Sagar

A South Asia Graduate Research Journal

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Sagar

A South Asia Graduate Research Journal

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[1] Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the Asian Studies Graduate Student Conference at the University of Texas, Austin, October 4-5, 2002 and the 31st Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, October 11-13, 2002.

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The Secular Origins of Grace in Mānikkavācakar's *Tiruvācakam*[1]

A. Gardner Harris

The University of Texas at Austin

The Tamil word *aruḷ*, commonly translated into English as 'grace,' signifies the single most important theological concept in all of Tamil Śaivite literature. The English translation 'grace,' however, limits our understanding of the many nuances embedded within the concept. It encourages us to reify the word. In doing so, we cannot arrive at a closer appreciation of how authors conceived of the concept. In many instances the English word 'grace' is appropriate, but using a blanket translation for aruḷ leads us down a path wrought with problems because it veils shades of meaning. The translation 'grace' also influences how we should understand the development of Śaivite theology insofar as theological uses of the word 'grace' are assumed by many to exclude secular influence. This paper attempts to address both of these issues within the boundaries of philology. I will examine uses of the word *aruḷ* within two literary genres, basing my conclusions on the contexts in which the word was used. I hope this exercise will reveal various patterns of usage and provide a greater understanding of the world behind the development of Tamil Śaivite theology.

The importance of obtaining Śiva's *aruḷ* is first attested to in the *Tēvāram* (c. 6th-7th centuries CE), a compilation of Śaivite *bhakti* (devotional) poetry. As the *bhakti* tradition developed,

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[1] Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the Asian Studies Graduate Student Conference at the University of Texas, Austin, October 4-5, 2002 and the 31st Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, October 11-13, 2002.

the concept *aruḷ* became increasingly systematized, culminating in a thorough examination of its nuance in Māṇikkavācakar's *Tiruvācakam* (c. 9th century CE). The Śaiva Siddhānta tradition (c. 13th century CE) incorporated aspects of the *bhakti* poets' conception of *aruḷ*. The Siddhāntins developed the concept and presented it as the core tenet. The term *aruḷ* is not fully systematized within the Siddhānta tradition until Umāpati's 14th century text, the *Tiruvarutpayan* (Fruit of Divine Grace).[2] These religious and philosophical nuances of *aruḷ*, however, are late developments. The secular Caṅkam poetic tradition (c. 100 BCE- 450 CE) offers variations of the meaning of *aruḷ* that differ in kind from 'religious' and philosophical usages, but clearly influence later manifestations of the concept**.**

I have had to limit the present study to a select number of texts, though analysis of a greater number is certainly desirable. I will examine the corpus of Caṅkam poetry because it is in this tradition of poetry that we find the first uses of the word 'aruḷ.' Following this, I will consider Mānikkavācar's, *Tiruvācakam*, which is a collection of fifty-one bhakti poems that vary in length and meter, and convey a variety of themes, such as events in the author's life that result in his attainment of *aruḷ*, or principles concerning the nature of *aruḷ* or the greatness of Śiva and his deeds. This text is important for several reasons. As mentioned above, it is the first attempt to explore *aruḷ* in its fullest religious meaning. The *bhakti* texts that precede the *Tiruvācakam* stress the importance of Śiva's grace, but the authors are not as explicitly concerned with the concept as is Māṇikkavācakar. Virtually every poem in the *Tiruvācakam* is permeated with some shade of *aruḷ*. Furthermore, the *Tiruvācakam* is the primary source for reconstructing

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[2] There are several English translations of the *Tiruvarutpayan*. See, Rama Ghose, *Grace in Śaiva Siddhānta (A Study of Tiruvarutpayan)* (Varanasi: Ashutosh Prakashan Sansthan, 1984); Karen Prentiss, *The Embodiment of Bhakti* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Māṇikkavācakar's life. This is central to Śaivite self-understanding as he became an object of cult worship in the late medieval period and continues to be up to the present day. This is attested to epigraphically as well as in the production of religious iconography. Lastly, the *Tiruvācakam* continues to enjoy a lofty status in temple worship. Daily recitation of the *Tiruvācakam* is commonly heard within the walls of major Śaivite temples in Tamilnadu.

I propose that if we read these two genres of poetry together, we will recognize that the bhakti poets, Mānikkavācakar in particular, were very familiar with and employed Caṅkam poetic conventions. The primary overlap between the two is in the use of rhetorical devices, the use of allegory, and the use of imagery, as both Norman Cutler and Indira Peterson have shown.[3] For this reason, I justify beginning in the earlier secular genre and then moving to the *Tiruvācakam*. While the grammar and language of the two traditions is quite different, I believe that it is still possible to delineate a conceptual overlap through analyzing contextually sensitive word usage. I cannot discuss all occurrences of the word *aruḷ* in each text, but I will illustrate examples pointing to greater meanings and nuances.

The corpus of Caṅkam poetry consists of eight anthologies.[4] This tradition is the sole means available to reconstruct an image of classical Tamil society. There is no trustworthy epigraphical evidence and archaeological surveys have revealed little about the social environment. These eight anthologies are divided into two genres: *akam* (interior) and

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[3] Norman Cutler, *Songs of Experience—The Poetics of Tamil Devotion* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987); Indira Peterson, *Poems to Śiva—The Hymns of the Tamil Saints* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[4] The eight anthologies are the *Netuṇtokainā̱ṉū̱ṟu, Kuṟuntokainā̱ṉūṟu, Naṟṟinainā̱ṉūṟū, Purṟanā̱ṉūṟū, Aiṅkuṟuṉūṟu, Pattiṟṟuupattu, Nuṟṟaimpaṭu Kali,* and *Elupatu Paṟipatal*.

puram (exterior). *Akam* poetry tells of the heart, of lovers, of the household, and of private space. *Puram*, on the other hand, tells of public space, of kings, of war, of death. Unfortunately, Caṅkam poetics is far too vast a subject to present at this time. I am forced to simplify the complexity of the rules within which the poets worked, and speak thematically.[5]

In Caṅkam poetry, the term *aruḷ* indicates types of relationships between people and between people and the flora and fauna. These relationships are hierarchical. The socially superior position always gives or grants *aruḷ* to the lesser position, such as a king to his subject or a male lover to the female. I have yet to witness an instance in which *aruḷ* is passed up the hierarchy, though it would be interesting to find such an example. What is intrinsic to all of these relationships is a selflessness on the part of the one who bestows *aruḷ*. In employing the term, the poets express this selflessness in a very diverse manner, such as mercy, comfort, favor, protection, generosity, benevolence, good deeds, order, and grace.

I have located eighty-nine instances of *aruḷ* in both nominal and verbal forms in the 2,381 Caṅkam poems. Within the two genres, there exists a subtle difference in the ways in which the poets use the term. *Aruḷ* in the *akam* or love genre is primarily employed in poems conveying the mood of separation (*pālai*) from a lover. In these instances, a woman is lamenting the fact that her male companion has left her. He left because he lacks the desire to give or does not posses *aruḷ*. The lover is self-focused and does not protect her or offers no sense of comfort or benevolence. The woman wishes that this were not the case and describes the grief as consuming her life and throwing the social world into chaos. In many instances the man has left in order to

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[5] For an excellent discussion regarding the poetics of *Caṇkam* poetry, see A.K. Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War from the Eight Anthologies and the Ten Long Poems of Classical Tamil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

participate in war (*poruḷ*), which resonates rhythmically with *aruḷ*. In other instances, he has left in search of money. In any case, the woman laments about the loss of *aruḷ* in her life.

The association of *aruḷ* with the mood of separation is compelling. The concern for *aruḷ* arises when it is no longer present in a relationship. I believe that this implies the understanding that *aruḷ* is an inherent quality necessary for a harmonious relationship. Therefore, mention of this quality in other mood contexts is not necessary because it is understood as being present. It also shows that *aruḷ* is important for order in life and in the perception of the social world. Certainly, there are other moods in *akam* poetry where a woman is wasting away from grief because she cannot be with her lover, but in those contexts her environment is not in disarray, value structures have not been challenged. She longs to be with her lover, that is her only obstacle.

The use of *aruḷ* in *puram* poetry operates in a different manner, but the implications are similar. The term is always associated with the rule and the actions of kings. The poets insist that the king not forget *aruḷ* when overseeing the kingdom because if he does the entire world, not just the social world, will fall into chaos. In this context there are many nuances associated with a king's *aruḷ.* The poets urge him to be merciful to the downtrodden and to be kind to all of his subjects. They sing of the glory of his *aruḷ* in describing his benevolent and protective actions as he grants villages to poets or provides a shawl to a shivering peacock caught in the rain. They also warn of what will happen if *aruḷ* is not present. They describe scenes in which those who ruled without *aruḷ* find themselves in a hell-like existence after death and a kingdom without order; they tell of subjects who are lost and confused by the ruthless and self-focused actions of a king and don't know how to live.

The association of *aruḷ* with creating order is the most significant aspect here. Order is created through all that *aruḷ* encompasses: compassion, generosity, protection, favor, etc. As

George Hart points out, Caṅkam kings were believed to have the ability to order the chaos in the raw state of the world. The king altered the dangerous power found in nature into an auspicious power under human control. Not only was the king's *aruḷ* necessary to maintain the social order, it was also necessary to maintain the environment.[6] Through the king's benevolent and protective actions, as exemplified in giving a shawl to a shivering peacock, he could transform the wild into a passive state. *Aruḷ* is seen as a necessary component in the king's proper relationships, as it is in the relationships of the *akam* or love poems.

Although the term *aruḷ* appears infrequently in the eight anthologies, only eighty-nine times, as a *concept* its influence was far greater than the number indicates. It was the foundation for relationships and was required for order in the natural and social world. Mānikkavācakar develops these ideas further and employs them in a religious context in order to understand Śiva and his relationship with him. It is important to keep in mind, however, that a single author composed the *Tiruvācakam*, while numerous poets composed the Caṇkam poetry. Nevertheless, I hope to show a conceptual overlap between the two traditions as I now turn to the *Tiruvācakam*.

In my search of the text I have counted 337 uses of a grammatical variant of *aruḷ* in 3,327 lines of poetry, appearing in forty-three of the fifty-one hymns. This number is far greater than the number found in the Caṅkam texts, which indicates a development of the concept and an attempt on the part of the author to explore all the nuances that the term may encompass. In these hymns, Mānikkavācar does not talk of possessing his own discrete *aruḷ*, but longs to understand and feel Siva's *aruḷ.* He desires to be in a close, intimate relationship with the divine,

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[6] George Hart, *The Four Hundred Songs of War and Wisdom-An Anthology of Poems from Classical Tamil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp.xvii-xxx.

to understand what animates himself and the world around him. He realizes that only through his devotion will such awareness be obtained and only then will he be able to be in a cherished relationship with Śiva. This type of relationship mirrors the relationships in Caṅkam poetry. One could imagine Mānikkavācar as a king's subject urging the king to be favorable and benevolent so that the world will have order and the lives of the people will be fulfilled; or as the woman whose lover has left her, who longs for the *aruḷ* that is now absent in her life so that the world around her is not chaotic.

The influence of the Caṅkam poets' understanding and employment of *aruḷ* is most apparent in the second hymn of the *Tiruvācakam*, the "Kīrttittiruvakaval" (or "the sacred verse of (Śiva's) glory"). In this hymn, Mānikkavācakar eloquently describes a variety of mythological tales about Śiva. It is here that he intimates the widest range of nuance associated with *aruḷ.* Mānikkavācakar only peripherally focuses on himself or his own desire to experience Śiva. I believe this hymn presents the best thesis for understanding the ways in which he conceived of Śiva's *aruḷ* because he is attempting a level of objectivity that is absent in the remaining hymns. This is also apparent in the number of instances that the term *aruḷ* appears—38 times in 146 lines, which is decidedly more frequent than in any of the other hymns.

As Mānikkavācakar outlines his understanding of the concept in the second hymn, he weaves the secular nuances exhibited in *Caṅkam* poetry together with the theological and philosophical concerns found in the *śaivāgamas*, a liturgical genre directed at temple cults delineating proper knowledge (*jñāna*), ritual action (*kriyā*), conduct (*caryā*), and discipline (*yoga*). It is important to keep both traditions in mind because behind Śiva's actions, which closely correspond to the secular notions of *aruḷ*, lies a religiosity that is intrinsic to the action itself.

Mānikkavācakar describes Śiva coming to and staying in various shrines and temples. He uses the term *aruḷ* to describe Śiva as granting favor to the devotees there, offering his protection, or expressing philosophical truths about his own nature as delineated in the *āgamas*. Mānikkavācakar describes the production of these texts as stemming from Śiva's *aruḷ*. It was out of compassion that he bestowed on the devotees these liturgical texts. With this compassion also comes a sense of protection, generosity, and favor. The āgamas were produced as a means for his devotees to attain the highest states of spiritual bliss, to not be fooled by the illusory world. It is clear that Mānikkavācakar sees the āgamas as a textual embodiment of Śiva's *aruḷ*.

There are other instances within the hymn, however, in which Śiva aids others in fulfilling certain requirements. For instance, Śiva is witnessed helping a female devotee carry soil; or he aids a Paṇdiyan king to gain victory in battle by becoming a water attendant for him. The usages of *aruḷ* in these contexts are imbued with similar shades of meaning to those evidenced in Caṅkam poetry. Śiva is exhibiting mercy, favor, benevolence, generosity, and protection. In doing so, he is creating an order to the world that relies on *aruḷ*.

In these examples, however, Mānikkavācakar problematizes the hierarchical relationships witnessed in Caṅkam poetry. As I mentioned, he describes images of Śiva in his divine form, imparting knowledge to his devotees. This may be viewed as hierarchical. He grants *aruḷ* as a king would to a subject. But in portraying Śiva as attending on and serving people, Mānikkavācakar balances out this hierarchy. Śiva is seen in a socially inferior position; yet he is still granting *aruḷ*. In this balancing act, Mānikkavācakar expands the concept *aruḷ* from its secular usage and allows the more theological and philosophical aspects of the term to manifest. Mānikkavācakar

intimates that hierarchy is tied to the senses and is therefore illusion because everything in the world is of Śiva's *aruḷ*.

In the *āgamas*, three principle entities are delineated: *Pati* (Lord), *Paśu* (bound souls), and *Pāśa* (bonds). Mānikkavācakar states that Śiva placed him on the path of *aruḷ* and that it enslaved him. In being placed on this path, he is aware of these three entities and longs for Śiva's *aruḷ* to sever the ties of *Pāśa* so that he can enjoy his final potential- divine status. Mānikkavācakar is aware that Śiva's *aruḷ* is what animates himself and the world around him. He longs for Śiva to reveal the nature of *aruḷ* so that he can dispel reliance on the senses and cultivate his own latent, divine potential, which will release him from attachment so that he may enjoy liberation and unite with Śiva.

I began this investigation hoping to show that the English translation of the term *aruḷ* (grace) is entirely too narrow to encompass all the shades of its meaning. I also wanted to show that in translating *aruḷ* as such, we reify the word and obfuscate the contexts in which it is used. Contextually, the term indicates a much wider concept than merely grace. It indicates relationships between people, between people and their surroundings, between people and the divine, and between the divine and the universe. To possess *aruḷ* one must be of a selfless nature from which compassion, mercy, favor, and protection can emanate forth.

In performing this philological exercise, I hopefully have illustrated that the borders of texts are not fixed entities, that ideas from one tradition may influence systems of thought in another. I feel that this type of investigation opens the door for the analysis of 'religious' texts from other traditions, specifically Jain and Buddhist. Indira Peterson has documented the influence of Jainism on the development of Śaivism in Tamilnadu, but there is much work still to be done in this area. I hope we may also recognize an earlier beginning for the development of Śaivite theology, a beginning that occurred in the 1st century

BCE with the *Caṅkam* poets' understanding of the ordering of the world. This understanding has trickled down and found itself in the pages of the *Tiruvācakam*.

Rethinking the Sectarian Trope and Culture in the Historiography of Vijayanagara

Matt A. Cook

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A wide variety of disciplines talk about tropes. In South Asia, such work is dominated by colonial and post-colonial scholarship. This paper examines the impact of tropes in analyzing the pre-modern period and focuses on the medieval kingdom of Vijayanagara. It argues for theory of culture that subverts "sectarian" tropes that view Vijayanagara's history as conflict between Hindus-Muslim.

Introduction

Academics in a variety of disciplines talk about tropes: tropes appear in English and Comparative Literature, Economics, Education, and Art History.[1] Anthropology has been awash with tropes for a decade or more; recently, I went to a presentation that even discussed tropes in philology! What do tropes mean in the context of such disparate disciplines? How do tropes provide a common methodology for social, artistic, and literary analysis? As an anthropologist interested in history, I am particularly curious in exploring the suitability and efficacy of tropes in understanding South Asia.

Stephen Tyler defines tropes as:

> Vehicles that carry imagination, from the part to the whole, the concrete to the abstract, and knowing them for what they are, whether mechanistic or organismic, makes us suspect the rational order they promise.[2]

For Tyler, tropes convey meaning, not literally, but metaphorically. James Fernandez, in *Beyond Metaphor: The Theory of Tropes in Anthropology*, supports Tyler by stating that tropes "transfer features of meaning from domains of experience that we know well to domains that we do not understand," and that "experience in culture and position in society are constructed through metaphoric predication."[3] Tropes concern metaphorical concepts, and how they convey meaning.

Mary Louise Pratt, in Clifford and Marcus' seminal work *Writing Culture: The Politics and Poetics of Ethnography*, argues that anthropologists employ tropes in their writing. Pratt examines tropes and their meanings in anthropological arrival stories. She concludes that anthropology should revel in its tropes and appropriate new ones from other disciplines, such as history.[4]

Nevertheless, anthropologists must be critical of historical tropes and use them cautiously. For example, in Indian history there are "sectarian" tropes: metaphors that view Indian history through the oculus of Hindu-Muslim conflict. Many scholars consider that the British introduced these tropes to describe the history of India.[5] For example, Nicholas Dirks states the "British assumed that law in India had comprised two things, Hindu law and Muslim law."[6] Dirks goes on to state that the divorce of these two communities was "somewhat preposterous."[7]

To date, work on sectarian tropes in India has been dominated by those focused on the colonial and post-colonial periods.[8] Only a handful of works have addressed the question of Hindu-Muslim conflict in the pre-modern period.[9] This paper examines the use of sectarian tropes in reference to the Vijayanagara Empire; a medieval kingdom centered in modern-day northern Karnataka. It contains three sections. Section one examines the arguments in support of interpreting Vijayanagara's history as a conflict between Hindus and Muslims. Section two evaluates the social and material history of northern Karnataka in order to shed doubt these arguments. Section three uses this evidence to argue in favor of a theory of culture which subverts sectarian tropes.

