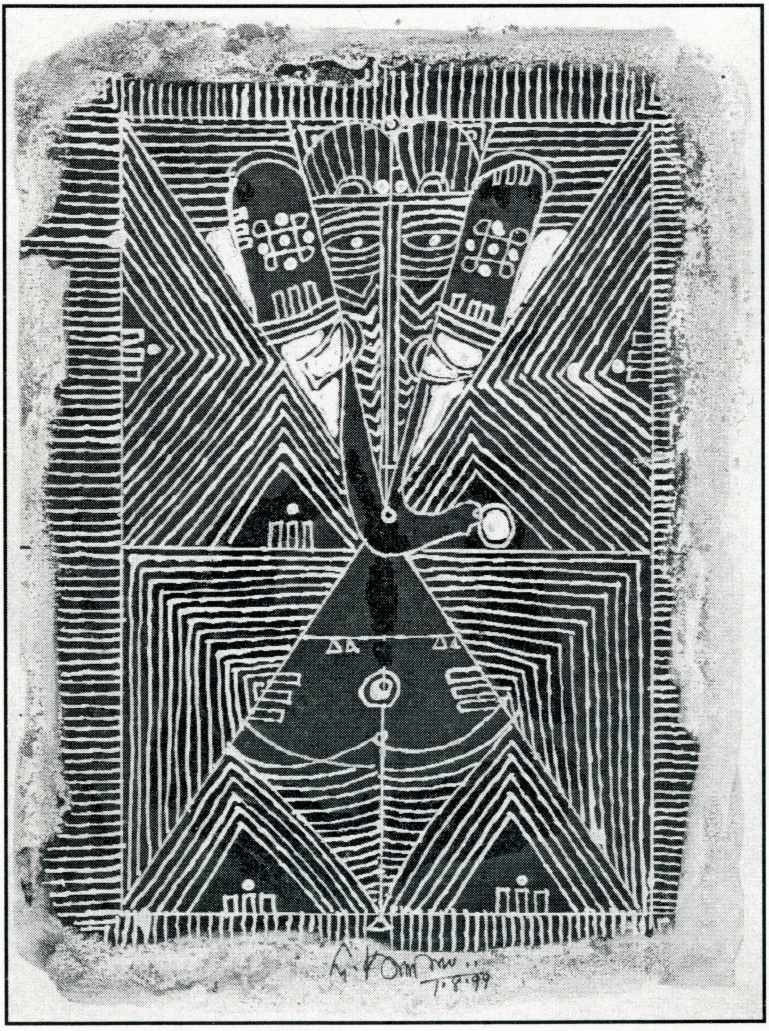
Sagar

A South Asia Graduate Research Journal



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Bharata Natyam and TerukkŠttu: E. Krishna Iyer's Revival Efforts[1]

Kristen Rudisill

University of Texas at Austin

E. Krishna Iyer is commonly recognized as the "knight in shining armour" of Bharata Natyam, "the dance in distress" that he worked so hard to save during his years as Secretary of the Music Academy of Madras (founded 1928).[2] What is less well-known is his campaign to promote the traditional arts of Tamilnadu, such the dance-drama *terukkŠttu,* during his years with the Sangeet Natak Academy (1956 -1968). What was it about Bharata Natyam that allowed for Iyer's astounding success in "the transfiguration of the sullied Sadir into blessed Bharatanatyam"[3] compared to the still relative obscurity of the *terukkŠttu* form? In this paper, I look at the two performance arts and their cultural and political contexts as well as at the strategies for their revival[4] in order to think about their very different histories, reputations, and their relationship to the life of celebrated reformer E. Krishna Iyer.

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[1] An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 31st Annual Conference on South Asia at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, October 11-13, 2002. I need to thank the Liberal Arts Graduate Research Fellowship from the University of Texas, Austin, for providing the funding necessary to complete this research in Austin and London, and Kathryn Hansen, Carla Petievich, and Laura Brueck for their thoughtful comments at various stages in the process.

[2] See "Tributes: The E. Krishna Iyer Centenary Dance Festival August 9-15, 1997" published by the Music Academy of Madras, courtesy of Sruti, pg. 1.

[3] Ibid. pg. 1

[4] I use this word not to imply that the art was dying out, but that there was an attempt to improve its reputation.

Bharata Natyam and TerukkŠttu Today

The art of Bharata Natyam is known the world over. Its internationalization began in the 1950s, when the Indian government sent dancers around the world as "cultural ambassadors."[5] The dance moved from its native Tamilnadu[6] to become the cultural property of India in general, and it became standard practice for young girls of a certain class both inside the country and in the diaspora to take lessons for a time. The image of the Bharata Natyam dancer, along with that of the Kathakali dancer, is used as a symbol of the nation of India.

I am going to come back to this idea of the dancer as a symbol of nation in terms of Marilyn Ivy's idea of a "national-cultural imaginary" where culture and the idea of nation become inextricably linked. This "imaginary" led, in Japan, the object of Ivy's study, as well as in India, to a nostalgic desire to recover a "lost" theatre tradition. Both Bharata Natyam and *terukkŠttu* are objects of this nostalgia, but the form being "recovered" is not the living dynamic tradition but the "rarefied classical form" that Richard Frasca speaks of. In each case the rarefied form has become a nationalist symbol of a "traditional" art, but it never actually existed in this decontextualized frozen form. *TerukkŠttu,* though not a symbol of the nation of India, is a symbol for the state of Tamilnadu, a highly politicized entity[7] that posits its identity as its language and culture and once imagined itself as part of an independent Dravidian nation. Tamilnadu has a well-developed sense of regional identity that often stands in opposition to the projected national identity. This has meant that the task of supporting the Tamil folk arts by

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[5] See Yamini Krishnamurthy's autobiography, pg. 99

[6] The state boundaries were not redrawn along linguistic lines until 1956, and it was not officially named Tamilnadu until 1969, but the form of Bharata Natyam that is most popular today traces its lineage to the Tanjore Quartet, from the heart of today's Tamilnadu. (see Anne-Marie Gaston)

[7] Hardgrave and Kochanek, 2000, pg. 334

giving annual awards and scholarships to folk troupes and performers has largely been the domain of the Department of Tamil Development in Chennai, not of the Central government, which does give considerable financial support to Bharata Natyam through the national Sangeet Natak Akademi (for the promotion of music, dance, and theater). The conflict between Center and State about culture can be viewed in microcosm through the life of Krishna Iyer, who was an instrument of both.

India and Tamilnadu, as national-cultural imaginaries, continue to rely on cultural forms for identity, and move toward a recovery of traditional forms, not with a revival, but with an assimilation of aspects of the traditional folk theater genres into the modern. Theater scholar Rustom Bharucha credits the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) (founded 1943) with contributing to the process of forming an "Indian" identity by glorifying "the 'folk' in the context of the freedom struggle. The 'folk' became emblematic of our 'lost heritage' and 'authentic history' that we were determined to reclaim from the British."[8] Iyer clearly believes that the "folk" arts, explicitly including *terukkŠttu,* are important and valuable and need to be preserved and developed for the benefit of the people.[9]

TerukkŠttu is an art that culturally distinguishes Tamilnadu from the rest of India. Unlike Bharata Natyam, which is also a Tamil art, it is not very well known outside of Tamilnadu. It is still performed primarily in the villages of northern Tamilnadu in conjunction with Draupadiyamman festivals. Occasional performances are given in Madras or as part of cultural festivals elsewhere in India and abroad. The art has received some critical acclaim on the Madras stage and in rare television specials on the folk arts, but very little actual patronage. Its primary role in the city seems to be as an inspiration for theater practitioners in troupes such as Koothu

[8] Bharucha, 1990, pg. 258
[9] Iyer, 1966, pg. 16

Pattarai and Madurai's Nija Nataka Iyakkam that are trying to form a "contemporary Indian theater idiom." [10]

Iyer's fear, that the art was dying out, while not as dire as his search for "surviving troupes" indicates,[11] is somewhat corroborated by recent anthropological work. Richard Frasca, writing in 1990, found that even amateur *terukkŠttu* troupes were more rare then than in the 1960s, primarily due to the financial strains of hiring lighting and sound systems and transporting and boarding troupes. Alf Hiltebeitel[12] writes that it is more and more common, even in the last twenty years, to find festivals with merely a reciter and no drama. *TerukkŠttu* artists have felt compelled to perform popular episodes and "Western" songs[13] in order to attract and hold audiences. These factors have caused some of the less popular episodes and less well-known stylistic approaches to *terukkŠttu* to disappear in the last 30-40 years. Hanne de Bruin agrees that films have led audiences to desire novelty, but contradicts Frasca and Hiltebeitel when she says that part of the reason behind the demand for *new* plays is due to a growing demand for the art[14] in general and particularly to "a growing interest in urban-elite circles"[15] which share the West's demand for novelty. Without better statistics on the number and location of performances over the last 50 years I can only give my impression that there is little *terukkŠttu* presence in Madras outside of Koothu Pattarai and other "modern" theater groups, and that even the most prestigious of the professional troupes perform an average of only three village festivals in a year.

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[10] Muthuswami, 1985, pg. 80
[11] Iyer, 1966, pg. 15
[12] Hiltebeitel has studied Draupadi cults in Tamilnadu since 1976 and published his most recent book on the subject in 1999.
[13] Frasca, 1990, pg. 50: "…a description used to indicate melodies adopted from the modern cinema or its direct predecessor, the modern musical play (*icai natakam*)."
[14] de Bruin, pg. 118
[15] de Bruin, pg. 112

Different Histories

The Bharata Natyam revival campaign was very contentious and attracted a lot of attention from the English language press[16] due, in part, to a lively debate between two well-known figures: E. Krishna Iyer and Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy. Iyer was a lawyer as well as an actor/dancer/musician and a well-known advocate and critic of the arts. Reddy was a medical doctor from a *devadasi* family, and felt very strongly that the practice of dedicating girls to the temple led to exploitation, immature sex, pre-pubertal marriage, and prostitution. In 1930 she brought a bill before the Madras Legislative Council demanding that the dedicatory practice be stopped. Iyer took the view that while the *devadasi* practice was indeed degrading and undesirable, the dance itself was worth preserving. In contrast, the campaign to gentrify *terukkŠttu* received very little press, except for brief mentions in the Sangeet Natak Akademi's journal and other such publications.

Many of the same strategies employed in the cause of Bharata Natyam were later repeated with *terukkŠttu*. Matthew Harp Allen lists six different components in the reform strategy of Bharata Natyam, most implemented by the Madras Music Academy under Iyer's leadership: 1) the replacement of the traditional community of dancers; 2) the renaming of the dance as "Bharata Natyam" in place of *sadir*; 3) the excision of erotically suggestive songs; 4) an increase in tempo and *nritta* (pure dance) at the expense of *abhinaya* (mime); 5) movement from the temple and salon to the public stage; and 6) the adoption of Nataraj as the patron deity of dance and a subject for portrayal in dance.[17] Compare this list to Hanne de Bruin's list of possible reasons for the disdain of *terukkŠttu*: 1) poverty and

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[16] see 1997 Music Academy performance brochure

[17] Matthew Harp Allen "Rewriting the Script for South Indian Dance" *Drama Review* Fall 1997

subsequent begging of performers, 2) performers' lack of formal education, 3) (perceived) lack of good/morally acceptable conduct, 4) "urban elites' disregard for Tamil as a legitimate stage language", 5) lack of codifications and systematic training, 6) lack of government recognition of the tradition as a whole.[18] She adds that the contempt for the professional stage among representatives of the elite extended to the belief that contact with professional players was considered 'polluting' and their performances were believed to be unfit to be seen by respectable women.[19]

Both performance communities were degraded somewhat circularly for their low status. To purify Bharata Natyam, the *devadasis* as a community were dispensed with, but that has never been attempted with respect to *terukkŠttu.* Until 1936 hereditary dancers dominated Music Academy stage, and Iyer invited personalities such as Ragini Devi, Uday Shankar, and Rukmini Devi to attend, lecture, study the dance, and eventually displace hereditary performers and teachers. In *terukkŠttu,* however, the lower castes continue to perform, both in the urban and rural spaces, and the higher castes, especially the members of the urban, educated elite, continue to look down on the art as degraded and withhold patronage. The derogatory attitude towards the actors and their art is found even within *terukkŠttu's* most familiar context of the Draupadi cult where actors are usually deferential to the higher-caste reciters, but the reciters have a range of reactions to the *kŠttu,* "from the deeply engaged to the benevolently indifferent to the disdainfully critical."[20] Alf Hiltebeitel quoted one reciter as saying that the *terukkŠttu* actually "'spoils' the *Mahabharata* and is 'unfit for modern times.'"[21] Hanne de Bruin does suggest the possibility of a

[18] de Bruin, *Kattaikkuttu,* pg. 13
[19] de Bruin, pg. 13
[20] Hiltebeitel, 1988, pg. 143
[21] ibid. pg. 142

divided performance community in the future, however, in noting the difference between traditional village performance and that being performed on urban and international stages:

> When we look at this new variety of Ka aikkuttu[22] meant for urban elite audiences we can discern a development which contrasts sharply with that of the living village tradition. Whereas the latter requires an even greater flexibility to adjust to far-reaching changes in the village society, and in the audiences' expectations and demands, the former—once it has found a form and style which fit urban cultural standards—tends to become more static, responding to fixed artistic rules and criteria. Time will tell whether the village and urban variants of the tradition can be handled side by side by the same village-based groups of Ka aikkuttu performers as is presently the case.[23]

So it is possible that some form of appropriation may take place eventually, paralleling the Bharata Natyam story.

When the devadasis' dance was appropriated for the urban stage, they also lost their traditional performance venue, the temple, through the anti-dedication legislation.[24] *TerukkŠttu* has retained both venues: the village ritual setting and the proscenium stage for urban entertainment. Naa Muthuswami, founder of Koothu Pattarai, has spoken out against city performances of *terukkŠttu* for this very reason, although he recognizes that it may be better than nothing for both the audience (culturally) and the performers (financially and publicity-wise). He says that "what one sees in Delhi or Madras is a truncated version which has lost 90% of its vigour and

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[22] Another name for *TerukkŠttu*.

[23] de Bruin, *Ka aikkuttu,* pg. 157-8

[24] There is, however, a recent trend to re-introduce dance into temples that has excited a lot of controversy. Gaston, pg. 39, 335

beauty. One has to see Koothu as it is performed in a village, in front of the Draupati Amman temple, a ten-day-long ritual…."[25]

A major difference between the two performance communities relates to gender and changing ideas about "Indian" tradition. Bharata Natyam, to clean up its act and reputation for prostitution, moved from low-caste female performers to high-caste female performers. The history of *terukŠttu* is very difficult to trace, so it is unclear if at some point women were eliminated from the art or if the art simply stopped at one point and was reinvented at another without them, though the evidence points to the latter. Richard Frasca's informants suggest that women are excluded from the art because of "the possibility of a female performer's becoming menstruous and therefore ritually impure during a festival…and the general social stigma against female performers in Tamilnadu."[26] In addition, Hanne de Bruin's informants include financial worries (need for a separate green room, etc.) and fear of tensions within the troupe. Presumably, at some point in history, the art tried to clean up its reputation and broaden its audience base by prohibiting female participation as has happened in so many of the Indian performing arts.[27] This trend actually reversed itself to some extent during the pre-Independence period when women were explicitly associated with "tradition" and assigned the duty of upholding culture. Partha Chatterjee has argued that women in the mid-nineteenth century were in "an inner domain of sovereignty, far removed from the arena of political contest with the colonial state. This inner domain of national culture was constituted in the light of the discovery of 'tradition'"[28] and

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[25] Muthuswami, 1985, pg. 81
[26] Frasca, 1990, pg. 213, note 11
[27] for example, see Banerjee, 1990 for a detailed analysis with respect to the jatra in West Bengal
[28] Chatterjee, pg. 117

allowed India to become "modern" without losing its identity. [29] In light of these ideas, it seems possible that the presence of female performers could, rather than just drawing charges of prostitution, also argue for the purity of an art, provided that the women involved were above reproach. This means that performance arts such as *terukkŠttu* could actually be *less* respected *because of* the absence of women. Hanne de Bruin and the Ka aikkuttu Sangam have acted on this assumption and began training actresses for all-female *ka aikkŠttu* performances in 1996.

Another strategy for the purification of Bharata Natyam was the very fact of its new name, no longer the "sullied Sadir" as Arudra refers to it. This name change occurred on December 28, 1932 in response to a resolution submitted to the Madras Music Academy by E. Krishna Iyer. [30] The new name linked the dance to Bharata's ancient Sanskrit text the *Natyasastra,* which was widely hailed as the fifth Veda. This connected a local and regional art to an all-India ideology and helped to construct a shared culture across a country fighting for identity in light of the "two-nation theory" and the creation of Pakistan as an Islamic nation.

Similarly, *terukkŠttu* is defined in the Tamil Lexicon as "a dramatic performance or dance in a street; that which is a public disgrace."[31] Performers of the dance-drama, especially professionals, have understandably tried to distance themselves from these terms by dropping the word "teru" ("street"), with all its negative connotations of riots, violence, and undesirable characters, from their names, saying that *teru*-kŠttu is only performed by amateurs. Another strategy has been to replace "teru" with "ka ai," which refers to the distinctive head ornaments worn by the dancers. The majority of troupes actually

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[29] Chatterjee, pg. 120
[30] Arudra, pg. 9
[31] Tamil Lexicon, 1982, Vol. 4, pg. 2037

use the Sankritized form *n□akam* on their publicity posters[32] instead of *kūttu,* hoping to draw a more sophisticated (and monied) audience.[33] Hiltebeitel has made a convincing case that this is an attempt to purge the art of its "common" element, which is further supported by the trend, popular amongst Bharata Natyam trained *terukkūttu* actors, to trace the folk drama back to Bharata's *Natyasastra* as a derivative of the classical dance. This trend to trace arts to the *Natya Sastra* reveals the influence of such men as E. Krishna Iyer and Suresh Awasthi.

Iyer conceives of Bharata Natyam as "a vast, comprehensive and generic system of classical dance in India" of which the "solo *Sadir-Natya* of women" is only a part.[34] Awasthi, in his 1985 article "In Defense of the 'Theatre of Roots,'" asserted that the only "authentically Indian" traditions are those that can be traced back to the *Natya Sastra*. The argument is strained with respect to the *terukkūttu,* which focuses on drama and song, with *abhinaya* (mime) as peripheral, leading to the more convincing suggestion that it may have developed out of the *p□u* or "song" tradition[35] and not from the classical dance. Thulasi Ramaswamy outlined the arguments in favor of the classical connection and cited "dance-expert" Kumari Padma Subramaniam as saying "All movement patterns of the *Kuttu* are of Bharata Naatya."[36] He himself, however, though admitting that the two forms do have common elements, does not accept that *terukkŠttu,* with its rough, violent movements, could be a descendent of the gracefully executed Bharata Natyam. At any rate, the very existence of the argument brings the two arts

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[32] Ramaswamy, 1987, pg. 25 and Hiltebeitel, 1988, pg. 150

[33] In fact, of the 31 companies Hanne de Bruin lists in her appendix, only two actually use the word *terukkuttu* to describe themselves, while 24 use the term *nataka.* See de Bruin *Kattaikkuttu,* Appendix 1.

[34] Iyer, 1969 pg. 46

[35] see Frasca, 1990

[36] Ramaswamy, 1987, pg. 31

together in the reader's imagination and serves to sanitize and to some extent Sanskritize the *terukkŠttu*.

The Sanskritization project for *terukkŠttu* is closely related to the British project, later adopted by the Government of India, to identify "authentic" Indian forms. The British had encouraged the idea of the "authenticity" of the village in their ongoing search for the "finer specimens" of Indian tradition to support.[37] This paradigm in the minds of the newly independent Indian government, according to Breckenridge and Van der Veer, led to "the attribution of 'authenticity' to what is seen as traditional and of 'mimicry' to any effort to adopt modern practices."[38] E. Krishna Iyer, although acknowledging that there is no continuity in the historical record of the *terukkŠttu,* tried to establish its traditional roots: "There is reason to believe that it has come down from ancient times and that it had been in vogue in most of the villages in Tamil Nad."[39] Although this is, of course, a possibility, Iyer unfortunately does not give any justification for his "reasoning," which is likely to have been based primarily on his desired end of a revival and renewed patronage for the art.

Iyer recruited troupes for performances he organized in Madras with the backing of the Madras State Sangita Nataka Sangam (established 1955) and All India Radio, Madras. He auditioned many troupes at a series of folk dance festivals put on by the Madras State Sangam for the purpose of popularizing "the best among them"[40] and identifying those "surviving art troupe[s] which keep up the genuine art tradition." Although one particular troupe, the Purisai Thambiran troupe, received rave reviews in Madras and the MSSNS arranged some shows and gave occasional costume grants, the troupe was not able to make

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[37] Breckenridge and Van der Veer, 1993, pg. 7-8
[38] Breckenridge and Van der Veer, 1993, pg. 14
[39] Iyer, 1966, pg. 150
[40] Iyer, 1966, pg. 15

it financially in the city, so they returned to their village. Iyer, puzzled and disturbed by this phenomenon, says

> With all the great reputation that they have earned both in rural areas and in Madras City, it is strange that they do not seem to get frequent chances to perform outside their village or get adequate remuneration for all their efforts. Classical Karnatak music and Bharata Natya in its various forms dominate the tastes of most people in Tamil Nad, not only in urban areas but also in rural parts. The modern theatre and the ubiquitous films also cater to the art needs of the masses. In the midst of these, the value and importance of folk art including the folk play tradition, do not seem to have been adequately realised, and consequently adequate patronage is not forthcoming for the folk plays…..[41]

Clearly, Iyer is worried about the fate of this art, which he believes to be dying and authentically represented by only this one troupe.

The interest in the revival of *terukkŠttu* did not end with E. Krishna Iyer, however. Just to mention one more development, the Ka aikkŠttu Sangam has recently set up the first *terukkŠttu* school of its kind in Kanchipuram. This was done for Bharata Natyam in the mid-1930s with Rukmini Devi's founding of Kalakshetra in Madras. I want to suggest that although E. Krishna Iyer may not have been able to successfully associate *terukkŠttu* with the Indian national-cultural imaginary due to a variety of social and political factors, the work is still going on. As the idea of India focuses on its diversity more and more and the regional arts are incorporated into the everyday theater idiom, I suggest that the narratives of these two performance arts may not always seem so disparate. Echoes of

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[41] ibid. pg. 16

the Bharata Natyam story are visible in the recent developments of *terukkŠttu* such as the new school and the involvement of women in the art.

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NGO-led Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh: Issues of Social Reform and Religious Opposition·

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Part I

Non-governmental development organizations (NGOs) working for women's empowerment in Bangladesh since the early 1970s have experienced Islamic opposition persistently though this opposition never appeared in an organized form until recently. A series of incidents of organized reactions took place during 1993-95 targeting especially BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, the largest NGO in Bangladesh), but the impact spilled over to other NGOs. The second such violent clash erupted between PROSHIKA (the second largest NGO) and the religious group in Brahmanbaria in December 1998 over the issue of celebrating Independence Day when PROSHIKA-supported grassroots organizations scheduled to gather several thousand poor village women in the city. Both the parties came into violent conflict and blamed each other for the incident. Over the course of two weeks the issue became a national political crisis incorporating in it many dimensions—social, religious and political. Other than these major clashes sporadic incidents against NGOs took place in different parts of the country. Though the NGO community equated such incidents with the rise of *moulobad* (fundamentalism) as a strong anti-development

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force, little academic attention had been paid to exploring the causes of such opposition.

The aim of this paper is to identify and critically assess the contrasting views of NGOs and Islamic religious groups about the nature of women's empowerment in Bangladesh. The paper focuses on the initiatives of women's empowerment (and the poor's in general) undertaken by the two national level NGOs named BRAC and PROSHIKA in Bangladesh (thereafter NGOs) and religious opposition to them. It analyses the causes of religious opposition in the context of NGOs' empowerment of women and specific religious objections to them. The article focuses on one major dimension of empowerment initiatives: paralegal education which aims to give functional knowledge of literacy as well as basic legal knowledge of marriage, divorce, dowry, inheritance etc. These are the major issues that invite Islamic opposition and resistance. Islamic opposition is usually represented by the community that takes Islamic education in the Madrasa[1] system, inculcates that knowledge through representation in religious institutions such as madrasa, mosques and Islamic political parties, and is politically conscious or active. It therefore excludes other Islamic groups such as *Tabligh Jamat*[2] and *Pirs*[3] who rather display apathy toward politics.

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[1] Madrasa, literally a school, refers to an institution where Islamic religious education is given. In Bangladesh there are two parallel educational systems; one is secular general education, and the other is religious madrasa education. Both systems however partially include religious and secular subjects such as Islamic studies, and mathematics, geography and English literature. Among madrasa there are again two systems, one is called Alia, which is recognized under public curriculum, and the other is called Qawmi or Khareji which is outside public curriculum. Secularist groups in Bangladesh, including NGOs, do not necessarily distinguish between the two madrasa systems.

[2] *Tabligh Jamat* is an internationally organized body of Muslims who are basically involved in preaching Islam. Its programs are absolutely non-political. It holds an annual World Congregation in Bangladesh every year attracting millions of Muslims from all over the world.

Literature Review

Despite the fact that Islamic religious opposition remains persistent in Bangladesh, academic investigation into it is extremely scanty. So far Mannan (2000), Rafi and Chowdhury (2000) and Shehabuddin (1999) have made a limited attempt to shed light on some aspects of the conflicting encountering of NGOs and Islamic opposition.

