Maazinama

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Special Volume on Intellectual History and its Impact on Culture, Politics and Society

The Annual Academic Journal
Department of History
Jesus and Mary College
University of Delhi

Message from our Teacher- In-Charge

The Department of History, Jesus and Mary College, is delighted to present the second edition of its Annual Academic Journal, “Maazinama”. This edition of the Journal stands in the line of further advancing the aim of Maazinama, which is providing a safe academic space to young researchers, helping them search for answers to their questions, and sharing their findings with the world via publishing.

This edition of Maazinama, covers papers on the theme of Intellectual History, “Do ideas shape the course of history? Intellectual History and its impacts on Culture, Politics, and Society”. Intellectual History is a multidisciplinary field, where research pours in various disciplines. Military innovations, urban-spatial distribution patterns, contemporary art styles, and many more concepts, that have become rooted in our daily settings, were once simple ideas, thought by an individual or issued by a group. But as these novel ideas, found an audience receptive to them and wider circulation among people of different ages and groups, these ideas shaped the course of history. Our journal brings forth, this very journey, of the birth of an idea and how it bourgeoned to alter the course of history.

The papers selected for the same are diverse in their ideas and methodology of research.

The task of preparing this edition of the journal has been a long, meticulous, yet enriching process. The finalization of the theme, ancillary research that went into the formation of the concept note, selection of abstracts, and editing of the final papers for printing, took months of preparation to give the edition its present shape. It was also a unique experience for the students working on the journal to develop a healthy connection with their teachers, from whom they learned the larger process as well as the nitty-gritty that goes behind the crafting of an academic journal.

I would like to thank our Principal and mentor Professor Sandra Joseph, who has been very supportive in all our academic endeavours, my colleagues Dr. Sanghamitra Rai Verman and Dr. Tanu Parashar, the student editorial board, and the young researchers who have contributed to the journal.

Editor-In-Chief
Dr Richa Raj
(Teacher-In-Charge)
Department of History
Jesus and Mary College, DU
March 2023

From the Editorial Board

Maazinama, the annual academic journal of the Department of History is elated with immense joy to be able to bring forth its second edition focusing on the theme “Do Ideas Shape the Course of History? Intellectual History and its Impacts on Culture, Politics and Society”. As we venture towards incorporating more ideas to explore the unexplored in our historical understanding and engaging students directly with significant intellectual discourses in this edition of Maazinama, we hope the same is reflected as the readers flip through these pages laden with an intriguing scholastic ambience.

Throughout the unfolding of history, there have been multiple instances highlighting the role of ideas in shaping the changing contours and dynamics of history. It is then that the need to locate these ideas and intellectual histories within the broader framework of our historical understanding becomes pertinent. History is filled with wide and diverse strands of thought that have shaped and intensified the fissures of changes that were developing and thereby set the stage for changes and revolutions. Keeping this in mind, the theme for the year 2023 edition of Maazinama was chosen in order to accommodate and give breathing space to these ideas that have often been subsumed from our understanding but surely play a very important role in helping shape the discipline of history. We hoped that an exploration of the different kinds of ideas and intellectual thoughts in history would find a sharp and deep resonance in today’s contemporary political and social climate.

The editorial process has been an extremely enriching experience for everyone as our submissions brought in new ideas to the table. While we do acknowledge that our engagement with the theme is highly limited and many different dimensions of ideas within intellectual history remain unexplored. It would not have been possible for the journal to manifest itself in its present form without the enthusiastic response that we received from the students who submitted their articles. Our heartfelt gratitude to the entire faculty and students at the Department of History, Jesus and Mary College for their unwavering love and support throughout the curating of this journal.

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We hope the exhilaration and passion that went into the making of this journal seamlessly flows through these pages into the hearts and minds of the readers and may Maazinama soar high year after year from strength to strength.

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Principal's Message

Congratulations to the Department of History and the team of Maazinama for the successful publication of their second edition of the annual academic journal. The Department has made the institution proud with its pertinent academic activities and by promoting a climate of rigorous research that is expected of any institution of higher learning.

The theme of this journal is "Do Ideas Shape the Course of History? Intellectual History and its Impact on Culture, Politics, and Society" This remarkable endeavour of the Department has significantly contributed to the process of learning, promoting inclusivity, and in engaging with intellectual discussions among students and scholars. The journal explores themes such as class, institutional status, political orientation, and generational membership which often form the thought and expression of a socially-conditioned 'worldview'. It includes ideas and thoughts of emerging scholars, guided by faculty members,peer-reviewers, editors and the design team.

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The journal is laying a strong foundation which will infuse rigour and passion for academic research and expertise among young minds in the field of ongoing historical interventions and critical thinking. It is with great pride that I formally introduce the second edition of Maazinama. It has provided a potential space for young researchers and helped them to actualise their latent talent and skills.

Best wishes to each one who has contributed to this edition. May you continue to explore new avenues, expand new spaces and gain deeper insights that will ultimately enlighten all your readers.

Prof. Sandra Joseph
Principal
Jesus and Mary College
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Table of Contents

Foreword

by

Professor Raziuddin Aquil

Much as historians are required to avoid present-minded interpretations of the past, historical research and writings cannot be completely free from the influences of the context of their production. Need for checking anachronism and maintaining historical distance apart, our study of the past is determined by the questions of the present. And as it happens, the best of the histories are written in the worst of times. Some of the brilliant minds rise and shine to excel with their deep engagements with the world's problems. Some do it as part of political activism, and some at higher levels of intellectual and philosophical inquiries. Some combine both, as our intellectual activities can better inform and educate the present.

The distinguished teachers and talented students associated with the fine initiative of bringing out the journal, Maazinama, as part of the multifaceted activities of the dynamic History Department of South Delhi's prestigious institution of higher learning, Jesus and Mary College, deserve praise for the excellent work they do. The theme of this year's edition, "Do Ideas Shape the Course of History? Intellectual History and its Impact on Culture, Politics and Society", is of crucial import in the current context of post-truth and political nonsense, which require serious intellectual engagements for a much-needed narrative of sanity in society. Some critical insights from the past can show the way forward. Indeed, when a history of a culture or civilization is written, reflections of scholars and intellectuals are necessarily foregrounded. Politicians and bazaar people come next. Other segments of society and officers and staff to govern it follow.

I am delighted to see that as many as five well-informed contributors to the volume have seriously reflected on the value of critical intellectual insights and interventions in shaping the course of history in all its varied dimensions. Body, spirituality, and sexuality are sometimes fused for delightful satisfaction. Aparna Nair discusses long-standing intellectual and artistic expressions on love, sex, and marriage for pleasure, whereas society prefers to remain prudish. Ananya Atrishya and Muskan Joshi interrogate travelers' accounts for understanding the possibility of a vibrant culture inside

Mughal harems, steering clear of moral judgments. Udayan Mukherjee exposes the hollowness of the moral censure of nude art and sculpture in the later imposition of the sense of shame in two independent contexts of ancient Greece and early medieval India.

People with no history can certainly sing songs highlighting what their tribes and communities have endured in the past. Kimbiakmawi Dousel examines oral narratives and cultural practices for understanding changing social ideologies in the northeastern regions of India, especially of the Paites of Manipur, with Christianity bringing about some change in the lives of the people since the nineteenth century. Anirudh Naveen looks at Indo-Japanese artistic and intellectual exchanges in the early twentieth century, aimed at a pan-Asian cosmopolitan thought, resisting and indeed defeating European designs.

Together the articles offer an interesting reading of some important issues involving the past. Indeed, critical historical imagination, thinking, and writing matter in context and beyond. I congratulate the contributors and editors of the volume for their superlative work and wish them a bright future ahead. The guidance and mentoring by the teachers go a long way in this process. The members of the faculty of the History Department deserve commendations for the fine work of bringing out this year's edition of the Department's annual academic journal, Maazinama, taking stock of the past with a lasting impact on the present and the future – intellectually and historically.

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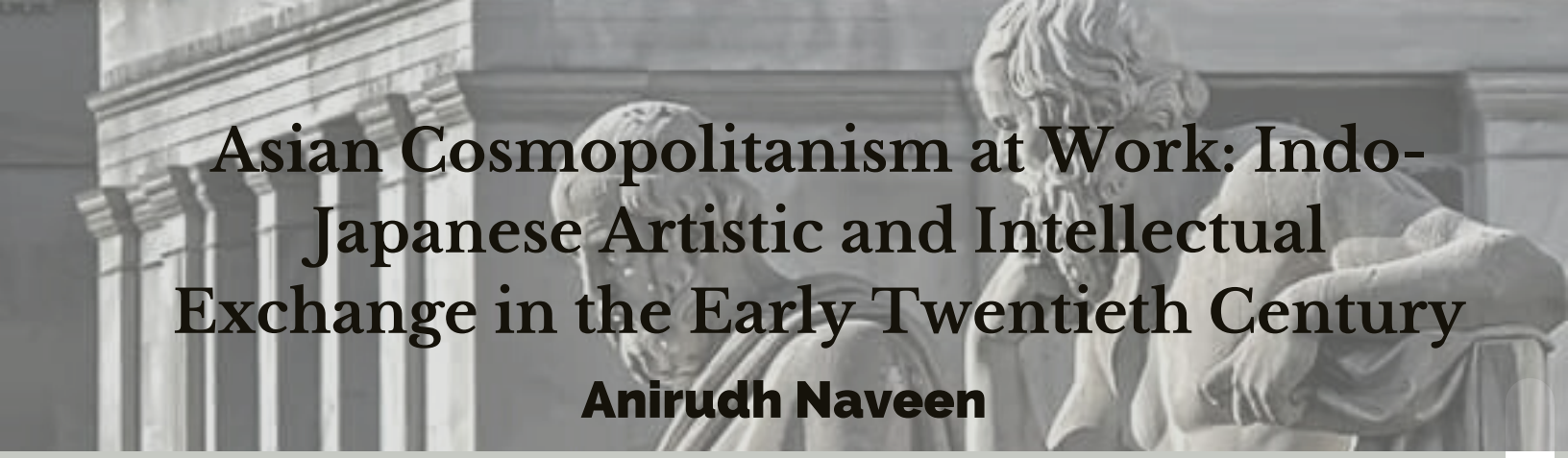

Asian Cosmopolitanism at Work: Indo-Japanese Artistic and Intellectual Exchange in the Early Twentieth Century

Anirudh Naveen

Japan's victory over Russia in 1905 sent shockwaves across the convoluted geopolitical sphere in the early twentieth century. The defeat of a European power to a hitherto subordinate 'yellow-race' was viewed as a backlash against Western universalism and perverted claims of racial or civilizational superiority. Japan's military triumph though needs to be counterposed against the rising tide of cultural awakening that gripped the country after the Meiji Restoration. Kakuzo Okakura, a globally renowned artist-scholar from the Late Meiji period produced one of his most defining works a year later, known as The Book of Tea. A book on the Japanese tea ceremony in the aftermath of an epoch-defining military triumph might seem like an oddity, but if placed in the context of Okakura's deepening cultural contacts with Indian and Chinese artists, it does become intelligible. Meanwhile, newspapers far away in Bengal carried numerous articles on Japan. The Indian reaction to this major development bordered on hysteria as funds were collected for the Japanese cause through public shows, and in some cases, children were given nicknames after Japanese leaders. Bedazzled by the Japanese triumph, a young Jawaharlal Nehru too eagerly 'waited for papers for fresh news daily'. Moreover, in that very year, Abanindranath Tagore produced a painting of Bharat-Mata that endures in the popular imagination for its striking features. But in rendering one of the most powerful icons of Indian nationhood, Tagore consciously employed the Japanese "wash" technique. The hazy yet graceful blend of colors employed to render the image of a pious woman evoked a range of emotions. This was a hallmark of the technique diffused by Japanese painters like Okakura and Yokoyama Taikan.

These instances illustrate the variegated ways in which Indian and Japanese artist-intellectuals engaged in a heated dialogue in the early twentieth century. Despite occasionally being at cross-purposes, their opposition to European expansionism was predicated on some common grievances as well as covert cosmopolitan ambitions. Scholars like Okakura, Sister Nivedita, and Rabindranath Tagore were active participants in what Arjun Appadurai calls a 'permanent traffic in ideas of peoplehood and selfhood' that had been stimulated by colonial networks. This paper will investigate some facets of this trans-cultural intellectual exchange by demonstrating the concerted attempts made by these scholars to conceptualize a pan-Asian cultural sphere and in the process successfully cultivate new cosmopolitan thought zones that continue to be activated down to this day.

Keywords: nationalist art, pan-Asianism, Japan, universalism, cosmopolitanism.

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The term ‘Asia’ is definitely of European vintage. Indeed, the concept ‘Asia’ was a perfect foil for Europe to affirm the decadence of Oriental culture. As rightly pointed out by Naoki Sakai, Asia was necessary because, without it, Europe lacked any distinct and distinguishable unity (Sakai 2000, 791). However, the cultural idea of Asia sprung to life only when it was creatively re-appropriated by Asian intellectuals in the early twentieth century.

