersault and body levitation on a swing up in the air. The dramatic effect of the act held the spectators spellbound. The act in the moment of performance created transcendence. The performers, Gokul and Nari, in the momentum of their swinging bodies could move above the social and gender paradigms26. Above all, the act of swinging above generalised divisions enabled the performer to move out of the colonial paradigm. In their extraordinariness the performers contradicted and contested colonial discourse, and set up a new example.

Demonstration of the ,self,affected a sensation. As a resultant product, its source lay in the spectacle that the performance staged. The sense of indigeneity disseminated by the narratives turned into a passion or intense emotion when an element of spectacularity was deployed by the performance27. The visual image produced by the performance was a mixture of reality and fantasy (a made up world). Spectacles created a 'œtheatrical authenticity' 28 that the onlookers/audience knew was both not-real yet again not not-real29. The phenomenon of not-real and not not-real referred to or represented a transitional phase when the actual i.e. real intermeshed with fantasy i.e. not-real. Since spectacles could easily blend in the qualities of both realism and theatricality/fantasy it opened up a space where the performance could both be something acted or could also be something implied. The margin separating actual from fantasy, and playact from implied in spectacles was very narrow. Above all, by its open-ended nature the spectacle could present before the audience images that they desire the most.

View of the desirable as a spectacle excited the emotions and feelings of the audience who came to witness Bose,s circus. A masculine image of ,self,(or swadeshi) charged with prowess and the spine-tingling thrill with which it was presented in the performance arena often made the audience respond or raise their voice. The reception of the images did not occur in complete vacuum where the audience absorbed the notions disseminated. Reception in performance theory is equated with reaction. The sensation afforded by the performance often produced reaction. Audience made themselves heard vocally and through gesticulations. In Lahore, the Great Bengal Circus experienced an exhibition of such audience reaction. Unable to accommodate the huge crowd of spectators who flocked to the performance the circus had to face a riotous situation30. The enthusiasm of the people to witness the performance and subsequent inability to witness it triggered a violent situation necessitating police intervention. The reaction that the people exhibited was the response that the performance, and the desire to witness the performance, produced. The in-arena response of the audience was equally enthusiastic. As Professor Bose narrated in his autobiography, the ladies who came to witness the performance, sat behind a transparent veil and during a performance the circus staged in Kashmir the women sitting behind the veil were so excited that they congratulated the performance with repeated claps31. These

small little reactions expressed by people in connection with the performance prove the audience were not only charged with a sensation that propelled them to express their emotions, they were charged by a sensation afforded by a performance viewed in company of each other. In the space of performance where the audiences expressed themselves their desire to watch the performance, or thrill felt at watching the same performance, as is evident from the stated instances, were felt and expressed at the same moment. The response expressed in unison made the audience aware that their fellow viewers were visited by the same sensation, like them, by the feats of the performance. The sensation and the knowledge of its being felt by the rest of the people present in the space at the same representations joined the audience in a community '“ a community of sensation.

'œLaudatory ejaculations' 32: sensation and nation

The audience rose from an aphasiac phase and discovered an opportunity to express themselves in an arena where their voice was taken into account. Above all, they were now a public. The sensation they felt while viewing the performance and the way they expressed themselves subsequently grouped them together. The voice they gained was not just expressive, it was critical. It not only appreciated the performance; it probed deep into the performance and passed judgements. The riotous reaction and enthusiastic applause of the audiences/spectators (discussed earlier in the paper) shows the vocal/gesticulatory activeness gained by them in the arena of the performance of Bose,s circus. The publicness gained by the spectators in the arena of performance grouped the people, unconnected and unknown to each other, in a camaraderie of sensation. By virtue of the feelings, they felt and shared while viewing the performance, established a connection between them. It transformed people into public, vocal, reviewing and, most importantly, brought together by their vocality.

Consequently, the togetherness of the spectator-turned-public drew sustenance from the images portrayed by the performance, the interpretation of the image by the spectators, and the subsequent sensation it could produce. The experience of viewing and consuming an image of vitality disseminated by the circus performance involved feeling a keen sensation of excitement and responding in that moment of adrenalin rush. The response of the spectators to such images and the way they interpreted it was influenced substantially by the nature of the images, hence by the performers or the organizers who decided upon the structure of the performance. Performance structure exhibited a strong affinity towards elements and factors that had a close connection with the mentality of the age. Notions of patriotism and swadeshi ideas reiterated in the public space found a place in the programmed structure of the circus. Thus, songs of patriotic fervours were added to the show as a response to the tides of the time. A contemporary writing about the performance of circus reminisced about the performances where Professor Bose delivered patriotic and swadeshi speeches in the performance ring. The deliverance of the speech in its own right held performative value, as Professor Bose, the author recollected, in a voice charged with vigour would deliver 'œbhabshuchak uddipanamoyi baktrita' 33 [emotionally charged sensation-provoking speech] and at the end of speech, his salutations of Bande Mataram was matched by the

enthusiastic replication of it by the audience. The author defined this replicating reaction as 'œsamarthansuchak' [condescending in nature]. Such response filling the tent at the moment of performance and experience of a sensation demonstrates that the spectators-turned-public who reacted positively to certain culturally charged and contextually significant symbol.

What was the symbol that excited the audience? Writing about the Bengali circus enterprises Abanindra Krishna Basu noted the feeling of the people who came to view the performance of Great Bengal circus as, 'œtahara protyeke paisa kharcha koriya, jeno ek abhinava jatiya melay '" abhinava jatiya anusthane '" sammilita hoiya desmatrikar charane shradhya nibedan korite ashiyachhen.' [(As if) each person had spent their penny to witness an extraordinary national fete '" extraordinary national event '" and jointly pay their obeisance on the feet of Mother Nation]34. Circus performance of Professor Bose assumed the ,national,character in the interpretation of the audience who visited it. They read into the disseminated image forms of nation. Nation as an image emerged from the body of the performer. The physicality of the performer, potent, skilful, and full of vigour, became the ground for reading and feeling this image. Spectators gaze on the body of the performer, presented in the form of a spectacle, transformed the performer into a super-normal being, who lay above the restrictions and boundaries of everyday life. The body of the performer became the ground for viewing two things: the similarity of skin pigmentation i.e. common physical features shared by the spectators with the performer, and the potency exhibited by the body. The image of vitality portrayed by the performance retained its potency in the interpreted image. Performers were no longer mere entertainers; in their contextual rendition and reading, they assumed the status of agents of vindication, trying to legitimize an image of vigorous Bengali before the public. Enmeshing of the portrayed image and interpreted image released the emotions of the audience. Watching the transformation of few native men and women into embodiment of prowess and vitality excited a sensation in the audience. The spectators verbally and physically released the felt excitement in the arena where they went to view the performance. The release assumed a general pattern of clapping, rioting and shouting in the arena. But the significance of the expression lay in the image of vitality and the active response made to it by the spectators. The spectators were visited by a feeling, and the feeling served the function of agglutination.

Conclusion

The performance enacted by the swadeshi circus generated an illusion in public mind. The fantastic world of legerdemain, bravado, and equestrian skill presented in an immensely spectacular form affected the audience-public sensationally. The sensation arose from the in-between(ness) of the space of performance. The space of images lay between the colonial paradigm and the world of what was possible. Ven Genepp, Belgian folklorist, identified a tendency in every human society to move from one socio-cultural state to another35. He characterized this transition as the rite of passage36. Passage created a middle space, a space where the order of the world left behind, and the world laying ahead both lay betwixt; a stage that lay between the transitions. Victor Turner in his study of human society and their processual development identified this space as the liminal space. Describing the intricate characteristics of a liminal stage Victor Turner asserted, 'œBut the

besetting quality of human society, seem processually, is the capacity of individual to stand at times aside from the models, patters and paradigms for behavior and thinking, which as children they are conditioned into accepting, and, in rare cases, to innovate new patterns themselves or to assent to innovation.' 37 Hence, the proceedings of a liminal stage or a liminoid are optional38. The swadeshi circus performance serving as a rite of passage from the colonial imaging of effeminacy to a self-image of vitality, and the space performing the function of a liminal stage, or the middle space, stood aside from the social and political Order. By this definition the middle space provided by the circus performances, therefore, represented a liminal39 stage. Susan Broadhurst describes the situation as one lying just at the edge of what was possible40. A site of many possibilities it had the power to re-define the ,self'. When the circus, in its carnivalesque imitation of both art and life, merged theatricality and reality, and presented onstage as a spectacular being, it moved out of the boundaries of the prescribed notion of ,self,(notion prescribed by the Raj) and strived towards a new notion of ,self,that could assume many shapes and forms. Demonstration of the performance the body of the performer, the spectacle, excited sensation, and the sensation '" the feeling of it and the knowledge of its being felt by other viewers, simultaneously, brought the audience together into what Benedict Anderson identifies as a community41'" a community of felt sensation. In the moment of feeling, expressing and acknowledging its prevalence over fellow spectator,s senses, the felt sensation enabled the spectators to imagine a felt bond, a community, and to feel national.

Referances

1. This is a rendition of the published image in words by me and is not a part of the advertisement originally published in the newspaper. See, Amrita Bazaar Patrika, 2nd January 1909.
2. John Rosselli, 'œThe Self-Image of Effeteness: Physical Education and Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Bengal' , Past and Present, 86 (1980): 121-148, p. 146.
3. Amrita Bazaar Patrika, 1st March 1909.
4. Amrita Bazaar Patrika, 22nd December 1905.
5. An article narrating the achievements of Professor Bose,s Circus, published in popular contemporary English daily, bestowed this honour on the performance of the circus. Amrita Bazaar Patrika, 30th November 1905, p.5.
6. Circus has found a passing mention in analytical works on colonial sports history. Noteworthy in this regard are the work of Richard Holt, Sports and the British: A Modern History, (Oxford, 1990); John Rosselli, ,The Self-Image of Effeteness: Physical Education and Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Bengal,, Past and Present, 86 (1980): 121-148;
7. A term used by Sumit Sarkar in his seminal work on the swadeshi movement in Bengal to categorize the print and performative media that proliferated in the city, districts and countryside during this period. He identified and analyzed them as a means used by the

nationalist bhadralok landlorder leader to reach out to the peasant commoner. See, Sumit Sarkar, Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-1908, (New Delhi, 1973), chapter 6, pp. 515-16.

8. On 19th July 1905, the Government of India announced the scheme to organize a new province called Eastern Bengal and Assam conglomerating Chittagong, Dacca and Rajshahi divisions, Hill Tippera, Madras and Assam. The official proclamation came on 1st September and Bengal partition came about on 16th October 1905. Resolution of the Government of India in the Home Department, No. 2491 of 19th July 1905, Parliamentary Papers (House of Commons), 1905, Volume 58, Cd 2658, n.2. Sumit Sarkar, 1973, pp.11-12.
9. Swarupa Gupta has shown that development of the notion of nationhood was not exclusive to the period. It had begun to take shape in the writings of Bengali intellectuals from the late nineteenth century.Â Swarupa Gupta, Notions of Nationhood in Bengal: Perspectives on Samaj, 1870-1905, (Leiden, 2009), Introduction. The idea of nation to cut through the ethnic and linguistic divisions placed their reliance on factors like jati/kinsfolk, desh (a multidimensional term meaning land, country etc) that could establish a link among the people on a mental and emotional level paying little or no attention to material divisions. It was assumed that emotional bond would foster a material unity.
10. Sumit Sarkar has shown that the initial spurt of economic swadeshism fizzled out gradually as a new wave of political activism engrossed the attention of the volunteers. Moreover, by 1906-07 shady dealings of few who circulated foreign goods in the market under the trademarks of swadeshi goods threatened the little success swadeshi enterprises had managed to gain the preceding years. See, Sumit Sarkar, 1973, pp. 108-136.
11. Amrita Bazaar Patrika, 8th December 1906.
12. Cited in Abanindra Krishna Basu, Bangalir Circus [Circus of the Bengali people], (Kolkata, 1343 B.S., 1936), p. 79.
13. Priyanath Bose, Professor Bose er Apurba Bhraman Brittanta [The Narration of the Wonderful Adventures of Professor Bose], (Kolkata, 1309 B.S., 1902), p. 35.
14. Marx used the theory of commodity fetishism to define the extra-market social life that commodities acquire in a capitalist society. Lynn M. Voskuil has utilized the same theory to illustrate and outline the Victorian taste for theatrical authenticity and the sensation it could afford. For an in-depth discussion see Lynn M. Voskuil, Acting Naturally: Victorian Theatricality and Authenticity, (Virginia, 2004), pp. 77-79.
15. Lynn M. Voskuil applied Karl Marx,s idea of commodity fetishism to the sensation theatre culture of Victorian England to gauge the nature of production influenced by the demand of the spectators. See, Lynn M. Voskuil, ,Feeling Public: Sensation Theatre,

Commodity Culture, and the Victorian Public Sphere,, Victorian Studies, 44 (2002): 245-274, pp.255-59.

16. For an in-depth discussion on this topic see Mrinalini Sinha, Colonial Masculanity: The ‚Manly‚Englishman and the ‚Effeminate‚Bengali in the Late Nineteenth Century, (Manchester, 1995), p. 1-32.
17. A new image of the British Raj was created and circulated at the cost of the image of the native by the media the Raj deployed. The role played by the fictions of Rudyard Kipling has been treated analytically in Zohren T. Sullivan‚s, Narratives of Empire: The Fiction of Rudyard Kipling, (Cambridge, 1993), chapter 1.
18. J. Roselli, Past and Present, pp. 122-23.
19. For the present discussion see, Amitabh Das Sarma, ‚Football and the Big Fight in Calcutta,, Football Studies, 5 (2002): 57-73, p. 63. An attempt to redefine one‚s identity and free it from the clutches of colonial discourse was also noticed outside Bengal in such physical culture like wrestling. Northern portions of India demonstrated great dexterity in building a new physically powerful identity. for an in-depth discussion see Joseph Altar, ‚Indian Natioanlism and the World Wrestling Championship of 1910 and 1928,, Academy of Punjab in North America, 9/1/2011, apraorg.com./articles/gama-1.
20. Priyanath Bose, Professor Bose er Apurba Bhraman Brittanta, p.82.
21. Amrita Bazaar Patrika, 2nd January 1909.
22. The Englishman, 25th November 1901.
23. Samir Kumar Ghosh, ‚Atmabrismita Bangali o Ganapati Chakrabarty‚[The Forgotten Bengalis and Ganapati Chakrabarty], Utsa Manush, 30 (2010): 30-36, [atsamarchs.com/Magazines/con-vol. 3-Sep 2010.pdf], p. 32.
24. Amrita Bazaar Patrika, 1st February 1908.
25. Amrita Bazaar Patrika, 11th January 1909.
26. Peta Tait is of the opinion that the act of trapeze enabled the performer to transcend the general and social regulations of daily life. See, Peta Tait, ‚Circus Bodies: Cultural Identity in Aerial Performance,, Australian Drama Studies, 48 (2006): 252-255, p. 252.
27. Spectacle is often decried as faking intending to play at the credulity of the consumers, more like a comportement hypnotique (trancelike behaviour). Guy Debord surmised that spectacles were opposites of dialogue hence the sociability that it promoted were 'œinauthentic and illusive' . Precisely, it built a society without community. See G. Debord, The Society of the Spectacle, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (New York, 1994), p. 17, pp. 10, 25, 27-30. However, theatrical public sphere worked not as a site but as a process that relied on various modes of persuasion and exchange to determine sociability. Therefore, despite the atmosphere of mistrust surrounding it spectacles could and were often utilized by people to create cooperation. Voskuil has shown how

sensation drama in the nineteenth century Victorian England made the people feel public, hence vocal i.e. expressing their opinion, by generating a common sensation in them. Lynn M. Voskuil, Victorian Studies, pp. 245-251.