In Mannan's view that there are four patterns of thought regarding Islam and development. These are: (1) Islam is anti-development; (2) Islam is conducive to development; (3) religion is insignificant for development; and (4) rejection of "exogenous" (Western) model in favor of "endogenous" (Islamic) models of development. Within these patterns he maintains that BRAC is heavily influenced by the Western model of development that invites local antagonism on four major grounds: village power-structure, credit, education, and the dichotomy of male staff-female beneficiaries. Mannan finds that the root cause of antagonism lies, on the one hand, in the persistence of BRAC on exogenous model of development without considering local-religious concerns, and the misinterpretation of Islam by the religious groups in order for opposition, on the other. Rafi and Chowdhury (2000) found that Islamic groups reject NGO reform in women rights because these reforms are contradictory to Islamic laws.

Both studies are significant as they provide some basic understanding of the NGO-religious dichotomy. However they are quite insufficient to explain the greater phenomena.

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[3] *Pir* is a Persian word which literally means elderly person. But in Islamic tradition it gives the distinctive meaning of a religious spiritual leader who is believed to have spiritual relations with God. Pirs are usually stationed in the institution of Mosques, and under their guidance religious institutions such as Madrasa and Mosques are operated. They command the reverence of many followers but remain non-political.

Mannan's assessment of BRAC as being a mere replicate of "exogenous" development theories is rather simplistic, and his positivist treatment of endogenous local culture is unsound. Development will certainly affect local cultural and religious systems but his analysis fails to address how these endogenous forces should accommodate the changing situation. Besides, Islamic opposition in Bangladesh clearly bears political significance and involvement of greater sociopolitical structural forces which are missing in Mannan's analysis.

Rafi and Chowdhury's article is more limited to a particular case study in response to some religious reaction to BRAC's postering on women's rights. Their analysis focuses only on two: madrasa community and textual contents of the poster. They however identified a different and important dimension of conflict: the domain of knowledge, but their analysis falls short of institutional analysis of that domain of knowledge. Besides, wider sociopolitical factors and forces are not considered in the study.

Shehabuddin's work is by far the most extensive and exploratory one. She found that the antagonism between NGOs and their Islamic opponents has three basic features: one, that it is essentially a conflict between "competing interpretations of modernity, development, Islam and feminism" which she divided into two camps—the secularist and the Islamist groups; two, that this an "almost wholly urban-based" debate; and, three, that the rural poor, and women in particular, are subject to the elitist version of the secularist and Islamist interpretations. She argued that the rural poor and women react in a mixed way compatible to their circumstantial needs. Shehabuddin analyzed the issue of fatwa in the context of NGO-Islamic divide and how the lower strata of society react to it. Though she discussed the issue of fatwa in relations to NGO activities to some extent, her analysis did not go beyond the mere account of narration. Her analysis neither includes institutional analysis of NGOs nor the textual

analysis of their adult education materials that the Islamists frequently criticize.

This literature is either insufficient or offers only partial explanations of the problems. This is because these studies are particularistic and exclusive to certain cases. Furthermore, they lack a comparative analysis of NGOs' relevant textual readings and the Islamists' claims. If it is argued that the Islamic resistance manifests as a reaction to NGO intervention into local religious-cultural systems, especially concerning women's mobility, then why does it fail to explain how and why the huge garment industry developed depending exclusively on women's labor without facing any organized religious challenge? Furthermore, if women's mobilization is a major concern of Islamic groups then why did recent reforms in a local council election in favor of one-third women's representation not meet religious opposition? This suggests that the religious-cultural argument does not stand strong, and the problem concerns some other critical dimensions as well. The current existing literature fails to answer and address these questions.

This paper rests on three arguments. First, that theoretical difference on development issues and approaches between empowerment agents and religious opponents are fundamentally conflicting in some vital areas, which generates misunderstandings. Second, the production of knowledge about the contending issues based on their respective theoretical paradigms seems to be unilateral and has a tendency to dominate each other. Third, that both empowerment agents and opposing groups act with fatal misperceptions against each other which either side tends not to concede and overcome through mutual engagement.

The Data:

This paper is based on a series of fieldworks. The first phase was during October-November 2001 in Brahmanbaira,

while the second and third phases were during April-July 2002 in Dhaka and Brahmanbaria. Direct interviews were conducted, among others, with a number of executive level officials of BRAC and PROSHIKA, with leading Islamic figures, and with more than 250 grassroots level women of BRAC and PROSHIKA. Interviews were also conducted with 35 teachers of PROSHIKA's adult education program.

Part II

This section provides a theoretical overview of empowerment, and how NGOs in Bangladesh interpret and contextualize it.

What is Empowerment?

Empowerment is one of the key concepts in understanding the development approaches taken by BRAC and PROSHIKA. The concept of empowerment is one of the most popular buzzwords in the development profession. It is being used everywhere as a miraculous solution for all the problems. It implies "growth," "change," "improvement," "development," or the "enhancement" of any situation considered to be making negative impacts on one's life. From personal to community, from psychology to politics it is a "fashionable term" used with convenient legitimization (Moor 2001). The objective of empowerment is usually to undo some negative social constraints for disadvantaged people, especially poor people and women, and to enhance their capacity to act.

Though empowerment is a very widely used concept, any systematic theorization of it is yet to be seen. Jo Rowlands (1995, 1997) has correctly made an attempt to define and analyze the term in relation to the root concept of power. But since the concept of power itself is debatable so is the concept of empowerment. Rowlands sees that power manifests in four different forms: power over, power to, power with, and power

from within. Her review of empowerment literatures of McWhirter, Caroline Moser, Janet Price, Alan Thomas, Hazel Johnshon, Salil Shetty, S. Batliwala and others led her to divide these literatures into three overlapping dimensions: personal, relational, and collective. These dimensions are due to differences of approach taken and emphasis put on issues. According to Rowlands, empowerment is context-specific and issue-oriented. However, empowerment in any approach concerns addressing power relations in all four forms.

However, the concept of power, which has a political flavor in Rowlands' analysis, assumes a different meaning when it relates to third world development and social change. This power is explained mostly by the feminists in structural term, patriarchy,[4] which is composed of many other interrelated and mutually reinforcing power poles such as male dominance, gender discrimination, exploitative forces, religion, culture, and traditional rules and customs (Lerner 1986; Epstein & Goode 1971; Pateman 1989; Moghadam 1994; Mir-Husseini 1999; Ahmed 1992). Therefore, different approaches to development and change have emphasized different dimensions of empowerment. Mayoux (in Razavi 1998) has captured these approaches and dimensions in three categories: empowerment as "access to resources" in *financial sustainability approach*; as "community development and self-sufficiency" in *poverty alleviation approach*; and as "consciousness, control and self-reliance" in *feminist empowerment approach*. These three

[4] A useful definition of Patriarchy is that it is "a concept which essentially means the rule of the father or the patriarch that is the male members of the household or society. It encompasses the totality of structure of domination and exploitation by men which affect women's position in the society. Patriarchy is perpetuated through a process of institutionalization of social, cultural and religious practices, as well as legitimized through political, legal and economic systems of the society. It leads women to internalize as well as to perpetuate patriarchal ways of thinking, both in values and in behaviour." Mondal, Sekh Rahim, "Status of Himalayan Women", *Empowerment*, 1999, Vol. 6, p. 41.

approaches encompass related methods of empowerment such as microfinance (*financial sustainability*); targeted assistance to groups aiming at their collective improvement focusing on "practical needs" of households and communities (*poverty alleviation*); and developing individual rights of women such as control on reproductive choice, challenging gender inequalities within households, gaining access to decision making process, and challenging repressive sociopolitical structure to contest their subordination (*feminist*).

Batliwala (1993) has presented a more comprehensive analysis of empowerment in the context of South Asia by combining "resources" and "ideology" into her analysis of power. She defines power as *control over resources and control of ideology* (p. 7). She categorizes *resources* into five kinds: physical (land, water, etc.); human (people, their bodies, skills, and labour); intellectual (knowledge, information, ideas); financial (money, access to it); and self (combination of intelligence, creativity, self-esteem, and confidence). She defines *control of ideology* as "the ability to determine beliefs, values, attitudes-virtually, control over ways of thinking and perceiving situation." Thus the "process of gaining control—over self, over ideology and the resources which determine power—may be termed empowerment." This reflects the Freirean concept of conscientization but Batliwala argues the Freire's concept missed gender as a determinant of power. To her empowerment is the "redistribution of power" and it "is all embracing, because it must address all structures of power."

Chen's (1990) concept of empowerment has echoed these issues in four conceptual clusters: resources, power, relationships and perceptions, which explain perfectly the contextual situation of Bangladesh. Inclusive of all these aspects the following definition is useful: "(a) process which enhances the ability of disadvantaged (powerless) individuals or groups to challenge and change (in their favour) existing power relationships that place

them in subordinate economic, social and political positions" (Meinzen-Dick 1997). In the context of Bangladesh women's empowerment has been defined as the "function of her relative physical mobility, economic security, ability to make various purchases on her own, freedom from domination and violence within the family, political and legal awareness, and participation in public protests and political campaigning" (Banu et al. nd). This definition of empowerment is akin to the view held by BRAC and PROSHIKA.

Both BRAC and PROSHIKA define empowerment in structural terms and identify women, and the poor in general, as the oppressed subordinate classes of the structure. PROSHIKA organizes people into groups and contends that "these organizations (*Samitis* and *Samannayas*) help indigent people unitedly fight the *structural factors* (emphasis added) that perpetuate poverty, and claim their rights…and bring about changes in the *institutions* (emphasis added) that control their lives…" It "believes women's empowerment as an ongoing dynamic process which enhances women's ability to change those *structures and ideologies* (emphasis added) that keep them subordinate."[5]

BRAC also rationalizes the concept of empowerment on the same grounds. "In Bangladesh, *patriarchal norms* (emphasis added), ideology and social institutions shape women's role and status in the society," therefore "it is time that women break free from their stereotype role. Apart from this for self-realization she needs self-respect and for self-respect she needs to assert her rights. She now needs to stand up and where necessary, confront."[6] So for both BRAC and PROSHIKA empowerment is understood in structural terms, and its objective is to overturn the structure, that is, the power of patriarchy. Thus both address structural dominance and its consequences.

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[5] PROSHIKA Activity Report July 1999-June2000, pp. 1, 75

[6] *Access*, A Quarterly Newsletter of BRAC, January 2002, No. 39, p. 1.

NGO-Identified Dimensions and the Nature of Powerlessness:

BRAC and PROSHIKA primarily work with poor women. Women in Bangladesh live under particular socioeconomic, cultural and religious constraints and poor women experience these more acutely. A PROSHIKA training module on *Women's Empowerment*[7] identifies four dimensions of women's powerlessness: family, social, political, and economic. Under these dimensions a total of 25 areas are identified where women are powerless. For instance, in marital relations they suffer from abuse of underage marriage, dowry, denial of consent in marriage, and vulnerability in the face of unequal talaq (divorce) rules. They are neglected in household decision-making; discriminated against in the distribution of labor; deprived of food, medicine and nutrition; denied ownership of property, equal right to inheritance, etc. Their public and economic life beyond the household is constrained by the cultural and religious norms of the institution called *Purdah*[8] and patriarchal attitude (pg. 11).

BRAC, however, focuses more on family and marital issues and includes economic insecurity to some extent, but excludes the political aspects of powerlessness. Its Human Rights poster identifies seven areas where powerlessness exists. These are inequality of sex; child marriage and its undesirable consequences; multiple marriages of men; physical abuse of women; nonregistration of marriage; dowry; and verbal divorce. Furthermore, it also focuses on Muslim inheritance laws and highlights the fact that women are deprived of their legal entitlement (Rafi & Chowdhury 2000).

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[7] *Women's Empowerment* (in Bangla), PROSHIKA, Dhaka, nd.

[8] *Purdah* literally means curtain. But in the Islamic tradition it, in reference to women, means keeping themselves out of sight of strange men, or avoiding any interaction with them; it also means covering one's body, sometimes including both head and face, to maintain modesty in public. The outer appearance of *Purdah* differs from place to place.

These and multiple other features make women subordinate entities in society. These conditions are termed "powerlessness" in the sense that the rules concerning women's selves, behaviors, attitudes, and legal entitlements are set by patriarchal institutions. Consequently they are helpless and incapable, and unable to assert themselves to turn the condition around. Therefore, "external institutional intervention" is needed, due to their ignorance and powerlessness, to help women hold power and reverse the power relations or remove power imbalances. The existing laws in Bangladesh do not necessarily make women equal to men. There are a number of areas where women's status seems to be legally subordinate such as in unequal inheritance laws, and there are areas where lack of law enforcement puts women in positions of powerlessness such as child marriage, dowry and divorce (Monsoor 1999). So BRAC and PROSHIKA seek social reform in certain cases and practical enforcement of laws in other cases to make women more powerful or equal to men.

Part III

This part presents an analytical discussion of religious opposition to NGO activities.

Religious Opposition: Discussion and Analysis

The diverse nature of Islamic opposition and its complexity makes generalization of arguments difficult. The issues are so broad in range, so social in nature, and so intermingled that they make classification impossible. The related concepts such as *purdah* concern personal, religious, social, and cultural dimensions (Kabeer 2000). Locating it only at the social level makes it partially relevant. Besides, multidimensional aspects of a given issue might generate oppositions that bear resemblances to Islamic arguments, but may not have been fomented by Islamic groups. Furthermore, the

entire society including the Islamic groups might passively accept a greater structural transformation relating to the same issues that they fight over with NGOs. An explicit example is the absence of religious opposition to the development of the women's labor market in the garment industry that also concerns *purdah*, women's mobility, income, and ownership and control over property (Kabeer 2000).[9] Therefore it is difficult to exclusively point out the issues of contention. However, it is interesting to see that the huge women's labor market was neither created by the NGOs nor encountered organized Islamic opposition. But then why do Islamists oppose NGOs when they advocate the same principles—women's mobility, income, ownership, etc.? The following discussion presents some of the articulated concerns and reasons for opposition.

First Argument: Theoretical Difference

That theoretical differences on development issues and approaches between empowerment agents and religious opponents are fundamentally conflicting in some vital areas, which generates misunderstandings.

Women's empowerment in Bangladesh is perceived to be hindered by two factors: patriarchy and religious fundamentalism (Mansoor, T: 1999; White, Sarah C: 1992; Rahman, M 2002; Chen, Martha: 1990; Feldman, S: 2001). Patriarchy and religious fundamentalism are mutually reinforcing. Therefore, NGOs believe empowerment would be possible through following a third avenue: secularism. By secularism they mean making religion a personal and spiritual matter, and keeping the laws and rules of family, social, economic, and political life free from its

[9] Especially chapter 4, "Renegotiating Purdah" is an interesting analysis of the issue.

intervention. In the words of Qazi Faruque Ahmed of PROSHIKA:

> "Secularism means only religion is not allowed to interfere in public life, that is not used to further the dominance of one section of the citizens over another, or to make laws that discriminate against women. That is secularism. But an individual is free to worship and to practise whatever she or he wants to" (quoted in Seabrook 2001, 101).

Furthermore, human life would be ruled not by customs, traditional norms and rules, but by civil laws. The underlying philosophy is that the human being would be set and regarded as a free agent, equal to each other in and according to laws. Development is only possible by letting men and women work together with equal rights and opportunities.

However, this approach is now under serious challenge. Scholars have recently started questioning the relevance of the secularization thesis by saying that it alternatively gave rise to the religious fundamentalism in the world and especially in the third world (Safi 1994; Marty & Appleby 1991; Juergensmeyer 2000; Gill 2001; Sherkat & Ellison 1999). This trend is making religious groups more inward looking and self-conscious. Furthermore, theoretically Islam and secularization are incompatible (Nasr 1995), for secularization ultimately aims at eradicating religion (Lechner 1991; Gill 2001). Therefore, Islamic groups find the secular approach and viewpoint of NGOs especially problematic because they go against the religious construction of life and society. The religious groups regard religion as the basis of life which pervades every other aspect of life—family, social, economic and political, private, and public. There is therefore no scope for making religion a personal-spiritual matter. This difference of worldview about religion turns out to be the most fundamental and irresolvable condition of conflict.

Here conflict persists when the "elitist" version of the understanding of the issues dominates. For the secularist approach, for example, deconstruction of the theory of *Purdah* based on economic grounds might appear insufficient because *purdah* includes dimensions of both agency (personal) and structure. Religious incentives of *purdah* at the agency level might have stronger connections with spiritual aspects than structural imposition (Kabeer 2000:87). The following response substantiates the point "yes for economic and other reasons we would go out, mix with men but covering myself to preserve my modesty is also inseparable, otherwise how am I going to answer to Allah?" was the response of many of the teachers of PROSHIKA who teach PROSHIKA prescribed secularized views of empowerment and women's rights. Similar phenomena are observable in grassroots level women's personal attire, even in the local level offices of BRAC and PROSHIKA.[10] This illustrates the point that construction of preferences and choices of agency and structure by the "elitist" groups, be they secular or Islamists, may not necessarily represent the choices and preferences of grassroots women.

So in the participatory approach of NGO development, if the fundamental viewpoints of NGOs regarding the meaning of life are broadly different from that of the targeted participants then adverse reactions are not unexpected. In the case of Bangladesh people are overwhelmingly religious in their beliefs, and contesting that belief with radical secular thoughts would continue to be challenged.

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[10] During my fieldwork I personally observed the phenomena that most of the female borrowers were wearing a Burka, a special piece of cloth that covers the entire body, or alternatively a second piece of cloth to cover their heads and upper parts of their bodies. I found the most of the PROSHIKA female teachers wearing the same. However, in the offices of BRAC and PROSHIKA female officers do not maintain such types of Purdah.

Second Argument: Production of Knowledge and Dominance

That production of knowledge about the contending issues based on their respective theoretical paradigms seems to be unilateral and has a tendency to dominate each other.

Whose construction of knowledge about the selves, roles, and status of women in society should be accepted as more rational, logical and authoritative? This is the second dimension of conflict at the structural level between NGOs and Islamic authority. NGOs maintain that the body of knowledge regarding the issues produced by patriarchy has lost its validity due to its oppressive nature. The human self of womenhood has to be freed and treated equally to that of manhood. A reconstruction of women's selves needs to be done. Accordingly they produce a body of counter-knowledge regarding the self of women. In the context of Bangladesh, PROSHIKA constructs a woman by conferring on her the following rights: "education, food, healthcare, clothing, equal inheritance, entitlement to property, right to divorce, right to express opinion regarding marriage, right to *Mohar,*[11] right to inherit husband's property, right to guardianship, equal pay for equal job, right to vote, right to participate in *bichar* and *shalish,*[12] equality in laws, maternity care, right to justice against oppression" (Women's Empowerment, pp 45-48). Some of these rights are either not recognized or not implemented by state laws. BRAC explains the absence of these rights by "lack theory" (Chowdhury & Alam 1997). Therefore, recognition and implementation of these

[11] *Mohar* usually is the money or in kind that a husband is bound to give to his newly married wife. The payment of Mohar is a necessary condition of marriage.

[12] *Bichar and Shalish* are two Bangla terms that refer to the rural traditional system of dealing with social crimes such as stealing, rape or even manners that are deemed immoral and unsocial. Usually village elites and local government officials solve such problems by giving their judgment in a local meeting. Decisions of such Shalish are binding upon the accused.

rights, according to BRAC and PROSHIKA, would produce a woman who would have counter-self-perception, enjoy mobility, economic security, have the ability to make decisions, enjoy purchasing power, have political and legal awareness, become relatively free from domination and violence within the family, and participate in public protests and political campaigning (Huda & Hussain 1994). The demarcating line of gender segregation disappears in this counter-body of knowledge. NGO authorities believe that this counter-body of knowledge is more authoritative and valid because it reflects "universal standard"[13] and therefore they want the society to be restructured according to this knowledge. A knowledge-based dominating tendency thus becomes clear.

Religious authorities on the other hand perceive themselves to be the right and legitimate authority to produce a knowledge-base regarding the selves, roles and status of women. This is because of two reasons: one, that the identity of self and agency is to be deducted from the guiding principles inscribed in the *Qurān* and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition); and two, the Ulama (plural of Arabic '*Alim*, means religious scholar) feel that they hold the legitimate power to explain those principles because they are the experts on shariah (Islamic legal system) knowledge. Furthermore their moral perception of being in the position of religious guides for the commoners creates an impression of having professional territory of this knowledge. "They are atheists and ignorant about religion, how they could talk about shariah matter"[14] is therefore a typical reply to the similar counter claim by NGO authorities "the fundamentalists are engrossed with back-dated knowledge of medieval age and ignorant of modern social system, they think they are the sole explainers of shariah."[15]

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[13] Personal interview with a senior PROSHIKA executive, May 6, 2002.
[14] Personal interview with the Mufti of Jameya Yunusia Brahmanbaria.
[15] Personal interview with PROSHIKA executive.

In their claims of authority over knowledge and its validly both the contending groups have severe flaws in the rationalization of their claims. For the NGO authorities they tend to emphasize economism more and overlook the importance of the most influential aspect of the religious existential-ontological worldview of the common people. Most women (95%) interviewed expressed that they rely on as well as trust local Imams and *Huzurs*[16] for religious knowledge. I even found a PROSHIKA woman leader who teaches the *Qurān* recitation class in a Maktab.[17] This reflects that the NGO counter-body-of-knowledge is produced and presented in an absence of, in Bourdieu`s (1990) terms, "ideal speech" situation which is why acceptability encounters resistance. Religious authorities, on the other hand, prioritize religious morality and fail to contextualize religious knowledge in social issues to meet contemporary needs.

Some Illustrating Examples: Marriage and Divorce

Marriage and divorce are the most observable sites of women's powerlessness (Monsoor 1999). In these important social institutions women have virtually no voice, they are merely the objects of others' voices. Against all odds, attempts to bring the institutions under civil laws and public procedures have been made. The current Muslim Family Laws of Bangladesh regarding marriage and divorce have been made very much official and formal such as defining marriage age, compulsory requirement of its registration, official procedures to enact divorce etc. However, the religious authorities have rejected these laws as un-Islamic. This is a bone of contention between the NGOs and the religious opposing groups.

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[16] *Huzur* literally means 'Sir' but the term is used to refer to a religious teacher or a religious spiritual leader. Alternatively, the schoolteachers who do not teach religious texts in Bangladesh are called Sirs.

[17] *Maktab* is a place where basic Arabic and the reading of the *Qurān* are taught to minor children.

NGOs' stand is that they are making women aware of the Muslim Family Laws regarding marriage and divorce without looking at its Islamicity or non-Islamicity: "these are legal rights and processes. We educate people of that. We are not concerned whether they are Islamic or not."[18] BRAC in its Human Rights and Legal Education kits make the same effort. This stand of the NGOs is fairly reasonable in the sense that it promotes the legal process. However, they fail to address some serious ambiguities of the laws which cause further legal problems. For example the registration of marriage is made compulsory, but non-registration of it does not make it invalid or illegal. At the same time verbal divorce is made illegal. This complicates the situation. If a verbal divorce is called invalid in a specific case where a marriage went unregistered for years or decades, then counseling women for legal action against husbands does not make sense due to the nonexistence of documents. And indeed virtually none of the marriages in rural areas are officially documented due to various reasons such as ignorance about the laws and remoteness of marriage registration offices which are usually located in the cities. The case of Fatema (39 with a 12-year-old daughter) faced this very situation, and being a neighbor of a vocal PROSHIKA woman leader, who herself had been deserted, was of no use. Even this deserted well known leader, 45, when was asked why she did not file a lawsuit against her husband the answer was surprising: "What is the point? I can make my own end, and by the grace of Allah I am much better off now. Besides my only son says, 'mom, since you did not do so when you were in severe hardship, what is the point doing it now when you are better off.' Again, what else I can expect from him (husband) because he also has nothing. Rather this is better that he comes sometimes to

[18] Personal interview with PROSHIKA executive, May 6, 2002.

see his son and daughter. I wish he can make his days well."[19] This shows that the legal options cannot easily replace the altruistic aspects of marital relationships. In fact, the majority of the BRAC and PROSHIKA women interviewed expressed that they heavily depend on local Imams for advice on marriage/divorce issues even after having been made aware of the legal procedures by the NGOs. Furthermore, most of them are not even confident of practicing the NGO teachings regarding marriage and divorce issues.

On the other hand the Ulama reject the Muslim Family Law in its entirety based on five reasons: first, that divorce is a shariah issue which is religious, therefore only Ulama are legitimate authorities to deal with divorce. Secondly, personal notification by husband/wife of divorce to local chairman and effectiveness of divorce after ninety days does not correspond to the divorce laws of shariah. Thirdly, putting local chairmen in charge of such an important shariah issue is tantamount to secularizing the shariah. Fourth, it changes some inheritance laws that directly contradict the *Qurān*. And finally, the Muslim Family Law makes verbal divorce invalid.