Vijayanagara's History: A Sectarian Conflict Between Hindus and Muslims

The sectarian trope is strong in the history of South Asia. For example, inter-community conflict occurs in the modern period: Partition is portrayed as the division of India along religious lines, the Kashmir crisis produces images of militant Muslims forcing Hindu Pandits to flee, and the Babri-Masjid conflict is viewed as a communal problem between Hindus and Muslims. However, the sectarian trope is not just confined to the modern period. It has also shaped the understanding of pre-modern India; more specifically, the discourse on the medieval kingdom of Vijayanagara:

> Almost from the outset there has been agreement among Vijayanagara students with respect to certain important interpretations. These have tended to remain acceptable to more recent scholars. The first of these durable interpretations

> pertain to the success of the Vijayanagara state in limiting the expansion of Deccani Muslim power.[10]

Building on this statement, Stein concludes that the second broadly agreed upon interpretation of Vijayanagara is that it stood for the defense of Hindu culture by preserving "institutions against the depredation of Muslims."[11] Stein specifically focuses on Nilakanta Shastri who states:

> The basic nature of the historic role of Vijayanagara . . . was to preserve South India as the last refuge of the traditional culture of and institutions of the country . . . that great empire which, by resisting the onslaught of Islam, championed the cause of Hindu civilization and culture in the South for close to three centuries and thus preserved the ancient traditions of the country in its polity, its learning and its arts.[12]

One measure of the validity of this observation lies in examining the physical record we have from Vijayanagara: scholars in the field of material history (*e.g.*, art and architecture) also appropriate the sectarian trope. The appropriation of the sectarian trope is reflected in the work of John Fritz and George Michell who claim Vijayanagara's material history is primarily a reflection of its "Hindu" character.[13] Fritz and Michell argue that Vijayanagara was the "greatest of all medieval Hindu capitals in India," and that the "power and magnificence of its rulers were the envy of the Muslim sultans."[14] They support this position by arguing that the layout, monuments, and landscape of Vijayanagara represent a "symbolic system that can be comprehended only within a framework of Hindu myth and

culture."[15] Central to their argument is the location of the Ramachandra temple at the center Vijayanagara's royal enclosure. According to Fritz and Michell this structure represents a "state chapel."[16] By locating a state chapel at the center of the royal enclosure, they deliberately attempt to collapse the realms of religious and non-religious so that the former eclipses the latter:

> A feature of this cohesive force [Hinduism] is that religious and nonreligious matters are never separate; it is unimaginable that any activity, impulse, or process is without some connection with the divine. Hinduism encompasses the complete spectrum of Indian life, from the very day agricultural labor of the villager to the transcendental speculation for the philosopher.[17]

Fritz and Michell conclude that the layout of the royal center is symbolic of the "meeting of king and god," and as such representative Vijayanagara's Hindu character.[18]

In contrast, historian Burton Stein argues that Hindu-Muslim conflict actually played a relatively minor role at Vijayanagara when compared to strife among Hindus:[19]

> Actually, those who bore the brunt of Vijayanagara military power were most often Hindu rulers, not Muslims. And, ironically perhaps, the most strategically placed military units of the Vijayanagara military formation were composed of Muslims, as is generally conceded . . . . The Vijayanagara state was however not in fact dedicated to different principles of rule as might be supposed from the confrontation of Hindu and

> Muslim forces in the Deccan, whatever the importance of its dharmic ideology.[20]

Stein further problematizes the historical basis of the sectarian trope by noting the "founding brothers of the first [Vijayanagara] dynasty had served in Muslim armies,"[21] and that the emperor (specifically Devaraya II) kept a copy of Koran beside his throne so that his Muslim soldiers could properly swear allegiance.[22]

Although Fritz and Michell use material evidence to support the validity of the sectarian trope, the argument that Vijayanagara is understandable only from within the framework of Hindu myth, is also questionable from a material culture perspective. While discussing the symbolic character of Vijayanagara, Fritz and Michell fail to address the fact that Islamic architecture exists less than a hundred meters from the city's "sacred" Hindu center, the Ramachandra temple.[23] Furthermore, located in the *danaik*, or governor's enclosure, these buildings are in fact closer to the Ramachandra temple than any of the palace structures. Also, while Vijayanagara's heavily fortified wall system encompasses the Ramachandra temple (and some minor shrines), it excludes the vast majority of the city's sacred sites: ironic for a city based on Hindu cosmology. This fact is surpassed in irony only by the fact *all* the city's mosques are located within the Vijayanagara's walls.[24] In short, Fritz and Michell's sectarian trope fails to result in a better understanding of Vijayanagara, and "clearly, other kinds of explanations are necessary."[25]

"Shatterzones": Toward an Alternative Understanding of Vijayanagara's History

If the sectarian trope fails to result in a better understanding of Vijayanagara, then where are we to turn for other kinds of explanation? Renato Rosaldo, in *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*, provides an option: the cultural borderzone. Rosaldo states that culture is typically defined "both by its internal homogeneity and its difference from others."[26] He continues, arguing that this definition is a "fiction" which is increasingly more "tenuous and than useful."[27] Rosaldo calls for analysts to shift their gazes from "crystaline patterns of a whole culture," to the "blurred zones in between."[28] By shifting the analytical gaze, Rosaldo intends to redirect the understanding of "borderzones" from "empty" transitional spaces to "sites of creative cultural production."[29]

The borderzone concept is an important analytical tool for South Asianists. Termed cultural "shatterzones" in the context of South Asia, this concept diminishes the importance of stable cultural patterns, and is characterized as a mosaic:

> The traditional regions through which large numbers of people passed either in military or peaceful invasion. In these areas, which in effect connect the nuclear regions, there is no persistent political tradition. Socially and culturally the area tends to be more of a mosaic than a relatively unitary kind of social structure.[30]

Richard Eaton, in *The Sufis of Bijapur*, builds on the shatterzone concept by examining the "degree and quality of the synthesis or accommodation achieved by them [Muslims] with the indigenous Hindu population among whom they lived."[31] According to Eaton this synthesis is particularly evident in Bijapur's material history. For example, Eaton cites the *Karim al-Din* Mosque, which he calls "certainly one of the most

fascinating structures in Bijapur," because "its low squat pillars supporting long beams, not arches or domes, reflect the style of a Hindu temple more than anything Islamic."[32] Eaton's analysis of shatterzones is not restricted to architecture, he also notes the composite character of miniature painting, wall painting, furniture, and dress.[33] To illustrate the extent of this cultural synthesis, Eaton states:

> There is evidence that Ibrahims II's posture vis-à-vis Hindu beliefs went even beyond toleration. The very purpose of his writing his Kitab-i Nauras, so recorded his poet laureate Zuhuri, was to relay to the Muslims of Bijapur the theory of Hindu aesthetic and iconography with which he himself had already become so infatuated. Moreover, the book opens not with the traditional Muslim invocation to Allah, but with a hymn in praise of the deity Ganapati, whose name is generally invoked at the commencement of Hindu literary works. Lord Siva, has consort Parvati, and Bharaiva are also give prominent attention throughout the Kitab-i Nauras.[34]

Eaton argues that all these examples reflect "a degree of cultural accommodation seldom witnessed in Indian history."[35] He identifies at the root of this cultural accommodation the physical and cultural geography of northern Karnataka, where Bijapur is located:

> With respect to its political heritage, its linguistic distribution, and its religious history over the past hundred years, the Bijapur plateau can be designated a shatter zone. From about the

> thirteenth century two distinct core areas formed both the northern and southern extremities of the plateau. On the northern edge, form the Bhima River north to the upper Godavari basin there arouse the nucleus of the Marathi-speaking core region now know as Maharastra. Similarly, form the Tungabhadra River on the southern edge of the plateau south of the Kaveri River, Kannada-speaking people formed the nucleus of what is now called Karnataka. Thus the center of the Bijapur plateau, especially the upper Krishna region including the Bijapur City itself, straddled a cultural fault zone between Maharastra and Karnataka, its inhabitants being fully integrated into neither Mahrati nor Kanada culture, but only partially into one or the other.[36]

It is important to note that Eaton's shatterzone stretches from the Bhima River in the north to the Tungabhadra River in the South: Vijayanagara is located at the southern end of this zone.

Vijayanagara's Social History as a Shatterzone

Fritz and Michell identify pre-colonial northern Karnataka as volatile area.[37] They state:

> The last two decades of the fifteenth century and the first decade of the sixteenth were marked at Vijayanagara by successive military coups by the Saluva and Tuluva families. A similar situation prevailed in the Muslim territories to the north, where the Bahmani state fragmented into the

> smaller kingdoms of Bijapur, Bidar, Golconda, and Ahmadnagar.[38]

These conflicts, occasioned by expansionist policies and "almost never by differences in religion . . . gave ample opportunity for social and cultural interchange between Southern India and the Deccan."[39] According to Michell, Muslims are those who "left the clearest record of their presence at Vijayanagara."[40] Many Muslims served in the Vijayanagara armies, but this population was not only restricted to military personnel.[41] In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Arab traders were the principle importers of horses.[42] The pivotal role Muslims played in Vijayanagara is reflected in their portrayal as active citizens (participating in constructive activities) in temple reliefs, as well as on ceremonial buildings.[43] It is also important that Vijayanagara's Muslim community was itself a mosaic, composed of both those who were born in the region as well as those who migrated.[44] Therefore Vijayanagara is probably best characterized *not* simply as a Hindu city, but rather as a cosmopolitan one, with important Hindu, Muslim, and foreign communities that coexisted side-by-side. Fritz and Michell, ironically, inform us that visitors to Vijayanagara were "delighted by crowded bazaars stocked with a large variety of merchandise,"[45] and that:

> The foreign travelers comment on the various social groups of Vijayanagara's population . . . the spectrum of linguistic, religious, ethnic, and professional communities found throughout the empire must have been represented at the capital.[46]

Vijayanagara played host to a variety of foreign travelers. The most notable of these travelers were: Italian (Nicolo di Conti

[c.1420] and Ludovico di Varthema [c.1504]), Persian (the ambassador Abd-ar Razzaq [c.1442]), and Portuguese (Duarte Barbosa [c.1518], Domingo Paes [c.1520], and Fernao Nuniz [c.1535]).[47] The writings of Domingo Paes compares Vijayanagara to Rome,[48] and he states of its cosmopolitan character: "In this city you will find men belonging to every nation and people."[49]

Despite the continuous strife between the Hindu kings and the Muslim sultans to the north, there were regular exchanges of peoples, goods, artistic traditions.[50] This social and cultural interchange also had an important impact on Vijayanagara's material history. According to Michell, it had "significant repercussions in architecture and the arts."[51]

Vijayanagara's Material Culture as a Shatterzone

A.H. Longhurst was the first European scholar to seriously record Vijayanagara's material history. In particular, Longhurst was struck by "Saracenic [Islamic] features being adopted in some of the buildings in the capital."[52] In fact, architecturally, some of these buildings are quite literally half Hindu and half Islamic:

> The remains of the brick and plaster turret above this gateway is built in the Indo-Saracenic style, while the lower portion is constructed of stone in the usual Hindu manner.[53]
>
> While the pillars and arches are Muhammadan in character, the base, roof, cornice and stucco ornament are Hindu in design.[54]

Longhurst makes similar notes about the structure called the "elephant stables," which he describes as largely Islamic in nature, but notably crowned with Hindu styled domes.[55] Fritz and Michell comment extensively on Vijayanagara's particular blend of architecture.[56] For example, they discuss the appropriation of the Islamic Bahmani style:

> Bahmani architectural influence at Vijayanagara extends beyond the Muslim quarters, significantly, it is incorporated into the courtly architecture of the king's own residence. Pavilions, watchtowers, stables, and other building in the royal center at Vijayanagara are distinctive for their use of architectural techniques and forms derive form Deccan Islamic practice. These courtly structures are built of stone blocks set in thick mortar covered with plaster, now imperfectly preserved. Typical Bahmani-style features are arches with angled sided or with pointed or suspended profiles; vault on square, octagonal, and even twelve-sided plans; and flattened domes with plain and fluted surfaces. The decoration of these buildings makes repeated use of the geometric patterns and stylized foliate motifs characteristic of Islamic art.[57]

They observe that Bahmani styles are closely associated with the remains of both secular and religious buildings.[58] They also note that the preference for Islamic-styled buildings was not a fleeting fancy, as "palaces at the later Vijayanagara capitals—Chandragiri and Penukonda, for instance—display a continuation of this tradition."[59] Not only were Islamic motifs borrowed at

Vijayanagara, but the city's Muslims appropriated Hindu styles. For example:

> Two ruined mosques can be identified with in the Muslim quarter of the urban core. They are noticeably un-Bahmani in appearance, since they make use of [Hindu] temple like columns to support flat roofs; entrances are sheltered by angled eaves. An inscription in one mosque identifies the patron as Ahmad Khan, officer of Devaraya II.[60]

Since Muslims incorporated Hindu styles into their buildings, and Hindus borrowed Islamic motifs to produce structures, how do you best characterize the architecture of Vijayanagara? Specifically focusing on royal architecture, Fritz and Michell explain that Vijayanagara's structures cannot be truly described as Islamic,[61] but rather reflect a blend of two fully integrated but different traditions, Bahmani and southern Indian.[62] This blended style has had an effect on the historiography of Vijayanagara:

> Scholars concerned with "Buddhist" and "Hindu" phases of Indian architecture, sculpture and painting tend to ignore the later centuries since they fall within what is considered to be the "Islamic period." Meanwhile, scholars involved with the architecture and fine arts of the Muslims courts of Northern India and the Deccan regard contemporary practice in the Hindu courts of Southern India to fall outside there area of interest. In this way the architecture and art of the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods are situated

> between two well-defined disciplines, lacking any credibility as a valid subject in their own right.[63]

Such an analysis results in difficulties categorizing Vijayanagara, and is clearly an example of trying to place a octagonal peg into either a round or square hole. This act is methodologically similar to trying to understand Vijayanagara in terms of a sectarian trope: The city defies being defined in terms of simple (i.e., Hindu-Muslim) binary oppositions, and invites syncretic interpretations. This fact, while sharply contrasting with Fritz and Michell's understanding of Vijayanagara as a "cosmic" Hindu city, adds to the capitol's symbolic character. Vijayanagara is clearly a shatterzone where many peoples, languages, and customs "met and intermingled."[64] The city's unique blend of cultural materials is also indicative of its cosmopolitan character, as well as the diverse peoples and cultures which composed the Vijayanagara Empire.[65]

Conclusion: Culture as "System," Culture as "Process"

Clearly the character of Vijayanagara's history is complex. The sectarian trope remains overtly simplistic; the shatterzone model fits better. The debate between these two understandings of Vijayanagara reflects a more general debate concerning the "nature" of culture.

In anthropology there is a diverse, and often conflicting, field of meaning for culture.[66] Much of this diversity and conflict flows from the fact culture is an abstraction, and as such its meanings are wound up with the process of definition.[67] In other words, there is no intrinsic relationship between culture as signifier and what it signifies, so that meaning is constructed in the process linking signifier and signified. Because the construction of meaning is processual, it must be comprehended

in relationship spatial and temporal contexts. This fact leads to a construction of meaning which is inherently "slippery." Some in the field of Anthropology, like James Clifford, celebrate this slipperiness declaring culture an "allegory," or a concept which "implies the existence of at least two meanings for the same words."[68] Seen from this perspective then, it is "natural" for anthropologists to assign different meanings to culture, as the contexts within which they link signifiers with the signified vary temporally and spatially.

With the slippery meaning of culture in mind, Renato Rosaldo advocates a view of culture which "shows how events, and institutions act and change through time."[69] This perspective, which views culture as a "process," is controversial because it does not lay claim to a monopoly on "truth," but rather "emphasizes that culture requires study from a number of perspectives, and that these perspectives cannot necessarily be added together into a unified summation."[70] Because this "processual" approach to culture does not present a neat, clear-cut picture, it is interpreted as conflicting with views that conceptualize culture in terms of coherent and distinct "systems."[71]

Understanding culture in terms of a system, is a familiar trope in the social sciences and humanities. The anthropologically-minded historian Ronald Inden states there has been a "long standing quest to write a science of the human world as a machine or self-regulating system."[72] This system, in contrast to process, stresses order:

> A system consists of hierarchically arranged levels of discrete, interdependent parts . . . like the solar system: heavenly bodies consist of solid masses which in turn consists of molecules, which consist of atoms . . . . A natural system is characterized

> by mutual exclusion among its parts. Just as different objects do not occupy the same space . . . they do not overlap.[73]

The system concept plays a key role in the historiography of Vijayanagara: it is reflected in the predilection, despite considerable evidence to the contrary, to employ a sectarian trope and interpret Vijayanagara through the oculus of two distinct cultural systems: one Hindu and one Muslim. According to Inden, this predilection has formed a core element in the academic understanding of India.[74] However, the evidence from Vijayanagara clearly suggests India's cultures are "neither necessarily coherent nor always homogeneous."[75] At Vijayanagara, the short comings of system-based metaphors, like the sectarian trope, are salient: Their coherence, in light of historical and material evidence, is shown to be a theoretical phantasm. In contrast, evidence suggests Vijayanagara is best conceived of as a shatterzone characterized *not* as a coherent system, but rather as a space in which culture is practiced and changed through time. In the end, the importance of Vijayanagara lays in the fact it questions certain basic understandings of culture in India, and by doing so emphasizes the requirement to develop critical academic thinkers with a capacity for reflexivity.

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[1]Marjorie Perloff, *Wittgenstein's Ladder* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Myra Stroeber and Allen Cook, "Making and Correcting Errors in Economic Analyses: An Examination of Videotapes" *Journal of Economics Education* (1997): 123-156; R. Orton, "Ockham's Razor and Plato's Beard," *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education* 26(1995): 204-229; Catherine Asher and Thomas Metcalf, eds., *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past.* New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing, 1994).
[2]Stephen Tyler, "Post-Modern Ethnography: From Document of the Occult to Occult Document," in *Writing Culture*, eds., James Clifford and George Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 132.

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[3]James Fernandez, *Beyond Metaphor: The Theory of Tropes in Anthropology* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 6.
[4]Mary Louise Pratt, "Fieldwork in Common Places," in *Writing Culture*, eds., James Clifford and George Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 50. The "hijacking" of historical tropes is reflected in the important presence in anthropology of titles such as: *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* by Nicholas Dirks*, Islands of History and Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom* by Marshall Sahlins, *Time and the Other* by Johannes Fabian, and *Culture Through Time: Anthropological Approaches* by Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney to name a few, but albeit important, examples.
[5]Gyanendra Pandey, *Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990).
[6]Nicholas Dirks, ed., *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 189.
[7]Ibid.
[8]Cynthia Talbot, "Inscribing the Other, Inscribing the Self: Hindu-Muslim Identities in Pre-colonial India," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37(1995): 694.
[9]Ibid.
[10]Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*. London and Delhi: Oxford University, 1980), 372.
[11]Ibid., 382.
[12]Shastri cited in Stein, 372.
[13]John Fritz, John, George Michell, and John Gollings, *City of Victory: Vijayanagara, the Medieval Hindu Capital of Southern India* (New York: Aperture Foundation, 1991), 11.
[14]Ibid., 2
[15]Ibid., 11. Fritz actually compares it to Varanasi and Mecca, stating "the 'sacred' or 'cosmic' city derives it religious significance from a pattern or model and is planned by mean at the summit of a hierarchical society to embody that pattern in its overall structure" (John Fritz, "Was Vijayanagara a 'Cosmic City'?" in *Vijayanagara—City and Empire: New Currents of Research*, eds., A. Dallapiccola and S.Z. Lallemant [Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1985], 257).
[16]Fritz, Michell, and Gollings, 149
[17]Ibid., 11
[18]John Fritz, George Michell, and M.S. Nagaraja Rao, *Where Kings and Gods Meet: The Royal Centre at Vijayanagara, India* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1984), 146. Michell elaborates this argument and further suggests that Vijayanagara's material culture reflects a form of Hindu revivalism which borrows Chola temple architecture, and then surpasses it in

scale and elaboration (see "Revivalism as the Imperial Mode: Religious Architecture During the Vijayanagara Period," in *Perceptions of India's Visual Past*, eds., Catherine Asher and Thomas Metcalf (New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing Co., 1994), 187-195.

[19]Art historian Catherine Asher sternly states: "It may well be that scholars who use the term Hindu and Islamic as style designators do not intend sectarian implications. However, the use of such terminology in modern writing, at a time that is so often associate with a sense of communalism which opposed Hindus with Muslims, provides sectarian connotations that likely misrepresent the artisan's, the designer's, and patron's original conceptions" (see "On Islamic Influence and the Architecture of Vijayanagara," in *Vijayanagara–City and Empire: New Currents of Research*, eds., A. Dallapiccola and S.Z. Lallemant [Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1985], 192).

[20]Stein 1980, 392.

[21]Ibid., 403.

[22]Ibid. The historian of South Asia Herman Kulke adds a twist to the story of the founders of Vijayanagara (Harihara and Bukka) by critically examining the claim that were actually "Hindus" who converted to Islam and then reconverted back to Hinduism (see "Maharajas, Mahants and Historians: Reflections of the Historiography of Early Vijayanagara and Sringeri," in *Vijayanagara—City and Empire: New Currents of Research*, eds., A. Dallapiccola and S. Z. Lallemant [Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1985], 120-121).

[23]According to Fritz, the alignment of Vijayanagara's roads also plays a important role in the "cosmic city" thesis (Fritz, "Cosmic City," 260). However, when roads fails to conform to his theory, Fritz glibly cites B.B. Dutt's statement that "economic and aesthetic consideration were not sacrificed to the fetish of symmetry or rectilinearity in a fixed direction" (see *Town Planning in Ancient India* [Calcutta and Simla: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1925), 132). Fritz, attempting to rhetorically undercut Dutt, continues: "However, one could argue that the numerous deviations from 'symmetry or rectilineality' in the plan of the capital are only [Fritz's emphasis] responses to local conditions. Dutt does not take up this point" (Fritz, "Cosmic City," 260). This response is ironic considering Fritz's own theories draw on symbolic and interpretive methodologies which argue "local" context forms the basis of general knowledge (see Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge* [New York: Basic Books, 1983]).

[24]Fritz, Michell, and Rao, 14

[25]Stein, 400.

[26]Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 202.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., 209.
[29]Ibid., 208.
[30]Bernard Cohn, *The Anthropologist Among the Historians* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 109.
[31]Richard Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur 1300-1700: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 40
[32]Eaton, 17.
[33]Ibid., 94.
[34]Ibid., 100.
[35]Ibid., 96.
[36]Ibid., 6-7.
[37]It is important to acknowledge that—despite the fact much of their own empirical work contradicts their assertions about the "Hindu" character of Vijayanagara—Fritz and Michell have been extremely important in the collection and cataloging of materials from Vijayanagara.
[38]Fritz, Michell, and Gollings, 25.
[39]Michell, *Architecture and Art*, 7-8. Ethnohistorian Phillip Wagoner examines Vijayanagara's textual evidence, and supports this position by stating: "Clearly, it is the Turka's ordinary personal and cultural behavior that is being targeted for criticism, not the formal beliefs and practices of their Islamic religion" (see *Tidings of the King: A Translation and Ethnohistorical Analysis of the Rayavacakamu* [Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993], 52).
[40] Fritz, Michell, and Gollings 1991: 42
[41]Ibid.
[42]Ibid.
[43]Ibid., 43
[44]Ibid., 42.
[45]Ibid., 41.
[46]Ibid., 43.
[47]Fritz, Michell, and Rao, 7.
[48]Fritz, Michell, and Gollings, 26
[49]Ibid., 32.
[50]Fritz, Michell, and Gollings, 42.
[51]Michell, *Architecture and Art*, 8.
[52]A.H. Longhurst, *Hampi Ruins: Described and Illustrated* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services 1988[1917]), 15.
[53]Ibid., 45.
[54]Ibid., 82.
[55]Ibid.
[56]Its importance is reflected by Fritz, Michell, and Rao, whose chapter on Islamic style in *Where Kings and Gods Meet* is second in length only to that

on the city's sacred core (which spatially takes ups of one-third of Vijayanagara's entire area).
[57]Fritz, Michell, and Gollings, 43.
[58]Fritz, Michell, and Rao, 122
[59]Ibid., 123
[60]Ibid., 122
[61]Fritz and Michell's work supports such a position: "Before examining the various Islamic-styled structures within the royal center, we must first point out that, though many of these buildings exhibit characteristic Deccan Islamic features, their overall appearance is unlike any known Islamic monument at Gulbarga, Firuzabad, Bidar, etc." (Fritz, Michell, and Rao, 123).
[62]Fritz, Michell, and Gollings, 43; Michell, *Architecture and Art*, 273.
[63]Michell *Architecture and Art*, 2
[64]Ibid. 273
[65]Fritz, Michell, and Gollings, 43.
[66]All budding anthropologists are given a definition to memorize: "culture is a system of symbols and their meanings" (see Clifford Geetz, *The Interpretation of Culture* [New York: Basic Books, 1973]). However, this definition is all to often consumed only to be regurgitated in papers, examines, and conferences without clarifying its meaning. British social anthropology added a twist to the culture debates by declaring the entire concept an unsuitable analytic category when compared with "society" (A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, *A Natural Science of Society* [Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957], 106).
[67]This element of abstraction lead Radcliffe-Brown to conclude that the culture concept was "rather vague" (Radcliffe-Brown, 93).
[68]James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," in *Writing Culture*, eds., James Clifford and George Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 98.
[69]Rosaldo, 92.
[70]Ibid., 93.
[71]Joan Vincent, "System and Process, 1974-1985," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 15 (1986): 100.
[72]Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford: Blackwell), 2.
[73]Ibid., 12.
[74]Ibid., 13.
[75]Rosaldo, 217.