By the late nineteenth century, even as British imperialism reached its zenith, anti-colonial and anti-European voices increasingly acquired salience, especially in urban areas. In Bengal, Bankim Chandra’s Anandamath and Vivekananda’s spiritual ideas gained tremendous currency, particularly among the bhadralok, though a section of the Muslim community was unable to relate with them. This prosperous bhadralok community had benefitted from its exposure to English education, supplying it with confidence to oppose colonial rule by harnessing trans-cultural intellectual networks.

It was in such a context of political and ideological ferment that Kakuzo Okakura arrived in India in 1902, by which time he had established himself as a globally reputed artist and museum curator. His tour to India though inaugurated a new phase in his celebrated intellectual career as he formally stepped into his life as a writer of books for the English-speaking public. He stayed with the Tagores in the cultured environs of Jorasanko and soaked in the intellectual and artistic atmosphere that prevailed over here.

Besides his friendship with the poet Rabindranath Tagore, he also developed an intimate bond with Sister Nivedita, a protégé of Swami Vivekananda and then associated with the Ramakrishna Mission. Okakura’s first book in English titled ‘Ideals of the East’ was published in 1903, with Nivedita herself writing the preface. This work deserves a great deal of scrutiny as it inspired a generation of artists and intellectuals who became strongly wedded to the pan-Asian awakening and triggered a continental resurgence in the arts.

Okakura’s objective behind writing this book was to demonstrate the one-ness of Asia. The first paragraph itself celebrates two great Asian civilizations: “The Chinese with its communism of Confucius, and the Indian with its individualism of the Vedas”. Briefly, Indian spirituality and Chinese community life were to function as central nodes for a united Asia that could challenge the epistemic hegemony of the West. If carefully dissected, such assertions reflect the way Okakura internalized a Hegelian paradigm universalized by Western scholars including his mentor Ernest Fenollosa that drew a distinction between a ‘spiritual’ East and a ‘material’ West. In Okakura’s analysis, India and China had been great civilizations in yesteryears, but they presently lay in disarray, and as the “real repository of the trust of Asian thoughts and culture”, it was Japan’s prerogative to resurrect those fallen ideals. He further provided a technocratic dimension to his analysis, suggesting that by synthesizing Asian values, Japan had turned into a “museum of Asiatic civilisation”. However, at its core, the book sketched out a history of Japanese art, each period being associated with a distinct ideal.

For instance, the rise of Taoism around the mid-1st century BCE was symbolically associated with the dragon, conveying the power of change. His encounter with the Indian spiritual community looms large in the assertion that Japanese art was a "manifestation of Advaitism which welcomes the new without losing the old" (Okakura 2007, 9-12). His book was therefore aimed at establishing a hierarchy of Eastern civilizations with Japan at the apex chiefly because of its all-encompassing spiritual credentials.

Nivedita, on the contrary, gave centrality to Indian spirituality and Vedanta in her dream of a united Asia. In a lecture delivered in 1907 titled 'Function of art in shaping nationality', she stated that it was imperative for Indians to nurture a 'sovereign faculty' to take stock of their problems and connect with their art. In her own words-
"And so with Art, its rebirth in India can only take place, if it be consciously made the servant and poet of the mighty dream of Indian Nationality" (Nivedita 1955, 11)

This statement, if treated in isolation may appear self-aggrandizing, but if tied with the following, it reflects a distinct broad-mindedness that distinguishes Nivedita's outlook:
"It is a characteristic of great styles that they can assimilate new knowledge without self-degradation." (Nivedita 1955, 7).

It must bear mentioning that both Nivedita and Okakura acknowledged the superiority of Europe's technical knowledge, and were open to imbibing them. However, as Okakura explained in one of his speeches, this technological knowledge was merely like the commissariat which sustained any army in warfare; ideals on the contrary were like the 'plans of campaign' determined by the nature of the terrain and these could only be obtained in the East (Notehelfer 1990, 337). Ananda Coomaraswamy, a Ceylonese scholar actively involved in this pan-Asian discourse, too posited in a similar vein that a future race should "act with European energy and think with Asiatic calm" (Coomaraswamy 1918, 114). Therefore, proponents of pan-Asian unity militated against 'imitation' of the West at all costs.

This pan-Asianism was imbibed by artists and intellectuals from both countries. Okakura left India in 1903 as a profoundly inspired man and consequently sent two of his students Yokoyama Taikan and Hishida Shunso to India. These prolific painters engaged closely with the artist community in Bengal and diffused the Morotai wash technique which was employed by Abanindranath in his portrait of Bharat Mata. Blown away by this powerful rendition, Sister Nivedita opined that *"the artist has given expression to a purely Indian idea, in Indian form"*. (Nivedita 1955, 58).

Abanindranath published a philosophical tract on Indian painting called *'Sadanga or the Six Limbs of Painting'* in 1914. This text reveals the deep-seated impression of pan-Asian ideas on art, as Abanindranath took recourse to classical texts to illustrate the linkages between Indian and Japanese aesthetics[1]. He invoked Chinese philosopher Xie He's canon of painting to

demonstrate how Japanese and Chinese artists were deeply influenced by Vedantic principles. 'Idealism' again appears to be the cornerstone of Abanindranath's exposition, as to him the paper on which any work of art is performed is akin to a 'precious mirror of our soul'. While elaborating on the sixth limb (*varnika-bhanga*), he stresses on the role of the mind rather than the senses in performing any work of art because the mind 'reveals the music or perfume of colours'. While elucidating upon each of the six limbs, Abanindranath directs attention to the emotional state of the painter, which is seen to determine the quality of the work produced. This was an implicit critique of western techniques of oil painting and academic realism, which were reviled by most artists from the Bengal school for being impersonal and only superficially capturing the bounty of life. Such texts also corroborate scholar Tapati Guha Thakurta's assertion that art criticism in the early twentieth century mystified concrete issues of style and technique, under the "overbearing weight of emotions and ideas" (Thakurta 1992, 286). Moreover, Abanindranath seems to have deliberately excluded any reference to 'Indian' or 'Japanese' painting in the title, perhaps serving as a reminder to skeptics about the global salience of Pan-Asian sensibilities. Such universalism illustrates how artist-scholars were consciously crafting an Indo-Japanese intellectual thought-zone, that could potentially enhance Asia's prestige globally.

One Indian polymath stood head and shoulders above the rest in terms of global stature and intellectual prowess. Rabindranath Tagore's intellectual trajectory took sharp turns through the first two decades of the twentieth century. Tagore was one of the torch-bearers of the *Swadeshi* ideology, but once the movement ebbed, he distanced himself from essentialist positions on nationhood and consolidated his identity as a universal humanist. His first tour to East Asia in 1916 proved to be supremely eventful. Deeply moved by the visual arts of Japan he effusively hailed the nation for almost being 'nurtured' by its arts. (Bharucha 2006, 87).

However, in a powerful address to crowds gathered in Tokyo, he rebuked the Japanese for their intense nationalism and militarism, which in his view amounted to "imitating the West where she had a festering sore". He stated unequivocally that Japan's submission to technology was leading to "a process of gradual suicide by shrinkage of the soul". This stemmed from his acerbic hatred for the western construct of a nation-state, which he firmly believed "sedulously cultivate moral blindness in the cult of patriotism". He went to the extent of comparing the Japanese to hunters who "staked their souls to win their game" (Tagore 1996, 364-375). The Japanese were awe-struck by his poetry but a significant cross-section of intellectuals opposed his caustic remarks on Japan's modernization. Tagore's three landmark speeches in 1916 illustrate how the project of forging an integrated Asia had acquired such salience that intellectuals could publicly rebuke another Asian country for deviating from 'Oriental' ideals.

This pan-Asianist discourse gave centrality

to the Indian Ocean as a geographical thought zone. In other words, these artist-scholars imagined the cultural unity of Asia by traveling extensively across the Indian Ocean. Tagore's visits to East Asian countries and Okakura's landmark tours of India helped cement intellectual ties for several decades. However, in the process of highlighting spiritual ties between East Asia and the Indian subcontinent, these scholars conspicuously ignored Islam's historical contribution towards encouraging such exchange of ideas across the Indian Ocean. On the contrary, Buddhism received pride of place in their discussions, revealing the implicit biases that inhered in their ideas (Moorthy 2009, 267).

This trans-national intellectual exchange between two Asian nations- one colonized and the other nurturing imperialist ambitions- around the turn of the twentieth century is captivating for the penetrative insights it offered to the world. It must be noted that throughout the period under analysis, Japan was part of a treaty with Britain, and to that extent, it does seem rather incredulous to imagine Japanese intellectuals consciously alienating the British. So, what might have been the stimulus for this far-reaching dialogue? What accounts for this desperate search for origins and irreverent approach toward European academic art? This paper has tried demonstrating how artist-intellectuals of the early twentieth century were earnestly trying to construct bridges that could prefigure the revival of Asia as a world area which in turn could challenge the hegemonic impulses of Europe. Rash Behari Bose's three-decade-long refuge in Japan; the spiritual practice of 'silent sitting' propagated by Mirra Richards and the formidable artistic legacy of Nandalal Bose were in many ways linked with this new cosmopolitan thought zone formed in the early twentieth century. During the Second World War, Japan infamously declared the formation of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity sphere, and Okakura's book *The Awakening of the East*[2] became propaganda material to stoke imperialist ambitions. Nonetheless, the Indo-Japanese intellectual exchange of the early twentieth century was a very refreshing attempt to surmount the European approach of viewing Asia in immutable terms by envisaging a shared future founded on cosmopolitan ideals.

END NOTES

1. He drew parallels between the Indian notion of 'Rasa' and the Japanese conception of 'Ki-In'.

2. Published posthumously in 1940

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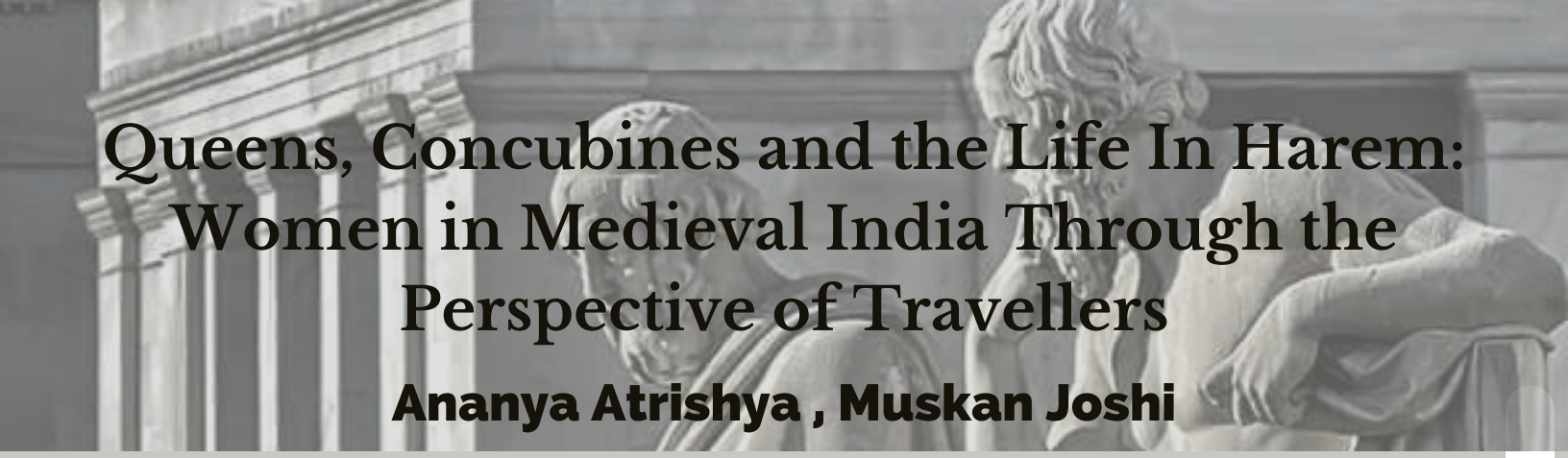

Queens, Concubines and the Life In Harem: Women in Medieval India Through the Perspective of Travellers

Ananya Atrishya , Muskan Joshi

India has a long history of travelers coming from different parts of the world, who not only record their journey of finding self-hood but also capture the accounts of social, political, and economic institutions. Coming as explorers and not historians, these travelogues provide us with their observations and experiences of a foreign land.

Though an important literary source used by historians to build a historical narrative, travelogues cannot be termed historical texts, as they are influenced by the views of travelers. Debates surrounding the authenticity of their facts continue to remain a matter of concern.