A closer examination of this rejection reveals that the Ulama are in fact incapable of grasping the merits of these reforms. Firstly, both the *Qurān* and the fiqh literature put greater emphasis on the sanctity of the institution of marriage. Fiqh literature explicitly categorizes marriage as a *civil contract* (Walther 1993: 55) and any contract especially where financial issues are involved is strictly treated as formal and official in the *Qurān* and fiqh literature. So marriage should be treated as such through proper documentation. The usefulness of this contract documentation is to be realized in the case of divorce. Therefore, when Islamic groups oppose the state law of "registration of marriage" the very spirit of the shariah is undermined. Secondly,

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[19] This woman`s bedroom is used for PROSHIKA school and she herself conducts the *Qurān* reading classes for other group of children in a neighborhood house.

the fiqh literature repeatedly refers to the institutionalized court system in dealing with divorce which means that public institution is a perfect organ to systematically deal with such civil issues, though this does not negate the existence and independent authority of Ulama. So, the claim of the opposing groups that "marriage and divorce are issues which the Ulama only are legitimate to deal with"[20] is seriously inconsistent with the shariah knowledge. Finally, their failure to understand the importance of "contract" in practical terms has made them unable to recognize the practical need for administrative innovation in dealing with marriage and divorce. It would not be inconsistent with the *Qurān* to administer the divorce procedures through stages under the jurisdiction of local public administrative authorities as long as the basic principles and spirit of divorce procedures are maintained through particular arrangements such as creating a local Ulama body to give its expert opinion. Their understanding that marriage and divorce are shariah issues and in the absence of an Islamic state the extralegal authority, the Ulama, have the sole right to deal with them is questionable.

Regarding the invalidity of verbal divorce according to the Muslim Family Law the understanding of the Ulama suffers from similar shortcomings. Firstly, the invalidity of verbal divorce is quite reasonable when marriage is actually regarded as a "contract" which requires written agreement and documentation. And a written contract cannot be nullified by a verbal utterance. Though there is the provision that triple successive utterance of divorce (*tin talaq*) at a time makes it legal, the *Qurān* terms it the worst way of doing so. So, for the greater public good, if the administration of divorce is brought under formal procedures and the strongly condemned practice of talaq (three talaqs at a time which is widespread in Bangladesh) is forbidden by law, then it probably does not go against shariah.

[20] Personal interview with different Ulama on various dates during fieldworks.

Secondly, the effectiveness of divorce after ninety days seems to be in accordance with shariah in the sense that shariah also recommends that the best way of divorce is through three intentions in three successive menstrual periods of wife (with certain conditions). These three menstrual periods amount to ninety days. So, this straight law can be further modified by accommodating the best-recommended procedure of divorce in the shariah laws, that is for example by notifying the chairman three times in three successive months instead of once to be effective for ninety days.

Hilla-Marriage:

Hilla-marriage,[21] which is prohibited by law, is another site of contention. The Ulama feel that the prohibition is a negation of the *Qurān*, but they fail to realize that the *Hilla* solution in the *Qurān* is not meant for the practices that prevail in Bangladesh. It is not a principle law, but a by-law which is clearly defined. But in Bangladesh it is grossly misused and the Ulama extend a tacit approval to it. Instead of imposing religious sanction to this irreligious practice they often legitimize it by the reasoning of the absence of an Islamic State: "when there is an Islamic state this practice can be stopped, and it is in the absence of an Islamic state that the NGOs are taking advantage of."[22] In fact the issue of Hilla-marriage creates the single most important point where NGOs and women's rights groups vehemently oppose the religious groups. NGOs rely on the legal provision of the Family Laws whereas the religious groups resort to the *Qurān*. However, it is found that in virtually all hilla-marrriage cases the fatwa is issued by half-educated or sometimes ignorant local Imams backed up by local village *matbars* (local elite) or

[21] It is a system according to the *Qurān* that says a divorced woman could be married to her first husband only and if she is divorced from her second marriage with a different person. However this could not be done in prearranged and mutual agreement, which is actually practiced in Bangladesh.
[22] Personal interview with the former Amir of Jamat-e-Islami, May 7, 2002.

even local union council members or chairmen. Some reports say that those Imams have merely crossed the secondary level of madrasa education and can hardly understand the Arabic text of the *Qurān* and the fiqh books (Khan 1996). Furthermore illiterate elders who happened to have performed Hajj sometimes issue fatwa on Hilla-marriage![23] But the Ulama`s silence and tacit approval allows this violation of the *Qurānic* law to continue.

Inheritance Law:

Islamists would argue that inheritance laws are clearly defined in the *Qurān* and that the entitlement is clearly quantified and unalterable (Ashrafi 1995). But the Muslim Family Law has made some drastic changes to the inheritance law. Furthermore, PROSHIKA demands for equal rights for women. So Islamists oppose both of them. BRAC however prefers to teach the Muslim Family Law in this regard without demanding equality in inheritance. The issue here is not how each of the contending parties rationalizes their argument and claims, but how they look at the *Qurānic* ordinance. PROSHIKA's claim and attitude towards inheritance laws, according to the Islamists are tantamount to rejection of the *Qurān* itself. It is for the same reason that the Islamists have rejected the Family Laws in their entirety. Probably the demand for the implementation of the female inheritance rights given in the *Qurān*, instead of asking for equal inheritance rights, would have been more effective and useful for grassroots women, because women are systematically denied even these rights!

Purdah:

The third point, *Purdah*, is the most obvious site of disagreement between the two contending parties. Though the

[23] This happened to be in the famous case which went to the high court in 2000 and made it declare issuance of all fatwa illegal which was ultimately postponed following violent resistance and bloodshed.

meaning of *Purdah*, its origin, and the extent to which it is influenced by religion and local culture are debated there is no doubt that the *Qurān* maintains a particular attitude towards the agency of women, and their status and role in the society. It clearly prescribes a particular set of behaviors for them which are subject to different interpretations (Barlas 2002; Mernissi 1975; Ahmed 1992; Tohidi & Batman 1998). The religious authorities legitimize its practical need and importance primarily on and by religious grounds, while NGO authorities explain the phenomenon primarily by structural imposition of patriarchy, saying that the values and forms attached to it by patriarchy are far greater than those by religion.

However, it seems to be the case that the Ulama interpret *Purdah* based on the framework of status quo, concerned mainly with religious morality, where they do not take the changing patterns of gender roles, structure of society, influence of urbanization, education of women, etc. into their consideration. Therefore, when NGOs oppose the system by calling it "Purdah Protha" (the system of *Purdah*) and "superstition," the Ulama find them to be going against religious prescriptions.

The Ulama's perception of *Purdah*, however, is seriously parochial.[24] Concerned primarily with social morality they think public mobility and the involvement of women in nontraditional activities outside the household along with men creates avenues for "opportunities of free and immoral mixing of sexes" leading to "demoralization of men and women." However, this concern with public demoralization is difficult to generalize due to the prevailing tendency of women to maintain modesty in attire on their own (in many cases by wearing Burka) when they venture into the public domain. Nonetheless, their particular objection seems to be against the NGO efforts to break the structural

[24] However, some Islamic parties, Jamat-e-Islami in particular give a relatively greater explanation of purdah which allows women's participation in outer home activities. See, Golam Azam, *Thoughts for Muslim Women* (Bangla), Dhaka: Adhunik Prokashoni, 2001.

demarcation and make women work in public visibility – "fieldwork." A typical example, one the Ulama often refer to, is the phenomenon of poor women cutting mud on the roadside. The Ulama interpret it from the perspective of a different moral theory—making mothers do such laborious jobs is a serious insult and mockery to their honor as "mothers." In contrast, NGOs would put the same picture in their annual reports with catchy captions like "empowerment of women" and "equality of sex."

And that is why when the Ulama are asked "what about women who work in government offices and banks" the answer is "that is similar to working in houses" implying within the four walls. Surprisingly, working in male environment here is not of much concern. Interestingly enough, such works are severely objected to in NGO offices. However, it is clear that the maintenance of attiral aspect of *Purdah* empowers a woman to cross the domestic boundary and appear in the public sphere. And the Ulama do not oppose this phenomenon either.

The foregoing discussion demonstrates that the religious authority's intellectual paradigm could not overcome the traditional mode of explanation of shariah. Production of knowledge is thus stagnant and its reconstruction is not attempted. They rely on the details and literal rules of the medieval body of knowledge. Yet they perceive that they alone are the legitimate people who can deal with the issue. It is undeniable that there are some provisions in the Muslim Family Laws which contradict the Qurānic sanctions, but they are amenable in favor of the shariah. NGOs have also failed to understand the effectiveness of reformulated family laws more in favor of the shariah for achieving rights for women who maintain deep religious beliefs.

Third Argument: Role-model Perception

That both empowerment agents and opposing groups act with fatal misperceptions against each other which either side tends not to concede and overcome through mutual engagement.

Anti-NGO literature and discussion with Ulama reveal that Islamic groups hold multiple perceptions about NGOs. First they categorically make all NGOs homogenous and agents of Christian missionaries. Second NGOs are Western economic neo-exploiters similar to those of British indigo planters in the subcontinent. Third, NGOs are engaged in subversive activities against the independence of the country. These show that their perceptions include religious, economic, and political dimensions.

However, it is clear that NGOs are not homogenous and development NGOs, especially BRAC and PROSHIKA, are not pursuing a missionary program. However, the perception of NGOs as economic exploiters is supported by at least some studies (Rahman 1999) given that many NGOs are merely in business. Besides, various repressive measures taken by NGOs in loan recovery, which the Ulama frequently refer to, are proven facts which resemble the repressions of medieval feudal lords (Rahman 1999:133). But such repressive aspects of NGOs would probably be easily overshadowed by the types and extent of the services they have been extending to the poor, even by the evaluation of the beneficiaries themselves: “yes they keep us under pressure and don’t listen to excuses, but that is also good for us, because we can be responsible and save.” At the same time it is also evident that the women bear the pressure silently due to their opportunity of easy access to cash-capital: “What can we say? They give us money, we have to bear such behaviors.” Thus freeing them from one patriarchy only makes them subordinate to another. Regarding the third point, the conspiracy of Christian missionaries, it is very speculative, though it is undeniable that missionaries are involved in religious conversion. The rise of the Christian population in the country

proves the fact. Different unsubstantiated hearsay and propaganda regarding missionary activities, NGOs' dependency on the money and expertise of the western Christians, whose political roles against the Muslims are considered "double-standard" make valid point for conspiracy theory for the Islamists. This was proven by the fact that none of the 17 Islamic leaders interviewed had ever read seriously about NGO development activities.

NGOs, on the other hand, and PROSHIKA in particular, do not maintain a positive image of religious groups either. NGOs bombard them with multiple derogatory terms such as *Moulobadi* (Fundamentalists), *Fatwabaz* (a pejorative notion for those who issue fatwa), *Dharma Byabshaye* (doing business with religion), *reactionary force*, *Ekattorer Dalal* (collaborators of 1971), *Swadhinotar Sartu* (enemies of independence), etc. (CBS: An Observation, 2001). Some of these terms are very political and sensitive. NGOs actually hold that religion is an "opposing force to development and women's liberation" under the pretext of patriarchy. They use patriarchy because doing so makes it more strategic and avoids direct antagonism and conflict. But the extent of religious influence on patriarchy is very obvious. Therefore, antagonistic attitudes toward religion, and toward the Ulama in particular, are very clear in their literature.
Besides, NGOs evaluate the Ulama very negatively. They tend not to recognize the numerous social services the Ulama and local religious authorities extend to poor people in their everyday lives which public authorities either cannot or tragically fail to provide. In a situation where health service, for instance, is not available or not accessible or costly impetus to preserve life would naturally impel poor people to seek handy solution at no or cheap cost from sources they trust for other reasons. Relying on Imams for religious healing, for example, thus must be interpreted from a practical context. So their social services like free education in madrasa or maktab that raises the literacy rate

(one of the NGOs` main concerns) must be evaluated from the contextual perspective. Instead, NGOs maintain a kind of negative attitude towards religious community. But this seems to be inappropriate on the part of NGOs precisely because their development and reform activities target those people (rural poor and women) who foster intimate relations with the religious authorities and maintain mutual interdependence for exchanging mutual services. Thinking structurally, the antagonistic attitude towards religious groups would lead to antagonizing those people and destabilizing the structure. Therefore, "we should not hit the system or society, rather we should take society along with us"[25] seems to be more practical than maintaining, "we want to create instability, we want to destabilize the society."[26]

The above discussion indicates that there exists a huge gap of knowledge about each other. Each fails to understand the other's real nature, and as a consequence fails to perceive their practical importance. Superficial knowledge, misperception, hearsay, unsubstantiated propaganda, attitude to indiscriminate generalization, derogatory remarks, perfection fantasy of knowledge, etc. leads to mutual conflict.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to identify and shed analytical light on some of the issues of NGO-led empowerment in Bangladesh that the Islamic groups perceive to be anti-Islamic. Related publications and personal interviews with the leading Islamic figures reveal that although unsophisticated in theorizing their arguments, their concerns run deep into philosophical and paradigmatic dimensions. The NGOs are involved in the empowerment of women in various dimensions: resources, power, relationships, and perceptions. To do this they need to address some issues regarding the social system, customs, laws,

[25] BRAC view. Interview with BRAC executive.
[26] PROSHIKA view. Informal discussion with a PROSHIKA executive.

and rights—personal, economic, social, and political. Obviously their reform initiatives ultimately go against the structural settings that are defined and reproduced by various but mutually reinforcing sociopolitical institutions. Any attempt to revise the structure would inevitably invite structural opposition. It is this structural power competition that leads the Islamic groups to oppose the intervening power brokers. There are several clear grounds that make the contending groups rationalize their arguments and legitimize their position or opposition. The following table identifies the major areas of contention with respective views.

Issues	NGO views	Islamic groups views
NGOs	Heterogeneous in aims	Homogenous in aims (deIslamization / Christianization)
Religion	Personal/spiritual	Personal/sociopolitical
Purdah	Patriarchal/superstition	Religious/moral
Marriage	Social contract/civil procedures	Religious contract/shariah laws
Divorce	Social problem/civil procedures	Religious/shariah procedures
Hilla-marriage	Social problem/women right	shariah issue
Women's mobility	Human rights/economism	Religious boundary/ Social/personal morality
Inheritance	Equal rights (PROSHIKA)	*Qurānic* quantification irreversible
Male – Female Interactions	Required for balanced development	defined by religious moral codes

It is also evident from the analysis that both sides produce a body of knowledge and counter-knowledge based on their respective views about life and society. These views are sometimes fundamentally contradicting and neither side is willing to consider a contextual revisiting of their thoughts. NGOs move for a *reformative destruction* of local customs, culture, religious beliefs and practices that they see as demeaning to women, while religious groups stand for *conformative reproduction* of the system without contextualizing the shariah

laws and taking the sociopolitical changes into consideration. Their respective mis/understandings towards each other leave much room for improvement and accommodation. Furthermore, since NGO empowerment activities include political awareness building as well as involvement in it, they make serious impacts on the NGO-religious dichotomy in Bangladesh. In the context of Bangladesh national political discourse, setting up NGO empowerment activities into the mainstream national political divide, might easily make NGOs vulnerable to partisan politics and therefore make these activities questionable. This aspect itself requires a different study.

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Fusion over the Airwaves: South Asians and Radio Pedagogy

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"Subversive music makers and users represent a different kind of intellectual" (Gilroy 1993:76)

South Asian identity has been surfacing in Canadian popular culture through music and film for over two decades now. In the early 1990's South Asian youth "day jams" were on the pop culture scene[1]. These dance parties featured South Asian fusion music, specifically Bhangra fusion. Since these early days, South Asian fusion, originally produced in Britain has taken on local dimensions in cities like New York, L.A. and Toronto. Amita Handa, a local Toronto DJ, explains that both the music and its generation "[are] not easily classifiable. Not 'pure' anything--not quite 'black' nor 'white' nor 'brown'" and describes the subtext of this music and its fashion scene as "a valiant celebration of racial identity" (Handa 1996:299). I consider this kind of cultural scene as a creative site of maneuvering by a generation of youth interested in re-rooting themselves in a metropolis like Toronto but with a South Asian difference. The young Dr. Das, member of the popular London based band known as Asian Dub Foundation[2], makes explicit that many young South Asians make *initial* contact with notions of South Asian-ness in the fusion of music re-mixes.

In this paper I examine the journey of homemaking for second and third generation South Asian youth who return "home" in a variety of ways through popular culture. I am specifically concerned with the way music and DJ-ing become sites for such re-routing and how radio pedagogy can be an

interventional practice of creating and reformulating community. This kind of cultural production is performed on Toronto's community radio station, CKLN. Here, identities and communities are imagined and mobilized through a local community radio program, *Masala Mixx*. A close reading of the pedagogical performative practices of the two South Asian female DJs of this show exemplifies the expansion of public space and the imagining of communities.

Fusion Music: Radio as Discourse

Although a different project than mine, Giroux's analysis of conservative radio talk shows[3] articulates the double edgedness of expanding sites of cultural and pedagogical work. In his work, he examines the use of talk radio by right wing "intellectuals" and how they are able to manipulate public spaces of "entertainment" while simultaneously getting their political rhetoric "out there". [4] This study is informed by Giroux's interest in how "mass-mediated cultural forms function as teaching machines, pedagogical apparatuses that in their attempt to amuse and entertain simultaneously inform and impart knowledge and values about identities, social relationships, and what it means to desire"(Giroux 1996:152). He asserts that radio and television are critical sites of instruction and learning (Ibid.)

Jodi Berland's work on radio describes it as "a placeless but still spatially defined third space" and her discussion on music describes it as having "no boundaries…it is more accurate…to say that it re-defines them (Berland 1990/91). CKLN's commitment to being an "alternative" radio space for those who belong to disenfranchised communities in the mainstream media helps to create this third space. Berland also draws attention to how "radio is expected to accommodate itself technologically and discursively to every situation" (Berland 1990:179). It is the technology as well as the very intangible

nature of airwaves that reaches very tangible sites/situations and accommodates these spaces/places and make it possible to transcend many limitations.

This air space along with the music is able to connect the listener "to others who are not present but who are evoked or imagined through the music (Berland 1990/91). Differing ideologies, identities and communities are able to "tune in" and respond to moments of a program like *Masala Mixx* very literally from their own particular locations. For those of us who are multi-located this does not demand any relinquishing of our multiple positions. Berland's description of music also suggests the usefulness of it-- to be able to accommodate often contentious ideologies. Simultaneously, music surpasses boundaries and re-defines them. This is of particular importance to the diasporic subject who must re-root herself through different "routes" in her new homes (Gilroy 1992). I suggest that these new routes can be found in precisely this kind of fusion music that is being produced by brown youth[5] and in the ways South Asian DJs use this music to imagine community and address cultural production of not only music but of the self.

Amita Handa, producer of the show and one of the weekly DJs, describes the uniqueness of *Masala Mixx* and the diverse weekly audience--those who are being evoked or imagined.

*One of the most interesting and exciting things about Masala Mixx, I have found, is the music. Largely because we play such a cross section of music, generationally, from the oldies, classical, old Hindi films, ghazals, qawaalis (and I refer to this as old skool[6])***,** *we have the auntie and uncle types listening and every week there are always a few who call in who have just discovered the show or who have been long time listeners. Then of course we have a whole contingent of young people (teenagers) from all parts of the city, there's a Scarborough posse, a Brampton posse and a Mississauga posse[7]. Then there's*

folks like me who never had this kind of music at home but due to racism did not want to associate with it and never really had access to any spaces that celebrated it, so now there's the place of memory and nostalgia and making up for lost years. And then there's progressive white folks who want to open their minds and ears and then there's the white folks who jump on this kind of music cuz it's the latest "in" thing, cool, exotic, etc. And there is a wide range of people in terms of ethnic mix, but this is something we are constantly trying to work on, cuz Hindi film music tends to dominate and is a kind of music that actually cuts across and into a lot of communities, as you know Bollywood[8] *has had a tremendous impact in parts of Africa, Afghanistan, the West Indies, etc. And there's a large constituent of taxi drivers, simply cuz there's a lot of South Asian taxi drivers and they're sitting in the car.*

I understand the politicization of music to be a method by which cultural and geographical boundaries are re-drawn and traversed. The DJs use music programming as a pedagogical tool to create (third) spaces in which multi-located South Asians may dialogue. Although radio technology might limit the listener-ship to the Metro-Toronto area, radio as discourse enables a notion of community that is not bound by geographical location. For example, *Masala Mixx's* broad array of music includes Bhangra fusion, classical Punjabi folk, Hindi movie tracks, Bengali fusion, Qawaali, Tamil music, Calypso, Dance Hall, Reggae and R&B. Bhangra fusion however, has had the most popularity and airplay of all South Asian music in the mainstream media.

A unique example of how radio as discourse surpasses geographical and other boundaries is the South Asian taxi drivers Amita mentions. Their spatial mobility as taxi drivers embodies how belonging to a sense of community is not spatially or geographically bound. However, how South Asian taxi drivers

enter into the *Masala Mixx* "music scene" is often complicated by class, location and immigrant status. Although many of them enter the Canadian context through a "blue collar" occupation, many of them are either Punjabi farmers or educated professionals "back home". They are often dis-connected from any previous occupational identity they might have had "back home". They ironically come in contact with much of the "Canadian" population but still spend most of their long day/night shifts alone. Therefore, as an example of the diverse *Masala Mixx* listenership they exemplify how differently located South Asians are able to "tune in" to *Masala Mixx* from their particular diasporic experiences.

The Politicization of Music

Bhangra, conventionally, specifically refers to a kind of folk music from Punjab (which of course as a region is now in both Pakistan and India). The heartbeat or signature of the music being in the drumbeat accompaniment of the dhol and or dholak[9]*. However, here in the West, bhangra has popularly come to be a catch-all phrase which describes any kind of Asian fusion. This, I think, came about by the mainstream media's interpretation, renaming and intervention into the process. So, therefore, bhangra fusion by the mainstream would be any kind of asia sounding music mixed with any kind of western beats, rhythms or melodies. (Amita Handa Interview 1998)*

Traditionally, Punjabi folk music has been linked with harvest festivals, weddings or other festivals of the agricultural state of Punjab. Images of fecund, earthy harvesting rituals and celebratory dance and music of Punjab are metaphorically tied to notions of sexuality. Notions of sexuality are further complicated in *fusion*-bhangra by the mixing of "Black" music beats and lyrics to Punjabi folk. This in itself is a powerful resistance as it gives expression to reclaiming the power of

sexuality that has been distorted in the over-sexualization of Blacks and the denial of sexuality for South Asians. The playing of music then functions via radio pedagogy to instruct people about sexuality, which is a crucial part of community making. *Masala Mixx* teaches without teaching. Further, this also serves another purpose**,** perhaps more specifically for the DJs and community members like the DJs. Although there is no overt homosexual content within the music, the acknowledgement of the sexual implications of the music opens up the discourse of sexuality. For example, the DJs of the show make explicit their openness to discuss issues around sexual orientation. CKLN also openly advertises for Gay and Lesbian community events without discrimination when these community announcements are broadcast through the day's programming. This type of manoeuvring and creating of liveable spaces is consistent with what Walcott acknowledges as the "ways in which our actions, desires, and dreams must fashion a community as one that is needed" (Walcott 1995:218).

Furthermore, the tradition of punjabi folk as a vehicle for political commentaries also continues in the diaspora. Songs have been written about the living conditions of immigrants, the desire to return home in face of racism in host countries and on the contorted relationship between Britain and the members of her former colonies. An example of this are the lyrics of the following song which are featured on the soundtrack of Gurrinder Chadha's (1990) documentary "I'm British But…":

My friend how will you ever thrive
In this strange and loveless land
Where hatred mocks you at every turn
Where souls are as cold as ice
Where the very soul is contaminated
Oh my friend, you've come to this England
Leaving your Punjab…

This desire for the "return" (Hall 1988) is then made possible through "memory and nostalgia". However, fusion music permits the young South Asian in the West to "visit" a sense of home through nostalgia while at the same time creating new "homes" for themselves in their present location. The mixing of music is representative of this process. One cannot ignore, however, that this music is predominately being mixed with "Black" music and this in turn complicates notions of the "return to home". The "contagion" of "Blackness" –no home can have blackness—therefore, not only complicates the return but also complicates "home". This also advances our understanding of the Guyanese and/or Trinidadian experience of South Asians. This experience is laden with "mixing" and notions of their inferior positioning in a South Asian hierarchy. In other words, the hegemonic South Asian elites construct Caribbean South Asians as having *made* themselves inferior by their mixing.

There is no easy connection between the "brown" experience and that of Blacks in North America. For example, in their efforts to be heard in the political arena many South Asians buy into the North American notion of the "model minority" and put themselves on the ideological side of the white majority bourgeoisie, thus becoming an active participant in the ongoing racial oppression of African Americans (Bhattacharjee 1992).

Interestingly the community radio station's own conceptualization of "alternative" is closely tied to notions of Black resistance. Quite simply, people of African descent have one of the longest histories in the West of oppression and resistance. Also, it is Black expressive culture through which many North American youth of colour have found a voice of resistance. What does this shift or blending mean for (young) South Asians? How might their present experience of being "othered" create new political alliances? I posit that South Asian youth have an opportunity here to recall a history of political

cooperation and cultural exchange between Asians and Africans (Prashad 2001: 70-96).

Amita describes the historical roots of Soca and Calypso as being a form of resistance for many Africans and South Asians in the "West Indies":

Soca is a kind of branch off from Calypso music. During colonial rule in Trinidad and Tobago, one expression of resistance for black peoples came in the form of calypso, which is kind of like a talking song. Calypso almost always focuses on delivering a political commentary, criticizing, mocking, holding accountable, poking fun at those in power. Soca is an often beat [sic] of calypso and is kind of the fast, dancey, club, pop version of calypso. As for chutney, and I don't know its actual roots, but just from observation (and I haven't actually done research on this), it seems to be a form of music that was kept by the Indians who were brought to the West Indies,[10] it seems to have actually been in some kind of bhajan[11] form originally. Soca chutney again is the mix between chutney style and soca beats which gives it a faster more danceable rhythm.