Union under the Sun: Exchange as a Trope of Habitus

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> In spite of a persistent fiction, we never write on a blank page, but always on one that has already been written on.
> —Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life[i]

Introduction: Gift and Spiritual Exchange

In questioning the Sahar Taran people's identity as Buddhist, I continue to grapple with their practices that involve placating the Chibbha gods. In Kaike, Chibbha means "outside." The name marginalizes them, yet people continue to placate the Chibbha gods in the ritual form upon which these gods insist. It is their thirst for blood that designates them, in the Sahar Taran's Nyingma Buddhist spiritual practice, as extrinsic to the pantheistic realm of the Nangba gods[ii] and bodhisattvas. In making sense of this structure, I recognize how the Sahar Tarans exercise particular forms of habitus to create specific spheres, in which they can practice their phenomenological tradition. This distinction of ritual practices is instrumental in ensuring that their obligations to placate the Chibbha gods not disrupt their acknowledgement of the Buddhist doctrine of ahimsa, or non-violence. They believe the placation of the Chibbha

gods—particularly through animal sacrifice—is necessary to create an atmosphere of security in which to practice their spiritual tradition.

Through various roles, the village has delineated the Buddhist and non-Buddhist realms of practice. The roles of the lama (Buddhist priest), patum (ritualistic spiritual priest), dhammi (spiritual healer), and shaptan (healer, both spiritual and physical) apportion the necessary practices of the village into designated functions; these roles serve to compartmentalize the practices, dividing those that are within Buddhist doctrine from those tangential to it. Here I will consider two different types of exchange, the gift and the spiritual exchange, and how these exchanges are associated with ritual, spiritual, and everyday actions. Both types of exchange are necessary to placate the Chibbha gods and to insure the villagers' spiritual progression. The various realms of practice, and the habitus specific to them, have a dynamic interdependence. They represent the Sahar Tarans' spiritual progression in Buddhism, and their tangible attempt to maintain a level of prosperity so they may thrive as a Buddhist community.

Through the following narratives I examine specific praxis in light of the habitus of exchange. I would like to remind the reader that any form of coherence in the following ethnographic narrative is a simulated exercise in recollection. This simulacrum does not adhere to the space-time continuum in which I observed the acts; it reduces the practice's fluid nature of possibility _habitus_ into a single trajectory, the accounted result. This application of deliberate narrative allows me to create an understanding of a possible Sahar Taran identity; through this very act I am crystallizing my notions of them in light of these particular perspectives of exchange.

Mauss's Gift

Marcel Mauss has argued that "the gift" pre-existed modern economy. He demonstrated that the act of exchanging gifts enacts social relationships through the circles of exchange. Such a cycle creates an interdependent economy, which connects the individual to the society.

> …A tie occurring through things, is one between souls, because the thing itself possesses a soul, is of the soul. Hence it follows that to make a gift of something to someone is to make a present of some part of oneself.[iii]

He outlines such traditions, in their differing forms as a way to construct an explanation of how culture flourished for early societies. Mauss's paradigm of exchange in society can be applied to the practice of placation of the Chibbha gods in Sahar Tara. This practice deals with the fragile structure of give and take between the environmental forces and the people. According to Sahar Taran cosmology, the Chibbha gods have initiated a co-dependent "circulation of energy"[iv] by enforcing their power upon this mountain community. The community must return the gift to placate them and continue the circle. The Sahar Tarans are united in their common struggle with these environmental, spiritual factors (through which the Chibbha gods' power is conducted) and they work together to uphold this link of exchange with the Chibbha gods.

Mauss, through his work with Henri Hubert, applied the gift exchange analogy to sacrifice. Sacrifice involves investing one's soul in an object, sacrilizing it, and offering it to the gods. But to Mauss, sacrilization transcends the reciprocity involved in simple gift exchange. For him reciprocity is not the link that binds the parties in sacrifice. Instead, sacrifice involves a melding of the sacred and the profane through the sacrificed item. "Lastly it is a sacrifice of redemption, for the sacrificer is consecrated: he is in the power of the divinity, and redeems

himself by substituting the victim in his place."[v] Mauss has charged such ritual with phenomenological implications that may not necessarily be there. He feels that the victim is charged with the being of the sacrificer and then connected to the sacred through deconstruction. He points out that "The sacrificer gives up something of himself but he does not give up himself."[vi] It is not the case in the Sahar Tarans' understanding of their offerings to the Chibbha gods. They comprehend it as an obligation that allows them to exist safely in territory that a particular god has claimed. They have no spiritual investment in these gods and do not want to invest themselves in the sacrifice beyond the dutiful act of supplication, through blood sacrifice. They do not revere them, but rather are wary of their wrath.

The lama pointed out to me that humans are better off karmically than these Chibbha gods, who surrender to every whim of their desire. The Sahar Tarans are confident that they will be able to escape the interdependence they have with the Chibbha gods through spiritual progression in Buddhism. The Chibbha gods, on the other hand, are locked into a perpetual cycle of existence; they are slaves to their desire and wrath, which constrains them in a dependence on appeasement through sacrifice. For this reason I will simply classify the exchange relationship involved as gift exchange. I do not feel Mauss's dynamic of sacrifice can be applied to Sahar Taran practice with the Chibbha gods.

I am not disregarding the work of Mauss entirely, for I think it articulates a distinction that is inherent in Sahar Taran identity. The distinction lies in what they hold to be sacred and what they include in the environment in which they dwell. Obeyesekere has noted that there is a difference between placative ritualistic traditions and religious ideologies that involve salvation.[vii]

> Where religious norms are violated, supernatural sanctions tend to be immediate rather than saved

> up for the after-life…This consequence is an elaboration of the concepts of sin (in the sense of a violation of the religious ethics of morality) and religious merit. These determine the individual's ultimate destiny on the principle of contingency of supernatural reward, and entail the bifurcation of the other world.[viii]

The supernatural will provide a safe physical environment. By unburdening themselves of quotidian hardships the practitioners can concentrate on a spiritual path that will benefit them in future lifetimes.

The Sahar Tarans' performance of puja to Padmasambhava and the Nangba gods may appear similar to sacrifice to the Chibbha gods, insuring prosperity. The difference lies in that they perform puja out of reverence, not fear or obligation. They are confident that Padmasambhava is concerned for their well-being. Puja is not in the realm of simple gift exchange, for the reasons that Jonathan Perry cites when criticizing Mauss's paradigm of the gift. It is not simply disinterested, obligatory exchange that creates an economy. Through sacrilization, one invests a spiritual interest, as Mauss has discussed in his work on sacrifice. Sacrilization in puja charges the ritual with spiritual experience, creating karmic merit for oneself and one's community.

The gift offered in the realm of the spiritual exchange must not be reciprocated. Instead, the action or ritual is offered selflessly to another so that the fruits of that action can shape the unfathomable realm of the future. Sahar Taran spiritual exchange is based on the Buddhist notion of karma, which understands the disposition of causality as untraceable; the return effect of one's actions will solidify when the right conditions are present. Until then it is "stockpiled" and creates an ethos of deference in spiritual practice.

> —a soteriology, not a sociology of reciprocity…The gift does indeed return to the donor, but it does so as the fruits of karma. It is the 'unseen fruit' (adrstaphala), which withers on the branch if any return is accrued in the here and now. The return is deferred (in all likelihood to another existence); its mechanism has become entirely impersonal, and the recipient is merely a 'vessel' (patra) or conduit for the flow of merit himself and is no way constrained by the gift or bound to the donor. Even a spiritual accounting is sometimes looked upon with suspicion, and so the best gifts are given merely from a detached sense of duty and with out thinking of them as gifts at all.[ix]

A spiritual exchange such as this involves what Derrida has criticized as the idea of the "pure gift." He asserts that a gift that is given cannot appear as a gift, that "nothing presents itself."[x] As soon as the gift is accepted it is allocated as a gift. The recognition of the gift serves as reciprocity. Therefore, no gift can be given in a pure manner, because the idea of the gift is attached to the signifier "gift." Of course, as soon as the gift is

> [r]ecognized as gift, if the gift appears to him as such, if the present is present to him as present, this simple recognition suffices to annul the gift. Why? Because it gives back, in the place let us say, of the thing itself, a symbolic equivalent.

Derrida's analysis of a "pure gift" is solely linguistic; it does not consider the realm of praxis. The intentions of religious practice cannot be deconstructed in the way Derrida deconstructs language, even if language is a trope of the social. For that reason I feel that the Sahar Taran concept of merit allows for a "pure gift" to occur. They may dedicate the merit to one another,

touch altars and beings to absorb their merit, and pride their human form for meritorious reasons, but this acknowledgement does not remove the spiritual intentions from the realm of a "pure gift" because of the doctrinal emphasis on detachment of the five skandhas (aggregates). A spiritual gift is an exercise in detachment from rupa (form), sanna (recognition), and sankara (thinking). This mode of exchange implies a dyadic form, the stipulation of an ethical code, and disciplined detachment. One can only detach oneself from something that one is aware exists. It is much more sanctifying to understand all the implications involved in a gift, then detach oneself from those implications and continue with the spiritual exchange of a "pure gift." This conceptual paradigm is not perfect; it is a practice of discipline. The Sahar Tarans seem to alleviate the difficulty involved in spiritual exchange by concentrating on such things as their dharma, as well as compassion and generosity for others.

The act of spiritual exchange, similar to gift exchange, involves connecting the individual to the community. As you will see through the following narratives, both forms of exchange establish habitus through the materialization of the social attitudes and traditions. These narratives spin a dynamic interaction between both patterns of exchange, which create a rich experience of communal and environmental interaction.

An Offering to Life

Why does she want me here? Granted, all the Sahar Tarans I have met here in Dunai, the district headquarters of Dolpa, have been hospitable and kind. It's not often that they find a foreigner with whom they can communicate a few words in their native tongue. Walking down the street I hear, "Shims yin pa? Ngi hyalmo gee thung." ("How are you? Lets drink some beer together.") This is Kaike, the indigenous tongue of Sahar Tara. I cherish the commonality of experience with the other, a

dialogue in a tongue spoken by only a few hundred in the world. I've learned something, as sparse as it is, that these people seem to appreciate. They are not impressed with the breadth of my knowledge, but my willingness to open up to their world and learn from them.

I now realize that Chabang Budha's insistence on my coming to her room is not because she is fascinated by my minute knowledge of her culture. She does not want to relish such mundane joys as my Kaike pick-up lines. Rather, she is speaks to me in simple Nepali: "I am preparing for death. Every day I sing a chant called the 'Gyan Norbu.' It lists all the gods, Chibbha and Nangba alike, in order. I start at the bottom and ask all the Chibbha gods to do me no harm in my time of death and to take pity on me and create a productive atmosphere in the open realms, for I have been good to them and now need their help. Then I appeal to the Nangba gods, slowly ascending up to his Holiness Padmasambhava, may they provide me peace and flexibility." First she says nuhune ("flexibility"), but pauses and says avagathan ("awareness") instead. It is interesting that she has specifically asked the Chibbha gods for a particular end. She is not afraid to demand reciprocity for the gifts she has given them throughout her life. She seems more humble in her mentioning of the Nangba gods. She has not asked for a direct favor, but appeals to them, subordinating herself through a spiritual exchange that involves phenomena beyond any knowledge she conceives of having, or expects to.

She tells me it is her duty to prepare for death. She does this by sitting at her doorstep chanting various chants and spinning her prayer wheel. "My chants are dispelled into the atmosphere and bring the buddhas into the awareness of all beings. I am old; I am supposed to remind others of death and get them thinking of a path to liberation. I have lived my life and others prayed for me; now I pray for others. Now you will tape me chanting and bring it back to your country. Please, you must play it for everyone so that they may understand the meaning of

suffering and know how to leave it behind. The gods and buddhas are powerful, but they work through us. It is through their compassion for us that they use us as vehicles for teaching. Your neighbor or friend is your best teacher." She enacts her dharma detached from any karmic fruits; she must approach it with pure dhanna, generosity.

She begins the chants with a dedication to all suffering beings and offers the merit of her actions to their progression. She chants quietly as she rocks back and forth spinning her prayer wheel. She is enacting this ritual not for herself, but for our benefit, and those she does not know. She does not face me or anybody else that is in the room, yet she provides us all with a spiritual gift of knowledge and merit. To place the recorder in proper range, I creep around her and which enables me to momentarily enter her personal space. I know I am close because I can smell her; it is subtle and secondary. It smells of a mixture of urine, gasoline, cow dung, campfire, and woods. The same smell I detect on most who dwell in this area of the high Himalayas. This scent usually presents itself with a pungent intensity, the first signifier that a villager is coming, particularly on the trail. The sensation of her scent compels me to look up and observe her sightless eyes. They remain open in the direction of the sky, only blinking at the end of a schloka, the break at the end of each line in a chant.

She feels she is doing what all old people are meant to do in her society. That is what makes her contribution so significant, the unawareness of its advantage in any form beyond the following of tradition.

> The gift is its own return, and ultimately there is no referent we can point to it with words outside of this law of exchange, the law of kamma, of cause and effect, reciprocity: for every gift there is a return gift.[xi]

Of course, she does not see her chanting as an exchange of any sort, but a necessity in this stage of her life. In the simple conception of dharma, Chabang Budha has performed a pure gift.

Nana's Transmissible Powers

I am walking through Thupa Tara, the neighboring village of Sahar Tara, after visiting a local gumba ("temple"). I notice a small crowd and a goat outside one of the homes on the periphery of the village. I ask what is going on and am informed that this she-goat is going to be sacrificed to the Kul duetha, or household deity. I ask if I could watch, and they agree, as long as I will not shriek or become afraid. They do not want to scare away their Kul duetha during her biannual visit to purify the house. They tell me that they will sacrifice the goat to welcome the Kul duetha back and to serve as an invitation for her to come again in the future. They express the importance of pleasing her, for if she were displeased, they would not survive the wrath of her actions, which would occur for six months before they had another chance to placate her. I vow to look on in silence.

Not all Kul duethas are female, but this one happens to be a small Hindu goddess. They call her "Nana," which means mother. They do not know her real name or any details about her except that she returned from the Terai, the southern region of Nepal that borders India, with the grandfather of the house forty years ago. He had returned to the family's newly constructed home from a six-month journey trading sheep for spices. Soon after he was welcomed into the house people became sick. At first they blamed it on a pestilence in the spices he had brought back, but the illness persisted after they were burned. The family consulted the local patum, the ritual priest of the Chibbha gods, who alerted them to the presence of their household deity. A Kul duetha usually enters the house up to a year after it is inhabited

and claims it as his or her territory. One must placate the deity so that he or she remains benevolent. This encourages the god to reciprocate by ensuring prosperity and protecting and purifying the grounds against any ill will. Often times the patum will perform the placation ritual for a small fee, though this is not a necessary formality; if the family is poor they may do it themselves, or if the spirit is more responsive to a dhammi ("spiritual healer"), then that person might enact the ritual. Such a tradition is flexible in times of crisis, but usually the sacrificer should be consistent. For instance, the last patum of this area died about fifteen years ago leaving no successor, so now one man of each household is chosen to perform the ritual. This role is passed down from generation to generation.

Consistency is necessary because Nana, like many household gods, is temperamental. She has claimed the territory and is allowing the incumbents of the household to dwell there without harm. A gift exchange is created, which holds the householders responsible to return the services, which are immediately reciprocated by Nana right before she leaves, so as to keep them indebted to her for the next six months.

> In reality, they merely act as representatives of the sprits, because these exchanges and contracts not only bear people and things along in their wake, but also the sacred received is not inactive. Even when it has been abandoned by the giver, is still possesses something of him. Through it the giver has a hold over the beneficiary…This is because the taonga is animated by the hau of its forest, its native heath and soil. It is truly 'native': the hau follows after anyone possessing the thing.[xii]

It is to her advantage as the holder of the transmissible power to delay transmission and keep the household in the dark regarding her ultimate intentions. In this way she holds the power in the relationship, a relationship that was not chosen by the

householders, but rather forced upon them. It is explained to me that she does this out of necessity. She is slave to her desires and the only way she can fulfill them is to enslave others to achieve her mundane ends.

A visceral energy seems to surround the house. I wonder if my perception is being skewed by my fascination with watching a goat getting decapitated, or if I am really feeling the presence of this temperamental goddess. I calm myself by looking at the goat, who has no idea of her coming fate. The men have laid down fir boughs so as not to stain the ground. A stain of blood in the ritual field would force Nana to stay until the rain has erased it. I have been told she has two weaknesses: her attraction to blood and her thirst for the freedom to roam. If the one desire enraptures her and keeps her from the other, all will see her wrath. Success seems to involve quickly and smoothly following through with the ritual to gain her benefits, so she can move on. A man now places the goat on top of the fir boughs and ties a noose around her horns. She does not seem to mind until he draws in the slack rope making it taut, then she begins to shake her head. Another man holds her body tightly while a third man decapitates her. It takes one clean cut. Her head is quickly lifted up by the rope tied around her horns and marched around the fir-lined ritual area to spread the blood. After this they take her body inside. Her head is left at the edge of the fir boughs to entice Nana to move beyond that area and go on her way. Nobody is allowed near them for the rest of the night. This is Nana's area and she will soon leave.

Afterwards I am invited to eat the meat of the goat. The remains are a gift provided to them by Nana and I must partake of the feast. I humbly refuse, telling them that it is against my dharma to eat meat. Immediately I am asked to leave. Nobody is supposed to refuse Nana's gift and I must go before she discovers that I have done so. I do not realize yet that my refusal may cause them hardship.

Later in the night I am throwing up again. I have been recovering from the sickness I suffered from while trekking, but I seem to be taking a turn for the worse. It does not occur to me that my regression in health involves Nana until the young boy who accompanied me tells his mother of my actions. This makes me nervous. Can I be affected by something I do not believe in? Is their belief in this phantom god so powerful that its reality impinges my own? I am nervous and reproach myself for being so unaware. My cultural ignorance may have served as an insult and seems to have manifested as an obstacle to my recovery. At this point I am more than willing to take heed and follow this woman's advice. She tells me that early the next morning I must go and make a puja sacrifice to Nana on behalf of the family and another one to Padmasambhava, for he will watch over them if Nana becomes vengeful.

The next morning I am lucky to find a household that has raw meat I can to purchase in a small quantity for my offering to Nana. If no one had butchered an animal, I would have to purchase one and kill it myself. The woman aids me in my presentation of the gift. This puts Nana in the position of the receiver, which she cannot refuse, and placates her for my ignorance. I have now completed the cycle. Since I have no territorial domain that interests her, she will not encourage another cycle of exchange. The conciliatory offering is necessary before she leaves the area, to free myself from any bonds of exchange that would leave me indebted not only to her, but to the community as well. Next, the lama helps me make an offering of buckwheat to Padmasambhava. The offering to Padmasambhava is a spiritual offering. I dedicate the merit of the act to the family and their cyclic plight with Nana. Hopefully the merit will aid in their spiritual progression, the only way they know of freeing themselves from their karmic ties to Nana. I am relieved. By the end of the day everyone on the mountain seems to know that I do not eat meat due to my dharma.

Through a mishap in the gift exchange process the community is brought together. Both a gift and a spiritual exchange are necessary so that the wrath of Nana will not be provoked. This act of reconciliation depends upon various roles in the village. The lama aids me in the act of the spiritual offering and the people aid me in the placative offering. All realms of practice must be called upon to mend such an offense. Once it is over, people have incorporated a conception of my own dharma and its stipulations into their habitus so that such blasphemy will not occur again. My insult to their tradition has resulted in their acknowledgement of my dharma. A Heideggerian breakdown[xiii] has occurred. They have created different "schema" to fit my traditions into their framework of habitus. For my own part, the entire ritual has made me see the world through different eyes, maybe eyes closer in shade to those of the Sahar Tarans.

A Bardan Festival Drunkenly Simulated

Festivals are traditional social events that involve celebration, and may also ritualistically serve to ensure future prosperity. Festivals allow for exchange to occur on a number of levels. Gift and spiritual exchange are involved on both an individual and a communal level. My time in the Sahar Tara coincides with the first Tibetan month, Dowa Suba Poitha. Between the ausi and the purnai, the new moon and full moon of this month, the Bardan festivals take place. These festivals involve all first-born sons seven years of age. They are required to shave their heads as a duty to the family and their village.

In the Bardan I observe most closely, all of the people are crowding around a boy named Ratna Prasad Roka, while the elders in the village attempt to shave his head with dull razors. He crouches; wide-eyed, flinching each time they put the razor to his head. His mother is nagging him to hold still, while his

younger sister, Maya Devi, holds a copper plate that contains his loose hair and the money people have offered as gifts. A man is wandering through the crowd with a ledger book, recording the amount of money each family has given. Ratna's father tells me that he will have to give each family twice the amount of money that they have given to Ratna when it comes time for their sons to go through the Bardan festival. "Yo challan cha," he says: "It is tradition". This sort of tradition creates a gift exchange between families. I find it interesting that a written record is kept; Ratna's father obviously intends to reciprocate in the proper amounts, with no mistakes. The doubling of the monetary gift seems to perpetuate the exchange in a continuing cycle. One constantly owes the other, and the return gift will be allotted such that the first recipient is left in debt. At every Bardan I attend they keep track of my gift and tell me that they will return it when my son has a Bardan. Intent of reciprocity is made clear even though they will probably never have any feasible opportunity to reciprocate. It is as if this verbalized intent symbolizes reciprocity and alleviates them of their debt.