28. L. M. Voskuil, Victorian Studies, pp. 249-50.
29. For an in-depth discussion on this point see R. Schechner, Between Theater and Anthropology, (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 35-117.
30. Priyanath Bose, Professor Bose er Apurba Bhraman Brittanta, pp. 88-89.
31. Ibid., p. 91.
32. The Tribune, 10th September 1897.
33. Abanikrishna Basu, Bangalir Circus [Circus of the Bengalis, p. 35.
34. Abanindra Krishna Basu, Bangalir Circus, p. 35.
35. Victor Turner, ‚Frame, Flow and Reflections: Ritual and Drama as public Liminality„ Japanese Journal of Religious Studies, 6 (1979): 454-499, p. 466.
36. Ibid., p. 466.
37. Victor Turner, Dramas, Field, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society, (Ithaca, 1974), pp. 14-15.
38. Ibid., pp. 16-17.
39. Victor Turner described liminal, or liminality, as an interim stage that had the potential to disintegrate the root metaphor into something new, creating a new metaphor or root paradigm, altogether. See, Victor Turner, Dramas, Field, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society, pp. 13-17.
40. Susan Broadhurst, Liminal Acts: A Critical Overview of Contemporary Performance and Theory, (London, 1999), p. 12.
41. Benedict Anderson defined nation and nationalism as an abstract entity born from a certain communitarian feeling of fellowship attained through an invisible link established amongst people. He conceded that feeling of common emotions invoked by a piece of news, or a song, or even a drama could bind people into one community transforming itself into a nation. Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and the Spread of Nationalism, (Verso, 1983).

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Forests, Tribes and Food Crises: The Paharias and the Famine of 1770

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The paharias were the original inhabitants of the hilly terrain of the Rajmahal hills, known as jungle Â '“ Terai region. The Rajmahal hills are spread across the Â districts of Dumka, Pakur and Sahibganj located in the modern Jharkhand state. It was covered with dense forests in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the pre-colonial period, while the region was nominally under Mughal control, due to the inaccessibility of the area, little attempt was made to extract revenues or exert political authority. Paharias lived on hunting and food gathering from the forest and practiced slash and burn cultivation or shifting cultivation, locally known as kurao. When, during Â the famine of 1769- 1770, the entire region was facing acute food shortage and starvation deaths, the paharias lived on makai (maize) and bora beans (barbatti), which they cultivated in their hilly and aired tract following a very primitive style of cultivation, and could successfully avoid starvation. Â They also gave shelter to hundreds of plainsmen who chose to go to the hills. This paper is concerned with the social, economic, and agricultural practices adopted by the paharias in successfully avoiding starvation and death during the famine of 1769- 1770.

The year 1769-1770 was marked by a period of remarkably scanty rainfall. It was reported that '˜the field of rice parched by the heat of sun' were like 'œfields of dried straw' and that land became 'œas hard and dry as a piece of rock and the labourers were unable to till it with the plough.' 1 As a result, no crop could be produced. Not only the rice harvest, but wheat was also badly damaged.

The scarcity of grain continued throughout 1769 and the food shortage ultimately culminated into a full-fledged famine in 1770. The famine totally devastated the rural life of eastern India. Rumbold, the chief of Patna, informed the select committee that complaints of distress were daily coming from the interior parts. Suffering of the people became so acute that Rumbold and Shitab Roy could not walk in public without being stopped in the streets by crowds of hungry people.2 The number of beggars in the city of Patna rose to about eight thousand. By December 1769, fifty to sixty people died every day from hunger in the streets of Patna. By the beginning of January, the death rate here had increased from fifty to one hundred and fifty daily. The decomposition of numerous dead bodies, which lay unburied or unburned along the streets and in the empty houses, polluted the air.3 The death rate increased further when small pox broke out in the province.4

Famine of 1770 caused death and desertion on a massive scale. It was one of the most remembered catastrophes in the history of Bengal subah for the massive depopulation it caused. Warren Hastings himself wrote that it took the lives of 10 million people and thereby one third of the inhabitants of this populous province were said to have been lost. Hundreds of villages stood empty and deserted. Houses were unoccupied both in the towns and in the villages. Large tracts of arable land which were not taken up for cultivation for many years turned into jungles. It took several decades for the population to return to pre-famine levels.

Famine and food shortages were such frequent phenomena in the eighteenth century rural economy of eastern India that it would be surprising if the rural population had not learned from experience and devised means of protecting itself from these recurrent crises. For a large section of the rural population food shortages must have presented a perpetual problem. It was a recurring seasonal problem as peasants had to face food shortages between the harvesting of one crop and the next. Food shortages due to crop failure was also a part of a cycle as the deviation of monsoon from its normal pattern was almost a characteristic feature of monsoonal cycle. Bad agricultural years revisited almost regularly between years of relative plenty. Nineteenth century historiography of famine is full of evidence which describe various ways in which the vulnerable groups actively tried to resist the onslaught of hunger and destitution. In the case of the Paharias in the eighteenth century, we are not in a position to study in great detail their efforts to cope with the crisis, but there is some evidence to show that members of this tribe were not just passive victims in the face of impending disaster; instead, they devised various strategies for survival and evaded hunger in an effective way.

When in 1769- 1770, the entire region was facing acute food shortage and starvation deaths, the paharias subsisted on Â makai (maize) and bora beans (barbatti) which were not destroyed in the drought, because of their drought resistant quality. They also practiced hunting and gathering forest products. Â Many people from the adjacent Bhagalpur - Colong area driven by hunger took shelter in the jungles of Rajmahal Hills and lived with the tribal people there. Bhagulpur district witnessed massive depopulation during the famine of 1770. Half of the people in Bhagulpur town were said to have died in the famine.5 Tracts of previously cultivated land turned into wastes.6 In Monghyr the depopulation was massive. Here, 'œformerly villages consisting of 200 or more houses were entirely uninhabited' and some with only 'œfive or six families remaining.' 7

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The Paharias practiced shifting cultivation as well as hunting, and gathering forest products, which made them less dependent on agriculture and highly mobile. Wild fruits, roots, herbs and the nutritious flowers and fruit pulp of the Mahua provided much of their diet. Tribal villages were also engaged in trade in firewood, honey, wax, medicines, charcoal, etc. When the forest dwellers encountered oppression from rulers or locally powerful groups, they ran away and settled in some other village. At the same time, it seems that the forest-dwelling communities of the paharias could also resist incursions into their areas. Their superior knowledge of the forest and their hunting skills made them an effective guerrilla force. Occasional raids on lowland groups expanding into

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In shifting cultivation, care was taken to protect natural resources while reaping its fruits. Prevailing practices among the tribes living in the forest in the present day and anthropological data of the past prove this point. The entire culture of the paharias was oriented to maintain a sustainable balance between human population and nature. To maintain the ecological balance, slush and burn cultivation or jhoom or kurao of the paharias was practiced in such a way that the maximum was extracted from the forests, without disturbing their productive potential.12

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which required a large tract as a production unit, a Â Â significant feature of their society was communal property ownership. Tom Standage has argued that nomadic society was based on egalitarianism and communal property ownership, because nomads required carrying all their possessions in the course of their journey.Â The need to carry everything limits individuals' ability to accumulate material goods. Modern anthropologists, who are working on African hunter-gatherers found that items like a knife, a spear, bow and arrows etc. are collectively owned and freely shared. Â Â Bands in which items were shared would have been more flexible and more likely to survive than bands in which items were jealously guarded by individuals. So bands in which there was social pressure to share things would have proliferated.14

Thus, a significant feature of the paharia economy was communal property ownership. Under this system, each household unit had rights over the natural resources as a member of the village. Tom Standage points out that egalitarianism and sharing in tribal society ensures that food supply is evened out and most people have enough to eat most of the time. Competition for resources also tends to encourage overexploitation of natural resources15 and that is why it was discouraged in a tribal society which used to depend on the nature for its sustenance.

The tribes managed the forest as a resource for fulfilling their basic needs and kept its use to an optimum level to maintain the balance of a productive ecosystem. Shifting cultivation ensured that there was no famine in the tribal society. Even the worst famine of 1770 did not affect the paharias. When the entire region was facing acute food shortage, the paharias lived on makai (maize) and bora beans. They also gave shelter to hundreds of plains people who chose to go to the hills. They stayed there for a year, and when not accepted in their villages on their return after one year took to the tribal way of life. Thus, this was a time, when different socio-economic system interacted with each other.The paharias were the original inhabitants of the hilly terrain of the Rajmahal hills, known as jungle Â '“ Terai region. The Rajmahal hills are spread across the Â districts of Dumka, Pakur and Sahibganj located in the modern Jharkhand state. It was covered with dense forests in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the pre-colonial period, while the region was nominally under Mughal control, due to the inaccessibility of the area, little attempt was made to extract revenues or exert political authority. Paharias lived on hunting and food gathering from the forest and practiced slash and burn cultivation or shifting cultivation, locally known as kurao. When, during Â the famine of 1769- 1770, the entire region was facing acute food shortage and starvation deaths, the paharias lived on makai (maize) and bora beans (barbatti), which they cultivated in their hilly and aired tract following a very primitive style of cultivation, and could successfully avoid starvation. Â They also gave shelter to hundreds of plainsmen who chose to go to the hills. This paper is concerned with the social, economic, and agricultural practices adopted by the paharias in successfully avoiding starvation and death during the famine of 1769- 1770.

The year 1769-1770 was marked by a period of remarkably scanty rainfall. It was reported that '˜the field of rice parched by the heat of sun' were like 'œfields of dried straw' and that land became 'œas hard and dry as a piece of rock and the labourers were unable to till it with the

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became 'œas hard and dry as a piece of rock and the labourers were unable to till it with the plough.' 1 As a result, no crop could be produced. Not only the rice harvest, but wheat was also badly damaged.

The scarcity of grain continued throughout 1769 and the food shortage ultimately culminated into a full-fledged famine in 1770. The famine totally devastated the rural life of eastern India. Rumbold, the chief of Patna, informed the select committee that complaints of distress were daily coming from the interior parts. Suffering of the people became so acute that Rumbold and Shitab Roy could not walk in public without being stopped in the streets by crowds of hungry people.2 The number of beggars in the city of Patna rose to about eight thousand. By December 1769, fifty to sixty people died every day from hunger in the streets of Patna. By the beginning of January, the death rate here had increased from fifty to one hundred and fifty daily. The decomposition of numerous dead bodies, which lay unburied or unburned along the streets and in the empty houses, polluted the air.3 The death rate increased further when small pox broke out in the province.4

Famine of 1770 caused death and desertion on a massive scale. It was one of the most remembered catastrophes in the history of Bengal subah for the massive depopulation it caused. Warren Hastings himself wrote that it took the lives of 10 million people and thereby one third of the inhabitants of this populous province were said to have been lost. Hundreds of villages stood empty and deserted. Houses were unoccupied both in the towns and in the villages. Large tracts of arable land which were not taken up for cultivation for many years turned into jungles. It took several decades for the population to return to pre-famine levels.

Famine and food shortages were such frequent phenomena in the eighteenth century rural economy of eastern India that it would be surprising if the rural population had not learned from experience and devised means of protecting itself from these recurrent crises. For a large section of the rural population food shortages must have presented a perpetual problem. It was a recurring seasonal problem as peasants had to face food shortages between the harvesting of one crop and the next. Food shortages due to crop failure was also a part of a cycle as the deviation of monsoon from its normal pattern was almost a characteristic feature of monsoonal cycle. Bad agricultural years revisited almost regularly between years of relative plenty. Nineteenth century historiography of famine is full of evidence which describe various ways in which the vulnerable groups actively tried to resist the onslaught of hunger and destitution. In the case of the Paharias in the eighteenth century, we are not in a position to study in great detail their efforts to cope with the crisis, but there is some evidence to show that members of this tribe were not just passive victims in the face of impending disaster; instead, they devised various strategies for survival and evaded hunger in an effective way.

When in 1769- 1770, the entire region was facing acute food shortage and starvation deaths, the paharias subsisted on Â makai (maize) and bora beans (barbatti) which were not destroyed in the drought, because of their drought resistant quality. They also practiced hunting and gathering forest products. Â Many people from the adjacent Bhagalpur - Colong area driven by hunger took shelter

in the jungles of Rajmahal Hills and lived with the tribal people there. Bhagulpur district witnessed massive depopulation during the famine of 1770. Half of the people in Bhagulpur town were said to have died in the famine.5 Tracts of previously cultivated land turned into wastes.6 In Monghyr the depopulation was massive. Here, 'œformerly villages consisting of 200 or more houses were entirely uninhabited' and some with only 'œfive or six families remaining.' 7

To protect themselves from hunger, the plainsmen from the Bhagulpur-Colong region left their villages and migrated to the jungles of Rajmahal hills in search of food.8 They could evade starvation and subsisted on maize and beans and might have supplemented their diet with forest products like wild fruits and roots. Sometimes when they could successfully hunt down, a little extra food could have been obtained. Thus, as a last resort, the forest was often of critical importance to famine-stricken people, a resource that stood between life and death. Â They stayed in this region for a year, and when not accepted in their villages on their return after one year, took to the tribal way of life.9

The Paharias practiced shifting cultivation as well as hunting, and gathering forest products, which made them less dependent on agriculture and highly mobile. Wild fruits, roots, herbs and the nutritious flowers and fruit pulp of the Mahua provided much of their diet. Tribal villages were also engaged in trade in firewood, honey, wax, medicines, charcoal, etc. When the forest dwellers encountered oppression from rulers or locally powerful groups, they ran away and settled in some other village. At the same time, it seems that the forest-dwelling communities of the paharias could also resist incursions into their areas. Their superior knowledge of the forest and their hunting skills made them an effective guerrilla force. Occasional raids on lowland groups expanding into the forest areas and also sometimes on the villages in the plains provided some economic benefits. In the late eighteenth century, the paharias gained the reputation as robbers due to their aggressive raids into the plains. After the famine of 1770, there was an increase in their raids on the villages in the plains, which brought them into conflict with the British government.10

Shifting cultivation was the first system of food production and dates back to the lower Palaeolithic age. Unlike plough '“ cultivation it did not require cattle or manure. Â Captain Sherwill has described the method of shifting cultivation practiced by the paharias in his notes following a tour through the Rajmahal Hills. According to him, the paharias were very lazy and did not clear forest for cultivation. They choose the 'œmost precipitous hill sites as the ground best fitted for" their crop and cultivated the spot with a pointed stick made of iron instead of a plough. They used to make holes in the ground with the implement at the distance of a foot or slightly less from each other and sow a mixture of 'œIndian corn, Janera, Bora beans and the seeds of several small pulses.' The tall and robust Indian corn and jenera gave support to twining Bora bean, which in turn afforded a beneficial shade to the delicate pulses at the feet.11

In shifting cultivation, care was taken to protect natural resources while reaping its fruits. Prevailing practices among the tribes living in the forest in the present day and anthropological data of the past prove this point. The entire culture of the paharias was oriented to maintain a

sustainable balance between human population and nature. To maintain the ecological balance, slush and burn cultivation or jhoom or kurao of the paharias was practiced in such a way that the maximum was extracted from the forests, without disturbing their productive potential.12

The paharias cultivated makai or maize, which had a drought resistant quality and were not destroyed in the severe drought during 1769-1770. They planted bora beans or barbatti along with maize (makai).Â Planting of beans along with maize fixed nitrogen in the soil and made it fertile. Plants need nitrogen, and certain microbes in the soil can capture it from the atmosphere and make it available to them. In addition, legumes can draw upon a second source of nitrogen, namely that fixed by the microbes accommodated in their root nodules. Farmers replenish soil nitrogen by growing leguminous plants such as peas, clover, lentils or beans. This was a very old practice prevalent among the ancient people of different countries in the world. Though the farmers did not know Nitrogen's crucial role as a plant nutrient, farmers all over the world had practiced cultivation of leguminous plants such as peas, lentils, and beans for thousands of years. Peas and lentils were being grown alongside wheat and barley in the Near East almost from the dawn of agriculture. Beans and peas were rotated with wheat, millet, and rice in China. In the New World, beans were interleaved with maize.13 Farmers did not realize it at the time, but growing legumes is a far more efficient way to enrich the soil than the application of manure, which contains relatively little nitrogen.

