
AGAR
xxiv

SAGAR a south asia research journal

volume xxiv • 2016

SPONSORED BY THE SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE,
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

SAGAR 2015–2016

SAGAR a south asia research journal
volume xxiv • 2016

SOUTH ASIA AND THE WORLD

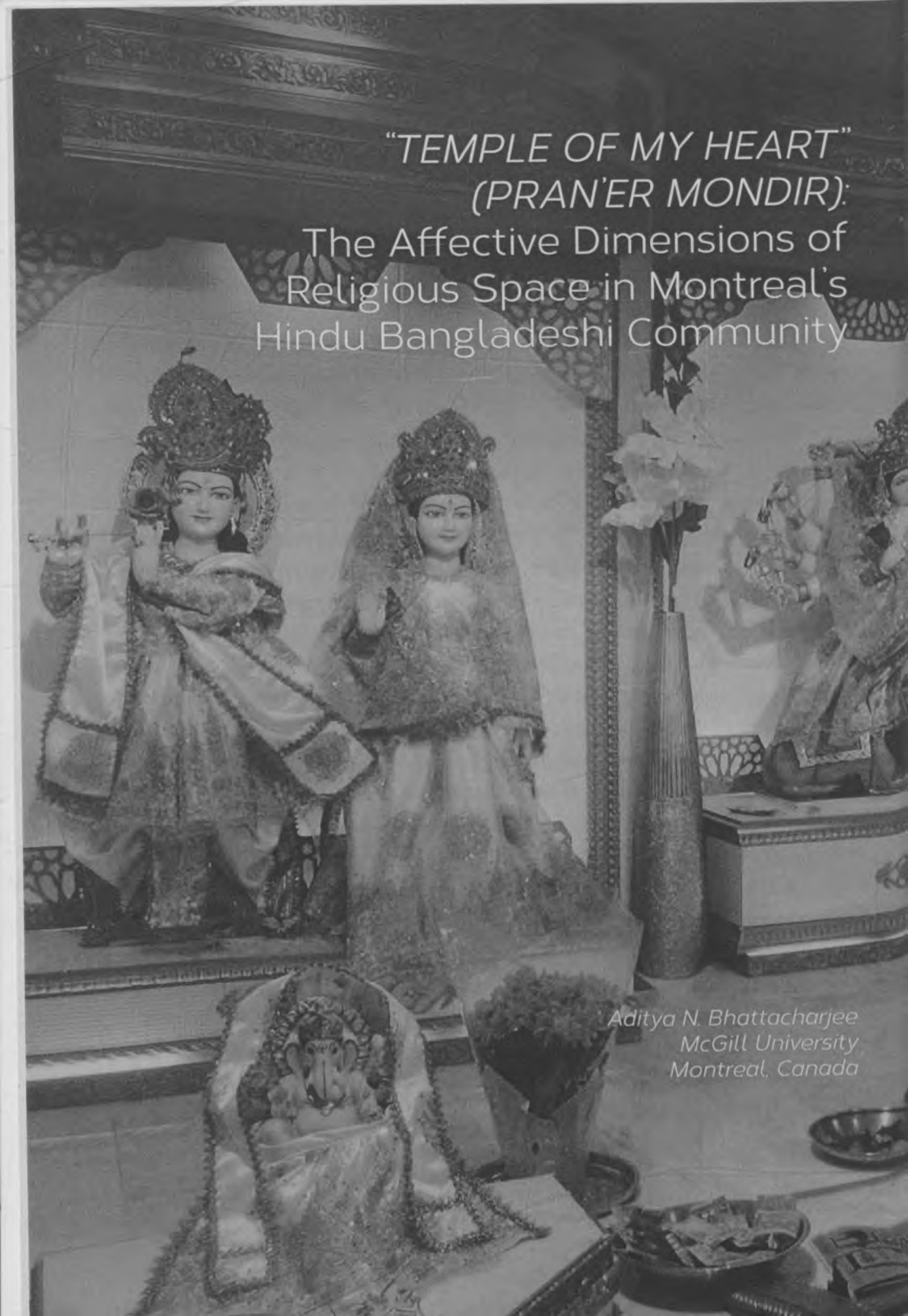
EDITORS' NOTE

The theme of this issue is "South Asia and the World." Three papers and a translation locate South Asian cultures and politics in global contexts across contemporary, colonial and precolonial times. Through their explorations of space and place, situatedness and displacement, they shed light on the interactions between global and local hegemonies and how they shape the constructions of meaning and performances of identity.

In his ethnographic account of the construction of a temple in Montreal, Aditya N. Bhattacharjee examines how Hindu-Bangladeshi immigrants preserve—but also reinvent—their individual-collective identities, especially with the help of religious rituals or *pujos*. Safoora Arbab's translation of Ghani Khan's poetry brings to light a postmodern sensibility far ahead of its times: by reinforcing essentialized representations of Pashtuns in both foreign and indigenous discourses, Khan transcended the East-West binary and revealed how discourses on either "side" were driven by common impulses. Amrita Mishra's re-reading of Mulk Raj Anand argues that the author, while explicitly commenting on caste relations during late colonial rule, was implicitly performing anticolonial resistance by linking the condition of the caste-bound subject to that of the middle-class Indian citizen under British rule. We return to the power of rituals in the issue's final article, but in a very different manner this time: Nalini Rao's study of *navaratri* rituals in precolonial and colonial times reveals the fusion of religious and royal power and how it is sustained across historical eras in symbolic performance.

We remain deeply thankful to the South Asia Institute for its continued support of *Sagar*, designer Dana Johnson for his work on the print volume, web editor Deepa Fadnis for ensuring that our site remains up to date, student members of our Editorial Collective and faculty members of our Editorial Board.

Sincerely,
Saif Shahin and Jeff Wilson
Chief Editors, *Sagar: A South Asia Research Journal*



"TEMPLE OF MY HEART" (PRAN'ER MONDIR): The Affective Dimensions of Religious Space in Montreal's Hindu Bangladeshi Community

Aditya N. Bhattacharjee
McGill University
Montreal, Canada

ABSTRACT

In March 2014, the Montreal Sanatan Dharma Temple (MSDT) was finally and formally inaugurated thanks to the collective efforts of the 6,000-person strong Hindu Bangladeshi immigrant community in Montreal. In this article, I draw upon ongoing ethnographic research on the site to connect its construction to larger conversations concerning the community's efforts to preserve a "Hindu-Bangladeshi" identity. A key way this identity is enriched is through the performance of religious rituals or pujos, *which I understand as sites where Montreal's Hindu Bangladeshis transcend challenges posed to their Hindu Bangladeshi-ness and congregate in a space where their individual-collective identities from their homeland are reinvented. To understand this reinvention, I consider how in discourse propagated by temple leaders, the community's identity faces challenges not only in the immediate and physical unavailability of Bangladesh but also by what is termed "Canadian culture", held as subverting an ideal set of Hindu-Bangladeshi social and religious values. The community also warily identifies the local presence of non-Bengali-Hindu communities as diluting Hindu-Bangladeshi identity, understood again as possessing a special characteristic. The theoretical framework for my research is provided by Dorothy Angell, a scholar of Bengali-American studies, who offers useful insights into how individual Bengali identity is constituted by hierarchically-positioned social and family roles. In conclusion, I reflect on the construction of the MSDT as a space with affective dimensions that offers Hindu Bangladeshis a physical site where they redefine their individual and collective selves on a daily basis.*

In this city, we built homes, bought cars, and sent our children to school and university. The only thing we lacked was our own temple!

—Shaktibrata Haldar (Manu Da), 25th of March, 2014

INTRODUCTION

March 8 was a busy morning for the 45-ear-old nursing assistant Shakti Ranjan Paul,[1] affectionately referred to as Shakti Da ("Brother Shakti") by his fellow Bangladeshi-Montreal-

1 In compliance with rules set by McGill University's Ethics and Research Board Policy (ERB) and as per their own personal wishes, the names of all my informants have been replaced with pseudonyms.

ers. As he woke up at the crack of dawn and drove his SUV from his house in Ville LaSalle to the nearby neighborhood of Verdun, Shakti Da was filled with immense joy at having finally realized a dream he and a group of 15 other friends had first envisioned in 2005—the construction of a Hindu Bangladeshi temple.

The preceding week had been busy. The six *murtis* to be consecrated in the temple premises—including images of the deities Durga, Lakshminarayan, Radhakrishna, Shiva, and Ganesha—had finally arrived from the workshop of a sculptor in Jaipur, India who had been specifically commissioned to prepare the temple's images. After the site of the future temple was ritually purified by priest Dibyendu Bhattacharjee, Shakti Da, along with several of his cousins and friends, spent countless nights swabbing and mopping its floors.[2] These efforts made it possible for Shakti Da to invite high-ranking Montreal politicians and dignitaries from other Canadian Hindu communities who had confirmed their presence, alongside the city's six thousand member strong[3] Hindu Bangladeshi diaspora, at the inauguration ceremony of the Montreal Sanatan Dharma Temple (MSDT), Shakti Da's *praan-er mondir* ("temple of the heart").

THESIS

In their 2003 work *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, scholars Jana Braziel and Anita Mannur offer the following remark concerning diasporic communities. The large-scale displacements which give rise to a Diaspora are "created by the 'human phenomenon' that includes the

2 Shakti Ranjan Paul ("Shakti Da"), interviewed by the author, March 25, 2015.

3 It has been extremely difficult to trace an official census statistic which provides an accurate estimate of the community's current size. Community leaders seem to agree upon this figure of 6,000 individuals.

social, cultural, psychic and experiential facets of life".[4] Hence, such migration often arises on account of extraneous reasons that includes discrimination on the basis of religious and/or political affiliation. They contrast this with the migratory patterns that form 'transnational communities' by emphasizing the economic factors which motivate the latter.[5] In both cases, the identities and experiences of the migrant actors undergo significant upheaval as they straddle between the "two dialectics of location/dislocation and belonging/longing".[6] In their effort to establish a firm footing as either religious or cultural minorities in their adoptive homes, both diasporic and transnational migrants consciously strive to "maintain connections to another (home) land, culture, or faith—real or imagined".[7] Examining these efforts reveals interstitial public spaces that aspire to make meaning of the in-between-ness which characterizes the migrant experience—one pulled between the allegiances of state and non-state and individual and group needs.[8] In what follows, I explore these themes through the case study of Montreal's Hindu Bangladeshi diaspora and its efforts to articulate a distinctly Canadian Hindu-Bangladeshi identity. I begin this paper by discussing the political and historical factors which gave rise to this diaspora and then describe the salience of religious space to the community's efforts to consolidate itself as a surrogate family for its members. To support my arguments, I provide excerpts of private interviews that I conducted myself with community members whose narratives reveal a twenty-five year old triumphalist history beginning with the arrival of single bachelors fleeing

4 J.E. Braziel and A. Mannur "Nation, migration, globalization: Points of contention in diaspora studies," in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, J.E. Braziel and A. Mannur (eds.), (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 15.

5 Ibid.

6 Shakib Ahsan, "An Inquiry into the identity constructions of the Bangladeshi diaspora in Greater Toronto Area through their social networks," (PhD diss. McGill University, 2015), 24.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

religious and political persecution, and ending with the construction of a Hindu Bangladeshi temple space which in the eyes of both the community and its political representatives, signifies its successful integration into a loosely defined Canadian society.

Over the span of one and a half months between the months of March and April 2014, I conducted lengthy interviews with three individuals—each of whom characterizes different stages of the community's development. The eldest of my informants is Pandit Dibyendu Bhattacharjee who, after migrating to Montreal in the early 1980s, was amongst the first Hindu Bangladeshis to settle in the city. This conversation was followed with a face-to-face interview with Mr. Shakti Ranjan Paul, who I introduced earlier in this paper. Arriving in Montreal in the early '90s, Mr. Paul was amongst the early pioneers who determinedly worked to form distinct Hindu Bangladeshi organizations in the city, in contrast with Indian, Sri Lankan, and Caribbean Hindu groups. My final interview was with Ms. Monika Dey, a university student in her early 20s who was born and raised in Montreal and who has been an active participant in community activities since her childhood. Her parents are businesspeople in the city and are active community members. I personally contacted each informant and obtained their consent via both telephone and email, and visited each of them for their interviews in accordance with McGill University's Ethics and Research Board procedures.

MEMORIES: THE STORIES OF INDIVIDUALS AND OF COMMUNITIES

I was first introduced to Shakti Da over five years ago at a community gathering. We bonded over our shared Sylheti heritage,[9] and we also discovered a mutual interest for Bengali music and theatre, Bengali cuisine,[10] and the teachings of the 19th century saint Ramakrishna.[11] When I first met Shakti Da, I was struck by his dynamism, his extensive knowledge of South Asian social life in Montreal, and

9 Shakti Da was born in the Northeastern Bangladeshi province of Sylhet, a province which is renowned for its vast tea gardens and wealthy *Londoni gaos* or villages made affluent by cash remittances large populations of UK-based relatives(Katy Gardner, "Transnationalism in Sylhet, Bangladesh," in *The Routledge Handbook of the South Asian Diaspora*, Joya Chatterjee and David Washbrook (eds.), (New York: Routledge, 2013). My own grandparents were born in Sylhet but fled to Assam, India during the population exchanges which accompanied the riots of the 1947 Partition of Bengal. This event, which was part of larger Partition of British India, gave birth to two religiously constituted successor states, the Hindu-majority West Bengal and the Muslim-majority East Pakistan which was separated by thousands of miles of Indian territory from its predominantly Urdu-speaking Western wing. Political tensions based on linguistic and cultural differences between the two wings of Pakistan led to a civil war in 1971 which ended with the replacement of the former East Pakistan with the ethnically-homogenous nation of Bangladesh (Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1993), 1). The long history of conflict in the region has created large populations of *refugee families*, or families with roots on the other side of the India-Bangladesh border such as mine (Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*,106). Muslims form the largest religious group of Bangladesh comprising 90% of the population. Hindu Bangladeshis comprise 9.6% of the population. See: "The World Factbook: Bangladesh." Central Intelligence Agency. Accessed August 16, 2016. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html.

10 When he first arrived in Canada in the early 1990s, Shakti Da worked several different jobs, one of which included cooking at one of Montreal's popular Indian restaurants. Given this skill, he oversees the cooking operations at most Hindu Bangladeshi social events.

11 Shakti Da is the current secretary of Montreal's Vedanta Society, a faith-based association affiliated with the Ramakrishna Mission, a Kolkata-based religious order which is highly popular amongst Bengali middle class families (Refer to chapter 3 of Partha Chatterjee's *The Nation and its Fragments*). My father's family which is based in Kolkata is also deeply involved with the Ramakrishna Mission, thus adding extra affinities between Shakti Da and myself.

the excitement in his voice while discussing Bangladeshi community activities.

When we sat down for our formal interview on the evening of March 25, 2014, Shakti Da provided a brief account of his life, the circumstances which brought him to Canada, and the formative years of Montreal's Hindu Bangladeshi community. Prior to his arrival in Canada, Shakti Da worked as a banker in Bangladesh. He was an active member of Sylhet's Ramakrishna Mission and was an actor in a local theatre company. He recalls having a very vigorous social life and a large friend circle which consisted of both Hindus and Muslims.[12] One could argue that the success of Shakti Da's social and professional lives in the late 1970s and early 1980s was a product of the 'secular Bengali nationalism' that informed Bangladeshi socio-political life of the period.[13] The mid-1980s however, saw the rise of great political and economic unrest in Bangladesh which in turn facilitated the rise of social insecurity and Islamic fundamentalism across the country.[14] Within this uncertain socio-political climate, Hindu Bangladeshis were often targets of organized pogroms and other violent attacks.[15] Employers often favoured Muslim candidates over Hindu

12 Shakti Da interview.

13 In the early years after the Independence of Bangladesh, Bangladeshi identity was highly influenced by Bengali nationalism which, in contrast to the Muslim Pakistani identity, celebrated secularism and a Sanskritic-register of the Bengali language. See: Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 26-7.

14 The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Bangladesh during this period emerged in conjunction with Cold-war era conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and also in response to the rise of Hindu nationalism in India at the same time (Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 26). As noted by P. Chatterjee (2010), the tension between secular Bengali nationalism and Islamization has plagued Bangladesh since its inception. This tension often manifests itself in the interactions between Hindus and Muslims. This fact was confirmed by Prianka Saha, another informant of mine who stated that "Although they[Hindus and Muslims] have generally enjoyed friendly relations with each other there always was a tiff between Hindus and Muslims in Bangladesh" (Prianka Saha, interviewed by the author, April 21, 2014).

15 Ritesh Chakraborty., interviewed by the author, April 23, 2014.

ones for job positions and many educated Hindus "were left with no choice ... [other than] to do labour jobs to run the house" (Saha, April 21, 2014). Ritesh Chakraborty, the priest at the MSDT, mentioned that Hindu temples were frequently vandalized by thugs hired by Islamist organizations and that Hindu festivals were celebrated at "smaller scales, lest they attract unwanted attention."[16] During this period, several Bangladeshi Hindus were "driven by discrimination" to migrate to the USA, the UK, Australia, and Canada, where they often received political asylum.[17] It was against this historical backdrop that Shakti Da arrived in Montreal as a political refugee in 1992.

The early 1990s, Shakti Da believes, were the formative years of Montreal's Hindu Bangladeshi community. The first Hindu Bangladeshi migrants to Montreal were like Shakti Da—single men fleeing political persecution. Despite holding degrees from Bangladeshi universities and "held respectable jobs back home," the qualifications and work experience of many of these early migrants was not recognized by most Montreal employers.[18] Moreover, their inability to speak French acted as an additional barrier in their pursuit of white collar occupations similar to those they practiced back in Bangladesh. Although Shakti Da and many of his compatriots did see the benefit of "restarting their education from the beginning," they also had to support their families back home.[19] Many of them also intended to sponsor and bring their families to Montreal under what was then called the family reunification program. Hence, in order to make money as quickly as possible, many of the early Hindu Bangladeshi Montrealers sought employment as cooks and waiters in restaurants, taxi drivers, and deliverymen.[20] Others opened small business establishments

16 Ibid.

17 Monika Dey, interviewed by the author, April 21, 2014.

18 Shakti Da interview.

19 Dey interview.

20 Shakti Da interview.

which included Indian restaurants, fast food joint franchises, depanneurs, travel agencies, and real estate agencies.[21] As indicated in a footnote presented earlier in this paper, Shakti Da himself worked as a waiter and chef in an Indian restaurant for several years. The similar circumstances of their social and cultural dislocation stimulated many of the first Hindu Bangladeshi migrants to form an informal support network which sought to help its individual members with important tasks such as the finding of roommates, accommodation, and employment. The friendships forged within this network soon developed into strong "emotionally joint family-like relationships which offer a fierce support system which persevere to this date" and which form the bedrock of current Hindu Bangladeshi community activities.[22]

DOROTHY ANGELL: BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN THEORY AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

In her 1999 essay, "Identity, Kinship and Community: Bangladeshis in the United States," Dorothy Angell[23] suggests that a thorough analysis of Bengali kinship is "indispensable for an adequate understanding of the Bangladeshi experience in the United States."[24] "In Bengali culture," she writes, "kinship is established through 'shared substance'—that is, persons are said to be related because they share

21 A similar trend was noticed in the case of Sylheti Muslim migrants to the United Kingdom (UK) in the 1970s, many of whom came to dominate and have transformed London's Indian restaurant industry. For more information, refer to Gardner, "Transnationalism in Sylhet."

22 Shakti Da interview.

23 Dorothy Angell is an Independent researcher of Bangladeshi-American communities. She is a charter member of the Independent Scholar of South Asia and also works as a consultant for CSR in Washington DC.

24 Dorothy Angell, "Identity, Kinship and Community: Bangladeshis in the United States," in *The Expanding Landscape: South Asians and the Diaspora*, Carla Petievich (ed.), (New Delhi: Manohar, 1999), 184.

one or more culturally salient substances."[25] Not only are "persons related through the sharing of bodily substance...they are also related through the sharing of ordinary daily activities and circumstances, thus creating the category of affinal kin."[26] Indeed, individuals included within this extended kinship circle are considered "kin" (*attiyo)* or "like kin" (*attiyo-moto).*[27] In the homeland, one's personal identity is grounded in "the net of kinship of relationships," thereby leading Angell to emphasize that for Bangladeshis, "one's identity or is formed through relatedness not through individuation."[28] Individuals are distinguished by "the sum of all of their relationships."[29] In America where one's identity is determined through individuation, Bengaliness, which in contrast is constituted by relatedness, is "thought to be under direct threat."[30] A complete integration into the West challenges one's Bengali-ness. She discusses examples of Bangladeshi-American individuals for whom this threat does indeed feel real. This threat is of particular concern when they think of the lives of their children. She mentions a Bangladeshi mother who, with distress, describes the attitudes of her children with the following quote: "Too much of 'my this',

25 Ibid.

26 Angell notes that the Bengali understanding of kinship often includes relationships which in the West are included within the category of friendship. The concept of friendship is indeed a very present one in Bengali culture. However, the most common Bengali-language word for friend *bondhu* shares its root with the verb meaning 'to bind' thus *"underlining the deep and lasting nature of the tie"* (Ibid). This serves to emphasize the blurred boundaries between friendship and familial bonds within the Bengali social context.

27 Ibid.

28 Angell, "Identity, Kinship and Community," 180.

29 The theoretical framework for Angell's argument is supplied by the work Meyer Fortes, an anthropologist of African kinship patterns who states: "To adequately be a person...one needs at every stage both to know for self-guidance and to show for orderly social relationships to be possible, who and what one is within one's culturally-specified social universe" (Meyer Fortes, quoted in Angell, "Identity, Kinship and Community,"181).

30 Angell, "Identity, Kinship and Community," 181.

too much of 'my that'—too much individualism and selfishness."[31] Such parents, Angell notes, "worry that their children will become 'another sort of person' ... If children raised in the United States are no longer able to feel emotional closeness to their grandparents in Dhaka, their parents will lose a sense of generational closeness and continuity which is reciprocally the bedrock of both the family and the identities of its individual members."[32] Thus, in the absence of strong consanguinal kinship bonds which could keep one rooted in one's Bengali identity despite the threats posed by Western conceptions of personhood, friendships between Bangladeshi American individuals rapidly develop affinal kinship networks which in turn aim to foster *emotionally joint families* of Bangladeshi Americans. As I seek to relate Angell's theoretical formulations with the lived experiences of early Hindu Bangladeshi Montrealers like Manu Da, I see that instead of arriving at conclusions, I find myself asking myself the following questions. First: Does Angell's discussion of Bengali identity explain the formation of the informal network among the young bachelors who formed Montreal's first Hindu Bangladeshi community? Second: How does discussion help us understand the hidden affection present in the voices of the dozens of Bangladeshi Montrealers as they call Shakti Da, *Dada* (elder brother), *Kaku* (paternal uncle), or *Mama* (maternal uncle)?

MEMORIES: THE EVOLUTION OF HINDU BANGLADESHI RELIGIOUS LIFE IN MONTREAL

Religion has always served as a "principal organizer of social life" in the Bangladeshi Hindu community.[33] Monika Dey explains that "Our society is built on religion...even if (one of us) is not a believer, the fact

31 Ibid.

32 Angell, "Identity, Kinship and Community," 181-182.

33 Dey interview.

remains that one cannot remain untouched by religious teachings."[34] Religious festivals such as Saraswati Pujo,[35] Kali Pujo, and the penultimate Durga Pujo are usually celebrated at specially erected *pandals* which function as sites for *darśana* and the "formation of community solidarity."[36] In Bengal, "the distinctions between the public and private aspects of worship have always been blurred."[37] *Pujos* are grand affairs where individual members of the extended family, community, neighbourhood, or village pool resources as they construct *murtis*, prepare copious amounts of *proshad*, and manage various other logistical matters. Over here, social ties facilitate the performance of ritual action.[38] Thus, the *pujo* provides individuals with the opportunity to celebrate their relatedness and live their social roles to the greatest possible extent. Given Pranab Chatterjee's discussion of the collective element of *pujos* and in light of our recent conversation regarding the porous boundaries between group affiliation and individualism in the context of Bengali-identity formation, it may not be too far-fetched for me to state that *pujos* are sites where the community gathers thereby physically instantiating its relatedness, and publicly performs,[39] and thus reaffirms, its Bangaliana. Consequently, the individual's Bangaliana is also nourished.[40]

Shakti Da recalls attending a Durga Pujo celebration at the Murugan Temple at the West Island which was organized by the Kolkata

34 Saha interview.

35 The Sanskrit word for worship (*puja*) is transliterated as *pujo* in Bengali.

36 Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments, 97.*

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Over the course of my interviews, I noticed my informants unanimously use the phrasing "We *perform* pujos" (The English word Perform was used) rather than "We *conduct*" or "We *carry out* pujos".

40 As a self-identifying Bengali Hindu, I think it wouldn't be too much of an overstatement to comment that religious festivals are the pillar of Bengali life. The passion Bengalis feel for religious festivals is best captured in the popular Bengali axiom "*Baaro Maash'er Tero Parbon*" (13 festivals for twelve months)

Bengalis,[41] a community which has had a continuous presence in Montreal since the 1960s.[42] He felt that the rituals performed at this *pujo* were identical to those performed at Hindu Bangladeshi *pujos*. He remembers being teased by community leader Mrs. Neela Basu (whom he lovingly calls *Neela Di* or "Elder Sister Neela"), the matriarch of the community, playfully scold him for helping himself to several servings of the delicious *alu'r dom*, a wholesome potato dish which forms a vital element of the traditional *pujo'r bhog* (food offerings which are first 'fed' to the goddess and are later distributed amongst devotees). In response to a question of mine regarding his experience at the Indian *pujo*, Shakti Da answered that "the pleasantness of my experience at the Kolkata Bengali *pujo* made him feel that this was indeed my *pujo*."[43] Nevertheless, he does believe that certain irreconcilable differences do exist between the Kolkata Bengali and Hindu Bangladeshi communities. The Kolkata Bengali community, although much smaller in size than the Hindu Bangladeshi one, has an older presence in Montreal. Unlike most of the first Hindu Bangladeshi Montrealers, the Kolkata Bengalis faced little difficulty in finding well-paying jobs as professors, doctors, and engineers. More importantly, Shakti Da was astonished to notice the pronounced absence of children at the *pujo* celebration he attended. He believes that "as Montreal's Kolkata Bengali population is a more mature one, it makes sense that the children of this community (many of whom were born and raised here in the 1960s and 1970s) are well-integrated in Canadian culture and feel less of an obligation to participate in community *pujos*."[44] Referring back Angell's discussion of the insecurities felt by Bangladeshi-American parents, I wonder: To what extent did the Manu Da of 1992 see integration into Western society as a threat towards the Bengali-ness

41 Bangladeshis normally refer to all Bengali people who speak Bangla with an Indian accent, irrespective of their origins as Kolkata Bengalis.