These genres of music must be seen as what Africans have *made* of the New World (Mudimbe 1994). This is analogous to Velma Pollard's (1994) assertion that Rasta talk is an emergent New World language. This is a language of resistance being *made* in the New World. Amita's description also links various forms of expressive culture, thus pointing to a long history of cultural borrowings and resistances, denying essentialism and positing the fragility of hegemonic elaborations.

Therefore, the role of DJing and the function of music on a program like *Masala Mixx* continue to adhere to Tricia Rose's notion of polyvocal conversations. The DJs as *public intellects* truly do make spaces for "radical identificatory political possibilities" (Walcott 1995:76). The political goals of the DJs

are to disrupt notions of tradition, “fixed cultures”, generational gaps, and ethnic and geographical boundaries. This is achieved through the acts of “blending” and “fusion”. This pedagogy of influx and fluidity is demonstrative of the experience of many diasporic peoples. This understanding is consistent with Hall’s elucidation that the diasporic subject is continually recreating him/herself anew.

I think the politics comes from the act of blending, first in terms of the fusion music we play. This sends a message about the notion of tradition and breaks the normative notion of tradition which equates it with "fixed" notions of culture and fusion music disrupts this notion by tampering with the boundaries of old, new, and culture. Also the politics of the music comes from blending together, linearly, different genres of music in one show and here we cut both boundaries of separateness in terms of ethnic divisions and geographical divisions as well as divisions of age by blending "old school" with new school, ghazals with R&B, Hindi fusion, for example, or Tamil, to the backdrop of reggae beats. (Amita Handa Interview 1998)

Amita demonstrates how music crosses and re-draws boundaries. She does not only talks about geographical boundaries among diasporic South Asians. This DJ includes inter-group boundaries of those living in the so-called Third World and boundaries drawn within Western South Asian communities and indicates how cultural production in Toronto is a part of a wider diasporic dialogue.

Yes there are Indian/South Asian communities out there. If by your question you're asking about a mainstream one, I would say that there is a mainstream conservative, Hindu, Indo/Hindi-centric/ North Indian, straight, middle class community out there. And where do we fit in, in relation to them? I often wonder how they perceive us and/or engage with the show (and they

definitely listen to the show still). And we cross the boundaries in many ways in terms of the music we play, the topics and discussions we take up, the community announcements we make, etc. I think they seem to put up with us because our binding ingredient is the music and we give them enough of what they want so as to also hold their interest.

Masala Mixx attempts to create spaces for not only "marginalized" communities that are viewed as marginalized by the mainstream but also those that are marginalized within the Toronto South Asian community. The South Asian community is therefore not understood as a homogeneous ethnic group with one political voice but rather a heterogeneous one that internally has hegemonic practices. It is characteristic of much of the immigrant experience to be conservative, to hold on to fixed notions of culture in order to seem less "other" to the mainstream and to be less "othered" by the mainstream. This is a group of immigrants who have already moved from one neo-colonial experience to another –already mixed. This resistance is therefore, a re-engagement with the already experienced colonization in different spaces and places. Although the term South Asian has been utilized as an umbrella term encompassing many bodies and cultures for a larger political voice/agenda (Vissanji 1996), this type of "strategic essentialism" (Spivak 1993) glosses over the diversities within such a heterogeneous group of peoples with such varying diasporic experiences. On *Masala Mixx*, Amita points out that it is the music that is the binding ingredient. Through the power of music the self is transformed as boundaries are traversed and re-drawn. Music is also used to sustain interest and soothe diverse ideologies and identity politics as well as to challenge existing prejudices within and among communities. The DJs' music programming functions then to produce a vision of "new interpretive

communities" that are able to "tolerate difference and dissent" (Bhabha in Walcott 1995:166-167).

In considering how the DJs work both with and against categories of difference, Amita posits,

I think we walk a tight rope sometimes. Because we don't just want to preach to the converted and stay comfortable and ghettoized. So we work within by finding common-ness in the music, and, surprisingly enough, sometimes Hindi film music is able to do this. Bollywood has had such a profound far-reaching impact that it can at times bring very disparate, other separate South Asian communities together...it is an industry and a producer of culture that is relatable and accessible to people within parts of Africa, Afghanistan, parts of the Middle East, the West Indies, North America, England etc. But of course this common-ness also lends itself to a kind of monopoly over sound and that's why we attempt to work against this category by also including Tamil, chutney/soca/calypso Pakistani music, etc… how are the tensions and contradictions of diasporic identities negotiated? I think by mixing all the music up and not in any particular order, like we don't play Tamil music at such and such time or bhangra at another that it forces people to stay tuned, to listen, perhaps waiting for the music they like but in the meantime opening their ears to other sounds.

Berland notes that radio locates us both as same and as other (Berland 1990/1991). On *Masala Mixx,* listening to Punjabi folk and then to Tamil locates us as same and other all in a moment. *"Mixing all the music up and not in any particular order"* is also strategic on the part of the DJs as it asks their audiences *"to stay tuned."* Here, the transcendence is occurring in the imminence (Gilligan 1982).

At the same time, in order to work against Bollywood's monopolization of sound and imagination, the DJs of *Masala Mixx* "mix it up" once again by including sounds of the South

Asian diaspora in a more expansive way. Furthermore, the music itself mutates into something else as it is fused with soca, calypso, reggae, hip hop and dance beats. The infusion of "Black" music also forces South Asians and others to pay attention to the taboos of ethnic or cultural mixing that has a long history of racist intentions (refer back to earlier discussion of contamination of darkness). Gilroy observes that South Asian artists in England such as "Apache Indian and Bally Sagoo's attempts to fuse Punjabi music and language with reggae music and ragga muffin style [brought]…the debates about the authenticity of these hybrid cultural forms to an unprecedented pitch" (Gilroy 1993:82). The production of such fusion music raises questions around cultural fluidity, authenticity, hybridity and cultural borrowing in the South Asian community. It attracts and keeps people talking—keeps the culture "alive"—therefore endorsing an active notion of cultural production. *Masala Mixx* is deliberate in its intervention to keep this fermenting alive in Toronto. This kind of movement, crossing of boundaries, cultural borrowing and fluidity demonstrates Lipsitz's understanding of popular music as "nothing if not dialogic, the product of an ongoing historical conversation" (Lipsitz in Rose 1994:148). The production of such fusion music demonstrates how "music [can be] used as a source of diasporic dialogues" (Walcott 1995:84) and that "all forms of culture are in a process of hybridity" (Bhabha in Rutherford 1990:209).

Questions to be considered further are how are young South Asians hybridizing Canadian-ness through their cultural production? How is the mixing of South Asian music with Western dance melodies, calypso tunes and reggae beats transforming the Canadian cultural/music scene in the realm of popular culture. The music programming is, however, one component of radio pedagogy. Dialogue between DJs and listeners also play an important role in how community and identity is produced.

Moments of Community and Identity Production

The following are two moments from *Masala Mixx* that I believe demonstrate how identity is "performed" and community "practiced". These moments are conjunctural in nature and illustrate how varying notions of community and identity are mediated by the DJs and listeners of the show. The call and response feature of the show creates an immediacy possible only through popular cultural forms such as DJ-ing and community radio programming. This is unique in its role in creating counter and oppositional voices to mainstream media. The intersectionalities within identity production are apparent here. The dialogic relationship of individual, inter-group and intra-group dynamics is best illustrated by such moments. These moments of "talk" are created in conjunction with audience response.

Celia Haig-Brown defines "*testimonia"*, as "a written form based on spoken words, [that] has been developed as a vehicle of communication for people who have limited or no access to knowledge distribution" (Haig-Brown1998). In her book Writing as Witness Beth Brant uses "testimony" as a way through which she documents her life stories as a Mohawk woman. Through her essays, Brent relates "testimonies" of oppression, colonization, sexual and gender discrimination, survival, love, triumph, struggle, pain and pleasure. Before turning to writing Beth Brant "talked her stories". Similarly, the kinds of conjunctural moments that I believe are "performed" on *Masala Mixx* come in the way of "talking stories"--testimonies. As indicated once by a volunteer and *Masala Mixx* listener, *Masala Mixx* is one place where he and others can *"just talk about our lives."* Haig-Brown's discussion also describes the narrative power of testimony to come "from the metaphor of witnessing" (Haig-Brown 1998:4). This is of particular importance to how conjunctural moments are created on *Masala*

Mixx. The DJ's or callers are not simply "talking their lives" in isolation. Rather, the significance of their *testimonios* lies in the fact that these are multi-layered narratives--intertextual. The artists, the DJs, the listeners, myself as researcher/writer and the reader of this piece are all a part of this process of giving importance to *testimonia* by the act of witnessing. Therefore "talking lives", *testimonia* and witnessing become a part of the process from which community-making is negotiated and determined. The moments of production, thus, are produced and reproduced at many levels of identification, providing an example of what Mannette's writes, "identity is found, [and performed] not primarily in the self, but in the group" (Mannette in Clarke 1991:13).

Moment One: The Butterfly Story and Other Disruptions

During one week's broadcast DJ Zahra relates a story about a young girl and a butterfly. She talks of how we have so much personal power originating from *"a lot of the struggle we all have to go through*". She narrates this story as *"a little inspirational"* story about the *"themes of struggle, endurance, perseverance and the freedom and joy that comes with that"*.

Zahra describes a little girl who could not relate to the things other children played with, like *"Barbies and Power Rangers"* and so she spent most of her time outside with nature and befriending the animals. One day this young girl found a caterpillar and became fascinated with it. She took the caterpillar home with her. She made a little matchbox home for the caterpillar and tried to make it feel comfortable by surrounding it with grass and twigs. She watched and loved the caterpillar every day. One day, returning from school, she saw the caterpillar *"intertwined in a web-like structure*" and became frantic and asked her mother what was wrong with the caterpillar. Her mother explained that this was a natural part of

life for the caterpillar. It cocoons and once it is ready *"it will break out of its shell"* and become a butterfly that will fly. It will have beautiful wings with gorgeous colours, *"purples, oranges, reds and it will come out really strong and really alive"*. The little girl became very excited and thought she would encourage the caterpillar to cocoon quickly and become a butterfly. One day, she saw a crack in the cocoon and thought that the butterfly would soon be here. She used to come home from school and consistently watch the crack, hoping it would get bigger. *"It wasn't getting bigger and so she was thinking, "what if the caterpillar is stuck and the butterfly cannot get out now?" So, she looked at it and she cracked it open"*. Part of the process for a butterfly while it is in its shell is to grow stronger wings in order for it to break out of its shell on its own. Therefore, though the girl thought she was helping the butterfly *"out if its cage or its imprisonment"* she in fact ended up damaging the wings of the butterfly. Zahra relates the moral of the story as

You think you may be helping people when they are in struggle and trying to get out of it, but that is not necessarily the case because we all need to struggle and we all need to grow, and we all need that strength to carry ourselves through our lives because in the end that is all we really have...so, I don't know if that meant anything to anybody but it is kind of relevant in my life right now. So, if anybody has any comments as to what they've done to get through their struggle in their lives I would love to hear the comments and then maybe we can engage in that on air…so please dial in…

Zahra begins this story to relate to her audience her own experience with struggle. She ends this story again stating that this is relevant to her own life and asks her audience if this is something relevant to them. I examine this moment as a pedagogical intervention on the part of Zahra since her invocation of a kind of double consciousness (Du Bois 1989)

suggests that living in the margins is not only an experience of oppression but is also a vantage point from which individual power and strength are cultivated. Furthermore, her testimonial approach provides a structure to her pedagogical intervention. The story is used to illustrate personal and communal struggle, but her framing of the story "as a personal one" creates an intimacy and connection between the individual experience and a cultural/communal one. Her asking for caller response in turn connects her again to those listeners "out there" making her story resonate between individual self and cultural self. She pulls away from her own *"cocoon"* and matchbox room of a DJ booth and connects with the larger South Asian community of listeners. If we think of Zahra as a carrier of her community or cultural identity, another kind of dimension is added to the call and response technique employed by the DJs. It is not simply a checking device but rather a witnessing of individual as well as cultural production and re-production. The metaphor of the caterpillar turning into a butterfly assists here in envisioning how identity and community is then produced through negotiation and witnessing. This process however, is uniquely made possible by the technological realities of radio.

For *Masala Mixx* listeners specifically, this story might point us towards a sense of understanding and patience for second and third generation South Asians who are developing and struggling as a community. Her discussion around this story focuses on the need for time and space for personal and cultural development and reflection. Although the listeners of *Masala Mixx* vary greatly in age, the South Asian youth who are the producers of the music are my central focus. If adolescence is viewed as a marker of change and a time of development[12], then this story of personal struggle carries again a double meaning for such minority youth in their Canadian context. I would like to suggest that these youth, at times, may seem to be dealing with their individual struggle, they do however, carry within them a

cultural one. In other words, their individual struggles have collective consequences. These negotiations are also mediated by racism, ethnic differences, sexual orientation, gender specificities and so forth. I do not subscribe to a notion of adolescence as necessarily a time for personal crisis and do not conceptualize the adolescents of South Asian parents engaged in more of a cultural and generational conflict than their "white" counterparts. Young "white" teens are no more or no less engaged in "clashes" with their parents than other minority youth and therefore, the myth of cultural conflict among minority youth is not a part of this analysis (Handa 1997). I reject this type of "othering" and notion of personal crisis that has been a part of our conceptualization of youth and specifically minority youth[13]. However, the development of South Asian youth is conceptualized through the process of "othering" in a Canadian context and this kind of oppression does affect their own struggles as individuals and members of a cultural and ethnic minority.

The colonial and neo-colonial experience is very much intertwined with the diasporic experience. This "butterfly story" may broadly raise questions of the disruption of "natural" progression and industrialization by colonialism and the importing of imperialism not only to Asia but also to the personal and collective experience of the diaspora. Brah suggests that the postcolonial and diasporic experience/theory jostle one another to create new "theoretical creolization". These theoretical constructs constitute a point of "confluence and intersectionality" and from these insights we are able to produce "analytical frames capable of addressing multiple, intersecting, axes of differentiation" (Brah 1996:210). As stated earlier, the intent of the story can/is played out in multiple interpretations/intersections for not only the storyteller but also for its audience. The diaspora, thus, is not a descriptive term but a theoretical construct that is able to envision the lived experience of those occupying multiple spaces. The postcolonial

subject is one that carries with them the history of colonialism – "the hybrid, the exiled, the dislocated, the multi-located –'the post-colonials'" (Ibid). South Asians are peoples who carry with them memories (Fentress & Wickham 1992) of a colonial past and constitute the postcolonial subject. The relation between the postcolonial and diasporic experience becomes "mixed" into a new third space in which identity formation is produced. *Masala Mixx* and the DJs imagining of community is a place for such "new" identity formation in a Torontonian setting. Zahra's personal story is understood as part of a story of cultural struggle.

On such a program individual and diverse diasporic and postcolonial experiences become mappings/processes of different and hybrid forms of identity production. This, in turn, allows for a more expansive and inclusive notion of community. However, how this is realized is not necessarily by a substantive product of community. Rather, I suggest that it is the *process* which is expansive. It is the *imagining* of community that is able to "withstand difference and dissent" (Bhabha in Walcott 1995:166-67), and that enables "forms of solidarity and identification which make common struggle and resistance possible but without suppressing the real heterogeneity of interests and identities" (Hall 1988:41).

Zahra's conceptualization of survival is radical in that she expresses that alongside struggle, endurance, and perseverance are freedom and joy. This is a new and different way of conceptualizing the difficulties of living in the margins. CKLN itself, although inscribed and invested in speaking from the margins, as a station expresses its joy and sense of freedom existing within that space. However, in speaking from the margins CKLN is contriving disruptions itself. I posit that the DJs do not and cannot infer a product from their work, nor is that their intent. Rather, their politics lie in the creation, the desire, for the…disruption! This analysis then turns the story of the

Butterfly on its head. However, it is this kind of conceptualization, one in which other possibilities emerge, that is the intent and outcome of such dialogue on community radio –a "third space" if you will.

Moment Two: The Spreading Virus Chutney Style

In this conjunctural moment Amita's response to a community issue raises questions of identity that are mediated by religion and place but simultaneously illustrates the politicization of music. She responds to a magazine that she obtained from a local Hindu temple. In this magazine there is an important community message that the producers of the magazine would like to give out to all the *"ladies and gentlemen"* of the Hindu community. Amita reads:

'There is a very serious virus spreading amongst our people for a very long time. It is past high time that we put an immediate stop to this spreading virus. What is this virus that is causing a complete disgrace to our children, grandchildren, grandparents, ourselves, and our respected community? That virus is the filthy word chutney which is not our culture nor our dharma[14] [Zahra is heard laughing in the background]. It is disgusting, degrading to our family and society to tell our loving nanni [grandmother] to "whine down babe" and our bhouji [grandfather] to "lotela"[bend down low]. Which sane man would publicly do this dirty act? Do you want to walk the right path? The path of the Ramayan or Gita[15]. Do you want to stop the decay of values of our society? Do you want our children to learn how to pray? How can we expect them to appreciate our noble dharma or do you want to replace dharma with chutney?' So this is the message that is in this particular magazine. And I just wanted to say that I myself of Hindu background am a supporter of chutney music and I am about to play one right now. And if you have any

comments about this particular one just have to warn you though don't whine down too much to this next track…

She then proceeds to play chutney music not only for the next track, but any regular listener would note she begins the next four shows with the same music. The "public" reading of this message is a radical pedagogical intervention on the part of Amita. Zahra's reaction on air also illustrates clearly the political standpoint of both DJs on the exclusion of Chutney music from the larger South Asian context. This defiance against a community institution is a radical one in that they carve out their own identity politics in direct contrast to another community's response to such an issue. This illustrates that the intent of these two DJs is not necessarily to console, soothe, or endorse all community interests but rather to challenge and create friction within/among the community and therefore, to force dialogue on the parts of their diverse listeners. They are recasting friction as desired and enhancing.

It is important to recognize that the magazine Amita quotes from is also resisting. It is invested in notions of cultural purity that resist "mixing" as a result of fear and loss. Subsequently, M*asala Mixx* is also excluding because the nature of the text is interested in closure and static notions of community. This pedagogical intervention must be a painful one because the DJs *are* rejecting something even though their politics are one of inclusion and fluidity.

Chutney, a form of music that comes for the "West Indies", is produced by those with South Asian ancestry living in the diaspora. The music has a fast moving beat with Hindi vernacular interspersed throughout. The kind of dancing associated with this music is sensual and sexually suggestive with a lot of hip and "whining" motion.

The message from the temple magazine is ironic since this temple has a high population of Guyanese Hindus that have

probably grown up with this kind of music. The temple places high emphasis on the translation of Sanskrit scriptures, and the rituals and ceremonies are translated into English for the majority Guyanese constituents. The message itself has a preaching tone that suggests that there is a "right way" of being Hindu. This type of propagation of Hinduism for many people of Guyanese descent demonstrates the real internal struggles amongst South Asians to retain a sense of identity distinct from others in their new migratory homes. Although this kind of essentialism can be viewed as survival tactics against the acculturation and assimilation process that occurs for many immigrants, it also illustrates the internal taboos of the community. Questions are raised about the "mixing" among South Asians and others in their new homes, specifically with those of African descent. The fear of the "Black" contagion complicates the experience of South Asians from the "West Indies" and specifically places Guyanese and Trinidadian South Asians on the lower rungs of South Asian hierarchy. Conceptualizations of what it means to be a "real" Indian or a "real" Hindu re-inscribe practices of self-loathing in this community. Ideas of purity of blood, racial discrimination, and the impact of colonialism and slave trading all function to distort cultural borrowing and production. Religion becomes the marker of purists' notions of "Indian-ness or Hinduism". It is also suggestive of the internal discrimination among South Asians from the continent and the South Asian diaspora. The closer one is to the "motherland" (India) the more purely one is Indian/South Asian. It is also indicative of the hegemonic practices of Indian Hindus that have for much of South Asians' history in Canada dictated what the South Asian will look like. This is a light skinned, middle-class North Indian educated in the Western way. Thus, Amita expands notions of South Asian and the "canon" of acceptability by disrupting the impact of hegemonic practices of North Indian Hindus. She emphasizes the struggles of a scattered peoples that here, in Canada, must re-

name, re-create and resist internal discriminatory practices in a kind of cohesive diversity.

Conclusion

In that contradictory space between the identity evoked in language and constituted in sound lies radio. (Berland 1990/1991:10)

Radio technology, community radio politics and specifically radio as a space for discourse are all salient constructions that demonstrate the possibilities of radio pedagogy in popular culture. The performative use of radio, music and lived experience become pedagogical tools. By questioning how and what radio technology permits in the way of cultural production I conclude that radio is but one "route" through which diasporic peoples and communities can revisit their own historical "roots" as well as re-root themselves in their new "homes". Radio technology uniquely permits ways to connect to notions of communities that are multiple, diverse, and distinct. Further, for those living in the Toronto South Asian diaspora radio allows for connections to be made and new interpretive communities to be produced simultaneously. Those [listeners] who are multi-located can "tune in" to notions of South Asian-ness from their present and particular location(s). The intangible airwaves become metaphoric mappings of multiple negotiations and the ambivalence of desire.

The DJs' interaction with community listeners and multiple community agendas represent the possibilities of discourse that are able not only to withstand heterogeneity but encourage it. The DJs' own politics are negotiated through this dialogue as they investigate for themselves multiple representations of South Asian-ness. Their politics of fluidity and inclusion sometimes require them to exclude, re-interpret and re-

create liveable spaces for themselves. Nonetheless, they adequately illustrate that it is the re-working of difference that they desire, not its suppression.

My interpretations and analysis of fusion music and cultural borrowing also demonstrate how second generation South Asians are able simultaneously to negotiate desire and nostalgia along with their new cultural context to create and re-create what is South Asian. My discussion on cultural borrowing aims to incite new understandings of cultural fermentation and disruptions enacted through radio pedagogy. Through my analysis of *Masala Mixx,* as a space/place for individuals to "perform" their lives, I investigate how moments of (cultural) production are in fact moments of disruption, fermentations and "mixes". My descriptions of the DJs illustrate how they are the carriers of a new sense of community which, like themselves, are never fixed and always fluid. Therefore, through the broadcasting of their lives, interests, and politics the DJs as "public intellectuals" venture to transgress political, socio-economic, geographical and cultural boundaries. From discussions of cultural purity, cultural "mixing", and community making arise more uncomfortable discussions around the fear of "tainted blood", fermentation, and exclusion. The DJs' pedagogy is one that is interested in not more expansive products of community production; rather the interest is in an expansive process of community making.

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[1]. Day jams are dances conducted by South Asian DJs in large warehouses within suburban locations of large South Asian populations.

[2] On March 14th, 1998 a local Toronto television show "New Music" featured a segment on the "Asian Underground". The Asian Underground is described as the new Asian music of London, England. Asian is the popular term in Britain to describe South Asia's diaspora.

[3] .Giroux, H. A. "Talking Heads and Radio Pedagogy: Microphone Politics and the New Public Intellectuals." In *Fugitive Cultures: Race, Violence, and Youth* New York: Routledge, 1996.

[4]. The pedagogical practice of the use of "talk radio" in this way is described by Giroux like this: "The pedagogy of talk radio employs a cultural populism rooted in "plain" talk, engages national and local issues that often are not covered in the mainstream media, and offers both extended dialogue and fast-paced, witty improvisations. Wrapped in an anti-intellectual ferocity, conservative talk show hosts refuse the discourse of the objective, distanced professional; "voice". Instead, they fill the airwaves with impassioned speech, provide moral anchors in an unraveling world, and assert their ideological position in an up-front manner." (pg. 155)

[5] The term South Asian is a literary and political term mainly imported from the academy. Most South Asians refer to themselves within their various communities by their regional locations such as Punjabi or Bengalis, "qualified by religion, sect, caste, etc. " (Vissanji 1996: 116). In this paper I have often referred to South Asian youth in the more popular vernacular "brown". I hope to put forth a politicization of the term, brown, in the same vein as Black has at times come to mean political alignment for those of colour. For example, Black Asian is a term in Britain that is used to identify Asians of colour as well as indicate alignments with the Caribbean, African or Black population.

[6] Please note that since this interview was conducted via internet, I have included the written form of the interview as close to the original text as possible to indicate to the reader the emphasis the interviewee intended in her response.

[7] "Posse" is usually used in teenage vernacular to mean "gang" however, it playfully refers to one's own kind or group of friends.

[8] Bombay holds India's largest film industry and the name Bollywood is a play on North America's Hollywood. The influence of Bollywood's films and film songs decentres western notions of cultural production. Its far reaching impact on neighbouring countries as well as the West firstly denounces the West as the most industrious place for cultural production and

secondly, illustrates the movement and impact of expressive culture from Asia.

[9] These are traditional Punjabi drums. They are either played on the floor or attached by a strap around the neck. They are played either with the palm or traditional drum stick.

[10] For the migratory patterns of Indo-Caribbean South Asians see Subhash Ramcharan's "The Social, Economic and Cultural Adaptations of East Indians from the British Caribbean and Guyana to Canada." In *Overseas Indians*. Edited by George Kurian and Ram Srivastava. New Delhi: Vikas, 1983.