The paharias had a nomadic life- style and the British government in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was trying to settle them. In any settlement if the crops failed or frequent deaths occurred the paharias left their village and settled in some other place. As they practiced shifting cultivation, which required a large tract as a production unit, a Â Â significant feature of their society was communal property ownership. Tom Standage has argued that nomadic society was based on egalitarianism and communal property ownership, because nomads required carrying all their possessions in the course of their journey.Â The need to carry everything limits individuals' ability to accumulate material goods. Modern anthropologists, who are working on African hunter-gatherers found that items like a knife, a spear, bow and arrows etc. are collectively owned and freely shared. Â Â Bands in which items were shared would have been more flexible and more likely to survive than bands in which items were jealously guarded by individuals. So bands in which there was social pressure to share things would have proliferated.14

Thus, a significant feature of the paharia economy was communal property ownership. Under this system, each household unit had rights over the natural resources as a member of the village. Tom Standage points out that egalitarianism and sharing in tribal society ensures that food supply is evened out and most people have enough to eat most of the time. Competition for resources also tends to encourage overexploitation of natural resources15 and that is why it was discouraged in a tribal society which used to depend on the nature for its sustenance.

The tribes managed the forest as a resource for fulfilling their basic needs and kept its use to an optimum level to maintain the balance of a productive ecosystem. Shifting cultivation ensured that

there was no famine in the tribal society. Even the worst famine of 1770 did not affect the paharias. When the entire region was facing acute food shortage, the paharias lived on makai (maize) and bora beans. They also gave shelter to hundreds of plains people who chose to go to the hills. They stayed there for a year, and when not accepted in their villages on their return after one year took to the tribal way of life. Thus, this was a time, when different socio-economic system interacted with each other.

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Popular Perception of Nationalism: Peasants, Adivasis and the National Movement in Maldah 1920-1922

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The Indian national movement saw various political trends and the contribution of various political classes and sections. It witnessed the broadening of popular participation from around 1920. In this sense, the Non-Cooperation movement was very significant as it proved to be a turning point in the national movement. During and after the Non-Cooperation, the national movement no longer remained confined to the educated sections of society but assumed a mass character. It witnessed mass articulation of nationalism, unleashing a variety of protests and arousing feelings in many directions. As the movement spread, it took diverse shapes and forms in different areas. A significant aspect of Non-Cooperation movement in India has been its regional specificity and the salience of local issues. People related, assimilated, and adapted nationalist ideology to their own local social and political needs based on their own worldviews and experiences.

The present article is a study of the nationalist movement as it was conducted at the grassroots during the time of the Non-Cooperation movement. By concentrating on Maldah, a northern district of Bengal, the study proposes to bring out the dynamics of India's freedom struggle against a powerful state, which wielded the instruments both of coercion and persuasion. A major focus is, however, on the nationalist politics at various levels and also on the complex connections and interactions between it and popular movements at the base level. The movement received impetus from local social and agrarian tensions and agitations and became a vehicle of expression for a variety of discontents. Although far away from Calcutta, the nerve centre of provincial political activities, this northern district of Bengal articulated the nationalist protest in an effective manner. The movement in Maldah was not a mere replication of the nationalist movement outside. It was an integral part of the Indian national movement, but it also had its own inner dynamics. Due to this, a study of the historical development in Maldah during the period would not only be interesting, but also be important for understanding the local peculiarities there. The present study is only a small and modest attempt in that direction.

This study attempts to break out of the binary paradigm of elite/subaltern nationalism and focuses on the complexities associated in the interaction of nationalism with popular pressures. It was not the local nationalist elites which had taken initiative to organise popular protests. But, at the same time, one cannot overlook the widespread political ferment in Maldah at the time of Non-Cooperation movement, which was writ with general defiance and contempt of authority that affected the movement. Popular protests intensified and radicalized as a result of its interaction with the non-cooperation. Although this study accepts the specificity of the popular level and

popular translations of swaraj, it highlights the process of interaction of nationalism with popular struggles.

In order to grasp the complexities of the Non-Cooperation movement in Maldah it is necessary to throw light on the nature of politics in Maldah preceding it.

The rise of nationalist consciousness in Maldah was, no doubt, favoured by the spread of western education, development of communications, introduction of local self-government as well as formation of Englishbazar (1869), Old Maldah (1869) and some year's later Nababganj (1903) municipalities. A new class of English educated gentry emerged in the socio-political canvas of the district in the last quarter of the 19th century. These English educated gentry became the chief vehicle for spreading nationalist consciousness in the district.1 Thus, it was due to the efforts of some local middle class intelligentsia like Radhesh Chandra the stage was set for further and steady growth of national consciousness in Maldah. The incipient growth of national awakening was given a fillip by the Swadeshi Movement that followed Curzon's infamous decision of Partition of Bengal in 1905.

Curzon's partition of Bengal provoked what is famous as the Swadeshi Movement which upset the '˜settled fact' of partition and during which various new techniques of political mobilization were successfully attempted.2 Maldah did not lag behind in this phase of nationalist movement. In Maldah, the anti-Partition movement began as an urban middle class movement in which leadership and inspiration were provided by Benoy Kumar Sarkar and Radhesh Chandra Seth. The Swadeshi movement was not confined to only boycott of foreign goods and to the observance of Partition day. It rapidly spread in the fields of education also. . Benoykumar Sarkar took a leading role in establishing in June 1907 the Maldah Jatiya Shiksha Samiti. The Maldah Jatiya Shiksha Samiti had set up eight schools with 748 students by June 1908, three of them primary.3 These schools were located at Maldah, Kutubpur, Kaligram, Dharampur, Paranpur, Jadupur and Malatipur.4 In order to spread mass education, the Maldah Jatiya Shiksha Samiti had established night schools at Kutubpur, Kaligram and Dharampur. The Samiti also endeavoured to spread female education. Girls' schools were opened at Kaligram and Dharampur.5

The Maldah Samiti since its inception had emphasized the need of well-written textbooks in vernacular. Radhesh Chandra Seth and Haridas Palit engaged themselves in writing textbooks in history and geography.6 The Maldah Samiti founded a Literary Research Department in 1911, which greatly patronized the folk culture of the region. Haridas Palit was encouraged by the Literary Research Department to compose his Addyer Gambhira, which was published in the journal of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad.7 The Maldah Jatiya Shiksha Samiti laid stress on technical education and vocational training as well. Thus the Maldah Jatiya Shiksha Samiti under the leadership of Benoykumar Sarkar and Radhesh Chandra Seth played a pivotal role in spreading '˜national' education and national consciousness among a large number of student of Maldah, many of whom in later years turned out as prominent persons in political, social and cultural arena of the district.

By 1908, political swadeshi was certainly on the decline and was taken over by another trend, i.e., individual terrorism against British officials and Indian collaborators. Both the Anushilan Samiti and the Brati Samiti had their branches in Maldah.8 The youngest person tried in the Alipur Bomb Case was Krishnajiban Sanyal of Maldah, aged about 16 years.9 As it became clear after the Alipur episode, a section of students of Maldah had a direct involvement in the revolutionary activities, the district administration let loose various repressive measures to scare the people away from swadeshi campaign.10Â Â Â However, the revolutionary activities again came into operation around 1915. On January 28, 1916 Nabinchandra Bose, the Headmaster of Maldah Zilla School, was stabbed to death.11 The revolutionaries suspected that Nabinchandra Bose had been supplying information to the police about the political activities of his students.12 Indiscriminate police repression was effective for the time being in containing terrorist activities in Maldah. It, however, contributed to raise the level of political consciousness in Maldah. Although the Swadeshi Movement declined in the second decade of the century it had provided a solid foundation upon which was built the edifice of future nationalist movement.

The revival and growth of nationalist politics in Maldah was again discernible after the entry of Gandhiji in the political life of the country. His arrival on the political scene introduced various new dimensions to the nationalist politics. India's freedom struggle was no longer confined to bhadraloks alone, it expanded to incorporate new social groups which so far remained peripheral. The involvement of new social groups in the freedom struggle helped crystallize their search for a new order. All these factors snowballed into the Non-Cooperation - Khilafat movement of the years of 1921-22.13 Maldah also became involved in it as did a large number of people from a variety of social backgrounds.

As the Khilafat and Non- Cooperation movements were twin movements and were interdependent, both the Hindus and Muslims unitedly participated. And in Maldah also the Hindus joined hands with the Muslims in the Khilafat movement. Large Khilafat meetings were held in the district. In an official record, it was stated that the Khilafat agitators were spreading false rumours and inflammatory appeals about the desecration of the holy places and the need for jihad.14 As we have already noted,Â Maldah was an important centre of the Wahabi sect and during the time of the Non'"Cooperation--Khilafat movement, they also began to organize the common Muslims around the Khilafat issue. As an official report states, intensive propaganda was conducted by the leading Wahabis of Maldah and Rajshahi, where pirs and collecting agents collected Baitul- Mal, and their principal topic of preaching was the approaching declaration of jihad.15 In a large meeting at Maldah, Maulavi Abdul Ghani compared the glorious past with the present humble condition of the Kingdom of the Caliph and opined that the decline of the Islamic powers was due to degeneration of the Muslims.16 The meeting was presided over by Maulavi Shah Mohammad Choudhury, a zamindar. The other speakers were Maulavi Mohammad Laljan Motwalli and Maulavi Mohammad Ismail.17Â

The chief centres of the Non-Cooperation movement in Maldah were Englishbazar, Kaliachak, Chanchal, Kaligram, Harishchandrapur, Nababganj and Gomastapur. Training the volunteers,

picketing before excise shops, boycotting foreign goods, establishing the cottage industry etc. were the programmes of the District Congress during the Non- Cooperation Movement. The prominent leaders of the Congress during this time were Bhupendra Krisna Misra of Harishchandrapur, Debendranath Jha and Bhupendranath Jha of Bangitola, Jatindranath Singha of Nagharia, Krishnagopal Sen of Bachamari, Satish Chandra Agarwall and Surya Prasad Behani of Old Maldah , Phani Dube and Baroda Dube of Kaliachak and Ramesh Chandra Ghosh, Ramesh Chandra Bagchi and Bepin Bihari Ghosh of Englishbazar.18

The boycott of government educational institutions was one of the most important programmes of the Non-Cooperation movement. As regards boycott of school and colleges, the Non-Cooperation campaign in Maldah probably attained a dramatic success. The local leadership urged the students to leave the government-controlled educational institutions. Students were asked to appeal to their guardians to allow them to boycott their educational institutions, but if their guardians did not agree to their appeal, they were told to non-cooperate even with their guardians.Â The students in Maldah responded to this appeal in a striking manner. At Kaligram, a number of students, namely Charu Chandra Sarkar, Manindranath Roy Choudhury, Girindra Narayan Biswas, Gour Chandra Sarkar came out of the Government- controlled school and joined the Non- Cooperation movement.19 Priya Nath Ghosh, an ex-member of the Anusilan Samiti took a leading role in organizing students at Gomastapur and Nababganj. Under his leadership the students of Nababganj School went on strike.20 The student of the A.C. Institution of Englishbazar also participated in the movement. They organized strikes when the district leaders were arrested.21 Sachindranath Misra, a student of Harishchandrapur School, organized the students there in support of the Non-Cooperation movement. Shibram Chakraborty, a noted literary figure afterwards, led the students of his school Chanchal Siddheswari Institution.22

Establishment of national schools was one of the important programmes of the Non- Cooperation movement. Maldah district played a very significant role in this programme of the movement. In February 1921, a huge meeting was organized at the Town Hall, which resolved to establish schools, which would ensure within a short period national regeneration.23Â Accordingly, the Jatiya Shiksha Mandir was established. Another National School was started at Kaligram and arrangements were made for training the students in important arts as well as industries. The art of spinning and weaving was given due importance.24 An official report stated that several zamindars of Maldah provided financial assistance for establishing these schools as well as for organizing anti- British campaign.25

In late May 1921, Chittaranjan Das and several other leaders visited Maldah. In response to his call, some prominent legal practitioners of Maldah namely Ramesh Chandra Bagchi, Ramesh Chandra Ghosh, Jnanedrasashi Gupta, Gangacharan Datta and Maulavi Tahiruddin Ahmed suspended their law practice.26 In fact, Deshbandhu's visit to Maldah during the Non- Cooperation Movement gave a fillip to this new urge for nationalist movement. C.R. Das addressed a massive rally at the Town Hall in which he explained the situation with special stress on the wrongs of Khilafat and Punjab and urged the people to make the Non-Cooperation movement a success.27

The Government reports indicated that a determined effort was made to establish youth and student- based volunteer corps under Priya Nath Ghosh, on ex-member of the Anusilan Samiti. The report also pointed out that this body had chalked out a programme for collection of funds, enforcement of the Congress Committee's programme of work, picketing before excise shops etc.28 Another report stated that the volunteers at Englishbazar, Kaligram and Shershahi were carrying out the instructions of the District Congress Committee and provoking the people to abstain from payment of taxes and rent. They also urged the people to boycott the law courts and prevented shopkeepers from supplying foodstuffs to the police.29

The Non-Cooperation movement in Maldah witnessed mass articulation of nationalism, unleashing a variety of protests and arousing feelings in many directions. The movement marked popular translation of nationalism. Once the desires and aspirations of the masses got linked with swaraj, the Non-cooperation movement developed its own rhythm and dynamics , bringing forth its own agenda, which often ran independent of the Congress leaders. The movement had drawn strength from the popular agrarian protests, which was not a part of the Congress programme. Popular protests intensified and radicalized as a result of its interaction with the non-cooperation

One of the important programmes of the Non '“ Cooperation movement was the no- tax campaign, which had a deep impact in Maldah. The introduction of the Union Board in 1919 as the lowest unit of administration provoked unrest in the district. The Union Board was introduced in the 1919 Bengal Village Self Government (BVSG) Act to strengthen administration at the grassroots. The primary objective of the Act was to ascertain the Government authority at the grassroots.30 It laid emphasis on the appointment of more dafaders and chowkidars. Although the Board members had virtually no power in their appointment, the Union Board was required to pay the salaries and the cost of equipment used by the dafadars and chowkidars. The Union Board was also expected to contribute to rural development. However, the Government did not sanction money for the boards to encourage them to undertake taxation for rural improvement. The Union Board was instituted with a 50% increase of the existing chowkidari tax.31 The no-tax movement took a concrete shape at Kaligram, Harishchandrapur and Bangitola under the leadership of Manindranath Roy Chowdhury, Sachindranath Misra and Debendranath Jha respectively. The Provincial Congress Committee sent the volunteers to different districts including Maldah to instruct the people, especially the peasant not to pay taxes. The call for a campaign against the chowkidari system found a receptive audience. It was the most hated tax. No villagers liked the tax for the simple reason that the Chowkidar was more an oppressor than a friend to the village folk. In its report for the month of June 1921, the Intelligence Branch recorded that the agitation against chowkidari tax continued in the district of Dacca, Murshidabad, Maldah, Rajshahi, Noakhali and Rangpur.32 The anti-Union Board movement in Maldah is, as the above discussion shows, certainly a break with the past in the sense that it brought new actors on the local political scene; it is also unique because it provoked different kinds of agitation drawing on the popular resentment against the vested interests. Â Â Â

Police unrest was another significant feature of the Non- Cooperation movement in Maldah. Â The rural police was restive for inadequate and irregular pay. The social apathy coupled with inadequate pay broke their reserve, and they also started putting forth their demands for higher wages. Around this time, the local congress workers took the opportunity and urged the policemen to resign their posts. Leaflets carrying an appeal to the police to join the movement were distributed by the local nationalists.33Â According to the nationalists, it was the moral duty of policemen to free themselves from service under the British and their slavery and to identify with the cause of national freedom. Such appeals to the police alarmed the government, as it feared that the national movement would influence the police force. To estimate the extent to which the national movement had influenced the police force, the Superintendent of Police instructed the officer-in-charge of different police stations to report on the attitude of the police towards the Non-Cooperation movement. All of them were of the view that the higher ranks of police officials were loyal to the government and were opposed to the movement.34 But, as the report states, the lowest echelons in the police force were not trustworthy; the constables were not as dependable as in the pre-War period. The chowkidari system was vulnerable because the chowkidars were only incompletely under official control and protection and hence could be subjected to pressure within the villages. Â At Sibganj, one dafadar and one chowkidar resigned from services in April 1922. The chowkidars of Bamongola police station were planning a strike in August 1922 to press their demand for pay hike.35 Instances of chowkidars being socially boycotted for refusing to resign their posts were reported from the district.36

The impact of the Non-Cooperation movement was felt in Barind region amongst the santal adivasis. The movement precipitated to a climax some of the issues over which the adivasis had been agitating for long. There had been a strong tradition of adivasi struggle in Maldah. The major grievances of the santal adivasis centred around rent and abwabs. A large part of produce, in the different existing forms, was appropriated as rent. Besides rent, the adivasi sharecroppers had to make various payments in kindÂ and pay miscellaneous cesses or abwabs. Abwabs were offered to landlords for different purposes and on various occasions. These grievances led to a series of protests in adivasi belt of Maldah. The santals considered themselves as the original owners of the land and held non-adivasis for the appropriation of their land. The santal adivasis resented the imposition of rents and abwabs by the zamindars. They argued that the zamindars had no right to rent as the land belonged to them because their ancestors had cleared the jungles and brought the land under cultivation.37Â In fact, the Non-Cooperation movement brought forth adivasis' conflict with the zamindars. It must be mentioned here that even during the Non-Cooperation days, the local congress leadership appeared indifferent to the Santal cause. Involved in the anti-Union Board agitation, the local congress also did not pay an adequate attention to the growing resentment in the adivasi belt of Barind area. Although the local congress leadership was aware of the adivasi grievances it was however not particularly interested in integrating the adivasi agitation with the Congress-launched anti-Union Board movement probably because of the apprehension that such an agitation would alienate the nationalist zamindars who had always been a significant force in the Maldah Congress.38 Â Â

In February, 1921, in a village in Bulbulchandi, a group of santals forcibly ploughed the field of a landlord, and insisted that the land belonged to them. At Rohunpur, Shyam Murmu, an adivasi sharecropper, refused to pay the dues to the zamindar and his land was auctioned off for non-payment of rent. At Kochakandar, a peon was threatened by the santals when he attempted to hand over possession of land that had been sold for failure to pay rent.39 The idea of Swaraj had aroused great expectations amongst the adivasis. They believed that under Gandhi Raj they would not have to pay any rent and would also regain their lands.40 To the santals of barind the name of Gandhi was symbol of struggle and a source of inspiration. The santals of barind constructed the image of Gandhi from rumours and disjointed bits of news. It is to be noted here that the non-tribal political forces in Maldah were represented by Swarajists and Hindu Sabha activists.41Â Tanika Sarkar thinks that the santal adivasis of Maldah in this respect was influenced by the santals of Balurghat subdivision in the neighbouring district of Dinajpur. They were far better integrated with the Congress movement.42 But the contemporary local newspaper source speaks against Sarkar's assumption. That the name of Gandhi was familiar to the Santals of Maldah is clear from a number of incidents recorded in Gourdoot, a local newspaper.