Through the writings of François Bernier and Niccolao Manucci, we will try to navigate the lives of the varied genders present in the Mughal Harem. While court historians focused on the formal structure, the Europeans let their presumptive and erotic inquisitiveness run wild about a place beyond their reach. This research paper aims to critically examine the condition of women of royalty, nobility, and the lower class of the medieval period and the pursuit of pleasure by both men and women

Keywords: Travelogues, Mughals, Harem, François Bernier, Niccolao Manucci

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From ancient times, India has been a docking place for various travelers who captured accounts of political, economic, and martial institutions in their travelogues. Though their authenticity has been a bone of contention due to the problem of exclusivity, historians believe these writings play a crucial role by providing an exoticized point of view. Out of the array of discussed topics, the enigmatic Mughal Harem often found space in the travelogues of the ever-curious medievalist foreign travelers.

Treated as a delicate matter whose history can not be generalised, the Harem became a muse for travellers. Even though the Persian chronicles did not dare to write on this subject, foreign travelogues presented readers with an amalgamation of facts and fiction. Scholars agree that the late 17th century travelogues of Francois Bernier and Niccolao Manucci give readers a more detailed and systematic image of the harem in *History of the Late Revolution of the Empire of the Great Mogol* and *Storia Do Mogor,* respectively. They often fantasised

about the number of women in the king's palace. For example, according to Niccolao Manucci, the Italian adventurer, "ordinarily there are within the mahal two thousand women of different races." A point to be noted while reading the presented travelogues is that the travellers were foreigners, had limited resources to understand the language and culture of the society, and were all male, making the physical domain, which is the Harem, an inaccessible place for them.

Generally depicted as a place of debauchery by foreign travellers, the Harem was not a magic arbour full of lovely females. Instead, it was a queer establishment wherein mothers and aunts, sisters and cousins, wives and concubines, princesses and minor princes, dancing girls and maids, besides, of course, choicest beauties for the master's pleasure, all lived under one roof as in a joint family (Lal 1988, V). Power dynamics played a crucial role resulting in distinct responsibilities being assigned to different individuals. N.M. Fenzer further states that 'far from being a palace of women lazing about marble halls awaiting their masters' pleasure, the Harem was a little world of its own governed not by a man at all but by a woman', challenging the notion that gender segregation in a royal household led to women's opportunities being limited.

A vibrant space fraught with tension and contestation for power, the Harem was an integral part of the polygamous Mughal society. Marriage, though crucial, was marked by casualness and contracted either for political considerations, social convenience or sheer sex, meaning that the Mughals did not limit themselves to four legal wives and often married free women. Thus, the royal Harem had three distinct divisions of women: legal wives, free but considered to be inferior wives, and concubines. According to the ulema, a Muslim was allowed to marry only four wives. However, reasons like the need for political alliance, lust, etc., often resulted in kings having more than four wives. Jadunath Sarkar terms this category as the 'secondary wives'. This category generally included daughters or relatives of Indian princes who, because of their defeat, political necessity, or personal ambition, married them to Mughal rulers or princes.

The harem also consisted of wet nurses who played a critical role in the internal working of the institution. Generally, high-born, these women who were serving the royal family during the infancy of princes and princesses, forged lasting ties of "milk" with them. Since moral qualities were considered transmissible via nursing, wet nurses were chosen for their family of origin, virtue, and piety. Their children further forged ties with their mothers' elite ties. References of foster brothers, called kokas, being appointed to positions of power have been found in the Mughal texts.

The institution of concubinage formed a specific category of bondage when compared with ordinary domestic slavery. Concubines, also called *kaniz, parasar, sarar, aghacha,* etc. held a unique position in the Mughal society and harem and were kept beside the legally wedded wives, solely or

mainly for sexual enjoyment. Children of such unions belonged to masters and retained the "free" status, whereas the concubine only played the role of "mother of children." As it was a common practice, emperors and nobles spoke freely about their concubines. Often, this resulted in them getting more importance than the wife, for while the latter was only his wife, the concubine enjoyed the real affection of the man. This reflects the real pleasure laid in extra-marital affairs. However, many, like Akbar, were also conscious of the difference between his 'free-born wives' and the slaves. A major difference between the wives and slaves was that the former was expected to be faithful to her husband and reflect chastity and piousness, but concubines could not.

The *Aghas* and *Aghachas* sometimes rose to the position of Begums, depending on their husbands' will. However, this was only possible when he did not have four wives already. In such situations, one could resort to divorcing his wife.

The nobility Harem followed the model of the Imperial Harem. However, it is difficult to say if they, like royalty, kept free wives besides the legal four. It is safe to opine that the strength of their Harem was made of concubines and female slaves.

Few historians, like Lal, believed that the presence of patriarchal values pointed towards the subjugation and oppression of married ladies to such an extent that all chances of disagreement between the two sexes disappeared. H.A.R. Gibb quoting Ferdinand Brunetière says that "Women in the bourgeois life in the Middle Ages seemed to have bowed the head as low as in any age and any place beneath the law of force and brutality" and adds, "the artificial sentimentality of chivalry had nothing in common with the life of the seraglio." A dichotomy, therefore, appeared in the psychology of pleasure as far as the marital life of a king is concerned. Though there exists a dominating love of a powerful queen like Nur Jahan over Jahangir, there also exists at least four hundred wives, secondary wives, and concubines.

Another integral part of the Imperial Harems was the Eunuchs. They were appointed on guard duty in the seraglio. Also known as Khwaja Sara, where the senior Eunuchs were called Nazirs, these individuals were described as ones whose "Virile Parts are cut off smooth, to prevent the least Temptation from the Sex" by John Ovington. Each Nazir had a number of other Eunuchs under him, making this cadre hierarchical. Francois Bernier states "Emasculation, say the Indians, produces a different effect upon men than upon the brute creation; it renders the latter gentle and tractable; but who is the eunuch, they ask, that is not vicious, arrogant and cruel?" According to Manucci, "there is always one set above the rest who directs and looks after everything that goes on in the Mahal." He further comments that many princesses won Eunuchs over through generous financial help and, at times, "get permission to enjoy that of which I cannot speak." Straddling the inner and outer domains of the court, Eunuchs, according to European writers, were also kept as "spies" by the

“Mughal Emperor and princes. They were expected to provide information about “the lovlist (sic) young women in the empire” and employ all their means to lure these girls and present them as mistresses or concubines to the king.

For Bernier, Eunuchs could be entrusted with responsibilities as they could nurse no private ambition, could have no zenana of their own, no heirs, and their wealth would become the property of their masters after death. However, he also reflected on the issue that sometimes, Eunuchs could entertain feelings of hatred and treachery due to their irreparable physical damage.

The pursuit of pleasure by men and women within the walls of the Harem was one of the highly discussed topics in travelogues by foreign travelers.

Akbar and his successors were never tired of filling up their Harems. Rajputanis were preferred for political reasons, Kashmiri women for their fair skins, and Bengali beauties for their disposition. According to Bernier, it was from Kashmir that nearly every individual, when first admitted to the court of the great Mogal wives or concubines, so that his children might be whiter than Indians and pass for genuine Mogals.

During Shahjahan's time, fairs were organized, which gained importance as the socio-economic place where kings and nobles chose their concubines. Francois Bernier gives an accurate description of the fair. According to him, "A whimsical kind of fair is sometimes held during these festivities in the Mahal, or royal seraglio; it is conducted by the handsomest and most engaging of the wives of the Omrahs and principal Mansabdars. The articles exhibited are beautiful brocades, rich embroideries of the newest fashion, turbans elegantly worked on cloth of gold, fine muslins worn by women of quality and other articles of high price. These bewitching females act the part of traders, while the purchasers are the King, Begums or princesses, and other distinguished ladies of the seraglio. If any Omrah's wife happens to have a handsome daughter, she never fails to accompany her mother, that she may be seen by the King and become known to the Begums." Peter Mundy, on the other hand, says that to this fair, "the wives and daughter of all sorts" come, "no man daring to refuse to sending them if the king require them." No parda was observed. "Women need not be veiled before the king or a bridegroom, both known as Shah, and the king was after all an evergreen bridegroom."

The nobles or Amirs completed the picture of the debauched life of the Mughal elites. According to Francisco Pelsaert, "Each night the Amir visits a particular wife, or mahal, and receives a very warm welcome from her and from the slaves, who dressed specially for the occasion, seem to fly, rather than run, about their duties. If it is the hot weather, they undress the husband as soon as he comes in, and rub his body with pounded sandalwood and rosewater, or some other scented and cooling oil. Fans are kept going steadily in the room, or in the open air, where they usually sit. Some of the slaves chafe the master's hand and

feet, some sit and sing, or play music and dance, or provide other recreation, the wife sitting near him all the time. The husband sits like a golden cock among the gilded hens until midnight, or until passion or drink sends him to bed. Then if one of the pretty slave girls takes his fancy, he calls her to him and enjoys her, his wife not daring to show any signs of displeasure, but dissembling, though she will take it out on the slave-girl later on."

The insatiable thirst for sex and the availability of courtesans and dancing girls often resulted in an atmosphere mixed with sex, luxury, and licence.

In Akbar's time, a separate quarter called Shaitanpura or Devils-Ville was assigned to the prostitutes. A darogah or clerk was appointed for the registration of names of individuals who went to or took the prostitutes to their homes. Permission from the Majesty had to be taken if a well-known courtier wanted to have a virgin. Infringement of rules resulted in punishments, but most nobles went scot-free.

Kishori Sharan Lal categorizes the Mughal period's love as degraded. He further elaborates on how as far as the generality of Mughal nobles was concerned, the pursuit of sexual pleasure was limitless and that in far-off places, where the king's authority was limited, life was licentious. An important example provided by him is of Mirza Ghazi Beg, the governor of Sindh during the reign of Akbar, who required both wine and a virgin every night. Having catamites or loving beardless boys was considered a disease of double degradation. A common practice of Mughal society, many emperors like Babur, Prince Kam Baksh, etc., also indulged in the same. However, Akbar considered this abhorrent, resorting to various strict punishments. He believed that the search for boys was as common as that for virgins, "and drunkenness and ignorance soon led to bloodshed. Many individuals had to face capital punishment, while certain privileged courtiers walked about proudly and insolently doing what they liked."(cited by Blochmann)

The pleasure of sex was mutual. Even though women were kept under every conceivable restraint, nothing deterred them from finding pleasure clandestinely or using other ways. A difference between the pattern of seeking pleasure between men and women was that man went about it boldly and openly while women cleverly and surreptitiously (Lal 1988, 179).

Many like Bernier and Manucci, who were physicians or posed as one, present engrossing accounts of the same. According to Manucci, "The latter [the physician] stretches out his hand inside the curtain; they [the women] lay hold of it, kiss it, and softly bite it. Some, out of curiosity, apply it to their breast, which has happened to me several times; but I pretended not to notice, in order to conceal what was passing from the matrons and eunuchs then present, and not arouse their suspicions." Manucci further added that since these women did not have any opportunity to meet men, except their husbands, and therefore, many pretended to be ill so that they get the chance to meet the physicians, converse with them, and have their pulses felt.

In the Mughal times, there were neither electricity nor kerosene lamps. Fire, once lit, was kept burning by constant feeding. Dark nights, therefore, helped in the reunion of forlorn lovers, who, if caught, were given strict punishments. Bernier's account frequently mentions the romantic entanglements of the princesses residing in the harem and gives examples of Jahanara Begum's lovers who were fraudulently brought into the harem. One example, even reflects on the execution of her lover, who was discovered by Shah Jahan.

Ruby Lal evaluates and reveals that in an unexpected way, royal women and royal eunuchs came to occupy a similar liminal zone, and so the accounts of their agency, opportunities and achievements can parallel one another in many ways. This ideas can be supported by Abūl-Faz'l's well known model of "sacred" eunuchs. Evidently, one might conclude that both women and eunuchs played a crucial role in maintaining seclusion, sacredness and inaccessibility of the harem. However, travelogues provide readers with a contrasting view by presenting tales of forbidden love between the Eunuchs and the women of the Harem. Since the king or husbands used to only take their favourite wives, and leave the rest at home, many wives allowed the Eunuchs to enjoy them according to their own abilities, gratifying their burning passion. Manucci confirms that Eunuchs were favourites of the princesses "whom they enjoyed." The question which often arose was, "How could Eunuchs make love to a lady?" Lal elaborates on the same by emphasising the presence of both gender and sexuality in the Harem. According to him, Eunuchs could be inter-sexual or hermaphrodite. A few men like Itmad Khan took drugs like camphor to become impotent, but a majority of them were strong men who were subjected to castration. The operation did not mean a change of sex, rather, it was just the shedding of male sex without impairment of physical strength. This strength was their asset so far as ladies of the Harem were concerned.