[11] Religious hymns.

[12] For more on conceptualization of adolescence see Munoz, Victoria. *Where "Something Catches": Work, Love, and Identity in Youth.* New York: State University of New York Press, 1995.

[13] See Lesco, Nancy "Past, Present and Future Conceptions of Adolescence" In *Educational Theory*. 46:4 , (Fall 1996): 453-471 and "Denaturalizing Adolescence: The Politics of Contemporary Representations" In Youth And Society. 28:2, (Dec. 1996): 136-161.

[14] Dharma literally means duty however, is understood as the way of Hindu life as prescribed by the Vedas (Ancient Hindu scriptures).

[15] Sacred Hindu scriptures.

Vijayanagara Art: A Political and Historical Metaphor

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This paper examines the relationship between patron, image and viewer in Vijayanagara. Sculpture in Vijayanagara is traditionally associated with specific deities and the stories about them. Further research indicates that political motivations and historical events determined the iconographical aspects of these works. In what follows, an investigation of this sculptural iconography on Hindu Vaishnava images reveal that they often illustrated the king as the sculpted deity, while sometimes other royal images were deified. Secular events and forms were integrated into religious art. Political decisions were often made to shape sacred forms. The intrinsic meaning and underlying values of these sacred forms have been discussed here.

According to monistic interpretation of the *Upanishads* the ultimate reality is Brahman or Self - which is pure reality, pure consciousness and pure bliss. The world came into being from Brahman and is wholly dependent on it. The world exists as Absolute, without quality and with qualities as a personal god - Ishvara. Ishavara presides over all. Ishvara is thus a concept of a personal God, creator of the cosmos and is manifest in the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The Vaishnavas regard Vishnu as Ishvara, the Supreme Being, of whom other gods are secondary manifestations. Vishnu is manifested in incarnate forms, especially in times of crisis or need, and it is mainly in these forms that he is worshiped. The *Atharva Veda*, however, defines 'ishvara' as being the power of the ruler, his divine power. The literal meaning of the word is 'to have power.' If

'ishvara' is the divine power of a ruler, then it is not difficult to imagine the Vaishnava kings during the Vijayanagara period regarding them selves as the manifestation of that Supreme power. Vaishnavism, especially during the medieval period, believes that Vishnu, the universal deity, is manifested in a particular place and time. God and Man together created a sacred condition of which kingship was an important part. In Vijayanagara the king maintained this relationship with the Supreme Being and also tried to dissolve the differences between this God and himself. For if Ishvara was that Supreme God and the ritualistic power of the king was indeed 'ishvara' then it may not have been too difficult to put them together and see them as one being, or at least to see the earthly power as a manifestation of the heavenly power.

In medieval India, it may safely be assumed that it was a learned Brahmin or priest who advised a patron to show devotion to a certain deity.[1] It was, however, the patron who chose the portrayal of the deity, in other words, the form in which the deity was ultimately represented. To choose a particular style in architecture, to place a certain idol within this structure, to have certain reliefs depicted in or around the building, and to have the main icon look a certain way were all wishes of the patron. I hope to demonstrate that sometimes patrons in Vijayanagara used art as a metaphor. In other words, a real-life person or event corresponds to the image portrayed. The image was not only literally understood, but the underlying secondary narrative was also clear to the contemporary viewer. The viewer saw an image as analogous to a visual reality. The image of a deity, intended as

[1] According to the Upanishads, Brahman is the ultimate, unchanging reality, composed of pure being and consciousness. These qualities relate to the other meaning of the word Brahman, or Brahmin. A Brahmin is a member of the highest Hindu caste. It is the caste of the priests, who alone may interpret the Vedas (the oldest Hindu scriptures) and perform the Vedic sacrifices and religious rites.

a metaphor, is therefore an allegorical statement understood figuratively.

Defeated in a war against a confederacy of five northern states, the Vijayanagara emperor abandoned the capital in 1565. The invaders set fire to the entire capital and, unfortunately, much was destroyed. Wooden monuments were burned to the ground, while most stone monuments were seriously damaged. According to Richard Eaton in a lecture he presented in Oxford late 1999, he believes that the Islamic forces invading Hindu kingdoms in India desecrated temples that were patronized by the king or of whom the king was a follower. In Vijayanagara, interestingly only the Vaishnava temples were desecrated, while most Shaivite temples were left alone. Vijayanagara scholars have long wondered about this and if Eaton is right then striking the religious power of the king was the aim of the Muslim invaders.

The early dynasties of Vijayanagara were Shaivite, but all later kings from the 15th century were Vaishnavite. The kings made donations to both sects in which one may also see a political point, however the Vaishnavite temples like the Ramachandra, Vithala and Krishna temples were built by the kings and were highly patronized by the royal family until 1565. **(Figure 1, Vithala Temple Complex)** The Vijayanagara kings encouraged Hinduism by supporting Brahmans, promoting Vedic studies, patronizing temples and other religious places, and celebrating public rituals.[2] The king's primary concern was protection of dharma and protecting his subjects. Burton Stein indicates that the functions of the king, but not the king as a person, were considered sacred. He argues that building, protecting, and donating to temples is crucial for sustaining

[2] Anila Verghese, Religious traditions at Vijayanagara. New Delhi: Manohar, 1995. Page 3.

sacred authority.[3] Hence the building of large and small temple complexes must publicly demonstrate the ruler's ability to donate and protect the deity. This in turn focused attention on the king, or rather, on his sacred authority. This power was further generated through donating land and building water canals or wells for sacred and secular institutions.[4] Power was also asserted by celebrating public rituals during which grants were made and accepted. That the king was the chief giver and receiver from god compares to the exchange between public and king. Whether born of royal lineage or not, the possession of power enough to protect was sufficient to be anointed king.[5]

Here I propose that portraying a certain subject in an image was political, however the aim was not altogether propagandistic. They were not always meant to persuade the public, who already had an existing view. In other words, the 'divine right of the king's power and rule' was an established ideology. And therefore the political idea behind the image was sometimes a confirmation of this existing established ideology.

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[3] Burton Stein, Mahanavmi: Medieval and Modern Kingly Ritual in South India, In Bardwell L Smith, ed., Essays on Gupta Culture. New Delhi, South Asia Books, 1983, 67-90. Pages 70-71.

[4] There are a number of inscriptions found in Vijayanagara. Donar inscriptions in Vijayanagara usually begin with an invocation to a deity such as Shiva or Vishnu. This is followed by an account of the presiding king and sometimes by a verse in praise of the king and his ancestors. If the donor is a private citizen, there is an account of him and his family/ancestors. Lastly there is a description of the gift that may be in the form of a structure, land or grant. Grants towards a temple were used for its maintenance. While revenue from agricultural land served as an endowment, that helped support temple dancers, temple musicians and others who served the temple. Priests ran the temple, collected the taxes and revenue on the land grants. The temple was the largest economic institution in Vijayanagara.

[5] Burton Stein, Mahanavmi: Medieval and Modern kingly ritual in South India, 70-71.

One suggestion is perhaps to view images in most Hindu Indian art as a replication of the supreme realization of Hinduism, the idea of Atman, the Universal Soul = atman, the individual soul.[6] The greater reflected in the lesser, the macrocosm within the microcosm. Thus the Supreme Being = human being, god = king. This theory explains some forms of religious art, however, it does not explain how the argument helps the status of a king, who according to this theory equals a common man in his kingdom. This monist philosophy of Shankara of the macrocosm reflected in the microcosm would be unacceptable by the Vaishnavite kings of Vijayanagara, who were followers of Madhava and Ramanuja,[7] whose theism did not agree with monist teachings. If indeed the king is identified as an incarnation or avatar of God, then according to monism so are we all. All men are then divine. The two Epics, Mahabharata and Ramayana,[8] however, illustrate the avatar doctrine as demanding some degree of transcendence. The avatar is a

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[6] Susan Huntington, Kings as Gods, Gods as Kings: Temporality and Eternity in the Art of India, 36.

[7] Anila Verghese, Religious traditions at Vijayanagara.

[8] The greatest literature of ancient India can be found in the long epic poems, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Written over many centuries and not completed until sometime between the fourth century BC and the fourth century CE, they probably grew out of the story telling of the traditional bards. The Ramayana is considered the first ornate poem and is attributed to the sage Valmiki. Its present form has seven books and about 24,000 slokas or verses, though the last book is an epilogue written later as was probably most of the first book. Treatment of Rama as an immortal god, an incarnation of Vishnu, is mostly found in these later books. Nevertheless the entire poem is heroic, and Rama along with his wife Sita is superhuman in their virtue and perfection. For Indian culture they represent models of ideal behavior and attitudes. The legendary author of the Mahabharata is Vyasa, who is also given credit for compiling the Vedas and writing the Puranas. The 24,000 couplets of the Bharata were gradually expanded to become over 100,000 making the Mahabharata the longest poem in the world and probably the work of many hands.

heavenly being, which comes to earth to manifest grace, to restore right and destroy wrong.

Krishnadevaraya, the most popular and famous of the Vijayanagara kings, writes, "The anointed king is equal to God."[9] This King quotes the Vedas as support for ruling monarchs and believes that god created kings to rule, protect and provide. In other words, the ancient Hindu scriptures supported royalty in their belief that they represented god on earth.[10] If indeed the king and his subjects believed the king equaled god, represented god and hence was god, then kingship and the king were both considered sacred.

The Rama cult was immensely popular among the royalty and general population of the capital in the early fifteenth century. So popular was this deity that the rulers tried to identify themselves with this perfect and universal god-king. In the Ramachandra Temple, this seventh incarnation of Vishnu is honored. But this is just within the interior of the temple complex. The outside of the enclosure wall, on the other hand, honors the king. Inside the complex the viewer confronts the heroic deeds of Rama, while outside he or she confronts the power and wealth of the Vijayanagara king. The intention here is surely to view the earthly king as the incarnation of Rama, the legendary divine king.[11] The friezes are arranged in five rows moving in a clock-wise direction, on both sides, just as a devotee moves when making a circumambulation around the main sanctuary of a temple.

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[9] T V Mahalingam, Administration and Social Life Under Vijayanagara. Part I and II. Madras, University of Madras, 1969. Page 22.

[10] H von Stietencron, Political aspects of Indian religious art, In Visible Religions Volume IV-V Approaches to Iconology. Leiden, Ej Brill, 1985-86. Page 17

[11] Anna Dallapiccola, The Ramachandran temple at Vijayanagara. New Delhi, Manohar, 1992. Page 129.

The rows on the outside contain long processions of elephants, horses, armed men, noblemen, wrestlers, acrobats, musicians and even foreign visitors, such as the Portuguese horse traders. They are all shown paying homage to the king, who is seated in a structure similar to Rama's dwelling in the Ramachandra temple. In row four the king and queen watch female dancers, singers and musicians. This seems like a private affair for the royalty. The fifth row portrays the celebration of the spring festival of holi. Occasionally one sees episodes from the Krishnalila, where Krishna multiplies himself and dances with all who love him. God within the scenes that portray royal life signifies a close relationship between heavenly and temporal figures.

Art in Vijayanagara, as in the rest of Hindu India, is largely religious. Gods, and the myths attached to these gods, saints, sacred animals and emblems are represented in abundance. As is the case in other Hindu kingdoms, secular scenes do exist in Vijayanagara on temple walls and doorways. But, in Vijayanagara one also finds structures that have been identified as secular decorated with scenes of everyday life.

While a few stylized royal portraits are found in the corpus of Vijayanagara sculpture, contemporary victories and major political events are not. The battles and events portrayed are those of the gods. Can the attitudes of the Vijayanagara kings be considered non-political or a-historic as far as art is concerned? Probably not. Artists and temple priests in India must have had a common interest in being patronized by the royal family. It is hence not possible that they did not use the medium of art for this purpose.[12]

Kings and gods may be linked by names or by actions. Contemporary literary sources openly compare kings to gods. The art though is subtler. The connections between kings and gods are nevertheless present. The meanings behind these images were undoubtedly more obvious to the contemporary viewer than

[12] H von Stietencron, Political aspects of Indian religious art. Page 17

they are to us today. Why, for example, did the Vijayanagara emperor(s) select the boar to represent them and their ideology? Of all the animals, that could possibly have been chosen to represent Vijayanagara and the ideology of the emperor(s), the boar was selected. The lion or tiger had both been emblems of earlier powerful empires in India. Either of these animals would have associated Vijayanagara rulers with Narasimha or Durga, cults of whom were prevalent in the area.

According to one of the myths of Vishnu, the asura (demon) Hiranyaksa kidnaps the goddess earth, Bhu Devi, and takes her to his realm below the ocean. By doing this, he prevented worship and sacrifice to the gods on earth. The gods ask Vishnu for help. Vaishnava mythology states that when virtue and righteousness are threatened and evil seems to conquer the world, Vishnu appears or is reincarnated on earth in order to vanquish the evil source and create a balance between good and evil. This way Vishnu once again establishes Dharma. Of Vishnu's many incarnations, ten are considered most important.[13] In this story, Varaha, the boar, his third incarnation, dives into the ocean, kills the asura and rescues earth. Dharma being restored, sacrifices, and thus normal life could continue. The Vijayanagara rulers must then have had a reason to choose this particular incarnation with which to be associated.

During the Vijayanagara period the Muslim rulers of northern India, the non-believers of dharma, were considered to be the enemy even of the Hindu gods. Land was lost to this enemy, land that was in essence earth. Who better than Varaha to rescue earth and her people? The king, who fights evil,

[13] Vishnu is the only Hindu god credited with avataras. As protector of the gods, Vishnu is believed to have assumed several forms. The ten most important (Dashavataras) of his incarnations are: Matsya (the fish), Kurma (the tortoise), Varaha (the boar), Narasimha (the man-lion), Vamana (the dwarf), Parashurama (Rama with the ax), Rama, Krishna, Buddha (sometimes Balarama or Mahavira are portrayed as the 9th avatar) and Kalki (who is yet to appear).

conquers it and rescues earth, must not only be represented by Varaha, but is indeed Varaha reincarnated. Once the flood of invaders was subdued and the oppressed land rescued, life, worship and sacrifices to the Hindu pantheon could go on unhindered under the rule of the Hindu king, who through his actions, upholds Dharma. The emblem of the boar is a metaphor associating the Varaha avatar with the reigning monarch. By unifying Southern India, the kings emulated Varaha, who saved the earth from submersion. An analogy is thus drawn between the king and Varaha, rescuers of earth. Although a religious choice, it was definitely political. Frederick Asher and H von Stientencron have both argued for a political aspect to Varaha images in the art of the Gupta period.[14] This theory is equally applicable to the Vijayanagara period.

Although the boar is the emblem of the Vijayanagara Empire, the rulers do not neglect the other incarnations of Vishnu. Narasimha, a man-lion, was frequently used to glorify kings in literature. When used as a metaphor for a human being, the person was to be seen as a lion among men. It is especially easy to associate the king with this avatar when the king bears the same name. Three different kings of two different dynasties were called Narasimha in Vijayanagara.

Perhaps the most famous Narasimha is also the best example of the sculptor's skill during the Vijayanagara period. Carved from a single boulder on the orders of Krishnadevaraya is a giant monolith Lakshmi-Narasimha (**Figure 2 Lakshmi-Narasimha Monolith**). Unfortunately, damaged and today seen without his consort Lakshmi, Narasimha wears Vishnu's Kirita-mukuta, which closely resembles a crown worn by Vijayanagara kings and noblemen. In Anna Dallapiccola's description of royal and courtly attire in Vijayanagara, she quotes Sivaramamurti's

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[14] F M Asher, Historical and political allegory in Gupta art, In Bardwell L Smith, ed., Essays on Gupta Culture. New Delhi, South Asia Book, 1983, 53-66. Pages 55-59 & H von Stietencron, Political aspects of Indian religious art. Pages 19-22.

description of one particular crown/cap worn by the elite, "slightly conical with a little flaring up of the coni-cylinder towards the top, where it has a bud shaped tip on a bulbous cushion."[15] It is indeed interesting to note that the Sivaramamurti description of an elite crown/cap fits the crown worn by the large Monolith.

The Krishna Temple was built around 1515 AD, after Krishnadevaraya returned victorious from Udayagiri with an icon of Krishna. The Krishna cult was introduced to the people of Vijayanagara after this victory and the temple was built especially for the icon. The introduction of this particular cult by this particular king is undoubtedly not a mere coincidence, since the king was named after the god. According to Stein's theory, the construction of this temple may be seen as a public and ceremonial expression of sacred kingship.

On pillars and walls especially at the entrance of the rangamandapa (pillared hall) of the Krishna temple (**Figure 3 Rama with Lakshman in the middle panel**) are images of Rama portrayed in an unusual manner. Seated with one leg over the other, and with a shawl draped around an arm Rama leans against a cushion. Rama is also seen seated in a similar position on the walls of the Ramachandran temple. **(Figure 4 Rama with Hanuman and Lakshman)** These resemble the royal images on the Mahanavami Dibba (discussed below). (**Figure 5 Royal Image**) Iconographically, Rama is never portrayed in this manner, which is a royal posture used to depict just royalty.[16]

The Mahanavami Dibba is the most magnificent of all secular monuments in the city of Vijayanagara. (**Figure 6 Mahanavami Dibba/Platform**) About ten meters in height and thirty eight meters on a side, its three stone tiers may have been topped by a wooden construction under which the king sat. The

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[15] Anna Dallapiccola, The Ramachandran temple at Vijayanagara. Page 122.

[16] Anila Verghese, Religious traditions at Vijayanagara. Page 51.

platform is elaborately carved with military and hunting scenes, seated royal figures, acrobats, musicians, wrestlers and animals. According to medieval sources the king watched the Mahanavami festivities from atop a grand platform decorated with reliefs and which had stairs leading to the top. This platform fits the description and, by its sheer size, dominates the royal area. It must indeed have been a royal stage, where the king was the center of all attention. This is the only structure in Vijayanagara, which portrays the life of the king and the people around him and omits the gods entirely. Perhaps a symbolic separation between religion and state.

The entire Mahanavami relief system presents a complex synthesis of the actual and the ideal. It also illustrates social life in Vijayanagara. Evoking the idea of the Mahanavami celebration as we hear of it from medieval sources, noblemen pay homage to the ruling king. (**Figure 7 Panel from Mahanavami Dibba**) Perhaps this symbolizes the domain, which issued from this power. It shows the conquered people in submission before the king. In addition to the conquered noblemen, foreigners, performers, the king's army and his wives attend him. The aspect of submission is not just military but also moral and spiritual.

According to medieval European visitors the king sat on a throne atop the Mahanavami platform. He usually sat alone. However, sometimes he sat at the foot of the throne, while an idol was placed on the throne. Stein believes the unidentified image may have been Sita, the consort of Rama.[17] If this is indeed true and if medieval sources are right about it being made of gold, then the king was once again identifying himself with the god-king, Rama.

After Rama and Sita returned from exile, they did not stay together for long. According to the Uttarakhand, the last part of the Ramayana, Sita's purity was questioned by the common

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[17] Burton Stein, Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India. Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1980. Page 389.

citizens of Ayodhya & hence, Rama banished Sita from his kingdom. During Sita's second exile, Rama performs the Ashvamedha yagna, the sacrifice of a horse.[18] It was considered the greatest sacrificial ceremony in the Vedic times. However, since the sacrificial rituals could not be performed in the absence of the wife, Rama has a gold statue of Sita made and places it besides him during the rituals. Why did the Vijayanagara kings not have their wife(s) sit beside them? If the consort of Rama were placed on the throne of the reigning king during such a great public ceremony, the implication of such an action was surely understood by all visiting dignitaries as well as by those who took part in the festival.

Also according to medieval sources the festivities began with the procession of the queens, the chief of whom walked around the ceremonial horse. This may be related to the early part of the Ramayana in the Balakhanda. Before the birth of Rama and his brothers, their father also performs the Ashvamedha yagna. The ceremony described in the Ramayana begins with the procession of the queens and Rama's mother, the chief queen of his father walks around the sacrificial horse. Most historians agree that this sacrifice stopped after the Gupta period, and was never performed during the Vijayanagara period. However, the Mahanavami festival in Vijayanagara gave much importance to the horses in the kingdom, especially the royal horse.

Although the origin of the Mahanavami festival is unknown, there are a number of purposes for its celebration. Chief among them and perhaps very important to the Vijayanagara kings, was the victory of Rama over Ravana. The Mahanavami was one ritual not dominated by the brahmin priests. The king performed all the rituals and was the chief worshiper. However, he was also the focus of the festival and was honored as one would a deity. Medieval sources indicate that those arriving at the Mahanavami platform first passed

[18] Ashvamedha yagna was the sacrifice of a horse. It was considered the greatest sacrificial ceremony in the Vedic times. The sacrificial horse was set free and followed by the king's army. The land that the horse trespasses is either taken by force or the owner agrees to give in to the king.

through a number of tall gateways, resembling those of temples.[19] Thus it would also seem to the visitor as if he were going towards the main shrine of a temple, but, instead of a deity, he found a king enshrined.

Over the ages, in the West and the East, art and architecture have aroused intense emotional responses in people. Medieval India was no exception. Residents, pilgrims, and visiting nobles were all affected by the art and architecture in the capital city of the empire, especially when the work of art was first presented to public view. Examples such as the images of Narasimha and Rama, or even the Vijayanagara Varaha Royal emblem, demonstrate the intention of patrons in this city to portray themselves metaphorically in art. The common people of the empire were the principal targets of these politically motivated metaphors. Used as a form of propaganda, these buildings and the sculpture that decorated them must have helped reinforce the power of the rulers in the eyes of the common individual.

[19] Burton Stein, Mahanavmi: Medieval and Modern kingly ritual in South India. Page 88-89.

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Lamas, Kings and Lama-kings: The *Mchod-Yon* or Lama-Patron System in Tibet from the Seventh to the Seventeenth Century

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To date, the writing of Tibetan social and cultural history for an English-language audience has been dominated by scholars of Sinology and related fields (Mongolists, Manchu studies scholars, etc.) With glaring disproportion, they have relied on Chinese over Tibetan sources to reconstruct Tibetan history. By contrast, few scholars have seriously examined the indigenous landscape of Tibetan historiography and what it can tell us about how Tibetan constituencies imagined themselves at various historical junctures. As a result, Tibetan history has tended to be represented in specifically Chinese Imperial, Republican and Communist historiographic terms, along a Chinese historical timeline. By uncritically parroting the terms of Chinese historiography, scholars have effectively consigned Tibet to a footnote in a larger Chinese historical master narrative which reductively depicts it as one of the many, sundry "outer--" or "western barbarians" of Chinese imperial discourse.[1] In the process, Tibet emerges a militarily-"pacified," culturally-nil, peripheral subaltern that functions as little more than a signpost of alterity in a Chinese imperial narrative stipulated on claims to hegemonic rule over "all beneath Heaven."[2] While this representation illuminates little about Tibet's unique socio-political order and its cultural, institutional and intellectual traditions, it effectively consigns Tibet to the spatial, intellectual and historical periphery.

In this paper, I attempt to help redress this scholastic gap by sketching a brief genealogy of the *mchod-yon*, or lama-patron, system in Tibet. The lama-patron system was a specifically Tibetan Buddhist arrangement of people and power, with Indian Buddhist roots. It stipulated that socio-political and cosmic harmony could be best achieved if an accomplished Buddhist monk and a Buddhist king negotiated a contract to jointly administer society with the king administering worldly affairs, the world of the seen, and the monk attending to supra-worldly affairs, the world of the unseen. Western scholarship generally claims that after the Tang Dynasty, when Tibet flourished as an independent empire of redoubtable strength, Tibet was simply a tributary state of the Chinese empire. Few scholars, however, have actually examined how this purported "tributary" status gets inscribed in Tibetan historical narratives, while fewer yet have investigated the history of Tibet's indigenous institutions of governance. It is my contention that the *mchod-yon* discourse constituted the fundamental ideology of Tibetan statecraft throughout much of its history and that Tibetan narratives of its social history will make little sense unless examined through this lens. In this paper, I briefly survey the development of *mchod-yon* as a set of discursive practices from the seventh century, when Buddhism came to Tibet, to the seventeenth century, when the Tibetan plateau was centralized under the rule of the fifth Dalai Lama.

The term *mchod-yon* is an abbreviation of the Tibetan terms *mchod-gnas* and *yon bdag*. *Mchod-gnas* means "a person or thing to which religious offerings are made," namely a lama.[3] *Yon-bdag* means "one who gives offerings to a religious person or object," namely, a patron.[4] While the *mchod-yon* institution only formally emerged in the context of thirteenth-century Tibetan-Mongolian relations, its roots lie in classical Indian Buddhism. On the most basic level, the lama-patron institution directly recapitulated the Indian Buddhist social ideal of lay-

monastic symbiosis in which the laity and the monastic community, or *sangha*, jointly fostered social harmony by cultivating the parallel goals of worldly, social welfare and ultimate, individual and collective liberation. This specifically Buddhist version of "the social contract" was organized around a political economy of merit which stipulated that the lay patron, or *danapati*--preeminently the king—provide material support and protection for the *sangha*. Such action benefited the donor personally by earning him (or her) individual karmic "merit" while it contributed to social harmony by promoting the smooth working of lay-*sangha* symbiosis.[5] In turn, the *sangha* reciprocated by generating vastly greater stores of karmic merit through its steadfast adherence to a highly ethicized lifestyle grounded in Buddhist practice which it then dedicated to the welfare of the entire society.