Another area of contestation was the right over forest and fishing. Forests were intrinsically connected with adivasi existence. But most importantly, forests symbolised freedom and it constituted an important source of livelihood to the Santals. They roamed the forest areas freely, hunted the animals there, and were in fact, the sole beneficiaries of the forest produce. The forests were also to provide a source of medicine.Â The folk tale signifies that the forests have serious religious, aesthetic, and existential significance for the adivasis. The Santal songs were replete with their association with the forests, their communion with Nature, the forest and the woodlands. Be it birth or love, or marriage hunt or recreation, death or misery --- all are surrounded by the forest as the background.43

Till the closing decade of the 19th century, the Santal adivasis of Barind had absolute rights to the neighbouring forests. The belief system of the Santal adivasis was strongly grounded in the worship of nature. Religious festivals are tied to both the agricultural cycle and the flowering and fruiting of the forest trees. The Santal new year, for example, begins with the blossoming of the Sal tree in March. The links in tribal belief between the health of the forest, fertility, and prosperity are clear in the Santali folk songs of Barind. As the Collector of Maldah wrote in 1895, '˜in a bad year the bulk of the Santal Raiyats can barely support life..... but the fruits of the tree, roots and insects..... enable them to tide over the difficulties..... the scope to extend cultivation is limited as large tracts will be more valuable as jungle rather than cultivation'.44 It was only after the introduction of the Forest Policy of 1894 that forest officials appeared on the scene and claimed the authority to limit and regulate adivasi rights on behalf of colonial government. With the introduction of railway system in Maldah in 1909, pressure on the forests of Barind grew further as the railway system demanded immense quantities of Sal logs to provide sleepers for the rail bed. Commercial demand for timber accelerated forest cutting, and raised the value of forestlands. Timber merchants rushed in, even before the rail lines opened and began leasing or purchasing large tracts from the zamindars of Barind. Leaseholders and zamindars began imposing strict

control on forest use by adivasi communities as the value of the forest increased, restricting or eliminating traditional forest rights enjoyed by the Santal adivasis.45

A question naturally comes.Â How did popular perceptions relate to these changes? A common feeling was that traditional means of relaxation and rights over the forests were being '˜stolen' away. Worse still, after being '˜stolen' away, the access to these depended on payment of duties, cesses, and fines. As a result, one's freedom to which a lot of importance was attached and which had been existed for generations was being lost. Since the concept of '˜profit' motive came before the material conditions existed and that too in a sudden and superimposed fashion, it created a sense of confusion, deprivation and anger at all those who were responsible for the changes.Â British forest reservation laws had thus proved irksome to the Santal adivasis of Maldah and in the context of the degradation of their forest environment, exploitation by zamindars and moneylenders they rose in protest. As customary access to the forest was restricted, friction between adivasis and local zamindars grew.

The Private Fisheries Protection Act of 1889 had allowed greater consolidation of zamindari control over fisheries, irrigation tanks, and other such waterbodies in permanently settled estates of Bengal.Â The restriction of access to forests and fresh-water fisheries resulted in a wave of protest among the Santal adivasis of Maldah. These were fuelled by memories of better times, by stories of their father's times when all jungles were free and all beels (ponds) were open to public fishing. Over the years, there developed in Barind a custom whereby the santals used to catch fish from beels or extensive water- logged areas. The leaseholders wanted to restrain the santals from fishing in the beels as a form of procession. The santals, on the other hand, were convinced that they had been following a traditional custom. In this practice, other local ethnic groups like the Polia, Rajbansi and Momins also joined the santals.46 Disturbances cropped up when a spate of fish-looting broke out in February 1922 at Singhabad Estate for which three cases were started against the santals.47 Â Again in April 1922, about one thousand santals of Gajol- Bamongola-Old Maldah p.s. and of Itahar and Banshihari p. s. of Dinajpur district indiscriminately looted fish from certain beels in Gajol and Bamongola p.s. An armed police force was deputed by the administration and several arrests were made.48

Two recent studies, however, suggest that these kinds of defiant attacks on private fisheries had a serious meaning. Ranajit Guha underlines the potency-----as an instrument of peasant mobilization against the zamindars-----of '˜rebel' threats to bring the polo (trap) '˜to fish in the beel, close by your village' in Pabna district as early as 1873: '˜The polo in its turn', he writes, '˜was regarded as a badge of insurgency. It gave to the movement and its participants their respective folk names-----'œPolo Bidroha' and 'œPolowallahs' .49 He also points to santal use of collective fishing of this kind as a means for mobilizing for protest.50 Sumit Sarkar extends this discussion into the 1920s. He comments on a number of instances in 1922 and 1923: '˜Haat and fish-looting by Santals in north-west Midnapur and Bankura in 1922 and 1923 however was clearly part of a broader upsurge and had more to do with rumours of a crisis in authority than economic distress alone ...

Crowds of up to 5,000 Santals as well as low caste Bengali peasants looted fish-ponds in daylight, asserting what they felt was a natural right.51

Evaluating the Non- Cooperation Movement from 1920 to 1922 in Maldah, we may point out that the movement was a landmark in the nationalist politics of the district. The movement expanded the constituency of nationalist politics by incorporating the hitherto marginal social groups. The unrest among the santal sharecroppers, discontent among the rural police, no-tax campaign, boycott of law courts by the rural populace all were example of the popular politics, initiative and self mobilization at the grass roots level. The participation of a large number of students and youths was also a unique feature of the movement. They came not only from the elite class of the society but also from the middle class and the lower middle class. It was fairly clear that the national movement was no longer confined to a few people in the educated sections of society but had widened its social base, which gave its strength and a militant character.

The Non-Cooperation movement is, as our discussion shows, certainly a break with the past in the sense that it brought new actors on the political scene of Maldah. The movement reflected the existence of widespread discontent at the popular level. Until then the District Congress was dominated by landed interests. Therefore, the District Congress never encouraged agitation at the popular level against local zamindars precisely because of the implications of offending the landlords who had always been a significant force in the Maldah Congress. Albeit this, a process of self-mobilization around the name of Gandhi began among the santal sharecroppers in Barind during the Non-Cooperation movement. The santal sharecroppers of Barind did not precisely know who Gandhiji was or what were his ideas and principles. They only knew that a man named Gandhi was carrying on a struggle against the enemy of the common people- the British and the zamindars. To the santals of Barind, the name of Gandhi became a symbol of struggle and a source of inspiration. This trend had an element of popular messianism and demonstrated the impact of Gandhi on the minds of peasants and labourers who had a sort of marginalized existence. The name Gandhi began to capture the imagination of the masses. Indeed, the autonomous santal mobilization ushered in a new era by identifying a new constituency, which gradually became formidable culminating in the open revolt of the santals under the leadership of Jitu Santal in the year 1932.52

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Religious Nationalism versus Cultural Nationalism – A crisis of Bangladesh

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Bangladesh is a relatively new democratic state, compared to the other contemporary democratic states, born in 1971, through a violent struggle for liberation. Having achieved her much awaited freedom from Pakistan, Bangladesh started facing a new dilemma '“ which nationalism to accept '“ Bengali nationalism or religious nationalism? Bengali nationalism is purely a cultural nationalism whereas religious nationalism implies Islamic nationalism, when a group of people believe in the fact that a nation can be formed on the basis of Bengali language and culture, irrespective of religious, caste, sex, race or any other diversity, they are said to profess Bengali nationalism. On the other hand, when a group of people believe that the religion of Islam should be the basis of forming a state, irrespective of cultural, linguistic and any other considerations, they are believed to profess religious nationalism.

The dilemma between Bengali nationalism and religious nationalism existed even before the birth of Bangladesh as an independent nation. This dilemma was born in undivided Bengal. There, the religion of Islam could not act as a force to foster a sense of unity between the two communities '“ the Hindus and the Muslims. It could not even keep the Muslims united. Rather it kept the entire Bengali Muslim society divided, encouraging a section of the Muslim community to aspire for an identity, distinct from that of the local Bengali Hindus.1 In undivided Bengal, the Bengali Muslims failed to realize that a nation is not born of religious considerations alone, but a nation is a land comprising all its inhabitants regardless of its religious diversities.

When Bengal got partitioned and the eastern part of Bengal became a part of Pakistan, the dilemma between religious and Bengali nationalism continued, though in a different form. In the period between 1947'“1970, the conflict evolved from the linguistic differences between Urdu and Bengali. The ruling gentry of Pakistan was not friendly to Bengali culture and language and termed it '˜anti'“Islamic'.2 They banned the songs and poems of Rabindranath Tagore in the national broadcasting centres of Pakistan.3 In 1947 a key resolution at a national education summit in Karachi had adapted that '˜Urdu' would be the sole state language of Pakistan and the Government would ensure its exclusive use in the media and in the schools. But the Bengalees in East Pakistan started to protest and later it was transformed into a movement.

On 21 March 1948, the founder of Pakistan Mohammad Ali Jinnah declared in a civic reception in Dhaka, '˜Urdu and only Urdu will remain as the state language of Pakistan.'4 The students of Dhaka University immediately protested against this declaration in front of Jinnah. The then Pakistani Government forcibly tried to stop the Bengali people's demand for recognizing '˜Bangla' as one of the state languages of Pakistan.5 During the agitation, some protesters were killed, huge

numbers of people took to the streets to protest and it was the first movement that tried to uphold Bengali nationalism over and above religious nationalism.

Immediately after liberation in 1971, the founding father of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib-Ur-Rahman tried his best to uphold Bengali nationalism over religious nationalism. Amongst the measures he adapted, the significant one was that of declaring the state of Bangladesh a Secular one. In the Constitution, Mujib incorporated the term '˜Secularism', banning all forms of communalism, politicization of religion and did not patronize any religion as the state religion of Bangladesh.6 This move was indeed worthy of appreciation, but with the passage of time Mujib's concept of secularism gave rise to certain misgivings resulting in a. setback of his brand of secularism. First of all he failed to maintain a balance between his personal religiosity and national secularity that made his concept of '˜Secularism' indigestible to the ordinary masses of Bangladeshi people.7 In many of his public speeches he used the expressions '˜Inshallah', '˜Bismillah', etc., that disturbed his secular image on the one hand and Bengali nationalism on the other hand. Secondly, he banned a few radio and television programmes for being un-Islamic. He also banned horse-racing for the same reason.8

These measures along with a few others like his setting up of a Madrasah Education Board to look after the loopholes in the Madrasah system of education, his act of passing the Islamic Foundation Act for promoting the ideals of Islam throughout the nation contributed to subjugate Bengali nationalism and patronizing religious nationalism.9

However, one must take note of the fact that the ongoing trial of the war criminals of the 1971 liberation war, was started by Mujib-Ur-Rahman himself. Inspite of several fallacies in his concept of secularism itself, Mujib did not fail to realize that a true triumph of Bengali nationalism over religious nationalism could only take place if the war criminals of 1971 were adequately punished. The Government of independent Bangladesh promulgated in 1972 the '˜Bangladesh Collaborators' (Special Tribunal) order 1972'. Around 37,000 people who had collaborated with the invading Pakistani army were arrested under this law. Almost 12,000 among them who were specifically involved in punishable crimes under International Law including crimes against humanity like murder, rape, plunder, forcible conversion, crimes against peace, genocide were brought before the courts of trial.10

Mujib who is also known as Bangabandhu offered amnesty only to those against whom no specific complaints of crimes punishable under International Law were lodged.

But immediately after the assassination of Mujib, a reverse journey had started. The trial of the war criminals of 1971 was stopped through promulgation of a martial law order on 31 December, 1975. The Bangladesh '˜collaborators' (Special Tribunal) order 1972 was suspended and all criminals, punished and detained under this law were freed. Not only that, the process of social and political rehabilitation and re-instatement of the masterminds of war crimes against the nation was set in motion.11 Therefore, a digression from the spirit of the liberation war seems to have

started with the suspension of the trial process of the war criminals and the rehabilitation of the masterminds of the war crimes in the mainstream politics and society of Bangladesh.

After assuming power Zia-Ur-Rahman removed the term '˜Secularism' from the constitution of Bangladesh, as a result of which the pro-liberation and pro-secular spirit of the country got lost. Zia-Ur-Rahman left no stone unturned to get back the members and renowned leaders of Islamic political parties like Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh from Pakistan. At the time of the 1971 Liberation war, Jamaat had formed several killer armies like the Razakars, Al-Badr, AL-Shams to butcher the Bengali freedom fighters, commit rape, murder, plunder, arson and so on. Thus, when Zia-Ur-Rahman called them back to Bangladesh and facilitated their gradual rehabilitation in the country, the spirit of Bengali nationalism was defeated.12

The process went unhindered through the regime of Hussain Mohammad Ershad. It is important to note that the more Jamaat-e-Islami leaders and their Islamic allies got rehabilitated in the politics, society and economy of the country, the more Bengali nationalism was defeated by the Islamists.

The decade of the 1990 was that of democratization of Bangladesh. In 1991 Bangladesh Nationalist Party or BNP (a party founded by Zia-Ur-Rahman and headed by his widow Begum Khaleda Zia) assumed power through general election. Another political party Awami League (founded by Mujib-Ur-Rahman, later headed by his daughter Sheikh Hasina wajed) emerged as the main opposition party.13 From then onwards the two phases of Bengali nationalism and religious nationalism alternated with varying degrees of force, depending upon the political party which controlled the reins of power. It was usually found that when Awami League was in power, Bengali nationalism tended to flourish over religious nationalism, while when BNP assumed power -- religious nationalism prevailed over Bengali nationalism.

In the period when BNP-led Government ruled Bangladesh (1991"‘1996) a movement was initiated by the secular, liberal and progressive elements of Bangladesh as well as by Awami League, the main opposition party to hold trial of the war criminals of the liberation war. They formed a committee named '˜Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee' to punish Golam Azam, one of the main war criminals of 1971.14 Eventually, the Shahbagh Movement, gaining momentum today had already started in a rudimentary form and with a different name during the early part of the 1990s. The Committee was headed by Jahanara Imam, the mother of one of the martyrs of the 1971 liberation war. The Committee too felt that Bengali nationalism could best be preserved over religious nationalism by holding trial of and punishing the war criminals like Golam Azam, who were not only the enemies of the Bengali freedom fighters but of mankind in general.