During all this, Ratna is studying me with curiosity. Being educated in Kathmandu Valley, where he resides, he is bolder than the other children, probably because he speaks Nepali better than he speaks his village's native tongue of Kaike. He keeps saying to me, "Look at my hair, it is falling from my head, it is gone." I ask his father why they are doing this and he responds that it is good for the family and allows prosperity to continue in their lineage. I want to find out why it is so important to do it in this form but he does not know. Again he repeats, "Yo challan cha." I ask other people, including the lama, but nobody can give me a more specific answer. As my eyes scan the crowd for an explanation, the lama's father approaches me and says quietly, "This is something you cannot question, but must follow. It is an act created by our forefathers to celebrate their sons and thank the gods and buddhas. This act of our forefathers allows us the prosperity that they are receiving in the

present time. We must continue to ensure our children's prosperity." It seems to be an offering that the Sahar Tarans make to the gods and buddhas to show that they are pleased with what they have received, and that they would like to continue receiving. It is a celebration of the acts of their forefathers, who began the cycle to ensure continual well-being. The festival displays a tradition of giving to the gods and the buddhas, and to the villagers' forefathers and children. What the villagers are offering is ambiguous, but it involves both realms, Chibbha and Nangba, in a collective gift exchange. Much seems to rest on the villagers' conviction that this system governs their prosperity. If the village were to be stripped of its prosperity, it would perform such festivals with more vigor in order to regain the favor of the gods and buddhas. The villagers' intrinsic understanding of cyclic action is apparent insofar as they offer this event to their forefathers and children simultaneously. "… 'economy' in a true sense of the term is between the living and dead. A life and death obligation, you might say."[xiv] The shaving of Ratna's head unifies the generations of the community in one glorious thanksgiving.

The Bardan occurs in the social realm of exchange and is celebrated for three days straight with heavy drinking and eating, and with dancing and games. The invitation entices everyone throughout the area into this celebration of exchange. The larger the party, the more beneficial the festival will be for all. Ratna's father tells me that the gods have shown favor toward his family by arranging my presence at his son's Bardan. His son's Bardan will now be known by the "bahirako lokka," the outside world. To him, my presence implies the spreading of his tradition and the diffusion of his dharma into a larger community, which he considers meritorious.

This festival allows the gift exchange to occur on both a communal and an individual level. For example, the tailor of this village carries the tradition of being the drummer during the festival. He provides a strong beat to which this gift can be

delivered. During the first day of the festival he beats on the drum all day long, and the sound reverberates across the mountainside and into the sky. People follow the sound to the household of the festival. That is why it is important that he beats on the first day. He announces an invitation through his beating, which directs people to the celebration. The people then know where to return over the next two days to continue celebrating. Since this festival only occurs for fifteen days out of the year, the tailor is in high demand. He finds himself in a drunken oblivion of drum beating for two weeks. One day I observed him staggering home from a Bardan in a village about twenty minutes away. Unaware of my presence, he was mumbling as much as stumbling. He stopped and swayed back and forth so rapidly that I was afraid he was going to fall. Instead he took a leaf and he offered it to a chorten along the path.[xv] He set it down at the foot, murmured a mantra, and then sat beside the structure and took a swig from a flask. He had offered a similar leaf to me five days earlier at a previous Bardan. He explained that it signified the changing of the cycles, new life, naya jivan. A young boy's life changes at this time; his hair is offered to the gods, buddhas, and forefathers, in order to link him into a cyclic exchange of gift and reciprocity for the rest of his life. The symbolic leaves are distributed to the family and guests, so that they may share in the young boy's progression, in the process connecting them to him. It forms a communal obligation involving the village in exchange. The leaf symbolizes the loop that encompasses all in such an economic interchange, and the humble tailor offered this entire matrix up to Padmasambhava. He was selflessly giving it all to Padmasambhava in the form of a leaf.

After Ratna's head is shaved everyone moves into the kitchen of the home, to surround the hearth. Here the lama performs the Bardan puja to Padmasambhava; he presents all the noble intentions of the festival for Padmasambhava to embrace and to deliver to his sacred realm. For this occasion he has

dressed in his maroon robes, as if to legitimate his role. He first blesses all the chang (beer) and ceremonial food and offers it to Padmasambhava. He tells me that this will accumulate karmic merit for the family as well as infuse the food with merit, so that whoever imbibes the offered substances will share in its gift. Everyone is encouraged to eat, because the more merit you spread, the more you receive, and the more potential prosperity there is for everyone who is involved. The act of sacrilization is apparent. Through the physical objects of the food and hair offerings, these people conceive of a sacred realm to which the lama offers the intentions of the festival. These objects are charged with the community's being, and dedicated to a very specific realm, Padmasambhava's sacred realm, in which they invest spiritually. The sanctified chang and torma (millet) connect all those involved to Padmasambhava's sacred aura. This physical exposure allows their progression on the spiritual path, a gift from Padmasambhava. The villagers' understanding of the sacred recipient distinguishes the spiritual offering from the ritual's gift exchange offerings, whose direction and corollary are ambiguous.

The lama has been present throughout the entire festival, celebrating as part of the community while fulfilling his ritual duties. His final duty involves hanging a new prayer flag at the household on the third and final day of the festival. This action closes the ceremony by handing the entire festival over to Padmasambhava. The tradition of hanging the prayer flags is believed to disperse mantras, or prayers, into the atmosphere, in this case at one of the highest points on the earth, so that the air becomes indoctrinated with the compassionate words of the bodhisattva, Chenrezig.[xvi] This action culminates the festival. It connects the experience of the festival to the actions of everyday life by infusing the atmosphere with the spiritual ambition that manifested through the festival. The hanging of the prayer flags symbolizes all of the offerings of this festival to Padmasambhava. One can conceive of all of the merit enveloped

in the mantras of the flags, so when the wind blows, the merit of the villagers' actions is dispersed into the air with the dharma ingrained mantras. I think even Derrida could conceive of this as being a "pure gift." After the flag is hung, no one is needed to spread the dharma, only the wind. Even if one attributes to the wind the capacity to make an offering, it does not matter, for the wind is like the sun:

> Solar energy is the source of life's exuberant development. The origin and essence of our wealth are given in the radiation of the sun, which dispenses energy—wealth—without return. The sun gives without receiving.[xvii]

The Boundaries of Exchange

The trek to Sahar Tara has been one of the most difficult I have ever undertaken. But its remoteness is purely an obstacle of distance, which does not deter people from coming and going. A number of Sahar Tarans live in Dunai as well as in Kathmandu Valley. The few Sahar Tarans I met that have moved elsewhere still incorporate the village into their lives; it is their home. It serves as a referent of identity.[xviii] They invest their ritual intent in the village by dedicating their actions to its prosperity, and the more affluent invest through commerce. Bim Prasad Roka's family owns a carpet factory in the city of Bhaktapur, in Kathmandu Valley. The Roka family has offered many of the villagers the opportunity to come to Kathmandu Valley by providing them with jobs in their factory. They are deeply invested in the community of Sahar Tara and return as often as possible for the main festivals and family events. They are dedicating fifty percent of the funds needed to the building of khamis around the village. A khami is a large chorten that has a walkway through it. It is sacred space that establishes land boundaries. These structures are erected to keep out evil and

allow prosperity to flow through the village. Such structures serve as places to perform puja and to rest safely on the outskirts of the village. They designate sacred space. The project involves establishing four khamis facing in the four directions around Sahar Tara. They are building in a circumambulatory path around the village, beginning at the southernmost point, near the river.

The khami building project itself binds the community physically through boundaries, actively through the community effort of the construction, and dharmically through the merit that will pervade in the area through everyone's actions. Everyone's intentions seem to be invested in this area regardless of where they actually dwell. This project solidifies such a notion through physical boundary markers to which all can refer.

It sets the circumferences for exchange, not through a narrowing of the landscape but through a symbolic agreement among the people of the community, a community in which the villagers are actively involved in exchange and practice based on a shared experience of the world. The khami can be seen as a symbolic form of habitus—it represents the parameters but does not set them, and they can always be extended so that the external can be incorporated.

Conclusion

Through these narratives an interplay between the two forms of exchange creates a fluid economy involving all aspects of the Sahar Tarans' lives. Their belief system survives on this agenda of prosperity. There is no question that they will receive the fruits of their ritual acts if they have executed them properly; it is similar to our expectation that our tax moneys will benefit our lives through the services they provide. For the Sahar Tarans it is a matter of necessity; they have few other alternatives on which they can depend. The Nepali government is not a key

force in their lives, and the village is quite aware of that. Much of the governmental funds and aid the village receives is given to the local gumbas ("monasteries") so that the lamas can encourage the exchange with the gods and Buddhist figures. This system seems to be working well for the village, so it is easier for the central government to support it rather than intrude with the organization of a new system of dependency, one in which the government would be the center. The villagers believe that such action allows for a stable environment to engage in a spiritual practice and thereby move beyond the mundane rituals' obligatory functions. The pure gift cultivates a path of compassion and detachment, which fosters spiritual progression and henceforth moves them beyond the realm of simple gift exchange, perhaps in a different lifetime.

The communal interdependence that results from such economies is pragmatic. The economy is circumstantial; it depends on the "shifting of meanings and on the labor involved in perpetuating the social relationship through which variable meanings of identities are created and proliferated."[xix] Exchange as a trope of habitus implies the delicate nature in the notion of habitus. It does not consist in a solid form because it would be shattered by the inevitable possibility in the experiential realm, over and over again. Instead these internal notions mutably reform with every fruit of possibility. It is parallel to the conception of karmic fruits—there is no way to measure its potential, but one can still conceive of its existence and effectiveness.

My analysis through habitus is, I hope, not limiting, but incorporates various facets of analysis: historical, textual, philosophical and structural. All of these elements are necessary in a dialogue meant to broaden the view of cultural interpretation. Such investigative discourse allows one to enact Robert Musil's category of the non-ratioid realm in its proper manner, which allows "pulsating ideas" to replace rigid concepts. One needs to be flexible in one's conceptions, especially when

challenged in a discourse on cultural interpretation. Whether in an academic discipline or on a Himalayan hillside, we all should be reminded by Musil's aphorism: "It very well could be otherwise."

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[i] Certeau, Michel, de. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Steven F. Randall, trans. Berkley: University of

California Press. P. 13.

[ii] Nangba gods are benevolent spirits who protect the dharma of Buddhism. Nangba literally means "inside" in Kaike.

[iii] Mauss, Marcel. 1950. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. W.D. Halls, trans. London: W.W. Norton. P. 12.

[iv] Klima, Alan. 1996. *The Funeral Casino*. Doctoral dissertation: Princeton University. P 20

[v] Hubert, Henri and Marcel Mauss. 1964. *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function*. W.D. Halls, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. P 96.

[vi] Ibid. (100)

[vii] Parry, Jonathan. 1986. "The Gift: The Indian gift and the 'Indian gift,'" in *Man*. vol 21:3:453-473. P. 467.

[viii] Ibid: 467

[ix] Ibid.:462

[x] Derrida, Jacques. 1992. *Given Time:.1 Counterfeit Money*. Peggy Kamuf, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. P 147

[xi] Klima, A. Ibid : 1996:71.

[xii] Mauss, M. Ibid : 1950:43

[xiii]Cohen, Lawrence. 1998. *No Aging in India: Alzheimer's, the Bad Family, and Other Modern Things.* Berkeley: University of California Press. P 6.

[xiv] Klima, A. Ibid: 14.

[xv] A *chorten* is a sacred boundary marker that represents the presence of the dharma in the area.

[xvi] Chenrezig is the Tibetan name for the bodhisattva of compassion, known in Sanskrit as Avalokiteshvara.

[xvii] Bataille, Georges. 1985. “The Notion of Expenditure.” In Alan Stoekal, ed., *Visions of Excess: Selected*

Writings, 1927-1939, pp 116 -129. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. P 118.

[xviii] Basing one’s identity on ethnic group and the location of one’s village is common in Nepal. Loyalty is designated by such categorical distinctions. In Kathmandu Valley there are a number of cultural organizations for ethnic groups from specific areas. These organizations stake out their positions in Kathmandu’s cultural melting pot. They also allow for a common community in which to continue their traditions and festivals. The Roka family has established such a cultural association of the upper Dolpa villages in Bhaktapur so that they may celebrate the festival of *Rung Puki*, a month long festival that occurs in the winter. Due to the harsh weather it is difficult to return for such an event, and the time spent in Bhaktapur would keep them from their work.

[xix] Vinceanne 1996. *Tigers of the Snow and Other Virtual Sherpas: An Ethnography of Himalayan Encounters.* Princeton: Princeton University Press. P38.

Re-creation of a Dance That Never Was: The Stylized Life of a Dance & Near-death of its Dancer

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The dancer appears on stage, the epitome of beauty and grace, she dances her homage to the gods and the audience is enchanted with her dance. The way she moves gracefully to the beats of the drum, portraying the universal stories of humanity, captures the hearts and minds of her viewers. Many do not understand the meanings of her gestures, or comprehend the lyrics of the music, nor do they know *who* exactly she is or how she got here. The only thing this audience knows is that her dance is beautiful, and they are enraptured by it. They applaud her performance shouting, "Encore! Encore!"

Thus begins the national dance of India,[1] Bharata Natyam, which upon first inspection appears to have remained consistent in style and presentation throughout the twentieth century. The dancer appeared, paying homage to her gods, while her Western and newly-educated Indian elite audience applauded her beauty and grace. And today, they are still applauding her again and again as she enters the stage, performs her message and leaves. They applaud everything she is and was, everything they have made her.

The dance we see before us today is a collaboration of efforts from many different sources. The story of the devadasi and her dance is a long and winding path. It weaves and dodges between East and West; sacred text and Oriental scholarship; women's powers and men's attempts to control them. A woman who was once considered an integral part of the temple

[1] This description of Bharata Natyam is used by Janet O'Shea and others.

community, who played a significant role in the arts connected to it, is no longer connected to her dance; that dance has joined the realm of the middle-class woman, while the devadasi herself languishes on the sidelines, surviving in what is left of an ancient tradition.

Various factors affected the dismantling of the devadasis' institution; however, all ultimately stemmed from the Christian / Western view of the world and how it perceives power. Oriental scholarship began as a way to understand those aspects of power in Eastern culture, but it began at a time when Western society was at a peak of Christian morals and purity – the Victorian Era. Therefore, all other cultures were viewed through this lens and compared to this type of morality. Oriental scholarship produced the first perceptions of the East that the Western public received, thereby colouring their perceptions and expectations of Eastern "reality."

The Devadasi represented highly sensual aspects of religion and female sexual power, both of which created tensions for the Christian world view. The Christian view of the world could not reconcile the idea of sexual power and sacred, holy purity residing within the same being, particularly a female being. Their views disseminated the belief that the divine contains no sensual or sexual nature, which is perceived as originating from a lower, animal nature, therefore not divine. Considering the position of women during the era, in conjuction with the religious implications of the devadasis' role, it seems obvious she presented a threat both religiously and socially, because she challenged religious concepts and the presiding social order. It was this perceived paradox that ultimately led to the divorce of the devadasi from her dance, which was intitiated through several avenues, and used for a multitude of purposes.

In our present day we are still struggling with the implications of this split. The modern-day dancer originates from a more Christianly acceptable station, yet these women still struggle themselves with perceptions of the dance and its

connections to the devadasi. The beliefs of their culture have been permanently altered by Oriental scholarship, Western education, and therefore, Western views of the world, which are grounded in the dichotomy of good versus evil and the Christian interpretation of that view. The modern dancer's perceptions of the history of the classical dance form, the devadasi's situation, and the re-insitution of temple dancing reflect the residual effects of Oriental scholarship and the dualistic form of thought that permeates the Christian view of humanity. Modern fiction[2] reflects the views of the dancers and echoes the sentiments expressed by colonial scholars over a century ago, leading to the conclusion that the actions and opinions expressed 100-150 years ago are still affecting public perceptions of the dancer and the dance. It is these reverberations that continue to cause difficulties in the eradication of the devadasi institution and the full sanctification of the dance.

Two important aspects to explore here are the **women** themselves who dance and **the dance** they are dancing. There are many features radiating from this pair we could explore. Here, we will focus on five aspects that affected the women and the dance. To begin with, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the performing arts underwent a substantial amount of restructuring. The devadasi did not escape this restructuring; it would be her first documented transformation of many. Second, at approximately the same time, the British East India Company's trading centers became more established and their employees were discovering the wonders of India, including its arts. By the nineteenth century three more factors came into play. Oriental scholarship was in full swing and the format of Western-style education was being established in India. Second, more British missionaries were arriving in India and third, romance and fascination with the orient was in vogue throughout the world.

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[2] A good example is *Shiva's Fire* by Suzanne Fisher Staples, which will be discussed further below.

The Theosophical Society can lay claim to participating in four of these five aspects to be explored. Annie Besant fuelled the beginnings of the dance renaissance in India through her own actions and her presentation of Rukmini Devi Arundale as the artistic incarnation of the "world mother." This essay endeavors to explore the role Oriental scholarship and the Theosophical Society played in the art of dance during the past two centuries and how it has affected the lives of the women who dance, and those who have been left behind in the wake of that dance.

Before exploring the implications of Besant and the Theosophical Society's actions, it is important to find out how the dance and the women involved in it got to that point.

Beginning the restructuring

The dancer who presents the dance of South India today is not the same dancer who performed similar dances three hundred years ago. At one time, her art was part and parcel of the temple tradition, supported by the royal courts and wealthy patrons. She danced her dance in the name of the deity to whom her body and life were dedicated to since childhood. The exact nature of her role in society is obscure; however, we do know that she was an integral part of the temple's activities, was the only "educated female of her time, and provided sexual services to particular patrons. Whether she can be labeled a prostitute in the Western sense of the word is up for debate.[3] The reformation of her dance, and quite possibly her societal role, began as a homegrown movement in the great courts of Tanjore during the late 1700s and into the mid 1800s.

Sometime around the 1790s, the Raja Tulaja of Thanjavur (Tanjore) met the four brothers, commonly referred to as the

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[3] For a further discussion on the social structures of the devadasi community see A. Srinivasan, "Reform and Revival: The Devadasi and Her Dance," *Economic and Political Weekly* (Vol. XX No. 44 November 2, 1985)

Tanjore Quartet, in Senganarkoil and brought them to the royal court.[4] What followed was a total revision of the performing arts traditions. The four brothers are given credit for organizing the dance tradition into a classification of *adavus* (steps), the systematic structuring of the music, and contributing a large number of musical compositions.[5] According to Saskia Kersenboom-Story, "the great contributions of the Quartet lies in this fact that they combined ancient Tamil traditions with new imported forms and infused them with the aesthetic and cultural sophistication that was in vogue at the court." Exactly what all these "foreign" influences were one cannot really say. However, Kersenboom-Story mentions the European influences observed in the *Kollāṭṭam* dance, that strongly resembled a waltz, and was frequently accompanied by English tunes, as well as other English peculiarities initiated at that time.[6] Meduri brings attention to the fact that this time was not only a time of syncretism, but also a time of Sanskritization. Popular forms of dance that the devadasi performed disappeared quickly at this time, being replaced by the Quartet's textualized and formalized version of the dance.[7]

This textualization can be seen as the beginnings of a Western legitimization of the tradition as well as the paternalization of the devadasi lineage. Keep in mind that this period directly followed the Enlightenment, which emphasized "rational human thought,"[8] and occurred at the same time as the first significant influx of Christian missionaries at the turn of the

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[4] Avanthi Meduri, *Nation, Woman, Representation: The Sutured History of the Devadasi and Her Dance,* (unpublished. PhD dissertation at New York University, 1996), 41.
[5] Jon Borthwick Higgins, *The Music of Bharata Natyam Volume 1*, (UK: Asia Publishing House, 1994), 3-9.
[6] Saskia Kersenboom-Story, *Nityasumangali: Devadasi Tradition in South India*, (India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), 44-45.
[7] Meduri, 43-44.
[8] Williard G. Oxtoby, *World Religions: Western Traditions*, (Canada: Oxford University Press, 1996), 309-313.

century.[9] It is highly possible that the four brothers assimilated a more Western mode of thought with their own. Richard King states in his book, Orientalism and Religion, that the eighteenth century, a time of increased production and availability of the printed word, combined with the Reformation movement within Christianity, helped to establish a text centered approach to religion.[10] This mode of thinking seems to be reflected in the remodeled approach to the dance tradition the brothers were disseminating.

It is interesting to note here that traditionally the Indian culture has been an oral culture. Although, the devadasis and others connected with the temples and ruling classes were educated in reading and writing, many portions of their spiritual traditions were transmitted orally. On this topic, King writes:

> …the vast majority of humans throughout history have participated in an ***oral*** as opposed to a literate culture. This point perhaps needs to be underlined, for it means that the vast majority of religious expression throughout history has been of a non-literate nature, taking the form of speech, ***song*, *performance*** or iconography. …the literary bias in Western notions of religion does not accurately reflect the diversity of human experience.[11] (emphasis mine)

Whether or not the textualization and restructuring in the early nineteenth century was directly a result of Western influence carries only small relevance. What is important to note is that the dance took on a new form, where the devadasi herself had less control of her art, and was subject to its aesthetic manipulation by a dominant male body. No longer was she

[9] Oxtoby, 320.
[10] Richard King, Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial theory, India and the Mystic East, (UK: Routledge Press, 1999), 43.
[11] King, 62.

dancing to please the gods, she was now dancing a stylized form directly created by men, who sought to enjoy her performance.