42 Shakti Da interview.

43 Ibid.

44 Shakti Da interview.

of future Canadian-Bangladeshi children?

In the following year of 1993, Shakti Da and his other Hindu Bangladeshi compatriots gathered form Montreal's first Bangladeshi Pujo Committee. Individual community members provided the funds needed to rent the congregation hall at the Hindu Mission of Canada, a North Indian temple, for conducting their first Durga Pujo. Dibyendu Bhattacharjee, who at the time was a board member of the Hindu Mission's managing committee, was extremely instrumental in making this space available for Hindu Bangladeshi activities at reasonable rental rates.[45] Until the fall of 2013, Hindu Bangladeshis "performed all of their religious rites in the Hindu Mission."[46] These rites included monthly Satyanarayana Pujos, wedding ceremonies, *anna-prashons* (a rite of passage which marks a baby's first consumption of solid food), and post-death rituals.[47] Although he earned a lot of money as a businessman, Dibyendu-babu believed that it was his "duty as the son of a learned Pandit" to assume priestly responsibilities at Hindu Bangladeshi ceremonies.[48] As time progressed, the business ventures launched by the early Hindu Bangladeshi bachelors prospered and they consequently were able to bring their immediate, and in several cases extended families as well, over to Canada. During this time, Shakti Da himself was able to sponsor the permanent resi-

45 Manu Da, interviewed by the author, March 25, 2014.

46 Soma Chowdhury, interviewed by the author, March 8, 2014.

47 *Bodhon (The Awakening)*, (Montreal: Montreal Sanatan Dharma Temple, 2014), 22.

48 Dibyendu-babu's story, although similar to that of other early Hindu Bangladeshi migrants, has a few notable differences. He left Bangladesh in the late 1970s and ran a business in Germany for four years. He arrived in Canada as a political refugee in 1981 and quickly found employment as a senior manager at "Canada's biggest textile mill" (Chakraborty interview). Unlike most Hindu Bangladeshi Montrealers who belong to the Kayastha caste, Ritesh-babu is a Brahmin, and the son of a very learned Pandit from Sylhet. He received religious instruction at a very young age and was also able to speak the Hindi and Punjabi languages. A combination of his elevated caste status, secure job position, and his linguistic versatility allowed him to feel at ease within the North Indian religious milieu.

dence applications of many of his relatives including his new bride, his brothers, and the family of his sister.[49] Community members also felt financially secure to move out of their smaller apartments in the relatively poorer localities of Montreal such as Cote-des-Neiges and Parc-Extension and to buy independent houses in peripherally located, but emerging neighbourhoods such as Verdun, Ville LaSalle, and Ville-Emard. As the Hindu Bangladeshi community increased in size and acquired more material resources, Shakti Da and his *colleagues*[50] at the Hindu Bangladesh Association felt a parallel need to increase the tone and scale of the Pujo festivities, which began to welcome over several hundred attendees on a daily basis. Furthermore, the pioneers who founded the community were no longer single bachelors, but were now husbands and fathers. At the same time, the threats experienced by the Bangladeshi-American parents in Angell's piece started to seem more and more real. They wanted their Hindu-Bangladeshi children, most of whom were born in Montreal and were attending French schools, to speak fluent Bengali and to also be well-versed with Hindu Bangladeshi customs. They believed that the expansion of *pujo* operations would serve as the perfect occasion to promote the Bangladeshi cultural education of their children, thereby reaffirming the Bangladeshi component of their children's Bangladeshi-Canadian identities.

Over time, the simplicity of the small-scale *pujos* conducted at the Hindu Mission grew into strategically-planned weekend-long events held at high school auditoriums across the city.[51] The mornings and afternoons at these *pujos* were reserved for religious services and the evenings consisted of grand *anushthans*—entertainment extravaganzas where the men, women, and children of the community present

49 Shakti Da interview.

50 I have italicized this term to highlight the transformation of the informally-organized *pujo* committee of the early 1990s into a legally incorporated Association.

51 Da interview.

Bengali dance, music, theatre, and other culturally-relevant performances. In recent years, the community has invited leading Bengali (Indian and Bangladeshi) artists to participate in these *anushthans*, and key Montreal politicians including Justin Trudeau have been its guests of honour. These *pujo* celebrations welcome over a thousand guests each day, and guests are guaranteed free and elaborately-prepared Bengali meals.[52]

THE MONTREAL SANATAN DHARMA TEMPLE

As a close friend of Shakti Da's, I have over the past six years been invited to several Hindu Bangladeshi *pujos* where I have participated in community activities in various ways. I have relished the delicious preparations of *alu'r dom* and *labra* (a cabbage dish which, once again, is a key element of the *pujo'r bhog*) and have laughed during the *natoks* (comedy plays) staged during the *anushthans*. These interactions affirm the Bengali-ness of my splintered Indian-Bengali-Tamil-Bangkokian-Montrealer-Canadian identity. While attending these events, I once heard an announcement soliciting funds for "a temple that was coming! A Bangladeshi temple". This announcement provokes the following questions: (1) What would this separation from the North Indian temple achieve? (2) What makes a temple Bangladeshi and what makes it Indian?

Answers to these questions became clearer in the process of my fieldwork and the writing of this ethnography. During our private interview, Shakti Da commented that "Although we did have a very adequate worship space at the Hindu Mission, we had to pay for it...I only felt it was *my temple* on the days I rented it..." Monika Dey similarly stated that "Whenever people asked us, which temple do you go to?

52 These meals are prepared by community members, many of whom also own Indian restaurants.

Do you own this temple? The only reply we had was that the Indians owned the temple and not us!"[53] Dibyendu-babu offered certain practical reasons rationalizing the need for a Hindu Bangladeshi temple. He said that "Although the customs and rites of the North Indians and Hindu Bangladeshis are very similar, there are subtle differences. For example, North Indian priests chant mantras differently than we do. Their women wear *salwar* suits while ours wear the *shari*."[54] Moreover, "the Hindu Mission is dominated by North Indians and Punjabis. Because I speak Hindi and Punjabi, I was able to fully integrate myself within that community and become an important member of its management. The rest of our people (who speak only Bengali), were unable to do so."[55]

UDBADHAN (INAUGURATION)

On the afternoon of March 6, 2014, I was delighted to receive a telephone call from Manu Da inviting me to join the Hindu Bangladeshis in their "moment of joy" *(anand'er logno)* at the inauguration ceremony of the MSDT. Since the project was first discussed in 2005, the community launched an aggressive campaign to raise the funds necessary to construct this temple. Based on material supplied in Bodhon, a Bengali magazine which was distributed at the inauguration, individual members of the community collectively donated over $300,000, which was used for the purchase of the temple space, its renovation, and the purchase of the temple's images.

In what was a sunny morning I embarked upon a leisurely ten minute walk at 11:15 a.m. from the Monk metro station to the 6221 Rue Monk, the temple's address. Dada had suggested that I arrive ear-

53 Dey interview.

54 Dibyendu Bhattacharjee, interviewed by the author, April 23, 2014.

55 Ibid.

ly; at 11 a.m. in fact, in order to be assured a seat during the ceremony. I had suspected that this ceremony would follow the notorious trend of starting ridiculously late—a feature common to numerous other Bangladeshi celebrations I have attended over the past six years. However, when I arrived at the temple I was pleasantly surprised to see a neatly-arranged row of young, slender girls formally welcome the hundreds of entering guests. All of the girls were dressed in the traditional *laal-shaadha*[56] sari and were holding metal plates adorned with *aarti* materials, while greeting entering guests.

The temple's congregation hall was packed and as Shakti Da had warned me, it was indeed difficult to find an empty space to sit. Unlike previous *pujos*, not only were things starting on time, but the arrangement of the congregation space felt different. In previous *pujos* conducted at the high school auditoriums, men and women stood together as they worshipped. During smaller gatherings at the Hindu Mission, the congregation was gender-segregated, but the men and women sat side-by-side. On the 8th of March however, the initial rows were occupied by women, all dressed in *laal shaadha*. They were followed by the men who in turn were followed by the children, who in turn sat in front of community elders, many of whom were seated in chairs arranged for them at the congregation space. When I asked Dibyendu Babu about this new arrangement, he responded that "This is how we do things in Bangladesh. We always seat the women at the front of the temple space in order to emphasize their importance in our lives... They are our mothers! Only I know how important my own mother is! Only you know how important your own mother is!"[57]

At 11:30 a.m. sharp, the centre of activity shifted from the congregation hall to the entrance of the temple. The VIPs of the event—which included the Venerable Swamiji Sri Sri Kripamayananda

56 In Bengal, the colors red (*laal)* and white (*shaada)* are considered very auspicious. Traditionally, the sari worn by married Bengali women in everyday life is white in color with a red border.

57 Bhattacharjee interview.

Maharaj,the head abbot of Toronto's Ramakrishna Mission; Shastriji, a senior priest from Agra, India; Mr. Himanish Goswami, a popular London-based singer of Bengali Vaishnav *kirtans*; M. Dimitrios, mayor of the city of Roxboro-Pierrefonds; and a representative from the office of Montreal mayor Denis Coderre—had finally arrived. The row of young women welcomed the honoured guests by throwing fresh flowers over their heads and adorned their necks with flower garlands. As they were doing this, they were accompanied by the sounds of the *dhaak* (drum), *shankha* (conch shell), and *uludhwani* (ululation)[58] which added a very dramatic effect to the scene. They were followed by the *thakurmoshai* (temple priest), Dibyendu Bhattacharjee who removed the evil eye of his guests by applying a *tilak* on their foreheads, and draped their shoulders with shiny, colorful shawls.

As soon as the guests were seated, Shakti Da, who played the role of master of ceremonies that morning, welcomed the *shubhomandali* (congregation of the blessed) of approximately eight hundred guests to the weekend-long inauguration ceremony. The ceremony began with a five-minute-long *prana-pratishtha* ritual where the deities were vivified. In this ritual, Dibyendu-babu, the Maharaj, and the Shastriji[59] were concealed, alone with the images in the temple's sanctum sanctorum, behind a curtain. During this brief period, they chanted special mantras which served to vivify the *murtis*. After this, the curtains were reopened devotees folded their hands to venerate the

58 In Bengal, these sounds are considered ritually auspicious.

59 The Pandit, Shastri, Goswami and Maharaj occupy different levels within the hierarchy of Hindu Bengali clergy (Shakti Da interview). During our interview, Shakti Da explained that in having all of these clergymen present, the temple was performing an ecumenical role by uniting the different Hindu clergymen. The ecumenical aspect of the temple's identity is also illustrated in its name "The Montreal Sanatan Dharma Temple" (which all my informants stated is the real name of the Hindu religion), and the choice of the images it houses: Lakshminarayan, Radhakrishna, Durga, Ganesha, and Shiva. Dibyendu-babu states that these deities are "important to the five *sampradayas* (sects) of Hinduism, the Vaishnavas, the Shaktas, the Saivas, the Ganpatyas, and the Sauryas" (Bhattacharjee interview).

newly-declared gods. This ritual was indeed a very special one for the community. As I looked around, I observed hundreds of devotees pray fervently, with deep concentration, as the deities were unveiled. A few of them, I noticed, even had tears in their eyes. It was impossible to remain untouched by the scene.

CONCLUSIONS: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND EXPERIENCE

Today, as I seek to define continuity between the theories of scholars such as Angell with the lived experience of the Hindu Bangladeshi community, I better understand the emotional need for a separate Hindu Bangladeshi temple. As discussed earlier, in the Bengali context, sacred spaces are more than physical sites for individuals to offer private worship. Instead, they are social locations where the community's collective consciousness is consolidated. They are, if I may quote renowned anthropologist Partha Chatterjee, the spiritual "inner sphere" which, within the diaspora, is a safe space where one's Bengali-ness remains unchallenged. The social interactions which facilitate the performance of ritual action affirm a stronger inner sphere where strengthened kinship bonds, be they consanguine or affinal, ground the community. In turn, the unique Bengali identity of the Bengali-Canadian individual is reinforced.

Twenty-three-year old Monika Dey believes that the *pujos* and *anushthans* of the pre-MSDT era have been highly successful in fortifying the Bengali-ness of Hindu-Bangladeshi children. She, for one, speaks perfect Bengali and believes herself to be extremely "familiar" with the traditions of her elders. She states that: "Our dual identity is well-blended, I must say. During the weekdays, children are busy with their school and work and so they do not have the time and quality to focus on our culture and religion. But it is during the weekends that we bring the children to come to...practice our religion and learn about our culture and traditions." While the weekend reaffirmation

of Hindu Bangladeshi identity may indeed have been successful, it was not permanent. It was a temporary instantiation of the community and was therefore second-rate. The MSDT is a permanent space where Hindu Bangladeshis in Montreal can gather every day to celebrate their Bengali identities. It is indeed the temple of their hearts—their beloved *pran'er mondir.*

WORKS CITED

PRIMARY SOURCES

Bhattacharjee, Dibyendu. Personal Interview. April 23, 2014.

Chakraborty, Ritesh. Personal Interview. April 23, 2014.

Dimitrios, M. Public Speech. *Montreal Sanatan Dharma Temple Innauguration.* March 8, 2014.

Paul, Shakti Ranjan (Shakti Da). Personal Interview. March 25, 2014.

Saha Prianka. Personal Interview. April, 2014.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Ahsan, Shakib. "An Inquiry into the identity constructions of the Bangladeshi diaspora in Greater Toronto Area through their social networks". Montreal: 2015. Doctoral Dissertation. Print.

Angell, Dorothy. "Identity, Kinship and Community: Bangladeshis in the United States." *The Expanding Landscape: South Asians and the Diaspora.* Ed. Carla Petievich. New Delhi: Manohar, 1999. Print.

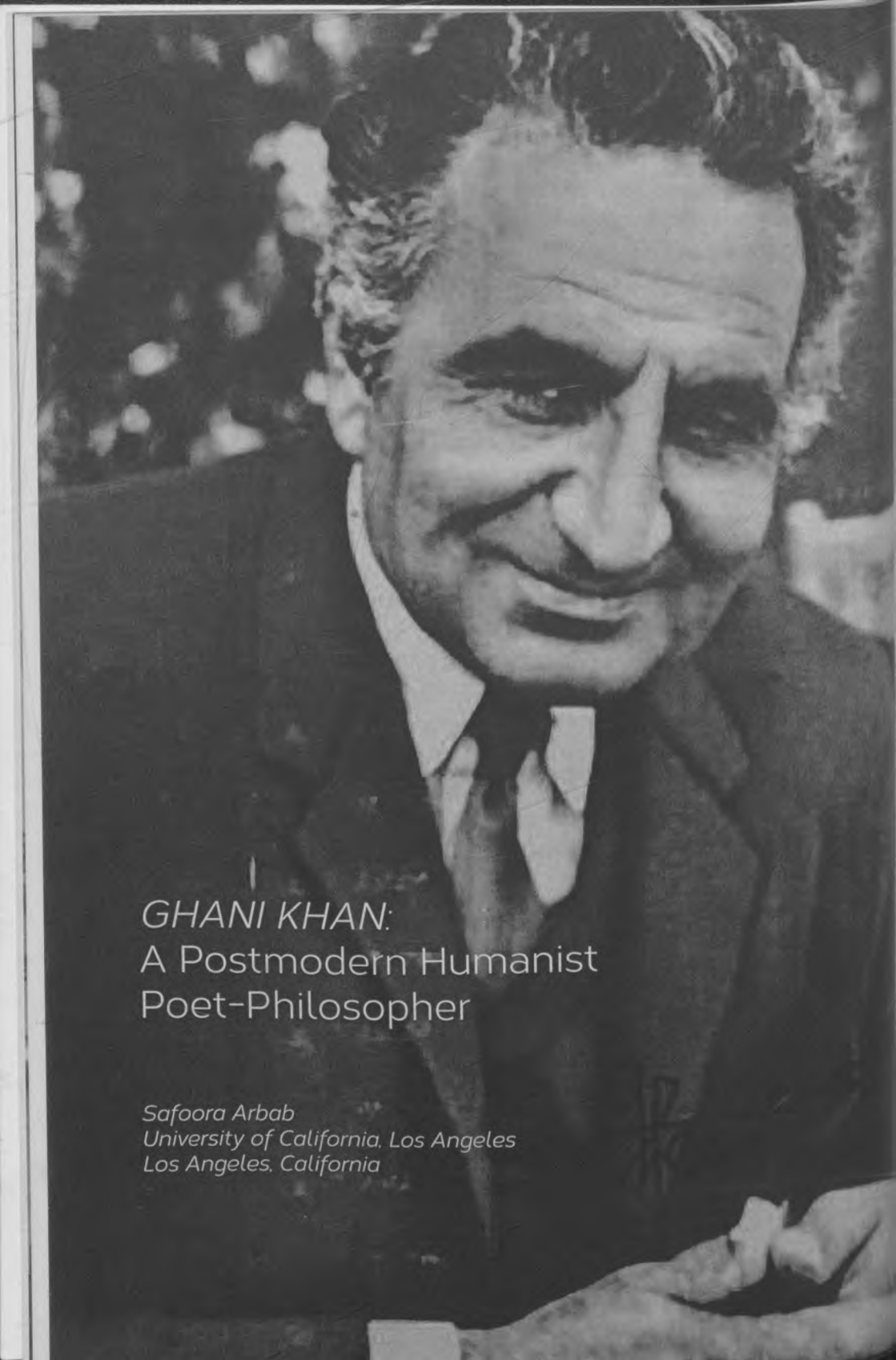
Brazielv, J.E. and Mannur, A. "Nation, migration, globalization: Points of contention in diaspora studies". *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader.* Eds. Braziel, J.E. and Mannur, A. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003. Print.

Chatterji, Joya. *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967.* University of Cambridge Press: Cambridge, 2007. Print.

Chatterji, Joya and David Washbrook, eds. *Routeledge Handbook of the South Asian Diaspora.* London and New York: Routeledge, 2013. Print.

Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories.* Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1993. Print.

Chatterjee, Pranab. *A Story of Ambivalent Modernization in Bangladesh and West Bengal: The Rise and Fall of Bengali Elitism in South Asia.* Peter Lang Publishing Inc: New York, 2010. Print.



GHANI KHAN: A Postmodern Humanist Poet-Philosopher

Safoora Arbab
University of California, Los Angeles
Los Angeles, California

The politics of the Pathan centre round gold and power, hunger and ambition just like yours. As he has more blood in his veins and more bubbles in his head than you have, he is inclined to make them rather lively. Politics today do what religion did five hundred years ago. They are merely a system men have developed, whereby they pay for their stupidities by giving crafty wise men and earnest fools the power to rule them. For every man must rule or be ruled. There is no third way unless you are a poet or a lunatic.

—Ghani Khan, *The Pathans*, 1947

Ghani Khan and his poetry can best be described as "a most complicated simplicity."[1] He uses this phrase in his short satirical book, *The Pathans,* to explain his own people to the English speaking world, namely the British colonizers of India. While satirizing the colonizers' methods of dealing with the unruly population living in their strategic North-West Frontier, he paints a somewhat caricaturized portrait of the Pashtuns, heightening the paradoxes of both colonial and indigenous representations of an essentialized "Pathan" figure. With bombastic, tongue-in- cheek irony, and characteristic contrariness, he also reinforces many stereotypes about the Pashtuns while equating their follies with those of the foreigners he is directly addressing. Not only does he equate the humanity of both, but he also points out how static representations of "primitive" Pashtuns rob them of this shared condition:

> Customs are subtle chains with which the primitive man tries to keep intact the pattern of society. They are his school and radio, prime minister and preacher. You make a law and keep a goody supply of gunpowder and men to help your weak brothers up-

1 Ghani Khan, *The Pathans.* (Peshawar: University Book Agency, 2010, first published 1947), 1

<< GHANI KHAN. SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

> hold it. He made a custom and invented magic and the devil to keep watch and ward for him. There is absolutely no difference between your law and his custom in object and purpose.[2]

However, the paradoxical portrait reveals much more about the author and his worldview than the people he is supposedly depicting. The epistemological frameworks of both "East" and "West" are often visible through his work—such as, in the passage above, his acceptance of the linear thrust of time from backward and "primitive" to "modern" and progressive (even if modernity is inflicted at the point of the gun)—but more often the two strains are fused quite uniquely making it extremely difficult to neatly categorize the poet. Instead, his passionate humanism transcends representational borders and seamlessly weaves the multiple threads that pattern his thinking. Composed of stark contrasts and vivid hues, his work also reflects his training as a painter and a sculptor: chiaroscuro tonalities are a distinctive leitmotif throughout his poetry. Meanwhile, the deep strain of deconstructive doubt—about any systematic ideology, immaterial idealism, or bounded categorization—that underlies his work also serves to situate the poet very squarely within his particular postmodern context.

Born in the North-West Frontier of British India between 1913 and 1915, Ghani Khan was familiar enough with English and with "Western" epistemologies to articulate his thoughts comfortably through that register. However, except for *The Pathans,* he hardly ever uses the language to express his deepest thoughts. In keeping with the cosmopolitan colonial context of his time he was educated in schools in British India and sent to England and America for his higher education, thereby unselfconsciously imbibing the conceptual systems of the "West." This epistemological framework, however, becomes uniquely synthesized and layered into his own distinctive style of Pashto po-

2 Khan, *The Pathans,* 24

etry, although, at first, it is hard to read or unravel because most of his work is written in his mother tongue. Yet without taking these composite layers into account, it becomes difficult to fully appreciate the polysemic nuances resonating through his poetry.

During a television interview he gave in the 1990s he explains how atypical a childhood and early adult life he had for a Pashtun:

> When I returned from America[3], I could not get along with the people in my village. I never lived in the village, I lived in this blasted boarding house[4]. My father had turned our ladies house into a school. I did not know anymore that Pathan customs were anything. When I was 14 or 15 they sent me to Jesus & Mary [Convent], and then to England and from there I went to the U.S. So whatever I learned about social life and manners I learned in America and England. I did not know what the Pathan way of doing things was anymore.
>
> When I came back I used to go about in suits, and I had on a hat or something. Villagers and elders came and said why do you put on an English hat? I said it is my own damn head and I will put anything on it that I like. I was very fond of horses, so I had bought a very good thoroughbred horse from my uncle and I used to ride on it and go to my grandfather's village...I would go there and look at the fields and look at the tenants and everything. I did not have servants following me, six or seven with rifles, so they thought it was very peculiar that I rode on one side of the horse, why do you not sit like a Khan with 5 or 6 pillows next to you and have all these village elders come to you. They

3 Ghani Khan spent 1930-1932 at South Louisiana University enrolled in an engineering program.

4 He spent his childhood living in the Azad Schools that his father Abdul Ghaffar Khan had founded: an egalitarian, low cost school system, teaching in the vernacular, that accepted children—including girls—from all walks of life, and as such the school's boarding houses were very basic forms of subsistence living. Ghani Khan often speaks of a childhood of inadequate food, warmth and clothing.

wanted me to be a dignified Khan.[5]

However, in his characteristically ironic and self-deprecating style he fails to recount that his early education was mainly in the vernacular while he was growing up in his village of Utmanzai in Charsadda, a district of what was then the North-West Frontier Province (and today is Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa). Moreover, in keeping with local education at the time, he was also well trained in Islamic theology. His father, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the renowned leader of the Khudai Khidmatgars—a massively popular Pashtun nonviolent movement—wanted his eldest son to become an Islamic theologian. Although Ghani Khan had a somewhat contentious relationship with Ghaffar Khan throughout his life, he nevertheless followed his father's wishes more often than not, and, in this case, enrolled in the Jamia Millia University at Delhi, in 1927. After spending a year studying Islamic theology at the University, his father sent for him to serve as a medic in the Afghan civil war of 1928.[6] Such fragmentary education would serve as a life-long pattern, instigated both by the fact that Ghaffar Khan was the leader of one of the largest organized anticolonial resistance movements, but also, because of his father's vision for his eldest son's education and life. Spending most of his childhood without any consistent parental presence—having lost his mother when he was around five years old, while his father, tirelessly devoted to reforming and liberating his own people, was frequently imprisoned by the colonial authorities—he was at one point adopted by his British aunt who, appalled at the neglect with which her younger brother-in-law's children were growing up, urged Ghaffar Khan to send his eldest son to England for higher education. At fifteen, Ghani Khan went to England and, along with

5 Taken from a transcript of the interview which aired on Pakistani TV: http://old.harappa.com/sounds/ghani0.html

6 Shazia, Babar. *Strains of Romanticism in Abdul Ghani Khan & John Keats Poetry: A Comparative Study.* (Peshawar: Pashto Academy, University of Peshawar, 2005), 41-2.

his formal education, also studied Christian theology while living in the home of an English priest for about a year and half. Later, he went to America to study chemical engineering at South Louisiana University, but his education was cut short when his father was imprisoned in 1931 yet again and the family's assets frozen. Temporarily adopted by Jawaharlal Nehru upon his return to India, Ghani Khan lived with the family for about eight months before being sent to Visva-Bharati University along with his "close friend" Indira Priyadarshini.[7] It was at Rabindranath Tagore's famous university at Shantiniketan in West Bengal that Ghani Khan trained as an artist while also learning about Eastern philosophies, histories, and cosmologies alternate to the metaphysics of the West. Recalling his short but memorable time at the Academy, Ghani Khan states: "My stay in the West left many imprints on my psyche. I was deeply impressed by their society, culture and politics. When I came back I had an inferiority complex about the backwardness of my country and people. It was in the Shanti Niketan [sic] that I discovered myself and the past greatness of my own culture and civilisation, which has produced several men of versatile genius, who have been appreciated by the historians and scholars of the West."[8]

Although Ghani Khan showed great promise as an artist his education was cut short once again by his father, who, upon visiting Shantiniketan told him to return home and serve his people usefully instead of wasting time becoming an artist. As Ghani Khan describes, in another television interview:

> I was there for a year after which Baba [Ghaffar Khan] came and he was really elaborately welcomed by all the colleges. They put

7 Indira Priyadarshini, later Mrs. Indira Gandhi, mentions "Ghani" quite conversationally in quite a few letters she writes to her father while at Shantineketan: *Freedom's Daughter: Letters between Indira Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru 1922-39*. Edited by Sonia Gandhi, (London: Hodder & Stoughton,1989).