To conclude, the writings of various foreign travellers present the Mughal Harem as the assimilation and accommodation of individuals who shared or competed for power and positions. Although the emperor was an absolute sovereign, in theory, the cooperation of various elements was a crucial precondition for his power. These elements included individuals of different genders, sexualities, religions, and ranks. Arguably, foreign travellers' inability to see women, especially the ones from the upper class due to the purdah system and the Harem's rules and regulations proved to be one of the biggest disadvantages, which led to them not being able to provide an eye-witness account. Their accounts were based on hearsay and bazaar gossip and ultimately turned out to be exaggerated or fictitious pieces of literature. These sources on the Harem lacked historical knowledge on the relationship between the Mughals and the harem. While court historians focused on the formal structure, the Europeans let their presumptive and erotic inquisitiveness run wild about a place beyond their reach. In the end, the difference in ideals between westerners who followed celibacy and renunciation of flesh and Indians, who indulged in polygamy and concubinage, resulted in travelogues presenting a tempting, misinterpreted and scandalised point of view.

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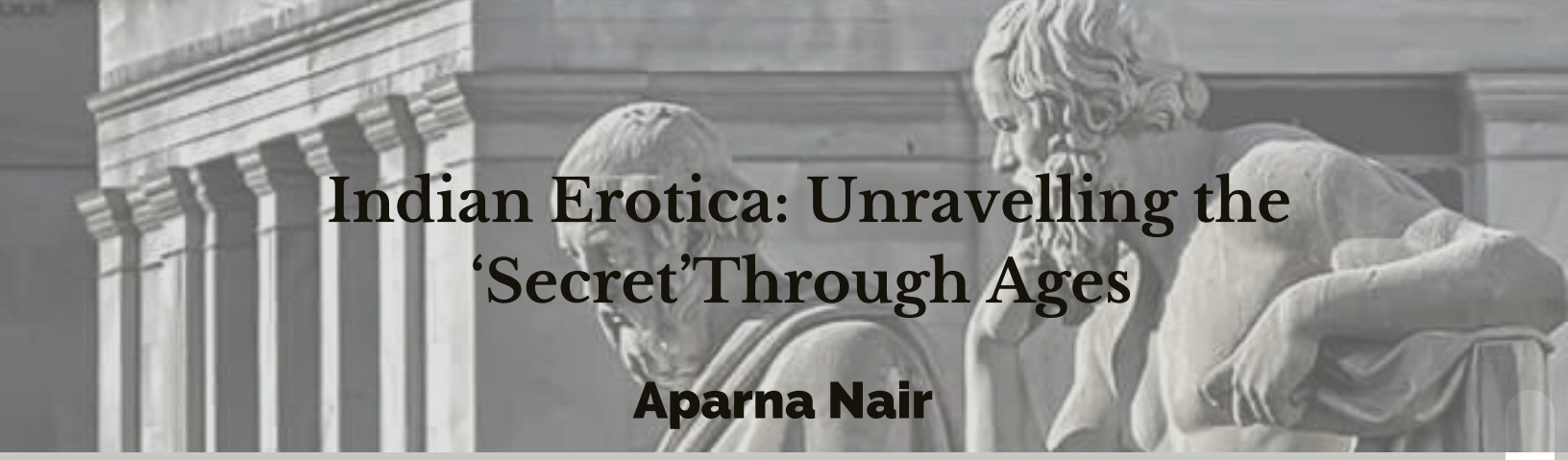

Indian Erotica: Unravelling the 'Secret' Through Ages

Aparna Nair

India has witnessed a vast amount of literary writings, from political, economic, social, and religious aspects. Apart from these, one theme remains quite silent in comparison to others, that is 'erotica'. Works on love, sex, and pleasure have been in existence since ancient times, from Vatsyayana's Kamasutra to modern Indian novels. Thus, India has a plethora of writings on the same, but it is not talked about plenty. It seems as though the word 'SEX' is quite embarrassing and shameful, and thoughts of it seem worse, making it taboo. But historical works display quite the opposite, depicting pleasure as a part of human life, for both men as well as women, lovers, courtesans, and friends. 'Congress' between men and women, women and women finds mention in ancient, medieval, and modern literary works and architectural buildings, especially temples of the Indian subcontinent. This paper aims to look at the historical works on erotica and the present Indian works and thoughts on the same and the reaction of the society towards such works which seem to change with the coming of new generations.

Keywords: Erotica, sex, pleasure, Congress, history

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Erotica as a topic has a long and varied history in India which has been a constant source of debate and controversy. Though metaphorically a 'secret', India has pioneered the art of sex education through art and literature which sheds light on the changing attitudes and values of Indian society regarding 'sex' over time. These also included literary writings that were a means to assert one's own sexuality. K. Chakraborthy and R.G. Thakurata argue that it was first found in the Vedic and Buddhist ancient texts which provided a "righteous" perspective on sexuality, wedlock, and rituals as a means to increase productivity. Later, sexuality was asserted as a means to unite with God and the lover.

Several works were composed in the ancient, medieval, and modern periods on the same, a few of which are:

KAMASUTRA – PLEASURE AS ART

Also known as 'Aphorisms on Love', it was written by Vatsyayana in Sanskrit after 1 century AD and before 6 century AD. It is a part of the *Kama Shastra*, the 'art and science of love' with the aim of understanding sexual desires within marriage as well as outside marriage, opine Keya Das and T.S. Sathyanarayanan. The Sutra is based on the three commandments of the Lords of Beings, Shiva – Dharma or righteous conduct,

Artha or wealth, and Kama. The latter, i.e., Kama means to love and pleasure which is said to have been written by Nandi (Shiva's vehicle) in one thousand chapters and was abbreviated by several others such as Babharavya, "inherent of the Panchala country", with one thousand five hundred chapters put together under seven parts or heads. These are *Sadharana* (general), *Samprayogika* (embraces), Kanya *Samprayuktaka* (the male-female union), *Bharyadhikarika* (on one's wife), Paradika (on other's wives), *Vaisika* (courtesans) and *Aupamishadika* (the art of seduction).

Today, sex is a taboo outside marriage and its only objective is to produce progeny. But Vatsyayana argues that the art (of Kama) is to be learned by both men and women alike. For women, Richard Burton argues, enjoying is not a sin. They have two main duties – pleasure and progeny. Any woman who fulfills either one is a *Nayika*. He further argues that the 'union' between a man and woman is of nine kinds, based on the dimension, force of passion, and time which further creates several kinds of union. But he does maintain a patriarchal notion that the art must be learned before marriage, and after marriage with the consent of their husbands. He further maintains that women, in the beginning, want a tender sexual connection and must be patiently approached by men, rather than forcibly. Otherwise, the former may come to hate the 'congress' or even the male himself. This shows that Vatsyayana advocated consensual sex rather than forced.

Interestingly, he does not prohibit sexual connections with lower caste women, public women, and those married twice. This, in comparison to present-day Indian situations, where such a connection is regarded as polluting caste purity (Uma Chakravarthy, p. 148), is not upheld as long as it is only meant for pleasure.

BHAKTI POEMS -EROTICISM TOWARDS GOD

Bhakti or the 'one-sided devotion to God', V. Ramaswamy notes, emerged as a religious movement that developed in Tamil Nadu around the 7th century and later spread to other regions. R. Champakalakshmi calls it an instrument of social protest against Brahmanical orthodoxy and focused on socio-religious reforms. It was inclusive of women who took to forms of "bridal mysticism" and "eroticism" towards their Lord – mainly Shiva and Vishnu – whom they saw as their lover or husband. The element of "sexual imagery" is most evident in the poems of *Virashaivite* bhaktas. While men would take on femininity and think of God as male, women felt a natural connection in regard to sexual union. Akka Mahadevi, for instance, equates the spiritual union with God to that of a sexual union. Another bhakta, Goggavve, says:

The fragrance that merges in the air
The pleasure of sexual intercourse
That is the only way for the devotee
For the devotee God is the sum total
Of all pleasures
The union of God and devotee is pleasurable

(Goggavve: V:5 in Hirenath; 1965: V: 189:89)

Leaving behind one's own sexuality was another form of bhakti which was evident in the Nayanar(1) bhakta Karaikkal Ammaiyar's

verses where she describes herself as a female pey (demoness) with shrunken breasts, protruding eyes, and lengthy shins who roams in Shiva's Forest (Tiruvalankattu Mutta Tiruppatikam. Patikam 1, Vl.). The "most perfect stage of spirituality" where gender dissolves is when the saint becomes an asexual being, argues V. Ramaswamy. Mahadevi regarded herself as a 'female in body but male in principle'. She transcended love and sex by discarding her clothes and went around naked, only covered by her hair. Lallesvari of Kashmir also did the same and danced naked, without any care for the men around her whom she saw as sheep.

Unlike the hitherto norms and traditions that were followed in society, bhakti created a space for everyone to worship God in different ways, either explicitly sexual or by leaving behind one's masculinity and femininity. The naked bodies of the women bhaktas were a means to offer their raw self to the deity which was void of the idea of *izzat* or honor in contrast to present Indian societies where a woman is the upholder of honor and traditions in the family and community, as Uma Chakravarthy points out.

ANANGA RANGA – FOR THE COUPLES

Known as 'The Stage of Love' or *Kamaledhiplava* (a boat in the ocean of love), it was composed in Sanskrit by the poet named Kallayana Malla for Lada khan (or Ladkhan), son of Ahmad Lodi, the Viceroy of Gujarat, in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Substantially deriving from the *Kama Sutra*, it has about ten chapters and it was the first work which was translated by Burton. He argues that the author sees the 'Art of Love' not as debaucherous but as a means to prevent monogamous couples from separating.

Malla begins by describing that the second greatest joy that one receives apart from the knowledge of the Creator is the pleasure arising from possessing a beautiful woman. Most men marry for the sake of congress, love, and comfort of their wives but they tend to not give the same pleasure to their wives as they are ignorant of the "Scripture of Kama". Unlike the *Kama Sutra* which focuses on both marital and extra-marital affairs, Ananga Ranga focuses on husband-wife relations, thus having greater sexual prohibitions in regards to time, place, and partners, argues W.G. Archer.

Here, men and women are divided into classes and divisions. Padmini (the Lotus Woman) is described as the most perfect woman while Shasha (the hare-man) is the ideal man. Malla argues that those who read the book shall know "how delicious an instrument is woman", who can give the most divine pleasures. Though the woman is objectified in this case, there are instances where women play "male instruments" or even play the role of a male. For example, *Purushayita* is the position where the wife mounts the prostrate man and "enjoys her husband and thoroughly satisfies herself." Thus, pleasure was meant for both men and women alike and women are treated as the ultimate means of acquiring Kama, one of the three main commandments.

But regarding the translation, Rice argues that Burton wanted to change the nature of the original work and he thus expressed that it was a man's duty to pleasure his wife. He states that several sections of the Ranga come from Burton's brain and which forces the text and culture to submit to the "trick of translation" in order to produce and deploy the desired knowledge.

REKHTI POETRY AND LESBIAN LOVE

Rekhti is the feminine of *rekhta* which was the earlier name of the Urdu language. Ruth Vanita opines that it was a form of poetry where male poets used the female voice and idioms in Lucknow in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The term was coined by the Urdu poet Saadat Yaar Khan Rangin. Mayuri Dutta argues that, unlike Urdu poetry where masculine genders and male homoeroticism was represented, *rekhti* projected lesbian intimacy even though Islam prohibits such bondings. The poetry is marked by the use of its highly erotic lines that indicate sexual activity between women and women through the use of terms such as *chapti* or *dogana*. *Chapti* refers to sticking, clinging and rubbing together while *dogana* means doubling or two-ness. The poem's genre, *Chaptinama*, is derived from *chapti*. Centred around the settings, objects and subjects related to women in their everyday life, it dealt with women from all walks of life through the usage of vernacular words and idioms and focuses on unrequited love. Jur'at (meaning: audacity), the first Urdu erotic poet writes:

To the enjoyment of this clinging what other pleasure can compare? This rubbing above, below, is intercourse wondrously rare...
Sometimes you will be on top of me, sometimes I, your slave, will be on top, When the body's rubbed all over, the heart's delight is multiplied...
(Jur'at's Chaptinama, V: 4 & 5 In Kulliyat-e Jur'at, Iqtida Husain)

In the *mushairas* (poets' gatherings), poets mimicked the female voice or even assumed a feminine persona by dressing up or using props. Some even took feminine pen names such as Dogana which was the Urdu for "homoerotically inclined women". Carle Petievich calls *Rekhti* poetry as sexually aggressive while Ruth Vanita called it similar to medieval romances and erotic treatises. Vanita and Saleem Kidwai argue that the portrayal of sexual details in *rekhti* is much more accurate than several 19th-century Western fictions. By the 20th century, it was labeled as obscene and eliminated from the corpus of Urdu literature.

CONCLUSION

India has a rich culture of erotica that provided the base for sex education and pleasure-seeking since ancient times. Yet, today, sex remains restricted within marriage norms and its objective is to produce children. Pleasuring was not only meant for males but females and the emphasis on female pleasure is given by Vatsyayana and Malla to name a few. At the religious level, eroticism was directed toward God, evident from Bhakti poems or 'vachanas' of saints and followers and involved leaving behind mortal humans. Voices of female homosexuality

are seen in 18th and 19th-century *rekhti* poetry which reflected the lived realities of women during the period, including courtesans or tawaifs, as Dutta points out. Thus, India's perspective towards Kama may require her to look back at history and interpret it in a different light.