However, the attempt of the '˜Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee' to take Golam Azam to task went in vain when the BNP-led Government brutally suppressed the activities of the Committee by attacking the freedom fighters, their relatives and friends whoever had participated in the

movement,15 and charged them with treason. At that point of time even the intellectuals sympathetic to Begam Zia became highly critical of the treatment meted out to the members of the Committee. The fact remained that BNP in league with the Islamic fundamentalist forces of the Bangladesh tried to uphold religious nationalism over and above Bengali nationalism, since men like Golam Azam were certainly instrumental in destroying the spirit of the liberation war of 1971 and by defending them, and it is alleged that the BNP Government actually intended to obstruct the spread of Bengali nationalism.

Today, Awami League, is in power in Bangladesh. The Shahbagh Movement, presently dominating the society and politics of Bangladesh has captured the attention of the intellectuals across the world. This movement can well be depicted as a battle between Bengali nationalism and religious nationalism. Through this movement all the liberal and pro-Awami forces of the society who demand the trial and punishment of the war criminals of 1971 uphold the spirit of Bengali nationalism and Bangladesh liberation struggle, while the Islamists consisting of mainly the Jamaat and its Islamic allies want the process of trial of the war criminals to be stalled to strengthen the BNP as the political mascot of religious nationalism.

The Islamic political parties mainly the Jamaat seeks to influence the country's majority Muslim population with the aim to supplant their Bengali identity with an Islamic one. But this time, during the Shahbagh movement their purpose looks more sinister as they have resorted to bigotry and communalism so that the Shahbagh Movement with a secular fabric can be branded as sacrilegious for trying to replace Bangladesh's Islamic culture with Hindu culture, encouraged by India.16

What actually triggered the Shahbagh Movement was the utter dissatisfaction of the Bengali intellectuals arising out of the verdict delivered by the International Crimes Tribunal regarding the imposition of '˜life-imprisonment' on Kader Mollah, the war criminal of 1971, who butchered innumerable people and beheaded a poet and indulged in rape and arson in 1971. The secular and liberal Bangladeshis were shocked to know that Kader Mollah was not given death sentence and expressed doubt about the impartiality of the International Crimes Tribunal.17 The Shahbagh Movement has challenged the very basis of Jamaat and its Islamic allies, thereby reducing the prospect of religious nationalism in Bangladesh.

The ruling Awami League has expressed its solidarity with the organizers of the Shahbagh movement, but the uniqueness' of the movement lies in the fact that the Shahbagh activists have refused to allow any political leader to participate in the movement.18

In this backdrop one should be mindful to the fact that Awami League also at times had failed to defend Bengali nationalism and succumbed to religious nationalism when it felt convenient to satisfy its aspiration for power. One such occasion happened in the year 1996 when election to the Jatiya Sangsad was due and BNP was in power. At that time Awami League was agitating against the ruling BNP Government for the demand that the general election should be conducted by a care-taker Government.. At that time, to adequately strengthen its agitation, Awami League

deliberately took the assistance of Jamaat and thereby weakened the spirit of Bengali nationalism.19

But now the question is '“ will the Shahbagh Movement ultimately lead to the triumph of Bengali nationalism over religious nationalism? It is true that the people who have spearheaded the movement are so intensely driven by the conviction that they refuse to fall prey to any kind of threat or allurement.20 The movement has placed the Awami League and its 14-party alliance at an advantageous position just on the eve of the election to the Jatiya Sangsad. But will Awami League be really able to protect Bengali nationalism against the whirlwind of religious nationalism? It is still unresolved because in 2006 on the eve of election to the Jatiya Sangsad, Awami League declared in its election manifesto that if it could capture power, it would revise the legal system of Bangladesh in line with Quran and Shariat.21

It is known that the Shahbagh Movement not only wants the institutions run by Jamaat to be shut down, but wants a complete ban on Jamaat. This measure cannot be easily taken by Awami League for some certain sensitive factors. Firstly, if Jamaat is officially banned, it will not really put an end to religion-based politics in Bangladesh. Neither will it freeze the process of proliferation of Islamic militancy in Bangladesh. In 1971, Mujib had also declared Jamaat and its allies pariah, forcing their members to flee Bangladesh and take shelter in Pakistan.22 In Pakistan, the members of these Islamic parties got ample opportunity to hatch conspiracy against the new-born nation and ultimately they returned to Bangladesh to execute their conspiracy. Therefore today also if Awami League somehow manages to ban the Jamaat, the latter will go underground and establish links with the Islamic terror groups worldwide. The Jamaat has spread its tentacles deep inside Bangladeshi politics, society and economy from where it is now very difficult to get them eliminated from the social roots. Moreover many of the top Awami League leaders have economic ties with Jamaat which they cannot really forsake for the cause of Bengali nationalism.23 Above all, the West Asian countries have threatened to send back nearly forty lakh Bangladeshi expatriated people employed there, if a ban against Jamaat is really imposed.24

Under the circumstances it is obvious that Awami League would remain non-committal on banning Jamaat by traversing path to Bengali nationalism. Thus, it is quite uncertain whether this time Bengali nationalism will truly be able to succeed over religious nationalism. In this regard, one should remember that the definition of Bengali nationalism is nowhere specifically stated. Furthermore Awami League, which claims to uphold the spirit of Bengali nationalism is ambivalent in so far as the exact meaning of Bengali nationalism is concerned. The vagueness of the concept '˜Bengali nationalism' and Awami League's failure to clearly define the concept has put the future prospect of Bengali nationalism in question. Nobody, starting from a political party to a civil society actor can prescribe a path, going by which Bengali nationalism can best be protected against religious nationalism.

Furthermore, the emergence of one more radical Islamic organization Hefazat-e-Islam (Protector of Islam) along with its thirteen point proposal of Islamizing the entire nation has re-inforced

religious nationalism against Bengali nationalism. The successful 6 April '˜march' has made the Hefazat-e-Islam aspirant for political influence. If its thirteen demands for Islamizing Bangladesh are met by the Government that will certainly mark the victory of religious nationalism over and above Bengali nationalism.25

Liberals view the foundation of the Hefazat as a '˜shrewd move' by the Jamaat and its ally BNP to stop the war crimes trial and block the ruling alliance's re-election. What is quite alarming is that '“ although Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina rejected the Hefazat's demand for the enactment of an anti-blasphemy law, maintaining that the existing laws were sufficient to punish anyone who attempted to insult Islam. She defended her Government's decision to arrest several bloggers on the suspicion of harming religious sentiments.26 The arrests are capable enough to prove the fact that the Sheikh Hasina Government is yielding to Islamist pressure. Given this situation, it is too early to predict the outcome of the current confrontation in Bangladesh '“ between the Islamist on the one hand and the secular forces on the other hand. Therefore, in this civil war the general public can be expected to put up a formidable resistance against religious nationalism and pave the path for the triumph of Bengali nationalism.

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Food and Diet: Creating Nationalist Identity

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Introduction

Studies on nationalism have shifted focus from the former emphasis on anti-colonial political struggle, for emancipation from political subordination, to the more nuanced struggle over cultural or intellectual spaces. The new wave of studies have shown that the political movement of nationalism has often derived new strength from anti-hegemonic or contesting practices in cultural forms like literature, performing arts, scientific deliberations or simply remembering or writing about past historical events1. This article aims to establish the utilisation of culinary art and cuisine as another mode to contest hegemonic aspects of colonial culture in Bengal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the process of creation of a cultural/nationalist identity. Bengal is an appropriate case study for studying the politics evolving around food during the period because of the public sphere brewing at this stage was integrally linked to domestic issues2 and due to the availability of substantial vernacular literature on subjects related to cooking, food, and nutrition.

The article is divided into three subsections dealing with discourses on food and diet in colonial Bengal. The first presents the British perception of the 'œideal' food habits for the colonizers and how this perception was linked to the colonial politics of the body. The second deals with the nineteenth century nationalist construct of ideal health and diet and the way these were related to the notions of masculinity and effeminacy. The third enunciates the space cooking occupied in the nouveau space for domesticity and the debate on vegetarianism and nonvegetarianism, which became a surrogate commentary on demonstrating the contrasting natures of the Western and Eastern cultures.

The Colonizers Food Discourse

The attitude of the British towards the India and its inhabitants were varied and often ambivalent. However, the belief in the uniqueness of the Indian climate and its maladies and the need for appraisal of the British medical knowledge in light of these circumstances were available in most medical texts. The question of diet arose for the British arriving to the country and whether they could acclimatize their body to the tropical climate, which was assumed sickness-ridden. In this context, often attention was drawn to the unhealthy diets followed by Europeans in India. In 1780s, Charles Curtis, a surgeon at the naval hospital of Madras expressed his belief that over consumption of meat was the cause for all the illness among Europeans. 'œThey cannot too soon ... accustom themselves to what are called the native dishes' , which he believed 'œconsist for the most part of boiled rice, and fruits, highly seasoned with hot aromatics, along with meat stews, and sauces, with but a small proportion of solid animal matter.3

Overall, such medical exhortations were lost on the British in Bengal who continued to consume large amount of all kinds of meat. 'œWe were very frequently told in England' chronicled Eliza Fay in 1780 'œthat the heat in Bengal destroyed the appetite.

I must own that I never yet saw any proof of that: on the contrary, I cannot help thinking that I never saw an equal quantity of victuals consumed. '¦ I will give you our bill of fare and the general prices of things. A soup, a roast fowl, curry and rice, a mutton pie, a fore-quarter of lamb, a rice pudding, tarts, very good cheese, fresh churned butter, fine bread, excellent Madeira (that is expensive, but eatables are very cheap).4

Such ostentatious eating habits were used as cultural markers for British masculinity and superiority.

Â The growth of effeminacy of the Indians, as contended by Thomas R. Metcalf, could be traced back to the eighteenth century theories of climate, which stressed on 'œheat and humidity' as the contributing factor 'œto subvert manliness, resolve and courage' of Indians5. According to the treatise of eighteenth century English historian Robert Orme, the diet of the 'œpeople of Indostan' worsened these shortcomings, as it was mostly dependent on rice an easily digestible food that is obtained with little effort, and thus 'œthe only proper one for such an effeminate race' 6. Therefore, the colonial discourse of the ostentatious, though unhealthy, dietary habit of the British was aimed at linking it to the masculinity of the Europeans as opposed to the effeminate Indians due to the latter"s vegetarian eating habit.

Nationalist Discourse of Bengali Diet

The Bengali intellectuals, according to John Rosselli, identified the self-perception of effeminacy as a middle-class phenomenon7. Food and dietary instructions created a large space for itself in medical magazines in vernacular like Chikitsa Sammilani, Swastha, and Bhishak Darpan in the late nineteenth century. These provided various reasons for the perceived effeminacy that ranged from climate, diet of rice, and the physical pursuit under the material security of the British8.

The debate on the potent relationship between physical prowess (bahubal) and race on the nationalist stage in the 1870s in the meetings of Hindu Mela, a social and cultural organization in the Calcutta in the late nineteenth century. Food and dietary practices became one of the key topics of debate. In 1866, a pamphlet written by Brahmo reformist Rajnarayan Basu, Prospects of a Society for the promotion of national feeling among the educated natives of Bengal, proposed a return to the indigenous and traditional custom and etiquette after cleansing of the Indians of the 'œnative' superstitions as an alternative to the ideology of Western modernity9. The Hindu Mela adopted the agenda proposed by Basu and its purpose became to exhort the comparing discourse of the colonizers between martial and non-martial race. In 1885, Jnanadanandini Debi wrote in Balak magazine that the health of Bengali youth was deteriorating due to the lack of proper physical exercise and enfeebling diet of mostly rice and dal.10 Rajnarayan Basu in his work Se

kal aar e kal, published in 1873, compared 'œthose days' with 'œthese days' in terms of health of Bengalis in nineteenth century, the lack of nutrition in Bengali diet, and consumption of adulterated food.11 Therefore, these treatises created a vibrant space for creation of a proper dietary practice and physical regime for the Bengalis.

'œScientific' explanations for the Bengali diet were also available to the mass by the end of nineteenth and early twentieth century that consciously tried to historicise the gastronomic trajectory of the nation. Consider for example, the following passage from the book titled Food, written by Chunilal Bose:

The health and physique of the Bengalis were not so poor a few generations ago. Time was when the people of this province were not unaccustomed to military life and service, for they formed regiments, which successfully fought against the disciplined army of the Mughal Emperors of Delhi.Â ...they showed their prowess, courage, endurance and the other manly qualities of a soldier in successfully counteracting the military operations of the French in the struggle for supremacy in South India.12

Bose"s study showed that Bengali diet was replete with carbohydrates however was strikingly deficient in proteins that helped in 'œmuscle forming elements' and vitamins 'œessential for growth and for the protection of the body from infectious diseases' .13 He pointed out that the reason for reduced virility, power, and endurance among Bengalis was mostly due to the lack of these substances in their diet. Bose, therefore suggests, that in order to make up for these deficiencies, Bengali diet has to include a larger quantity of 'œgreen leafy vegetables' 14 and 'œa more liberal allowance of protein-foods of animal origin [e.g., milk, fish, meat, and eggs] in the present-day diet of the people' .15 I

ntellectual and scientific reasoning for Bengali effeminacy was due to lack of proper diet and inadequate food habit. The bhadralok required to pep themselves up to reinstate their claim on a historically unsustainable 'œmartial tradition' . No way could have been better than to emulate the flesh eating ways of the West. But in the section, we will see that the middle class of Bengal shied away from their emulation and focused on what they perceived as the distinctive identity of Bengali cuisine.

Amish or Niramish: a Cultural Question

The emergence of cookbooks in the late nineteenth century became a source of discourse to the young educated newlywed women in culinary arts and housekeeping. Though, these cookbooks were a part of a greater discourse on women"s role as homemaker, their effects were not limited to demarcating gender roles. Often these books defined cuisines as Bengali/Indian and European, in order to position the cuisines as Eastern or Western and distinctively demarcate cuisines based on cultural boundaries.

The nationalistic discourse witnessed compelling arguments in favour of vegetarianism in India as opposed to the consumption of food that required taking of life. History of India supports the presence of such moral arguments in India were vegetarian food such as cereals, pulses, vegetables, oilseeds, milk, fruit, spices, and sweetening agents were available as long ago as 1000 BCE.Â As pointed out by K. T. Acharya, 'œperhaps nowhere else in the world except in India would it have been possible 3000 years ago to be a strict vegetarian' .16

Another cookbook, Amish o Niramish Ahar, written by Prajnasundari Debi in 1900 took great store for vegetarian food. The publisher to the book wrote distinctly in favour of a distinctly Oriental cuisine and differentiating it with the Western food in the preface. The publisher"s preface noted that the meat eating Western Aryans practice took a lot of their time in hunting, as it was the only means of collecting food, that they did not have enough time for leisure and progress.17 The publisher"s preface added an argument with a contemporary touch: 'œTill this day the Europeans have not learnt the magnificent art of combining a variety of vegetables (in a dish)' .18 The author of the book herself traced the divine origin of the vegetarian food as she pointed out in her introduction that the gods and the goddesses used to survive on a diet of fruits, vegetables, and milk products; however, the demons (ashura) devoured on meat and flesh that resulted in their feral and bestial nature. Bipradas Mukhopadhyay in the forward to the book Pak-PranaliÂ puts forth a similar idea of vegetarianism attaining a greater place in humanistic values: 'œwhen a race reaches its pinnacle [uccha shikhare] the urge to kill animals for food declines' .19 Therefore, the superiority of the race of the Hindus was established in these cookbooks by tracing the origin of vegetarianism to the ancient times and consequently the superiority and refinement of the vegetarians as opposed to the nonvegetarians.

Jyotirindranath Tagore expressed similar view in an article written for the Balak magazine in 1885 named 'œMangsho Ahar' .20 Tagore out rightly rejects the idea that if the Bengalis did not consume meat they will never be able to attain physical prowess and health as a superstition. He uses examples of Hindustanis who had fought and defeated the Europeans in battles. He on the other hand, stresses on the importance of physical exercise that would increase health and the physical prowess of the Bengalis.