8 Babar, *Strains of Romanticism in Abdul Ghani Khan & John Keats Poetry*, 48

> flowers on him and the boys and girls danced for him. Baba was very happy but then he told Gandhi-ji that this place is not good for my son...The principal told my father and Gandhi to leave this boy, he is very unique, we haven't seen the likes of him in... years. Let him stay and become an artist. But Baba said "if you put red colour on paper or green what difference would that make to the world of Hindustan?" Gandhi said, "yes Khan Sahib, you are right." So the two oldies said don't go there any more.[9]

Ghani Khan's recollections concerning his father's influence upon his life are often tinged with mild bitterness and lasting regret. Dutifully obeying his father yet again, Ghani Khan left Shantiniketan in 1934 to return home to the North-West Frontier Province. However, en route, he fell in love with his future wife in Bombay. It would take him six years to finally persuade Roshan, (and her father Nawab Rustam Jang who was appalled at giving his daughter to a wild "Pathan"), to marry him and he dedicated the poem "why" to celebrate this hard-won wedding. Ghani Khan was enchanted with his beautiful, sophisticated and extremely well educated wife, even if the entrancement was not fully reciprocated throughout their tumultuous relationship. Nevertheless, they remained life-long companions; Roshan would often critique and edit Ghani Khan's poems and quite forthrightly give her opinions about his politics as well. They had three children together, although their only son died in 1987, followed a few months later by Roshan herself. Ghani Khan never quite recovered from such a heavy loss. Though he lived on for another nine years, his intense concern with death defines his poetry after this point. Ghani Khan died in 1996 in the home he had built with Roshan in Utmanzai, Charsadda, where they had spent most of their married life.

When he returned home in the mid 1930s to the North-West Frontier Province his greatest contribution to the Khudai Khidmatgar

9 Ghani Khan interview for PTV, Part 2 (4:39): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smDkGwrmIdA

movement was not so much as a political activist but rather as its voice of conscience. He started writing in the Pukhtun journal[10]—the literary and ideological voice of this nonviolent resistance "army"—and it was Ghani Khan's composition that became the anthem for the nationalist movement which was printed on the cover of every issue of the journal. However, he gained his reputation as a blistering satirist in his column "Gade-Wade" or, "a mix of this and that," which he regularly wrote for the journal under the pen name of Lewanay Falsafiy or the "Mad Philosopher;" a name that has since become synonymous with Ghani Khan. Especially directed against all forms of hypocrisy and conceit, no one was beyond the bounds of these satirical critiques including the hallowed status bestowed upon his father. While including the leaders of the movement, it was most obviously directed against the colonial rulers, the Khans collaborating with them, and members of the Frontier branch of the Muslim League.[11] However, Ghani Khan's most scathing critiques were directed against mullahs, pirs, and other "holy" men who interpreted Islam through a narrow, literalist, and unimaginative lens; he turns the figure of the mullah into a trope representing hypocrisy and ignorance in all his work.

His political participation in the movement, and even his whole hearted acceptance of the ideology of nonviolence, was always tem-

10 The *Pukhtun*, was a Pashto literary and political journal started by Abdul Ghaffar in 1928 and became the official voice of the Khudai Khidmatgar movement. It was banned as seditious by the Pakistan government in the 1950s and most copies of the journal were destroyed.

11 As the Frontier branch of the All India National Congress Committee, Ghaffar Khan and the Khudai Khidmatgars were the ideological as well as political opponents of the All India Muslim League. Often mocked by the Muslim League as a "Hindu" party, because of their practice of nonviolence, their alliance with the Congress Party and Ghaffar Khan's close friendship with Mahatma Gandhi, this ideological rift only deepened once the politics of Partition got under way. The communal partition of India, which was the political banner of the Muslim League, was strongly opposed by the Khudai Khidmatgars and Ghaffar Khan. Therefore, the Khudai Khidmatgars were declared traitors a few years after the creation of Pakistan and the Muslim League government that came to power, with all their literature and the memory of the movement officially expunged.

pered with more than a dose of skepticism and pragmatic doubt, especially at the efficacy of absolutist nonviolence in the face of the violence surrounding them. In the midst of the violence unleashed by the politics of Partition he even organized a political movement of his own in April, 1947. The Zalmay Pukhtun was an armed political youth group formed to protect the unarmed Khudai Khidmatgars, much to the ire of his father. Although Ghaffar Khan publicly accepted his son's organization he does so by distancing himself from the ideology of this new movement:

> During my three and half month absence from my province the people of Frontier have been very much provoked as a result of violent and terrorist movement started by the Muslim League. Consequently, those who hitherto have been believers of non-violence are now drifting towards violence. On my return to the Frontier I collected my workers and told them that I was not prepared to give up my creed of non-violence. But if anyone of them believed in violence, he should openly declare it. Many of them were of the firm opinion that there must be an organization for the defence of non-violent people and they thought that in the present circumstances such a body is extremely essential. That is how Zalme Pakhtun [sic] came into being. The object of this party is to defend and not to offend. The Zalme Pakhtun volunteers believe in violence. They wear deep red uniforms and carry fire-arms.[12]

Ghani Khan composed a prolific numbers of poems but there is only one specifically titled "nonviolence" or "*ad'm-e thushadud,*" the Pashto phrase used by movement. This poem especially reflects the peculiar situatedness of Ghani Khan: always wavering on the bound-

12 D.G. Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan: Faith is a Battle,* (New Delhi: Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1967), 418.

aries between, on the one hand, a conviction and admiration for the ideology of nonviolence and a more agnostic, material, and complex lived experience, on the other. The poem reflects both this skepticism while also celebrating the radically alternate political that the ideology of nonviolence was producing, but unlike Ghaffar Khan, who was consumed by his ideals and gave his life in its service, even at the expense of his own children, Ghani Khan always looked askance at absolutist ideologies of all kinds. Instead, Ghani Khan was a mystic (and paradoxically a materialist), a philosopher rather than a saint or a social reformer; an idiosyncratic individualist and an artist rather than a political man of the people or a zealous resistance fighter. However, both father and son shared a profound conviction in a universal humanism that transcended borders while being deeply embedded in their own particular Pashtun ethos.

Even though he was not a public figure like his father, Ghani Khan did engage with the politics of his time, despite his ostensibly nonpolitical poetry. Nevertheless, he was particularly engaged in active politics when he was elected, by a sweeping majority, to the Central Legislative Assembly of India in 1946. As part of the Frontier Congress Party,[13] the provincial branch of the All India National Congress and the political arm of the Khudai Khidmatgars, Ghani Khan distinguished himself as an articulate parliamentarian despite being one of the youngest members of the Assembly. The only member to represent the N.W.F.P. in the Central Legislature, Ghani Khan felt obliged to explain and counter the representations about his people and the

13 The Khudai Khidmatgars were a volunteer social organization who allied themselves with the All India Congress Committee after the Peshawar Riots in 1930. The Frontier Congress Committee were elected to office twice in the N.W.F.P. once in 1937 and then again when elections were held after the war in 1945. The popularly elected government was dismissed after the formation of Pakistan and the Partition of India in 1947 by the Muslim League government that came to power. Subsequently the organization was banned and the Khudai Khidmatgars were declared traitors to the Pakistani State with many of its members imprisoned, their assets appropriated and all institutional records about them (including their own literature) were destroyed.

area in his fairly lengthy maiden speech in the Assembly:

> Just try and imagine our Province. We have a long stretch of area that is called the Settled Area. It is not usually very settled. It has a few towns and a moderate sort of business. After that you have the Political Agencies where the brown man is taught to worship the white god. His word is law, his pleasure heaven and his displeasure hell. Here the white man can play god in peace and comfort. Technically and legally these agency Pathans are supposed to be semi-free but literally they are the most terrible slaves in India...Between the districts and the Afghan territory there is that romantic belt called the Tribal Territory, a land of wild men and wild stories, a land which is in the habit of throwing up vicious faqirs, but usually at the right time and the right place. You find these gentlemen coming to the tribesmen and asking them in the name of Allah and for the sake of heaven to attack the British. At the end of the show the British always somehow or other mange to get a strategic pass or mountain and most of the poor Pathans get Heaven: they are killed. The tribal territory people are very nice except that they come and burn our villages, they murder us, they kidnap us, they burn our bazaars and carry away our brethren ever since the English have become masters of the Frontier and not before.[14]

However, even in reinforcing the stereotypes about the wild and violent Pathans, Ghani Khan's tongue-in-cheek irony points to the more sinister reality of colonial domination and manipulation of the people on the strategic North-West Frontier of British India. He describes how the three-layered "scientific" border created by imperial cartography was demarcated on the ground: by differentiating and pitting

14 Imtiaz Ahmad Sahibzada, ed., *A Breath of Fresh Air: Speeches and Interventions of Abdul Ghani Khan in the Debates of the Central Legislative Assembly of India 1946-48*, (Unpublished work pending publication), 37.

the people, on each side of the division, against one another, especially on either side of the "settled-tribal" border. This border was in fact (and remains till today) even more impermeable than the Durand Line that divided the same Pashtun tribes on either side of the Afghan and Indian border, and which consequently created the "romantic" nonstate space of the Tribal Territories as a buffer zone in between.

Ghani Khan reveals his true political forte when he voices these little known facts about the Pashtuns and their land at the colonial center, while highlighting the misrepresentations surrounding them. He excelled both at this critique of representation and in articulating a radically alternate perspective grounded not just upon his own idiosyncratic world-view but also the new political that the Khudai Khidmatgars had produced. Elected also as member of the Working Committee of the Frontier Congress Party in 1946, and along with the formation of the Zalmay Pukhtun organization, Ghani Khan was an active political figure despite his misgivings, yet this would cost him six years in Pakistani prisons after Partition. Imprisoned from 1948 to 1954, during which time the Khudai Khidmatgars movement was effectively destroyed and its members declared traitors to the new postcolonial nation-state by the Muslim League government that came to power,[15] Ghani Khan wrote his most memorable collection of poetry. The collection was later published as De Pinjray Chaaghar, or "the screeches from a (bird) cage." Despite Ghani Khan's protests to the contrary, he actively participated on all the registers of resistance that the Khudai Khidmatgars were engaged in: the ideological, the social, and the political, but especially on the literary and philosophical fronts.

Poetic articulations of resistance to foreign domination, as well as constant refrains of pan-Pashtun unity and nationalism, have a long

15 The Khudai Khidmatgars and Abdul Ghaffar Khan were adamantly against the partition of India along communal lines and, therefore, as one of the largest Muslim provinces whose majority population did not want the creation of Pakistan made the members of the movement forever suspect in the eyes of the new postcolonial nation-state.

literary tradition in Pashto, both written and oral.[16] Arguably, some accounts go so far as to ascribe the advent of written Pashto literature solely to South Asian imperial domination.[17] However debatable that conjecture maybe, the advent of modern Pashto literature was instigated by anticolonial nationalism and the pan-Pashtun patriotisms it aroused in opposition.[18] Even though the political and the poetic almost always go hand in hand in the Pashto literary tradition, the Khudai Khidmatgar movement in particular seamlessly combined the aesthetic with the material (contra the Western Platonic tradition of distinguishing aesthetics from politics). However, it is especially the insistence on the vernacular, both as the medium of education and as the language of resistance, and which finds voice in the *Pukhtun* journal, that brings about this literary renaissance.[19] Moreover, Ghani Khan's innovative, unstructured poetics—as well as his philosophical critique of all ideological and absolutist systems of thought—situate this renaissance firmly within its postcolonial and postmodern context.

The selected poems reflect some of the poet's characteristic contrariness and the paradoxes he quite proudly and deliberately cultivated as a signature hallmark—characteristics that endear him to many Pashtuns as their favorite modern poet. However, his reputation as a complex, philosophical thinker, whose innovative thematic concerns and largely unstructured style, which remains hard to clas-

16 *Afghanistan in Ink: literature between diaspora and nation*, edited by Nile Green and Nushin Arbabzadah. (London: Hurst & Company, 2013)

17 Wide, Thomas: "Demarcating Pashto: Cross-border Pashto Literature and the Afghans State, 1880-1930, in *Afghanistan in Ink*, 92

18 Salma Shaheen, *Modern Poem (Nazm) in Pashto*, (University of Peshawar: Pashto Academy, 2013), 75.

19 Shaheen, *Modern Poem (Nazm) in Pashto*, 45

sify within traditional South Asian poetic forms, makes his work also somewhat inaccessible to popular appropriations. Although his poetry has been rendered into song by popular Pashto singers since the 1980s,[20] the meaning and interpretation of his poems remains beyond the reach of mainstream cultural understandings even till today. The postmodern philosophical angst in his poetry, with its multivalent blend of meanings, seamlessly integrates and layers the semiotics of both "east" and "west," and makes his poems intimidatingly complex to interpret to anyone unfamiliar with such a polysemic worldview, despite the fact that Ghani Khan eschews classical literary Pashto in favor of the vernacular and uses straightforward syntax, idiom, and stylistic structure—preferring the *nazm* and even the *azad nazm* over the more complex, classical metered *ghazal* form. His thematic concerns are thickly interwoven and intertextual with Neoplatonism, Sufism, Islamic theology, Romanticism,[21] phenomenology and the symbolism of Pashto literary canons. As such, his poetry has not been widely translated into other languages, or even completely understood by Pashto speakers themselves, until contemporary efforts to

20 Sardar Ali Takkar's renditions of Ghani Khan's poems are an extremely popular collection of songs but despite making the poet's work accessible to the popular imaginary people often express how difficult it is to fathom the deeper meanings of the poems. Even academics specializing in his work have been known to express such sentiments: I was witness to such a sentiment given in the keynote address at Ghani Khan's birth centenary in March 2016, by Professor Yar Mohammad Maghmoom, University of Peshawar.

21 And although Shazia Baber's book, *Strains of Romanticism in Abdul Ghani Khan & John Keats Poetry,* situates Ghani Khan squarely within the Romantic tradition by pointing to similarities between his poetry and Keats' thematic concerns and poetic style, it is perhaps a disservice to the poet to be categorized within this narrow confine even if there are elements of Romanticism in his poetry.

the contrary.[22] However, situated with one foot in the particularism of his cultural context and the other in a cosmopolitan humanism, his satisfyingly subtle and polysemic poetry particularly seems to resonate with today's global cross-cultural milieu.

Like all poetry, these poems can never be fully translated outside their own context, yet—as paradoxical as the poet himself—they especially seem to lend themselves to a translation in English. That translation can never express the original is perhaps even more true in the case of Pashto because the cultural context itself has a long legacy of imperial (and now neo-imperial) misinterpretations and anthropological misrepresentations. However, because Ghani Khan's intricate and complex concepts and imagery were fashioned and influenced not only by traditional Pashto poetics of resistance but also by his colonial context, his poems seem to lend themselves more meaningfully—and often rhythmically—to a fairly satisfying metric resonance even in translation.

The selected translations are not in any way meant to be definitive of Ghani Khan's prolific poetic expressions. The poems were chosen merely for subjective reasons—except for the two that pertain to the nonviolent political struggle: "nonviolence" and "Bacha Khan's march on Mardan"—which I analyze in more detail elsewhere in my larger project on the Khudai Khidmatgar movement. The rest were chosen simply for my own pleasure.

His magnum opus, the lengthy, self-reflective poem "*Latoon*" or "search," especially serves this pleasurable purpose. Written in free verse, or *azad nazm*, it perhaps best expresses the poet and his work.

22 Three books in English have been recently published on Ghani Khan: one is the comparative analysis of his poetry by Baber (2005), the second is a short selection of poetry translated by Mohammad Arif Khattak, but the book is largely composed of a reprint of Ghani Khan's English book *The Pathans* and transcripts of television interviews of the poet, and a few translations of his poems: *Ghani Khan: A Poet of Social Reality* (2011); and most recently an extensive collection of translated poems and copies of the poet's artwork by Imtiaz Ahmad Sahibzada, *The Pilgrim of Beauty.* (Islamabad: The Army Press, 2014)

The minimalist postmodern structure—unconventional and innovative for Pashto poetry—and the philosophical exploration combines Sufi mystical yearning with a phenomenological sense of situatedness. Probably influenced by Rabindranath Tagore's poetic expression, this poem particularly situates itself within an expansive sense of its surroundings. It is permeated and coloured by the atmosphere in which it was written: "in the open spaciousness is mixed a kind of mirth/ like someone dreaming listens to the *rabab.*" The poem gathers its metaphors from the sights, sounds and a sense of place in which it is written even while dealing with abstract philosophical concepts; there is an immediacy and dialectical relation between the poem and its habitat:

quiet, still
and within silence
I seek the strum of the sitar
rhythm's substance
in the encompassing colour
in the young viridescent birds
for myself I seek a reply to my life

While this poem is one of his most structurally minimal and conceptually abstract, it is also, paradoxically, much more materially grounded than his other philosophical reflections. I begin my collection of translations with this emblematic work as the poem most comprehensively embodies the poet's restless quest for knowledge—both mystical and philosophical—that lies at the core of his poetry. Ghani Khan's most recent *kulliyat,* or complete anthology of his poems, is also titled *Latoon.* Tempered by his postmodern skepticism this poem best reveals the essence of both the poet and his poetry.

The poem "strange philosophy" also reveals Ghani Khan's materially grounded philosophical reflections and mysticism, but this poem is not conceptually deconstructive or as structurally unconstrained

or as the former lengthy one. Neither is it as phenomenologically imbued by its surroundings. Far more philosophically abstract, it yet remains one of the finer examples of Ghani Khan's engagement with narrow, unimaginative, and literalist interpretations of conventional religious thought and practice. He berates and satirizes the rigidly rational structures of Islamic theological thinking and disparages mullahs and ordinary preachers, especially those who posture as learned theologians while preying upon the vulnerabilities and ignorance of most believers. As the voice of the mullah says in the poem, "fear, fear from divine retribution/ that is the real face of faith/ this rapture with the beloved of yours/ what meaningless philosophy is this?" The figure of the mullah, which is a constant trope of hypocrisy and conceit in his poetry, is also often contrasted with Ghani Khan's own nuanced philosophical concepts which represent an alternate mode of worshipping the sacred. In this poem especially he contrasts and reveals a conceptual framework that is deeply humanistic, evoking a long tradition of progressive thinking grounded upon Sufi humanism and its tradition of enlightenment thinking. Not just derivative of the humanism grounded upon the philosophical traditions of Western Enlightenment, but, much more pointedly, he incorporates the humanistic tradition that grounds the poetic meditations of Rumi, Rahman Baba, and particularly the Pashtun reformist Bayazid Ansari, or Pir Rohan.

A theologian, and not ethnically a Pashtun, Pir Rohan was one of the first indigenous figures whose writings have had a profound and lasting influence on all subsequent reformation and resistance movements in the region, both nationalist and Islamic. Bayazid Ansari was both a fierce resistance fighter against Mughal domination of the area, as well as founding the sixteenth century Rohaniya or Rowshanyia movement—quite literally the "Enlightenment" movement. His title of "Rohan" (also spelled "Rowshan") also means "the one who brings light" or "the enlightened one." By introducing the four unique phonetic sounds of Pashto lacking in the prevalent Arabic alphabet, he is credited with the advent of the modern script and of the written

literature. He authors what is considered to be the first book in Pashto, *Khayr-ul-Bayan:* a narrative history along with a literary analysis of the normative language, culture, and moral codes that ought to be adopted by everyone, including women. Written concurrently in Persian, Arabic, Hindko, and Pashto, it incorporates all the predominate languages and, thereby, addresses all the people of that land.

Conceptually, Bayazid's text and teachings—as well as the Rohaniya movement itself—were grounded upon the Sufic concept of *wahadut-al-wajūd,* or the concept of divine imminence—in contrast to the concept of divine transcendence. This crucial Sufi conceptual framework distinguishes it from many orthodox or literalist interpretations of Islam: if the material and all that is manifest are also sacred and point to the unity of all Being, then it follows—by the logic of its hypothesis—that there is a dialectical relationship between the material and the spiritual and both must be taken into account when pointing to the sacred. In making all of creation divine, and thus giving reverence to the material as one aspect of this sacred unity, it thus also gives rise to a strong, materially grounded humanist tradition within the framework of Islam. Moreover, it pits this framework in opposition to the concept of *wahadut-ash-shahūd,* or the separation and transcendence of the divine above its manifest creation-one that conceptualizes God as an abstract, intangible Platonic ideal. As the Rohaniya movement strongly influences the literary and philosophic culture of the area even till today, Pashto aesthetics and its poetics of resistance are steeped in this strain of humanism, despite the fact that Sufism is also heavily laced with Neoplatonic thought. However, it is within a framework that interprets the spiritual as imminent in the material—and the material, therefore, as sacred—that Ghani Khan's poetry must be contextualized.

In Ghani Khan's poetry the metaphors of "light," "radiance," "brilliance" and "enlightenment" reoccur and are pointers to this Sufi Islamic tradition, and which he also, quite self-consciously, uses in opposition to traditional theological thought or literalist interpreta-

tions of scripture. His poem "prayer" is especially imbued with the metaphor of light that serves to point to this alternate form of worshiping the sacred. And the poems "when Adam sits upon the earth" and "I" both testify to his affirmation of the sanctity of the material; a sanctity of life that he celebrates in contrast to the disdain with which some orthodox interpretations view earthily existence—often voiced through the mullah's pulpit. While his poem "discarded flower" is especially redolent with Sufi mystical yearning expressed through particularly resonant metaphors and symbolism, which, once again, subtly opposes systematized ideologies.

I have also translated one of his satirical poems, "a mix of this and that," that he originally wrote and published in the *Pukhtun* journal under the nom de plume of Lawanay Falsafi, or the "Mad Philosopher." In this poem, Ghani Khan contemptuously derides the corruption and graft engendered by those collaborating with the colonial authorities at the Frontier Sugar Mills. After managing the mills for three years during the early 1940s he resigned in protest, as he explains: "Two of the Mill's directors were appointed by the government at one time, both were English. They started questioning why we were only hiring Red Shirts. I said, but everyone here is a Red Shirt, there are very few Muslim Leaguers—perhaps in Kohat or amongst the Bangesh. Everyone else here, from Swat and Bajuwar etc., are all Red Shirts. So I got fed up and I left there."[23] Called the "Red-Shirts" by the colonial authorities, because of the red uniforms they wore, the Khudai Khidmatgars had become ubiquitous in the Frontier by that time and were not just limited to the ethnically Pashtun: most people of the N.W.F.P. were either active members of the movement, had close relatives who belonged to it or ideologically supported them. It is the ceaseless oppression of the Khudai Khidmatgars by the colonial administration and their collaborators and allies, such as the large landowning

23 Ghani Khan interview for PTV, Part 3 (1.01) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ByV7TR7nttc

Khans and the Muslim League—the poem also addresses the Muslim League's rising popularity in the North-West Frontier at this time and alludes to their close alliance with the colonial government—that wearies and compels Ghani Khan to resign as manager of the mill. However, it also impels him to actively participate in politics at this point in his life.

Despite Ghani Khan's ambivalence about the efficacy of nonviolence—and in keeping with his paradoxical character—it is his poem "*ad'm-e-thushadud*" or "nonviolence," that squarely situates the ideology of the Khudai Khidmatgars within the ethos of *Pashtunwali*—or the traditional Pashtun codes of conduct. While it expresses a sense of wonder at the concept of nonviolence and an admiration for its embodiment by such a vast number of Pashtuns—especially a people long categorized as a violent race—the poem also subtly questions whether the embodiment of nonviolence can fully become the norm rather than the exception. However, the poem brilliantly (re) interprets the framework of *Pashtunwali* so that nonviolence in fact becomes the more honorable and, therefore, the more Pashtun code of conduct than the emblematic concept of *badal*[24]—the endless cycle of vengeance and violence with which the people have long been identified. As the poem states:

> mothers place Qurans on their heads, yet again
> sisters have blackened their eyes
> Baba's Pukhtun vision
> told them tales of another kind

Part of the unwritten code of Pashtunwali contains the precept of *nanawati*, which is the obligation to forgive those who ask for forgiveness—generally those who have been engaged in a long cycle of venge-

24 Often, in the case both of Pukhtun self-imaginaries as well as in ethnographies about them—especially British colonial ones—*badal* is often cited as an explanation for Pukhtun's violence and thus a hallmark of the race.

ful enmity, but it extends to anyone who asks. The traditional method of asking for such forgiveness is for the mother of one family to put the Quran on her head when she goes to the house of the enemy—and as the term *nanawati* literally means "to enter in"—the other family is obliged to let her enter the house, thus paving the way for dialogue and an end to a long held feud. In the second *misra,* Ghani Khan adds that sisters can now blacken their eyes as they are no longer mourning the deaths of brothers and can happily prepare for their weddings—perhaps even finding suitors in the former enemy's household. With this line in the poem, he evokes all the metaphors surrounding this precept, pointing to a tradition which, though acknowledged as part of *Pashtunwali,* is nevertheless, less commonly cited or practiced than *badal.* Ghani Khan points to the normative shift entailed in embodying the ideology of nonviolence so that, in (re)interpreting the codes of *Pashtunwali,* the concept of forgiveness becomes the new badge and hallmark of the Pashtun. With "Baba's eyes"—a reference to Ghaffar Khan—telling them tales of another kind, the second *shir* points to this shifted normativity. Thus the poem in itself both instigates an alternate set of normativities and embeds them within the traditional ethos while also pointing to the radical politics that the Khudai Khidmatgars had produced by telling "tales of another kind"—a radical politics that not only replaced the norms of violence but, by embodying the ideology of nonviolence, it entailed and produced a new set of normativities as well.

In this pointedly original interpretation of both the Sufi as well as the Pashtun traditions, nonviolence is equated neither with passivity nor with impotence—as nonviolence has often been categorized—instead it becomes an exhilaration of the spirit; a vital ecstatic force that conquers its end through the power of love, even if in that act it annihilates itself. The iconic figures of Laila and Majnun are tropes representing this Sufi poetic tradition in which the annihilation of the tragic lovers symbolizes the mystic's quest for union with the sacred beloved, or the union of the Self with the Other.

His tempered admiration for both the ideology of nonviolence and especially for his father's selfless leadership—who is fondly called Bacha Khan[25] in the vernacular—is expressed in the poem, "Bacha Khan's march on Mardan." However, the poem is more a paean to his father in the role of a heroic warrior figure with the admiration a bit idealistic and abstract. Whereby, the poem seems removed from the poet's normally complex and materially grounded philosophical quests or his satirical sense of humour. The meter is also unusually constrained within traditional *ghazal* form with a far too cheerful and martial rhythm than is customary for the poet. However, once again the poem, with great subtlety and nuance, situates nonviolence within a normative Pashtun and Muslim ethos, this time using legendary heroic figures as analogy. Ghaffar Khan's resistance and reformation thereby become situated within a historical continuum that include the warrior figures evoked by the poem; only now the fight against injustice is fought nonviolently. So that the traditional warrior is transformed into the radical Sufi mystic Mansur al-Hallaj,[26] with Bacha Khan as his new incarnation: "to the battle now goes Mansur/

25 Ghaffer Khan is called Bacha Khan in the vernacular, or "Badshah" Khan as it is spelled using the Urdu/Hindi pronunciation, and this is generally translated as meaning "King of Khans." Although "badhsah" does mean "king," the Pashto "bacha" has a double meaning: it literally means king, but figuratively, it also connotes a carefree or unworldly existential state, closely linked to aspects of a wandering mendicant, a *malaang* or a *fakir*—which is also what Bacha Khan was often called. In other words, it was not just a title expressing his leadership or his nobility but it also strongly connotes a self-sovereign spirit detached from material care. Moreover,it is used in Pashto weighted in favour of the latter connotation rather than simply the former one of kingship.