The Birth of Oriental Scholarship and Colonial Activities

The late eighteenth century additionally witnessed the birth of Oriental scholarship on the South Asian subcontinent. It was around 1780, with the arrival of English civil servants in Calcutta, supported by their governor, Warren Hastings, that the serious study of the Indic civilization began. The aim was no longer merely to gain knowledge, but to gain knowledge for domination and conversion, therefore providing impetus to support larger numbers of scholars.[12] William Jones, founder of the Asiatic society in Calcutta, was already an established Orientalist in England when he jumped at the chance to take up the position of judge in Calcutta in 1783.[13] Although he was not the initiator of the Orientalist movement, his substantial contributions to textual study and creation of an institutional structure created high standards for those that would follow him.

This period also reflected the increased availability of printed works to the general public. Travel writing, fiction and scholarly writing on the Orient was in vogue throughout the Western world, creating high demand for the translations and research people like Jones produced. Thomas R. Trautmann comments on the immense popularity of the Asiatic Society's journal:

> The journal of the Society, *Asiatick researches* (the "k" was soon dropped), made a great hit in Europe, as may be seen from the reprints and translations that were published in response to a celebrity that it attained soon after its first

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[12] Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880,* (USA: Columbia University Press, 1980), 33-36.

[13] Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India,* (USA: University of California Press, 1997), 28.

> volume was printed in Calcutta in 1788. Pirated editions appeared in London in 1796, 1798, and 1799, and other editions appeared in 1801 and 1806…A four-volume German translation…in1795-97…French translations…in 1803 (one volume) and 1805 (two volumes). The works of Jones, who died in India in 1794, ten years after the founding of the Society and at a time when the clamor for its works was rising, were also in great demand.[14]

By the time Annie Besant was born in 1847, scholarship was well established, providing her with limitless amounts of literature to feed her inquiring mind. Although there was little serious scholarship available on the devadasi, Nancy L. Paxton, in her book Writing Under the Raj, provides several examples of fictional and amateur non-fictional writings on the devadasis. She notes the inconspicuous procession from the romantic idealism of the devadasi in the late eighteenth century, to the outright spurning of her by the late nineteenth century, attributing the change to increased textual scholarship combined with increased missionary activity and British female presence in India. This of course resulted in amplified pressure to conform to Victorian and Christian morals in Indian society.[15]

As mentioned in the opening paragraphs, the power of women, in this case their sexual power, played a significant role in how the British colonizers viewed the role of the devadasi in Indian society. She did not fit into the conventions of a traditional British woman's role, which confused and instilled fear in the minds of her colonizers. Paxton echoes these sentiments:

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[14] Trautmann, 29.

[15] For detailed discussion see Nancy L. Paxton, "The Temple Dancer," *Writing Under The Raj: Gender, Race and Rape in the British Colonial Imagination, 1830-1947*, (Canada: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 84-108.

> The *devadasi* disrupts prevailing nineteenth-century British perceptions about femininity, first of all, because she literally embodies what Sir William Jones identified as Shakti, or "divine feminine energy," the power generated when spiritual and sexual love are combined. Because the *devadasi* lives outside the secluded domain of the family and outside the bounds of marriage, though she remains ritually pure, she demonstrates how Shakti could be enacted in what colonizers regarded as the public sphere.[16]

It is important to note that it was not only the British men who had difficulties interpreting the social structures surrounding the devadasi, but the women as well. The increase of missionary activity also supported the increase of young, single British women arriving in India to provide education and help implement conversion to the Christian faith. Both women and men would obviously be uncomfortable with the level of sophistry and sensual ease the devadasi embodied. Paxton alludes to as much:

> In the "historical real" of Indian culture, especially before the opening of British India to Christian missionaries in 1806, *devadasis* could claim many privileges otherwise categorically denied to **British and Indian women** alike. *Devadasis* could be well **educated**, highly literate, and culturally sophisticated, since they studied dance and music, and were well versed in both the oral and written sacred **traditions**. …As such, *devadasis* highlighted specific **contradictions** in the social and sexual contract in force in Great Britain until at least the 1880s concerning women's freedom, sexuality, spirituality, and purity. In other words, the *devadasi* marked the threshold of several of the most contested boundaries in the colonial

[16] Paxton, 84-85.

> imagination that separated the inner from the outer, the private from the public, and the **sacred from the sexual**.[17] (emphasis mine)

Thus, it was her unique position of power that fuelled the splitting of the devadasi from her dance. By the 1890s when Annie Besant set foot on Indian soil, the romantic vision of the devadasi was a faded memory and in her place was the scapegoat devadasi. Her body became a victim for the colonialists and the colonized. They could hurl all that was seen as invidious in the Hindu faith in the direction of the devadasi. Her mere presence represented the fact that the Anglo-Indian did not measure up to the Western idea of morality.

The Theosophical Society

The founding of the Theosophical Society (afterwards referred to as TS) in 1875, in New York, by A.P. Blavatsky and Colonel H.S. Olcott, played a pivotal role in propagating Eastern philosophy in the Western world. By 1878, they had set up a headquarters in Bombay, and had toured North America, Europe and India with their message of doctrinal unity.[18] It was not until 1889 that Ms. Annie Besant would have extended contact with A.P. Blavatsky. Besant and Blavatsky met personally for the first time after Besant reviewed Blavatsky's book, Isis Unveiled. By 1891, Besant was working solely for the TS, and was in America when Blavatsky passed away. On November 16 1893, Annie set foot on her beloved *aryavarta* (land of the Aryans) for the first time. Her affectionate term for India provides clues to what lay ahead. She had aroused much interest with her oratory skills during her passage to India, lecturing her fellow passengers on the virtues of the Brahmin caste, whom she felt were the

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[17] Paxton, 85.
[18] Theosophical Society Headquarters at Adyar website http://ts-adyar.org/

rightful leaders of Indian society.[19] She immediately found herself stepping on the toes of her fellow Theosophist, H.S. Olcott, who was working to eradicate caste problems in South Asia. Moreover, she provided an example of how conditioned she was by the Orientalist literature existing in Britain at the time.

As mentioned above, when Besant arrived in India, the dismantling of the devadasi way of life was well under way. Besant was horrified by what she saw happening around her. But she only contributed to the anti-nautch movement – the attempt to eliminate dance performances in temples and the homes of the upper classes - by defending the dance as a sacred part of Indian culture, but placing the devadasi into the position of fallen angel, stating that her sexual practices were a disfigurement of her once glorious, celibate dedication to the divine.[20] Several others, such as Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and Rabindranath Tagore echoed her sentiments, providing more fuel to the efforts of separating the women from their art.

Besant was determined to achieve three things during her life in India: reviving confidence in the "old religion"; combining of "traditional" learning with the "best of Western education"; and instilling confidence and unity in the people politically to free them from British rule.[21] Her utopian idealism, naivety and false intellectual knowledge contributed to her desires to link the West with the East and see the reinstallation of India's glorious past. We cannot fully blame Ms. Besant for her actions, her heart was in the right place, but her personality, conditioned by Western culture combined with the Oriental literature she gained her knowledge from, proved to be somewhat detrimental for the direction the TS took over the next

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[19] Anne Taylor, *Annie Besant: A Biography*, (UK: Oxford University Press, 1992), 262.
[20] Arthur H. Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, (USA: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 301.
[21] Taylor, 277.

forty years. Nevertheless, the TS proved to be an integral part of the establishment of education centers, the initiation of the Independence movement, and the resurrection of Indian performing arts.[22]

Rukmini Arundale was the daughter of a Brahmin couple who belonged to the TS. She created sensation when at sixteen years of age she decided to marry George Arundale, one of the key members of the TS. When George, Rukmini and her family approached Besant with their intentions she reacted calmly; "Annie asked the girl whether she was brave enough to face the hostile criticism which would – and did – burst out."[23] Both the Indian and British communities reacted strongly to the marriage, some members of the TS actually resigned due to the unlikely pairing of the two, but it is important to note that Rukmini confirms her own consent on this matter, and that there was no coercion involved.

Rukmini and Besant formed a fast friendship, frequently traveling together to different parts of the globe. In 1925, they attended a performance of ballet dancer Anna Pavlova. Rukmini was so moved by the performance that she announced to her Theosophical companions her intentions to dance, who responded by laughing. Besant gave the only positive response stating, "I think it will be a beautiful thing to see Rukmini dancing."[24] Rukmini undertook training with Pavlova for the next few years. Then in 1932, Rukmini witnessed the life altering dasi performance:

> I was ushered into a new world of rhythmic beauty and meaning. The discovery of such a beautiful and profound art restricted to a few specialists aroused in me a desire to

[22] For further discussion of the Theosophical Society's activities in India please see the work of Nethercot and others listed in the references.
[23] Nethercot, 320.
[24] S. Sarada, *Kalakshetra – Rukmini Devi*, (India: Kala Mandir Trust, 1985), 94.

> do all that one individual could, to spread appreciation of it and to find young people who would dedicate themselves, along with me, to its revival as a factor in the cultural renaissance of India.[25]

In 1935, Rukmini gave her Classical Indian dance debut, creating yet another sensation among the local community. It is here that the ever-present prejudice against the devadasi community surfaces in Rukmini's own words: "There was great opposition from the public who objected to a lady of quality taking up this dancing, hitherto confined to the devadasi community."[26]

A few months later, she established the International Centre of Arts (later renamed the Kalakshetra) on January 6, 1936. Here she began teaching a small group of Theosophists' children, pushing against the resistance of the now ingrained association of the dance with the fallen dancer. Rukmini would not be the only woman to "rescue" the dance. A devadasi by the name of Balasaraswati, still dancing despite the social environment, discovered Rukmini's goals and deeply contested her actions, for a number of reasons. One of the foremost reasons was the purification of the dance that Rukmini was undertaking. Janet O'Shea writes:

> Rukmini entered the field with a clear goal: eradicating the stigma on bharata natyam by removing it from the hands of "the traditional teachers" and teaching it to "the daughters of good families" (Sarada 1985, 51). She saw the art as a precious but degraded treasure that had fallen into the hands of women of "ill repute," as many urban, upper caste communities categorized devadasis. She determined that it needed to be cleaned up, purified, and handed over to "women of quality" who would bring it to prominence in respectable social circles. She believed that the vanguards

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[25] Sarada, 223.
[26] Sarada, 224.

> of this new dance had to revise the form: "Everything about the form needed to be purified." Similarly, Rukmini Devi held the element of sringara, or erotic sentiment, as a symbol of the form's degradation which needed to be replaced with a bhakti-devotionalism-devoid of sexual referent.[27]

Balasaraswati rightfully recognized the puritan idealism that Rukmini was projecting onto the dance form. Rukmini had clearly been acculturated by her English education and her involvement with the Westernized forms of spirituality that were disseminated by the TS. What clearly was happening through Rukmini was the remaking of the Indian woman into the likeness of her British sister. Perhaps what fuelled the frenzied revival of the dance after its initial cold start was the community's recognition that Indian dance was the key to holding their women apart from their British counterparts. Eventually, both Balasaraswati and Rukmini Arundale were officially recognized by the Indian government for their contributions to Indian classical dance, and the dances that initially began from two very different women merged into one form, with one name. Complete books have been written on the rivalry between Rukimini and Balasaraswati and the twists and turns the development of modern Indian classical dance took to get to this point.[28] It seems that the new moral Indian society won in the end, as the element of *sringara* is not prevalent in Bharta Natyam in its present form.

Where is the Bharata Natyam dancer now?

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[27] Janet O'Shea, "'Traditional' Indian Dance and the Making of Interpretive Communities," *Asian Theatre Journal*, (Spring 1998), 45-63.

[28] For further discussion please see Avanthi Meduri's *Nation, Woman, Representation: The Sutured History of the Devadasi and Her Dance* and Janet O'Shea's work, including: "'Traditional' Indian Dance and the Making of Interpretive Communities."

At this point, we might ask, where is the classical Indian dancer today? What has changed in the past seventy years? The consistent course of globalization has placed dancers in all corners of the globe. Some dancers are choosing to stay in India, but tour worldwide, bringing their art to the international stage. Others are bringing their art form to their new homes, teaching to the local diaspora and a few adventurous locals, while performing in various settings. The effects of globalization have altered the perceptions of the dancers greatly. In a recent survey conducted through the internet amongst the global dance community, over 80 hits were received on the site, which was advertised on two popular South Asian performing arts sites and directly emailed to over fifty dancers. However, only ten surveys were actually submitted (possibly because the dancers did not want to deal with the questions asked). All respondents felt dance formed an integral part of their life, but there was mixed response over the "traditional" guru – shishya relationship. Some claimed they did not have a dance guru, but several dance *teachers*, or that the lineage of teachers was irrelevant (perhaps a reflection of Western individualistic society?). Others went into detail over who their teachers are and how they are related to the ancient teachers of Thanjavur, thereby stressing connections to the ancient tradition and reflecting the different views of Rukmini Arundale and Balasaraswati.

<u>What does today's dancer know about her predecessor – the devadasi?</u>

When asked about the devadasi and how she relates to the dance tradition, two declined to answer. All others were able to provide on the whole, a historically accurate picture of the pre-colonial conditions. Nevertheless, five of the respondents provided orientalized and romanticized ideals stating, "she was

part of one of the oldest and most beautiful form of dances"; "really pining for her Lord" when she danced; a "sacred prostitute"(2); and was "from a respectable family." It should be noted that five of the respondents mentioned they were academics, and also provided some of the more orientalized views of the group from the survey in its entirety. Margaret Walker, Kathak dancer and North Indian ethnomusicologist, stated that although she was aware there are still hereditary dancers, "they are no longer performing in temples either as dancers or sacred prostitutes. Therefore, although they are of devadasi lineage, they cannot really be called devadasis." It is obvious she has been affected by the scholarship in her field, and has an internalized definition of what a devadasi is, in accordance to what has been presented to her. Furthermore, she has excluded the women who are still involved in the tradition, dancer or otherwise, from the label, placing the term devadasi into the ancient realm, leaving the women who are currently living the shattered tradition without a voice or a name. However, she does acknowledge that the women should be consulted to "see how they view their own situation."

On the question of the current situation of the devadasis, all respondents save one excluded the women who are presently devadasis living without an artistic tradition, despite the fact these women are dedicated to the temple in the traditional manner. The respondent who replied concerning all women who fall under the label of devadasi lamented that the situation was not a positive one, and was unsure of how it could be rectified.[29] This unified response simply echoes the above-mentioned dilemma – that these women are left without a voice despite the fact that they still exist; here lies a prime example of the subaltern. Women exist in India under the name of "devadasi,"

[29] The institution of the Devadasi and the dedication of girls to temples were officially outlawed in 1947. However, dedication practices continue to go on as evidenced by recent articles in the news concerning temples in Karnataka and elsewhere.

yet no one wants to hear them speak. She has no voice; we do not want her to have one, she might say something we do not want to hear.

Temple dancing today

On the final question concerning the re-institution of temple dancing, answers were wildly varied, but carried through the general theme of orientalized and romanticized ideals. Lakshmi B. gave one of the most interesting answers saying,

> "I am not a devadasi unfortunately, but dancing in front of god gives you a different feeling altogether than dancing in front of an audience. You feel that you are complete, and each time you perform your aspiration for dancing increases. …Introducing temple dance is now impossible because of the name the devadasis have."

Interestingly, she was also the only respondent who had more experience dancing in temples than on stages. Lakshmi identifies with the romantic ideal of the devadasi dedicating herself to her god through her performance. It is not an unrealistic ideal given her own experiences. Her experiences have provided her with hard evidence of the difference the environment can create for the dancer. Nevertheless, her statements can be viewed as an overly romanticized view of the whole dance experience. In my eyes, her dedication to her art and devotional feelings that surface during her performance, already classifies her as a devadasi in the literal sense of the word (a servant of "God"). It would be interesting to find out from her why she does not consider herself one.

The remaining replies for this question were equally divided between indifference and a positive response to the idea of temple dancing. All of the positive respondents also stressed the necessity of keeping the role of temple dancing strongly

segregated from the ancient ideal of the devadasi, which again echoes the influence the negative stereotype perpetuated in the nineteenth century, still has on the modern mind. Roxanne Gupta cited two personal temple dancing experiences. One she perceived as partially judgmental, in that the deity's door remained closed, "as if the dance would somehow 'pollute' the god." She commented on the possibility of it being related to her Caucasian background or the "devadasi symbolism." Her second experience was much more positive which she attributes to "the attitude of the Guru who values women, dance and embodiment as central values…" Her experiences are reflective of the situations of the past century, where varying ideals are fought out on the body of the dancer.

Finally, the indifferent respondents looked at the necessity of continuing dance heritage and tradition over dancing in temples, of modernizing the dance to "win a global audience"[30] and the appropriate observation that this might have more to do with Indian nationalism than it does with ancient tradition.[31] All of these responses reflect an influence of Western ideals. Recall King's comments quoted earlier on the textualization of religion and add to this, his exploration of the word religion and its original meaning of pondering of the divine by following a path laid by one's ancestors, as opposed to the Christian emphasis placed on truth and falsity and therefore, "historicity."[32] The emphasis placed on recognition, tradition and nationalism, all reflect this desire to keep historical connections to the past, echoing King's observations of the Christian view.

It has been over a century since the separation of the devadasi from her dance was begun, yet we are still influenced by the discourse of more than a century ago. Newspaper articles in the

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[30] Diane Bird, *Re-institution of Temple Dancing & the Devadasi Survey Results*, (Canada: 2002), respondent Anu S.
[31] Bird, respondent Margaret Walker.
[32] King, 37-39.

last decade equate the devadasi with the common prostitute on one hand[33] and glorify her by labeling great dancers "true" devadasis on the other.[34] Social workers attempting to help the women ensnared in the distorted remains of the devadasi tradition are well aware of the emotional responses elicited from the ominous "D" word:

> Bharati Shettar takes care to keep out the dreaded word "devadasi" from posters and banners or programmes which beg for the attention of the public. Sensitizing people to the needs of devadasis who want to reclaim their place in society is as necessary as empowering the devadasis.[35]

It seems the primary accomplishment of the last century was to divorce the devadasi from her role of dancer and entertainer and replace her with the more wholesome, acceptable form of the middle-class woman. Today we are left with the debased elements of an ancient tradition projected at a name, that is still attached to a now victimized group of women, while glorified remnants of a sacred past are projected onto a woman who is found acceptable by the Western world and those whose mind has been re-educated by Western thought. Her once free sexuality is no longer a living truth, but a mere fantasy in the minds of her audience. The male observer is now free to fantasize about the beautiful dancer before him in all her glory, for now not only will she seduce him and titillate him with her stylized seduction, but she will transform into the wholesome "girl-next-door" who can cook for him and be the mother of his children. No longer is the power of the sensual, alluring dancer a threat, for she has been brought under control, we've divorced her from her former model of a woman with no direct paternal sovereignty over her power, and re-married her to one that

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[33] sample articles listed in references between 1992 - 2002
[34] ibid.
[35] Alladi Jayasri, "Believing in a Future," *The Hindu,* (India: July 25, 1999), 1.

society has control over. We project the devadasi as a prostitute when the dancer is **paid** to be sexual and alluring on stage. Is this not a form of prostitution itself? The fact that society has placed woman in the role of the sexually objectified, suggests that it may be just that – the prostitution of her sexual charm. We have encased our sexual dancer in layers of "tradition" and projected her onto a morally acceptable figure. Yet still, our global society romances the nautch girl.

A recent best-seller on the children's fiction list, Shiva's Fire by Suzanne Fisher Staples, who has not spent as much time researching the dance as one is led to believe, has written about the romance of being a specially chosen dancer of God. Staples presents the life of a devadasi as a luxurious life filled with discipline, but also with auspiciousness and respect. She lays claim to a fictional romanticization of a mere portion of the truth of what a devadasi was, never mind what she **is** today. She introduces her most romanticized perceptions in chapter seven:

> And then one day a famous master, Guru Pazhayanur Muthu Kumara Pillai, came to the village from Madras, a long distance away, to see the child. …The Guru, a follower of the Mahatma, Mohandas Gandhi, was well known…He and his late wife, Lakshmi, were two of a handful of masters who had revived the ancient art of bharata natyam, a classical dance form that had fallen out of grace during the time of British rule. The Guru was regarded as one of the heroes who had saved the sacred art and taught it again in its **traditional form**. … The Guru's students were known as **devadasis** – servants of the gods – whose lives were dedicated to their art, performing and teaching throughout the South of India. …"I want to take her to the gurukulam in Madras. There she would study to become a devadasi – " …"It is not what you are thinking," he said. "A devadasi is a servant of the gods. After the British came, they were regarded as common prostitutes.

> To be a devadasi is a sacred thing – as it was in **ancient times**. To the devadasi, dance is prayer as well as art, and it requires total devotion." …"She would have a rigorous life, but a good one. She would be well fed and well cared for, and **well educated**. And we would **pay you for giving her up to us.** You would not have to go to the expense of arranging a marriage for her in a few years. …She will be respected and admired."
> (emphasis mine, 83-90.)

It is hard to believe our society can "progress" so far yet still be in the same place after so many decades. Staples touches upon every aspect that is conditioning the current perceptions of South Indian dance. The romanticizing of the position of the devadasi, and the connection of her role to a glorious, ancient past, echoes the problems with Oriental scholarship that Said pushed onto the academic world several decades ago. She calls forth the idea of the well-educated devadasi, with a status above the others in her community, something, that at this present moment is the exact opposite of reality. The real, living, breathing devadasi of today does not have respect, admiration, education or even her craft of dance to fall upon. All of these have been stripped away from her; yet Staples is presenting to young girls the idea that they are not, ignoring reality in favour of a utopian ideal, conditioning yet another generation to participate in the manufactured "reality" of the East.

The far-reaching affects of Orientalist scholarship are continuing to condition the views of South Indian arts. Although members of the Indian community are also perpetuating the projections initialized by Western academia, we cannot blame them for the self-orientalization that has assisted them in their quests for national unity and international acceptance of their culture. The syncretization of South Indian culture with Western idealism has allowed the "other" to slip into a position of "equality" with the Western world, albeit an uncomfortable one.