END NOTES

1. Nayanars were the followers of Shiva.

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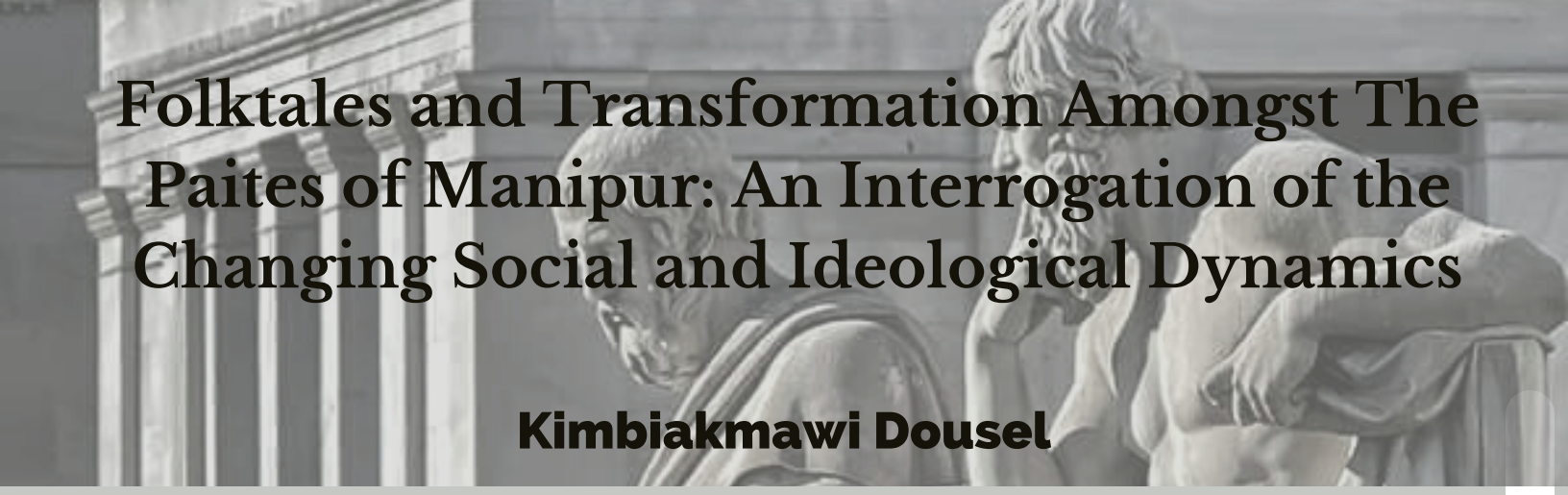

Folktales and Transformation Amongst The Paites of Manipur: An Interrogation of the Changing Social and Ideological Dynamics

Kimbiakmawi Dousel

The North Eastern Regions of India comprise a plethora of communities each with its distinct language, culture, and lifestyles preserved through the use of oral narratives and cultural practices. Using these mediums, traditional community knowledge systems have been passed down from generation to generation and they reflect harmonious relations and are considered a repository of indigenous knowledge and wisdom tapping at the very roots of their collective struggles and histories. These oral traditions have played a pivotal role in shaping and reshaping our historical and cultural understanding of the region as a whole and have constantly evolved under different socio-economic contexts. They are inherently infused with elements of tribal culture and belief systems thereby giving us insights into the ideologies which shaped the traditional tribal systems, the dynamics of how it has evolved to today's present context, the seamless merging of individual opinions into the community discourses and their impacts as well as the transition from orally transmitted traditions to print culture emerging with the coming of Christian missionaries who helped in the formation of elaborate scripts in the 19th Century.

This paper will focus on the oral traditions of the Paites using their folktales and how these can be used to reconstruct some aspects of a pre-literate animistic society with no written records of their own until the coming of the Christian missionaries. Like most indigenous people across the world and most particularly in the North East, the Paites have passed on traditional belief systems through stories and folktales that are passed on from generation to generation. This also serves as their way of interrogating their lived and unlived experiences of the past to engage with community ideological discourses of the present while holding their firm stand to their ethnic roots. In this paper, I hope to throw significant light and unravel the various dimensions to which these very narratives have shaped the ideological discourses of the tribal populated regions of Manipur focusing on the Paite tribe and the influence it has in representing the ideologies of these tribal diasporas without formal education and how it has accommodated itself to the ever-shifting of belief systems and practices and thereby give us significant insights into the histories of these marginalized groups seldom written nor talked about.

Keywords: Paites, Oral Traditions, North-east, folklores ,Christianity

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INTRODUCTION OF PAITES

According to the Mizoram Tribal Research Institute, " the first group of people who migrated from Chiimnuai(1) in Chin hills could not be overtaken by the latter group of migrators, so the latter group referred to the former group as '*Paimasate*' (Those who go first), and this was later shortened to '*Paite*'.Historically speaking, the Paites are one of the ethnic groups inhabiting the Indo-Burma Region in un-partitioned India and Burma. Although colonial and anthropological sources record them as *kuki/chin*, they refer to themselves as *Paite Zomi*. It is interesting to note the close interconnectedness between the Paites of Mizoram and the Paites of Manipur. Writing about the Paites of the Lushai Hills in 1912, Lt.Colonel J.Shakespeare said,

When we first occupied these hills a very large number of this clan were
living in different villages of Lushai Chiefs, having being brought there
and detained more or less forcibly. These have nearly all left now, and
either returned to their own country, the Manipur hills or settled in one
or two villages under Paite chiefs in the extreme Northeast corner of the
district. (2)

Taking a look at their folk songs, we get to know the traditional belief systems of the community as a whole and how that has shaped their particular experience. For instance, there was this pre-dominant belief amongst the tribe that their original home was a *khul*(*cave*). This is evident when we look at the folk songs prevailing in that same period of time which goes about suggesting their common origins from a rock:

Eiteng khawlkhawm a tuam omlo
(we,the people who are in aggregation are of one stock)
Vannuai chiteng khul a piang;
(born of a cave under the same sky)
Tuun sung khat a piang hi ngeingei,
(and borne of the same mother)
Suahpih sanggam,
(We,borne out of the same mother)
Laizom khat hi ngeingei hang e.
(thus are really descendants of the same stock) (3)

Prof. M.C. Goswami and Dr. H. Kamkhenthang are of the opinion that the term 'Paite is a combination of two words, 'Pai' (go) and 'te' (plural maker), and used to denote those who migrated from Chin Hills to the Lushai Hills and Manipur.'

SOCIETY AS DEPICTED IN PAITE FOLKLORE

A folktale in accordance with the words of Stitch Thompson can be defined as a story that has been handed down from generation to generation either in writing or by word of mouth. VL Lenin (1962) stated that there are elements of reality in every folktale and similarly folktales and folk songs of earlier Paite societies often bear significant imprints of the historical as well as the societal reality of the times thereby providing continuity and cultural distinctiveness. However, it remains important to bear in mind the inherent fragility of collective memories but very often it is this very fallibility that has helped accommodate the collective experiences of a 'pre-literate' tribal society

whose understanding of the world and their surroundings rests on their perception of memory. It is also imperative to address the fact that the body of written literature in terms of literature amongst the Paite tribe is woefully scarce when compared to their tribal counterparts like the Nagas and the Mizos. However, these folktales and songs do give us a sense of what the earlier Paite society looked like and how the folk engaged with their surroundings, and what beliefs formed the basis of the society they were living in.

One popular folktale amongst the masses even till the present contemporary times is the story of *Liandou* and *Thanghou* which is set against the backdrop of a pre-literate tribal society and the theme of the tale centers on the sad fate of two brothers of the same name abandoned by their mother while having to deal with the loss of a father. As poor orphans, both brothers represent a section of society that belongs to the periphery. Throughout the unfolding of the tale, there were instances that perhaps point towards the traditional ideological beliefs confining the society in a particular manner towards marginalization of certain sections of society. During the particular time in which this folktale was based, societal livelihood was mainly based on an agrarian economy meaning that there might be a much more emphasis on the ability of a particular individual to exert manpower in which the brothers and other socially marginalized persons were at a disadvantage. Another societal aspect reflective of the social customs and traditions that was seen in the folktale is the *innsung dongta/inndongta* meaning a household council with a set of functionaries whose primary function includes keeping the household intact. In the tale, we see both brothers being kept under the care of their aunt and uncle clinging to this principle of care by the *inndongta* which comprises of ni(aunts) and gangs (uncles). However, references to the two brothers being abandoned and ignored stand perhaps as an antithesis to the fundamental belief in the welfare of the people or brethren as upheld by the institution of *inndongta* and perhaps shed light on the failure of the community. The folktale ends with a folk song sung by Thanghou when losing his wife in flooded water which suggests continuity when contextualizing this with the present-day situation as seen in the great emphasis on songs even as a form of worship. A substantive point of argument that can be made here is with regards to the common notion that the *lenkhopna laa* or worship songs have their roots with the coming of the Christian missionaries. However, this might not be necessarily true as the folktale was based during a time when the forces of either Christianity or formal education had not reached the common masses yet. This tradition of using songs as mediums of expression was prevalent even prior to the coming of Christianity which continues on even till the coming of the Christian missionaries with the songs now shifting towards songs of praise and worship. This folktale still continues on in some households as a form of a lesson about the importance of sibling bonds.

Another folktale *Lengtonghoih* whose main protagonist

is also of the same name tells us the story of a beautiful girl dearly loved by her seven brothers who wish to get the brightest shining star for herself. While the brothers set forth to look for the star, the girl is abducted by a cruel prince and imprisoned in his palace. Upon returning and subsequently realizing that their sister is missing, the brothers set forth and tried transforming themselves into birds to rescue their sister of which only the youngest one succeeded. In this, the portrayal of indigenous customs and traditions comes to light with literary representations of magical and animistic rituals. This we see as evidenced by the magical act performed through which the brothers and sister are finally reunited. Another important aspect the folktale demonstrates is the power of love and how love conquers the most difficult of trials. Even in the present-day context, we find elements of continuity as reflected in the broader concept of community bonds and love for one's kinfolk or kinsmen called '*phattuamngaihna*'.This basically entails the capacity for hard work, bravery, endurance, generosity, kindness, and selflessness which acted as a stabilizing force in society in times of both happiness and misfortune.

Corresponding to the theme of love, we have the epic love story of *Khupching leh Ngambawm* which talks about how love transcends all kinds of evils. The story tells us a lot about the traditional belief systems of the Paites, for instance: we find references to the Paite community being reflected as an agrarian-based economy wherein one's wealth is determined by the number of cattle and land one owns as can be seen in the rejection of Ngambawm by Khupchings mother based on their lessened landed and cattle holdings following the untimely demise of his father. This particular aspect again provides us with an interesting glimpse into the reign of the patriarch and how the entire household is shouldered on the male autonomy so much so that with the passing of his father,Ngambawm who was once considered a good match for Khupching was now disowned. Through the folktale, we see mystical elements and representation of the dominant belief in life after death which has shown elements of continuity from the pre-Christian world even till the coming up of Christian missionaries and the gradual acceptance of the religion.

TRANSITION FROM 'PRE-LITERATE' TO 'LITERATE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY'

The Paite community came into contact with the forces of modernization brought about by the subsequent coming up of the missionaries in the early 20th century from the Lushai Hills of Mizoram. This brought forth dynamic changes in society such as the growth of education and modern ideas departing from the earlier notions of 'tribal' and animistic beliefs. With the growth of educated imparted by the Christian missionaries both in English as well as in the vernacular, there was the subsequent rise of a small-scale printing press resulting in the growth of written scripts as well as the easy availability of the scriptures to the common masses. All these transformative changes led to a large-scale change in the power dynamics of the region ushering in the rise of an educated Christian elite.

According to the words of *JH Hutton*, this evangelizing process drove a sword of dissension and was met with initial opposition by the erstwhile landed magnates or the chiefs who saw the coming up of the religion as standing in the way of their consolidation of power. Even amidst these forces of constructive changes in society, there was bound to be some sort of opposition from the 'tribals' who were apprehensive about their traditional rights and belief systems being taken away in favor of the new regime or the progressive force of Christianity. For instance, in April 1942 few years prior to independence, there were some villagers in Songtal village who were fined for embracing the new faith of Christianity and refusing to participate in the traditional sacrificial rite called Kosah(4). It was then that the enraged new Christians started to lodge complaints to *Paul Rostad* wherein they stated to him that they were ready to move out of their homes and leave the place which has been their ancestral home for generations. Significant observations can be deduced from this considering the profound impacts this newfound faith and belief had in the now upcoming new society of the Paites. Firstly, it did influence the relations between kinsmen as is evident from the example given above resulting in the drifting away from age-old customs and traditions that were earlier binding to all sections of the society. They now began to view the acts of drinking after a hard day's work and the performance of sacrificial rituals as taboo(5).