26 Mansur al-Hallaj: the 10th century Sufi mystic renowned for repeatedly uttering the words: "*anal-haqa*" or "I am the truth." He was accused of blasphemy and executed, and has since become a figure symbolizing mystical enlightenment in Sufism and the poetry of the region. Ghani Khan uses this figure often in his own poetry as well to evoke such an alternate and radical view of religiosity and pointing to the concept of *wahadut-al-wajūd,* or divine imminence. By equating Ghaffar Khan with Mansur he not only points to Bacha Khan's essence as a *fakir,* or a holy mendicant, but also that the practice of nonviolence itself is a radically altered form of divine worship.

neither guns nor armor bearing." The poem recounts an actual protest march that Ghaffar Khan led in the town of Mardan in 1931, in which he was quite severely injured when the Khudai Khidmatgar demonstration was violently policed by the colonial authorities. Therefore, on a closer reading, the poem is seen not just as a paean to his father's heroism but also a desire to chronicle and embed a historical event into the popular imaginary. It inculcates the memory into the ethos of the people through its straightforward meter and resonant, rhythmic refrain, which lends itself well to renditions of the poem in popular song. Moreover, like most of Ghani Khan's poems, even the simplest, most seemingly innocuous of his works, it contains a refreshingly alternate, innovative, and often radical interpretation of events and the meaning of being human.

SEARCH

summer afternoon
like winter's night
a silence
a spreading stillness
the doves coo-cooing
the universe still, quiet
time holds its foot
mounted upon its stirrup, while
the world lends an ear to its heart
listening to an accounting of life and death
in the open spaciousness is mixed a kind of mirth
like someone dreaming listens to the *rabab*
and I alone
in thoughts drowning
for my longing
I walk searching
compellingly lost
a traveler
going
lying upon the ground
walking upon the sky
I, too, lend an ear to my heart
searching for the meaning, the origin of life
for death, for pain, looking for its purpose
searching through eternity for the effervescence of my consciousness
in the why's why
river am I lost
within the bowl, wine
within the wine
a capacious book, within
the mosque's niche
for life and death, I

seek a covenant
quiet, still
and within silence
I seek the strum of the sitar
rhythm's substance
in the encompassing colour
in the young viridescent birds
for myself I seek a reply to my life
I am mad, I am mad, truly
I seek Plato within taverns
when I turn my eyes upon myself
nothing, but death and empty nothingness
I see
I am mad, I am mad, truly
I seek life within death's eyes

summer afternoon
like winter's night
a silence
a spreading stillness
somewhere, far away
a spark
of light
stars?
or, far away, the desert's fire
the speckled
radiances
within, tell me
even if the mountain is forbiddingly high
on its pinnacle there is a path
what?
if life
is a lost

moment of
consciousness
an
eternity
it has, at least, a carer of its heart
O heart, deceiving yourself or deceiving me?
how you've freed yourself from all perplexity
O heart, O deceptive heart of mine
you busy yourself and make me happy
but, if I do not heed you
I am obliterated
really, truly
I am going mad
within dread's dark river, I
now drifting, then drowning
lost within darkest fears
here, within my own fire burning
while living, turning into dark dust
within my own blood, drowning
what—now speak!

summer afternoon
like winter's night
a silent spreading stillness
somewhere far away
a spark of light
stars; if the desert's fire is far away
the speckled radiances within tell me
even if the mountain is formidable on its peak there is a path
what if life is a lost moment of consciousness
it has an eternity, a carer of its heart

(*Latoon*, 428-432)

STRANGE PHILOSOPHY

my heart I placed upon a platter
into the mosque's narrow alley I went
and placed it at the mullah's feet
here, I said, these are my alms
as far as I understand
"taha" and "yasin"
how far can my forehead
bend down in prostration
how much light can my earthy
body incorporate
how much can my tongue
drink of heavenly nectar?
the mullah turned his face from me
asking: what is this here in your platter?
this is neither *puloa* nor *firni*
neither *halwa* nor *faluda*
shariah is that which is manifest, and
manifestly you are a transgressor
your love affair with the lord
what kind of story is this really?
fear, fear from divine retribution
that is the real face of faith
this rapture with the beloved of yours
what meaningless philosophy is this?
put your heart back in your chest
bring here camouflage and clothes
for your *sherab* is *haram* here;
bring some *sherbat*, bring a glass.

my platter full of dreams, I
took it to the Qazi's court,
picking up a small pearl

I took it into the dungeon to the serpent
and I said: Oh good and evil one!
Oh khan of black and white!
accept this gift of mine
in the name of the beloved.
the Qazi sat upon his throne,
on his white head of hair he set a turban
on one hand he set a canon
on the other he set a citadel
and from logic he fashioned the divine scales.
he was on one side, on the other was my platter
on one side was noise, there was frailty
the other side was winter, there was wonder
on one side understanding, there was thoughtfulness:
a rapt selfless kind of thinking.
I said: oh lord of justness
look upon the aspiration of the rapt ones
oh! Amir of measurement, I said
look upon this measureless measuring.
the Qazi closed his eyes
pursed his lips, face anxious
saying: sadly, this is lost from me
what you expect of me—
I compel the human
I do not indulge the man
I take my white and my black
to the intoxicated flowering of the fields, and
I see only black and I see only white
this is all that is my story
this scale my aspiration
this measurement my philosophy.

II
standing, the philosopher of the nation
surrounding him the world
with self-illuminating torch in hand
disjoining multiplicity from distinction
sharp intellect, pointed vision
arguments like adamantine nails
step by step by rational deduction
progressing to a summit
I said: oh! consciousness and understanding
the light illuminating the torch
is the selfless madman;
every song of lamentation
from your waters of wisdom
one drop of light is asked
some presence of laughter sought
some meaning sought for sorrow.
the philosopher raised his eyes
mouth smiling, eyes luminous:
muddy, muddy sorrow's smog
within it, coming, suddenly
saying: oh, my sorrowful son!
beauty bears no body, no shadows
its radiance you will see, when
you look with eyes closed shut
knowledge: a bright luminous torch
but stars cannot be seen within it
in the heart the eyes that see the radiance
looking upon the world of irradiances
who can bind the sea of beauty
in logic's cramped container?
who has captured sorrow's breeze
in scales that weigh and measure?

saying, in the tavern of the self's consciousness
there is no *sherab* for you to drink
when love's melody falls upon it
there is no *rabab* like this here.
your sight a distinctive disjoining sight
your world a disjoining world
the blood of Majnun runs in you
your destiny a desolate desert
your intoxication swinging
with laughter upon the rainbow
in the crescent moon's slim figure
the beloved's lips are saying
madman! madman!

take all my knowledge
but in return grant me
a drop of your desire
I sacrifice myself to your tears
I yearn for a return to your pain
in both there is an intoxication—
these are the dreams of the beloved
when you turn your face away from the world
the world starts shouting: Oh madman!
but you profit even from the loss
while we loose even from the profit
so that living becomes a loveliness for you
sorrow only the sorrow of heart's fullness
how ecstatic every step
how luminous every glance
bring, bring, bring your heart
so that my heart can be kissed
every desire an inebriation
every insinuation an intoxication

give me, give me so I can be alive
grieving the dead is death they say
life is desire and the beloved
if there is hope, if there is restlessness
say, say, how much intoxication
this is the story of the full heart's glory
of rapture and the beloved:
what strange philosophy is this?

III
I gathered my heart in my hand
to dark night and to sorrow I took it
losing it in the evening's darkness
taking it to the morning's dew
now there is only me and my desire
the story of the beloved's glory
a small flower and a long-drawn out autumn
a wish and a restless longing
to death I began
the story of life's beauty
of rapture and the beloved
what strange philosophy is this.

(*Latoon* 348-355)

PRAYER

in this unfair, this coercively oppressive world
in this unforgiving, this spiteful insinuating world
in this poor inverted upside-down world
grant me eyes that see and a knowing that enlightens
grant me a tender heart lord! grant me a luminous heart.
in this utilitarian and deceptive world

in this seizing, coveting, amassing market of a world
in this honeyed poison, this ravishing monster
grant me eyes that see and a knowing that enlightens
grant me love without yearning, grant me a heart without regret
grant me eyes that see and a knowing that enlightens
in this false, in this dark world
in this unforgiving, this spiteful insinuating world
in this flaming world afire with the envious
grant me a mirror of pure intention and conviction
grant me eyes that see and a knowing that enlightens
in this disheartened debilitated world
in this despising blackened world
in this parched, abrasive and barren world
grant me that conviction that even death fears
grant me eyes that see and a knowing that enlightens
grant me the heedless enraptured mind of Mansur
grant me earthly humble eyes of loving radiance
grant me joyful faith and every thought ravishing
grant me the heart of an ecstatic and the glory of a sultan
grant me eyes that see and a knowing that enlightens

(*Latoon,* 4-5)

WHEN ADAM SITS UPON THE EARTH

humanism becomes a fury when it rises tall
when the self leaves self-consciousness it becomes an inebriation
when steel, sated by blood, becomes intoxicated by love
astonished and apprehensive becomes the sitar's string
when both love and the beloved are annihilated by time
then the sagacious man understands the glory of the self and the beloved
when Adam sits upon the earth what fecundity is engendered

when it acquires riches the coiled serpent becomes a dragon
enough, don't make me laugh about heavenly *houris* and *ghalman*
by god without you what use have I for anyone
this, today, in which I walk intoxicated and arrogant
god knows whose flowering garden this will be tomorrow
I am not afraid of this death of yours; I am a Pukhtun
only an empty life and a wasteful death anger me
drowned deep in my heart runs the river of distrust
when will it join the kaleidoscopic, cascading waters of hope
this heart of mine looks upon your uncaring vision
that's why, sometimes, weeping, it becomes the lead melody string
song is lamentation or ecstasy, I do not know
but every voice sometimes keening, sometimes the song of joy

(*Latoon* 368)

I

Oh mullah of platonic logic!
Oh mullah of heavenly tales!
Oh mullah of retribution and predestination!
Oh mullah of perdition and paradise!
do not tell me tales of living
go away, I won't hear your tales of life
neither gardener nor khan of orchards am I
why then tell me legends about gardens
I am but a honey-bee
I know honey and I know the flower
I am but a tiny butterfly
I know the coming and the measure of a moment
I am the waft of the morning breeze
I know only the gleam of the evening light
I am a drop of *sherab*

I know lips and I know the bowl
so then why tell me legends about gardens
neither gardener nor khan of orchards am I
I am but a honey-bee
I know honey and I know the flower
I am but a tiny butterfly
I know the coming and the measure of a moment
I am the jangle of the dancing bells
I know the beat of the dancer's step
I am that spark of burning illumination
I know sorrow and I know rapturous reunion

(*Latoon* 244-5)

I

I am, I am colour, rapture, fire and the beat of the music am I
in the beloved's eyes a withered inebriation am I
this interpretation of my ecstatic heart is its search
yearning for the beloved companion of my heart: I am the lover
my heart, that craves for this beauty and colour
spring flowers arrive: I am the flowering
this mad desire of mine for laughing lips
fashioning beauty into Laila: I am the master mason
mounted upon the air arising from the seared heart
spirit, purpose, meaning, I am the voice of the sitar
the skies of heaven have no meaning if I am not
incandescence, of the world and sovereign of love am I
this much I understand in this brief life
my companion wondrous; the wonder of my beloved companion am I

(Written in Khanpur Jail)
(*Latoon* 243)

DISCARDED FLOWER

one day in a desert while out upon the hunt, I
saw a rose standing, glittering, ravishing, laughing
saddened, I stood beside it, saying: "oh! one just like me
you also: an unfortunate flower lost from the hair of the beloved
neither cherished fingers reaching towards your supple face
nor the lover's exquisite scarlet mouth kissing your red lips."
quietly smiling, saying: "Khan do not be saddened
never would I exchange this desert for all the gardens of Iran
here I am the one and the only; there a thousand others like me
all around and about me desolate dust, I alone am luminescent
here a black wilderness, I alone a flame of colour and of radiance
I am the subversive song of beauty, a beam without abode and the allure of the placeless
in your orchard also grow a thousand roses like me
within a nameless fulvous river, a nameless droplet flowing
you also, be not saddened in your desolate desert, oh! my brother
at last, there will come to the assignation a scorched Ghani Khan!"

(*Latoon,* 615)

A MIX OF THIS AND THAT

Pukhtun you trickster! you've fooled Mullah baba
mollified by gruel he didn't know about the fritters
astonished, sometimes the poor Pir barks, sometimes he whelps
his sanctity gone, gone, he didn't know of its going
I admit, uncle Jinnah came upon a seasoned, kiln-fired platter
of beatings, bludgeons, bullets, he did not know
look at the madman, even with sated stomach he has aged
of that affair of eating and digestion he did not know
very brave was my big brother yet he spoiled the sugar
the mullah held fast to his gruel yet he spoiled the pudding

the sahib conquered Hitler yet could not conquer hunger
yet they spoiled this zesty Hindustani masala for me
and my khan-lala,[27] lost in adoration to Islam and to the nation[28]
a devoted acolyte of Jinnah yet he spoiled the sugar
look what the madman could have been: a cosseted child and an illustrious Qazi
yet they spoiled the tales of Adam Khan and Durkhanay[29] for me

Ghani Khan's endnote: "There was no sugar; there were permits, bribery and rapacity for a few bags of sugar which were given by the English, and their loyal followers, to the friends of the nationalist parties."

(*Latoon* 111)

WHY

someone ought to tell me please
how is someone lost in love?
why, when someone smiles at you,
why do you smile back at them?
to the mountain peaks the star
quietly said last night
love, with tears says
beauty, with laughter says
to me with mischievous laughing eyes
beautiful beloved says
why does someone lose their heart,
how is someone lost in love?
why, when someone smiles at you,

27 Reference to Liaquat Ali Khan, whose title was "Quaid-a-Millat"

28 I translate *millat* as nation

29 Traditional Pashto tales in the vein of Romeo and Juliet or Laila and Majnun

why do you smile back at them?
says the eyes of Majnun
says the tears of Laila
says the ecstasy of youth
anguish torn in silence say
to me with mischievous laughing eyes
beautiful beloved says
why do some lose their heart
how is someone lost in love?
why, when someone smiles at you
why do you smile back at them?
Written on the occasion of his wedding with Roshan

(*Latoon*, 209)

NONVIOLENCE

mounted upon the wrathful steed of retribution
the figure of an eagle this valiant grandson of a king
inflaming the Pukhtun's eyes yet again
half afire half radiant
the young again twirl their green whiskers
wondrously intoxicated they're going somewhere
seeing only the intoxicated eyes of the beloved
heedless, absolutely, of the world
mothers place Qurans on their heads, yet again
sisters have blackened their eyes
Baba's Pukhtun vision
told them tales of another kind
Oh my grandfather's son!
Oh my blood brother!
Oh children of a fearless father!
Oh born to an indomitable mother!

your eyes full of radiance
your hand is empty, where's your sword?
mounted upon the wrathful steed of retribution
where is your chain-mail armor now?
today a new intoxication intoxicates
the Pukhtun's blood now purified
let's see if Laila can yet again
abandon herself to Majnun for love alone

(*Latoon* 687)

BACHA KHAN'S MARCH ON MARDAN

come oh Khushal baba!
oh Khalid come and see!
rise Ali Murtaza![30]
this spectacle come and see

to the battle now goes Mansur[31]
neither guns nor armor bearing

30 Reference to famed warrior figures often evoked in Pashto literature: Khushal Khan Khattak, known also as the "warrior-poet," was a fierce opponent of the Mughal Empire and his poetry is suffused with rousing metaphors attempting to unite the Pashtun tribes in resistance to Mughal domination. Khalid bin Walid, known as the "sword of Allah" was the right hand general of the Prophet Muhammad; he united the Arab tribes and conquered many lands in order to spread Islam. Imam Ali Murtaza, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, the fourth Caliph and also a famed warrior—his crescent sword is an especially emblematic symbol often used as a poetic metaphor.

31 Mansur al-Hallaj: the 10th century Sufi mystic renowned for repeatedly uttering the words: "*anal-haqa*" or "I am the truth". Accused of blasphemy by orthodox theologians he was tortured and executed. His utterance has since become symbolic of mystical enlightenment and his figure represents a radically alternate form of religiosity, one that also rebels against all forms of narrow, literal and orthodox interpretations. Ghani Khan uses this figure often in his poetry to represent such an alternate mode of divine worship.

the sword's spark he does not flare
the arrow's music he does not strum
the enemy's might he will not see
like a madman he keeps on going
neither noose nor gallows does he see
this the khan of all ecstatics
this the Pukhtun's mendicant
what colours of a king he bears!

the fair face of Laila he is seeing
desolate desert he will not see
heart full of a single longing
despair and desire he will not see
red, like the eyes of the eagle
love of many colours bearing

to the battle now goes Mansur
neither guns nor armor bearing

upon his head a crown of thorns
like Majnun raptly walking
vindicating the Pukhtun's name
this son of Pukhtuns walking
the fearless Khan of the fearless
what pride and honour bearing!

to the battle now goes Mansur
neither guns nor armor bearing.

his head he placed upon the dirt
his chest he bared for death
for the Pukhtuns a sacrifice
his own blood the offering

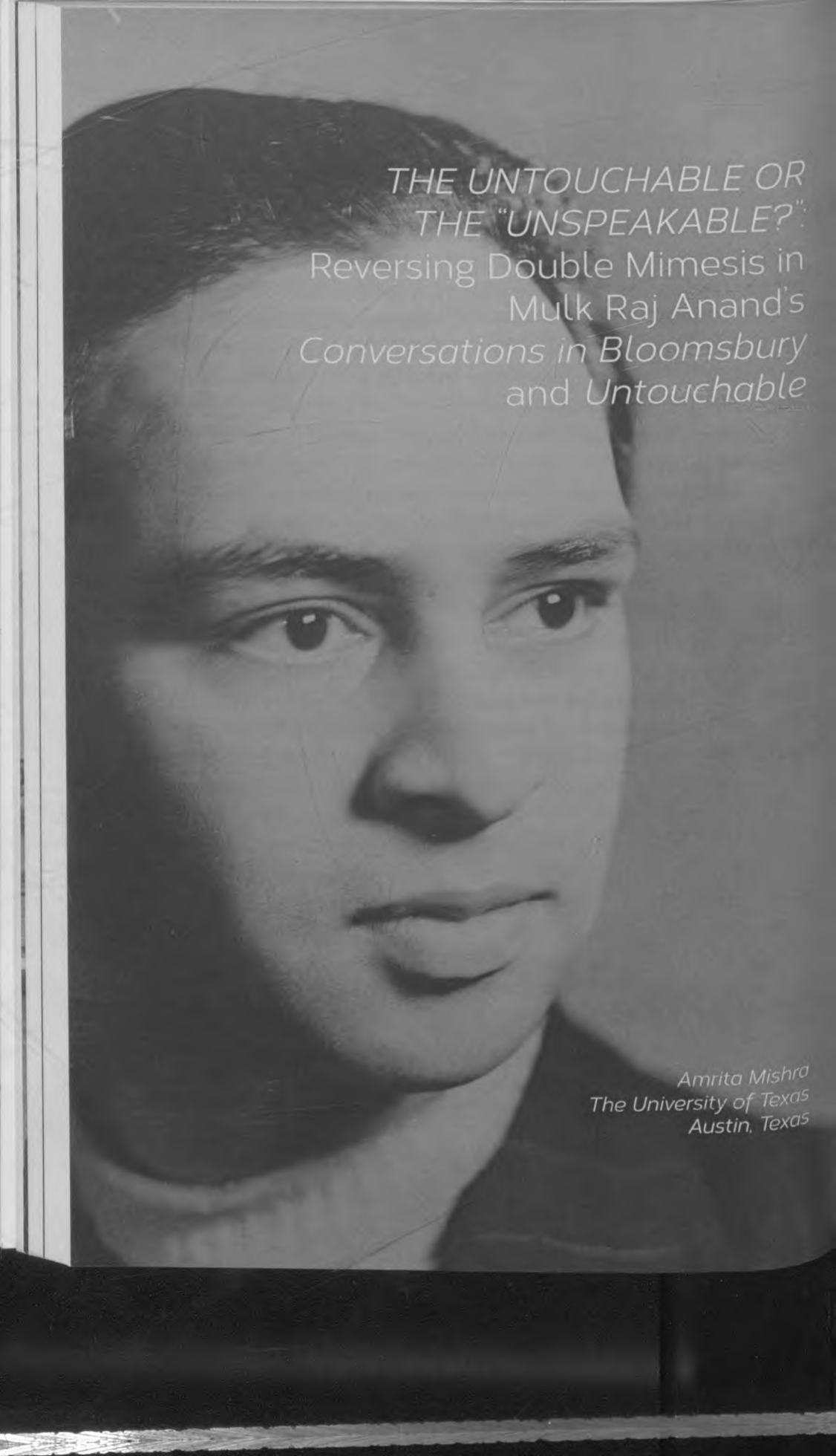
saying: everything for my people!
by god! what this mendicant is bearing!

to the battle now goes Mansur
neither guns nor armor bearing.

oh children of Pukhtuns!
let's not forget this battleground
his grey head bleeding freely
let's not forget this khan
lying here in the dirt
let's not forget this ecstatic
rise up in honor of him
by god how he honors you

to the battle now goes Mansur
neither guns nor armor bearing
the sword's spark he does not flare
the arrow's music he does not strum

(*Latoon* 309)



THE UNTOUCHABLE OR THE "UNSPEAKABLE?": Reversing Double Mimesis in Mulk Raj Anand's *Conversations in Bloomsbury* and *Untouchable*

Amrita Mishra
The University of Texas
Austin, Texas

ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore the ways in which Mulk Raj Anand's 1935 Untouchable, *a novel primarily concerned with caste relations in late colonial India, also in fact performs anticolonial resistance. I argue that through Anand's modes of narration and representation, and through the relationship between the omniscient narrator and Bakha, the young protagonist of the untouchable caste, this novel offers us a horizon of possibilities of national liberation.*[1] *The act of reading anti-imperialism into* Untouchable *requires us to draw an analogy between the framework of caste relations and that of colonial rule, where the caste-bound subject becomes analogous to the middle-class Indian citizen under British rule. The stakes of such an analogy are involved with the project of articulating a "recuperative theory of nationalism," as contended by Snehal Shingavi: he argues for the need to realize the potential of nationalism to incorporate minority group interests and propel radical change in the India of 1935, as opposed flattening nationalism as restrictive and homogenous—as assumed in postcolonial studies.*[2] *This paper hopes to build on such scholarship and demonstrate that if Anand, on some level, uses Bakha and caste relations in* Untouchable *to enact anti-colonial resistance, then he is potentially a middle-class, upper-caste nationalist who is also also interested in the abolition of the caste system—thereby proving that in this late colonial moment, a nationalist struggle and caste abolition struggle can in fact be parallel.*

To argue for such an analogy and consequently demonstrate that Untouchable *performs anti-colonial resistance, I turn to Anand's highly performative fictionalized 1981 memoir,* Conversations in Bloomsbury, *which reconstructs interactions with the Bloomsbury Circle from the 1920s. Anand's memoir calls our attention to the reciprocity between metropole and the colony or periphery, but also to the reversal of what Philip Holden calls "double mimesis," the idea of a colonial observer assuming a position of authenticity so that he/she can "displace the native informant" and assume a position superior to the native's, such that the native feels obliged*

1 I choose to use "untouchable" throughout this article to describe individuals born into the lowest social stratification or what is broadly understood as the fifth excluded varna of the four-varna caste system, to be consistent with Anand's usage of the term. It is important to note that "Dalit" is a self-chosen and much more appropriate term for those previously categorized as "untouchable."

2 Snehal Shingavi, *The Mahatma Misunderstood: The Politics and Forms of Literary Nationalism in India* (London: Anthem Press, 2013), 5.

<< MULK RAJ ANAND. © NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

to imitate the colonizer.[3] *This paper ultimately uses these apparatuses to argue for a parallel reversal of double mimesis in* Untouchable *as a form of anti-imperialist resistance.*

INTRODUCTION

Mulk Raj Anand's 1935 *Untouchable*--which is claimed by some scholars as a modernist novel, while read by others as committed to social realism—focuses on the struggles of a single day in the life of Bakha, an eighteen-year-old young man of the untouchable caste in late colonial India. As Bakha faces various injustices—from his own father, from a man he brushes up against accidentally after not announcing his presence as an untouchable, and from a mob accusing him of polluting a temple—he becomes increasingly alienated. By the end of the novel, Anand offers Bakha three avenues of improving his social position: Christianity, Gandhi's model of destigmatizing caste but retaining the caste system, and the water-closet. Feeling disillusioned with Gandhi's proposition and confused by who "Yessuh Messih" is when Colonel Hutchinson, the chief of the local Salvation Army tries to convert him, Bakha sees technology as holding the greatest promise.

Fairly early in the one day that the novel tracks, the omniscient narrator follows Sohini, Bakha's sister, as she leaves home—from the sweeper colony that services both the town and the British cantonment—to fetch water in a pitcher that she balances on her head with ease. The narrator goes on to muse:

> How a round base can be adjusted on a round top, how a sphere can rest on a sphere is a problem which may be of interest to those who can think like Euclid or Archimedes. It never occurred

3 Philip Holden, "Halls of Mirrors: Mimicry and Ambivalence in Kipling's Boer War Short Stories," *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 28:4 (1997): 91.

> to Sohini to ask herself anything like this as she balanced her pitcher on her head and went to and from her one-roomed home to the steps of the caste-well where she counted on the chance of some gentleman taking pity on her and giving her the water she needed.[4]

The narrator first gives us an impression of his of her own awareness. In claiming that questions concerning the adjustment of a round base or the balance of a sphere are only available to those "who think like Euclid or Archimedes," the narrator demonstrates his or her own capacity to generate such questions. Through this very claim the narrator is likens himself or herself to the ancient Greek mathematicians mentioned. Sohini is immediately denied the pleasure or the ability to preoccupy herself with the abstract, but she is also described as having the balance the pitcher without this thought. To believe that the narrator is admiring Sohini for her capacity to act without having to logically determine how to act might be too generous a stance; it feels more as though the narrator, curious and aware of the Greeks as he or she is, collaborates here briefly but surely with the reader. We are expected to know of a mathematician responsible for geometry, but Sohini is spoken of without speaking herself. Even in the gesture of walking to fetch water, she simply conducts the physical act while she is narrated, analyzed and thought for by another entity.