The other side of the debate propelled with the idea that meat was essential for the growth of the physical and mental strength of the Bengalis. Due to lack of meat in Bengali diet, Bengali men were essentially weak in their moral character and physical strength. One of the strongest proponents of this view was Swami Vivekananda who believed that along with physical exercise Bengali diet has to be replenished with adequate amount of meat in order to gain physical strength and moral will.21 In another book named Prachya o Paschatya, Vivekananda points out that had Ashoka not given up meat eating to follow a religious dictum, he could have been a more successful king.22 Another proponent of nonvegetarianism was Shoshee Chunder Dutta, who wrote in his book, Bengaliana, that the present dilapidated conditions of the Bengalis were due to their lifestyle and food habit. He cautioned that dejecting a wholesome meal of nonvegetarian food was actually reducing the capability of Bengalis to compete with their European counterparts.23

Therefore, these leaders cared little about vegetarianism as the cultural/nationalist maker of the Indian cuisine. For them, meat eating was the only way to get robust health while vegetarianism was an emasculating habit that created numerous hurdles in the process of nation building. This debate went well into the twentieth century without being resolved, even though prominent intellectuals like Prafulla Chandra Ray, Rajshekhar Basu, and Ramendrasundar Trivedi participated in it.

Conclusion

Cooking and food has comprised of a crucial cultural code.24 Decipherability of gustatory code allows social scientists to view human society as a structure producing variation and meaning. In case of Bengal, the turn of the century created a greater space for the complex rhetorical struggle between colonialism and nationalism. It can be argued that the food culture of the Bengali bhadralok Â became a politically charged tool for contestation, both from the gastronomic and culinary viewpoint, i.e. the way the bhadralok ate their food and the way the bhadramahila cooked their dishes. In so far, cooking transcended their functionality and became cultural practices, with strong ideological-pedagogical content that continued to inhabit the discursive space of the nationalist thought through the late colonial period. The gastronomic excess of the British officials '‘ crucial in the assertion of Â British masculinity '‘ became an object of ridicule in the bhadralok culinary text. With the rise of the vegetarian-nonvegetarian debate, the food became a source of national building.Â However, Bengali cuisine as observed from the cookbooks of the grihinis delineated of recipes and cuisines adopted and accepted from the esoteric traditions. The cultural/nationalist identity through food and culinary practices developed through this curious mixture of emulation, contestation, adaptation, and resistance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Bengal.

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Perspective Section

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Political Economy of FDI in Multibrand Retails in India

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Introduction

Union Government has decided to allow 51 per cent investment in multibrand retailing in India by the Foreign Direct Investors. In single brand retailing, even 100 per cent ownership of foreign investors has already been allowed in this country. In multibrand, earlier the foreign investors were allowed to operate as junior partners in joint ventures with Indian enterprises. With recent amendment in the Act, the foreign firms such as Wal-Mart, Carrefour or TESCO will now be allowed to do business as they desire because they will now hold the major stakes in the companies. Initially, the foreign investors would be permitted to operate only in big towns (population more than 10 lakhs). According to Census 2011, there are 53 such towns in India. The foreign multibrand retailers can now open their outlet in any of such towns. There are some stringent conditions on the volume of investment and the share of back end investment in the total investment of the foreign firms. It has also been pointed out that the firms shall have to source at least 30 per cent of their inputs from the local small and medium enterprises of India. In this paper we shall discuss the possible consequences of such a decision taken by the Government of India. At the very outset, we should point out that Indian multibrand retailers such as Reliance Fresh or Spencers are unlikely to feel threatened by the entry of the big players from abroad in the retail market of India. Such companies, according to the balance sheet of these companies as found in the CMIE (Prowes) data base, are incurring loses persistently for last 5 years. They are unlikely to recover from this crisis in future unless they address the gaps in the value chains which they cannot because this needs huge initial investment which they are unlikely to mobilise out of their own. Since India,s organised retail cannot incur such huge investment (mostly for back end infrastructure) they would welcome FDI in retail in expectation that they might join hands with the foreign investors as weak partner of these giant companies. The most likely future scenario is that they will sell their stakes and get out of the retail business at a price which the giant foreign firms are likely to offer.

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Retail Business and Jobs in India

Which retail would the foreign multibrand target? If global evidences be any guide they are likely to enter in every segment of retail including grocery. In fact, grocery items constitute the major share in global business by the giant retailers. Thus the share of grocery in Carrefour,s total business is as high as 74.4 per cent. In TESCO, the comparable share is 74.6. For Wal Mart the share of grocery in total business is low but even then the total share is not less than 43.7 per cent at the total global business of Wal Mart. The business that they organise is based on the scale of

operation. These are big firms operating on very big scale with efficient value chains spread over the entire globe. .They can therefore buy at a lower cost so much so that the small retailers can never compete with them. No wonder that the unorganised retail smells danger in opening up of retail market in India to the big giants. The ground reality is that in India, according to the 64th Round data of the NSSO, the estimated number of retail outlets in unorganised sector is 18540000 and the estimated number of persons earning their livelihood from such retail business is as high as 929 lakhs. In fact, unorganised retail accounts for 97 per cent of total retail business in India. If we consider the number of retail outlets by size, we should note that there are 130 lakh shops with average size of the shops as 217 sq ft. such small retail outlets (OAE and NDE) account for livelihood of 4.4 crores of workforce in India. Typically such firms operate on small scale. The owner of the enterprise along with the family members or in some cases (NDE) hires 2-3 employees per shop. The average number of employment in such retail outlets is 338 per thousand shops. As a giant operator such as Wal Mart enters in a locality they will target the retail business in that locality which is likely to affect these enterprises adversely to the extent the households in the locality opt for such big outlets for provisions including grocery items. The basic economic reason driving the consumer towards these big outlets would be the price which is likely to be lower, at least initially because the big retailers would pass over a part of the benefit from economy of scale to the retail buyers.

The extent of job loss in the retail sector, perse cannot be estimated in precise terms because a part of the loss of business of the small retailers would be compensated by the growing market opportunities in some segments which are coming up because of the expansion of the economic activities in the society. Analytically however one can start with a static framework that is a framework in which the size of the business is given. Consider now a situation where large scale operators are entering in business at the cost of the business of the small retailers in that locality. How much jobs will be created by a big operator and how much jobs will be loosed in OAEs and NDEs. Typically, one job in a company like Wal Mart, would be created at the cost of 17 jobs in small retail outlets. The net addition to job due to FDI in retail would therefore be disproportionately lower than what a new outlet in small retail can offer. This is the major point for consideration while the issue of FDI in retail comes for discussion in public forum.,

It is true that new jobs would definitely be created in other sectors for absorbing a part of the reserved army of unemployed. It is also true that all the small retails would not be affected by the business of organised retail in small pockets of big cities. One cannot also deny the fact that in every phase of economic progress the society moves through a process of structural adjustment which might be painful for a section of the citizen but which is necessary for progress of the civilization. One cannot however deny the fact that the issues are to be contectualised and the policy makers are to take care of the social cost involving the process of adjustment. The reality is that in India in the era of neo-liberal economic policies the output elasticity of employment is declining and right to have a decent job is persistently been denied for over 92 per cent of 460 million strong workforce in India. With the advent of organised retail the attack on the labour force would become more severe. Decent job in the organised sector would hardly be created by these

big operators. The value change that they will be creating in this country would be manned by the cheap unorganised labour. In this context one may note that according to NSSO 66th Round data (Employment and Unemployment Situation in India), the percentage of unorganised worker in the organised sector itself is now as high as 57.8. In 1999-2000 the comparable percentage was 37.8. In organised retail, such as Wal Mart and Carrefour the jobs that would be created would basically be the jobs of unorganised workers in the organised sector, as the general trend of employment suggests. The reality is that in India, out of 460 million persons in the workforce, the estimated number of regular salaried workers is only 75.1 million; the casual and the self employed workers constitute a workforce the size of which is as high as 384 million. Typically, they are low paid employees and they work under stringent conditions of employment where the working hours could be as high as 12 hours a day. This workforce always remain threatened for possible job loss which is not at all rare given the fact that the usual status unemployment rate is as high as 21 per thousand and the number of persons usually remain unemployed among the educated (higher secondary plus) is 49 per one thousand, according to the latest NSSO data. The giant retailers would consider this scenario as the opportunity for doing business under a regime of super exploitation and the Union Government has paved the way for such an opportunity of business in India by welcoming FDI in retails.

Peasants and the Consumers

One argument in favour of FDI in retail is that the foreign investors would develop efficient supply chains even for the agricultural products and the peasants would be immensely benefitted. The reality is that the peasants do not get remunerative price because the supply chain is inefficient and intermediaries reap the benefit of excess supply situation when the seasonal products arrive in the market. The argument in favour of developing back end infrastructure and an efficient marketing network for the agricultural products is therefore well taken. One may however argue that the FDI in retail might not meet this problem to the benefit of the peasants. They would definitely develop efficient supply chains with proper back end infrastructure. But that would be done to the extent it would be necessary for meeting the market demand in small segments of big towns. The peasantry at large could never come under the umbrella of supply chain to be developed by the big foreign retailers. Even in the areas in which the supply chains will be developed by these big retailers, the extent of benefit that would go to the peasantry covered by the supply chain of the concerned big retailers might be poor. One may refer to the global experience of the business of the peasantry with these big retailers. The reality is that the more of a commodity large retailers purchase in bulk, the lower the price growers of agricultural commodities obtain. Studies by FAO, Oxfam, etc attest to this. For instance, a decade ago coffee growers earned $10 billion from a global market of over $30 billion but now they receive less than $6 billion from a global market $60 billion. The cocoa farmers of Ghana now receive only 3.9% of the price of a typical milk chocolate bar but the retail margin hovers around 34.1%. A banana farmer in South America gets 5 per cent of the retail price of the banana while 34 per cent accrues to distribution and retail. In USA where the retail market is almost completely organised, the share of the direct producer of the agricultural product has gradually been declined over time. In 1952, the share of the direct producer in the retail chain

of agricultural products in USA had been 51 per cent of the retail price; it has now (2005) come down to 18 per cent. From the macro economic point of view, one may argue that the organised retail could hardly address the problem of remunerative price in agriculture even in the developed countries. This is evidenced by the fact that even with fully organised retail business with agricultural products in the USA the government has to provide subsidy worth of a very high amount to the producers of agricultural commodities in that country. The USA is no exception. The story remains the same for the OECD countries as a whole and OECDs as we know are role models for organised retail business in India.

It is also argued that the consumers get the major benefit of the organised retail because; with efficient supply chains the cost of procurement goes down and therefore the retail price is reduced. In a competitive market this would definitely be the consequence of replacing unorganized retail with organised one. However, one may point out that there exists a possibility that competition will be replaced with monopoly or oligopoly and the monopoly price or the price under oligopoly might remain higher than what the competitive price had been. Consequently, the consumers, instead of getting the benefit of efficient retail might be placed in a situation where the effective price is in fact higher than what it had been under a competitive market with large number of players in unorganised retail where there is â€˜free entry, and â€˜free exit, in the true sense of the term.

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Commentary Section

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Jockeying for Power: A Scrap Book on Harold Pinter.'s .'The Caretaker.'

Rima Mukherjee

The scrapbook deals with Harold Pinter.'s play The Caretaker which depicts vividly man.'s existential fear in a post-war generation, not in an abstraction but as something real, ordinary and everyday occurrence. It would analyze the play in order to bring forth the domestic nature of power and the shifting alliance men form as part of their survival tactic. Pinter.'s The Caretaker is a domestic play about the unyielding strength of fraternal ties between two men, Mick and Aston, when confronted by an intruder, Davies. The play explores the pipe dreams and protective illusions of these three characters, by which they sustain themselves from one day to the next, and also the way they use language as a weapon of domination, evasion and tactical negotiation. It is highly interesting to note the way in which Pinter in The Caretaker fuses the real and the symbolic, using the idea of a room as a temporary sanctuary from the outside world, and various other apparently innocuous props that on examination acquire symbolic significance. Pinter.'s The Caretaker has been staged and performed several times in many places throughout the world, starting from the 1960s to the modern times. All of these stage productions have designed and published innovative posters for the promotion of the play. The scrapbook attempts to make meaning out of the otherwise innocuous looking posters, each of which has some deep significant meaning. Next focusing on The Caretaker, the scrapbook would attempt to bring out the meaning behind some of the strongest instruments in Pinter.'s armory as a craftsman- specifically his use of silence, pauses and the gestures and movements of his characters. Often in modern drama, hidden behind pauses and silences are numerous unspoken words. The scrapbook makes an attempt to read the minds of the characters when they are silent and humbly tries to explicate the possibility of what they might be thinking when they are silent. On close examination these instruments (in form of pauses and silences) would prove to be major agencies of power display. The ritualistic and foucauldian transfer of power in Pinter.'s dramatic world prevents any form of human connection between two characters, leaving them isolated from one another just like twentieth century urban men.

Contents

2009, Siamak Pourjabar (The Caretaker). The bucket, with which we come across again and again in The Caretaker is almost synonymous with the character Davies. The bucket like Davies has a temporary period of stay in the room. Just at the point when the Davies-Aston relationship starts collapsing, the roof is tarred and the bucket is removed. This in turn anticipates the removal of Davies from the room. 1968, Hubert Hilscher (The Caretaker). The poster is in form of an hour-glass and Davies is shown to be sitting in the lower section of the hour-glass. If we take the lower section as a room, then Davies is to be under constant pressure as long as he is inside the room-the pressure of the sand falling directly on him (not shown but implied in the poster). However, this position too, is temporary. The hour-glass would inevitably turn and he would be cast out of the room.

The poster of London revival part 2 production. This poster clearly depicts Davies.' maneuvering nature. On one hand, he seems to be joining his hands and begging for sympathy, while on the other hand he is peeping through the gaps of the same hands in order to record the reaction of the person from whom he is trying to gain sympathy. It clearly indicates that Davies is highly skillful in adopting a strategic pose for his own benefit. The Roundabout Theatre Company's production. This poster depicts Davies sleeping on his bed along with the other useless stuffs that are scattered throughout the room in The Caretaker. This poster seems to establish the fact that Davies is also a part of this junk that Aston keeps bringing into his room. Davies is as useless and unconnected as any of the equipments that Aston tries to mend throughout the play- for example, the toaster with the faulty plug.

Los Angeles Theatre Center, Los Angeles, July 1988. The Buddha is one of the main props used by Pinter in his play The Caretaker. The Buddha stands for enlightenment, peace and compassion. In the play it was almost symbolic of the character of Aston. The poster depicts a crack in the statue of The Buddha, which recalls the smashing of the statue by Mick. A crack in The Buddha symbolizes a crack in the belief of Aston on the idealities of peace and compassion. Unable to connect with Davies and betrayed by him, he would no longer try to help others in any situation. The San Francisco Actor's Workshop, San Francisco, November 1964. This poster is in form of a negative of a photograph. The poster depicts the sordid reality of the lives of these three characters. The poster in form of a .'negative.' has a negative implication. It shows the colorlessness of the lives of these three people confined in a room, each of them existing in a colorful dream world, only to delude themselves.

Teatro San Babila, Milan, January 1967. This poster of the Milan production of The Caretaker is a kind of visual trick. On the surface it seems to be the unkempt face of the tramp Davies, with a cap on his head and a long beard. However, if viewed carefully, it would seem to be the rejected Davies finally walking out of the Aston- Mick family with down-cast eyes. Teatro Central, Rome, October 1970. This poster of The Caretaker depicts the night sky with the moon, clouds and the stars; a caged pigeon and a burning coal. The night sky here stands for Davies, who is a tramp, without a home and an identity. The caged pigeon stands for Aston, who metaphorically speaking is almost.'caged in his room.', due to societal pressures. The societal pressures had even subjugated

him to a period of confinement in the mental hospital. The burning coal stands for Mick, who has a lot of energy and vitality in him, but is burning and injured from inside due to the realization of his inability to change anything for the better.