India became an independent nation in 1947, yet the effects of colonialism show no signs of lessening their grip on its people. British rule has eternally changed how the nation and its people perceive themselves. The results of colonial scholarship are still echoing throughout the world, representing a semi-fictional East rather than the stark reality. Annie Besant, Rukmini Devi and the Theosophical society are merely a few pawns of many involved in the dissemination of dualism in Christian thought. The modern-day dichotomy of dancer and devadasi is a direct result of the colonialists' perspectives of religious and social structures. In a recent discussion with a Tamil-Canadian woman of Christian background, she expressed her disdain for a community unwilling to allow their children to dance because of its direct connections to the devadasi tradition. She quoted her elders as saying, "Only girls from low families partake in dance, we are above that."[36] Until society is able to transcend this dualistic way of thinking, the remaining devadasis cannot lay claim to a place in society that projects their own societal evils upon them, and the dancer cannot fully express the entire spectrum of human emotion, including those of an erotic, sensual nature without critical judgment.

[36] Informal interview on the position of women and dance in Tamil society with "Ms. B": April 2002.

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The Mourning After: Sikh Americans' Cultural Awareness Campaign Following 9/11

Avanti A. Pradhan

I: INTRODUCTION

September 11, 2001 is a day that will be remembered in horror and grief by all Americans. Almost 3,000 people died from the terrorist attacks perpetrated on the World Trade Center and on the Pentagon.[1] Hundreds more died from an airplane crash in Pennsylvania, which also resulted from the terrorist attacks.[2] However, the American tragedy did not end there. Directly following September 11, hundreds of Arabs, South Asians and other people who look "Middle Eastern" fell victim to stereotyping, racial profiling and hate crimes due to their physical similarities to the suspected terrorists.[3]

One group that was particularly affected was the Sikh community. As a tenet of their faith, Sikh men wear turbans and long beards, making them especially susceptible to hate crimes aimed at those who look similar to the suspected 9/11 terrorists. During the three months following the September 11 terrorist attacks, more than 200 Sikh Americans reported that they were victimized in incidents including racial targeting, harassment, vandalism, and murder.[4]

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[1] U.S. Department of State. 15 August 2002. *September 11 2001: Basic Facts.* Available from World Wide Web:(http://www.state.gov/coalition/cr/fs/12701.htm)
[2] (http://www.state.gov/coalition/cr/fs/12701.htm)
[3] The Sikh Coalition. Available from World Wide Web: (http://www.sikhcoalition.org)
[4] (http://www.sikhcoalition.org)

After the September 11th incident, as a response to the backlash against Sikh Americans, an alliance of Sikh American organizations was formed.[5] The four organizations that participated in the Sikh American Alliance were SCORE, the Sikh Coalition (an organization based in New York that promotes the safety and protection of Sikh Americans), the Sikh Communications Council (an organization based in California that is dedicated to portraying a positive Sikh American image), and the Sikh Mediawatch and Resource Task Force (also known as SMART - an organization based in Maryland that is committed to surveying all media concerning Sikh Americans and Sikh American issues). The Sikh American Alliance seeks to reduce stereotyping, racial profiling and hate crimes by reaching out to local communities, the media, and the government in a campaign to increase cultural awareness. The purpose of this study is to trace and evaluate the steps that the Sikh American Alliance took to increase cultural awareness.

CAMPAIGN PROFILE:
DECREASING HATE BY INCREASING AWARENESS

According to a November 1, 2001 *New York Times* article, hundreds of Sikh Americans have been the targets of hate crimes since September 11, 2001 because they wear turbans and have long beards that resemble the suspected terrorists. The Sikh American Alliance was formed with the goal of making the general public more aware of the Sikh culture and religion so that fewer cultural misunderstandings and misrepresentations would occur. The Sikh American Alliance hoped that increasing the general public's knowledge of the Sikh culture and religion would result in fewer stereotypes, racial profiling and hate crimes.

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[5] Singh, Jaspreet. Personal communication, November 2, 2001.

Approximately two or three days after the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Sikh Council on Religion and Education (SCORE), a Sikh American organization based in Washington, D.C., met with a small number of Sikh community leaders to discuss the effects the terrorist acts might have on Sikh Americans. After a few meetings, SCORE took the responsibility of assembling the Sikh American Alliance composed of four Sikh American organizations in order to implement a nationwide cultural awareness campaign. Together, the members of Alliance set out to combat the increase of stereotyping, racial profiling, and hate crimes aimed at Sikhs following September 11 by planning a cultural awareness campaign.

Richard Crable and Steven Vibbert contend that organization planners should be proactive in managing issues.[6] The Sikh American Alliance was formed to wage a cultural awareness campaign before any hate crimes resulting from September 11 were made against Sikh Americans. The proactive stance made by the Sikh American Alliance illustrates Crable and Vibbert's third concept of the catalytic strategy of change model.

During the planning stage, the Sikh American Alliance, led by Dr. Rajwant Singh of SCORE and Aman Singh of the Sikh Coalition, collected funds to hire an outside consultant from Washington, D.C. This consultant, Samuel Kaplan, had experience with social injustice issues and had worked with numerous civil rights advocacy groups since the 1960's. The purpose of the outside consultant was to develop a professional, long-term communication and lobbying plan for the Sikh American Alliance.

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[6] Richard E. Crable & Steven L. Vibbert. "Managing Issues and Influencing Public Policy." *Public Relations Review* 11 (1985): 3-15

Kirk Hallahan[7] suggests the Motivation, Ability, Opportunity (M-A-O) model provides a useful framework for public relations when communicating with inactive publics. He describes inactive publics as people with little knowledge and little involvement in an organization. The M-A-O model can help increase the inactive publics' level of knowledge and involvement by enhancing motivation and ability to process information. Hallahan explains that ability refers to improving publics' skill for understanding messages. By getting advice from an outside consultant, the Alliance seemed to understand how an outsider's opinion can greatly assist an organization that is in the middle of a crisis, thereby exemplifying Hallahan's concept of ability.

Once the Sikh American Alliance had gotten advice from the outside consultant, a three-pronged cultural awareness campaign was put into action. This campaign consisted of reaching out to local communities, the media, and the government. The Sikh American Alliance reached out to local communities by implementing five strategies for increased cultural awareness.

A: Community Relations

One strategy used by the Alliance to increase cultural awareness was to publicize Sikh American solidarity with other Americans after the September 11 attacks. The Alliance wanted to show America that Sikhs also grieved for the loss of the thousands who perished in the attacks. Immediately following the attacks, the Sikh American Alliance created stickers and banners with patriotic logos and mottos for display. The stickers portrayed an American flag and were about three by five inches. The stickers were distributed to Sikh community members,

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[7] Hallahan, 463.

religious leaders, local college students, and young professionals who live in the Washington and New York areas. The banners had bold words printed on them reading, "Sikh Americans Join All Americans in Prayer." The banners were made for display on homes, temples, and cultural centers and were primarily distributed to Sikh religious and community leaders.

Hugh Rank[8] gives a schema for teaching about persuasion based on intensification and downplaying communication. He states that one can intensify one's own good, intensify others' bad, downplay one's own bad, or downplay others' good in order to persuade. Rank explains that intensifying by repetition refers to how communicators reiterate their message in order to effectively persuade their audience. The Alliance intensified by repetition by using the phrase "Sikh Americans Join all Americans in Prayer" on stickers as well as on banners.

The Sikh American Alliance's second strategy to reach out to local communities was to reinforce the sentiment of the stickers and banners by encouraging Sikhs to attend vigils and prayer services. In order to portray their sincere sympathy and patriotism during the week of the attacks, Sikh Americans made a handsome showing at vigils and prayer services throughout the United States, but especially in Washington, D.C. and New York. For example, the Sikh American Alliance encouraged Sikhs to attend vigils and prayer services sponsored by Asian Americans at the Japanese American Memorial, the Inter-Faith Council on Religion at Georgetown University, and the Indian Embassy. The Sikh American Alliance hoped that attendance at vigils and prayer services would show America that their sympathies were with the victims of the attacks.

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[8] Hugh Rank. "Teaching about public persuasion," in D. Dieterich (ed.), *Teaching about doublespeak*. Urban, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English (1976): 3-19.

Third, the Sikh American Alliance reached out to local communities by encouraging the Sikh community to take an active role in the September 11 relief efforts in the weeks following the attacks. For example, members of the Washington area and New York Sikh communities donated food, clothing, appliances, and volunteer time to the Salvation Army, whose donations went directly to the September 11 relief efforts. The Sikh American Alliance also collected thousands of dollars from Sikh communities and Sikh religious organizations from across the nation to donate to World Trade Center and Pentagon relief funds. The Alliance also encouraged Sikh communities across the nation to donate blood to the Red Cross in wake of the attacks. By being actively involved with local communities' relief efforts, the Sikh American Alliance increased cultural awareness. Rank describes intensifying by association as linking "the idea, person, or product with something already loved or desired...by the intended audience."[9] By becoming visible in local communities, the Alliance demonstrated intensifying by association, and Americans were able to associate Sikh Americans with service to America.

Next, the Alliance reached out to local communities by visiting schools, universities, and police stations. During the week following the attacks when there was an increase in the reports of stereotypes, racial profiling, and hate crimes aimed Sikh Americans, the Alliance sent notices and Sikh American representatives to primary and secondary schools in the Washington area to warn faculty and staff of possible racial targeting and harassment. They encouraged them to teach students about cultural awareness in order to alleviate potential harassment. More specifically, the Sikh American Alliance encouraged school faculty and staff to be more aware of the Sikh culture and religion in order to reduce the amount of cultural

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[9] Rank, 19.

misunderstandings and misrepresentations concerning Sikhs. The Sikh American Alliance sent similar warnings and notices to universities and university organizations such as Indian and Sikh students' organizations, and university offices of multicultural affairs. The Sikh American Alliance also sent representatives to police stations throughout New York and the Washington metropolitan area, including university police, to warn police officers of possible racial profiling and hate crimes aimed at Sikhs. This was another way that the Alliance's campaign demonstrated Ranks' concept of intensifying by repetition. By reiterating their message regarding safety, the Sikh American Alliance was able to persuade their target audience into understanding their concerns.

Secondly, the Sikh American Alliance's fifth strategy to reach out to local communities was to respond publicly to current events that affected the Sikh American community following September 11, 2001. There were two current events that the Sikh American Alliance took special interest in to gain public and media attention. The first was the burning of an interfaith religious center in Oswego County, New York in November of 2001. Sikh community and religious leaders believed that the violence perpetrated on the Sikh religious center was an act of hate aimed at Sikh Americans. In order to publicize their condemnation of stereotyping, racial profiling, and hate crimes aimed at Sikhs, the Sikh American Alliance offered a $5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the fire.

The Sikh American Alliance established a national fund to provide for future rewards leading to the arrest and conviction of perpetrators of crimes against Sikh individuals as well as community and religious institutions. The purpose of the rewards was to assist the Sikh American Alliance in publicizing the increase of stereotyping, racial profiling, and hate crimes aimed at Sikh Americans. Notice of the $5,000 reward and the newly established national reward fund providing for future

rewards leading to the arrest and conviction of perpetrators of crimes against Sikh individuals as well as community and religious institutions reached the media, local police, and local communities by means of news releases and personal contact from members of the Sikh American Alliance. The Sikh American Alliance hoped the rewards would increase local communities' awareness of the Sikh culture and of the escalation of the social injustice aimed at Sikhs by publicizing the reward.[10]

Hallahan describes motivation as increasing the publics' interest in order to get them involved with the current situation. The Alliance demonstrated Hallahan's concept of motivation by issuing the reward leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the fire. The Alliance motivated their audience to help find those responsible for the hate crime made against Sikh Americans by offering them a monetary award.

Another current event that the Sikh American Alliance took special interest in was Guru Nanak's birthday. Guru Nanak is the messenger and founder of the Sikh religion. Every year on December 5th Sikh Americans gather to celebrate this auspicious day, and in wake of the attacks in 2001, the Sikh American Alliance used Guru Nanak's birthday as an opportunity to create awareness of the Sikh religion among local communities. The Sikh American Alliance spread messages by means of news releases and bulletins. These messages consisted of phrases such as, "Sikhism is teaching and praying for love, peace, truth, and equality," and were disseminated throughout the Washington metropolitan area. By publicly responding to current events that affected the Sikh community, the Alliance illustrated the concept of intensifying by association. In doing so, the Sikh American Alliance was able to associate itself with desiring to educate the public in a positive way rather than perpetually seeming like a victim.

B: Media Relations

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[10] Singh, Jaspreet. Personal communication, November 2, 2001.

The second aspect of the Sikh American Alliance's three-pronged cultural awareness campaign was to reach out to the media. The Sikh American Alliance disseminated press releases at least every other week since September 11, 2001 to local and national print media, broadcast media and specialty publications including Internet sites and minority publications. These press releases addressed such topics as the murder of Balbir Singh, the Sikh American man killed in Mesa, Arizona, on-going hate crimes aimed at Sikh Americans since the terrorist attacks, legislation condemning hate crimes since the attacks, interfaith council meetings and events, Sikh religious holidays, and fund-raising activities sponsored by the Sikh American Alliance.

Within two days of the murder of Balbir Singh, the Sikh American Alliance put together a press conference in Rockville, Maryland to respond to the murder. Dr. Rajwant Singh, president of the Sikh American Alliance, led the press conference. Then they arranged a national press conference at the National Press Club on September 26, 2001 to address hate crimes. Although the Sikh American Alliance arranged the National Press Club event, other affected parties, such as Muslims and Arabs, also took part. The Sikh American Alliance also sent representatives to a press conference held by Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle that celebrated ethnic diversity.

In addition, the Sikh American Alliance created advertisements for major newspapers such as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. These ads were paid for by donations from members of the Alliance. One full-page advertisement placed in the *Washington Post*, dating September 25, 2001, read, "Sikh Americans grieve with their fellow Americans and offer prayers for all those who have suffered in the recent tragedy." A second half-page advertisement placed in the *Washington Post*, dated September 29, 2001, read, "Sikhs for America, These are the faces of Sikh Americans." Both advertisements displayed a montage of Sikh American faces of

all ages and both genders. Rank explains that intensifying by composition is persuading an audience by arranging messages in an attention-grabbing manner. Through its advertisements, the Alliance exemplified this concept.

The Alliance encouraged Sikhs to contribute to local and national news packages by assisting media personnel who responded to news releases and by participating in interviews if approached by the media. News coverage included a fifteen-minute Connie Chung special on the ABC news network, articles in the *Washington Post*, *New York Post*, *LA Times*, *India Today*, and *Express India* and scrolling news on CNN.

C: Government Relations

The third part of the Sikh American Alliance's three-pronged cultural awareness campaign was to reach out to the federal government. They worked with a number of legislators to lobby for the passage of hate crime resolutions. In the House of Representatives, Congressman Mike Honda, a democrat from California, and Congressman Christopher Shays, a democrat from Connecticut, introduced a resolution condemning racial profiling and hate crimes against Sikh Americans, calling for those who engage in hate crimes to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Honda and Shays' resolution also asked that Sikh Americans' civil liberties to be protected during the search for terrorists. Senator Richard Durbin, a Republican from Illinois, introduced a similar resolution in the Senate. The Alliance demonstrated Hallahan's concept of motivation by teaming up with legislators to condemn hate crimes in order to increase the publics' interest. In doing so, the Alliance motivated their audience to refrain from engaging in racial profiling and hate crimes.

In addition to passing legislation through the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Sikh American Alliance also met with representatives from the Departments of Transportation

and Justice. The goal of these meetings was to make the departments aware of racial profiling, and to seek protection for Sikh Americans during the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. The Sikh American Alliance continued to increase cultural awareness by voicing their concerns to specific governmental departments.

Finally, as a culmination of the heightened efforts for cultural awareness following September 11, 2001, the Alliance planned a memorial to appeal to lawmakers. This program was called "One Nation United," and was created to offer the September 11 victims *and* hate crime victims a formal remembrance. The memorial program took place on December 11, 2001 from 5:30pm to 8:30pm at the United States Capitol, to mark the three-month anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks. The Sikh American Alliance's outside consultant, Samuel Kaplan, managed scheduling, speakers, and guests of honor while Jaspreet Singh, Director of Program Development for the Sikh Council on Religion and Education, secured the venue. The Sikh American Alliance also recruited eight local Sikh college students and young professionals to help organize the publicity, registration, and decorations for the memorial program.

Approximately 200 people attended the program, including elected public officials, congressional committee staff members, members of civil rights organizations, minority media representatives, documentary filmmakers, young professionals, experienced professionals, community leaders, Sikh community members, college students, primary school students, secondary school students, and religious leaders representing Sikhism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, Christianity, and Buddhism. Guests of honor included California Representative Mike Honda, New York Representative Hillary Rodham Clinton, and the family of Balbir Singh. Other public officials who attended the program included Ed Royce of California, Richard Durbin of Illinois, Connie Morella of Maryland, Jeff Bingaman of New

Mexico, David Bonior of Michigan, and J.D. Hayworth and Rush Holt of New Jersey. All registered attendees were given an information packet, a red, white and blue ribbon and a pre-printed nametag. The information packets included a schedule of events for the memorial program, a list of speakers, copies of recent print coverage and news releases, background information on the Sikh American Alliance and its leaders, and general facts about the Sikh religion. Information packets given to elected public officials included additional information regarding hate crime issues. The information packets exemplified Hallahan's concept of ability by assisting in the understanding of the Sikh religion and the Sikh American's plight following September 11, 2001.

The memorial program commenced with a speech given by Sikh American Alliance leaders Dr. Rajwant Singh and Aman Singh. Other speakers included Representative Mike Honda, Representative Hillary Rodham Clinton, a Sikh religious leader from Mesa, Arizona, and a George Washington University student who encouraged the passage of the hate crime bill concerning Sikh Americans. At the end of the speeches, each of the religious leaders led the memorial program attendees in prayer and candle lighting. Afterwards, all attendees were given catered Indian food and encouraged to mingle.

The "One Nation United" memorial program also helped the Alliance illustrate Rank's concept of intensifying by association by associating themselves with giving sympathy to those who perished in the terrorist attacks and to those who suffered from hate crimes after the attacks.

The Sikh American Alliance appears to be meeting its objective of reducing stereotypes, racial profiling, and hate crimes aimed at Sikh Americans by increasing Sikh American cultural awareness. Since September of 2001, the number of reported hate crime incidents has dramatically decreased. The Sikh Coalition, one of the participating organizations of the Sikh American Alliance, claims that there were 139 hate crime

incidents reported in September of 2001, 35 incidents reported in October of 2001, 16 incidents reported in November of 2001, seven incidents reported in December of 2001, four incidents reported in January of 2002, three incidents reported in February of 2002, and zero incidents reported in August of 2002. Although the drastic decrease of hate crime reports could be attributed to other factors, it can also be attributed in part to the Sikh American Alliance's proactive response to the social injustice aimed at Sikhs following September 11. Within the three months directly following the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Sikh American Alliance managed to visit five school districts, three police districts, and attract over 200 attendees to the memorial program on Capitol Hill.[11]

CONCLUSION

In this study I examined the Sikh American's cultural awareness campaign following September 11. Specifically, I focused on an alliance of Sikh American organizations as a case study to analyze how they attempted to attain cultural awareness. The Sikh American Alliance includes the Washington, D.C. based Sikh Council on Religion and Education (SCORE), the New York based Sikh Coalition, the California based Sikh Communications Council, and the Maryland based Sikh Mediawatch and Resource Task Force (SMART).

This study is needed at this time since it is in direct consequence to the recent September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Studying how and why one cultural group attempted to decrease the stereotyping, racial profiling, and hate crimes aimed at them immediately following the September 11 terrorist attacks is crucial to the question of how Americans are dealing with the current War Against Terrorism and national

[11] Singh, Jaspreet. Personal communication, November 2, 2001.

uncertainty. This study is also needed at this time because of the lack of literature concerning increasing cultural understanding in order to decrease stereotyping, racial profiling, and hate crimes. Much research has been done on these topics separately, but few have been done on how one affects the other.

Analyzing the effectiveness of the Sikh American Alliance's three-pronged cultural awareness campaign is important to understanding how future stereotyping, racial profiling, and hate crimes can be brought to an end. The Sikh American Alliance's campaign set a precedent for other ethnic groups in the United States during times of national crises and/or catastrophes that might affect the image or safety of their members. The Alliance proactively took responsibility for ensuring the safety and image of Sikhs in America following the September 11th terrorist attacks. By combining the forces of four prominent Sikh American organizations, the Sikh American Alliance was able to assist in the drastic decrease of the amount of hate crimes reported by Sikh Americans.

The Sikh American Alliance's effective cultural awareness campaign following 9/11 resulted in heightened public exposure and understanding about the Sikh culture. Therefore, although the campaign was implemented under grave circumstances, the Sikh American Alliance has set itself up for an ongoing cultural awareness campaign that targets local communities, the media, and the government.

Future research can be done on how the Sikh American Alliance's on-going efforts for cultural awareness compares to other affected ethnic and religious groups' efforts for cultural awareness. Such research calls for an in-depth study on how cultural groups, such as the Arab-Americans, dealt with their cultural awareness campaigns following the September 11th terrorist attacks. A historical study on this topic could focus on Japanese-Americans and the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor attack in 1942.

Such profiles of various cultural awareness campaigns should include review of news releases, public service announcements, newsletters, Internet memos, media mentions, and legislative action. Future studies should also include verifiable data in order to compare cultural awareness campaigns quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Future studies concerning cultural awareness campaigns will highlight the effect such campaigns have on society, especially at times of war and uncertainty.