I begin with this instance in *Untouchable* in order to pose two questions: What does it mean for a narrator of a novel to render a character silent and assume some kind of superiority that the reader is also assumed to be enjoying? Why, then, might Anand choose to employ this mode of narration, and might the genre of the novel assist us in understanding the chosen mode? These questions are not concerned with any kind of analysis tied up with the politics of representation or authenticity. Instead, I posit that Anand manufactures a

4 Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable* (London: Penguin Books, 1940), 22.

narrator who then performs superiority, and through this act of manufacturing, Anand does not lose any credibility in representing a caste-bound subject—nor is he necessarily likened to the cosmopolitan narrator himself.

This article argues that the relationship staged between Bakha and the omniscient narrator, in a novel mostly involved with caste relations, also in fact performs anti-colonial resistance. To posit this claim requires an analogy to be formulated between the framework of caste relations and that of colonial rule; I accomplish this by drawing a parallel between *Untouchable* and Anand's much later highly constructed and fictionalized 1981 memoir, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, in which Anand relates his encounters with the Bloomsbury Circle over fifty years prior. To understand the merits and stakes of creating an analogy between caste and colonial rule and using two texts from the two ends of Anand's prolific career, I first situate *Untouchable* in larger debates of what movement the novel belongs to.

GEOMODERNISMS AND RECIPROCAL FLOWS

Untouchable has largely been claimed as a modernist novel in scholarship generated within the Anglo-American academy—both as the variety that borrows and subverts European elements of modernism associated with imperialism in order to create an anti-imperialist work, as well as the kind that constructs modernism from an alternative Indian genealogy. Yet in India, and by some scholars in the Western academy more committed to Indian literary history, *Untouchable* is mostly read as social realism, with a deep commitment to authenticity and chronicling struggles.

The novel tends to be characterized as modernist based on various elements: it features an anti-teleological narrative and the radical alienation of Bakha, who becomes increasingly aware of his caste-status throughout the day that the novel spans. To contain narrative

time within the parameters of a day immediately recalls modernists like Joyce or Woolf. Joyce seems to have had a more direct influence, Anand proclaims in a reflective essay, "The Story of My Experiment with a White Lie," as the Irish writer taught him that unity and time are possible in all in one day of the life of a character.[5] That Anand first wrote the manuscript of *Untouchable* in 1930, while still living in England and closely associated with the Bloomsbury Circle makes it easier to co-opt him entirely as a modernist. This narrative does not seriously consider the changes that the novel undergoes once Anand leaves England and meets Gandhi, who suggests that the length and many modernist maneuvers be heavily edited out so that untouchables can be rendered more authentically; whether Gandhi actually influenced the novel and oriented it more toward realism, or whether this is a myth created and sustained by those interested in laying claim to Anand as a realist, is still contested by scholars of Anand.[6]

If we assume *Untouchable* to be a modernist novel, then on many levels the novel as well as Anand's other works enact Patrick Williams refers to as "simultaneous uncontemporaneities;" in a work like *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, it is through the collision or intersection of two very different worlds—that of Anand as modernist in late colonial India and that of the Bloomsbury modernists—that we see the very disruption or discontinuity in these seemingly "simultaneous" trajectories of modernism.[7] Anand, in his highly staged and manipulated re-imaginings of his experiences and friendships with the Bloomsbury Circle, wants to demonstrate the ways in which his younger self had to negotiate the tensions between "longing to be free"—or the desire to "live and be on equal terms with the men of learning"—and his

5 Mulk Raj Anand, "The Story of My Experiment with a White Lie," *Indian Literature* 10.3 (1967): 31.

6 I elaborate more on this contestation after my discussion of modernisms.

7 Patrick Williams, " 'Simultaneous Uncontemporaneities': theorising modernism and empire," in *Modernism and Empire*, ed. Howard Booth and Nigel Rigby (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 33.

increasing awareness that these modernists still almost entirely support England's imperialist agenda in India.[8] It is not very surprising that most of Anand's renderings of Bloomsbury figures have a keen Orientalist interest in India and treat it as some kind of temporally removed, ancient culture, while still advocating British rule; Anand's contrived rendering of T. S. Eliot remarks at a sherry party, "Sometimes I feel the Indians should pursue their culture and leave government to the British empiricists."[9]

The contradictions that Anand finds himself in embody the very irreconcilability between modernism and imperialism. Modernism as a European movement, as Kumkum Sangari observes, is a "major act of cultural self-definition," and one that is precarious at a time when territorial lines are radically shifting.[10] If, as Sangari contends, modernism itself was "recuperating the cultural products of non-western countries," and is based in part on "a random appropriation and remodeling of the 'liberating' and energizing possibilities of [the colonized's] own indigenous 'traditions,'" then modernism becomes dependent and inextricable from imperialism.[11] That modernism arguably relies some manifestations of imperialism to articulate itself is telling: as a movement modernism fragile and destabilized. If we understand a writer like Anand to be borrowing elements of Western modernism, then he is inarguably borrowing back or re-appropriating certain appropriated elements of Indian indigenous culture, which opens a reciprocal flow between the imperial metropole and colonial periphery. Similarly, Priya Joshi, in her work involving the circulation of the novel in colonial India, invokes John MacKenzie's formulation of the "centripetal effect," which undoes the notion that English influ-

8 Mulk Raj Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury* (New Delhi: Vision Books, 2011), 12.

9 Ibid, 16.

10 Kumkum Sangari, "The Politics of the Possible," *Cultural Critique* 7 (1987): 182.

11 Ibid.

ence only travels from metropolis to empire. Joshi describes the centripetal effect as a phenomenon in which: "the cultural and commercial propaganda that is supposed to propel British influence outward from metropolis to periphery actually ends up 'creating for the British a world view which is as central to their perception to themselves.'"[12] If modernism is made up in part of cultural products of colonized nations, then modernism can alternatively thought to be constructed first in the colonial world before being assembled at the metropole as what we understand as modernism. In the case of *Untouchable*, for example, Jessica Berman understands Joyce's one-day narrative structure's influence on *Untouchable* not as a one-way flow of influence but analyzes the novel's production as an embodiment of reciprocal flows: "this encounter highlights the multidirectional flow of global literature and culture, where streams of discourse move out not just from metropolis to colony, or even back from colony to metropolis, but as in this example, from colony to metropolis to another colony and back again."[13]

If we regard *Untouchable* as part of a modernist genealogy, then it changes the course of such lineages and fleshes out other, less visible modernisms that emerge from the colony, that are not necessarily echoes or the afterlife of Western modernist traditions. Such modernist texts have tended to emerge from colonial sites at a point of time when modernism in Europe is understood to have ended. Their belated entry tends to reinforce the narrative of historicism, or idea that something needs to be seen as a unity to be understood, that Dipesh Chakravarty wants to challenge in *Provincializing Europe*: "to practice historicism is to use the temporal statement, 'first in the West, then elsewhere.'"[14] Historicism, we are told, is a way of telling the colonial

12 Priya Joshi, *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture and the English Novel in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 9.

13 Jessica Berman, "Comparative Colonialisms: Joyce, Anand and the Question of Engagement," *Modernism/ modernity* 13.3 (2006): 466.

14 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000), 7.

world "not yet."[15] To break out of this linear narrative—and the idea that modernism can only emerge in the colonial world after it is fully realized in Europe—demands that we rupture the unity that historicism presupposes and consider not only circuits of reciprocity and exchange, but also simultaneous parallel modernisms that do not necessarily emerge at the same time.[16]

INDIGENOUS MODERNISMS AND REALISM

Much of scholarship that reads Anand and *Untouchable* as modernist engages in the colonial writer's modernism in relation to Western modernism, but does not imagine ways in which the construction of modernism in colonial India might have an independent trajectory than that of Europe. This body of work also tends to dismiss the realist dimensions of *Untouchable*. Jessica Berman, for example, contends that the story of Gandhi heavily editing Anand's initial manuscript as composed while in England is "apocryphal" but has become a way for scholars to co-opt Anand for project of social realism: "Though there is no extant manuscript and no evidence for this story, the assumed trajectory of Anand's early career still rests on this tale, guiding critics to comment on his return to India as a 'decisive shift,' a return to

15 Ibid, 8.

16 For a more elaborate discussion about modernisms emerging from the colonial world, see Susan Stanford Friedman, "Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies," *Modernism/modernity* 13.3 (2006), and Ariela Freedman, "On the Ganges Side of Modernism: Raghubir Singh, Amitav Ghosh and the Postcolonial Modern," in *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity*, ed. Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), along with other essays in *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity* (particularly Doyle and Winkiel's introduction).

authenticity and an embrace of social realism."[17]

Berman's insight is important, however, not in the debate of whether Gandhi called for dramatic changes in Anand's initial manuscript, but in pointing out the danger of tracing a fixed trajectory of Anand's early career. In such a narrative Anand rejects all previous associations with modernism to become committed to social realism. Scholars such as Sujrit S. Dulai seem to read Anand in this capacity; Dulai claims that as part of the Progressive Writers' Association and as one who wrote one of the founding manifestos, Anand "firmly believed that literature should serve a social purpose."[18] Dulai goes on to gesture towards *Apology for Heroism*, Anand's autobiographical account that describes some of his writing motivations, where he claims that early in life he began to "feel the misery of the inert, disease-ridden, underfed, and illiterate people about us."[19] Similarly, Anand's perhaps most famous biographer, Saros Cowasjee, reminds us that Anand was conditioned by Marxism, so that any art form is first a social event.[20]

Scholars such as Vinay Dharwadkher, are interested in recuperating Anand as a modernist while also heeding realist tendencies, but contend that the construction of modernism in the subcontinent

17 Berman, "Comparative Colonialisms," 469. Berman refers to Leela Gandhi's work on Anand to make her claim; Leela Gandhi also questions the legitimacy of the story of Gandhi's interventions in Anand's work. See Leela Gandhi, "Novelists of the 1930s and 1940s," in *A History of Indian Literature in English*, ed. Arvind Krishna Mehrotra (New York: Columbia UP, 2003), 175. Scholars such as Snehal Shingavi argue that the narrative of Gandhi's suggestions and changes in *Untouchable* is in fact true, and validated by Anand's own admission of Gandhi's advice, found in a 1992 note in Rajinder Dhawan's *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand*. For further elaboration see Snehal Shingavi's *The Mahatma Misunderstood*, 24.

18 Sujrit S. Dulai, "Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable: Practice before Ideology," in *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand*, ed. Manmohan Bhatnagar and Mittapalli Rajeshwar (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2000), 26.

19 Ibid, 27.

20 Saros Cowasjee, *So Many Freedoms: A Study of the Major Fiction of Mulk Raj Anand* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977), 38.

has more to do with an Indian literary genealogy than anything necessarily in conversation with, or borrowed from, European modernism. To assert an indigenous modernism parallel to European variants—rather than claiming a reciprocal flow between metropole and periphery—requires new definitions or orientations of modernism as a movement. In his project of identifying and tracking four distinct phases of literary modernism in India, Dharwadker chooses to define modernism as something similar to modernity; he uses Frederico de Onis's formulation: "there is no difference between Modernism and modernity, because those who named these phenomena understood that Modernism is essentially... the search for modernity."[21] Then for Dharwadkar, modernism becomes a movement that "grows out and returns" to Indian society's search for modernity and is very much related to social reform.[22] By using Onis's idea of modernism, Dharwadkar grants himself room to think through Anand's modernism and aesthetics as a "synecdoche for tis social modernism," as opposed to moving in a different direction.[23] This definition also enables him to claim that India as a movement must be distinct from its European counterpart because Indian social modernism deviates from European social modernism, particularly through processes of colonialism and the traditions that are broken away from in each case.

Dharwadkar situates Anand in the second phase of Indian modernism, which he marks as roughly between 1922 until Indian independence, a phase marked by the Progressive movement, nationalism, and experimentation. Anand is claimed as an "innovator of modernist realism;" Dharwadkar is particularly interested in how social modernism becomes embedded in the narrative structures of the modernist novel. He specifically treats *Untouchable* as an example of modern-

21 Vinay Dharwadker, "The Modernist Novel in India: Paradigms and Practices," in *A History of the Indian Novel in English*, ed. Ulka Anjaria (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015), 104.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

ist realism and argues that the novel follows Premchand's theoretical reflections on realism in the modernist novel, in his 1925 essay, "Upanyasa" ("The Novel"). Premchand divides novelists into idealists and realists; idealism in novels produces characters "whose hearts have sacrosanct purity, who are devoid of selfishness and lust," whereas realists are more interested in laying bare weaknesses and hostilities of a social fabric.[24] Such a dichotomy seems similar to Tagore's division of poetry as imaginative and romantic and prose as realist. The romanticist and imaginative capacity of the poetic is necessary for the production of nationalist visions.[25]

For Premchand, idealism compensates for some of the inadequacies of realist literature, but the highest form of literature would attempt to merge realism and idealism, creating "idealistic realism." Dharwadkar claims that *Untouchable* becomes an effective example of the kind of novel that Premchand imagines.

ANTI-COLONIAL RESISTANCE IN *UNTOUCHABLE*

As demonstrated, *Untouchable* tends to be claimed as a modernist novel that engages with European modernism but embodies reciprocal flows of cultural engagement that challenges modernism's origins and boundaries, as a modernist novel that emerges in India as a result of literary movements in the subcontinent with some realist elements, and as a novel whose primary project is realism and authentic representation, where social purpose trumps the aesthetic. This article starts out by raising a question regarding Anand's choice of mode of narration in *Untouchable*: What does it mean for Anand to employ a narrator who occasionally articulates a sense of superiority and condescension over untouchable characters like Bakha or his

24 Ibid, 117.

25 Chakravarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 155.

sister Sohini? What does it mean for that narrator to expect the reader to have a similar intellectual capacity as him or her, to think in ways Euclid or Archimedes would, unlike someone like Sohini? Does such a maneuver prevent any real kind of solidarity between the narrator, and thereby the reader, with the caste-bound subject?

I argue that the subjugation of characters like Bakha and Sohini by the creation of a smug omniscient narrator is staged and performed for the sake of a single moment when Bakha interrupts the narrator, which is an opportunity to imagine caste liberation but also national liberation. Here it becomes important to consider the body of scholarship that reads *Untouchable* as primarily a social realist text. Snehal Shingavi, in his work on the ways in which novels like *Untouchable* have been misread and instead offer us a glimpse into the ambivalences of Indian pre-independence nationalism—as recuperative and inclusive of what is generally understood as nationalism's others—points to a moment of Anand's "On the Genesis of *Untouchable:* A Note," published in Rajinder Dhawan's 1992 *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand.* Anand admits Gandhi considerably changed the mode of representing the untouchable in the novel: "he thought that the paragraphs of high-sounding words, in which I had tried to unite miscellaneous elements...must go. Also, the old man suggested the removal of my deliberate attempts at melodramatic contrasts of the comic and tragic motifs, through which the spontaneous feelings, modes and lurking chaos in the soul of Bakha, had been somewhat suppressed."[26] If we can trust Anand's own story, then it is important to heed those who read Anand as realist: he is at least relatively more concerned, following Gandhi's advice, more in the authenticity and realist mode of representation in *Untouchable.* With such an orientation in mind, we can believe that Anand is at least interested in forging solidarity with the characters in his novel, and the smugness of his narrator is

26 Shingavi, *Mahatma Misunderstood,* 34. For Anand's own admission, see Mulk Raj Anand, "On the Genesis of Untouchable: A Note." In *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand,* by Rajinder Dhawan (New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1992).

trying to do something other than simply articulate the "lesser" stature of untouchables.

How, then, can *Untouchable* perform anti-colonial resistance? Within the world of the novel, there are no direct references to national liberation. At the end of the novel, when Bakha listens to a speech from Mahatma Gandhi, who says he has been released from jail on the condition that he will not speak of any liberation tactics. While Gandhi instead focuses on caste oppression, as scholars like Shingavi observe, Gandhi is only interested in dismantling the stigmatization of untouchables, but does not imagine a caste-less society. Instead, he informs untouchables that should "realize that they are cleaning Hindu society" and that they should "cultivate the habits of cleanliness, so that no one shall point his finger at them."[27] In other instances of the novel, we see, if anything, the potential attractiveness of the colonial presence to those oppressed by a Hindu framework; Bakha wants to wear trousers like the Tommies of the barracks, and begins talking to Colonel Hutchinson, who wants to convert him into a Christian, for the same reason. How then can national liberation be imagined and how is it performed by the novel?

I argue that such liberation can be imagined through Bakha's interruption. To contend that the relationship between the narrator and untouchable protagonist performs caste and colonial resistance requires an analogy between the caste system and colonial rule to be drawn. To do this, I turn to Anand's 1981 *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, his highly performative constructed memoir of encounters and friendships with the Bloomsbury Circle, for an instance of the reversal of double mimesis—an apparatus I then apply to *Untouchable*. Then, along with parallels between caste and colonialism, I create a parallel between the caste-bound subject and the middle-class cosmopolitan Indian citizen under British rule (like Anand in England).

The stakes of arguing that an act of interrupting the omniscient

27 Anand, *Untouchable*, 148.

narrator enacts colonial resistance, and using *Conversations in Bloomsbury* in particular to prove that it does, are tied up in three areas: the historicization of nationalism in late colonial India, and the reciprocal flows and fragility of Western modernism, and the categorization of the novel itself.

First, we need to consider nationalism at the time that Anand writes *Untouchable* and its relationship with issues of caste. While the conventional understanding of nationalism, solidified by postcolonial studies, usually holds that nationalism is only interested in a middle-class majoritarian version of liberation that entirely ignores minority groups—which in India would include low-caste groups—some scholars like Shingavi look to complicate and nuance this theory. In *The Mahatma Misunderstood*, Shingavi is interested in offering a "recuperative theory of nationalism," one that takes into account the radical possibilities offered by the organized Left that are entirely ignored by postcolonial studies scholarship because such scholarship focuses on the failures of nationalism after independence. He wants nationalism to be recognized as far more ambivalent and variegated in ideology than the limited version offered and popularized by Gandhi. Instead, the nationalism that eventually became the vision of the state after independence actually needed "the silencing and elimination of more radical variants of nationalism."[28] Shingavi characterizes much of fiction emerging in late colonial India—in the 1930s and 1940s—as fiction that "imagines itself existing in the moment at which the Mahatma is about to be eclipsed, when more radical futures are on the horizon."[29]

In the case of *Untouchable*, Shingavi urges the reader to consider the historical divergence between nationalism or Gandhian ideas as understood by postcolonial theory, and more radical ideologies pushing for the abolition of the caste system that should be recognized as

28 Shingavi, The Mahatma Misunderstood, 6.

29 Ibid, 3.

a legitimate part of pre-independence nationalism. Gandhi, at the end of *Untouchable,* as mentioned, is heavily concerned with the treatment of untouchables, but never goes as far as to call for the abolition of the system. He instead believes it is partly the responsibility of untouchables themselves to uplift themselves to a "touchable" state. At the time that Anand is writing, nationalists do not agree on what to do about the issue of untouchability. As Shingavi points out, received understandings of 1930s Congress involve the choice to abolish caste abolition for the sake of national liberation, whereas reformers such as Ambedkar prioritized ridding of caste to the point that they did not mind sacrificing the project of independence. Ambedkar even chose, we are told, to collaborate with the British.[30] Such a narrative claims that freedom from caste and colonial rule do not seem to be parallel. Shingavi asserts that Anand stands between Gandhi and Ambedkar's visions and instead offers the reader a third alternative, through Bakha's inclination towards the water-closet at the end of the novel: "technological humanism." [31] While this third avenue is not within the scope of this project, I use Shingavi's argument and his historicization of the time at which Anand is writing to articulate the importance of my argument. To claim that a novel largely concerned with caste relations also enacts colonial resistance offers us the possibility of imagining nationalism and caste abolition as not necessarily deviating from one another, as postcolonial understandings of nationalism might hold. In positing that Anand is interested in national liberation as well as a casteless social framework, I contend that nationalism may not be as limiting and against minority interests as it has come to be associated with as a result of evaluating its failures after independence.

Why, then, use *Conversations of Bloomsbury*—which was written almost fifty years after Anand's first novel, by a much older Anand who stages all of his past encounters—as a text to situate in conversa-

30 Shingavi, *The Mahatma Misunderstood,* 37.

31 Ibid, 32.

tion with *Untouchable*? This has to do with my second set of stakes, which involves the ways in which Anand is understood by many scholars as a modernist who engages with the Anglo-American literary movement, as discussed earlier in this essay. Because the text is constructed partly to expose the Bloomsbury Circle's ambivalence regarding the British Empire, and the merits of self-rule, *Conversations in Bloomsbury* serves as a site of inversion and invites us to rethink the collision of two worlds as an exchange, rather than an exclusively centrifugal influence permeating from metropole to periphery. Anand fashions the memoir so that he can place himself and Virginia and Leonard Woolf in a reversal of what Kaja Silverman and Parama Roy formulate as "double mimesis." *Conversations in Bloomsbury* explores the imagining of India and Indianness by Anand's configurations of modernists, but also the ways in which "Englishness" percolates into what Anand imagines to be the English imagination.

Ben Conisbee Baer similarly locates cultural reciprocity and resists the idea of modernist influence travelling solely outwards from metropole to periphery, in *Untouchable*, by in fact drawing an analogy between caste and colonial oppressions: "The gesture of *Untouchable* is one of connection, of undoing the symbolic opposition between colony and metropole, and the first movement of its gesture is a staging of a parallel relation of dis/connection within the colony itself: a topography of an "'outcastes' colony.'" [32] Baer also observes the final paraph of the novel, which situates the reader in time and space: "Simla—S.S. Viceroy of India—Bloomsbury" and "September-October 1933."[33] This, Baer contends, makes *Untouchable* a "novel on the move" and one that enables the novel to travel to the metropolis and "make visible the unknown, excremental abjection of the colonial

32 Ben Conisbee Baer, "Shit Writing: Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*, the Image of Gandhi, and the Progressive Writers' Association," *Modernism/ modernity* 16.3 (2009): 581.

33 Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable* (London: Penguin Books, 1940), 157.

margin in the aesthetic heart of the center."[34] Baer's work strengthens my argument in that to create an analogy between caste and colonial frameworks also assists in securing *Untouchable* as part of a more global inclusive modernism, or calls for modernism's origins and boundaries to be reoriented.

I use *Conversations in Bloomsbury* because it provides an apparatus that can then be applied to *Untouchable*, but also calls for new ways for cultural exchange and literary movements to be imagined, which is precisely what much of the scholarship on *Untouchable* sees the novel as doing. This article will first locate moments of reversal of double mimesis that Anand produces in *Conversations in Bloomsbury* and then posit that a similar reversal is created in *Untouchable* when Bakha interrupts the omniscient narrator.

DOUBLE MIMESIS IN *CONVERSATIONS IN BLOOMSBURY*

Anand's 1981 performative memoir is preoccupied with exposing the anxiety of English modernists who choose to recuperate elements of culture from British colonies white simultaneously openly or subtly supporting empire. It is important to keep in mind that Anand writes his fictionalized account around fifty years after leaving England and his encounters with the Bloomsbury Group while working on the Hogarth Press, with awareness of Indian independence. In rewriting his younger self, he is sure to occasionally articulate a bold antagonism towards members of the Bloomsbury Circle for not sympathizing with the cause of Indian liberation, but we must be slightly wary of this favorably manufactured self. Anna Snaith is quick to remind us that both C. L. R. James and Anand were as keen to sample and prove themselves

34 Ben Conisbee Baer, "Shit Writing: Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*, the Image of Gandhi, and the Progressive Writers' Association," *Modernism/modernity* 16.3 (2009): 577.

within the literary culture of Bloomsbury as they were to resist it."[35]

Throughout the memoir, which is divided into episodic disconnected chapters to separate conversations with different figures in the Bloomsbury Circle, with no sustained plot, Anand contrives situations that demonstrate the colonizer's superiority over the colonized. One such instance is when we find Anand at a sherry party in Harry Munro's poetry shop, in the company of Nikhil, a fellow student at the university, Professor Bonamy Dobrée and T. S. Eliot. Anand's Dobrée describes Kipling's *Kim* as "wonderfully elastic prose," which the fictionalized Anand is critical of; he instead describes Kipling as "fantastically low-minded" in comparison to the great imagination of the poet Iqbal.[36] Nikhil, another colonial subject, is manufactured to be overt in his opinions; he raises a toast to Kim, who, he scoffs, is "superior to all the Indians put together."[37] Anand recalls this conversation to expose the ways in which those who proclaimed themselves as modernists could still very easily admire Kipling, who was part of their literary heritage. I am more interested in Nikhil's comment, which is fabricated to mean two things: a dry jab at the idea that Kim, who becomes a spy for the British Secret Service in colonial India, is superior by his capacity to outsmart them as a spy, or, more importantly, that Kipling's rendering of an "Indian" identity is superior to the native Indian's ability to render his own identity.

This superiority of the postured Indian identity by the colonizer lends itself to the idea of "double mimesis," the idea—put forth by Kaja Silverman and Parama Roy, in their separate discussions of Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and Burton's accounts of pilgrimages to Meccah, respectively—of a colonial observer "assuming the pos-

35 Ibid.

36 Mulk Raj Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury* (New Delhi: Vision Books, 2011), 36.

37 Ibid, 37.

ture of authenticity and seeking to displace the native informant."[38] If Kipling's construction of Kim is "superior to all the Indians," as Nikhil sarcastically claims, Kipling is enacting this very act of displacing the native informant. Silverman traces Lawrence's activity in Arabia and his insistent mimicry of the Arabs that he is surrounded by, which he perceives to be superior to the Arabness of the Arabs themselves. She expands on the "double" nature of mimesis: "in seeking to imitate the Arabs to the point where they might imitate him back, *Lawrence of Seven Pillars* both inverts and doubles the classic colonial paradigm."[39] The nature of mimesis allows for the colonial subject's identity to be fully malleable and something that can easily be imitated, while the colonizer's identity can afford to remain unfragmented and stable. Roy refers to this stability in her discussion of what she calls "successful rearguard action": the process of imitating the native as an effective defensive mechanism so that the native cannot be successful in imitating the colonizer first. The act of mimesis, then, curiously becomes sanctioned only in one direction, as Roy gestures towards: "when figures such as Burton assume their disguises, they seem to do so with the fullest faith in their own unfragmented subjectivity and in their ability to 'disguise and conquer.'"[40] The colonizer becomes superior in his ability to displace the native informant, but through his entirely unfragmented self. Lawrence encourages the process of double mimesis, we are told, in his *Twenty-Seven Articles:* "the best way to lead is to constitute oneself as an ideal within the terms

38 Philip Holden, "Halls of Mirrors: Mimicry and Ambivalence in Kipling's Boer War Short Stories," *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 28:4 (1997): 91. For a more elaborate discussion on "double mimesis," see Holden's work. He uses Silverman and Roy's formulation in an analysis of "A Sahib's War," a short story from Kipling's 1904 collection *Traffics and Discoveries.*

39 Kara Silverman, "White Skin, Brown Masks: The Double Mimesis, or With Lawrence in Arabia," in *Male Subjectivity at the Margins,* (London: Routledge, 1992): 312.