Landestheater, Hanover, November 1960. This poster of The Caretaker depicts a statue holding a mask in front of its face, almost ready to wear it. The statue here is symbolic of each of the characters who metaphorically speaking, wears a mask over his face in order to hide his true nature. Davies wears a mask of friendship in order to betray Aston, whereas Mick wears the same mask in order to betray Davies. RyhmÃ¤teatteri, Helsinki, Finland, 1993. The pair of shoes belonging to Davies is again very significant for the play as a symbolic prop. The dilapidated pair of shoes is almost symbolic of Davies.' dilapidated, almost equally worn-out condition. The pair of shoes serves to be his excuse for existing in a world of delusion.

Few Unspoken Words

Berkshire Theatre Festival.'s Unicorn Theatre production of The Caretaker.

Mick is alone in the room, sitting on the bed. He wears a leather jacket. SILENCE. He slowly looks about the room looking at each object in turn. He looks up at the ceiling, and stares at the bucket. Ceasing, he sits quite still, expressionless, looking out front. SILENCE. A door bangs. Muffled voices are heard. Mick turns his head. He stands, moves silently to the door, goes out, and closes the door quietly. SILENCE. Mick in this scene of The Caretaker is sitting on a bed in the room, in complete silence. But in his mind he might be saying the following words: ...God! What has this man done to my dreams! Why does he keep bringing in all this junk into the house? Even the damn ceiling is leaking and he hangs a bucket to collect the water! Such absurd ideas can come from his head alone...I wonder when he.'ll recover from that shock. There! He comes. I think there is someone with him. I see he has managed to get hold of another scapegoat. It is better I get out of here before he starts screaming at me for my uninformed inspection, in front of a stranger. . Mick depends on Aston for the fulfillment of his personal dreams. He also demands from him some amount of respect and wants him to recover from his experience in the mental hospital. This would in turn restore Mick.'s peace of mind.

New York, 1961 production of The Caretaker.

Aston: ...Take a seat.

Davies: ...Yes, but what I got to do first, you see, what I got to do, I got to loosen myself up, you see what I mean?..

.
Davies exclaims loudly, punches downward with closed fist, turns his back to Aston and stares at the wall. PAUSE. Aston lights a cigarette.

After the strong physical action, Davies might be telling the following words to himself during the pause: ...Nothing of what I am saying is going into this man.'s head! Is he listening at all? Why does he keep insisting on my taking a seat! What does he think? Just because he has saved me, he can treat me like a wimp! I may look old but I still have enough strength. If I get hold of that fellow once again...I will.... ,/p>

Davies might have been truly and utterly defeated in the battle that he had with the fellow in the cafÃ©, but he refuses to accept the reality that he is after all a physically weak man.

Liverpool everyman production of The Caretaker. Aston: ...Yes, I saw him have a go at you. . Davies: .....I keep myself up. That.'s why I left my wife. Fortnight after I married, no, not so much as that, no more than a week, I took the lid off a saucepan, you know what in it? A pile of her underclothing, unwashed. The pan for vegetables. The Vegetable pan. That.'s when I left her and haven.'t seen her since. I.'ve eaten my dinner off the best of plates...PAUSE.

Davies saying to himself: ...What did he mean by saying the fellow at the cafÃ© had a .'go at me.'? Does he think my picking up of a bucket of rubbish is no big deal! I must show him that I too have a standard. I.'ve told him that I.'ve had dinner with the best. Maybe now he.'ll stop treating me with contempt.. Davies: ...I know, that silly wife of mine, left me, never to come back again. But why not reverse the story. After all, she is nowhere nearby to clarify the truth. Who is she to leave me? It was I who left her. This would sound manlier. But is this fellow not believing me?.

London 1960 production of The Caretaker. Mick: ...I was just doing some spring cleaning. (He gets down). There used to be a wall plug for this Electrolux. But it doesn.'t work. I had to fit it in the light socket. How do you think the place is

looking? I gave it a good going over. PAUSE. We take it in turns, once a fortnight, my brother and me, to give the place a thorough going over...I thought I better get on with it, as it.'s my turn. .

In this scene Mick enjoys torturing Davies with the Electrolux and during the pause might be saying the following words to him self: ...I know he was damn scared. Now he.'ll realize that his intrusion into our family and house was his greatest mistake. You are utterly mistaken Davies if you think I am another Aston. You are another piece of junk in this room and I.'ve decided to clean you out of this place, along with all traces of dirt. Till now you had enough fooling around with my generous brother. Now, it.'s my turn to show you the gates.. Berkshire Theatre Festival.'s Unicorn Theatre production of The Caretaker. Aston: .....he said, we.'re going to do something to your brain...You can go out, he said, and live like the others...So I did get out. I got out of the place...but I couldn.'t walk very well...I couldn.'t think at all...I couldn.'t...get...my thoughts...together...but I don.'t talk to people now... I don.'t talk to anyone.. The three dots used throughout this speech is also a kind of Pinteresque pause. On one hand it explains the difficulty Aston faces in putting his thoughts together, and on the other hand the same pauses are a kind of witness to the brutality, to which a human being is subjected in order to make him conform to the

orders of the society. The pauses here establish psychiatry as a societal method of domination using which all kinds of artistic imagination and inspirations are curbed, in order to make the carefree artist conform to the societal norms.

Liverpool Everyman production of The Caretaker.

Davies: ...Couple of weeks ago...he sat there, he give me a long chat...He was talking to himself! That.'s all he worries about. I mean, you come up to me, you ask my advice, he wouldn.'t never do a thing like that...You can.'t live in the same room with someone who...who don.'t have any conversation with you. PAUSE. I just can.'t get the hang of him. PAUSE. You and me, we could get this place going..

Mick: ...Yes, you.'re quite right. Look what I could do with this place. . PAUSE.

In this scene we see Davies conspiring against Aston and attempting to establish friendship with Mick. Mick is however clever enough to understand Davies.' intentions and sees to it that Davies gets caught up in his own trap. Davies might be thinking the following words during the pause: ...I am sure Mick is as fed up of Aston as I am. After all, Mick has to agree that he is a mental patient. From their attitude towards each other I can well guess, none of them is too fond of the other. So, why not flatter Mick and bring him to my side. It is he who is the owner of the house. If I form an ally with Mick against Aston, my position in the house will be secured.. Mick on the other hand is thinking: ...Good. You are running into your own trap Davies. It is .'you.' who will bring about your end. Now let me conjure up a dream for you.. On one hand Davies back-stabs Aston, while on the other Mick back-stabs Davies in the same fashion.

A book-cover depicting Mick ready to smash the statue of The Buddha.,/p>

Mick: ...THAT.'S WHAT I WANT! (He hurls The Buddha against the gas stove. It breaks.) (Passionately) Anyone would think this house was all I got to worry about. I got plenty of other things I can worry about...I.'ve got my own business to build up, haven.'t I?... I.'m not worried about this house...My brother can worry about it. He can do it up, he can decorate it, he can do what he likes with it...He.'s got his own ideas. Let him have them. I.'m going to chuck it in.. PAUSE. This scene exposes the fact that no matter how strong and energetic Mick might seem from the exterior, in actuality he is a weak and defeated character- even weaker than people like Aston and Davies, who at least make an attempt to fight against the oddities of life. His manner of torturing Davies is also a kind of self-torture. His repetitive questions which he uses as a torture probe are in actuality, questions to himself. Mick is now a defeated man: ...I know I can never change anything in this house, not even my brother. This house was my only dream. What else have I got? But I know Aston will never recover. He keeps on getting hurt again and again. I have to leave the house to him. I have to give him Time. I can.'t pressurize him, he is my brother. At least I could save him from this scoundrel..

First New York performance at the Lyceum Theatre, 1960.

Davies: ...What about me?. SILENCE. Mick does not look at him. A door bangs. SILENCE. They do not move. Aston comes in. He closes the door, moves into the room and faces Mick. They look at each other. Both are smiling, faintly.

This is the scene in which Davies realizes that he has brought about his own misery. During the first silence Davies thinks: ...O god! What have I done! Was Mick then playing mind games with me? I had betrayed Aston only because of Mick assurance. Now, where will I go? Will these people ever give me a second chance?. During the second silence Mick thinks: ...Silly Davies! You ask .'what about me?.' There is nothing about you Davies; it.'s only about us- Mick and Aston. No matter how my brother is, I.'ll always be there to protect him. How could you ever imagine that I would throw out my brother because of you- a tramp? But it.'s good that you did imagine.. The faint smile is an acknowledgement of the unspoken bond of love between the two brothers.,/p>

Berkshire Theatre Festival.'s Unicorn Theatre production of The Caretaker. Aston turns back to the window. Davies: ...What am I going to do? PAUSE. What shall I do? PAUSE. Where am I going to go? PAUSE...(Aston remains still, his back to him, at the window) Listen...if I...if I was to...get my papers...LONG SILENCE.

This scene depicts the final rejection of Davies. It is important to note that in this final scene, Aston shows absolutely no traces of mercy. Instead he decides to punish Davies for his betrayal. The pauses in Davies.' language depict his despair and strong eagerness for attaining Aston.'s forgiveness. Davies might be thinking: ...I have destroyed myself! I am my worst enemy! Why did I ever trust Mick? Can I ever convince Aston again? Why is he not speaking? Is he throwing me out? How can I make him understand, that I have no where to go.... Aston might be thinking: ...I can now see through you Davies. You are again changing your color. I cannot trust you again. I know if I trust you again, I.'ll again get hurt. You deserve to be punished Davies. You deserve the punishment, just like me. You deserve it for your act of betrayal and I, for my act of trust. Both were mistakes. You.'ll be alone Davies just like me for the rest of your life..

Confessions of A Modern Man
...I have killed my conscience long ago,
Insecurity and distrust swallows me
My eyes are clouded by the foggy nights,
Nothing luminous can I hope to see
I speak to myself, not even to u
And love myself the most, I bet I do
I start my day to race with time,
And stare paralyzed at life.'s pantomime

I hide my thoughts and zip my mouth,
And cover my face in mask,
I color my language with choicest words,
To make .'betrayal.' an easy task
I have tied my hands with affluence,
I have bargained my soul for power,
But couldn.'t renounce my faith in you,
Cause I still fear the death hour. 1

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Review Section

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Interrogating Everyday Politics

Pratip Chattopadhyay

Partha Chatterjee, Lineages of Political Society: Studies in Postcolonial Democracy, Permanent Black, Ranikhet, 2011, 278 pages, Rs. 750/-, ISBN " 81-7824-317-2

It was in 2004 that the concept of "political society' entered in the theoretical baggage for analyzing postcolonial democracies through the work of Partha Chatterjee - Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World. In response to the academic excitement created by the concept, the present volume under review tries to understand the new practices of post colonial democracy through empirical evidence without offering any alternative model of future political order. The central puzzle that Partha Chatterjee tries to highlight through this book is how the experience of post colonial democracy questions the normative status of liberal democratic theory as it exists today. The book is divided into three sections " genealogies, popular reason and democracy.

The first section begins with "Lineages of Political Society' that brings to the fore how the mythical space of normative theory is a negatively designated historical past that must be overcome for modern politics to become possible and normative political theory as practiced in the West managed to fortify itself against the turmoil of real world of politics and assert the continued validity, of its norms as pronounced at its moment of creation by establishing two senses of the norm following Europe's encounters with its colonial territories" one, the right and good " the normative, the other as empirically existent average capable of improvement and Chatterjee finds the space of politics becoming effectively split up between a narrow domain of civil society where citizens relates to the state through the mutual recognition of legally enforceable rights and a wider domain of political society where governmental agencies deals not with citizens but with the heterogeneous group of populations to deliver specific benefits or services through a process of political negotiation while the subject of violence brings into view the dark underside of political society as in most local formations of political society (Chatterjee cites experience of Shiv Sena of Mumbai and squatter settlements of Calcutta) as a certain normal level of violence tends to be established to elicit calculative desired response from the government and the public, thereby making it a masculine space and such different experience of postcolonial regimes crops up as it adopt the same norm-deviation and norm-exception paradigms in governing their own populations.

Tracing the genealogy of European expansion into colonies based on cultural misrecognition particularly in South Asia and specifically in India since the Vasco da Gama days, the author in the chapter "Five Hundred Years of Fear and Love', identifies the goodwill of the colonized lying in developing an art of government in tune with Foucault's notion of "pastoral power' where the populations became the ultimate end of the government as exemplified by the apparent need of the

English rulers of India from the late eighteenth century to be loved by their alien Indian subjects to create a "spurious hegemony'(as discussed by Ranajit Guha in his Dominance Without Hegemony :History and Power in Colonial India [1997]) inducing among the, once-colonizers even today an insatiable need to love Europe which was sown even during the nationalist struggles when the middle class in India rejected the sovereignty that the British claimed over India but did not question the superiority of Europe in cultivating the arts of modernity with some marginal section of Indian society being incapable of loving the concept of Europe as reflected in some tribal and peasant rebellion and such a scenario continued in the nation-building project of once-colonized countries creating a pathetic parody of the chauvinism of the great powers designed to make the postcolonial elites feel good about themselves but one whose price will be borne by the poor and powerless but Chatterjee's understanding of the colonial encounter in the last two centuries leads him to believe that the concept of the West so lovingly nourished is in deep crisis in the West itself (the idea of participatory democracy eroded by the instrumentalist doctrine that sees political choice only about how much benefit can be reached to how many people at what cost and the social consensus about national identity eroded by immigrations) and thus in this critical age of modernity the marginal(postcolonial democracies) must use the opportunity to invent new forms of modern social, economic and political order however imperfect they may appear in the beginning with a sense of maturity and self-assurance of, being different from the West.

In next chapter on "The Rule of Subjects', Chatterjee introduces a distinction, in postcolonial settings, between "dharma'(broad frame of righteous action) and "niti'(policy to further one's interest and expand sphere of influence) drawing heavily on eighteenth century niti literature of South India but following Anandachandra Mitra's text, on Byabahar Darshan(1876) points out that due to the tide of English education and the ideas of rights of subjects the niti literature were mostly ignored and forgotten in the nineteenth century only to get reemerged in, the form of rajniti(basis of prajasakti) as against byabahar darshan or science of politics(basis of rajsakti) modeled on the German debates of 1920s centering on constituted and constituent powers resulting in new types of politics in prajatantra(the name given to republics in South Asia) exemplified in the ways victims of Emergency in Delhi see it not as an oppression but as an opportunity to bargain diluting the distinction between claims and benefits in an era of deepening of governmentality in India where ...the new crop of leaders that have emerged in Indian democracy in the last three decades or so are skilled in the art of niti. It is futile to expect them to match up to the high ideals of dharma157;. (p. 71)

In the next two chapters tracing the genealogy of the idea of the space of political society, the author falls back on Rabindranath Tagore. The first is titled "Two Poets and Death' that revolves round the theme of disjuncture between modernity's ethical values and democracy's pressure for a political space that got a fillip in the arguments between Rabindranath and Nabinchandra Sen over the necessity of a condolence meeting to mourn Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's demise where the former stood for the "public' space based on rational discussion(as in condolence of "their'/European kind ala civil society model) while the latter stood for an innovative/Eastern/ "our' way of commemorating through "public' gatherings and festivals ala "political society' model of

post-colonial democracies and Chatterjee refers to the way insurgent Nandigram has settled back into the same governmental regime now dominated by another political party to show that political society fails to radicalize/rationalize democracy and succeeds in creating a "over-reaching' state in post-colonial democracies ...bearing the instruments of coercion as well as looking after the population157;.(p. 93) The second piece titled "Tagore's Non-Nation' draws heavily from Tagore's writings to stress his faith in the community ...as a political form alternative to that of the nation157;(p. 118) and his plead for sociocracy or rule of society as against the rule of the modern state showing the difference between Tagore's conception of swadesh with Gandhi's idea of swaraj as the latter got infected by the deceit and cunning of modern organized politics by setting a deadline to achieve its goal(Quit India movement based on "Do or Die' call) which its promoter(Gandhi) seemed to have overcome through the power of love and truth and thus Chatterjee notes that Tagore ... was largely uninterested in the intricacies of modern technologies of power...it remains an attractive moral counterpoint for the intellectual critique of modernity157;(p. 126)

Through the chapter on "The People in Utopian and Real Time' the author establishes that prioritisation made by Benedict Anderson of the "unbound serialities' of nationalism over the "bound serialities' of ethnicity/community is flawed as the former idea is based on an universal conception of politics in a continuous homogenous time frame but in practice, believes Chatterjee, ...real space of modern life exists in heterogenous time : space here is unevenly dense157;(p. 135) in a site of political society where popular reason or populism (Ernesto Laclau in On Populist Reason[2005] distinguishes between differential(democratic) demands and equivalent(popular) demands and Pierre Rosanvallon in Counter-democracy: Politics in an Age of Distrust[2008] says that populism takes democratic function of public vigilance to the extreme) gains ground and popular resistances becomes ...not a concept of revolutionary politics...it is a response to new technologies of government157;(p. 148) subliming into profitable negotiations with the government as against the ethical sanity of the civil society. Trying to find the effect of popular reason in the domain of popular culture which is shaped by the operation of capital in various forms of cultural community, the chapter on "The Sacred Circulation of National Images' highlights the differences between depiction of history in school textbooks before nationalism(without any graphic illustrations) and after nationalist transformations(photographs, coloured ones) to create ...proximity and indexical familiarity157;(p.163) in 1990s ...rather than abstract remoteness and sacred iconicity157; prevailing in early 1950s and 1960s) to show how artistic photography finds place in history textbooks parallel with sacrosanct old images as ...Indians, like many other people, are still prepared to fight over maps157;(p.164). The next piece on "The Critique of Popular Culture' begins by recording Stuart Hall's plea ...to return the project of cultural studies from the clean air of meaning and textuality and theory to the something nasty down below157; (quoted in p. 165) by which Chatterjee understood that ...cultural studies should not avoid making moral, aesthetic or political judgments about the world of culture that it claimed to study157; (p. 166) associating himself with Gramsci's ...philosophy of praxis157; as having become ...a criticism of "common sense', basing itself initially, however, on common sense157;(p. 171) and then drawing heavily on Indian Cinema(citing mostly Chidananda Das Gupta's work The

Painted Face: Studies in India's Popular Cinema[1991]), popular practices of photography(citing mostly Christopher Pinney's work Camera Indica : The Social Life of Indian Photographs[1997] and Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India[2004]) and the art in popular culture through as reflected in the Durga Puja celebrations in Kolkata(mainly theme based pujas and different model of idol creation) concludes that cultural studies must ...be both more self-consciously critical and responsible in their engagement with the changing cultures of the people157;(p. 186).