With the growth of mission schools, the newly educated Christian masses started to command respect from all sections of society and they were held in high regard. Slowly, societies and organizations catering to the needs and representations of the Paites in all aspects of social, political, and economic lives such as the foundation of the Paite Literature Society established on the 10th of May,1954 at Pearsonmun leading to the blossoming of more organizations such as the Paite Tribe Council(PTC) started to be established in the year 1949 at Tangnuam overseeing the laws and regulations of the tribe. When looking at the change in power dynamics of the region due to the interplay of forces of religion, change, and the impact of education, we can see clearly the stark contrast on which medium this particular power or authority was derived from. In the erstwhile Paite society, any kind of power wielded by people in societies emanated from the upholding of the traditional customary laws and rituals in society whereas, in the latter periods with the onset of Christianity, power is rather derived from the modern force of education propagated by the English Missionaries. These kinds of developments do give us some substantive points of comparatively analyzing the varied changes that unfolded throughout the transition from pre-literate to a literate Christianized society. However, far from opposing each other in its entirety, forces of tradition and modernity as brought about by Christianity, both forces began to influence each other. Looking at today's present Paite society we still find continuity of its traditional elements as evident from the oral tradition of passing on these folktales from one generation to the next. Both forces of tradition and modernity have contributed efficiently to enriching our information about the social

life and practices of the Paites vis a vis the oral traditions as we trace their evolvement from being orally transmitted to being disseminated through print culture in present times.

CONCLUSION

Through a comprehensive study of the Paite Folklore and the dynamic changes in its transmission to the print culture brought about by the coming up of Christianity, the profounding glimpse oral discourses can give us about this undocumented transitional phase of the evolution of the Paite society from pre-colonial belief systems to a more radicalized worldview following the acceptance of Christianity can be seen. At the heart of all these developments was the transmission of oral tradition and knowledge from one generation to the next intertwined with tradition and memory in oral cultures. With the coming up of forces of education brought about by the Christian missionaries, the folklores which were once orally transmitted from generation to generation started to find their own solid footing amidst the blossoming of a print culture resulting subsequently in the large-scale dissemination of printed works including folktales and particularly Christian literature and small pamphlets of the Bible in both Paite and the languages are spoken by their tribal counterparts. Looking at these oral discourses and traditions through the lens of today's modernizing glimpse might seem capricious to outline or even understand the primitive belief systems that have formed the once dominant worldview of the Paite tribe before the onset of these transformative changes. Questions about its authenticity and accuracy certainly pervade the minds of all bringing forces of objectivity and subjectivity into the realm of our studies. However, despite these questions and apprehensions, it is important to note that oral narratives are the culmination of a particular community's collective ethos and belief systems and serve as an effective medium to understand better the undocumented histories and collective ideologies of the tribal populace and trace the changing dynamics of their thought processes. These oral traditions not only act as a force for continuity but also one that promotes diversity and change thereby providing a form of inheritance for the whole of its ancestral culture. For indigenous tribes like the Paites who have no written records of the past until recently, due to the absence of a script, it is important and essential to take into account their folklore in order to reconstruct their historical and cultural past.

END NOTES

1. Ciimnuai refers to the legendary city-state of the Zomi who are mostly referred to as Chins in Myanmar, Mizo, Kuki in India and Bawmzo in Bangladesh.

2. Lt. Colonel J. Shakespeare. 1912: The Lushei Kuki Clans. Macmillan and Co.Ltd. London. 1912.

3. Translated by the author

4. The Kosah Ritual involves the killing of an animal which was buried together with a dead man's body premised on the belief that the spirit of the dead animal follows the dead body to the afterlife and thus opened up the gates of heaven to him by appeasing Sahnu

5. D Khaizalian Tangthupha Tungma leh Tungnung,Convention Press,1982.

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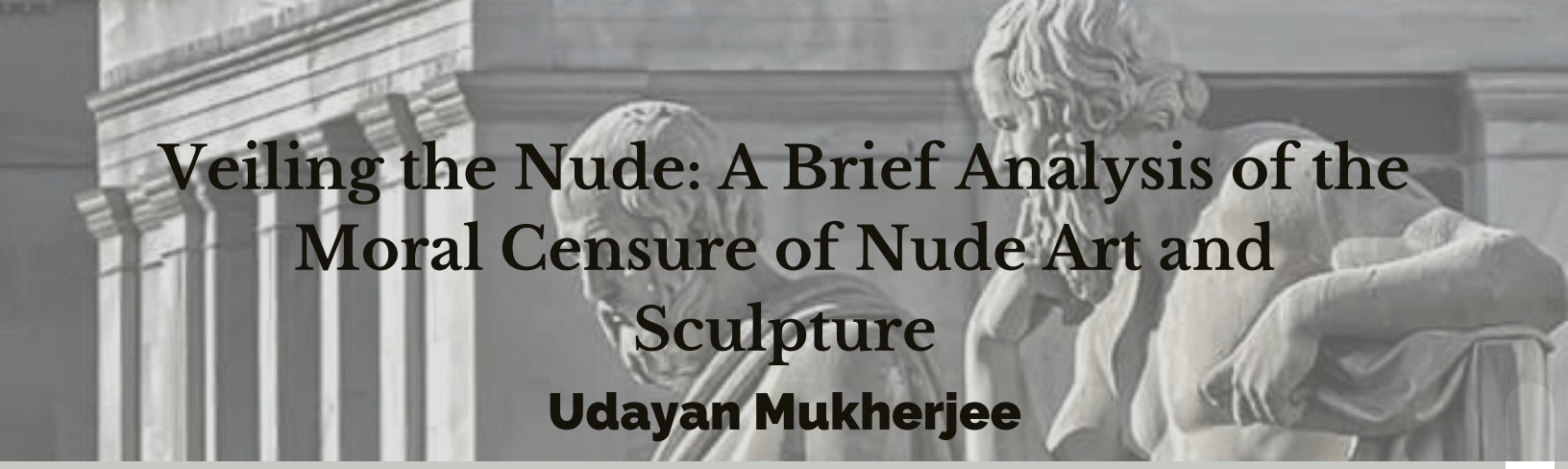

Veiling the Nude: A Brief Analysis of the Moral Censure of Nude Art and Sculpture

Udayan Mukherjee

Art is a powerful weapon. It is tied to the notion of morality, wherein often, the emotions aroused by art can lead to the very censuring of the object of appraisal. The nude exemplifies this proposition. Within the English dictionary, usage of the word naked is relegated to the "shame" experienced without clothing. While this need not necessarily entail being totally bare, the normative use of it reflects the former. On the other hand, the word nude illustrates the celebration of a marvel of nature – that is, the stupefying human body without the covers that limit its appreciation. Michelangelo's David, a hallmark of the Renaissance tradition, stands atop the exactitude showcased by skilled artisans of the golden era of sculpture. It is one of many such displays of the measure of precision in the depiction of the human body, in all its glory. Unfortunately, such displays, now are admonished by brutality to the ones that skillfully crafted them. Once lauded by the intelligentsia of society, rigorous attempts throughout history to completely disenfranchise the nude from collective imagination have proved fruitful. This paper aims to demonstrate the epistemic movement from artistic creation to appropriation, and to moral censure that the nude has suffered over the course of history. While the focus remains on the historical study of the idea of the nude being downgraded to "cheap art", a central tenet of this paper aims to establish the importance of morality in relation to art, and how the nude by its intrinsic nature can arouse untoward feelings not just towards the artwork itself, but the "gaze" directed towards it. An important piece of intellectual history, exemplification of the case will be provided by both Western and Indian traditions.

Keywords: Nudity, morality, art, culture, Reniassance

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INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts a limited analysis of the censure of nude art and sculpture, in two geographical contexts. Over the centuries, deliberate efforts have played a part in the systematic disenfranchisement of the nude, and the instilment of a layer of moral censure, the two going hand in hand in the case of art and sculpture. This paper aims to reflect briefly on the changes that brought about this change in Western and South Asian contexts.

WHAT IS "NUDE"?

The word "Nude" might bring to the eyes of the reader images of lewdness, or representations of other forms of debauchery associated with youth or even squalor. With the word having done the rounds on the Internet for the best part of a decade now, the reader cannot be faulted for conjuring an image that their moral faculty immediately tries to censor.

However, there is much more to the word than what meets the eye - The Cambridge Dictionary defines the word as, 'not wearing any clothes.' Strict attention must be brought to the lack of an erotic connotation. Contrast that with naked, which stands for pretty much the same image, with only a slight shift in focus of the viewer. The word "Naked" stands for 'not covered with any clothes.'

In essence, the word "Nude" stands for two diametrically opposite values today; the positive value associated with the display of fine craftsmanship [e.g., the great nude relics found engraved into the walls of the temple at Khajuraho] and the negative [e.g., the iCloud leak of "nude" photos of celebrities in 2014](The Guardian,2014). Our pre-modern ancestors did not have any prescribed consternation towards the word, so why do we?

THE WESTERN LANDSCAPE

For the purpose of our inquiry, the term "West" does not point across the pond from Europe – it is restricted to the continent, especially Western Europe and the Mediterranean. The word "Nude" was used without any ulterior undertones in the ancient and medieval West. On the contrary, nude depictions were considered the pinnacle of artistic recreation – a task only the very gifted could bear to shoulder. As a result, the successful completion of such works led not only to the personal glory of the artist but also to the kingdom-state (or other forms of political organization).

The nude was brought to the fore by the Greeks, during the fifth century. Although the assertion might be too steadfast, it is well worth it to add that the Greeks' appreciation (and, obsession!) of the lithe body has only come close to being replicated by Renaissance artists, albeit, with only a meager form of realism, when compared with the former. The Greeks perhaps had a confused relationship between the depiction of women as grand goddesses, gilded, however, in patriarchy. The woman, either was grandiose or was a demon – there existed no confluence between the two (Worcester Art,"Women in Greek Art"). A marked difference, however, between later artistic traditions and those of the Greeks is the latter artists' insistence on depicting solely the male as the epitome of perfection, relegating the female to a lackadaisical existence. Later traditions might have made a difference between brute and beauty, but for the Greeks, they were one and the same. They might not have done away with musculature as a symbol of beauty, but they had more wiggle room for the female form to be given its fair due.

Widely accepted as the touchstone of the human form, both the Greek body and its replication serve as the fountain from which artists have drunk inspiration to create their own sculptures which showcase the irrevocable form of the human. However, what made the Greek nude the yardstick for every subsequent Western replication was its obsession with proportion. The Greeks had a penchant for mathematics; marry the two together and the Greeks had themselves an outlet to display their mathematical prowess in a beautiful form.

Later nudes would borrow this skill from them – one of the best examples here being the Vitruvian Man encased in a geometric pattern (Kenneth Clark,1956,41). Still, most Renaissance and Gothic artists tried to replicate the Greeks' accuracy in their bid to actualize their approximation of the exactness of the body – an ode to the Greek mind, for all intents and purposes. They came close but often followed mechanistic routes.

However, where the Greeks homed in on the ideal creation was in their bid to showcase their bodies as pieces of art – that is, the corporeal structure must be maintained elegantly, from which art can flow. Literature from Homer shows just how much emphasis was showered upon the maintenance of peak physical status; "Besides, it is a disgrace to grow old through sheer carelessness before seeing what manner of man you may become by developing your bodily strength and beauty to their highest limit" (Xenophon, Memorabilia,3.2), wrote Xenophon, attributing these words to Socrates. Physical fitness, then, was a matter of pride; hence, it only made sense for posterity to be able to witness it long after the flesh had become part of the soil.

Fast forward a couple of thousand years, when Renaissance painters tried to depict nudes without the normative culture reflecting a similar trend, the essence of the spiritual unity of body with art lacked in the paintings and sculptures as well. Michelangelo's David stands among the early Renaissance creations which espouse the appreciation of the nude as the most breathtaking of all forms, attaching to it a sort of exoticism.

The downfall of the beauty showcased by the unbridled figure can be attributed to the fig leaf -yes, a simple leaf. We might have organized channels of censuring the "delinquent" elements in society, often through redressive mechanisms, but the authorities of Florence, with the force of Papal power, mobilized the fig leaf. The unveiling of a behemoth of the art world might not have had the same rousing effect on scandalized Florentines that it has on the hundreds of thousands of art chasers that throng the City of Lilies each year. The phallus's disrobement did not much amuse the faith-abiding population – swiftly, a fig leaf was used to cover David's modesty. Did he feel particularly shy before being covered? Michelangelo probably didn't intend for it to be so. Hence, the grandiose nude was censured to protect the masses from perceived debauchery. Similar modes of censorship were attributed to the nudity adorning the stunning Sistine Chapel, with a multitude of Frescoes created by the likes of Botticelli, Perugino, and Michelangelo, who created The Last Judgement, at the peak of his powers, only for it to be deemed "inappropriate" (Sreenivas 2009) for the Pope's appraisal. Perhaps the final nail in Michelangelo's coffin (he was to pass away months after!), the Catholic Church ordered 'figures shall not be painted or adorned with a beauty exciting lust.' (Artsy, "Fig Leaves.") The fig leaf returned again, to cover genitalia in The Last Judgement.