40 Parama Roy, "Oriental Exhibits: Englishmen and Natives in Burton's Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah & Meccah," *boundary* 2.22 (1995):196.

of the native culture—to outdo the Arabs in representing 'Arabness,' becoming in the process a standard to follow."[41]

"ENGLISHNESS" AND EMPIRE

This section explores the ways in which double mimesis becomes an apparatus to look more closely at the relationships between characters in *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, and the potential that Anand creates for its reversal. In the same conversation concerning Kipling, Anand's T. S. Eliot claims: "sometimes I feel the Indians should pursue their culture and leave government to the British empiricists."[42] Anand does not directly respond to this but is "luckily" distracted by a glass of wine, though he does feel a rush of "stored up bad temper" when Professor Dobrée justifies certain elements of British colonial rule in the same conversation: "Come, come, the British did give you roads—and justice!"[43] The highly performative exchange is Anand's way of delivering a critique of many of his Bloomsbury acquaintances, but also a critique of their need to exoticize India in the Orientalist imaginary as a removed culture that can be pursued by the native Indian, but not one that can be self-governed.

In his encounter with Leonard and Virginia Woolf, however, Anand grants his fictionalized self the credit of performing a reversal of "double mimesis," and sheds light on the precariousness of English identity and the literary movements associated with it. Young Anand tells the Woolfs that he frequently reads George W. Reynolds, presumably to demonstrate his own awareness of English writers and an "English-

41 Kara Silverman, "White Skin, Brown Masks: The Double Mimesis, or With Lawrence in Arabia," in *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, (London: Routledge, 1992): 312.

42 Mulk Raj Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury* (New Delhi: Vision Books, 2011), 37.

43 Ibid.

ness" in England.[44] Anand's Virginia Woolf does not recognize this author, which allows us to interpret the moment as one in which Anand exercises "superiority" as an Indian in knowing English culture. This episode then serves as a peculiar inverted instance where the colonial subject has the opportunity to fleetingly displace the colonizer informant. This reversal of double mimesis ruptures Roy's conception of "successful rearguard action;" Anand not only succeeds in rehearsing Englishness, but in rehearsing an Englishness that is superior to Virginia's Englishness. Her subjectivity is suddenly vulnerable to fragmentation while Anand's is allowed to remain intact.

Anand does not let his younger self bask in the small triumph of reading something that Virginia is unaware of—instead Leonard is fashioned to scoff at young Anand's choice of reading, so that Anand can articulate how relentless the Bloomsbury Circle was, perhaps, in securing their superior position. The inversion is contrived to spectacularly fail when Leonard not only knows the author but also dismisses him as one who is "mainly read by bored Englishmen in the tropics."[45] In dismissing Reynolds, Anand gestures towards the deep instability of English identity, which invokes John MacKenzie's conception of a centripetal effect: the very ideas of Englishness that are propelled outwards from the metropole are necessary in "creating for the British a world view which is as central to their perceptions of themselves."[46] Mackenzie further suggests that one needs to be English somewhere else, outside the metropole, before one can recognize oneself to be English at home. In this case, Anand points to Reynolds's work as the cultural product that the English propel outwards and disassociate from, but they are in need of such a product for their own sense of Englishness.

Anand's Leonard goes on to comment that Reynolds' work can be

44 Ibid, 122-4.

45 Ibid, 123.

46 Priya Joshi, *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture and the English Novel in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 9

rejected as "fodder on which the subalterns chew in the cantonments of Empire."[47] Priya Joshi uses this instance in her investigation of the reception of the English novel in India. She recognizes the moment that Virginia Woolf is constructed to be less "English" than Anand as a remarkably "telling one," in that it gestures towards the sustained popularity of novelists who still serve as inspiration in colonial India but are long forgotten in England.[48] She dwells upon a disjointedness in the consumption of the novel in England and her colonies, reminiscent of the same kind of disjointedness we experience in the rhetoric of emergent global modernisms. Joshi describes the Indian literary universe, or periphery, "considerably removed in time and place, theme and sensibility from metropolitan England."[49] She muses that the exchange with the Woolfs reveals a great ignorance of Indian reading practices among Britons in the literary world, and enables the representation of "what amounts to Indian illiteracy in the British literary imagination."[50] Anand's Leonard casts Reynolds's novels as "fodder" perhaps because he is confident in what he imagines Indian literacy and consumption to be. Anand does not give his fictionalized self the opportunity elaborate upon the popularity of Reynolds in India, and the ways in which Reynolds may be consumed; rather Anand as author enables his Leonard to displace the young fictionalized Anand by informing his wife what "Englishness" can and should constitute. Despite the fact that Anand as writer allows his fictionalized self to fail in inverting the paradigm of double mimesis, possibly convincing his reader of the difficulties of triumphing in such moments with Bloomsbury Circle characters, I use the apparatus of double mimesis to apply to *Untouchable. Conversations in Bloomsbury* provides an opportunity to witness one way in which where double mimesis

47 Mulk Raj Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury* (New Delhi: Vision Books, 2011), 123.

48 Joshi, *In Another Country*, 36.

49 Ibid, 37.

50 Ibid, 36.

can be reversed; in his episode with the Woolfs, Virginia Woolf momentarily becomes the native entity whose Englishness is trumped by Anand's when he knows an author that she does not. *Untouchable* grants us a moment where, I argue, Bakha's interruption performs a different kind of reversal.

DOUBLE MIMESIS IN *UNTOUCHABLE*

This section explores the main argument of the paper: how colonial resistance is performed through modes of narration and double mimesis in *Untouchable*. Anand, while attempting to invert double mimesis in *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, seems to be guilty of performing the double mimesis in a caste framework, rather than a colonial one, in *Untouchable*. In the framework of double mimesis, the "colonizer" becomes the narrator, one of high caste privilege, while the displaced "native informant" becomes Bakha.

At various instances of the novel, we witness ways in which the narrator fairly obviously looks down on Bakha, similar to the instance in which he evaluates Sohini as incapable of thoughts related to geometry. Other such instances occur as a result of the language barriers: the narrator takes advantage that he or she is narrating in English to a reader who can also presumably understand the language to be able to understand him or her, while Bakha does not have access to this narration. Towards the end of the single day that the novel takes place in, Bakha meets Colonel Hutchinson, the leader of the local Salvation Army, who becomes invested in converting Bakha. The colonel begins to persuade Bakha to go to church with him, and eventually begins singing, "Life is found in Jesus,/Only there 'tis offered thee."[51] The reader, having access to English, and the written word, fully understands the Colonel's intentions, but Bakha is denied the possibility

51 Ibid, 126.

of understanding the song and is not permitted into certain ways of knowing that the reader is. The narrator and reader automatically are granted a superior position to Bakha's helplessness.

An even more exaggerated instance of this denial of entry or at least limited entry is when Gandhi appears at the end of the novel, and Bakha can barely register that his people are being addressed, and are urged to uplift themselves. Gandhi speaks in Hindi, but uses vocabulary that makes comprehension a struggle for our protagonist. Before encountering Gandhi and his speech, we are made to consider Bakha's knowledge of the Mahatma. Bakha has heard of Gandhi and that he is keen on uplifting untouchables, and that he has fasted for this cause, but "could not quite understand what fasting had to do with helping the low-castes."[52] Later, as Gandhi makes a speech regarding the emancipation of lower castes and refers to the "trampled underfoot millions of human beings," Bakha again lives outside of the words, even though he, in this moment, understands the language: "He was restless. He hoped the Mahatma wouldn't go on speaking of things he [Bakha] couldn't understand."[53] It might be tempting, then to regard Anand as an author who does not allow his untouchable characters speak for themselves, or even have complete access to everything that the reader is permitted into. S. R. James, for instance, claims that *Untouchable* "makes no place for oppositional activity" and "denies power and agency" to the subaltern protagonist.[54] Alternatively, Baer argues that Anand deliberately excludes the native informant but has very different motivations: "the novel's English is ironized as a kind of self-defeating, transvestite medium, for the moment precisely *un*-suited to the task of accessing and giving voice to the subaltern

52 Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable* (London: Penguin Books, 1940),141.

53 Ibid, 146.

54 Ben Conisbee Baer, "Shit Writing: Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*, the Image of Gandhi, and the Progressive Writers' Association," *Modernism/ modernity* 16.3 (2009): 577.

consciousness."[55] It is possible that Anand forces a kind of privilege or access into ways of knowing that Bakha or Sohini cannot, so that this exclusion mimics the physical ostracism that one from a lower caste community faces.

RESISTANCE IN *UNTOUCHABLE*

I now turn to the moment in *Untouchable* which grants Bakha agency and reverts double mimesis, but also legitimizes Anand's use of an omniscient and disparaging narrator. In this part of the novel, Sohini has just been molested by a Hindu Brahmin and Bakha is attempting to take her home, but thinks about her eventual marriage and her husband, a "stranger holding her full breasts and she responding with a modest acquiescence."[56] The narrator continues, meandering into an interiority of Bakha that the narrator assumes Bakha himself does not have access to: "He felt he would be losing something. He dared not think of what he would be losing. He dared not think that he himself—'I am her brother,' he said to himself, to rectify his thought which seemed to be going wrong."[57] This interruption is crucial if we consider the narrator's voice, for it is Bakha who intercepts the narrator, by the dash after the narrator attempts to delve into incestuous thoughts. Bakha stops himself, as opposed to the narrator stopping him, so that he can grant himself a voice. Bakha the character performs a resistance to double mimesis, or ruptures the particular mode of narration where only the narrator can speak for him. His own words disrupt the trajectory of thought that the narrator wants to shed light upon, and this disruption stands for a moment of caste resistance, but also anti-colonial resistance. If we draw parallels between this in-

55 Ibid, 579.

56 Mulk Raj Anand, Untouchable (London: Penguin Books, 1940), 64.

57 Ibid.

stance and an instance of inverted double mimesis in *Untouchable* to *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, then Bakha's resistance or interruption corresponds to the moment in which Anand overtakes Virginia Woolf with his knowledge of Reynolds. The moment in *Untouchable* demands for us to consider a reversal of double mimesis in Anand's encounter with the Woolfs as successful, where Anand demonstrates a kind of superiority in being more "English" than the Woolfs, in the manner that "Englishness" is constructed through empire, and thereby displacing the native English informant. If we extend this even further to ideas of emergent modernisms of the periphery, the "repressed ghosts of an African modernity, an Atlantic modernity, a subaltern modernity" that Simon Gikandi mentions, that haunt or even determine Anglo modernism, have a moment of overtaking, or of visibility, in the same way that Bakha does. Bakha's ability to interrupt or stop the narrator becomes a plea to reconfigure conventional European understandings of modernism, which emerge from the metropole and propel outwards, and to shed light on alternative genealogies of modernism and their ability to intersect but also interrupt the modernism that we are much more familiar with.

In terms of the history of Indian nationalism, Bakha's capacity to interrupt the narrator demonstrates Anand's caste solidarity, since it seems as though the narrator is a middle-class condescending entity created just so that he or she can be interrupted in this instance. If Anand as cosmopolitan middle-class citizen can ephemerally overtake the Woolfs in their understanding of "Englishness," when similarly Bakha can overtake a narrator, we have the opportunity to imagine liberation from both caste and colonial rule. To imagine that these two oppressive systems can be in parallel, and that resistances to both are parallel, means that nationalism—understood in postcolonial studies as being in opposition to struggles of minorities like untouchables—must be dismantled and reconstructed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anand, Mulk Raj. *Untouchable.* London: Penguin Books, 1940.

———. *Conversations in Bloomsbury.* New Delhi: Vision Books, 2011.

———. "The Story of My Experiment with a White Lie." *Indian Literature* 10.3 (1967): 28-43.

———. "Towards a New Indian Literature." *Left Review* September 1936.

Baer, Ben Conisbee. "Shit Writing: Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*, the Image of Gandhi, and the Progressive Writers' Association." *Modernism/ modernity* 16.3 (2009): 575-595.

Bald, Suresht Renjen. "Politics of a Revolutionary Elite: A Study of Mulk Raj Anand's Novels." *Modern Asian Studies* 8.4 (1974): 473-489.

Berman, Jessica. "Comparative Colonialisms: Joyce, Anand and the Question of Engagement." *Modernism/ modernity* 13.3 (2006): 465-485.

Bhabha, Homi. "Of Mimicry and Men: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse." In *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World,* 152-60. Edited by Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997

Bluemel, Kirsten. *George Orwell and the Radical Eccentrics: Intermodernism in Literary London.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Carter, Mia and Alan Warren Friedman. *Modernism and Literature, An Introduction and Reader.* New York: Routledge, 2013.

Cowasjee, Saros. So Many Freedoms: *A Study of the Major Fiction of Mulk Raj Anand.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977.

Doyle, Laura and Laura Winkiel. "Introduction: The Global Horizons of Modernism." In *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity,* 1-16. Edited by Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press , 2005.

Freedman, Ariela. "On the Ganges Side of Modernism: Raghubir Singh, Amitav Ghosh and the Postcolonial Modern." In *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity,* 114-132. Edited by Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.

Friedman, Susan Stanford. "Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies." *Modernism/modernity* 13.3 (2006): 425-433.

Gikandi, Simon. "Preface: Modernism in the World." *Modernism/modernity* 13.3 (2006): 419-424.

Havely, Cicely Palser. "Reflections on Kipling's "Compellingly Unpleasant Story." *The Kipling Journal* (1994).

Holden, Philip. "Halls of Mirrors: Mimicry and Ambivalence in Kipling's Boer War Short Stories." *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 28:4 (1997): 91-107.

Joshi, Priya. *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture and the English Novel in India.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

Kipling, Rudyard. *War Stories and Poems.* Edited by Andrew Rutherford. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Said, Edward. "The Voyage In and the Emergence of Opposition." In *Culture and Imperialism,* 239-261. New York: First Vintage Books, 1993.

Sangari, Kumkum. "The Politics of the Possible." *Cultural Critique 7* (1987): 157-186.

Shingavi, Snehal. *The Mahatma Misunderstood: The Politics and Forms of Literary Modernism in India.* London: Anthem Press, 2013.

Silverman, Kaja. "White Skin, Brown Masks: The Double Mimesis, or With Lawrence in Arabia." In *Male Subjectivity at the Margins,* 299-338. London: Routledge, 1992.

Snaith, Anna. "*Conversations in Bloomsbury*: Colonial Writers and the Hogarth Press." In *Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury, Volume 2,* 138-157. Edited by Gina Potts and Lisa Shahriari. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

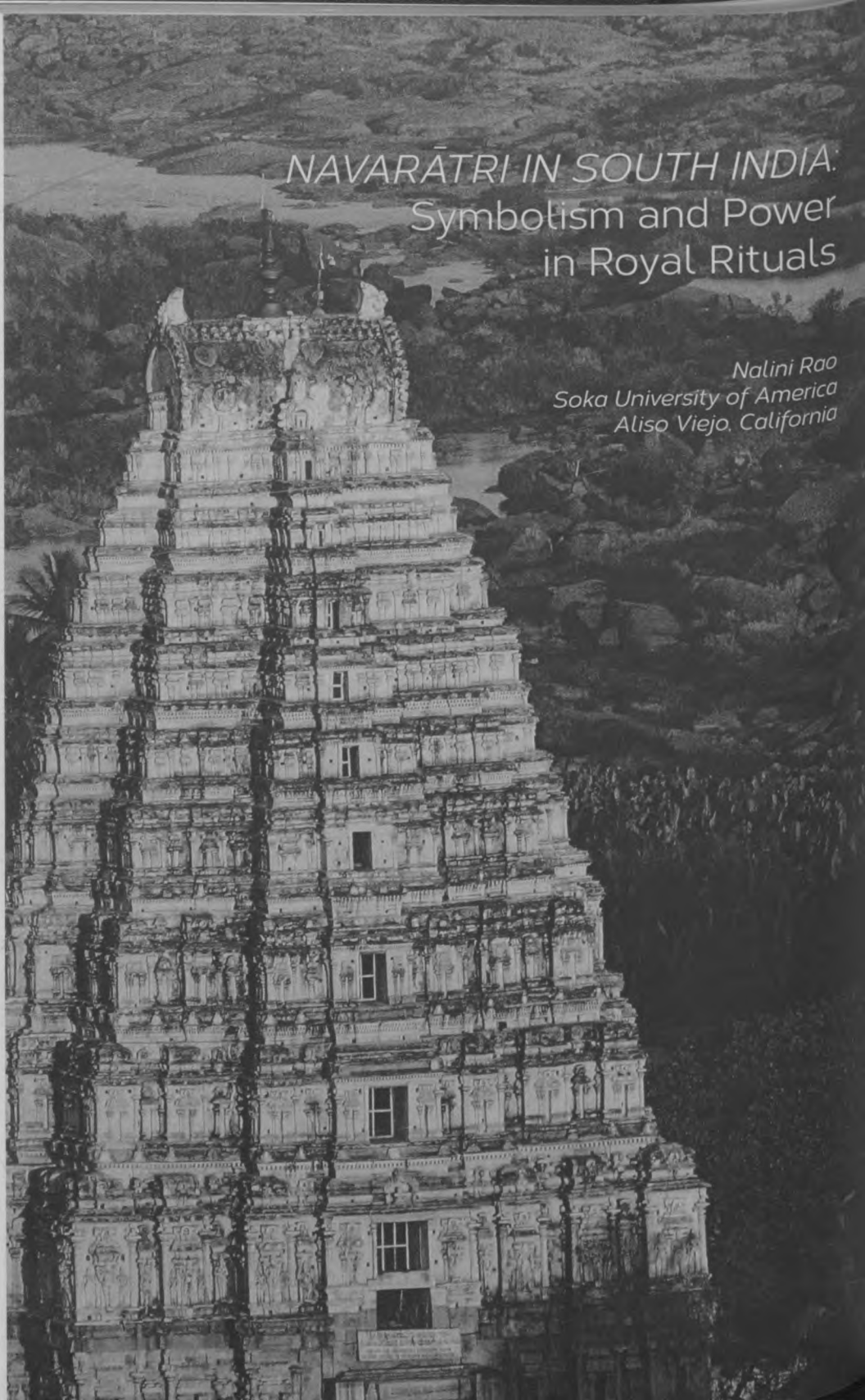
Roy, Parama. "Oriental Exhibits: Englishmen and Natives in Burton's Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah & Meccah." *boundary* 2.22 (1995): 185-210.

Tsing, Anna. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Vishwanathan, Gauri. *Masks of Conquest.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1989

Williams, Patrick. "Simultaneous uncontemporaneities: Theorising Modernism and Empire." In *Modernism and Empire,* 14-29. Edited by Nigel Rigby and Howard Booth. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.

Williams, Raymond. *Politics of Modernism.* London: Verso, 1989.



NAVARĀTRI IN SOUTH INDIA: Symbolism and Power in Royal Rituals

Nalini Rao
Soka University of America
Aliso Viejo, California

ABSTRACT

The role of religious ritual and ceremony has often been overlooked in the understanding of royal power. This paper is an investigation into the annual ten-day Hindu festival of navarātri as performed by Vijayanagar emperors (1336-1565 CE) in precolonial times, and those of the Wodeyar dynasty (1565-1947 CE), in the colonial period in South India. It aims to understand the multi-dimensional role of ritual and the power of its symbolism, particularly in relation to the nature of ritual kingship. I argue that that the ritual meant different things to different people. To the king, it was a way to legitimize his authority, a continuity with the past, his relation to the gods, and to the people; it was indeed an awesome spectacle that reflected the splendor of the kingdom. In addition, the ritual revealed the nature of kingship and the structure and dynamics of kingly authority in new ways and forms at both Vijayanagar and Mysore.

The paper begins by reconstructing the ritual performance, its continuities and transformations from the capital city of Vijayanagar (modern Hampi) to the Wodeyar period in the city of Mysore, revealing the complex fusion of religious and royal power. It provides a background of the festival of navarātri by describing the main themes, namely the worship of Durga, the goddess of power and victory, worship of Rama, and of military insignias of power by the king, who was the key participant in the ritual. In addition, it entailed the enthronement of the king, empowerment of his royal weapons and attributes, recreation of his military conquest, and restoration of peace. It then shifts to explain the symbolism of the material objects used in the ritual (such as the throne) in order to comprehend the ambiguity of display of military power, sacred kingship, and wealth. I contend that ritual kingship embedded in the elaborate celebration of navarātri was a mode of combating troubled historical conditions and a means to sustain unity, power, and sacredness of royalty at both Mysore and Vijayanagara. For an analysis of such a complex royal festival, the paper uses historical and art-historical methods of inquiry with a multidisciplinary approach.

INTRODUCTION: FESTIVAL OF NAVARĀTRI (DUSSEHRA)

The annual festival of *Navarātri* (nine nights),[1] also known as *dussehra* (the tenth day) is celebrated for ten days and occurs in the month of September-October corresponding to the lu-

1 Diacritical marks have been used only for Sanskrit words, but not for names of kings, places, gods, and titles.

nar month of *aśvine,* or autumnal equinox. Its origins can be found in the mythological story of slaying of the demon by goddess Durga, narrated in the *Devi Mahātmya.*[2] It is said that a buffalo- demon, Mahishasura was troubling mankind, till all the male gods approach Durga and consecrate their weapons to her, who, seated on the lion mount casts her noose and slays the buffalo demon.[3] The festival is dedicated to the worship of the goddess Durga (the "invincible"), also known as Mahishasuramardini ("slayer of the buffalo-demon"), to secure wealth and happiness especially for the king, and to ensure victory over enemies.[4] It consists of a number of ritually performed ceremonies, each day being associated with a worship (*pūjā)* rite. The top three ritual or ceremonial acts that were central to the symbolism of kingship were the last three days, when Durga is worshipped on the eighth day, (*durgāṣṭamī*),[5] the worship of weapons and implements, (*āyudha pūjā)* that takes place on the ninth day (*mahānavamī*) and on the tenth day of victory (*dussehra*) when goddess Mahishasuramar-

2 Part of the *Mārkandeya Purāṇa,* chapters 81-93. P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra,* 2nd ed., vol. 5 (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1973), 177.

3 At Vijayanagara, one cannot be sure which goddess was worshipped. However, an important evidence for worship of Durga at Vijayanagar, comes from the animal sacrifice that took place in recognition of her killing of the buffalo demon, Mahishasura. Hence, buffaloes and goats are sacrificed to the goddess. The *Devi Purāṇa* clearly prescribes the sacrifice of animals, which the Vijayanagar kings performed as described in great detail in the accounts of Paes. Robert Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire (Vijayanagar): A Contribution to the History of India,* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1988), Account of Paes, 265 ff.

4 Jagadish Ayyar gives the reason of nine days as duration of the festival. According to him, the numeral nine contains within it all the other numbers of one digit but is contained in none of them. Similarly, Devi contains within her the whole universe and no finite form with limitation can contain her who is without any limitation. P.V. Jagadisa Ayyar, *South Indian Festivities* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1982), 35. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra,*156-157.

5 The festival is also known as *Durgotsava. Durga Puja* in Eastern India is an occasion of great festivity.

dini (Durga) triumphed over the demon.[6]

However, the celebration of *navarātri* by the kings at Vijayanagar and Mysore included few additional rituals accompanied by ceremonies, such as music and dance,[7] which defined the role of the king. In this context, ritual may be defined as private acts of the king performed during the festival, based on the *Purāṇa* and witnessed largely by the priest or a small, private audience while ceremonies were public acts of the king, associated with the people. The festival entailed both private and public acts (ritual and ceremonial) that incorporated a variety of interests: royal, religious, political, military, and popular.

CELEBRATION BY THE KINGS OF VIJAYANAGARA DURING PRECOLONIAL TIMES

During the Vijayanagara period (1336-1565 CE), the festival was known as *mahānavami* (the ninth day)[8] and the setting of the royal festival was the Throne Platform, also known as the Mahanavami Dibba, a monumental secular structure which was built for the pur-

6 The goddess is also represented in the form of a *kalasa*, an auspicious pot filled with precious objects while green leaves depicting the life-giving quality of the goddess and is worshipped for all nine days. The nine plants, that form the nine goddesses later, are Brahmani, Kalika, Durga, Karttiki, Sivaa, Raktadantika, Shokarahita, Chamunda, and Lakshmi. The pot with nine plants is placed on a wet dough over which grains of rice, barley, wheat, black gram and sesame are scattered. The pot represents the womb of the mother goddess and the grains allowed to germinate and grow for nine days symbolizing her power to promote life. The symbol of the goddess as the source of life is further emphasized by the animal sacrifices that are offered to her during the festival with the ideology that the goddess nourishes the crops and promotes fertility every year, as her power of life is likely to be exhausted. David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses. Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987): 95–117.

7 This is testified by the account of Paes. Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, 262. Even in modern times, worship and other important events, such as marriage, is accompanied by ceremonial performances, such as music, beating of the drums etc.

8 The Festival was known as *dussehra* by the Wodeyars of Mysore and as *navaratri* by the *rajas* of Ramnad.

pose of celebration (figures 2 and 3).[9] Important sources for the celebration of the festival is the graphic and detailed accounts of foreign travelers who witnessed the celebration: Abdur Razzaq, the Persian ambassador (1442 CE),[10] Nicolo Conti[11], the Italian traveler (1440 CE), the Portuguese travelers Domingo Paes[12] (1520, 1522 CE) and Fernao Nuniz, (1530, 1537 CE).[13] However, their historical accounts must be understood and expanded using more recent information of the ceremony in Mysore to comprehend the similarities and changes in its performance, sequence, and symbolism, keeping in mind the force of ritual tradition.

Paes witnessed the ceremonial aspects of the festival, such as the daily ten-day worship of the golden idol every morning of the ten days of the goddess.[14] On the eighth day, special worship was offered to goddess Durga when she gained victory over the buffalo demon, Mahishasura. A buffalo head was sacrificed to her and it was believed that she would bless the king with physical power and

9 According to Domingo Paes, during the festival, the king ascended a building, at the top of which was a "throne of state." Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, 265.

10 Wheeler Thackston (tr.), Account of Abdur Razzaq in *A Century of Princes : Sources onTimurid History and Art*, (Washington D.C., 1989), 299-321. John Dowson (comp. and ed.), *History of India as Told by its Own Historians. The Muhammedan Period. Edited from the Posthumous Papers of Sir H. M. Elliot*, 8 vols. (London: Trubner, 1867). Reprint, Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1969. Vol. 4. 1872. 88ff.

11 Edward Farley, *European Travelers in India during the 15th, 16th and 17th Centuries*, (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner), 1909.

12 Robert Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire (Vijayanagar): A Contribution to the History of India* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1988); Paes' chronicle, 235-290; Nuniz'chroicle, 291–395.