The next set of chapters interrogates ...the project of bourgeoisie hegemony in postcolonial democracy157; starting with "Community and Capital' that deals with the political community having largest approval, i.e. the nation in mass democracies of non-Western societies in which the concept of social capital ...ground the social institutions of a modern capitalist economy in community157;(p.201) thereby introducing a strategic politics in the relationship between community and the new institutions of the state where autonomy and representation are being claimed on behalf not only of individuals but of communities with a democratising spirit and ...the principal tasks of political theory today157;, believes Chatterjee, is ...to provide a conceptual map of the emerging practices of the new political societies of the East157;(p. 208). Then comes "Democracy and Economic Transformation' beginning with the present nature peasant society as against the days of subaltern studies in 1980s as governmental agencies (whether state or non-state) have become internal aspects of peasant community and with the rapid growth of cities and industrial regions, the possibility of peasants making a shift to urban areas is often a voluntary choice shaped by perception of new opportunities and desires and thus in search for a new conceptual framework to understand these changes, the author drawing upon Kalyan Sanyal's work Rethinking Capitalist Development: Primitive Accumulation, Governmentality and , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , Post-Colonial Capitalism(Routledge, 2007) shows that the social changes brought about by capitalist growth in postcolonial democracies cannot be understood as a transition, hence it is in the management of non-corporate capital(an umbrella category, hiding many important variations within its informal units where beside profit, the logic of providing livelihood needs of those working in the units dominate as in the case of street vendors unit) of political society(...which includes large sections of rural population and the urban poor...make their claims on government, and in turn are governed...through temporary, contextual and unstable arrangements arrived at through direct political negotiations157;[p. 219]) wherein lies ...the difficult and innovative process of politics on which the future of the passive revolution under condition of democracy depends.157;(p. 234). The last chapter on "Empire and Nation Today' highlights a "Post-national Age' (after works of Jurgan Habermas, Postnational Constellation: Political Essays [2001], Daniel Archibugi and David Held (eds.) Cosmopolitan Democracy: An Agenda for a New World Order [1995]) under the influence of globalization and rapid expansion of international financial markets where not only sovereignty but the notions of citizenship are undergoing radical changes in the context of drive for human rights protection and democratic values necessitating the presence of an inclusive "virtual Empire' for the requirements of peace keeping(Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's work Empire[2000]) that seems to lose credibility, according to the author, in the post Iraq invasion period reflecting old-fashioned calculative national security and national interest logic in

place and in a complex and contradictory era of declining economic resilience and increasing military might of the US and European power, Chatterjee suggests that ...the imperial prerogative is the power to declare the colonial exception...(with) two forms of imperial pedagogy- violence and culture " the colony must either be disciplined by force or educated/civilized by culture...imperial prerogative may now be shared among several powers...regional hegemons claiming to declare the colonial exception within their own sphere of influence...there is no reason to believe that a postcolonial democracy such as India will not harbor ambitions of playing such an imperial role157;(p. 250-251) and thus not in virtual space but in reality ...empire is certainly not dead157;(p.252).

While addressing the critical comments of Nivedita Menon and Sanjeeb Mukherjee among others about the concept of political society, the author does admit that the utter marginalization of low caste groups or tribal peoples who do not even have the strategic leverage of electoral mobilization represents a world outside beyond the boundaries of political society, being true to his prefatorial remark of the present volume that ...the effort is self- consciously realist and not utopian157; (p. xi).

Reading this theoretical masterpiece by Partha Chatterjee in our time of disenchantment with the political system, a student of politics and society gets solace as it theoretically normalises such deviations as everyday political experiences in political society of postcolonial democracies without offering any prescriptions to come out of such deviations as a seasoned theoretician like Chatterjee gets excited to address and analyse real world laboratory of politics. The danger lies elsewhere " one can utilize this theoretical troop to validate any kind of misrule and misgovernance and there lies the task of the readers of Partha Chatterjee " to dissociate the logic of political society from the activities of political society.

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"The Army in British India" by Kaushik Roy

Manas Dutta

Kaushik Roy, The Army in British India: From Colonial Warfare to Total War 1857-1947, Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2013, pp. XVIII, 1-238+ Maps+ Appendices.

The British Indian army was the mightiest pillar of the Empire. It protected the state from internal danger and external aggression, and it helped fulfil global imperial objectives. Under the imperial rule, the Indian army was the crucial nexus between the rulers and the ruled. Without Indian recruits, the British could never have conquered or retained the raj. Due to the Indian army, the British rule in India not only survived and overcame some of the gravest threats to its existence, but was able to legitimise itself in the eyes of the a large number of common people., , One of the crucial components of the British-Indian Empire was the British controlled Indian Army, also known as the Sepoy Army or the colonial Indian Army. British-India's military establishment not only allowed a handful of sahibs to rule over millions of Indians but also allowed power projection outside South Asia. The book, under review, deals with the colonial army at the height of the British Empire (i.e. 1857) until its demise in 1947. With the onset of decolonization and partition of the subcontinent, the British-Indian Empire withered away, but the military legacies of the Raj continue to affect the post-colonial successor states. Here lies the importance of the volume. This book rather than following the much-touted John Keegan's ‚human' dimension attempts to provide an institutional analysis of the army. Further, this monograph is designed to reach out to both researchers as well as laymen.

The book, under review, is divided into seven chapters along with introduction and conclusion. , It is also necessary to mention here that the book has several sub-sections, which chronologically records the events as they happened during the timeline of the book. This book offers up-to-date, scholarly accounts of war and military history under the colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent. The book both accounts for the freestanding works that are attuned to conceptual and historiographical developments in the field while being based on original scholarship. According to the author, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have often been described as the ‚Age of Total War'. In this book, the author clearly hints at the differences that lie between the concept of War and Total War in India. Subsequently, he also writes about the comparative discussion of Small Wars in Africa and Asia since both these continents were under the colonial rule for a fairly long period of time. One of the aspects of the modern warfare is mass mobilization of the citizens which some historians categorize as Peoples' War. Warfare in this volume has been defined broadly. This volume includes both conventional as well as unconventional warfare within the rubric war. Besides the traditional approach to military history, which emphasizes on strategy, tactics, command, the author also adopts a social approach towards the armed forces in order to elucidate the complex dialectics between the social structure, cultural norms, and configuration of the armed

forces. By assessing tactics, technology and logistics, in relation to the social and cultural context, combat effectiveness of the Army in India has been deftly analysed.

The author clearly indicates the notion of writing this book in the introduction to the volume. He says there is no direct rival to this volume, but certain concepts in military history needs to be addressed properly. (p. 4) The proposed volume will deal with the art of war, military technology and also military culture. The author tries to fill up the gap between the earlier researches and that of the recent period. Byron Farwell, David Omissi, Stephen P. Rosen, Pradeep Barua, T.A. Heathcote, Daniel Martson and Chander S. Sundaram[1] have produced books on Indian army that do not adequately address the issues related to the army. (p. 4) That is why the author felt necessary to produce a monograph that will cover the untouched issues of the Indian army. Finally, the source base of the present volume is much broader compared to the mentioned studies. This volume is based on archival documents at National Archives of India, New Delhi, India Office Records, British Library and Public Record Office, London, Parliamentary papers, published and unpublished regimental histories, biographies and autobiographies of the civilian and military officers of the Raj, and the articles from the service journals like the Journal of the United Service Institution of India. (p. 4) The first chapter, entitled, ‚The Military Uprising: 1857-9' begins with the challenge faced by the British in India and how the British were able to crush it and consolidate the Raj in the subcontinent. Most of the works dealing with 1857 Mutiny by the British scholars portray the 1857 Mutiny as a sudden attack on the white. [2] On the contrary, the Indian historians over emphasize the social and economic reasons behind the civil uprising. [3] Theses aspects have not received adequate attention from the western historians. This chapter also focuses on the factors behind British military victory over the ‚natives'; superiority in command, control and firepower technology. The section titled, ‚1857 Uprising: Small War or the beginning of Total War' adequately addressed the purpose of this chapter. Here the author for the first time identified the characters of the small war and the total war hitherto untouched by the authorities of the events of 1857. (pp. 34-36)

The 2nd and 3rd chapters respectively, ‚Small Wars in North-West India: 1859-1913' and ‚Small Wars in North-East India: 1859-1913', analyze the political and military aspects of British warfare and state building in these particular regions. Both the chapters detail the variations of Small War theory as developed by the British military and civilian officers to deal with the fragmented tribes who inhabited the periphery of South Asia. , According to the author, most of the fighting was done by the irregular units (scouts, militia, and police forces) of Indian soldiers rather than the by the British regiments., Here, the author has done comparative analysis that brings out both similarities and dissimilarities existing in the British expeditions along the North-West peripheries and North-East India. Further, the two chapters highlight the different forms of logistical infrastructure built by the British to deal with the different physical geography of North-West and North-East India. So, both these chapters explain the two forms of warfare vis-A -vis the military technologies that had been adopted in these regions. The fourth chapter shows the rapid transition of the Army in India from being a sub continental ‚police' force to one of the largest volunteer armies of the world and its impact on state and society. Though Prof. Roy points this out, he does

not discuss the process of transformation in detail in the book. The first section of this chapter deals with recruitment and its impact on indigenous society. , Here, certain points need to be clarified, which has not been done properly. While discussing this aspect, one should follow the concept of caste, social status, prevalent in the recruiting regions. The modifications of the Martial Race theory in order to meet the ever growing manpower demands of the Great War are explained. Roy refutes the idea that the Martial race theory was entirely a British invention and notes how it was absorbed and reshaped by the selected communities of India. He traces how various myths were created, or existing histories enhanced, in order to create distinctions that would bolster regimental pride and loyalty to the Raj. Till date there are very few works that cover all the theatres in which the Indian Army fought. From that point of view, the second section of the chapter 4 dealing with the tactics and technology of the Army in India (mostly an Indian front), France, Palestine and East Africa, stands out to be a remarkable contribution to the field of military history, as it has helped to map, if not all at least the most of it, the theatres of warfare where the Indian army participated.

In the interwar era, as chapter 5 portrays, the British in India were caught between the ‚devil and the deep blue sea'. While on one hand due to riding nationalism, the Raj was unable to raise the taxes; on the other hand, modernization of the armed forces in order to fight an extra-Indian power as part of the imperial reserve, resulted in a deadlock. In addition, aid to civil duties and Small Wars in the peripheries of the subcontinent further obstructed mechanization of the Army in India. This chapter highlights the political and military changes in by the Great War and the Third Afghan War. As regards the nature of the Army in India during the interwar period, we have two opposite views. Anirudh Deshpande says that the post-First World war British establishment failed to realize that Indianization and modernization of the Indian armed forces. [4] On the other hand, Pradeep Barua said that the British were indeed following a long-term policy of indianization of the Indian Army's officer corps. [5] Following these parameters, the author argues that the Indian military establishment was not a rigid conservative organization, which operated in a strategic backwater completely isolated from wider military innovations. (p. 102) In fact, the Army in India was reforming and modernizing organization to rectify the defects but the process was somewhat hampered by the fluctuating strategic calculus and financial inadequacies of the Raj. Chapter 6 enunciates the tactical and organizational innovations in the Army in India between the disaster in Malaya and Singapore (mid 1942) and the re-conquest of Burma (late 1944). This volume asserts that conduct of hill warfare in North-West India and jungle warfare in North-East India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which actually aided the Army in India’s campaigns in Burma during 1944 and 1945. Hence, the traditional arguments regarding conduct capacities in conventional warfare, needs to be reassessed. We have few books that address both the hill and jungle warfare in India. This book has tried to fill up the gulf by analyzing these aspects.

The last chapter narrates the aftermath of the Second World War and military legacies of the Raj. Here the term ‚Legacy' could have produced debate among military historians. The beginning of demobilization of the 1.5 million strong Indian Army and 80,000 non-military labourers created a nightmare for the Raj. After demobilization, when the once loyal jawans were denied jagirs and

secure jobs, they turned against the Government. The author could have written the concept of discipline, disobedience, and loyalty little more explicitly to describe the resulting dilemma more accurately. Despite the scanty treatment of the affair, the chapter gives an interesting account of the worsening international scenario and British financial and military weaknesses in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. It also addresses the question that how the resulting problem accelerated the process of decolonization in South Asia. Also, the last section notes the military continuities of the Raj in the armed forces of the two successor states. Both the Indian and Pakistan armies continued to follow the Martial Race theory of recruitment and the regimental structure of the British-Indian Army. Yet the author does not sufficiently address the question- how colonial was the post-colonial Indian army. Notwithstanding these little details, the book stands out both in analytical research and penmanship.

The concluding section in each chapter sums up the principal arguments and the short historiography of the said topic unquestionably hold promises of immense help for the researchers on Military History in South Asia and laypeople interested in military history, alike. Inter-disciplinary history writing has gained importance in recent times and this monograph is an instance to the point. The search for alternatives to academic history is on. Academic history with ideological presuppositions, scientific methodology, and debates is bound to be a corrective to such alternatives. This book is a work of synthesis of the earlier works and the works produced in recent times. The author properly addresses the theoretical aspects of the colonial Indian Army yet he fails to identify the social issues like caste composition of the Indian Army, recruitment doctrine and the process of punishment, the recommendations of the Peel Commission just formed after the 1857 Mutiny, the Punjab Committee Report and the Eden Commission Report of 1879. These reports addresses the issues related the formation of the Indian Army. As a military historian, Dr. Roy should have addressed the socio-cultural aspects of both the indigenous and foreign soldiers too. To broaden the horizon of military history research it is paramount importance that the psychological world of the sepoy be explored. The book is somehow special since it deliberately attempts to describe the ‚small war', ‚total war', ‚conventional war' most importantly, the process of warfare in the frontier regions like North-East and North-West part of the Indian subcontinent along with the different forms of logistical infrastructure built up by the British to deal with the different physical geography of these regions. This book is a good example of alternative academic history from the pen of an industrious and talented researcher. Overall, the book is well produced, a treat to read and is indeed a crucial addition to South Asian military history.

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