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Confession and the *Paṭimokkha* in the Pali Vinaya

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The life of the monk in the Pali Vinaya is cyclical, for all monks must gather together on a schedule dictated by the waxing and waning of the moon. On the days of the new and full moons, called *Uposatha* days, the monks engage in the ritual of the *paṭimokkha*, in which the 227 core rules of discipline in the Vinaya are recited for each member of the sangha to hear. Such a regularly occurring and frequent ritual has a profound influence on another ritualized act in the Vinaya, the rite of confession. In fact, the Buddha relates confession directly to the *paṭimokkha*. In the *Cullavagga* he explains, "It is not possible, monks, it cannot come to pass that the Truthfinder [the Buddha] . . . should recite the *paṭimokkha* with an assembly that is not entirely pure. Nor, monks, should the *paṭimokkha* be heard by one who has an offense."[1] In other words, an assembly of monks that is entirely pure is one in which each individual monk harbors no unrevealed offense, and the purity of the entire assembly is a requisite for the *paṭimokkha.* How then does a monk who has committed an offense regain his purity? That very question occurs to a monk in the Vinaya: "It is laid down by the Lord that the Observance [the *paṭimokkha*] should not be carried out by an offender, but I have fallen into an offense. Now what line of conduct should be

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[1] I.B. Horner, trans., *The Book of Discipline, Vol. V* (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1992), 336. If the language of a passage bears on my argument, I translate it myself and give the Pali in a footnote. Otherwise, I use Horner's translations.

followed by me?"[2] When the Buddha is told of the monk's predicament, he prescribes the ritual of confession as the way for the impure monk to re-achieve purity. So confession becomes indispensable to insuring the performance of the *paṭimokkha*, and likewise the *paṭimokkha* stands as a predominant motive for confession.

The revelation of wrongdoing in the Vinaya is not limited to the required purity of monks on the *Uposatha*, however, and confession is not even limited to monks. But the frequency of the *paṭimokkha* makes this ritual a salient context in which to pursue an understanding of the primary functions of confession for monks.[3] The importance of the *paṭimokkha* to confession can be seen in the fact that the most lengthy and developed description of confession given by the Buddha is the example mentioned above of the monk harboring an offense as the *paṭimokkha* looms. While examples of confession and its consequences outside of the *paṭimokkha* will be used to illuminate some of its characteristics, only in relation to the *paṭimokkha* will confession be fully described, both as a means to spiritual development for the monk and as a powerful method of social control within the status-conscious and closely knit community of the sangha. This dual nature of confession will be seen to have the quality of an initiation, both to higher spiritual attainments and to a potentially arduous disciplinary process. As the gateway to spiritual progress and punitive measures, it partakes of the natures of both.

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[2] I.B. Horner, trans., *The Book of Discipline, Vol. IV* (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1996), 167.

[3] Another ritual gathering of monks, the *pavāraṇā*, partakes of the same cyclical quality as the *paṭimokkha*, occurring yearly as the rains retreat ends. In fact, the *paṭimokkha* and *pavāraṇā* operate so similarly in regard to confession that I will focus on the far more frequent *paṭimokkha* for the sake of brevity.

Previous literature

What little has been written on the rite of confession in the Pali Vinaya by Buddhist Studies scholars has described it as a means of psychological transformation without the consideration of any ritual context. I have found only two articles that treat the issue exclusively, both of which view it as a means of catharsis in the transgressor. The effect of such a catharsis is then presumed to encourage closer fidelity to the code of discipline. J. Duncan M. Derrett in "Confession in Early Buddhism" describes the process: "Consciousness of doing ill causes grief (Dhp 15). Confession clarifies one's position. One [the monk] may be reassured there is growth for the future. Like a child's transactions with his guardians, the offender will be 'better hereafter.'"[4] In this encapsulation, Derrett dwells upon the internal results of confession upon the confessee, without considering the forces brought to bear on the offender as a person embedded within a closely knit social group. In "Dynamics of Confession in Early Buddhism," Theresina Havens also identifies confession's therapeutic effect on the individual monk's psyche as its distinctive and groundbreaking operation: "It is not surprising in view of its psychotherapeutic approach that Buddhism seems to have been the first world religion to enunciate the general principle involved in catharsis..."[5] The explanations of these two scholars do touch upon real qualities of the act, but fall far short of a full description. This essay will show that any psychological results in the monk emerge not as the aim of confession, but as the effects of its two strategies of encouraging spiritual development and forestalling prohibited behavior. In order to prove these dual

[4] J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Confession in early Buddhism," in *Bauddhavidyasudhakarah: Studies in Honour of Heinz Bechert on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday,* ed. Petra Kieffer-Pulz and Jens-Uwe Hartman (Swisttal-Oldendorf: Indica et Tibeca Verlag, 1997), 62.

[5] Theresina Havens, "Dynamics of Confession Early Buddhism," in *Añjali,: Papers on Indology and Buddhism,* ed. J. Tilakasiri (Perandiya: University of Ceylon, 1970), 22.

goals the next step is to examine the codified language and actions used in confession.

The Act of Confession

As noted above, the Buddha describes a method of confession in response to a monk who needs to purify himself before the *paṭimokkha*. The Buddha says, "Having approached a monk, having arranged his robe over one shoulder, having sat down on the haunches, holding up the hands in *añjali*, this is to be said by the monk . . ."[6] The act of confession begins then before a word has even been spoken. First, the transgressor hunches down on the ground before his listener and makes a gesture of greeting and supplication (the *añjali*). This physically establishes a hierarchical power relationship, investing the upright listener with authority in relation to the crouching transgressor. Both participants then engage in a fixed colloquy. Close examination of the language used in this simple conversation underscores the power dynamic between the two monks already signified by their physical relationship.

> ahaṃ, āvuso, itthānamaṃ āpattiṃ āpanno. Taṃ pa ṭidesemī ti. Tena vattabbo,
> 'passasī'ti. 'Āma passāmī'ti. 'Āyatiṃ saṃvareyyāsī ti.[7]
>
> "I, Friend, have fallen into such-and-such an infraction. I acknowledge it." Then it is to be said [by the one listening], "Do you see it?" "Yes, I see it." "You should restrain yourself in the future."

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[6] Horner, Vol. IV, 167.
[7] Hermann Oldenberg, ed., *Vinaya Pitikam, Vol.I* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1879), 126.

Horner translates the word *āpattiṃ* as "transgression," but a philological analysis of the term reveals more subtle valences. The prefix of the word, *ā-*, typically means "to" or "toward" but can also mean "from." *Pad* is the verbal root of *–patti* and commonly means "to go," "to enter," or even "to fall." So *āpattiṃ* could be defined in one way as a "stepping back" from the rules, what we could term more colloquially a "backsliding."[8] Alternately, if *āpattiṃ* were translated as an "entering into" a state of transgression, it highlights the addition of an infraction for the transgressive monk in opposition to "pure" compatriots. In either case, the notion of moving away from a moral standard is expressed and then underscored by the following past participle of the exact same pre-verb and root, *āpanno,* which translates "to fall." This language highlights a continuing state of transgression from the norm that connects to the next lines in the ritual dialogue. After admitting his wayward state, the transgressor says, "Taṃ paṭidesemi" or "I acknowledge it." These words overtly place the misdeed on the shoulders of the wrongdoer, and, more than a mere restatement of the allowance that came before, the monk's words position him as a backslider among his "pure" peers. *Desemi* itself can mean "to indicate, show, set forth." The prefix *pati-*, meaning "towards, at," augments this sense, bolstering the feeling of weighty self-exposure.

In the first line of this dialogue the language establishes the speaker as a self-conscious wrongdoer. There is no God in this setting, of course, to wipe clean a metaphysical slate. Instead, this dialogue operates in the social sphere. Even if the monk's transgression engenders no further punishment, at the moment of acknowledging wrongdoing he explicitly admits impurity in order to redeem his status. The monk must endure

[8] Horner uses the term when proposing the general purpose of the code of discipline: "The rules were probably, like the Rule of St. Benedict, to help the beginners, the *backsliders*, in their struggle . . ." My italics, from Horner, Vol. II, xiii.

the shame of his transgressive state announced publicly by himself in order to pass through to a re-found rectitude. As the conversation continues, it confirms this public display of transgression and evokes both functions of confession, that of spiritual development and that of social control.

Confession as a means to spiritual development

After the monk's acknowledgment of an offense in our confessional dialogue, the next question and its answer enact the promise of spiritual attainment. Upon hearing the misdeed, the listener responds, "Do you see it?" To which the revealer answers, "Yes, I see it." The listener then says, "You should restrain yourself in the future." The use of metaphorical language of seeing denotes understanding for the revealer ("Yes, I see it"), and it also calls to mind the notion of proper understanding described by the first step of the eight-fold noble path, *sammā diṭṭhi* or "right views."[9] While "seeing" one's misdeed and acknowledging it does not instill right views, the listener's final admonishment to "restrain yourself in the future" shows that the purity of the monk has been re-won, the necessary precursor to realizing right views. Two stories illustrate this process of purification through the disclosure of an offense, followed by the establishment of right views.

In the *Cullavagga* the inimical Devadatta sends a man to kill the Buddha, but when the man "was quite near the Lord he stood still, his body quite rigid, afraid, anxious, fearful, alarmed."[10] The Buddha tells the man not to be afraid, and he replies,

> Lord, a transgression has overcome me, foolish, misguided, wrong that I was coming here with my mind malignant, my mind on murder. Lord, may

[9] I'm not suggesting the eight-fold path is linearly progressive and cumulative, but the order of the path does convey a normative quality.
[10] Horner, Vol. V, 269.

> the Lord acknowledge for me the transgression as a transgression for the sake of restraint in the future.[11]

Like the script of confession for monks, Devadatta's man calls out his wrongdoing in order to improve himself through "restraint in the future." The Buddha does acknowledge his misdeed and explicitly labels his confession as growth: ". . . we acknowledge it for you; for friend in the discipline of the noble this is growth: whoever having seen a transgression as a transgression, confesses according to the rule, he attains restraint in the future."[12] His confession subsequently allows the man to achieve right views: "Just as a clean cloth without black specks will take a dye easily, even so (as he was sitting) on that very seat did dhamma-vision, dustless, stainless, arise to that man."[13]

In another example a laywoman propositions a monk named Anuruddha for sex. She feels remorse when he refuses and acknowledges her offense in exactly the same words as Devadatta's man, and with exactly the same result: her acknowledgement is accepted as growth now and for restraint in the future. She has grown in her awareness of a transgression as a transgression, but she has not yet gained *sammā diṭṭhi*. Only later, after she has cooked and served Anuruddha a meal, is the second step, the instilment of right views, fulfilled when she is "gladdened, roused, pleased, delighted" by a dhamma talk and becomes an *upasikā*.[14] In the stories of Devadatta's man and Anuruddha's temptress the function of confession as a means to spiritual development is accomplished.

Both of these cases involve lay people who undergo a conversion after the inculcation of right views. For them there is

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid., 269-270.
[14] I.B. Horner, trans., *The Book of Discipline, Vol. II* (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1997), 200.

no attainment of purity like the monk's, for the monk's purity is simply the absence of any unrevealed transgression listed in the Vinaya to which they have already bound themselves. Monks too do not need confession in order to convert to the dhamma to which they have already dedicated their lives. Yet the laypeople in these stories do share the same dynamic of religious growth. They exemplify the promise of spiritual development through confession. This is also supported by the Buddha's explanation in the Vinaya of the positive consequences of confession specifically for monks. When discussing confession and the *paṭimokkha* he says, "Therefore the existent offense should be revealed by a monk who remembers that he has fallen (into an offense) and who desires purity; for when it is revealed there comes to be comfort (*phāsu)* for him."[15] Horner translates *phāsu* as "comfort," implying perhaps some salve to the conscience, but the word can also mean simply "pleasure," perhaps the pleasure of righteous, "pure" brotherhood with one's fellow monks, but definitely the pleasure of spiritual gains too, as the Vinaya's definition of *phāsu* demonstrates:

> In what is there comfort (*phāsu)*? There comes to be comfort in the attainment of the first (stage in) meditation . . . in the second (stage in) meditation . . . in the third . . . in the fourth; there comes to be comfort in the attainment of the meditations, of the deliverances, of the contemplations, of the attainments, of the renunciations, of the escapes, of the aloofnesses, of states that are good.[16]

From this we can see that confession aims at a two-step process of spiritual development for the monk, as it does for the lay people described in the examples above. First, it prepares the

[15] Horner, Vol. IV, 132-133.
[16] Ibid., 135.

monk for spiritual progress by purifying him and therefore allowing him to participate in the *paṭimokkha* ritual integral to the sangha, and, second, it promises specific results in meditative accomplishment. These positive outcomes, however, do not explain confession's punitive aspects. How does confession in the Vinaya take part in a disciplinary process, what I identified as its second function of social control? To understand this we need to turn from the notion of the transgressive monk who "sees" his infraction to that of the same transgressive monk "seen" by his closely knit community.

Confession as a form of punishment

When the monk listening to the revelation of wrongdoing in our ritual dialogue responds to the revealer's acknowledgment of wrongdoing with "*passasi?*", he implies that he too sees the transgression by asking if the transgressor himself sees. The one engaged in the act of confession not only acknowledges his infraction, but exposes it to the gaze of others. Through an analysis of the examples below, which show both the abiding concern in the sangha to safeguard status and the deliberate manipulation of status as punishment, I will demonstrate that exposure of transgressions is a serious matter. A monk's public persona is a defining characteristic of life in the sangha, and therefore, as the following examples will attest, hierarchy, seniority, and concomitant esteem from fellow monks and the laity are highly valued. In this context, revealing wrong-doing becomes a form of punishment, because it threatens one's reputation in the community. This social control achieved through a form of shaming is the second of confession's dual roles.

I begin with an example of a prohibition that forbids behavior simply to avoid the *appearance* of impropriety. Under the first *aniyata* penalty, the upright laywoman Visākhā reproves the monk Udāyin for sitting in a private place with a laywoman, even though she trusts him to keep the interaction platonic: "This

is not proper, honored sir, it is not suitable that the master should sit together with women-folk, a man and a woman, in a secret place on a secluded, convenient seat. Although, honored sir, the master has no desire for that thing, *unbelieving people are hard to convince*."[17] Visākhā then reports the situation (via some "modest monks") to the Buddha, who forbids Udāyin's behavior. So a monk incurs this penalty just for placing himself in a compromising position, and his actual intention is dealt with as a secondary issue. Such a rule shows the concern to avoid any excuse for calumny, because it does not threaten just the reputation and status of the offending monk, but the sangha's reputation and status as a whole.

Monks themselves in their greetings of others both within and outside of the sangha also reflect their concern with status. In the *Cullavagga* the Buddha provides a detailed list to guide a monk in greeting—and not greeting—other people. This great attention given to the social homage paid to and withheld from others reflects social hierarchy in the community, based upon seniority, as well as one's status as an offender. This categorization shows how a transgression made public can play a defining role in one's social rank. If one is in a state of transgression, it is reflected socially by the absence of a greeting.

> "Monks, these are . . . not to be greeted: one ordained later is not to be greeted by one ordained earlier; one not ordained is not to be greeted; one belonging to a different communion (even) if he is more senior (yet) speaks what is not-*dhamma* is not to be greeted; a woman is not to be greeted; a eunuch . . . one under probation[18] . . . one who

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[17] My italics, Horner, I.B. *The Book of Discipline, Vol. I.*(London: Humphrey Milford, 1938), 331.

[18] This probation is called *parivāsa*, a time of the suspension of many rights for the offending monk, and a time of shame-instilling strictures. It lasts for as long as an offense was concealed. This period is discussed more extensively below.

> deserves to be sent back to the beginning[19] . . .
> one who deserves *mānatta*[20] . . . one undergoing
> *mānatta*. . . ."[21]

Here the offending monk, undergoing either the punishment of *parivāsa* (probation) or *mānatta* (parole), is reduced to the rank of women, eunuchs, and those non-dhammic speakers from other communities. Such a sanction is a clear loss of status and a public announcement of one's wrongdoing.

Besides the lack of greeting, the other penalties required by the *parivāsa* and *mānatta* use the lowering of social rank as punishment. The Buddha gives a long list of activities prohibited to the probationer in the *Cullavagga*. Besides being divested of all power to ordain, teach, and dispute, the probationer's behavior is circumscribed to the rank of the lowliest: "Nor, monks, should a monk under probation walk in front of a regular monk, nor sit down in front of him. Whatever is the order's last seat, last sleeping-place, last dwelling place—that should be given to him and he should consent to it."[22] Such a monk cannot avoid displaying his shameful station to the laity as well during his alms round: "He should not have alms food taken back for this reason: that he thinks, 'Do not let them find out about me.'"[23] In fact, the probationer must freshen his shame periodically, insuring every monk in the community knows of it: "A monk under probation should announce it when he is incoming, he should announce it to (another who is) incoming, he should announce it at the Observance (*paṭimokkha*), he should

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[19] A monk who commits as offense while under probation is called this because he must start the probationary period over again from the beginning.
[20] This is a disciplinary period levied for certain infractions, often translated "parole." It lasts for six days.
[21] Horner, Vol. V, 227.
[22] Ibid., 45.
[23] Ibid., 46.

announce it at the Invitation (*pavāraṇā*)[24], if he is ill he should announce by means of a messenger."[25] *Mānatta*, often translated "parole," is the actual six-day punishment given for a *sanghadisesa* offense. It can follow the *parivāsa*, which runs for as long as the offense was concealed. The loss of public status is similar to that in the probationary period and has the same effect, though the monk must announce his misdeed not only at the times required of the probationer but daily.[26] In both probation and parole, this proclamation of one's transgressive state shows the same punitive character present in confession.

Another punishment, called the *paṭisaraṇaya kamma*, is levied against monks who adversely affect the reputation of the sangha in the eyes of the lay community through "reviling" and "abusing" a lay person or speaking ill of the Order to an outsider.[27] It requires the offending monk to publicly apologize to the offended lay person. In the example given in the Vinaya the Buddha orders a monk named Sudhamma to go and ask the offended householder Citta for forgiveness, but Sudhamma cannot bring himself to do it. He explains: "Now, I, sirs, having gone to Macchekasaṇḍa, being distressed, was unable to ask the householder Citta to forgive (me)."[28] In Sudhamma's explanation of why he was unable to ask the householder Citta to forgive him, Horner translates *maṅkubhūto* as "*becoming ashamed*."[29] This fits well with the idea of a sanction intended to embarrass the offender, but *maṅkubhūto* is translated in the PTS dictionary simply as "discontented, troubled, confused," and

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[24] Keep in mind an announcement during both the *paṭimokkha* and the *pavāraṇā* meant speaking to *all* the monks in a given community. See footnote 3.
[25] Horner, Vol. V, 46.
[26] Ibid., 56.
[27] Ibid., 27.
[28] Hermann Oldenberg, ed., *Vinaya Pitikam, Vol.II* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1880), 19: *idhāhaṃ āvuso Macchikāsaṇḍaṃ gantvā maṅkubhūto nāsakkhiṃ cittaṃ gahapatiṃ khamāpetun ti.*
[29] My italics, Horner, Vol. IV, 28.

Hardy cites Bohtlingk's definition of *maṅku* as "weak on the feet" and "staggering."[30] If we take Bothlingk's physical connotations for the word then the effect of attempting an apology becomes tantamount to a physical blow. For Sudhamma, apologizing to Citta comes near to corporal punishment, underlining the punitive effect of publicly apologizing for an offense.

A threat to social status amounting to physical punishment is more starkly shown in perhaps the most severe penalty in the Vinaya, short of expulsion, the *brahmadaṇḍa,* or "highest penalty." A monk named Channa (the former charioteer of the Buddha) receives this punishment for his arrogance toward the sangha. In other words, precisely for his lack of social respect he must pay the heaviest penalty: total non-recognition from his fellow monks. They are not to speak to him or respond to him in any way. In today's parlance, Channa gets the "silent treatment." Ananda explains: "You, reverend Channa, may say what you please to the monks, but you must neither be spoken to nor exhorted nor instructed by the monks."[31] Channa's place in the social network of the sangha is utterly, though temporarily, erased, and his reaction to such a situation shows just how important a monk's status and reputation are: "'Am I not, honored Ananda, destroyed because I may be neither spoken to nor exhorted nor instructed by the monks?' He fell down fainting at that very place."[32]

Channa is so "troubled about the higher penalty" and "*ashamed* of it"[33] that his loss of social status and the acute suffering it causes him instigates an unusual chain of events.

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[30] E. Hardy, ed., *Aṅguttara-Nikāya, Pt. V* (London: Oxford University Press, 1900), vi.
[31] Horner, Vol. V, 405.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Hermann Oldenberg, ed., *Vinaya Pitikam, Vol. II* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1880), p 292: *atha kho āyasmā Channo brahmadaṇḍena aṭṭīyamāno harāyamāno. . . .* *Harāyamāno* does translate as "being ashamed." Compare the Sanskrit root *hrī.*

"Being troubled about the highest penalty, being ashamed of it, loathing it" Channa goes off, "dwelling alone,"[34] and achieves arahantship. In this instance a punishment based upon social rank and public recognition (or rather, the lack of it) accomplishes not just the function of social control, but spurs Channa on to the highest goal of spiritual attainment. When Channa, now an arahant, returns to Ananda, he asks for the revocation of the *brahmadaṇḍa*. Ananda replies: "From the moment that you, reverend Channa, realized perfection, from that moment the highest penalty was revoked for you."[35] The shift back from a total lack of social position enacted *at the moment* of the realization of nirvana indicates that even arahantship partakes of the hierarchical system as a social rank trumping the lowly one created by the *brahmadaṇḍa*. As the highest status, arahantship naturally nullifies any other level of public treatment, and in its relationship to other statuses, including those of offenders, reveals a hierarchical social system involved in discipline.