13 Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire, 235-290; 291–395.*

14 Joan Pau Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000), 245.

military success.[15] The kings also worshipped eleven horses and four elephants,[16] accompanied by music and dance. In addition, was the worship of the throne, near which was placed the anklet and crown (while ministers held the sword). Lastly was the enactment of a wrestling match (figure 8). Ceremonies on special days included the worship of weapons, chariots, horses, camels, elephants, tools, weapons, chariots, vehicles, and swords, which was believed to confer blessings of military power on the king. The grand finale was on the tenth day, appropriately called *Vijaya-daśami* or the tenth day of victory when the king rode on a horse accompanied by his idol (of the goddess) and military forces, all richly attired and they returned the same way.[17] A unique aspect of the festival at Vijayanagar was the importance accorded to Rama, the hero of the epic, *Ramāyana* and the Ramachan-

15 Burton Stein has identified the sacrificial aspects of the *mahānavami* festival in an interesting interpretation that relates it to the preeminent Vedic *aśwamedha* sacrifice. The basis of his argument is that both the *aśwamedha* and the *mahānavami* were celebrated for ten days, and the prominent elements of the sacrifice, women, horses and animal sacrifices are equally important in the *mahānavami* festival. While Stein is probably correct in stressing the continuity of the *mahānavami* with earlier Indian tradition, there are other aspects that need consideration. Ten- day festivals are common to many sacrifices and the roles of the horses, women and sacrifice in the *mahānavami* are in a different context than in the *aśwamedha*. In addition, as Stein himself mentions, the month when the *mahānavami* festival occurs is inauspicious for Vedic sacrifices. Burton Stein, "Medieval and Modern Kingly Ritual in South India," in *Essays on Gupta Culture*, by Bardwell L. Smith (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), 67-90. Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, 190.

16 Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, 266.

17 From this tent to the king's palace the captains range themselves with their troops and array, The king leaves his palace riding on the horse... clothed in the many rich white cloths, with two umbrellas of state all gilded and covered with crimson velvet, and with the jewels and adornments...Then to see the grandeur of the nobles and men of rank, I cannot possibly describe it all....

There went in front of the king many elephants with their coverings and ornaments,...about twenty horses...Close to the king went a cage... and in it is carried the idol of which I have already spoken. ...Truly it seemed as if the whole world were collected there. (Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, 275-279.)

dra temple was the venue for one of the events during the celebration. Thus, there may be some truth in the description of Colonel Mackenzie who labeled the Rama temple as the temple of victory.[18] On the tenth day of the festival, when Rama gained victory over Ravana, the kings undertook their wars *(yudha jatra)* believing that they would become victorious like Rama. The incorporation of Rama within the festival was probably an innovation by Vijayanagara kings during the sixteenth century, most likely by Krishnadeva Raya who built the Rama temple. This may have been due to the growing popularity of Rama in medieval India[19]which had replaced the goddess. Some of the medieval works were the *Ramāyana* of Ranganatha (13th C.CE) and *Bhāskara Ramāyana* of Hulakki Bhaskara (14th C. CE).[20] In the *Sthala Purāṇas* (local histories) Rama was a popular figure.[21] In epigraphy, whenever there was an opportunity to praise the ruling king, the king was compared to Rama in valor.[22] Several characteristics of Rama made him attractive to Krishnadeva Raya: Rama was the hero who displayed courage and superhuman heroism by killing Ravana; he was an ideal king, an unconquerable protector and giver of happiness, an example of *dharmarāja* (protector of *dharma* and one who observed the duties peculiar to each stage of life) and his *rāmarājya* was the ideal kingdom. He elicited *bhakti* (devotion), a popular concept in me-

18 That both the Rama and Krishna temples were built at the same time (1513 CE) indicates that the victory over the Gajapati of Orissa was a major event which made the king accord additional importance to Rama, the victorious god

19 *Trishashtilaksna Mahāpurāṇa* (978), *Rāmacandra Caritapurāṇa* (1140 CE) were some of the Ramāyanas.

20 J. L. Brockington, *Righteous Rama* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984), 274.

21 A. V. Narasimha Murthy, "Sri Rama in Karnataka Art and Literature," in *Sri Rama in Art, Archaeology and Literature*, ed. B. P. Sinha (Patna: Bihar Puruvid Parishad, 1989): 106-113.

22 Some of the words which occur in the inscriptions are *sangrāma rāma, parākramarāma, pratijnarāma.*

dieval India[23]and Hampi was especially associated with the activities of Rama. The Vijayanagara kings were the first rulers to erect temples dedicated exclusively to the worship of Rama[24]and built the temple in the center of the royal city towards which all roads converged.[25] The concept of Rama as the victorious king and an ideal ruler influenced later Vijayanagara kings, who saw him as a victory god in the *mahānavami* festival.

That Rama was incorporated in the celebration at Vijayanagara is also testified by the reliefs on the Ramachandra (Rama) temple and its location at Vijayanagar.[26] The reliefs on the Mahanavami Dibba are closely related in style and subject to those on the eastern and northern enclosure walls of the temple located on the north- west side of the Dibba (figure 17). At the eastern end of the northern enclosure wall of the temple, a spectacular parade of elephants, horses with attendants, foot soldiers, female dancers and musicians move towards the king (figure 18). It appears to be a continuous rendering of a parade of military forces, dance and music. Although no prominent position was given to the king in terms of scale, position or detailed carving, his posture, profile, facing the rows of people and other spatial aspects in the reliefs convey a significant meaning. Although the narrative style was not unusual in terms of horizontal bands. It was unique in its incorporation of seated royal figures, foreigners, paying homage, and—nstead of a mythological story—perhaps incorporating a contemporary ritual enacted in a royal way. In addition, the carvings

23 Frank Whaling, *The Rise of the Religious Significance of Rama* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980): 39, 75, 159 ff.

24 Narasimha Murthy, A. V. "Sri Rama in Karnataka Art and Literature." Ed. B. P. Sinha. *Sri Rama in Art, Archaeology and Literature.* (Patna: Bihar Puruvid Parishad, 1989): 106-13.

25 John M. Fritz, George Michell, and M.S. Nagaraja Rao. *Where Kings and Gods meet: The Royal Centre at Vijayanagara, India* (Tucson, Arizona: the University of Arizona Press, 1984): 149 ff.

26 Nalini Rao, *Royal Imagery and Networks of Power at Vijayanagara: a study of kingship in South India.* Delhi: Originals, 2010. 54 ff.

on the Ramachandra temple imply a sense of order, hierarchy, and organization. There is a strong compositional integration enhanced by the incorporation of a vast horizontal space unlike those on religious temple walls. The overall program of the reliefs signifies the role of the king as one among the many, and a public perception of authority and celebration. Acts of public ceremonies: the king on the throne, wrestling matches, and parades were perhaps what the public witnessed, while sacred objects of kingship as independent objects were not represented. The emphasis is more on those who participated and those involved in the festivities, which the people witnessed. The reliefs also substantiate that both the temple and the Mahanavami Dibba were part of a shared space of the celebration and both share the meaning and function of the royal and the religious.

CELEBRATION OF THE FESTIVAL BY THE KINGS OF MYSORE DURING COLONIAL TIMES

The kingdom of Mysore was ruled by the Wodeyars (Lords) of Mysore for six hundred years in South Karnataka (1399-1947 CE). It rose from a small empire under the Vijayanagara empire in 1399 CE and after its fall in 1565 CE became an independent kingdom (1565-1799 CE.), till it came under the British control (1799- 1881 CE). After the transference of power from the British back to Mysore in 1881, the kingdom rose to great heights of fame, till ultimately in 1950, it ceded to the Indian Republic.[27] The festival of *navarātri* was popularly known as *dussehra* and the epicenter of its celebration was the royal

27 Important Rulers of Mysore: Raja Wadiyar, 1578–1617; Kanthiraya Narasaraja, 1638–1659; Chikka Devaraja, 1673–1704. From 1760–1799, rule by the Wodeyars was nominal, and the real commanders were Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan till 1799. Janaki Nair, *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region under Princely Rule* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.)

palace in Mysore, the capital of the kingdom of Mysore.[28] It was particularly important for the Wodeyars to celebrate this festival as they considered themselves as the progenitors of the Vijayanagara empire and performed the ritual from 1610 CE to 1970 CE.[29] The details of the ten-day Mysore celebration are preserved in the archives at Mysore palace where descriptions of the ritual, the king holding audience (*durbār*), performances, contests and the route of the royal procession are kept. Details about the ceremony performed by the Mysore kings have been collected by interviewing the descendants of past kings, while descriptions of the kingly rituals and those of public celebration have been published in 1921 by Ramakrishna Rao, who was an eye-witnesses to the festival performed in Mysore.[30] The festival, as it was performed by the king, during the 1940s in Mysore was similar in certain ways, particularly the worship of the goddess, of weapons, of the throne, as well as the tenth day procession, although we know more about the details of these practices and some additional rituals that were performed.

The celebration of Navarātri by the Mysore kings has been de-

---

28 Rao, Hayavadana, *History of Mysore, 1399-1799 A.D.*, vol. 2 (Bangalore: Government Press, 1943), 68. Also see Tahsin Ahmed, *The Mysore Palace* (Mysore: Academy Publisher, 1988): 9. The tradition of the procession still continues in Mysore, but instead of the king, the goddess is taken out in procession.

29 Although many regional kings, such as the Kakatiyas of Warangal in Andhra, Madurai Nayakas, Nayakas of Keladi, the Rajas of Ramnad, the princely states of Bastar and the kings of Orissa also performed this ritual, the closest link to the Mysore celebration is the performance at Vijayanagara as the lapse of time, from c. 1565 CE (the last time when Vijayangara celebrated the festival) and c. 1610 A.C.E (the first time the Mysore Wodeyars celebrated) is just forty five years. The royal throne of the Mysore Palace is considered to be the throne used by Vijayanagara kings. See B. Puttaiya, "A Note on the Mysore Throne," *Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society* 11, no. 3 (1921): 261-266.

30 B. Ramakrishna Rao, "The Dasara Celebrations in Mysore," *Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society* 11, no. 4 (1921): 301-311. From an analysis of the various accounts, it appears that there was not much variation in the way the festival was celebrated each year at Mysore.

scribed and analyzed by Aya Ikegami.[31] However he describes the rituals of tying the cords by the king and queen, maintenance of purity, seclusion, keeping of dolls[32] as royal rituals; but these rituals are performed in the same manner in every household, and is especially significant in homes that have a family tradition of keeping a *ghatta* for ten days. Ikegami also contends that the festival was not a personal ceremony, but a ritual for the country; it was both a personal and public ritual for the king and one may add that it was the king's *dharma* to perform the ritual and maintain the kingly tradition.

One of the most significant aspects of the festival was the worship of goddess Durga. The victory of Durga is said to have taken place in Mysore; in fact, the city takes its name after Mahishasura (the buffalo-demon) and has a temple dedicated to the goddess on the Chamundi hill, where she is known as Chamundeshwari, the tutelary (family) goddess of the Wodeyar kings. However, on the eighth day, unlike at Vijayanagara, there were no animal sacrifices associated with the goddess. Perhaps, by the period of the Mysore kings, the ritual had become symbolic and was replaced by the *chandi homa* (fire sacrifice to the goddess). In addition, a replica or paper image of the buffalo demon was set up and red dye poured over a pumpkin in addition to some mango leaves (figure 9).[33] The supplantation of vegetarian objects for animal sacrifice has been mentioned in the Kālika *Purāṇa* which recommends the offering of a pumpkin and sugarcane stalks, along with spirits distilled form molasses, flowers and herbs. It may be mentioned here that in South India, the mythological story of the

31 Aya Ikegame's "Dasara, Durbar and Dolls; the multidimensionality of public ritual" in *Princely India Re-imagined: a Historical anthropology of Mysore from 1799 to the present*, Vol. 1 2013 (143-164)

32 The two important wooden dolls do not represent the king and queen, but gods, and are worshipped daily with incense, lights, flowers; in front is kept the sacred *kalasa* (pot filled with water and mango leaves) representing overflow of wealth and happiness.

33 Swami Sivapriyananda, *Mysore Royal Dasara*. (New Delhi: Abhinav publications, 1995): 46.

goddess was slightly different than in North India. Each time the demon attacked, he 'wore' a new head, that of an *asura*, elephant, lion, tiger, buffalo, cow, bear, and ram. Ultimately, the demon arrives, wearing mango leaves sprouting from his neck (symbolizing fertility and regeneration) but he is slain and sacrificed to the goddess.[34]

In Mysore, apart from daily worship of the State Horse and State Elephant, Vijayanagar,[35] the State Camel and Bull (figure 5) were venerated as well. The royal swords would be worshipped on the first day and the king would place it near the goddess and continue to worship them for the rest of the nine days. (figure 4). The king witnessed the wrestling match (*vajra–muśti* that ended on the eighth day of the festival (figure 7). According to eyewitness accounts, an important ritual event was the seating of the king on the throne before a very large private audience consisting of nobles, military officials, ministers, dignitaries, and important people in the community. After the feudatory rulers (*pallaigaras*) offered cash or kind,[36] the throne room or Durbar Hall (private audience hall) would be open to the large private audi-

34 According to Ikegami, the deity (goddess) is identified with the throne which is difficult to comprehend. All gods, gurus and kings have to be seated on an elevated structure, and each is assigned a certain symbolic throne decorated with sacred symbols of either the lion or lotus. The exchange between royal and religious symbols has occurred in Indian art and religion from 2nd BCE. Aya Ikegame's *Princely India Re-imagined: A Historical Anthropology of Mysore from 1799 to the Present*, particularly the chapter on "Dasara, Durbar and Dolls." *Princely India Re-imagined: A Historical Anthropology of Mysore from 1799 to the Present*, Vol. 1 2013, 148 ff. Swami Sivapriyananda, *Mysore Royal Dasara.* (New Delhi: Abhinav publications, 1995): 46.

35 Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, 267.

36 Swami Sivapriyananda, *Mysore Royal Dasara.* (New Delhi: Abhinav publications, 1995), 105.

ence (*durbār*).[37] The throne was worshipped, offered lights, circumambulated, and then 'mounted' by the king in an elaborate ritual (figure 6).[38] When the king ascended, the whole palace was illuminated with lights. Some of the nobles brought gold and silver coins and bowed before the king who touched the coin, which was then returned to the nobles.

On the ninth day, the worship of tools and weapons took place. It is believed that goddess Durga obtained her weapons (such as the sword, bow, arrow, trident etc.) from the male gods and accomplished the destruction of the buffalo demon, Mahishasura.[39]Moreover, the worship of the weapons signified the infusion of śakti (energy).[40] The worship was significant to the kśatriyas[41]or the ruling caste, especially the king, whose power depended on military might. According to legend, in the fourteenth century, the Pandyan prince, Kurma Kampana was given a divine sword by the goddess of Madurai to fight against

37 In Mysore, the place where the throne is kept is known as the Darbar Hall in Kannada. However the *darbar* of Mysore was not very different from the audience of Vijayanagara. The Vijayanagara audience was probably derived from the term *dharmasana* (village court). See V. Mahalingam, *Administration and Social Life Under Vijayanagar* (Madras: University of Madras), 1940, 115. The word, *durbar* probably assumed royal importance due to the influence of the Muslim practice of holding private and public audience. In the *durbar* at Mysore, the nobles were seated in the gallery below the dais where the throne was kept, while the people were gathered outside.

38 The ritual of circumambulation is normally performed to gods but also for anything worshipped. In modern India on the day of *mahanavami*, circumambulation is performed to the vehicles, such as cars which are worshipped. The word used for alighting the throne, in Kannada is *hattodu*, meaning "climbing," as the throne was a very high one.

39 It includes the worship of tools and implements according to one's profession. They may be the plough of the farmer, or bow and arrow of the warrior, the horses and elephants and sword of the king, and in modern days, worship of people's cars, autos, bicycles, and other vehicles. Rao, "The Dasara Celebrations," 303.

40 According to the *Devi Purāṇa* collected the arms of all male gods, and killed the buffalo-headed demon on the eighth day. Rao, "The Dasara Celebrations," 303.

41 It may be noted that any caste that assumed royal power was known to belong to the *kshatriya* caste.

the Muslim invaders.[42] However, the grand finale was on the tenth day[43] when the worship of the Shami tree (Prosopis Spicigera) took place. In ancient times, the wood of the Shami tree was used to kindle the sacrificial fire and was believed to bring peace to the kingdom. A grand royal procession to Banni Mandapa (pavilion with the Banni tree) took place in the evening (figure 10).

INTERPRETATION OF THE RITUAL

The participatory and leadership role of the king, gods, priests, and the palace elite—as well as the roles played by symbols of state power—reflect the ritual drama of religious and political authority at both Vijayanagara and Mysore. The throne was a source of power and animation for the king. Only when the king was seated on the throne could he hold audience and be in a position to receive the homage and respect of the nobles. Hence, it was not the king as an individual, but kingship as symbolized by the throne, that was sacred. The throne, sword, crown, and anklet were symbols of kingship and the king was animated by possessing them. The sword was entrusted to the goddess during the ten days so that it would be infused with the cosmic and sacred energy (*śakti*) of the goddess.[44]

The king's throne was a seat of both secular and divine power and were fashioned on the model of thrones of deities. The *Mānasāra*, lists various type of thrones, such as the lotus throne for gods, while the *bhadrāsana*, or "auspicious throne" and *siṃhāsana*, or "lion throne"

42 David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses. Vision oof the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition.*(Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987): 110.

43 A similar festival was known even in Gupta times, Kalidasa, *Raghuvamsa*, I v, verses 24-25.

44 The coins of Kakatiya king Prataparudradeva shows a sword before a sun, moon and boar. See P. V. Parabrahma Sastry, *Kakatiya Coins and Measures*, ed. N. Ramesan (Hyderabad: Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1975): 9 ff.

was reserved for kings. In Mysore, the former was used for coronations and the lion throne for royal festivals, thereby suggesting the divinity of kingship than that of the kings. The lion throne contained divine power and no one could sit on it without an anointing rite that sanctified him; and the king always had to show his subordination to the divine throne and had to wear a waist band or *valli* whenever he approached either the throne or the weapons.[45]

The golden throne of Mysore used during the festival consists of seven steps and an umbrella, and the seat known as *kurmāsana*. The four levels of the decorative tiers of the throne represents, four traditional aims of human life, or *puruśārthas: kāma* or pleasure, prosperity or *artha*, righteousness or *dharma*, and liberation or *mokṣa*; the back is decorated with bird, lion and floral motifs surrounded by an icon of the goddess Chamundeshvari in the center, with Lakshmi and Sarasvati on either side. Other symbols include *vyalas*, or mythical lions, mango leaves and guardians of eight directions (*aśtadikpalas*) (figure 14). It is believed that the Mysore throne first belonged to king Kampilaraya of Kampili who died fighting with Muhammad Bin Tughlak. In 1338 CE, Vidyaranya is said to have pointed out to king Harihara of Vijayanagara where it was buried. It was retrieved and used by the kings of Vijayanagara for two centuries. After the fall of Vijayanagara, it is said to have been brought to Srirangapattana and in 1609 CE to Mysore by Raja Wodeyar.[46]

A careful examination of the throne in Mysore and the Mahanavami Dibba at Vijayanagara, display similarities in form (figure 3). Both have a high structure, approached by a flight of steps in the center, and articulated with figures and auspicious symbols, of obvious importance to notions of kingship. The silver and gold plated throne in Mysore portray *vyalas*, creepers, lions, swans, *nagas*, and nymphs, as well as the animal vehicles of the gods of the directions:

45 Sivapriyananda, *Mysore Royal Dasara*, 123.

46 M.S. Nagaraja Rao, *The Mysore Palace: A Visitors' Guide*, (Mysore: Directorate of Archaeology & Museums,1989) plate on p. 28.

elephants on the east, horses on the south, soldiers on the west, and Maheshwara on the north, as well as the guardians of the eight directions (*aṣṭadikpalas*). Some of these cosmic symbols, such as horse, elephant, *vyala*, swan, and *kumbha* (full vase), are found on the Mahanavami Dibba as well (figure 15).[47]

The king's throne was of great importance throughout the festival. It was worshipped and 'mounted' by the king in an elaborate ritual; only when the king was seated on the throne could he hold audience. The 'mounting' of the throne was a reenactment of the crowning ceremony (*pattabhiśekha*) of the king (ritual unction).[48] It is not surprising to find numerous coronation scenes of Rama on the Ramachandra temple in Hampi.[49] Many of the festivities may be corroborated with some surviving scenes from the reliefs on the Mahanavami Dibba and the Ramachandra temple, particularly those related to royalty. Although images of the king are scattered on the walls of the Dibba, the king is the focus in many scenes especially in those where he faces rows of figures which turn toward him. In figure 11 the king is seen

47 Paes describes the inner courts of the palace complex, where the festival took place:

> These huge courtyards are surrounded by walls and well guarded. The inner area is a space of display surrounded by low verandas, occupied by the lords and chiefs of the kingdom. The dancing girls stand in two circles by the gates, adorned with many jewels. There are also eleven lofty wooden scaffoldings, specially made for the occasion, adorned with colourful cotton cloths, and three double storeyed stone platforms, also huge with embroidered cloths. Here the king, his guests, (including the Portuguese) and his household (favourites and eunuchs) may watch the spectacle. The principle platform stands on pillars 'shaped like elephant and other figures and is called (like the city) 'house of victory', after the recent and successful war against Orissa. (Joan Pau Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250-1625*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 244.)

48 Ronald Inden, "Ritual Authority and Cyclical Time in Hindu Kingship," in *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, ed. J. F. Richards (Madison: University of Wisconsin), 1978, *mimeo*: 20.

49 Nalini Rao, *Royal Imagery and Networks of Power at Vijayanagara: a study of kingship in South India*. (Delhi: Originals, 2010), 44.

seated in the royal pose similar to that of Rama on the Ramachandra temple.[50] Foreigners are seen bringing horses and an attendant behind him holds the royal umbrella.[51] In figure 12 b, the king is depicted as witnessing a wrestling match. Quite a significant number of royal images occur on the south side, eastern wall where a king is approached by a row of elephants and soldiers; in another, a king and his two nobles are receiving "foreigners"; in yet another he is witnessing a dance scene (figure 12 a). With about a dozen royal reliefs of the king it may be contended that the king was a key ritual participant and communicator in the festival of *navarātri* that took place on the Dibba and around it.

At Vijayanagara, there was a symbolic enactment of delegation of authority by the provincial rulers. According to the *Achyutarāyabhyudaya*, in the consecration ceremony, kings who ruled various provinces held symbolic emblems, the one from Kalinga held a golden vessel, another held a pair gem studded sandals, and the one from Lanka, a ceremonial sword. The lesser kings showered golden petals on the new king to show their allegiance, then gave him the gifts they held and honored him. The coronation was symbolically a union of spiritual and temporal authority which was enacted ritually during the annual festival. Hence the throne ritual became symbolic of rejuvenation of kingship.

There was an additional ritual at Mysore, namely, the 'touching of the coin' by the king, which was offered by the ministers and nobles. This probably signified the distribution of gold coins which took place during the king's coronation ceremony, although the ritual enthronement in Mysore did not include the showering of the king with gold

50 This posture is similar to that of Rama, in the *Ramayana* panels carved on the Ramachandra Temple.

51 The presence of an attendant behind the king in group compositions (on the Dibba) is a departure from the absence of attendants in individual relief portraits (except that of Mallikarjuna). In relief portraits, the king was a devotee; in group compositions, the status relationship of kings was clearly revealed.

coins.[52] It is possible that the 'touching of the coin' in Mysore might be have involved an offering of gold coins which symbolized the giving up of their authority. Meanwhile, the coin handed back by the king symbolized the renewal of royal power. Thus there was a symbolic anointment, crowning, recognition, and honoring as the ideal of *dharma*. Considering the force of traditions, the ritual was probably practiced at Vijayanagara, where the annual renewal of power by the king and his military feudatories was important. The relationship between the capital city and provinces was reciprocal and the king and his feudatories needed each other. Whether the ritual was a rejuvenation of the crowing ceremony or equal sharing of authority, it was indeed an expression of wider social and political loyalty.

At Mysore, on the ninth day, worship of swords, bows, arrows, horses and elephants (symbolically, the state horse and state elephant) took place. The sword would be placed near the goddess on the throne during the ten days (figure 4). This infused kingship with cosmic and sacred energy (śakti) of the goddess while the ritual secured the re-appointment of the king. Similarly, at Vijayanagara, the prominent display of the sword created an atmosphere that gave importance to military success and religious context, providing an ideal for which to fight. The great importance accorded to the ninth-day, signifies a military, secular aspect to the ritual, in the troubling period of rival claims to the throne and external enemies.

At both Mysore and Vijayanagara, the tenth day of victory was celebrated with great pomp and magnificence with illuminated lights, contests, dances, music, and festivities. Known as *vijaya daśamī*, (tenth day of victory) it signified the victory of Rama over Ravana. In a similar way, on that day the kings undertook their wars *(yudha jātra)*

52 This was performed during the coronation of the Mysore king, Jayachamarajendra Wodeyar. We do not know about Vijayanagara times, although it is most likely that the ceremony took place in a similar manner.

because if they did, they would become victorious like Rama.[53] The tenth day of victory, *vijayadaśmi* day was devoted solely to public ceremonies. (The grandeur of the royal procession has been described in the Kannada epic *Bharatesha Vaibhava*, by Ratnakara Varni in the sixteenth century.[54]) After hearing the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the worship of the weapons, the king witnesses public entertainments.[55] At Mysore, the king mounted a silver chariot and understood a ceremonial procession to the Banni Mantap (a pavilion with the tree, where images of goddesses were brought), accompanied by the crown prince or *yuvarāja*, (figure 16).[56] He reviewed the troops and after *pūjā* (worship) to the Banni tree, the arms, state seal, he is blessed by Banni Mahakali, the goddess of the tree (figure 10).[57] The palace *vamśāvali*, or genealogy was read out in Sanskrit by the genealogist (śeristedar) who handed over consecrated Banni leaves as blessed food (*prasāda*) to the Diwan (Prime Minister), to the principal officers and the palace staff. The weapons (particularly, the sword and spears) were carried

53 Frederique Apffel Marglin, *Wives of the God-King: the Rituals of the Devadasis of Puri* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985): 167.

54 According to later sources (*Rajavali Kathae* of Devachandra 1830), Ratnakara Varni was the court poet of one of the Bhararasa Odeyar kings of Karkala in the south Kanara region. His *Vaibhava* is in ten thousand "*sangatya*" verses divided into eighty sections called *sandhis* and he is said to have composed it in nine months. Sivapriyananda, *Mysore Royal Dasara*, 101.

55 The French missionary, Abbe Dubois gives a graphic description of the celebrations and the wresting bouts of the *Jettis*. Abbe J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, trans. and ed. Henry K. Beauchamp C.I. E., 3rd Edition (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 569-571.

56 This short procession replaced the earlier grand procession through the streets of Mysore to the Banni *mandapa*, a large open area on the north eastern boundary of the city. The royal procession during earlier times is said to have consisted of the state elephant, horse and a golden palanquin along with the royal weapons, musicians, banners and fan poles.