Much of the censure at this juncture in time was tied to a sense of moral foreboding, or disclaimer to ward away debauchery, seen to be propagated by the vehicle of art.

Considered to be the torchbearers for public order and morality, the Church thus was able to put a swift end to the depiction of the human body in its most primordial and beautiful form. While the nude did not cease to exist, patronage by ruling elites was swiftly drying up, and the art form, with it, in the process. The question to be asked here is this – what about the natural form did the Church object to? The answer doesn't need intense mental work – in one word, the nude, instead of its attunement with the everyday human, came now with it the attached label of "shame". In essence, nudity was shameful since it was a representation of those who had sinned.

THE SOUTH ASIAN LANDSCAPE

The nude as a symbol of beauty isn't a mark of western aesthetic appreciation only. For thousands of years, temples in South Asia have been the center for the appraisal of the uninhibited expression of the human form. This is not news to Indians, who are usually versed (to a certain degree) with the relics of Khajuraho temple and Virupaksha temple, among others. That being said, having grown used to the nomenclature accorded by its colonizers, inhabitants of the region perhaps have developed a skewed understanding of the nature of sexuality in pre-colonial times. Much of the subcontinent cannot shake off a sense of ignominy when it comes to the unsheathed corporeal matter.

The question to be asked then is if the association of nudity with vice entails not just censure of the body but also the moral faculty.

For a British official in power of mandating and bringing into effect policies that would impact almost the entirety of South Asia, sculptures displaying their masculinity or femininity ostensibly would possibly have suggested a blot on imperial power. Beacons of "mysticism and exoticism", overtly suggestive tones inferred from them led to an incredible campaign of moral, and the consequent, aesthetic censure. Section 292 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) expressly states 'a book, pamphlet, paper, writing, drawing, painting, representation, figure or any other object, shall be deemed to be obscene if it is lascivious or appeals to the prurient interest or if its effect' (Indian Kanoon, "Section 292 in The Indian Penal Code") The rule might look like a colonial jurisprudential effect, but it has deeper linkages with Victorian-era morality, than explicit law and order.

The Victorian image of beauty did not have any reflexivity for art and sculpture labeled 'erotic' – in essence, finding these sculptures adorning sacrosanct religious spaces shocked the colonisers' limited aesthetic faculty. 'Bodily pleasures were seen as a way to be one with divinity'(Media India, "Temple Art in India."), says Madhabi Katoch; temples weren't just places of worship, they were also places of congregation. Inferring one from the other – South Asian populations admired the nude form, much like the Greeks. However, no reflexivity was afforded to the expression of spirituality in the visual culture of the era that produced marvels. Another strand of thought followed along the lines of viewing the Orient as diametrically opposite to the Occident.

Hence, while European art was at an advanced stage, much of Indian art was seen to be "primitive", or in its infancy. According to Hegel, Indian art was unbecoming, in the sense that 'ideas were inadequately realized, because the spirit had not yet come to terms with the matter', lacking realism and naturalism. (Partha Mitter, 1977, 213)

Followed by nudity, a secondary shock to the British came in the form of same-sex nudity. While the people that produced and consumed the alluring artwork possessed a normative framework designed to look at these sculptures with admiration, they stung in the British's eyes as forms of "deviant behaviour" or "aberrations". Section 377 of the IPC, marks 'unnatural offences' (Indian Kanoon, "Section 377 in The Indian Penal Code."), the source of contemporarily-relevant fervent debate for its regressive nature would possibly have been used as inspiration in conjunction with Section 292 to stultify any depiction of "public indecency". The British, clearly, didn't have much regard for any sort of cultural relativism.

Lacking a firm base for patronage, with the help of an ever-expanding Eurocentric nexus, nude sculpture, and art failed to be produced in the volume that it had in previous eras. The disenfranchisement of hallmarks of South Asian visual culture, thus, was a systematic, but imperative part of new-look colonial India. Dominant viewpoints in society, usually those perpetrated by the ruling elite also then become the normative standards for morality. The colonial condemnation of "barbarism" seeped through from the rulers to the ruled, and South Asians viewed their own sculptures as unsophisticated or primitive.

CONCLUSION

This paper briefly traced two distinct traditions of aesthetic creation and value, with a central synthesis. Within the Western (broadly European) tradition, the Greeks especially championed the cause of fitness and bodily splendour in their portrayal of the nude while in South Asia, much of the emphasis was laid on the spiritual aspect of the corporeal depiction. Yet, through the systematic moral censure of both strands, works of trademark artistic achievement were relegated from public discourse to being relics of the distant, mystic past.

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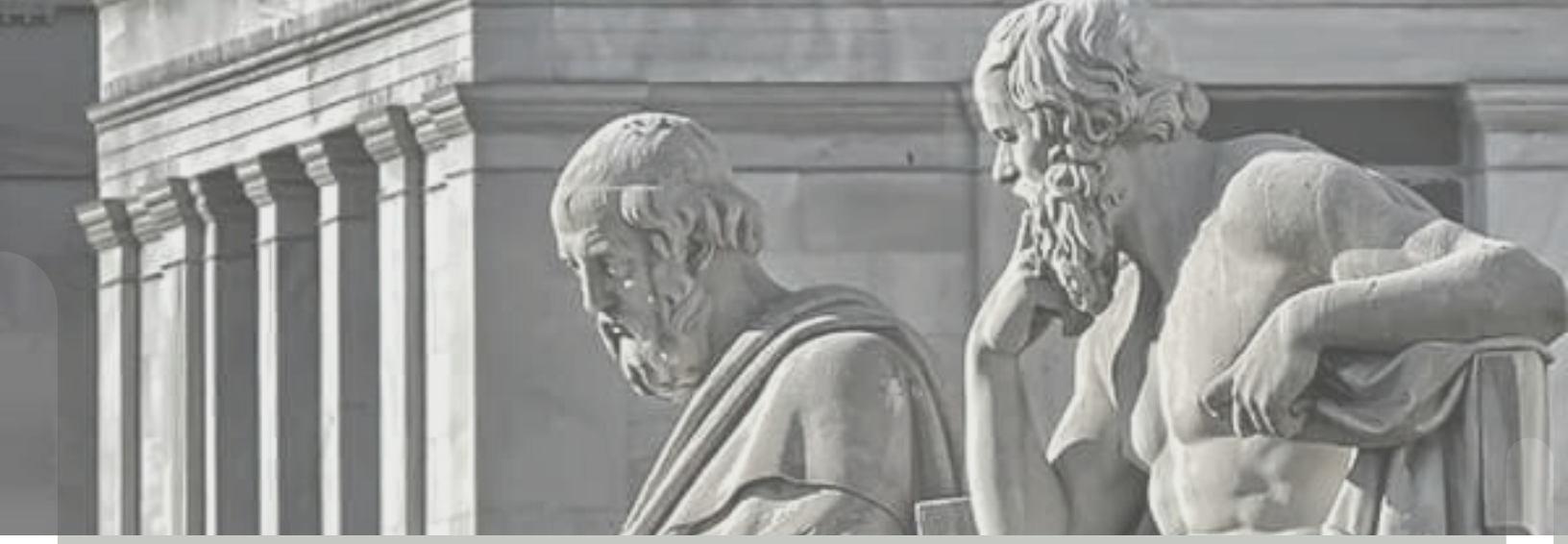

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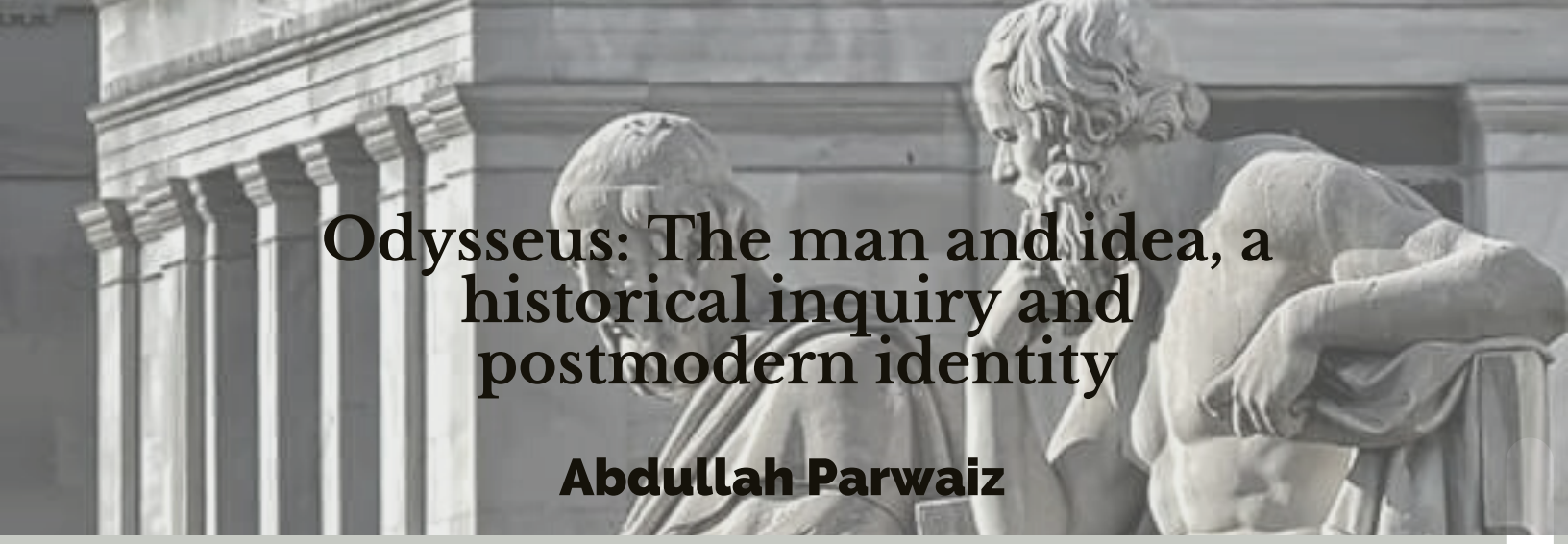

Odysseus: The man and idea, a historical inquiry and postmodern identity

Abdullah Parwaiz

The mythical character of Odysseus has been a recurring figure since his first introduction, in the great Greek Writer Homer's works around 700 BCE, in the 'Illiad', and, 'Odyssey'. He has been invoked over the ages to suit the means of the said eras, trans-morphing the character of the Classical Greek Hero to meet the desired ends of the poets, authors, and periods. The aim of the paper is to deconstruct the works where he has been mentioned and thus in turn construct the character itself. This will be done through the famous works he has been mentioned in, tracing the character as an idea of intellectual importance through history such as through Virgil's 'Aeneid', Dante's 'Inferno', Horkheimer and Adorno's 'Dialectic of the Enlightenment'. In doing so, the paper shall establish the grounds for Odysseus to come out as a character that establishes him as an idea of intellectual history that represents an array of ideas across ages in various cultural contexts. Furthermore, a Psychoanalytical analysis and study shall establish his relevance and stand in the Postmodern age that we live in, which shall aim to decentralize popular notions, moving away from the modernist experimentation towards the postmodern appreciation of the classical character as one, who the true core had been formed with such intricacy that writers have been forced to adapt him in their works, time and again. This historical inquiry broadens from a character into a series of ideas springing into the formation of intellectual history, along with an attempt to place his ideological relevance in the postmodern era.