Indian Buddhist literature gradually elaborated this discourse of lay-monastic symbiosis in significant ways. Unfortunately, I am not prepared today to trace how and when these shifts happened—that would be a paper in itself. Suffice it to say, however, that over time, Indian Buddhist sutras increasingly portrayed the Buddha and king as parallel figures, one a worldly sovereign, the other a cosmic sovereign.[6] The Buddha was extolled with a profusion of new epithets including "ruler of rulers," the "highest in the world," and the "*cakravarti*" or "wheel turning," world-conquering, universal emperor.[7]

These textual developments in Buddhist literature yielded a radical re-conceptualization of the prevailing Brahmanical theory of kingship. Very briefly stated, the Brahmanical theory of kingship, as laid out in the *Dharmasastras*, stipulated that *rajadharma,* the king's duty, was to oversee *artha,* the political administration of his kingdom, through the exercise of *danda,* force, in conformity with a specific code of kingly conduct. In this political economy, the larger task of upholding cosmic moral order was assigned to the Brahman who, in his unique capacity

to maintain the moral integrity and ritual purity of society, emerged pre-eminent in the social food chain.

Buddhist literature turned this theory on its head in what one scholar has called a shift from *rajadharma* to *dharmaraja*.[8] Usurping for the king a position once held by the Brahman, the newly-emerging Buddhist theory of governance united the erstwhile separate domains of political and cosmic administration under the authority of the king, now viewed as a *dharma* king or ethicized monarch who ruled in accordance with the Buddhist teachings. But that was not all. This newly-configured cosmic order ascribed to the Buddha, who alone possessed knowledge of ultimate truth and salvific power, paramount authority over the cosmos.[9]

This Buddhist re-conceptualization of kingship culminated in a theory of joint rule by a king with worldly jurisdiction and a Buddha with cosmic jurisdiction, spoken of as the two wheels of *dharma*.[10] The "two wheels" discourse of joint-rule came into full flower in texts historicizing the reign of Asoka, a third-century BCE, Mauryan emperor hailed as the *cakravarti* king *par excellence*.[11] Throughout the first millennium of the Common Era, Inner Asian and Chinese emperors drew on the Asokan legacy and styled themselves *cakravarti* kings in an effort to consolidate kingdoms and empires. Only in Tibet, and to a lesser extent in Mongolia, however, did the theory of dual rule materialize into a full-blown institution of joint lay-monastic governance.

The roots of the *mchod-yon* model can be traced back to the Imperial Period (seventh - ninth centuries) when Buddhism first established itself in Tibet under the patronage of the ruling Yarlung Dynasty kings.[12] Rife with imperial ambition, Tibet's Yarlung kings enthusiastically patronized Buddhism at this time because it provided the institutional and ideological resources needed to unify the disparate polities of the Tibetan plateau into a formidable empire—one that came to regularly terrorize its

Chinese and Inner Asian neighbors.[13] Thus, while Buddhism in Tibet's Imperial Period flourished only in court and aristocratic circles, it nevertheless underwrote a newly-forged concept of plateau-wide Tibetan identity and thus deeply entrenched itself in the Tibetan "national" mythos.

The first king to enlist Buddhism in the task of empire building was the seventh-century Tibetan ruler, Songtsan Gampo.[14] He actively sponsored Buddhism at the court, oversaw the construction of numerous Buddhist temples, and developed a legal code modeled on a Buddhist code of ethics. These efforts earned him the reputation of a devoted and magnanimous "*dharma* king," that doubtlessly facilitated his eventual defeat of the ruling Bonpo aristocracy. Whatever his motives may have been, Songtsan Gampo's patronage of Buddhism and Buddhist institutions not only facilitated the rapid consolidation of a Tibetan empire. It worked to institutionalize Buddhism at the core of Tibet's future socio-political structure.[15]

Subsequent Yarlung dynasty kings patronized Buddhism with even greater enthusiasm, adopting measures that gradually formalized a burgeoning Tibetan *sangha* as a veritable state-within-a-state. The eighth-century king Trisong Detsen not only oversaw the construction of Tibet's first monastery, Samye, and the ordination of its first seven *sangha* members, but he allocated 150 households to underwrite the new monastery while exempting the new monastics and their patrons from taxation, military and civil duties.[16] Equally significant, Trisong Detsen took measures to formally integrate the *sangha* into the governance of Tibet. Among other things, he created a monastic council that was superior to his lay ministerial council; he appointed the abbot of Samye as the head of his lay ministerial council; and he honored this lama with the prestigious court title "the royal envoy with a Golden Edict."[17]

The institutionalization of Buddhism in Tibet under Yarlung imperial auspices reached its apogee during the reign of King Ralpacan.[18] Ralpacan gave the new monks their own farmland,

pastures and livestock and, thus, made them economically autonomous. He further appointed a monk to serve as his chief minister and relinquished control of the state's lower assembly to the *sangha*.[19] Perhaps most significant for our purposes here, Ralpacan purportedly earned his name, meaning "The one with the dreaded locks," for inviting the *sangha* to sit upon his loosened tresses in a symbolic gesture of royal obeisance to the renunciant corps.[20]

These measures set important precedents for the future emergence of the lama-patron institution, and for its culmination in a system of joint lay-monastic administration under monastic auspices during the rule of the fifth Dalai Lama. Songtsan Gampo's appropriation of Buddhist discourse to consolidate a Tibetan empire entrenched Buddhism at the heart of a newly-formed state narrative. Trisong Detsen's decision to allocate households to officially sponsor the *sangha* secured it with an institutionalized economic base and, thus, laid the foundations for the *sangha* to function as a parallel society within the larger polity on the model of the *sangha* ideal laid out in Indian Buddhist texts. Ralpacan went a long step further and made the *sangha* economically self-sufficient. He thus set the stage for it to emerge not only as a major political player in Tibetan governance but as one that would eventually co-opt the state. Finally, the various measures which these kings took to actively integrate the *sangha* into the government only strengthened the *sangha's* burgeoning power base. Indeed, the fact that Ralpacan would come to be known by this name for purportedly prostrating to the *sangha* illustrates that a new ideal power structure was gaining ground at the discursive level, one based on state deference to the *sangha* in spiritual affairs, rather than on state co-option of the *sangha*. This narrative appears to constitute the first prototype of the lama-patron theory of dual rule in Tibetan history.

According to the Tibetan tradition, Ralpacan's successor, Langdharma, compromised the institutionalization of Buddhism in Tibet during the Imperial Period by initiating a virulent campaign of anti-Buddhist terror.[21] With his assassination in 846, the Yarlung dynasty came to an end and Tibet once again became politically decentralized. During the ensuing "period of fragmentation" which lasted for over three hundred years, Buddhist *sanghas* gradually re-emerged across the plateau, giving rise to a profusion of distinct orders and monastic complexes.[22] Notable for our purposes here, these monastic centers were typically sponsored either by a king who later renounced to become a monk, or by well-endowed monastic leaders themselves.[23] Thus, by the time the Mongols consolidated their control over Inner Asia in the early thirteenth century, economic, political and spiritual authority in Tibet were firmly planted in the hands of lama charismats and the monastic complexes coalescing around them.[24]

In the early thirteenth century, a number of these new Tibetan monastic orders began to forge lama-patron type alliances with Mongol patrons, eager to leverage themselves into a position of spiritual and political hegemony over Tibet.[25] From their side, the Mongols needed a potent ideology around which to consolidate their burgeoning empire and, in particular, one capable of rivaling the hegemonic claims embodied in the figure of the "Son of Heaven" of Chinese imperial discourse. With its ideology of universal kingship that transcended geographic, ethnic and cultural boundaries, the Buddhist discourse of the universal *cakravarti* king ruling together with a tantric monastic virtuoso served these needs all too well.[26]

By the mid-thirteenth century, the Sakya order of Tibetan Buddhism emerged supreme. With the military and financial backing of Godan and later Qubilai Khan, the Sakyas were able to secure their monastic hegemony over Tibet, ushering in a period of joint Mongol-Sakya rule that marked the formal emergence of the lama-patron institution.[27] According to Tibetan

sources, the first formal lama-patron agreement was negotiated in 1253-4, just prior to the founding of the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty, when Qubilai, the then prince and future emperor, agreed to patronize the famed Tibetan Buddhist scholar Phagpa and his Sakya stronghold in Central Tibet.[28] In return, Phagpa agreed to serve the prince as his personal guru and oversee Buddhist affairs across Qubilai's domain. The agreement was stipulated on the premise that each party held supreme authority in his respective domain: the prince in his rulership, the lama in his role as tantric initiator and master of Buddhist affairs.[29] The underlying logic behind this system of joint lay-monastic rule was that by respectively ensuring socio-political stability and providing spiritual expertise, the prince and lama could jointly cultivate the ideal conditions for the individuals of a Buddhist polity to progress towards spiritual salvation.

It is, of course, much harder to judge to what extent the lama-patron ideal was realized in the actual Sakya-Mongol administration of Tibet. We know that as its empire-wide head of Buddhist affairs, Phagpa, and the "imperial tutors" to succeed him, spent most of their time at the Mongol imperial court.[30] The actual administration of Tibet was overseen by the thirteen provincial governors, or Tripon, who, in turn, were overseen by a Tibetan Ponchen or "High Administrator." Notable for our purposes here, these government officials were more often than not lamas.[31] Scholars widely debate just how much control the Mongols exercised over Tibetan politics, arguing that the Tibetan Ponchen had everything from nominal to complete authority over Tibetan affairs.[32]

Whatever the case may have been on the ground, of greater concern to us here is that a significant discursive shift takes place at this historic juncture. No sooner do Tibetan texts formally articulate the lama-patron ideal whose prototypes had long-since underwritten Tibetan governance, do they proceed to make claims which openly transgress its fundamental terms. According

to the Tibetan historiographic tradition, after Phagpa and Qubilai agreed to serve each other as lama and patron, the lama bestowed a series of tantric initiations on Qubilai. In return, the khan gave Phagpa full jurisdiction first over the "thirteen myriarchies," a truncated area of Imperial Tibet, and later over the entire Tibetan plateau. The claim that Qubilai turned the governance of Tibet over to his lama, giving him jurisdiction over both the political and spiritual affairs of Tibet, clearly amounts to something very different from the vision of joint lama-khan rule enshrined in the lama-patron discourse articulating an idealized system of joint rule by a universal Buddhist king and an enlightened Buddha. On the contrary, it signaled a dramatic departure from a model of joint lama-king administration, to one of active co-option of the state, or at least one of the states associated with a larger empire, by the *sangha*.[33]

Sakya power waned in the mid-fourteenth century, weakened by factionalism in its ruling house and the gradual decline of its military backers, the Mongol Yuan Emperors.[34] As anti-Sakya fervor spread, power was re-consolidated under the leadership of Changchub Gyaltsan of the Lang family which had for a longtime governed the Phagmodru myriarch in south Central Tibet.[35] For generations, the Lang family had appointed one of its sons, and notably here, a monk, to oversee both the myriarch and its main monastery, Thel, while other sons married to continue the family line.[36] This legacy was continued under the rule of Changchub Gyaltsan, a Phagmodru son educated as a monk at Sakya monastery who later became the monastic governor of the Phagmodru myriarch.

Changchub Gyaltsan became more than a governor, however. As Sakya power waned, he flexed his muscle and gradually consolidated control over all thirteen myriarchs of Central Tibet. In the process, he imposed the Phagmodru system of rule by a single monk-aristocrat over both the lay and monastic constituencies of the myriarch on virtually all of Central Tibet. During his 26-year reign, Changchub Gyaltsan further changed

the landscape of the lama-patron legacy by actively severing Tibet's political dependence on foreign patrons and reconsolidating a centralized state under indigenous Tibetan rule. As monk-king of Tibet, he replaced the 13-myriarch system of Mongol imperial rule with an indigenous provincial administration based around "dzong" or fortresses.[37] He also appointed his own governors, Dzong Pon,[38] to rule them and banned the inheritance of gubernatorial posts to prevent the formation of opposition power bases.[39] Finally, he replaced the Mongolian system of jurisprudence with a law code based on the earlier code promulgated by Songtsan Gampo, the first "*dharma* king."[40]

Changchub Gyaltsan's legacy of rule by a lama-king[41] commanding both Tibet's worldly and supra-worldly affairs appears to have been continued in an unbroken lineage by his successors. With a few possible exceptions, it appears that all his successors-- culminating in the 47-year rule of the famous lama, Drakpa Gyaltsan--were either monastic kings or kings who were formerly ordained monks.[42] Thus, under Phagmodru rule, the *mchod-yon* lama-patron ideal formalized during the Sakya-Mongol period gave way to rule by a single lama in whom the figures of patron, *dharma* king, and monastic virtuoso were united. Not just lamas or kings, the Phagmodru leaders ruled as lama-kings who held supreme jurisdiction over both the religious and politico-military affairs of Central Tibet. In a move that clearly rejected previous norms of rulership, Drakpa Gyaltsan went so far as to style himself the "Gongma," meaning "the one on high," a term reserved exclusively for the Chinese emperor. In so doing, he asserted the legitimacy of indigenous rule by a lama-king and actively rebuffed foreign imperial pretensions over Tibet.[43] Also interesting for our purposes, several of the Phagmodru kings ruled over both Neudong, the capital of the Phagmodru myriarch, and Thel monastery, the seat of its religious authority. In other words, they simultaneously occupied

the "royal throne" as monastic (or formerly monastic) kings with overriding authority over monastic affairs, *and* the abbatial throne of the main Phagmodru monastery, Thel. In so doing, they further blurred the division between monastic and lay spheres of authority.[44] In short, the fall of the Sakya and rise of the Phagmodru marked, on the one hand, the formal end of the lama-patron system forged during the period of Sakya-Mongol hegemony and the beginning of a period of independent rule.[45] On the other hand, Phagmodru rule set a direct precedent for the future emergence of a system of unified administration of Tibet's lay and monastic constituencies under the rule of the Fifth Dalai Lama.

Like the Sakya before them, the Phagmodru became a divided ruling house that, while nominally in power for over a century more, was effectively overshadowed by other local hegemons by the 1430's.[46] From then until the mid-seventeenth century, Tibet was embroiled in two hundred years of inter-sectarian struggles between aristocratic patrons of the Kagyu order and the patrons of a burgeoning, new Gelug order.[47] Increasingly, the Tsangpa governors patronizing the Kagyu order overpowered their adversaries, and by 1616, they secured rule over Central Tibet.[48]

The tide of events, however, quickly turned. During the last decades of the sixteenth century, various Mongol leaders, eager to build a successor state to the illustrious Mongol Yuan Dynasty, sought to re-establish ties with Tibetan Buddhist lamas on the Phagpa-Qubilai model in order to claim themselves the spiritual, if not blood heirs, to the mantle of Chenghis Khan.[49] One of these leaders, Altan Khan of the Tumed Mongols, courted the abbot of a major Gelug monastery, Sonam Gyatso.[50] The lama agreed to visit the khan, hoping to secure both patronage and military backup for his Gelug order in the face of a growing Tsangpa-Kagyu hegemony.[51] In 1578, the lama and khan formally re-established the lama-patron alliance on the model of Phagpa and Qubilai's famous precedent, with Mongol

sponsorship now underwriting the Gelug order. Sonam Gyatso legitimized the khan's right to rule as an authoritative heir to Qubilai's mandate and entitled him the "Religious king, Brahma of the Gods." In return, the khan entitled Sonam Gyatso the "Oceanic" or "Dalai" Lama, giving rise to the very incarnation line that would rule Tibet within sixty-five years. [52]

The lama-patron system reached its climax soon thereafter under the reign of Sonam Gyatso's second successor, the Dalai Lama Lobsang Gyatso.[53] Eager to consolidate a power base and boost the Gelug order into a formidable force in Tibetan politics, this Dalai Lama (who was counted as the Fifth Dalai Lama) negotiated a lama-patron relationship with the Qosot Mongol leader, Gushri Khan, in 1638.[54] A renowned military heavyweight, the khan dutifully proceeded to eliminate the Dalai Lama's Tibetan and Mongolian adversaries, including the Tsangpa kings who were supporting the predominant Kagyu order. According to Gelug Tibetan sources, Gushri Khan then renounced his title as *dharma* king of Tibet and, much as Qubilai nominally had done centuries earlier, he turned the jurisdiction of the Tibetan plateau, minus its northwestern Amdo province, over to the Dalai Lama.[55]

But here's the rub. The Dalai Lama responded with initiative. He set up an independent government that retained his Mongol patrons only as military backers and unified the plateau for the first time since the Imperial Period. (By contrast, the Sakya-Mongol rulers and their Phagmodru successors ruled only over Central Tibet, or parts of it.) Split into monastic and lay wings, his government oversaw everything from legal arbitration to tax collection, minting currency and the education of monastic and lay constituencies across the plateau. This unification of worldly and supra-worldly affairs under Dalai Lama administration, known in Tibetan as *chos srid zung 'brel,* officially superseded the terms of the lama-patron legacy and tipped the balance of power strongly in the *sangha's* favor. In short, it fused aspects of

Sakya and Phagmodru rulership to form a system of indigenous rule by a lama-king who governed independently of his Mongol patrons and maintained jurisdiction over both the monastic and lay constituencies of virtually the entire plateau.[56]

The Dalai Lama's system of "joint administration of worldly and supra-worldly affairs" effectively institutionalized a full-scale co-option of the Tibetan state by its *sangha*. While Tibet had known various types of lama rulers throughout its history, none ruled with as wide a jurisdiction, as powerful a mandate or buttressed by as thoroughgoing an ideology of monastic sovereignty as that of the fifth Dalai Lama. Unlike the Sakyas who ruled under an imperial Mongol shadow, and unlike the Phagmodru who, though independent, ruled only a fraction of the Tibetan plateau, the fifth Dalai Lama ruled at the head of an indigenous, centralized government with jurisdiction over both monastic and lay affairs in a territory equal only to that of Tibet during the Imperial Period. To be sure, his government depended heavily on Mongolian military backing and its independence was short lived, not to be revived until the reign of the thirteenth Dalai Lama centuries later. Nevertheless, the government structure he organized and the discourse of joint worldly and supra-worldly affairs on which it was built effectively yoked the lama-patron system to a system of self-governance that transformed the Dalai Lama into a lama-king overseeing the administration of *both* Tibet's monastic and lay affairs.

In closing, the *mchod-yon* lama patron system, whose roots can be traced to the period of Tibet's Yarlung dynasty "*dharma* kings," functioned as the fundamental ideology of Tibetan statecraft throughout much of its history. By the time of the fifth Dalai Lama, in the seventeenth century, it had evolved from a system of joint monastic-lay rule by a patron and lama respectively, into a system of indigenous lama-king rule in which the patron functioned officially solely as a military backer. It is in these terms, and not the terms of the "barbarian subaltern" and "tributary," that Tibetans imagined themselves vis-a-vis foreign

powers for most of their history until the fall of the Tibetan state to Chinese Communist rule starting in 1950.

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Endnotes

[1] "outer--" or "western barbarians" (Ch: *wai fan/xi fan*).

[2] "all beneath Heaven" (Ch: *Tian Xia*).

[3] Turrell V. Wylie, "The First Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37, no. 1 (1977): 119.

[4] *Yon-bdag* in Sanskrit is *danapati.* D. Seyfort Ruegg, "*Mchod Yon, Yon Mchod,* and *Mchod Gnas/ Yon Gnas*: On the Historiography and Semantics of a Tibetan Religio-Social and Religio-Political Concept," in *Tibetan History and Language: Studies Dedicated to Uray Geza on His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Ernst Steinkellner (Wien: Arbeitskreis fur Tibetische und Buddhistiche Studien, Universitat Wien, 1991), 446, Wylie, "The First Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted," 119.

[5] Ruegg, "*Mchod Yon, Yon Mchod,* and *Mchod Gnas/ Yon Gnas*: On the Historiography and Semantics of a Tibetan Religio-Social and Religio-Political Concept," 448.

[6] For the difficulty in dating the sutras in which these shifts occur, see Chapter 2 in Gregory Schopen's *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.

[7] This takes place in the Anguttara Nikaya and Digha Nikaya respectively. See Frank Reynolds, "The Two Wheels of Dhamma: A Study of Early Buddhism," in *The Two Wheels of Dhamma: Essays on the Theravada Tradition in India and Ceylon*, ed. Bardwell L. Smith (Chambersburg, Penn.: American Academy of Religion, 1972), 17.

[8] See chapters 2-4 in S. J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[9] Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *The Buddhist Conception of Universal King and Its Manifestations in South and Southeast Asia* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1987), 19-22. In his study of the *Asokavadana*, however, Strong points out that while Asoka was celebrated by many as the Buddhist king *par excellence*, he often conformed to *arthasastric*, rather than characteristically Buddhist, methods of rule. Writes Strong: "Some of the episodes just referred to in the *Asokavadana* might readily be interpreted along Kautiliyan [the author of the *Dharmasastras*] lines. Asoka, as a king interested in maintaining his power, systematically disposes of those who oppose him; he does not hesitate to punish disloyal ministers and unfaithful wives, and deals summarily with those who are against his adopted faith of Buddhism." John Strong, *The Legend of King Asoka: A Study and Translation of the Asokavadana*, *Princeton Library of Asian Translations;* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 43.

[10] The two wheels of *dharma* came to be spoken of as the *dhamma cakka* and *ana cakka*, the wheel of doctrine and the wheel of royal dominion, respectively. Ruegg, "*Mchod Yon, Yon Mchod,* and *Mchod Gnas/ Yon Gnas*: On the Historiography and Semantics of a Tibetan Religio-Social and Religio-Political Concept," 450, Strong, *The Legend of King Asoka: A Study and Translation of the Asokavadana*, 79-83.

[11] Asoka ruled from 265-238 BCE. For a study of his life and rule according to the *Asokavadana,* the principal biographical source of Asoka's life and works, see Strong, *The Legend of King Asoka: A Study and Translation of the Asokavadana*. Scholars have forwarded wide-ranging estimates as to when the *Asokavadana* was compiled. According to Strong, the *Asokavadana* dates from 2nd century CE. Strong writes: "We do not know who composed the text of the *Asokavadana*, nor indeed whether it can be considered the work of a single author. Its first translation into Chinese in A.D. 300 sets its annus ante quem; its reference to the gold coin *dinara* puts at least part of it after the first century A.D., so we probably would not err too much in assigning it, in its present form, to the second century A.D. The legends themselves, however, are clearly several centuries older than that. Some of them have been represented on the bas-reliefs of the stupa at Sanchi (second-first centuries B.C.), and it is likely that at least some Asoka stories, in one form or another, were current in Buddhist oral traditions shortly after Asoka's death." Strong additionally states, "[t]he *Asokavadana*, however, represents what might be called the basic version of the Sanskrit recension of the Asoka legend and was popular in Northwest India and, in translation, in Central Asia, China, Korea, Japan and Tibet." (John Strong, *The Legend of King Asoka: A Study and*

Translation of the Asokavadana (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 26-7.) By contrast, Khosla asserts that the *Asokavadana* was compiled between 150 BCE-100BCE. (Sarla Khosla, *Asvaghosa and His Times* (New Delhi: Intellectual Publishing House, 1986), 8.) This date was forwarded earlier by J. Przyluski. The translator of Przyluski's 1967 work on the *Asokavadana* writes that, according to Przyluski, the *Asokavadana* is "a blend of composite elements which include an original *Asokasutra* coated with the account of the First Council and other historical details about the early Buddhist Church. This *Asokasutra,* dealing with the exploits of the Maurya emperor, is placed by him between c. 150-50 BCE." (Translator's Note, J. Pryzyluski, *The Legend of Emperor Asoka in Indian and Chinese Texts* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1967).)

In passing, I would like to note here that the parallel eruption of a Buddhist discourse of joint rule by king and Buddha and the Mauryan consolidation of an empire of unprecedented scale are likely related phenomena. Insofar as the Buddhist *cakravarti* discourse co-opted for the emperor the moral authority once vested exclusively in a Brahmanical corps and reconceived him as an emperor with universal mandate, this Buddhist vision of kingship must have been entirely attractive to would-be emperors with far reaching goals.

[12] Tib: *yar glungs*.

[13] Matthew T. Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 210 n. 2.

[14] Tib*: srong btsan sgam po,* c. 600-649.

[15]bLo-bzang 'phrim-las Dung-dkar, *The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet*, trans. Guansheng Chen (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1991), 10, Rebecca R. French, *The Golden Yoke: The Legal Cosmology of Buddhist Tibet* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 41. "Srong btsan gampo's hagiography depicts a grand Buddhist empire as the epitome of a Buddhist version of historia sacra in which the spiritual goal of humanity, a universal realization of nirvana, will be achieved. Thus the conception of the ruler blends with that of the Bodhisattva. Royal law and Buddha law converge, resulting in the happiness of the people." (Eva. K. Dargyay, "Srong-Btsan Sgam-Po of Tibet: Bodhisattva and King," in *Monks and Magicians: Religious Biographies in Asia*, ed. Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1994), 109.)

[16] Samye (Tib: *bsam yas*).Tib: *khri srong lde'u btsan*, 742-c.797. Dung-dkar, *The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet*, 20.

[17] Dung-dkar, *The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet*, 19. Trisong Detsen's heir, Tride Songtsan was assisted in his minority by four

ministers, two of whom were monks (Tib: *ban de*; Skt: *vandya*), which means "a being to whom one should prostrate." Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New York: Potala Publications, 1984), 48.