Among its 227 rules the *paṭimokkha* also contains four infractions classified together as *pāṭidesaniya*, or those simply "to be confessed." The presence in the *paṭimokkha* of a such a class of offenses shows that confession alone can constitute punishment, as well as serving as the portal to further sanctions. All of the rules in this category concern the acceptance of food. Improperly received food that is eaten requires a formulaic confession, similar in vocabulary to the confession given in connection to the *paṭimokkha*, but without reference to physical behavior and without any response from a listening monk. To clear himself of a transgression in this category, the monk says, "I have gotten, your reverences, into a blameworthy state, unbecoming, which should be acknowledged; I acknowledge

[34] Horner, Vol. V, 405.
[35] Ibid.

it."[36] Like the confessional procedure recommended by the Buddha to establish the purity needed to participate in the *paṭimokkha*, the language here positions the confessee as one in a continuing state of transgression. *Āpajjiṃ* means "have gotten into" or "have met with" and indicates the monk's descent into a regrettable status, a "blameworthy state" (*gārayhaṃ dhammaṃ*), one which is unfit or *asappāyaṃ.* The monk identifies himself fully with this disreputable rank when he next acknowledges it with the words, "*Taṃ paṭidesemi*," the same words used in the confessional ritual described in connection to the *paṭimokkha.*

Examples involving social protocol around the public announcement of a wrongdoing also support the notion of a culture of discipline enacted through manipulation of a monk's public persona. For example, monks cannot join forces to lessen the blow of public embarrassment when they confess. Confession is an individual affair. The Buddha says, "Monks, a collective offense should not be confessed. Whoever should confess it, there is an offense of wrong-doing."[37] This requirement emphasizes the importance of individual purity, rigorous personal self-examination, and the necessity of solitary confession. Elsewhere in the Vinaya the Buddha allows a confession to be made "in the midst of the Order or in the midst of a group or to one individual,"[38] but though the audience size is variable, the requirement of only one confessee is not.

A monk does have some control over when a transgression is announced publicly, however, for one cannot scold a monk for a wrongdoing at any time one pleases. Chastising a monk for a misdeed is carefully regulated, since to impugn a monk's character publicly is to threaten his standing in the community. Normally, to reprove a fellow monk for a

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[36] Hermann Oldenberg, ed., *Vinaya Pitikam, Vol. IV* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1883), p. 183: *paṭidesetabbaṃ tena bhikkhunā gārayhaṃ āvuso dhammaṃ āpajjiṃ asappāyaṃ paṭidesaniyaṃ, taṃ paṭidesemīti.*
[37] Horner, Vol. IV, 167.
[38] Ibid., 133.

transgression one has to secure that very monk's approval: "Now at that time the group of six monks reproved, on account of an offence, a monk who had not given (them) leave. They told this matter to the Lord. He said: 'Monks, a monk who has not given leave should not be reproved on account of an offence. Whoever should (so) reprove, there is an offence of wrong-doing.'"[39] This closely connects with confession, for here we see that even stating another's wrong-doing in public matters a great deal, and thus can be limited to at least some extent by the one who has purportedly committed the act. Of course, the very asking for leave to reprove in and of itself seems to challenge the offending monk's status. A prohibition against even obtaining leave to reprove from pure monks supports this: "Monks, leave should not be obtained from pure monks when there is no ground, no reason, since they are not offenders. Whoever should so obtain it, there is an offense of wrongdoing."[40] However, the next section of the essay, which explores more fully how the culture of status and shaming depicted in these examples relates to the ritual of the *paṭimokkha*, will show that this requirement to receive the permission of the offending monk before reproving him does not limit the airing of infractions to only those the wrongdoer is willing to acknowledge.

Confession and the paṭimokkha

All the examples above substantiate the presence of a culture deeply concerned with social esteem. Indeed, the punishments cited, particularly the *brahmadaṇḍa*, derive their power from how they sully public status. Confession too, by requiring a monk to explicitly, publicly, and ritually confirm wrong-doing to another taps into the same shame/esteem setting. But what would ever prompt a monk to reveal his transgression, given the value of public esteem and the dread of public opprobrium? In Brahmanical culture one might still feel

[39] Ibid., 150
[40] Ibid., 151.

compelled to announce one's wrong-doing, because of the promise of karmic cleansing through confession.[41] In Pali Buddhism, however, one cannot cancel out a specific karmic act. The Buddha in the *Khuddaka- Nikāya Dhammapada* says, "Neither in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor entering a mountain cave, is found that place on earth, where abiding one may escape from (the consequences of) evil deeds."[42] Given the ineluctability of karma, no matter if you admit your transgression or not, why go through the public humiliation?

In the case where one monk knows of another's offense, the offending monk could well be forced to own up to a wrongdoing. As noted above, while a monk cannot usually reprove another without the permission of the one to be reproved, a monk can still reveal another's transgression under certain circumstances, and these circumstances connect to the *paṭimokkha*. Even without leave, a monk can flush a miscreant out by suspending his participation in the *paṭimokkha*: "When the individual [the offender] is present this should be uttered in the midst of the Order: 'Honored sirs, let the order listen to me. The individual So-and-so has an offence; I am suspending the *paṭimokkha* for him, the *paṭimokkha* should not be recited when he is present.'"[43] The time just before the *paṭimokkha*, when all the monks of the community are gathered together, presents the opportunity to accuse without permission, and this ability to stop

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[41] For example, Manu XI.229-230 says: "In so far as a man, having committed his sin, confesses it, just so far he is released from it, as a snake from its skin. Just so far as his mind regrets his bad deed, to that extent his body is freed from the sinful act." From George Buhler, trans., *The Laws of Manu* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886), 477.

[42] I found this quote in Sunthorn Na-Rangsi, *The Buddhist Concepts of Karma and Rebirth* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Rajavidyalaya Press, 1976), 50. Note too the description of karma in *The Questions of King Milinda*: "No other influence is of any avail to the man in whom karma is working out its inevitable end." From T.W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Questions of King Milinda*, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 35 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 262.

[43] Horner, Vol. V, 336.

the *paṭimokkha* subverts a monk's attempt to avoid public censure.

Another point in the code of discipline encourages a monk to expose others he knows to have transgressed. A monk colluding with a wrongdoer to hide his misdeed incurs a *pācittiya* offense. In the Vinaya's example the Buddha rebukes a monk for helping another conceal his offense of masturbation: "How can you, foolish man, knowingly conceal a monk's very bad offense? It is not, foolish man, for pleasing those who are not (yet) pleased. . . ."[44] It seems that if one's misdeed is known by someone else, at most one has the two weeks between *Uposathas* before either having to own up to a selected individual or group, or facing the humiliating public suspension of one's participation in an important ritual.

The *paṭimokkha* is no event a monk can easily get out of either. A monk cannot simply skip it. Kappina, a monk "purified with the highest purification,"[45] is chastised by the Buddha for even considering being absent: "But if you brahmins do not reverence, esteem, honor the Observance, who is there who will. . . ? You go along, brahmin, to the observance, do not not go."[46] Even if a monk were ill, he must have a representative guarantee his pure state: "'There is, Lord, a monk who is ill. He has not come.' He [the Buddha] said, 'I allow you, monks, to declare entire purity on behalf of the monk who is ill.'"[47] If a monk is uncertain if he has committed a transgression, that itself should be explicitly stated: "I, your reverence, am doubtful as to such-and-such an offence. When I come to be without doubt, then I will make amends for that offence."[48] The unavoidability of the *paṭimokkha* and the risk of having it suspended in front of the entire sangha must have prompted many confessions.

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[44] I.B. Horner, trans., *The Book of Discipline, Vol. II.* (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1997), 8.
[45] Horner, Vol. IV, 137.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.,158.
[48] Ibid.,167

But would it motivate a monk to tell of a completely secret infraction? What would instigate the revelation of a totally private act in an atmosphere of zealous cultivation of public honor? For some a sincere desire to strengthen communion (*saṃvāsa)* with fellow monks and continue spiritual progress could impel them to speak. In the Vinaya the *paṭimokkha* is defined as "this is the beginning, this is the head, this is the foremost of states that are good; therefore it is called *paṭimokkha*."[49] Dwelling in such a state would appeal to the monk eager for spiritual development, the first function of confession.

But what about less-than-ideal monks, ones unmoved by the notion of spiritual attainments? For such monks, the impetus for confession seems to come from the threat of collecting bad karma. As I noted earlier, revealing a fault may not counteract bad karma, but it appears not disburdening oneself before the *paṭimokkha* creates yet more. This is made clear when the Buddha says: "Whatever monk remembering while it is being proclaimed up to the third time (during the *paṭimokkha*) that there is an existent offence should not reveal it, there comes to be conscious lying for him."[50] Since the *paṭimokkha* takes place every two weeks, this would mean one unrevealed transgression produces an offense of conscious lying; those two transgressions still hidden each make two more lies at the next *Uposatha*, those four transgressions then each spawn four more lies, and so forth exponentially. The transgressor's awareness of such geometrically mounting misdeeds must have been a powerful tool for promoting confession. The Buddha himself notes this when he says, after stating all monks must be pure before the *paṭimokkha* can take place:

> It rains hard on the covered thing,
> It rains not hard on the open thing;
> So open up the covered thing,

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[49] Ibid.,133.
[50] Ibid., 132. This is classified as a *pācittiya* offense.

Thus will it not rain hard on that.[51]

In this quote Theresina Havens sees proof of the Buddha attempting "to enunciate the general principle involved in catharsis."[52] She suggests, following C.A.F. Rhys Davids, that the "hard rain" signifies guilt. This seems incorrect. For one thing, the story which precedes these verses make no mention at all of a monk's mental state, and Havens admits "the sense of guilt is minimal."[53] Furthermore, catharsis denotes a purgative act or cleansed state, while the verses only say that "opening up" stops the hard rain. Finally, the poem is recited as the moral of a story in which a monk is physically *thrown out* of the recitation hall, the door bolted fast behind him, because he is harboring a hidden offense. This hardly exemplifies cathartic confession. Indeed, no confession takes place, and so to then read the Buddha's words as a description of a feeling of catharsis from confession does not make sense. Even for the incorrigible monk who is ejected from the meeting against his will, however, a transgression of conscious lying is avoided by not attending the *paṭimokkha*. The "hard rain" then is the bad karma of conscious lying, for each *paṭimokkha* that passes without confession engenders more and more lies. This interpretation, in fact, is specifically given by Buddhaghosa's commentary on the Vinaya, the *Samantapāsādikā*. Horner provides the quote in a footnote to the verses: "*VA*.1287 discusses (as is clear from the context) that the covered thing means 'having fallen into an offense and concealing it one falls into another and a fresh offense; but disclosing it, one does not fall into another offense.'"[54] When a transgression is completely hidden to all but the wrongdoer, the hard rain of bad karma is the final means to motivate confession.

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[51] Oldenberg, Vol. II, 240: *channam ativassati, vivatam nativassati; tasma channam vivaretha, evan tam nativassatiti.*
[52] Havens, 22.
[53] Ibid., 24.
[54] Horner, Vol. V, 336, n. 1.

Conclusion

This hard rain, the karmic retribution of conscious lying, can only operate through the *paṭimokkha* ritual, which acts as a sort of generator of bad karma for the offending monk, driving the impetus to confess. Due to the threat of committing another offense, the monk engages in a disciplinary process in which his revelation does not just lead to possible punishment, but is itself a sanction by its effect on the monk's reputation. The stipulations we saw above for how and when the airing of a transgression can take place demonstrates this. The examples of punishment beyond confession show this same dynamic of punishment too and particularly highlight the preeminence in the sangha of status and hierarchy. Confession operates in this role as an effective means of social control.

But confession has another role, the promotion of spiritual progress. As Havens and Derrett suggest, confession could well result in some state of catharsis achieved through the acknowledgment of a transgression. The clear role of confession, however, as a device which promotes spiritual attainments does not justify itself through a psychological state produced within the monk, but rather through the monk's subsequent status as pure of any infractions and therefore poised to (re)establish right views and take further steps on the eight-fold path.

These dual functions of confession emerge from a culture of shame and esteem described in texts. An interesting next step would be to see how this system described in normative literature accords with the rite of confession and the *paṭimokkha* as it is described in anthropological data. Even within the Vinaya, though, expanding the examination of confession beyond its relationship with the cyclical ritual of the *paṭimokkha* could reveal much more about its character and the nature of the sangha in which it operated.

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Book Reviews

D.R. Nagaraj. *Samskrithi Kathana* (Kannada). Edited by Agrahara Krishnamurthy. (Bangalore, India: Kannada Pusthaka Pradhikara (Kannada Book Authority), 2002).
Price: Rs. 200.00

The book under review is a collection of essays written by the late Kannada literary and cultural critic D.R. Nagaraj over a period of more than twenty years, from around 1975 till the time of his early death in 1998. Most of these essays have previously appeared in regular columns that Nagaraj wrote for such newspapers/magazines and journals as *Kannada Prabha*, *Lankesh Patrike*, *Shudra,* etc.

Those readers of English who have known or have heard of Nagaraj only through his one published collection of essays in that language *The Flaming Feet: A Study of the Dalit Movement in India* (Bangalore: South Forum Press, 1993) would have little clue about Nagaraj's prolific output in Kannada. His primary audience for most of his life was of course the Kannada reading people of the Karnataka region. It was only towards the latter part of his life that Nagaraj began to realise his full potential as a pan-Indian and post-colonial/Third-World thinker.

Nagaraj's writing in newspapers and magazines was marked not only by his characteristic courage, conviction and passion but also by an in-your-face honesty seldom found among the political and social commentators delivering staid homilies in Indian English language newspapers. The intellectual power that stamped his social commentary had seen through India's middle classes and the limitations of their radicalism. Although his essays in *Lankesh Patrike* may sometimes have lacked the bellicosity characteristic of some of the other features that run in that magazine, he made up for this with an intellectual and erudite frame of reference that won the more discerning reader over to his side. Nagaraj was that rare public intellectual who had

the cultural confidence to think through his positions and present his analyses and criticism in the most popular (“vernacular”) magazines and newspapers of the land.

The book under review has nearly a hundred essays ranging from fairly detailed and longish essays on cultural themes to book reviews and brief contemporary newspaper pieces on events of political significance. There is a series of valuable reflections on Ambedkar, Gandhi and Marx, three of the most important historical figures that Nagaraj's political sensibilities had to engage with for most of his life. As was evident in Nagaraj's book in English The *Flaming Feet*, Gandhi had begun to occupy an increasingly important role in Nagaraj's thought in recent times. But as someone whose intellectual and political life had initially been shaped most crucially by the figure of Ambedkar, the admiration for Gandhi had only come gradually and not a little grudgingly. It is this drift in Nagaraj's recent thematic concerns that necessitated the invocation of Gandhi in many of the essays in this book. In a beautifully crafted essay on Gandhian conceptions of violence, non-violence and counter-violence, (“Tibetina Naayi, Mauni Saadhugalu Mattu Champaran Raitharu”), Nagaraj likens Gandhi to a sensitive psychologist and points out that for Gandhi the source of human violence was fear. Gandhi's social intervention in history through non-violence was predicated upon a seemingly implausible syllogism: intervention in history is to be non-violent, non-violence requires renunciation, but renunciation rejects/denies history. Gandhi's solution was to forge an “activist” renunciation that drew on the intellectual resources for renunciation available in Indian traditions (Hindu, Jain, etc.) while simultaneously disavowing the institutional forms of renunciation in those same traditions. The full historical might of this “activist” renunciation was then directed at the colonial British Government in India through the doctrine of non-violence.

In one of the many essays on Ambedkar in the book ("Ambedkar Mattu Bauddha Dharma") Nagaraj reflects on Ambedkar's relationship with religion in general and with Buddhism in particular. Nagaraj suggests that Ambedkar's move towards Buddhism was an attempt to provide his struggle with the support of a great tradition by reenacting the historical story of Buddhism's relation to Hinduism. This was a monumental attempt—it continues even today—to build for the Dalits a great cultural tradition. Ambedkar saw little that could be cherished in the immediate life and culture of Dalits in contemporary India. He saw in the Dalits a people completely defeated by the humiliation that was inflicted upon them by *savarna* society. From this perspective Ambedkar saw himself as leading a struggle that would bring them a new culture through the inculcation of new values. It was his hope that these new values could be ushered in by making available to Dalits the great cultural tradition of Buddhism. While Nagaraj is obviously sympathetic to the enormity of Ambedkar's task, he also suggests that there were other ways of looking at the issue and cites Gandhi to make his point: Gandhi reckoned that one's religion was not like a piece of clothing or a house that could be exchanged at will. Nagaraj points out that religion held different meanings for Gandhi and Ambedkar in this exchange: for the former religion represented primarily a "spiritual necessity" although he was also aware of its other dimensions, whereas for the latter it was a religion's social and historical dimensions that were important. Given this meaning of religion for Ambedkar it is not surprising that his social and historical struggle against *savarna* Hindu society was forged as a combination of the humanistic values of Buddhism with the action-oriented dispositions of modern socialisms.

Nagaraj's investigation of Periyar Ramaswamy Naicker's political and cultural position (in "Periyar Pattu: Kelavu Sandehagalu") points out that Periyar did not see any major difference between culture and religion. Periyar did not

understand the complex relationship that subsists between cultures and faiths. Culture domesticates a faith's excesses and when faiths have become intolerant, it is cultures that labour quietly and steadfastly for harmony; in turn when cultures have become faithless, faiths strive to transcend themselves. Moreover, Periyar's trust in the discourses of modern science and development was total. Criticizing Periyar's total rejection of India's cultural traditions Nagaraj states "A cultural revolutionary needs cultural memories ("smritigalu") to support his revolution. A revolution without memories may look very attractive for a brief moment, but the effects/consequences of such a revolution do not last for long." (p.219). If Periyar's mode of reasoning was that of the "complete repudiation" of Indian cultural traditions, two other significant modes have been practised in recent Indian history. One of these is the mode of the "acceptance of another culture" practised by Ambedkar and the other is the mode of "cultural renegotiation/re-ordering" practised by Gandhi, Narayan Guru, Vivekananda, Kuvempu and others. It is this last mode that has been the most popular in Indian history.

In the two interviews included in the book Nagaraj explicitly reveals the direction in which his thought was moving in the late 1990s; "I am trying to move towards an area of learning that is neither (Hindu) conservative nor Orientalist, and to which I can contribute as a native socialist." (p.584). Nagaraj had clearly seen the limitations of the traditional Marxist and secularist understandings of Indian society: "(Their) analyses did not comprehend India's pluralistic cultural sources. … Barring a few exceptions, the traditional leftists of India are scared of India's culture. This is because they have been consenting to the values of the colonialist and modernising structures in Indian society all along." (p.585).

These are but a smattering of the bountiful critical insights that one may obtain from this book. This book represents one of the most thoughtful attempts in recent years to come to terms with the meanings of our social and cultural

worlds and our exigent political responsibilities as Indians. We are told that Nagaraj's writings in Kannada are currently being translated and prepared for publication in English. Meanwhile the collection of essays in this book should provide important clues for the re-activation of the founts of intellectual and social creativity in Indian society today.

By Dattathreya Subbanarasimha, Columbia University

Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers *India's Communication Revolution: From Bullock Carts to Cyber Marts.* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001). 297 pages.

This book is conceived of as an update to Singhal and Roger's 1989 book, *India's Information Revolution.* It looks at the last ten years in India, especially since the New Economic Policy of 1991, to see how things have changed on the technological front. The authors' primary concern is how India's "informatization" (its movement towards being an "information society," that is, a place where "information workers"—those whose main job responsibility is to gather, process, and distribute information or to produce information technology—are more numerous than other workers) is contributing to the socio-economic development of the country. The book is comprehensive, taking each type of communication media in turn: the press, radio, telephones, television, cable, Internet, and computer hardware and software (no mention of cinema, however). These professors (Singhal in Interpersonal Communication and Rogers in Communication and Journalism) use diverse sources for their research, including interviews with creators and users of these media, personal observation, scholarly books and articles, and government reports and statistics.

With the new communications technologies in place in 2001, Arvind and Singhal argue that the negative "brain drain" model is outdated, and needs to be replaced by a positive "brain circulation" (149) model that connects Indians all over the world. By inserting statistical charts and graphs as well as boxes that highlight some of India's more remarkable tech success stories into the main text, they are able to concretize this vision of shared labor, brain power, money, and technology between the US and India. Some examples of Indians who have been successful in the international tech world are Azim Premji of Wipro, Subhash Chandra of Zee-TV, Sam Pitroda of WorldTel, and Sabeer Bhatia of Hotmail. Much of the book resembles a "get rich quick" book for Indians in both the US and India. The authors theorize that India's highly competitive educational system, particularly for engineers—of whom the country graduates 150,000 per year, and only 2000 of them can go to IIT's (Indian Institutes of Technology), and even a smaller percentage can go and work in the US—gives them the competitive edge necessary to become rich in the highly volatile tech market. Over 40% of all Silicon Valley start-ups have Indian co-founders, and around 50% of all work visas issued in 1999 in the US went to Indians.

Singhal and Rogers provide a lot of valuable information and celebrate both the progress of Indians and of India. They look at development projects like the Pune Radio Farm project, Doordarshan's SITE program, the *Hum Log* pro-development soap opera, Sam Pitroda's metered phones, and Chandrababu Naidu's (Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh) agenda to "make Andhra Pradesh the best investment destination in the new millennium" (173) as proof that India is advancing and attempting to do so as a nation. Romantic as their success stories of spin-offs, venture capitalism, IPO's, and NASDAQ trading are, though, Singhal and Rogers temper this by keeping an eye on rural India. The subtitle "From Bullock Carts to Cyber Marts" is slightly misleading because part of their point, made

visually by a wonderful photograph from *India Today* of a farmer driving a bullock cart while talking on his cellular phone, is that both the bullock cart and the cyber mart are there, sharing space, in today's India. The progress is not from one to the other, but to both at the same time. The authors are careful to emphasize, also, the great disparity amongst the population in terms of wealth and access to these new communications technologies.

Overall, this is a wonderful, well-written book, appealing to scholars of any of the communications media and technologies in India, partly because of its comprehensive and detailed bibliography, as well as to general readers, entrepreneurs, and policy-makers. It is well-organized, making it easy to read selectively, but also well-integrated, connecting the different media back to the same users. It is a wake-up call to those who still hold romantic visions of the timeless village in India; that timeless village now has access to television programs broadcast in Delhi, pay phones connecting them to the world, and numerous local radio stations…and probably Internet access besides!

By Kristen Rudisill, University of Texas, Austin

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