57 Sivapriyananda, *Mysore Royal Dasara, 155.*

in the State Palanquin.[58]The king returned to the palace, and later a short *durbār* takes place.[59]

The ritual of the procession was of special significance. The king setting out on the horse, which is the vehicle of the warrior, signified the setting out of the king for conquest, believing that if they did they would be victorious like Rama. [60] Hence, the act of the review of the forces which was lined up between the king's palace and his tent at Vijayanagara, while in Mysore, it took place before the kings' palace. The shooting of the arrows by the king in the four directions signified his conquest of the four quarters. The procession of the king was the procession of victory, announcing his triumph, and as honor to his forces, the nobles and himself. The holding of contests, illumination of the palace and lights, waving of lights (ārti) to the king and reading of the *ślokas* on victory celebrated the joyous occasion of victory. The reading of the genealogy probably signified the descent by the king and emulating his forefathers. It may be said that the witnessing of wrestling combats was the enactment of a ritual combat in which

58 If the above information is compared with the textual evidence of the *Devi Purāṇa*, insight into the meaning of tenth day rituals can be obtained. According to the text, the king goes to a place of worship accompanied by a royal priest (*purohita*), who recites verses about the victory of the king in the four quarters. The king is honored by the *brahmanas*, the astrologer and the priest (*purohita*). The king then arranges for contests of soldiers, horses and elephants, followed by worship of the goddess, and arrows are shot in the presence of the king. He then returns with the courtesans hailing victory (jaya) and lights are waved before him. The performance of this ritual is said to ensure victory for the king.
Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra*, 190.

59 Rao, "The Dasara Celebrations," 301-311.

60 According to Fuller, god Vishnu Alakar set out for conquest on this day. Traditionally, kings set out for *digvijaya* on this day. C. J. Fuller and Penny Logan, "The *Navaratri* Festival in Madurai," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 48, no. 01 (1985): 79-105. Traditionally, the kings set out on the tenth day of the festival for *digvijaya* (victory) during the month of asvini, after worshipping their weapons and military forces on the ninth day, believing that if they did they would be victorious like Rāma.

the king gained victory, as he has done in war.[61] This stemmed from the practice of holding wrestling competitions during religious festivals[62] and thus he witnessed wrestling contests all the ten days. The presence of the State Horse and State Elephant when he was on his throne implied that military power (inclusive of physical power) were the king's insignias, similar to the sword.

The visit to the Banni Mandapa (with its Banni tree), by the king of Mysore, signified the peace which he ensured to his people after the victory.[63] The Banni tree was believed to have provided shade to Parvati; the images of the goddesses in the temples of the city are also taken to the Banni Mandapa in order to 'cool' her. The Banni tree was also considered sacred as Rama is said to have circumambulated the

61 Wrestling was popular with royalty and the masses. Kings were glorified with titles: *ahavamalla* (warrior wrestler) and *tribhuvanamalla* (wrestler of three worlds). It was a reflection of the emphasis of royal ritual competition—found in the mythic theme of competition in the Vedic sacrifices. See Phyllis Kaplan Herman, *Ideal Kingship and the Feminine Power: A Study of the Depiction of Ramarajya in the Valmiki Ramayana.* (Los Angeles: Diss. University of California, 1979): 70 ff.

62 Wrestling was a common royal pastime. In the *Kathāsāritasagara*, there is a reference to a wrestler from the Deccan who defeated all the local wrestlers in a contest held at Varanasi on the occasion of a religious festival or *devayātra*. The raised hand of the king which is also depicted in the wrestling scenes of the Dibba, was not uncommon; it denoted the signal of the king to commence the combat. For a detailed description of wrestling, see Jyotsna K. Kamat, *Social Life in Medieval Karnataka* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1980): 67 ff.

63 There is a popular myth in Karnataka, regarding the importance of the Banni tree also known as Shami tree. Kautsu, the son of Devadatta (who is said to have studied under Varatantu), was desirous of giving his Guru the customary fee or *guru-dakṣina*, but the later refused as he was poor. When Kautsu insisted, the guru asked for 14 times 10, or 140 million gold coins. Kautsu went to Raghu, ancestor of Rama who had spent his money for the Vishvajit sacrifice (world-conquering), but Raghu unable to refuse him requested Indra to pay back his old debt. Indra in turn rushed to Kubera, the lord of wealth, who sent a shower of gold coins on a Shami tree. Raghu gave Kautsu the money and distributed the rest among his citizens. As the shower of gold fell upon the Shami tree, it was known as the Banni Tree.

tree in his search for Sita and then secured her.[64] The visit by the king to the Banni Mandapa was a gesture of victorious thanksgiving to the goddess who has now been cooled (after giving her powers). Receiving the leaves of Banni, meant the establishment of peace and its distribution meant the sharing of peace with his nobles and officials, who had shared royal power.

At Vijayanagara, the celebration colored the perceptions of royal power on the nobles, the temples as well as the Nayakas. By radically managing the ritual and through ostentatious display, the Maharajas of Mysore and those of Vijayanagara affirmed themselves, the efficiency of their military institutions, and their own roles as heroic warriors, religious rulers, upholders of *dharma,* and ritual leaders who ensured the peace and prosperity of their people. The institutionalization of the annual festival by royal ritual celebration emphasized the continuation of traditional order and unbroken royal heritage going back to the time of the*Rāmāyaṇa.* At a time when it was a politically fluid situation, and the power of the Nayakas was increasing, the recognition of the power of grand royal ceremonials was fully realized and a suitably grand imagery developed. The ritual was an occasion to command allegiance of the powerful Nayakas and rebellious *pallaigaras* (who supplied the military force) and exchange gifts of acknowledgement. For such an allegiance the display of opulence, force, wealth and grandeur in the city was a visual form of power.

In Mysore, the Maharaja and East India Company had differences (1812-1831 CE), and ultimately due to local rebellions in parts of the

64 The Banni tree (called *Vanni* in Tamil) is the Prosopis Spicigera worshipped on this occasion. The Pandavas are said to have concealed their arms in this tree when they had to lead their lives in incognito. Carl Gustav Diehl,. *Instrument and Purpose; Studies on Rites and Rituals in South India.* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1956): 142. It is also believed that that the Pandavas (in the epic, Mahabharata) after fourteen years had stored their divine weapons under a *Shami* (Banni) tree in Karnataka and had prayed to Durga to keep them safe. On *mahānavami* they went to defeat their enemies and by using the weapons infused with divine energy, they gained victory.

kingdom, the Raja was reduced to a stipend of 100,000 C.P. per annum, in addition to one fifth of the revenue of the state. Between 1831 and 1888 CE, the British asserted themselves with absolute control over the kingdom of Mysore, while the spectacles of *navarātri* was held in a grandiose manner.

CONCLUSION

The nature of the royal festival of *navarātri* throws light on the nature of kingship in medieval South India based on visual and historical evidences, and reveals the structure and dynamics of kingly authority. The concept of kingship is not easy to define. It may be said to involve the deeds and actions of kings as influenced by the political circumstances of the period. It is best described in the words of Louis Dumont, "It (kingship) is more a conceptual idea.....It is a culture form, a complex process involving social, economic, political, and intellectual aspects."[65] To be more specific, kingship involves the role of the kings, their ideologies, nature of sovereignty, the distribution of authority, and the nature and structure of resource allocation. Even during the days of Vijyanagara, the question of kingly power was an object of reflection. King Krishnadeva Raya, conversing with Saluva Timmarasa, thought about the king's sovereignty. In the *Rāyavāchakamu* he reflects, "Where is our sovereignty? .....what can we do to people who do not obey us?...Without power we cannot put down evil and uphold good."[66] The nature of kingship that can be gathered from the festival, at both Vijayanagara and Mysore can be di-

65 Louis Dumont, "The Conception of Kingship in Ancient India, *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 4 (Dec. 1962):48-77; reprinted in *Religion/Politics and history in India*: Collected Papers in Indian Sociology by Louis Dumont (Paris: Mouton, 1970):62-88.)

66 *Rāyavāchakamu*, 28-45, cited by Sastri and Venkataramanayya, *Further Sourcesof Vijayanagara History*, vol., 3:149

vided into four aspects: the heroic, the dharmic, the religious, and the ritual—although these are overlapping categories. The heroic qualities of the king are praised and he is linked to the hero, Rama, during Vijayanagar times. Heroic kingship that glorifies the king's qualities of courage, his victory over enemies, conquests, war and peace was reflected at Mysore when the king set out on *digvijaya*, the procession, and on the tenth day when the King visited the Banni Mandapa.

However, according to the inscriptional sources, the military conquests were undertaken to protect the people and deliver them from sufferings and immoral acts or *adharma*. Fundamental to Indian kingship was the concept of *dharma*, the ancient and indigenous holy law of India. The *rājadharma* implied the king's obligation towards his subjects, which entailed almost every aspect of social good. He was obligated to protect his subjects by defending them from enemies, to maintain peace, promote prosperity and support the moral orders by sponsoring festivals and temples. The temple of Rama and the reliefs visually expressed the dharmic aspect of the kingly tradition, when the kings identified themselves with Rama.

The religious nature of kingship is evident in a number of ways at Vijayanagara, where the enthroned emperor was modeled on the image of Rama to express the qualities of the god in the king's person and authority. During the festival at Mysore as well, the royal symbols of power, the sword, anklet, and crown, were kept near the throne of the goddess in order to infuse them with energy. Here, religion was a means to replenish secular power and the king recognized the sacral power of the royal symbols, when he worshipped the weapons of war. Religious kingship entailed two aspects; the king as a devotee (*bhakta*) and as the possessor of special god-like qualities, such as those of Rama, Pampa and Durga, who were worshipped during the festival. The sincerity of devotion of the king was exhibited through endowments and grants largely as temples, monasteries, and the maintenance of rituals.

Finally, the festival entailed the idea of ritual kingship which in-

volved two aspects: the display of royal power and conditional sovereignty. In regard to the former, ritual kingship incorporates the means through which royal power is displayed by enactment of rituals. Most of these ritual acts were a means to cement his power—such as when the king places his royal emblems (sword and crown) near the goddess, to be empowered. Indeed, kingship in India is almost by definition, ritual kingship, as the king's actions—bothstructural and repetitive—are performed as constructs to create a particular sociopolitical reality. It was the festival of *navarātri* that best expressed the nature of Vijayanagara and Mysore ritual kingship. It associated the king with a divine nature, through the ritual enthronement of the king, recreation of his military conquests, empowerment of his royal attributes, regeneration of powers (divine, military, and social) connected with the king—all of which were significant in maintaining and rejuvenating kingship. Ritual kingship also implied conditional sovereignty of kings which began from the time of the second phase of Pallava kingship. During Vijayanagar and Mysore times, kingly authority was perceived or shared among powerful, locally based chiefs. The idea of conditional sovereignty is influenced by the aspect of divided sovereignty pointed out by Dirks, " Ritual forms continued to constitute and express relations between lesser and greater kings in the political system though often in new ways,"[67]and clearly brought out by Stein.[68] According to Stein, even at the zenith of their power during the early sixteenth century, when the Vijayanagara kings had subdued numerous chiefs, the sovereignty of the *rājas* was largely ritual. Beyond the heartland of their kingdom, where their hegemony and commands of resources were formidable, the Vijayanagara kings were content with the homage and occasional tribute of distant lords.[69]The major occa-

67 Nicholas B Dirks. *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987): 36,47

68 Burton Stein, *The New Cambridge History of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 72 ff.

69 Ibid.: ix.

sion for this homage was the annual ritual of *navarātri*. It was an occasion to receive allegiance from local lords and chiefs and the display of power and wealth that dissuaded the ever restless chiefs form rebellious activities. As mentioned above, the kings at Vijayanagara and Mysore were related in a variety of ways, including through ritual to the gods, and the gods were in their turn related as well to the concept of kingship. Many of the temple rituals, like the *navarātri,* treated the god like a king, called *rajopacāra*, where the deity was conceived as a sovereign. The dynamic language of ritual exhibited the mutual interrelationships of the four contexts: heroic, interwoven with religion, *dharma,* and ritual. Thus, the emperors were attempting to maintain a complex set of interrelationships and ritual was used as one of the means to accomplish this.

The festival of *navarātri* as celebrated at Vijayanagara and Mysore consisted of enactment of ritual warfare, celebrations of victory, peace, worship, and thanksgiving to the goddess—thereby signifying a sacral form of kingship with both ritual and military aspects. The ritual signified a multileveled symbolism of sacred and military power, both kingly and divine, where exchange of power was between the king and his people, as well as between king and his feudatories. The festival meant different things to different people: to the British, it represented a way to assert their power while being seated near the king during the festivities; to the Raja, a way of legitimization and show of his power; and to the subjects, it was a theater of enactment with the glories of the kingdom of Mysore that united them, and according to Janaki Nair "an illusion of permanence."[70]

It was the festival of *navarātri* that best expressed the nature of Vijayangara and Mysore kingship. The festival entailed the ritual enthronement of the king, recreation of his military conquest, and empowerment of his royal attributes. The performance symbolized the

70 Janaki Nair, *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region under Princely Rule* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press): 61.

regeneration of all powers connected with the king (divine, military, and social) which were significant in maintaining and rejuvenating kingship.[71] The ritual and ceremonial had also emotive power to enchant and captivate. Centered on the king, the ritual stressed the stability of the kingdom, legitimacy of the king and the workings of ritual ceremony in the dynamics of power. The celebration of *navarātri*, its ritual continuity and dynamic nature of enactment in a changing context provides a fine example of religious and political synthesis within a royal ritual that attained great heights of display and grandeur. The *navarātri* festival, as celebrated by the kings of the Wodeyar dynasty, has been ingrained in the memory of the people of Karnataka. The entire palace, streets, and city would be illuminated with lights and the procession was a spectacular scene. Although officially there are no kings today, the citywide ritual procession of the present descendant of Mysore kings still takes place in the city of Mysore annually, reminding the people the glory of the Wodeyar kings of Mysore.

71 Fritz, Michell, Nagaraja Rao, *Where Kings and Gods meet*, 1986; Alexandra Mack, "One Landscape, Many Experiences: Differing Perspectives of the Temple Districts of Vijayanagara," *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 11. 1 (2004): 63.

WORKS CITED

Ahmed, Tahsin. *The Mysore Palace.* Mysore: Academy, 1988.

Aiyangar, Sakkottai Krishnaswami. *South India and Her Muhammadan Invaders.* London: S. Chand and Co., 1971.

Apffel Marglin, Frederique. *Wives of the God-King: The Rituals of the Devadasis of Puri.* Delhi: Oxford UP, 1985.

Author Unknown. *Temples of South India.* New Delhi: Director Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1973.

Bayly, Susan. "Hindu Kingship and the Origin of Community: Religion, State and Society in Kerala, 1750–1850." *Modern Asian Studies* 18.02 (1984): 177-213.

Beals, Alan R. "Conflict and Interlocal Festivals in a South Indian Region." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 23 (1964): 99-113.

Brockington, J. L. *Righteous Rama.* Delhi: Oxford UP, 1984.

Deloche, Jean. "Historical Note: Old Water-Works on the Eastern Part of Mysore Plateau." *Indian Journal of History of Science* 50.1 (2015): 148-53.

Diehl, Carl Gustav. *Instrument and Purpose; Studies on Rites and Rituals in South India.* Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1956.

Dirks, Nicholas B. *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Dowson, John, comp. and ed. *History of India as Told by its Own Historians. The Muhammedan Period. Edited from the Posthumous Papers of Sir H. M. Elliot,* 8 vols. London: Trubner , 1867. Reprint, Allahabad: Kitab mahal, 1969. (For account for Abd-er-Razaaq), Vol. 4 (1872).

Dubois, Abbe, J. A. *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies.* Translated and Edited by Henry K. Beauchamp C.I. E., 3rd Edition, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989 (1906.)

Dumont, Louis, "The Conception of Kingship in Ancient India, *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 4 (Dec. 1962):48-77; reprinted in

Religion/Politics and history in India: Collected Papers in Indian Sociology by Louis Dumont (Paris: Mouton, 1970):62-88

Farley, Edward. *European Travelers in India during the 15th, 16th and 17th Centuries.* London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner,1909.

Fritz, John M. "Authority and Meaning of a South Indian Imperial Capital." *American Anthropologist, New Series* 88.01 (Mar., 1986) 44-55.

Fritz, J.M., George Michell and M.S. Nagaraja Rao. *Where Kings and Gods meet: The Royal Centre at Vijayanagara, India.* Tucson, Arizona: the University of Arizona Press, 1984.

Fuller, C. J., and Penny Logan. "The Navaratri Festival in Madurai." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 48.01 (1985): 79-105.

Herman, Phyllis Kaplan. *Ideal Kingship and the Feminine Power: A Study of the Depiction of Ramarajya in the Valmiki Ramayana.* Diss. U of California, Los Angeles, 1979.

Ikegame, Aya *Princely India Re-imagined: A Historical Anthropology of Mysore from 1799 to the Present*, particularly the chapter on "Dasara, Durbar and Dolls." Princely India Re–imagined: a Historical anthropology of Mysore from 1799 to the present , Vol. 1 2013 , (143-164)

Inden, Ronald. "Ritual Authority and Cyclical Time in Hindu Kingship." In *Kingship and Authority in South Asia,* edited by J. F. Richards, 28-73. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1978.

Jagadisa Ayyar, P.V. *South Indian Festivities.* New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1982.

Jaim, H. M Iftekhar, and Jasmine Jaim. "The Decisive Nature of the Indian War Rocket in the Anglo-Mysore Wars of the Eighteenth Century." *Arms & Armour* 8.2 (2011): 131-38.

Kamat, Jyotsna K. *Social Life in Medieval Karnataka.* New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1980.

Kane, P. V. *History of Dharmasastra.* 2nd ed. 5 vols . Government Oriental Series, Class B, No. 6. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research

Institute, 1930-53. 2nd Edition, Poona: 1973.

Karashima, Noboru. *A Concordance of Nāyakas: The Vijayanagar Inscriptions in South India.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Kinsley, David. *Hindu Goddesses. Vision oof the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition.* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987.

Kovacs, Anja. "You Don't Understand, We Are at War! Refashioning Durga in the Service of Hindu Nationalism." *Contemporary South Asia* 13.4 (2004): 373-88.

Mack, Alexandra. "One Landscape, Many Experiences: Differing Perspectives of the Temple Districts of Vijayanagara." *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 11. 1 (March 2004): 59-73.

Mahalingam, V. *Administration and Social Life Under Vijayanagar.* Madras: University of Madras, 1940.

Mayer, Adrian C. "Rulership and Divinity: The Case of the Modern Hindu Prince and Beyond." *Modern Asian Studies* 25.04 (1991): 765-90.

Mills, Martin A. "Ritual as History in Tibetan Divine Kingship: Notes on the Myth of the Khotanese Monks." *History of Religions* 51.3 (2012): 219-38.

Nagaraja Rao, M.S. *The Mysore Palace: A Visitors' Guide.* Mysore: Directorate of Archaeology & Museums, 1989.

Nair, Janaki. *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region under Princely Rule.* Minneapolis: University of Minnnesota Press, 2011.

Narasimha Murthy, A. V. "Sri Rama in Karnataka Art and Literature." Ed. B. P. Sinha. *Sri Rama in Art, Archaeology and Literature.* Patna: Bihar Puruvid Parishad, 1989. 106-13.

Parabrahma Sastry, P. V. *Kakatiya Coins and Measures.* Ed. N. Ramesan. Hyderabad: Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1975.

Pollock, Sheldon. "Ramayana and Political Imagination in India." Ed. David N. Lorenzen. *Religious Movements In South Asia 600-1800.* New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2004. 153-208.

Puttaiya, B. "A Note on the Mysore Throne." *Quarterly Journal of Myth-*

ic Society 11.3 (1921): 261-66.

Raheja, G. "India: Caste, Kingship, and Dominance Reconsidered." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 17.1 (1988): 497-522.

Rao, Ramakrishna B. "The Dasara Celebrations in Mysore." *Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society* 11.4 (1921): 301-11.

Rao, Hayavadana. *History of Mysore, 1399-1799 A.D.,* Vol. 2. Bangalore: Government Press, 1943.

Rao, Nalini. *Royal Imagery and Networks of Power at Vijayanagara: a study of kingship in South India.* Delhi: Originals, 2010.

Rajasekhara. "Inscriptions at Vijayanagara," in *Vijayanagara–City and Empire.* Edited by A. L. Dallapiccola and S. Z. Lallemant, vol. 1. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH,1985.

Rubiés, Joan Pau. *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250-1625.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.

Sastri, K. N. V. "The Political Theory of Mysore as A Dekhan Power (1700—1800)." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 3.4 (1942): 380-83.

Sewell, Robert. *A Forgotten Empire (Vijayanagar): A Contribution to the History of India.* New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1988.

Shaw, Dougal. "Nothing but Propaganda? Historians and the Study of Early Modern Royal Ritual." Cultural *and Social History* 1(2004):139-158.

Sherwani, Haroon Khan. *The Bahmanis of the Deccan.* New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1985.

Simmons, Caleb. Rev. of *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region Under Princely Rule,* by Janaki Nair. *Journal of Asian Studies* 71.03 (2012): 834-35.

Sinopoli, Carla. "From the Lion Throne: Political and Social Dynamics of The Vijayanagara Empire." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 43.3 (2000): 364-98.

Sivapriyananda, Swami: *Mysore Royal Dasara.* New Delhi: Abhinav publications, 1995

Srinivas, M. N. *Caste in Modern India.* Bombay: Asia House, 1962.

Stein, Burton. "Medieval and Modern Kingly Ritual in South India." *Essays on Gupta Culture.* By Bardwell L. Smith. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983.

Stein, Burton. *The New Cambridge History of India.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Stein, Burton. "Mahanavami: Medieval and Modern Kingly Ritual in South India." In *The Gupta Age,* edited by Bardwell L. Smith, 67-90. New Delhi:Motilal Banarsidass, 1983.

Sundar, Nandini. "Debating Dussehra and Reinterpreting Bebellion in Bastar District, Central India." *Journal Royal Anthroplogical Institute (N.S.)*7 (2001): 19-35.

Swamy, Chidambara, and B. Shankar. "Architecture and Heritage Resources of Mysore City." *International Journal of Modern Engineering Research* 2.2 (2012): 139-43.

Verghese, Anila I. "The Dasara of Mysore." Cultural Profiles of Mysore City (Pub: unknown), *103-12.*

Wheeler Thackston's translation of the account of Abdur Razzaq (not Razaaq) in *A Century of Princes : Sources on Timurid History and Art*

Wagoner, Phillip B. "Retrieving the Chalukyan Past: The Politics of Architectural Reuse in the Sixteenth-Century Deccan." *South Asian Studies* 23.1 (2007): 1-29.

Whaling, Frank. *The Rise of the Religious Significance of Rama.* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980.

Woodward, Jennifer, *The Theatre of Death: The Ritual Management of Royal Funerals in Renaissance England, 1570- 1625.* Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997.

CONTRIBUTORS

SAFOORA ARBAB is a doctoral scholar in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her work centers on the ideology of nonviolence embodied by the Khudai Khidmatgar movement, organized by Abdul Ghaffar Khan, or Bacha Khan, in the 1930s, on the North-West Frontier of British India. Reading colonial literature about this strategic border region against the grain, and alongside with the Pashto literature generated by the movement—especially the poetry of the women and of the iconic poet Ghani Khan—she argues that this radical movement was squarely situated within the ethos of Pashtunwali.

ADITYA NARAYAN BHATTACHARJEE is a postgraduate student in Asian Religions at the Faculty of Religious Studies in McGill University, Montréal. His research interests focus on ritual innovations in Hindu Diaspora communities and the negotiation of religious and regional identities in transnational Hindu/South Asian contexts.

AMRITA MISHRA is a second year graduate student and M.A. Candidate in English at the University of Texas at Austin. She is also an editor and reviewer for the *E3W Review of Books*. Her research interests include South Asian and Caribbean twentieth century literatures, geo-modernisms, diaspora studies, subaltern studies, gender and queer theory. She has presented work at the Caribbean Studies Association's annual conference in 2015.

NALINI N. RAO is Associate Professor of World Art in Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, CA. She has a Ph.D. Art History, UCLA, Ph.D. Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Mysore, India. Rao

has taught in UCI, CSULB, University of Hawaii, USC. Dr. Nalini Rao has designed and curated exhibitions on *Ancient and Modern Indian Sculpture and Painting*, organized ASPAC (2009), and *Sindhu–Saraswati Civilization*: (2009). She is the Chairman of Dr. S. R. Rao Memorial Foundation for Indian Archaeology, Art and Culture, Bangalore, India. Her publications include: *Sindhu-Sarasvati Civilization: New Perspectives*, Ed. Nalini Rao, DK Printworld, New Delhi, 2014; *Royal Imagery and Networks of Power at Vijayanagara: A Study of Kingship* in South India Originals, Delhi: 2010; *Sangama: A Confluence of Art and Culture during the Vijayanagara Period.* Ed. Nalini Rao, Originals, New Delhi: 2005; *Contours of Modernity: An Exhibition of Contemporary Indian Art.* G.K. Pub. Bangalore, 2005, along with Debashish Banerji; *Boundaries and Transformations*: Amarillo Museum of Art, Amarillo, Texas, 1997.

SUBMIT TO SAGAR

The deadline for our 2017 print issue will be in Fall 2016. Please check *www.sagarjournal.org* for an updated deadline.

All manuscripts must follow the 16th edition of the Chicago Manual of Style and full citation information should be included in footnotes. Entire essays, including block quotations and notes, should be double-spaced. Please remove any identifying information so that submission is suitable for anonymous review.

(1) *Full-length research articles*: full-length-articles should be between 8,000 and 10,000 words and should include a one-paragraph article abstract.
(2) *Original translations*: translations should be between 3,000 and 6,000 words and should be preceded by a 1300-1600-word introduction that contextualizes the text or excerpt. Please send a scanned copy of original source text along with your submission. If your submission is accepted, you will be asked to type the original source text for publication on our website.
(3) *Online articles*: We accept online essays throughout the year. Online essays should be 1500 words or less and should include citations. Submissions with images, video and/or audio are encouraged.
(4) *Reviews of archives*: Our archive reviews are published throughout the year. We encourage contributions from scholars who have recently consulted particular archives. Contributors should include information about archive holdings, accessibility and fees, working hours, duplication, and food and lodging.

Please submit electronic copies of papers saved as Microsoft Word file and include a 150-word biography and publishable images with credits, where applicable. Submissions of articles and translations received after October will be considered for the following year's issue of *Sagar*. Send all electronic manuscripts and questions to sagarjournal@gmail.com.

Sagar: A South Asia Research Journal
Sagar Editorial Collective
c/o South Asia Institute
University of Texas at Austin
WCH 4.132, Mailcode G9300
Austin, TX 78712
(512) 471-3550