[18] Tib: *ral pa can*, r. 815-836.

[19] Eva. K. Dargyay, "Sangha and the State in Imperial Tibet," in *Tibetan History and Language: Studies Dedicated to Uray Geza on His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Ernst Steinkellner (Wien: Arbeitskreis Fur Tibetische Und Buddhistische Studien, Universitat Wien, 1991), 125.

[20] "Ral pa," Sarat Ch. Das, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary with Sanskrit Synonyms* (Delhi: Cambridge Press, 1998). Dargyay gives an alternative explanation. She asserts that Ralpacan untied not his locks but a cloth turban upon which he seated the *sangha*. (Dargyay, "Sangha and the State in Imperial Tibet," 125.)

[21] Tib: *glang dhar ma.* However, we should note here, as Kapstein does, that the extent of *Langdharma*'s anti-Buddhist persecution is still highly contested. The oldest, available sources surviving from this period, for example, do not suggest that any major persecution took place during *Langdharma*'s reign. In addition, as Kapstein points out, it is difficult to explain the rapid resurgence of Buddhism during the ensuing period of fragmentation if *Langdharma*'s persecution did in fact come close to obliterating Buddhism from Tibet. See Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation and Memory*, 11-12.

[22] Tib: *sil pa'i dus*.

[23] Dung-dkar, *The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet*, 31-37, Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 59.

[24] Dawa Norbu, "An Analysis of Sino-Tibetan Relationships, 1245-1911: Imperial Power, Non-Coercive Regime and Military Dependency," in *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization*, ed. Barbara Aziz, N. and Matthew Kapstein (New Delhi: Manohar, 1985), 179, Warren W. Jr. Smith, *Tibetan Nation: A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 82, Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Kyoto: Rinsen Book Co. Ltd., 1980; reprint, Reduced Facsimile Edition with permission of the author. Originally Printed from la Libreria Dello Stato Rome, Italy. 1949.), 5-6.

[25] According to Dung-dkar, the Sakya forged an alliance with Ogodai Khan; the Phagmodru and the Gyazang (Tib: *gya' bzang*) with Prince Helugu; the Drigung (Tib: '*bri gung*) and the Tsang Gurmo (Tib: *gtsang gur mo*) with Qubilai; and the Tag lung (Tib: *stag lung*) with Prince Arigboga. (Dung-dkar, *The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet*, 43.) According to Petech, the Drigung Kagyu (Tib: '*bri gung bka' rgyud*) secured the patronage and military backing of Mongke Khan, the Phagmodru Kagyu (Tib: *phag mo gru bka' rgyud*) the backing of Prince Helugu, the Sakya (Tib: *sa skya*) the

backing of Godan, and the Tsalpa Kagyu (Tib: *'tshal pa bka' rgyud*) the backing of Prince Qubilai. (Luciano Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio es Estremo Oriente, 1990), 11.) Also see Smith, *Tibetan Nation: A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations*, 87.

[26] Herbert Franke, *From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor and God: The Legitimation of the Yuan Dynasty* (Munchen: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1978), 69-70, Herbert Franke, "Tibetans in Yuan China," in *China under Mongol Rule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 307, Smith, *Tibetan Nation: A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations*, 95.

[27] Tib: *sa skya*.

[28] Tib: '*Phags pa.* Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 64, Smith, *Tibetan Nation: A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations*, 87-8.

[29] Tantric initiator is *rdo rje slop dpon* in Tibetan and *vajracarya* in Sanskrit.

[30] "imperial tutor" is *di shi* in Chinese.

[31] Tib: *khri dpon, dpon chen.* Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 67. In actuality, the Ponchen only had jurisdiction over Central Tibet. Smith writes: "Despite the formality of Khubilai's previous 'donation' of the three regions of Tibet to Phagspa, after 1264 Kham and Amdo were separated from the administration of Central Tibet." (Smith, *Tibetan Nation: A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations*, 91.) We do know from other sources, however, that Kham was under local Tibetan leadership during the Yuan dynasty. See Luciano Petech, "Ston-Tshul: The Rise of Sa-Skya Paramountcy in Kham," in *Tibetan History and Language: Studies Dedicated to Uray Geza on His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Ernst Skeinkellner (Wien: Arbeitskreis Fur Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universitat Wien, 1991). Concerning the number of myriarchies over which the Ponchen had jurisdiction, Petech states: "The number thirteen is consecrated in the tradition; but their list varies in the several sources." (Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols*, 51.)

[32] Dung-dkar, *The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet*, 48-9, Franke, "Tibetans in Yuan China," Norbu, "An Analysis of Sino-Tibetan Relationships, 1245-1911: Imperial Power, Non-Coercive Regime and Military Dependency," 181, Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols*, 9-21, Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 71, Smith, *Tibetan Nation: A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations*, 91-100, Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 14-17, Wylie, "The First Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted."

[33] Dung-dkar writes: "1) The Tibetan polity which was based on the merging of religious and secular rule and in which high ranking Buddhist monks acted as religious and political leaders began to emerge at a time when Phagspa took control of the Tibetan local regime; 2) The rise of high ranking monks from the economic landlord class to the political ruling class also began during this period." (Dung-dkar, *The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet*, 48.)

[34] Yu. N. Rerikh, "Mongol-Tibetan Relations in the 13th and 14th Centuries," *The Tibet Society Bulletin* 6 (1973): 49.

[35] Changchub Gyaltsan (Tib: *byang chub rgyal mtshan*); *Lang* (Tib: *rlangs*); Phagmodru (Tib: *phag mo gru*).

[36] Thel (Tib: '*thel*). Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 74.

[37] Dzong (Tib: *rdzong*). Dung-dkar, *The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet*, 54, Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 81, Smith, *Tibetan Nation: A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations*, 101, Turrell V. Wylie, "Lama Tribute in the Ming Dynasty," in *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson: Proceedings of the International Seminar on Tibetan Studies, Oxford 1979*, ed. Aung San Suu Kyi (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1979), 336. According to Dung-dkar, he ruled for only 16 years, starting in 1349. (Dung-dkar, *The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet*, 54.)

[38] Tib: *rdzong dpon*

[39] dzong pon (Tib: *rdzong dpon*).

[40] D. L. Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 153, Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 37.

[41] Tib: *bla dpon*, *lha bstun*

[42] Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 26-28. Drakpa Gyaltsan (Tib: *grags pa rgyal mtshan*).

[43] Gongma (Tib: *gong ma*). Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 85-6, Snellgrove and Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet*, 153, Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 28.

[44] Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 74, Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 28-29.

[45] Wylie, "Lama Tribute in the Ming Dynasty," 336.

[46] Zahiruddin Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970), 137, Dung-dkar, *The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet*, 57-59, Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 86-90, Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 29-30.

[47] Kagyu (Tib: *bka' rgyud*); Gelug (Tib: *dge lugs*). Dung-dkar, *The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet,* Snellgrove and Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet*, 57-61, Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 30.

[48] Tsangpa (Tib: *gtsang pa*). Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 55-56. Central Tibet corresponds roughly to today's Tibet Autonomous Region in the People's Republic of China.
[49] Larry William Moses, *The Political Role of Mongol Buddhism* (Bloomington, Ind.: Asian Studies Research Institute, Indiana University, 1977), 90-95, Morris Rossabi, *China and Inner Asia: From 1368 to the Present Day* (New York: Pica Press, 1975), 45-50.
[50] Sonam Gyatso (Tib; *bsod nams rgya mtsho*).
[51] Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 46.
[52] Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 95.
[53] Lobsang Gyatso (Tib: *blo bzang rgya mtsho*).
[54] Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 103-5, Smith, *Tibetan Nation: A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations*, 107. According to Ahmad, the year was 1637. (Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, 120, 26-36.)
[55] Amdo (Tib: *a mdo*). Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, 134-52, Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 111.
[56] French, *The Golden Yoke: The Legal Cosmology of Buddhist Tibet*, 45-47, Franz Michael, *Rule by Incarnation: Tibetan Buddhism and Its Role in Society and State* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982), 51-64, Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 112-3.

Nature as a Metaphor for the Nation: Reconsidering the Gandhi-Tagore Nationalist Controversy

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Introduction

In 1924 Mahatma Gandhi implemented a National Congress directive that was intended to propel India towards the goal of nationhood. This *charka* (or 'spinning') directive became a major flashpoint in a growing controversy between Gandhi and another eminent national figure, Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali poet, humanist, educator and Nobel laureate.[1] Gandhi and Tagore had a cordial relationship from their first meeting in March, 1915, but public evidence of cracks in their agreement over national matters began to appear as early as 1919.[2] They disagreed about passive resistance, the burning of foreign cloth, Gandhi's pronouncement that the Bihar Earthquake of 1933 was a divine chastisement for the sin of caste, and other matters of national importance. These debates were joined in the public arena, carried out through journal and newspaper articles and occasionally laced with sarcasm. As India progressed towards nationhood and their lives proceeded,

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[1] Krishna Datta and Andrew Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore: The myriad-minded man* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2000) 260-261. The directive stated that Congress members should wear only *khadi* cloth and contribute 2,000 yards per month of spun cloth regardless of unwillingness or any other reason.
Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)
Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948)

[2] In 1919 Tagore objected to Gandhi's use of *hartals* (labor strikes) as a response to the Rowlatt Act. The *hartals* turned into violence in the streets of Delhi. R.K. DasGupta, "Gandhi and Tagore" in S.C. Biswas, ed., *Gandhi, Theory and Practice: Social Impact and Contemporary Relevance*, vol. II, (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1969) 461-462.

the friendship and controversy between them ebbed and flowed. Tagore was, to an extent, a thorn in Gandhi's side, continually questioning any act or policy that in his view delimited or suppressed the human spirit. At the time of Tagore's death in 1941, however, the mutual trust extant between them was expressed by Tagore's plea that Gandhi watch over *Visvabharati*, the university established by Tagore to embody his highest ideals of humanism.

Scholars have analyzed the controversy between Gandhi and Tagore from a number of vantage points. Some scholars, for example, sum it up as a disagreement between personality types, that is, the politician versus the poet.[3] Dennis Dalton more incisively assesses the basic cause of the dispute to be Tagore's aversion to nationalism.[4] Still others accentuate the common ground between them. Ashis Nandy, for example, emphasizes their mutual concern about a "new violence" that blew in with ideas of nationalism and progress.[5] The dispute is problematic, significant, and deserves further analysis if for no other reason

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[3] For example: B.K. Ahluwalia and Shashi Ahluwalia, *Tagore and Gandhi (The Tagore-Gandhi Controversy)*, (New Delhi: Pankaj Publications, 1981) 10: "The clash between Tagore and Gandhi was striking but almost inevitable. Tagore was the poet and Gandhi the political crusader; Tagore believed in art, Gandhi in action; Tagore believed in fullness of life, Gandhi in renunciation; for Tagore the ultimate quest was beauty; for Gandhi the ultimate quest was truth." This assertion is perhaps not too much of an over-generalization if discussed within a psychological paradigm.

[4] Dennis Gilmore Dalton, *Indian Idea of Freedom: Political Thought of Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose, Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore* (Gurgaon, Haryana: The Academic Press, 1982) 198: "Tagore's unique contribution rests with his early and emphatic assertion that though India's adoption of nationalism might further struggle for Independence, it could only thwart the essential quest for moral and spiritual freedom. This point of view inevitably sparked off a controversy with India's arch-nationalist, Mahatma Gandhi."

[5] Ashis Nandy, *Time Warps: Silent and Evasive Pasts in Indian Politics and Religion* (London: Hurst and Company, 2002) 222.

than that its history traces the major issues raised on the road to independence: the model of the nation; the means by which nationhood was to be achieved; the interaction between social and individual freedoms; the issue of rural reconstruction; India's relationship to the West; the place of science and technology; etc. Their debates also deserve attention because Gandhi's unabashed nationalism was tempered over time through interaction with Tagore.

Several problems, however, arise in uncovering and assessing the sources of their disputes. First, many of the ideas they express seem to be in perfect accord. Their perspectives, for example, on the principles of individual and social freedom are nearly identical.[6] Second, their viewpoints, especially Gandhi's, alter over time and according to context and political circumstance: Gandhi scathingly denounces modernism in his seminal tract, *Hind Swaraj* (1909), but later backtracks to accommodate science reservedly within his worldview.[7] Thus the temporality and fluidity of their positions also complicate the project of assessment. Third, their viewpoints are intrinsically complex because they arise from both western and indigenous sources.

The present paper presents an alternative framework for assessing the Gandhi-Tagore controversy: the concept of nature, both its metaphorical uses and ideological implications. Gyan Prakash argues that science served as a metaphor for the Indian nation.[8] I propose, however, that nature, the ideological and material field from which science emerges, served in early twentieth-century India as an alternate metaphor for the nation.

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[6] Dalton 197-198.

[7] Ronald J. Tercheck, *Gandhi: Struggling for Autonomy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998) 91 and fn. 66: citing *Harijan*, June 22, 1935, in Raghavan N. Iyer, *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 3:525.

[8] Gyan Prakash, *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000). Prakash has delineated science's use as a metaphor for the nation.

This proposal is built on two scholarly precedents: first, that science as a metaphor for cultural and political power was a keystone of the nationalist construct of the ancient Hindu nation; second, that resisting the dominant discourse of science was a fundamental project of European romanticism.[9] Stating that a preoccupation with nature is a defining characteristic of European romantic poetry, I propose that nature, in particular, was used by European romantic poets as a symbolic arena where the Cartesian worldview was questioned. Nature achieved this distinction by symbolizing a participatory, relational model of being in the world *against* the model of domination that was set up by the discourse of western science and appropriated into the nationalist construction of Hindu science. Along with western science, romantic concepts were imported and appropriated into nationalist discourses and thus came to influence both Tagore and Gandhi.

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's critique of the Enlightenment and empirical thought forms a useful framework within which to consider the ideological split between Gandhi and Tagore. Their work disrupts the Enlightenment paradigm and questions the primacy of the empirical method and its application to society.[10] They argue that the subject-object divide characteristic of Enlightenment thought was present in the animism of ancient myth-based systems; but whereas in magic specificity is represented through mimesis, science obliterates the multiplicity inherent in nature by objectifying it as its domain of

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[9] Joel Black, "Introduction" to the section "Newtonian Mechanics and the Romantic Rebellion." *Beyond the Two Cultures* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990) 133-134. Find here a discussion of the place of the Cartesian/Kantian divide in romanticism.

[10] Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, (John Cumming, tr.) "The Concept of Enlightenment" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 1979) Theodor Adorno, (Brian O'Connor, ed.), "The Essay as Form" in *The Adorno Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000) 91-111. "The Essay as Form" discusses Cartesian principles.

operation.[11] As a result of the dominance in the West of Enlightenment instrumental rationality, an awkward import of empiricism into the domain of society and social science occurred. Human beings and their communities, however, do not function as categories; they express "multiplicities of qualities" and identities. Thus Adorno and Horkheimer would judge nationalism to be an inappropriate ideological function and an extension of empiricism which works to reduce multiplicity to unity.[12]

The disagreement between Gandhi and Tagore can be misleading. Whereas Gandhi was in the main opposed to the use of science and technology to build the nation, Tagore was not. Thus it could appear that Tagore was more the empiricist thinker than Gandhi. Further, there are aspects of the Adorno-Horkheimer critique with which Gandhi could agree, for example, the problematic nature of mechanization and industrialization and the principle of self. But Gandhi unwittingly falls into the Enlightenment paradigm which Adorno and Horkheimer work to disrupt (and hence into the subject-object divide) while Rabindranath's thought is kin to the romantic critique of the Enlightenment. Although the ideas of

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[11] "Myth turns into enlightenment, and nature into mere objectivity. Men pay for the increase of their power with alienation from that over which they exercise their power. Enlightenment behaves toward things as a dictator toward men. He knows them in so far as he can manipulate them. The man of science knows things in so far as he can make them. In this way their potentiality is turned to his own ends. In the metamorphosis the nature of things, as a substratum of domination, is revealed as always the same. This identity constitutes the unity of nature. . . It is the identity of the spirit and its correlate, the unity of nature, to which the multiplicity of qualities falls victim. Disqualified nature becomes the chaotic matter of mere classification, and the all-powerful self becomes mere possession—abstract identity. . . In science there is no specific representation. . . Like science, magic pursues aims, but seeks to achieve them by mimesis—not by progressively distancing itself from the object." Adorno and Horkheimer, 9-11.

[12] Special thanks to Alan Wells, medical ethicist and South Asianist, for his discussion of Adorno and Horkheimer's work.

Gandhi and Tagore cannot be fitted into pure categories, in the end it is Gandhi's deep commitment to nationalism that reveals his (at least partial) ensnarement in empiricist thinking and Tagore's equally passionate commitment against nationalism that reveals his mindset to be outside of the rationalist paradigm.[13] Both men use nature conceptually to construct an idea of the nation. The difference between them lies not only in their different approaches to nature, but also in the epistemological frameworks referring to nature within which they position themselves.

Science as the Dominant Discourse and Romantics as Radicals

Numerous scholars have discussed the appropriation of a Hindu Vedic past as the foundation on which the concept of the Indian nation was constructed in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries.[14] Prakash extends this model of

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[13] Tagore took issue not only with nationalism, but also with the ideological divisions created by mass movements used as a means to promote nationalism.

[14] In her seminal article, "Imagined Religious Communities? Ancient History and the Modern Search for a Hindu Identity," Romila Thapar points out that the emergent national consciousness appropriated a definition of Hinduism and a heritage of Hindu culture that, derived from western Orientalist constructions, overrode the multiple nature of pre-existing religious communities to postulate an ancient, monolithic Hindu nation. She critiques the "constituents of Hindu communal ideology which claim legitimacy from the past, namely, that there has always been a well-defined and historically evolved religion which we now call Hinduism and an equally clearly defined Hindu community." Romila Thapar, "Imagined Religious Communities? Ancient History and the Modern Search for a Hindu Identity." *Modern Asian Studies* 13.2 (1989): 210.
Another scholar, Sumit Sarkar, writes on the nationalist construction of the Hindu Vedic past from the perspective of caste and social issues. Stating that Nehru's history, *Discovery of India*, promoted an exclusively Hindu and North Indian concept of the nation, Sarkar records the "harsh words of a contemporary Dalit writer" speaking as a member of a group barred from the

appropriation arguing that "the Indian nation-state that came into being in 1947 was deeply connected to science's work as a metaphor."[15] Initially Western science was used as a conceptual tool to establish dominance by colonizers who "possessed an instrumentalist knowledge of nature."[16] But in the late nineteenth century Western-educated Indians and various religious and social reform movements, such as Dayanand Sarasvati's Arya Samaj, began to appropriate science as a form of cultural authority and to rewrite the hegemony of Western science in Hindu terms. In sum, Prakash asserts that:

> Nationalism arose by laying its claim on revived traditions, by appropriating classical texts and traditions of science as the heritage of the nation. To be a nation was to be endowed with science, which had become the touchstone of rationality.[17]

However, while Prakash effectively argues the appropriation of science as a metaphor for the nation, he says scarcely anything on a topic irrevocably linked to science as a cultural metaphor: nature. He mentions nature only in passing as the field out of which science emerges. One of his rare comments on the subject is a quote by Adorno and Horkheimer, whose critical theory informs Prakash's book: "What men want

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benefits of a nation constructed on the basis of India's golden past: 'The national movement was turned into a form of historical mythological movement and ancestor worship. . . Those who did not want society to be democratic, started eulogizing history, mythology and ages gone by, because in those mythological and historical ages, they were the supreme victors and leaders. . .'" Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997) 363.

[15] Prakash 7.

[16] Prakash 5.

[17] Prakash 6-7. He continues: "The representation of a people meant claiming that the nation possessed a body of universal thought for the rational organization of society. The idea of India as a nation, then, meant not a negation of the colonial configuration of the territory and its people but their reinscription under the authority of science."

to learn from nature is how to use it in order wholly to dominate it and other men."[18] I contend, however, that nature meant much more in the Indian nationalist context than simply the background out of which the dominant metaphor of science emerged. Nature was, in its own right, a metaphor for the nation that, linked in a complex alliance with the metaphor of science, became an alternate symbol and was used as both a resistance and a support to the project of making Hindu science a "symbol of the modern nation."

The deeper issue underlying the use of science and nature as metaphors is a philosophical and cultural rupture in the West: the estrangement of science from the arts and humanities.[19] Where traditional Western science has been perceived culturally as anchored in rationality, the arts and humanities are seen as driven by irrational, subjective forces.[20] Joel Black claims that, even though the romantic poets stand accused of creating the disjuncture between art and science, it should be located in the seventeenth century at the inception of the modern scientific discourse.[21] We speak here of the roots of power conferred upon Western science as a hegemonic tool. This power was established by claiming rationality for the scientific discourse and irrationality for the by-products of subjectivity, such as art, poetry and mystical experience. However, in the late eighteenth century a conceptual shift occurred away from the representation

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[18] Prakash 5. Prakash quotes from: Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 4.

[19] A discussion on the place of the Cartesian/Kantian divide in romanticism may be found in: Joel Black, "Introduction" to the section "Newtonian Mechanics and the Romantic Rebellion." *Beyond the Two Cultures* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990) 133-134.

[20] Attention on the so-called "two cultures" was originally focused by C.P. Snow in a now-famous essay from 1959. C.P. Snow, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959).

[21] Black 133.

of the mind through Cartesian duality (where the mind as the site of knowing is segregated from the object of knowing) to Kant's transcendental philosophy (where the mind is conceived as an active, interpretive receptor and both subject and object in the process of knowing).[22] It is well-known that romantic poets embraced the Kantian model and that this conceptual shift spurred the development of the literary/cultural set of characteristics termed "romanticism."[23]

For example, the effort of Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829, an originator of the German concept of the romantic) to humanize classical physics was part of a larger attempt to replace, using Michel Foucault's words, the "science of living beings" with the "science of life."[24] Current research in physics, notably the work of Ilya Prigogine on irreversibility in complex systems, stresses a humanistic agenda for physics over the deterministic and time-reversible Newtonian model:

> The conflict between living systems and the physical world often is expressed in terms of whether living systems can be thought of as machines. The underlying assumption here is that in the physical world only machine-like or clockwork activities occur since the laws of nature are deterministic and time reversible…. [However] life is no longer seen as just contingent on the laws of nature but is consistent with new laws of nature

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[22] Black 134. Black cites Jeremy Campbell for his reference to a "pervasive shift in the philosophical concept of the mind during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—a shift that runs parallel to the rise of modern scientific discourse and method."

[23] Romanticism's cohesive existence as a movement has been questioned by numerous literary critics. Rather than presenting as a monolith, romanticism was a range of cultural attitudes and literary styles spread over an extensive historical period. I keep the term here not only because Black uses it but because it provides a reasonable starting point from which to discuss the cultural and literary history of that period.

[24] Black 137-38. Black quotes from: Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1973), 160.

> that include irreversibility and uncertainty on the fundamental level.[25]

The romantic poets thus may have anticipated questions asked in the twentieth century by scientists such as Prigogine, foreshadowing a conceptual model of the world that is dynamic, participatory and oriented towards a humanistic "science of life."[26]

Instead of being the guilty perpetrators of the divorce between science and art, Black proposes that the romantic poets were the first to "diagnose and treat this condition." His argument is that, although romanticism has been viewed generally as antithetical to science, it contributed to science through its "implicit and explicit philosophical critique of the concept and practice of science itself."[27] While some poets (Coleridge, for example) took issue with scientific premises such as the abstract nature of time, others (Wordsworth and Schlegel, for example) dreamed of a utopian union of the divergent paradigms of science and poetry. Black claims for these poets an awareness of the extent to which science had become the official discourse and the potentially wide effects on human values of its power to change both the way the world was perceived and

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[25] Dean Driebe, "The Wisdom of Uncertainty," *Conceptos* series, published by Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades, Unversidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, 2001.

[26] An interesting aspect of this discussion is the degree to which scientific and literary models reflect and arise out of cultural and political agendas. If we can: say that colonial rulers were able to rule based on the subject/object divide set up by the dominant discourse of western science; claim that the romantic poets assaulted the gates of the scientific edifice out of concern for its hegemony; and notice that the proof of irreversibility is used to support a humanistic worldview in the humanist essays of Professor Prigogine , then the implication is that all discourses are subject to the political, cultural and personal motivations (conscious or unconscious) of the people who create and promote them.

[27] Black 132.

conceived. Romantic poets, particularly English and German, thus served as "radicals against the dominant discourse of science."[28]

Black's analysis is provocative and I would like to extend it by pointing out that nature is a prominent site where the romantic poets' complex, rebellious relationship to science was engaged. Romantic poetry is preoccupied with nature, displaying in particular expressions of intimacy and identification with it. Thus nature was the object of the scientific edifice but it also was under manipulation by the romantic enterprise. Where science objectified nature in order to explain and control it, romantic representations of nature offered a less compartmentalized, more dynamic paradigm of the world, clashing with the Cartesian model to embody the notion of the participation of and involvement with nature. Nature was, in a sense, the symbolic battleground where a model of relationship to the Other (that is, the object) was struggled out.