Keywords:

Odysseus, classical Greek, Homer, psychoanalytical analysis, post-modern era

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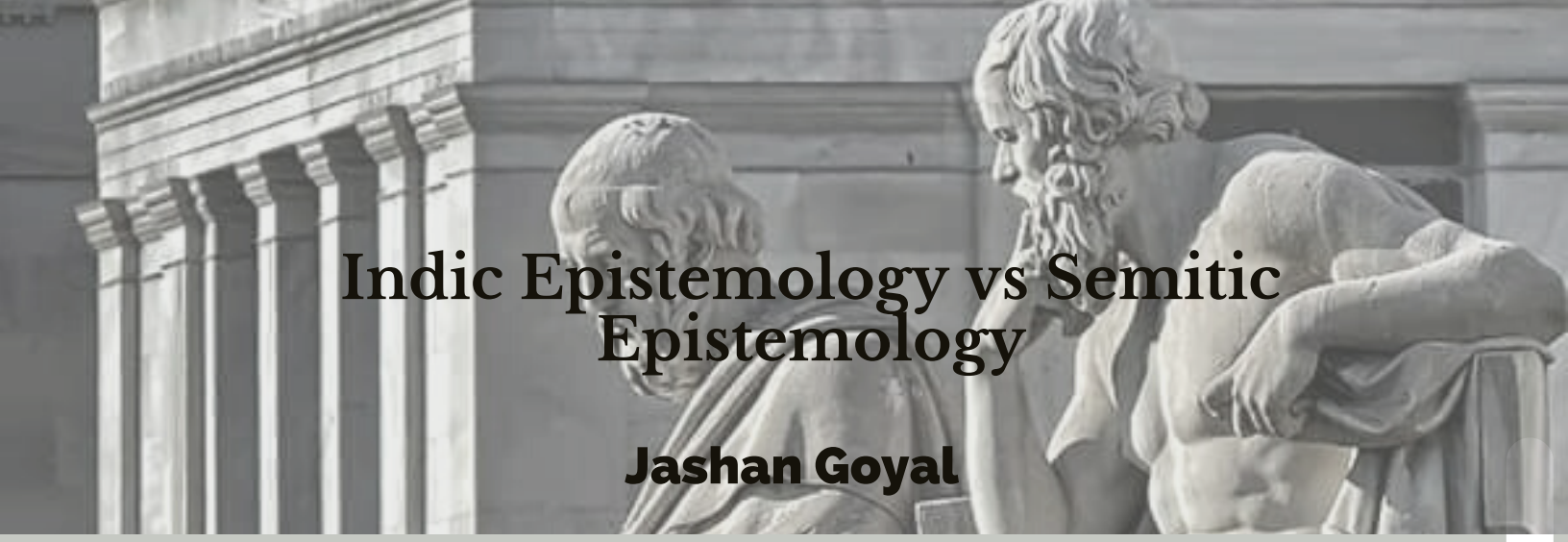

Indic Epistemology vs Semitic Epistemology

Jashan Goyal

India as a civilization has seen many invasions and has always allowed ideas and cultures to assimilate into its fold. Today, when we use the term 'Unity in Diversity," it is the legacy of this assimilation, but what accounts for this? One of the explanations is our thinking process and ideas of our darshan (philosophy), which are very well reflected in our Vedas. Indic epistemology is indeterministic, doesn't operate on a predetermined ideology, and is not open to drawing conclusions, where it believes in the unknowable and opens our mind to newer ways and beliefs, thus making us a mosaic, which we are today. This is very evidently highlighted in the 129th Sukta of the 10th Mandala of the Rig Veda, which is popularly known as the 'Nãsadīya Sukta.'

However, contrary to this is Semitic epistemology, which works on a pre-determined path and ideology. The famous classical Greek philosopher Plato, in his book "The Republic," very clearly determines and concludes the paths of reality, knowledge, and polity, thus restricting the march of knowledge itself. This tendency is not unique to the classical period but has continued in modern times in the famous Marxist historiography, which works on a predetermined ideology of 'materialism' and draws conclusions that give utmost priority to the economy and its variables—thereby limiting the scope of research. From this, it can be argued that Semitic cultures, as opposed to Indic cultures, are less open to change and have seen violence whenever newer ideas have come up, either during the scientific revolution or the enlightenment period—terming them as heretical.

The scope of this paper would focus on this comparison between Indic epistemology using the 129th "Nãsadīya Sukta' of the 10th Mandala of the Rig Veda and Semitic epistemology using various sources as stated above. Thus, linking the impact a particular thinking process or idea has on a society, which shapes its culture, way of life, and openness to newer beliefs and traditions.

Keywords:

Indic, assimilation, darshan, Rig Veda, Nãsadīya Sukta, Semitic epistemology

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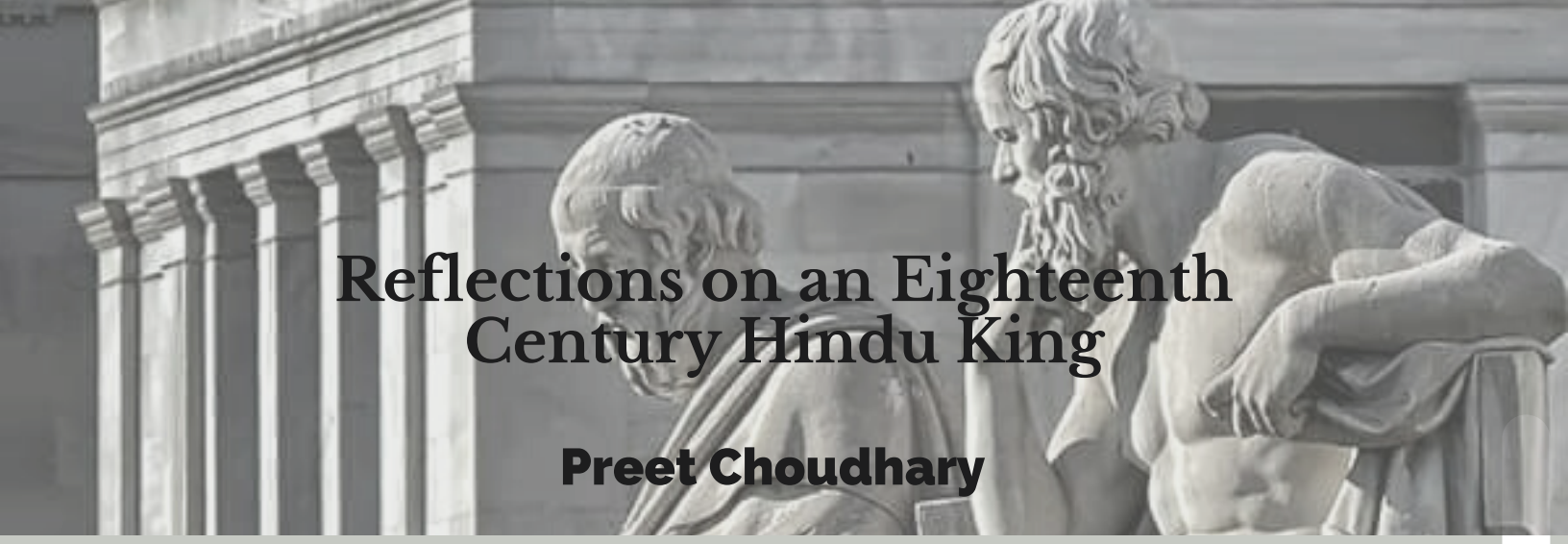

Reflections on an Eighteenth Century Hindu King

Preet Choudhary

The eighteenth-century political decline of the Mughals created a power vacuum and led to the emergence of several regional Kingdoms. The Kachhwahas of Amber , under their ruler Sawai Raja Jai Singh, expanded their claim over much of eastern Rajasthan and consolidated a kingdom of their own generally referred to as the Jaipur State. Sawai Raja Jai Singh fashioned himself as a 'Hindu King' to mark his delineation from the Mughal Imperial power. He revived age-old Vedic-Shastric practices to mark his coronation and reconciled a number of ideologically opposed and varying schools of thought clubbed as Hinduism. He was referred to as ' hindu kamal diwakar' or 'the upholder of varna-ashrama dharma'. In the third decade of his rule, Jai Singh through his influence got the Mughal Emperor to abolish jizya and pilgrimage tax. He also patronized the Sanskrit scholarship and built a royal library for the manuscripts. On one hand, he claimed to be a descendant of Ram and a suryavanshi, and on the other established Govind Devji as the state deity. In order to emphasize the Hindu character of his state, he also built the city of Jaipur, which also marks his attempts at reviving and reconciling Hindu traditions.

The paper will critically analyze the religious orientations, policies, and measures of Sawai Raja Jai Singh,and closely examine his acts of attempting his image as that of a 'Hindu' King. It will also look at how the ' Hindu City ' Jaipur's cityscape reflects the ideas and ideologies of SawaiJai Singh and the other ideas which influenced its construction. The paper will act as an attempt to analyze whether the political thought of Sawai Jai Singh be called a conception of ' Hindu Theory of Kingship.'

Keywords:

Kachhwahas, Vedic-Shastric practices, Hinduism, varna-ashrama dharma, suryaavanshi, kingship

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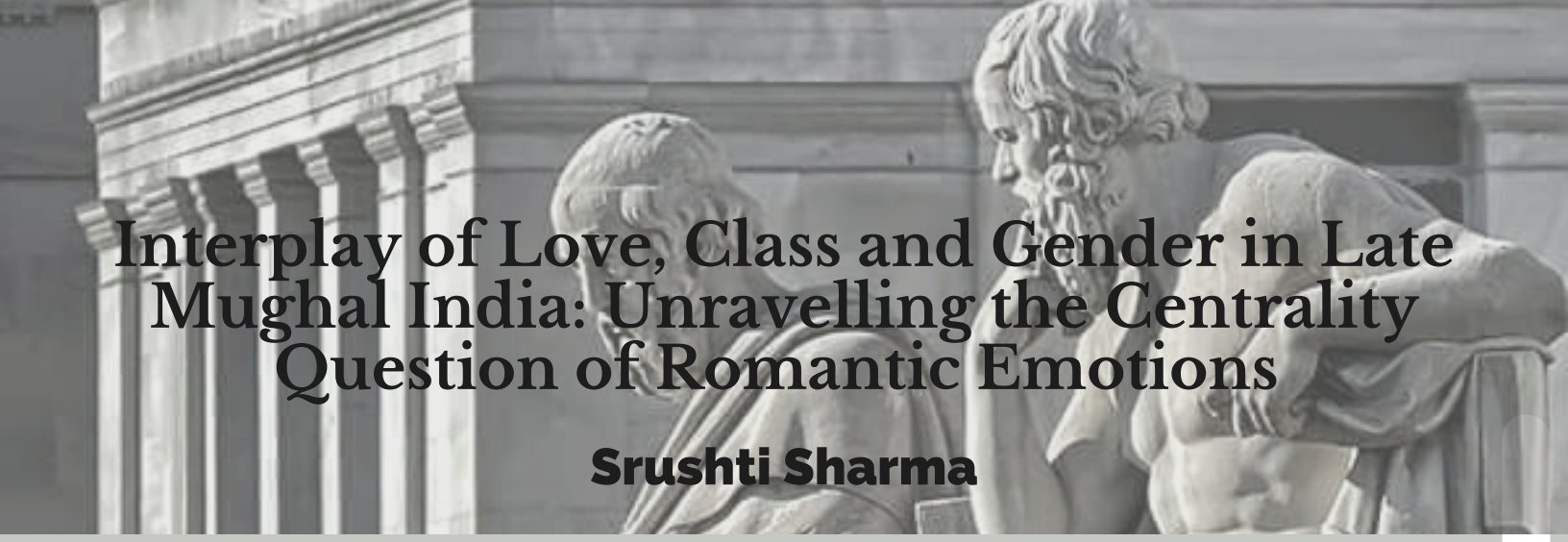

Interplay of Love, Class and Gender in Late Mughal India: Unravelling the Centrality Question of Romantic Emotions

Srushti Sharma

Taking emotions as the vantage point for understanding historical developments and social situations challenges (but is not exclusive of) situating history in stiff structures of class or politics. The study of emotions is a nascent arena in Indian historiography which carries the potential of not merely explaining how oppressive structures of caste and patriarchy were maintained by the propagation of emotions but also reflecting a continuity in contemporary realities. Despite the existence of seemingly universal emotions of romantic love, there prevails considerable difference in ways of reception, propagation, observation, and recording of these emotions in the context of India which the Western binaries fail to address. These aspects get particularly interesting during the period ranging roughly from Shah Jahan's reign in 1628 to the mid-18th century, characterized by peculiar political developments and a distinctive action of religious ideologies.

The paper attempts to understand romantic emotions as experienced by women and persons of alternate gender and sexual identities, and their portrayal with respect to the centrality question. How important was romantic love in the lives of womxn during the late Mughal period? Was it something around which they centered their lives or was it a negotiating space for womxn to express their selves and manipulate power structures in their favor? The paper will also try to understand whether the experience and portrayal of these emotions were constant across various economic segments and the underlying interconnections shared by womxn of different economic segments by the virtue of some commonalities like male-dominated economic and power structures. Urdu poetry, often composed and recited in mehfils will be majorly utilized by the paper to explore and analyze the same- the poets themselves representing the complexities of society. Insha literature, Persian sources like Padshahnama and Alamgirnama, and several Braj Bhasha compositions have also been dealt with in understanding the interplay of love, class, and gender during the late Mughal period.

In the quest to address the questions mentioned above, the paper sincerely attempts to apply research-based principles developed on emotions by rigorous academic projects led by scholars like Sara Ahmed, Faridah Zaman, and Margrit Pernau in the period of study relevant to us.

Lastly, the paper humbly aims at providing inspiration to women and persons of alternate gender and sexual identities constantly struggling in contemporary times by establishing some continuities in emotional histories.

Keywords:

Emotional history, historiography, patriarchy, continuity, Urdu Poetry

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"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms toward perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action -
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake."

~Rabindranath Tagore,
Gitanjali (1913)

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