The complexity of nature as a site of nationalist construction results in part from its interdependence with science. In a way, nature is obscured by science because, as the background of science (science's field of operation), it functions as a kind of shadow concept. As in the previous quote from Adorno and Horkheimer, nature is the arena described and controlled by science in its positivist mode.[29] Nature, cast in a subject role by the *style* of Western science that was practiced until more participatory models appeared in the late 20th century, functions as a dominated partner in a correlative relationship to science. Perhaps *because* of its subject role, nature could become an alternative metaphor for the Indian nation. Even though the metaphor of nature is apt to be linked in a complex, symbiotic relationship with the metaphor of science, I argue a unique function for nature in the nationalist context: that it advocated for a style of nationalism counter to the mindset of

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[28] Black 136.
[29] Prakash 5.

dominance set up by Western science. The metaphor of nature may also be called complex because, like Hindu science, it was constructed from a tangle of Western and indigenous sources.

Tagore's Nation

The work and thought of Tagore comprise the single most compelling and comprehensive representation of nature as a metaphor in the Indian nationalist context. Rabindranath became a national figure with his 1912 reception of a Nobel prize in literature for *Gitanajali*, a collection of mystical poems. Tagore's literary work was under enormous English influence, while revolutionary in its originality. The overarching tendency of his life and work was to effect the syntheses of divergent cultures—East and West, science and nature, etc.—by imagining the universal ground into which these apparently opposing categories fit. However his thought was anything but reductionist. His universalist imagination was not inclined towards a colorless homogenization of opposites, but rather towards the acceptance of subtlety and difference in the Kantian/romantic vein of participation in, involvement with and respect for the object. It is in the spirit of intimate participation in nature that his "faith in the unity of man and nature informed everything he did."[30]

Partially due to the influence of English Romantic poetry, Tagore's poetic corpus discloses his intense and continuous personal engagement with nature. In his poetry nature overlaps to an extent with the concept of deity. This relationship with nature evolves over time along the lines of the western Teresian model of mysticism: a purificatory path that moves from devotion, to questioning, to acquiescence, to transcendence and

[30] Krishna Datta and Andrew Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore: The myriad-minded man* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2000) 14.

an understanding of life from within its pain and imperfection.[31] Scientific thought also emerges in Tagore's poetry. In *Morning Songs* there is a clear influence from western science: images of evolution merge with the grand Hindu cosmology of the rise and fall of the ages at Shiva's hand.[32]

While his poetry reveals a personal relationship with nature, Tagore's prose displays his public engagement with it. In "The Religion of the Forest" he discusses the results of differing apprehensions of nature in the East and West.[33] In western drama "nature occasionally peeps out but she is almost always a trespasser" whereas in the great Sanskrit dramas "nature stands on her own right, proving that she has her great function, to impart the peace of the eternal to human emotions."[34] The western view of nature as a force to struggle against comes in part, he asserts, from the hard demands of its sea-faring history. In contrast, India's soul was born in the benevolent forest; but, unfortunately, she lost her soul when her ancient kings turned towards luxury and pleasure.

Analyzing *Shankuntala*, Tagore says:

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[31] That Rabindranath's poetic development followed the western contemplative model is my analysis. For an account of his evolving relationship with nature in his poetry see: Baldev Singh, *Tagore and the Romantic Ideology* (Calcutta: Orient Longmans, 1963), Chapter Nine, "The Concept of Nature."

[32] "*Prabhaat sangiit*" (1883). Rabindranath Tagore, *Selected Poems*, William Radice, Tr. (New Delhi: Penguin, 1994) 128. Tagore translator, Radice, says in reference to *Prabhaat sangiit*: "Tagore did not believe that science described Reality as he understood it. . . . but he was always keenly interested in it and felt that India had to learn from the science of the West. Four years before his death he published *bishva-paricay*, an introduction to modern science for Bengali readers."

[33] Rabindranath Tagore, "The Religion of the Forest," *Creative Unity* (Delhi: Macmillan India, 1995; first edition, 1922).

[34] Tagore, *Creative Unity* 51. His opinion is that Shakespeare depicts the gulf that exists in the West between nature and human nature while Kalidasa expresses the innately Indian experience of nature standing in harmonious relationship with humankind.

> The drama opens with a hunting scene, where the king is in pursuit of an antelope. The cruelty of the chase appears like a menace symbolizing the spirit of the king's life clashing against the spirit of the forest retreat. . . the pleading of the forest dwellers. . . to spare the life of the deer. . . is the pleading that rises from the heart of the whole drama.[35]

Tagore casts the deer as a metaphor for the soul of India which is in need of salvation from the "destructive force of uncontrolled desire" and the "life of unscrupulous ambition" that gripped India historically through indigenous but morally weak rulers.[36] Because the scene of conflict is mentioned in proximity to his discussion of the West's relationship to nature, it may also be interpreted as the encroachment of western dominance in India. Tagore's attitude toward the West, however, is fundamentally positive. He thinks India should accept the good that comes from contact with Europe:

> Let me state clearly that I have no distrust of any culture because of its foreign character. On the contrary, I believe that the shock of outside forces is necessary for maintaining the vitality of our intellect.[37]

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[35] Tagore, *Creative Unity* 57.

[36] Tagore, *Creative Unity* 56.

[37] Rabindranath Tagore, "The Centre of Indian Culture (1919)," *Towards Universal Man* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1967) 222. It is interesting to note that this statement appeared in an essay in 1919, the same year as the horrific and historically monumental Jallianwalla Bagh massacre in Amritsar. The Jallianwalla Bagh massacre was an event with wide national repercussions that occurred on April 13, 1919, in Amritsar in the Panjab. Public gatherings had been banned in the area and British troops under General R.E.H. Dyer shot dead in a walled garden four hundred Indian villagers who came to attend a Hindu religious festival and wounded twelve hundred more. See Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 298-300. This event incited Rabindranath to repudiate the knighthood conferred on him in 1913 when he received the

To Tagore the enemy was not the West or even western science, per se, but the spirit of greed and lack of harmony with nature brought about by a style of relating to the world that places the object (for example, the deer in *Shakuntala*) in a position of subjection and utility. This suggests that it is this *specific* aspect of western science, the subject/object split and its implications, to which Tagore objects. Thus while he acknowledges fundamental differences between the East and West he does not condemn the West except in specific contexts, chiefly those of the western nation-state and machine culture. In keeping with the historical trend to claim spiritual superiority for the East, however, he believes that, compared to the West, India is intrinsically closer to nature. Nature is his arch-metaphor for the *real* India.[38]

His working model for the reclamation of the soul of India was the ancient forest ashram which served as a prototype of a revived and purified Indian community. Believing in the exigency of a uniquely Indian approach to education, he made great personal sacrifices in order to start a school and university at Shantiniketan based on the perceived principles of the ancient forest ashrams in which asceticism and high learning supposedly had been practiced in harmony with nature. The grand synthetic concept of his university, *Vishvabharati*, is "the world in a nest." It was to be an open home for all the world's valuable ideas, but "the nest" would be appropriately Indian—based on a philosophy of self-discipline, creativity and mutual respect carried out in the lap of nature.

Nobel prize for *Gitanjali*. The conjunction between text and event demonstrates the complexity and varied nature over time of his relationship to England and the West.

[38] It is noteworthy that his metaphors for deity and nation overlap. This is not because he confuses nation with deity but that nature stands in for a complex set of meanings, applicable to both deity and nation, involving relationship and transcendence. For the record,Tagore wrote the words to India's national anthem, "Jana, gana, mana."

> By contrast, Tagore scathingly denounces nationalism: The peoples are living beings. They have their distinct personalities. But nations are organizations of power, and therefore their inner aspects and outward expressions are everywhere monotonously the same. . . . In the modern world the fight is going on between the living spirit of the people and the methods of nation-organizing.[39]

Nationalism, he says, produces systems and institutions that deny the moral responsibility and the innate significance of the individual:

> . . . I do not put my faith in any new institution, but in the individuals all over the world who think clearly, feel nobly, and act rightly, thus becoming the channels of moral truth. Our moral ideals do not work with chisels and hammers. Like trees, they spread their roots in the soil and their branches in the sky, without consulting any architect for their plans.[40]

Once again, Tagore's concern appears related to the issues of participation versus the empiricist divorce between subject and object. He wants the nation to be an organic entity in which individuals are not objects for governance but participants in a *living* culture.

In 1930 Tagore met with Albert Einstein at least four times in Berlin and New York.[41] One of their conversations, published as an appendix to *The Religion of Man*, is of special

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[39] Rabindranath Tagore, "The Nation," *Creative Unity* (Delhi: Macmillan India, 1995; first edition, 1922) 143.

[40] Tagore, *Creative Unity* 153. The problem inherent in the expressed social ideal is one of utility: How is a nation to be constructed without the deadening weight of nationalism?

[41] Dutta and Robinson, 293.

interest because it reveals Tagore's humanist attitude towards the scientific enterprise and religion. As he grew older, Einstein's thought had become more grounded in empiricism.[42] He began to dispute with quantum physicists such as Niels Bohr who believed it is "wrong to think that the task of physics is to find out how nature *is*. . . Physics concerns what we can say about nature."[43] The discussion between Einstein and Tagore revolved around the question of objective truth. Whereas Einstein was forced to admit that he believed with near religious conviction in objective truth outside of human participation, Tagore would not budge on his profound belief that "Truth is realized through men."[44] Tagore argued:

> This world is a human world—the scientific view of it is also that of the scientific man. Therefore, the world apart from us does not exist; it is a relative world, depending for its reality upon our consciousness.[45]

It is interesting that, played out over time, Tagore's viewpoint has been vindicated by the work of quantum physicists. Prigogine said in 1984: "Curiously enough, the present evolution of science is running in the direction stated by the great Indian poet."[46] It is perhaps Tagore's participatory model of being in the world that enabled his enthusiasm for science, even as his mindset was counter to empiricism. His interest in science was so great that towards the end of his life he wrote an introductory volume on science in Bengali.

Gandhi's Nation

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[42] Dutta and Robinson, 294.
[43] Niels Bohr quoted in Dutta and Robinson, 294.
[44] Tagore, Rabindranath, *The Religion of Man, being The Hibbert Lectures for 1930* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1953) 223.
[45] Tagore, *Religion of Man*, 222.
[46] Datta and Robinson, 14.

Like Tagore, Gandhi also imagined the nation in terms of nature and ancient India. He used a figure called the "oceanic circle" to represent *sarvodaya* or the ideal social system that would provide the "welfare of all":

> In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be the individual always ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.[47]

B.N. Ganguly notes that that Gandhi's oceanic circle suggests an ancient Hindu, Buddhist and Tantric symbol, the *mandala*. While the *mandala* exists in myriad forms, one of its major expressions in Hinduism displays the great god, Indra, seated at the center with smaller Indras placed around the circumference.[48] This configuration communicates through its cultural weight a strong sense of participation and identity with the center which Gandhi was able to translate into his social ideal. Prakash points out, however, that the oceanic circle ideal of society as an independent political order does not fit easily with Gandhi's view of India as a nation-state.[49]

Beyond the oceanic circle, Gandhi used his own body to symbolize the nation. Joseph Alter's insightful discussion of Gandhi's reinvention of his body demonstrates both how concepts of nature were reformulated to represent the nation and how Gandhi used his body as a field of scientific operation.

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[47] Gandhi, *Harijan*, 28 July 1946 in *Sarvodaya* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1958) 70-71. Quoted in Dalton 143.
[48] B.N. Ganguli, *Gandhi's Social Philosophy: Perspective and Relevance* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1973) 158, 160-161
[49] Prakash 222.

Gandhi, he argues, "conceived of himself as a scientist, albeit a scientist working in a laboratory of his own making. . ." He carried out this conceptual, "scientific" operation on his body as a proponent of the "Nature Cure" movement.[50] In early twentieth-century India yoga had been reinvented in the image of western science and this new scientized yoga merged with the so-called Nature Cure, an imported natural medicine practice born in mid-nineteenth-century Germany.[51] As a proponent of the Nature Cure Gandhi emphasized the purity of nature and exalted it to the realm of spirituality, writing, "spiritual laws like Nature's laws, need no enacting; they are self-acting."[52] Relying on both science and nature as metaphors within which to frame his body discipline practices, Gandhi "ingeniously blurred the lines between rational empiricism and subjective experience. ."[53]

Alter thus analyzes Gandhi's body as a site where the metaphors of science and nature were integrated, or blurred, for the nationalist purpose and where Gandhi's body, representing nature, was used as the operating field for a reclaimed Hindu science. I suggest that the practical effect of Gandhi's ideology was to exalt nature while at the same time subsuming, or incorporating, it into a scientific model that worked to validate the nation. Like Dayanand Sarasvati, Gandhi worked to reconceive western science in Indian terms but, going several steps beyond Dayanand's program, he politicized science through his body.

Gandhi has often been cited for his unswerving opposition to science and technology. Although such accounts fail to notice that he tempered his critique of science and technology over time, they stem from his own strident

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[50] Josepth S. Alter, *Gandhi's Body: Sex, Diet, and the Politics of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) xi.
[51] Alter 60. Nature Cure promoted the idea of the body's ability to heal itself with the help of nature and curative elements found in nature.
[52] M. K. Gandhi, *From Yeravda Mandir*, quoted in Alter 44.
[53] Alter xii.

declarations. The most notorious example of Gandhi's negativity towards modernity and its trappings of science and technology, is found in *Hind Swaraj* (1909). The work itself is an indictment against the West in which Gandhi pits his moral ideal of the Indian nation against the evil of western modernism. "Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilization, it represents a great sin," he said.[54] However, it is important to see Gandhi's aversion to machinery in the greater political, moral and human contexts of his thought. He saw machines as part of a larger system of western modernity which not only supported political dominance but also contained numerous potentially dehumanizing and enslaving traps. He correlated political *swaraj* (independence) with individual *swaraj* (interior freedom), calling for personal purification and self-discipline—an evocation of the ancient Hindu ideals of spiritual liberation and self-mastery—for the sake of the nation. Machines and other aspects of modern, western, technological society (doctors, hospitals, etc.) are couched in opposition to moral ideals and blamed in *Hind Swaraj* for the theft of the soul and the breakdown of individual and social integrity. In 1924, however, Gandhi adjusted his stance on machinery:

> What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. . . . Today machinery helps to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might. . . I am aiming not at eradication of all machinery, but limitation.[55]

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[54] *Hind Swaraj*

[55] Gandhi, Young India, 1924-1926, 13 November 1924, II, 1029. Quoted in Dalton, 142, and Ganguly, B.N., *Gandhi's Social Philosophy: Perspective and Relevance* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1973) 129.

Likewise, in 1925 Gandhi tempered his views on science, following the same theme that it is essential for technology to serve the greater human good:

> . . . it is perfectly true. . . that I am not an admirer of science unmixed with something I am about to say to you. I think that we cannot live without science, if we keep it in the right place. But I have learnt so much during my wandering in the world about the misuse of science that I have often remarked. . . as would lead people to consider that I really was a foe of science. In my humble opinion, there are limitations even to scientific search and the limitations are the limitations that humanity imposes on us.[56]

However, Gandhi never repudiated the basic view of civilization presented in *Hind Swaraj*, indicating that, although he tempered his concept of the use of machines and technology over time, he never was able to detach western technology ideologically from the great evil of the West.

By comparison, consider Tagore's objections to the anti-humanist aspects of western science in "Nationalism": "The genius of Europe has given her people the power of organization, which has specially made itself manifest in politics and commerce and in coordinating scientific knowledge."[57] While graciously looking towards a reconciliation of the "two great worlds" at a future time when India can "assimilate. . . what is permanent in Western civilization," he denounces the western concept of the nation-state as an "abstract being" and compares it to an impersonal, therefore efficient, hydraulic press.

> When this engine of organization begins to attain a vast size, and those who are mechanics are made into parts of

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[56] Speech to students, March 13, 1925 in Raghavan Iyer, *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 1: 310. Quoted in Dalton, 103.

[57] Tagore Nationalism 5 quoted in Mool Chand 132 [FIX]

> the machine, then the personal man is eliminated to a phantom, everything becomes a revolution of policy carried out by the human parts of the machine, with no twinge of pity or moral responsibility."[58]

While, with Gandhi, he could express negativity towards the misuse of technology, Tagore was far less rigid in that negativity and laced it with commendations of the West's positive qualities.

There have been several interesting critiques of Gandhi's negotiation with science and modernity. Ashis Nandy argues that Gandhi believed in multiple concepts of science and technology and that his opposition was, in particular, to the "technism" of Western modernity, a mode of technology bent on global domination.[59] Alter claims that Gandhi, "while working to 'escape' both tradition and modernity," could not entirely avoid "entanglement" with western science, a discourse that is irrevocably implicated in systems of knowledge and power because of its genealogy in Enlightenment thought.[60] Ronald Tercheck finds that Gandhi's concerns with science are rooted in ethics. Gandhi did not separate science from ethics and attempted to critique science from outside its self-referential paradigm. He was willing to allow science and technology into Indian society on the basis that "human beings control the process rather than are controlled by it," indicating that he was concerned with the ethical application of science rather than with western science as a demon in itself.[61]

Prakash relates Gandhi's critique of science to nationalism: "Yet Gandhi was a nationalist, and the nation was

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[58] Rabindranath Tagore, Nationalism (London: Macmillan and Company, 1917) 12-17.
[59] Ashis Nandy, "From Outside the Imperium: Gandhi's Cultural Critique od the West" in *Traditions, Tyranny and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987)
[60] Alter xii.
[61] Tercheck 91.

the secure foundation for his critique of modernity."[62] While Gandhi's ideal for the nation was based on an updated version of the principles of *dharma* and intended to define India on its own terms in opposition to the modern West, "the perspective of the nation also left Gandhi's ideology vulnerable to the idea of the modern nation-state."[63] Prakash thus sees Gandhi's conceptualization of India as a cohesive *dharmic* community to be the unfortunate source of nationalism. This, of course, is a great irony. If true, the very ideology which led India to independence is also the root of its nationalist problem. Prakash's analysis, however, presumes that Gandhi was a victim in the sense that his ideology caved in on itself to produce an outcome that he would not have chosen; but in the course of his disputes with Tagore, Gandhi defended his stance as a nationalist. Thus Gandhi, Mahatma though he was, bears a certain culpability for the nationalist outcomes about which Tagore attempted to warn him.

It is apropos to position Gandhi's negativity towards science and technology within a larger discourse and to justify it as Tercheck does when he cites ethics to be the greater issue for Gandhi than machinery. However, I agree with Alter that Gandhi became ensnared in the genealogy of the Enlightenment mindset and with Prakash who, concurring with Adorno and Horkheimer's criticism of the Enlightenment, sees the concept of the nation-state as an ideology that reduces multiplicity to an uneasy unity: "The formula of unity in diversity, shared by both Gandhi and Nehru, acknowledged multiplicity only in order to extract from it an essential singularity."[64] Thus, although Gandhi's "concept of swaraj empowered the struggle for the nation-state" it was "ill-suited to achieve the non-modern state."[65]

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[62] Prakash 214.
[63] Prakash 215.
[64] Prakash 223.
[65] Prakash 222.

This disjuncture is the crux of the Gandhi-Tagore controversy; and it is also the flashpoint that identifies Gandhi's prescription for the nation as potent and Tagore's as unviable. Tagore's opposition to nationalism, particularly nationalism versus individual freedom, was a central theme of his social and political thought.[66] He was utterly opposed to nationalism (after the Bengal Partition of 1905) and feared the implantation of the evils of western nationalism into the Indian project, while Gandhi defined Indian nationalism as something entirely different from western nationalism and saw the making of a uniquely dharmic Indian nation as the only means to relieve colonial oppression. He replied to Tagore's criticisms in 1921 saying, "Indian nationalism is not exclusive, nor aggressive, nor destructive. . . It is health-giving, religious and therefore humanitarian."[67]

From a conceptual standpoint, Gandhi fought fire with fire while Tagore entered into the meaning of fire in order to know its truths, both positive and negative. That is to say that Gandhi was ensnared in the empiricist mindset by the necessity of answering colonialism in its own language (and perhaps also because of personal predispositions) while Tagore's mindset followed more closely the paradigm of "romantics against the dominant discourse of science" in an attitude towards nature that was participatory and allowed for the untidiness of diversity:

> [Gandhi] does not take the carefree delight in nature's infinite variety which we see in Tagore's poems. Tagore finds nature temperamental and unpredictable, and loves her the more for it; but Gandhi looks at the universe as a simple, well-ordered arrangement.[68]

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[66] Dalton 192.
[67] Dalton 198, quoted from Gandhi, *Young India*, 13 October 1921, I, 673.
[68] V.S. Naravane, *The Saint and the Singer: Reflections on Gandhi and Tagore* (Allahabad: V.S. Naravane, publisher, 1995) 68-69.

Prakash, however, believes that "Tagore's bitter critique can also be situated in this history of modernity" because while Tagore denounced the western concept of the nation-state, he favored the idea of nation as community.[69] This is undoubtedly true. Tagore, being embedded in the historical moment, could not be entirely free of its discourses. However, as with his opposition to Einstein's worldview in which truth is enshrined as objective and defined outside of human participation, Tagore's opposition to nationalism was prophetic. Likewise, Gandhi's ideology was not purely empiricist. Prakash correctly notes that "Gandhi invoked and drew upon the romantic critique of modern science and technology" but continues saying, "we should not be too quick to absorb him wholly within it . . . [because] his opposition to modern technology was not based on the belief that it objectified human beings, depriving them of their essence."[70]

The various uses of nature by both Gandhi and Tagore demonstrate that science was not the only appropriated and assimilated metaphor at work in the imagining of the Indian nation. However the metaphors Gandhi used for the nation—the *mandala* and the body system—appear more structured, based on the notions of orderly arrangements and categories while Tagore's image of the primal Indian community is an organic one—nature as a whole, nature as the life of the forest.

It is perhaps entirely more appropriate to call the interaction between Gandhi and Tagore over the many years of their intense relationship a dialogue, not a controversy or dispute. They contested over many issues but, from out of their high-profile dialogue and their mutual concern for India's freedom, differing models of the nation were offered for public consumption. Tagore, putting forward a model of the nation that was organic, humanist and participatory, vied with Gandhi, whose model, although also intensely concerned with human issues, tended towards the moral and structural. It will be a

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[69] Prakash 232-233.
[70] Prakash 214.

future project to describe the literary, social and political streams into which nature's use as a metaphor for the Indian nation flowed after Tagore's passing.

Cannadine, David. *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Pp. 264.

David Cannadine, in *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*, argues the history of Britain cannot be severed from that of its empire. Cannadine stresses the interconnections between Britain and its empire by analyzing the social structures and symbol systems that unify them. Through the historical analysis of these structures and systems, Cannadine seeks to recover the world-view of those who ruled the British empire.

Ornamentalism portrays the British Empire as an interactive system of global proportions (85). The book is partitioned into four parts. The first part outlines perspectives on imperialism and the author's historiographic goals. The second examines the interconnections between Britain and its empire. It argues that the structure of society in Britain is *directly* related to how empire was ordered overseas. The third focuses on the system for distributing imperial symbols of honor. It describes this system as holistic and integrated around royalty. (Cannadine also evaluates the shortcomings of his arguments in this section of the book.) The fourth part discusses empire and its dissolution, as well as evaluates (autobiographically) the role contemporary historians play in the study of British imperialism.

Cannadine argues that *Ornamentalism* is an "alternative" history. He takes exception to conventional histories which view the British empire as economic opportunism, a military/religious crusade, and/or the export of constitutional practices (xiv). Nor is the empire and its history about race (27). Rather, it is about the replication of British views on their own society, on a global level (111). Cannadine cites a broad range of examples from around the world to illustrate how the British view society as "layered" structured relations both at home and in the empire at large. His historical knowledge of Britain and its imperial world is wide and impressive.

This breadth needlessly comes at the expense of sufficiently grounding the history of imperialism in particular locales. This produces "thin" descriptions of the colonized world which—most noticeably in the "detailed" chapter on India—result in exciting arguments leading to disappointing conclusions. Cannadine ingeniously argues that dis-contiguous spaces within the British empire influence one another. This exciting argument, however, is twisted into an account which portrays British views of their society as effortlessly "pulsing" out from the metropole and saturating life in the imperial periphery (111). By viewing colonies as unproblematic extensions of Britain, local socio-cultural realities are underestimated as forces that shape the history of imperialism around the world. Cannadine's view of the British empire consequently fails to engage a large and very influential body of literature on this subject. Such an oversight is important in an account which strives to recover how the British saw their empire since it leads the author to overestimate the impact of this world-view on how the British ruled their empire.

Ornamentalism also symbolically examines global interconnections between Britain and its empire. Represented by an elaborate system of royal honors and titles which "surged" from Britain to its imperial periphery (122), these symbols purportedly "homogenized the heterogeneity of empire" (85). This discussion—similar to the one on British views of society—reflects an impressive breadth of historical knowledge. The precise importance of this knowledge is difficult to asses since Cannadine remains fixed on how the British saw their empire at the expense of how they ruled it. The equation of British imperial views and imperialism's global practices (symbolically or otherwise) is a major assumption throughout this book. This assumption is particularly disappointing in the detailed discussion of royal honors and titles since—despite their ubiquity—the author baldly admits that relatively few imperial subjects were actually interested or even stirred by them (138).

Ornamentalism aims to integrate British and imperial history. This goal is laudable if it promotes a more subtle historical understanding of Britain, its empire, and the relationship between the two. Such an understanding should include various views on empire—not just those of the British—and balance them by examining the contextures of imperialism's practices. *Ornamentalism*, with a narrow focus that fixates on the British world-view, does not strike such a balance. Readers—particularly those interested in historical balance—will be disappointed by Cannadine's book and its view of the British empire.

By Matthew Cook, Columbia University

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